

**THE PANORAMA
OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT**

A STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE WORD “TESTAMENT” MEANS COVENANT. A COVENANT IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PARTIES. IN THIS CASE IT IS A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. THE WORD “NEW” SUGGESTS THAT THERE WAS A FORMER OR OLDER COVENANT. (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY 1965] PART II, P. 15.) THIS FORMER COVENANT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN OUR STUDY WE WILL SEE THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE UNIFYING THEME OF THESE COVENANTS. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE, THEREFORE, OF THIS STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS TO PRESENT JESUS CHRIST AS THE SUPREME UNIFYING TRUTH OF BOTH TESTAMENTS WHICH COMPOSE THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS IN THIS STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE:

- 1. TO ACQUIRE A GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,**
- 2. TO UNDERSTAND THE UNITY AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT,**
- 3. TO COMPREHEND THE UNITY AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,**
- 4. TO DISCOVER THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE AND MEANING OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,**
- 5. TO IDENTIFY JESUS CHRIST AS THE FOCAL POINT OF ALL THE MAJOR TEACHINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT,**
- 6. TO APPLY NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES TO DAILY LIVING,**
- 7. TO DEVELOP ABILITIES TO EXEGETE PASSAGES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND**
- 8. TO INCREASE ABILITIES TO PRESENT THE NEW TESTAMENT TRUTHS IN A TEACHING OR PREACHING SITUATION.**

ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF UNDERSTANDING ANY COMMUNICATION WHETHER SPOKEN OR WRITTEN IS TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND BOTH THE MIND OF THE PERSON COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE AND THE MIND OF THE ONE RECEIVING THE MESSAGE. WE WILL BE THINKING OF THIS PRINCIPLE AS WE STUDY THE VARIOUS BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

UNITY OF SCRIPTURE

AS WE STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT WE MUST COMPREHEND THE UNITY OF THE SCRIPTURE. THE BIBLE IS ONE BOOK, BUT IT IS ALSO A LIBRARY OF MANY BOOKS. IT HAS ONE AUTHOR, BUT IT ALSO HAS MANY AUTHORS. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN SPEAKING OF THE UNITY OF THE WORD OF GOD SAYS: "IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WE HAVE AN INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN NEED; AND THE NEW TESTAMENT IS A REVELATION OF DIVINE SUPPLY. IN THE OLD WE HAVE UNVEILINGS OF THE HUMAN HEART. IN THE NEW WE HAVE THE UNVEILING OF THE HEART OF GOD, AND THE WAY IN WHICH HE HAS ANSWERED HUMANITY'S NEED IN CHRIST." (QUOTED IN J. SIDLOW BAXTER, EXPLORE THE BOOK [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1960] VOL. 5, P.88.) THIS TRUTH IS ALSO CONTAINED IN A STATEMENT ABOUT THE UNITY OF THE TWO TESTAMENTS: "THE NEW IS CONCEALED IN THE OLD AND THE OLD IS REVEALED IN THE NEW."

THE GREAT CENTRAL THEME OF THE BIBLE IS SALVATION THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE BIBLE IS THE RECORD OF HUMAN RUIN AND GOD'S GRACE. DR. THOMAS RODGERS HAS ESTABLISHED THAT THE ENTIRE SCRIPTURE REVOLVES AROUND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN FOR THE HEART OF MANKIND. (THOMAS R. RODGERS, THE PANORAMA OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. NEWBURGH, INDIANA: IMPACT PRESS, 1988.) IT IS THE ONLY RECORD OF GOD'S REDEEMING LOVE. SOMEONE HAS STATED, "CUT THE SCRIPTURE ANYWHERE AND IT BLEEDS."

THE BRITISH NAVY ONCE HAD A SCARLET THREAD WOVEN INTO ALL ITS ROPES. THAT SCARLET THREAD WAS A SIGN OF ROYALTY. THERE IS ALSO A SCARLET THREAD RUNNING THROUGH THE BIBLE. IT BEGINS IN GEN. 3:15 WITH THE PROMISE OF SALVATION TO MANKIND AND THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST SATAN, AND IT ENDS IN REVELATION WITH THE PROCLAMATION, "WORTHY IS THE LAMB."

JESUS CHRIST IS PREEMINENT IN THE WORD OF GOD. HE IS THE CONTROL FIGURE OF ALL SCRIPTURE. THIS IS WELL EXPRESSED BY THOSE WHO POINT OUT THAT:

IN GENESIS JESUS CHRIST IS THE CREATOR GOD AND THE SEED OF WOMAN.

IN EXODUS HE IS THE PASSEOVER LAMB.

IN LEVITICUS HE IS THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

IN NUMBERS HE IS THE BRAZEN SERPENT OF HOPE LIFTED UP.

IN DEUTERONOMY HE IS THE TRUE PROPHET.

IN JOSHUA HE IS THE UNSEEN CAPTAIN.

IN JUDGES HE IS THE DELIVERER.

IN RUTH HE IS THE KINSMAN REDEEMER.

IN ESTHER HE IS THE PROMISED KING, AS HE IS ALSO IN SAMUEL, KINGS AND CHRONICLES.

IN NEHEMIAH AND EZRA HE IS THE RESTORER OF THE NATION.

IN JOB HE IS THE REDEEMER.

IN PSALMS HE IS THE ALL IN ALL.

IN PROVERBS HE IS THE PATTERN.

IN ECCLESIASTES HE IS THE GOAL.

**IN SONG OF SOLOMON HE IS THE LILY OF THE VALLEY
AND THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.**

**IN THE PROPHETS HE IS THE PROMISED KING, YET TO
COME.**

IN MATTHEW HE IS THE KING.

IN MARK HE IS THE SERVANT.

IN LUKE HE IS THE MAN OF MEN.

IN JOHN HE IS THE VERY GOD.

**IN ACTS HE IS THE SAVIOUR ASCENDED, SEATED AND
SENDING THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

IN THE LETTERS HE IS FILLING AND INDWELLING.

IN REVELATION HE IS CHRIST RETURNING AND REIGNING.

**IN THE BIBLE JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD, THE
SAVIOR AND THE LORD FOREVER. (SIMILAR
INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND IN VARIOUS WRITINGS.)**

**THE NEW TESTAMENT GIVES VALIDITY TO THE OLD
TESTAMENT. WITHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT THE OLD
TESTAMENT IS PURPOSE WITHOUT ACHIEVEMENT, PREPARATION
WITHOUT PROGRESS, PROMISES WITHOUT FAITHFULNESS,
PROPHECIES WITHOUT FULFILLMENT, SATAN WITHOUT BONDS,
MAN WITHOUT REDEMPTION, SIN WITHOUT REMEDY, CREATION
WITHOUT RELEASE FROM TURMOIL AND GOD WITHOUT A PLAN.**

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN SAYS, "THE OLD TESTAMENT IS A REVELATION OF HUMAN NEED. BENDING OVER THE PENTATEUCH WE HEAR THE SIGH FOR A PRIEST . . . SOMEONE WHO WILL DEAL WITH SIN AND BRING SALVATION. NEXT LISTENING TO THE HISTORIC BOOKS, WE HEAR THE CRY FOR A KING, 'MAKE US A KING.' IN THE REST OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE THE POETIC AND PROPHETIC, WE SEE THE QUEST FOR A PROPHET; ONE WHO SHOULD SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD FULLY, FINALLY. THAT IS MAN'S THREEFOLD NEED: A PRIEST WHO RESTORES THE BROKEN HARMONY; A KING WHO GOVERNS WITH AN ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY BASED UPON THE INHERENT NECESSITY OF THE LAW HE INSTITUTES; A PROPHET WHO SHALL SAY GOD'S WORD TO MAN IN FULLNESS AND FINALITY." (QUOTED IN J. SIDLOW BAXTER, THE STRATEGIC GRASP OF THE BIBLE [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1968] P. 142.)

IN JOHN 5:39, JESUS SAYS HE IS THE THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES; FOR IN THEM YOU THINK YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE; AND THEY ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME." AGAIN ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION HE REVEALS WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAID ABOUT HIM, "AND BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, HE EXPOUNDED UNTO THEM IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF," LK. 24:27. THE GREEK WORD IN THIS VERSE WHICH HAS BEEN TRANSLATED "EXPOUND" IS DERIVED FROM A WORD RELATED TO THE ENGLISH WORD HERMENEUTICS. THUS, JESUS DRAWS OUT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT THE TRUTHS ABOUT HIMSELF.

J. SIDLOW BAXTER SAYS, “THE OLD TESTAMENT CRIES, ‘BEHOLD, HE COMES!’ THE GOSPELS EMPHASIZE ‘BEHOLD, HE DIES!’ BUT THE ACTS FOLLOW ON WITH ‘BEHOLD, HE LIVES!’ THE EPISTLES JOIN IN WITH, ‘BEHOLD, HE SAVES!’ AND THE APOCALYPSE FINALIZES WITH THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS, ‘BEHOLD, HE REIGNS!’” (IBID., P. 145.)

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

AS WE BEGIN THIS STUDY LET US REVIEW SOME VERY IMPORTANT FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS THAT YOU ALREADY KNOW, BUT WHICH WILL HELP US IN OUR STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

REVELATION

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF REVELATION IS THAT GOD GIVES TRUTH OTHERWISE UNKNOWN. GOD GIVES HIS REVELATION:

- 1. BY SPEAKING IT THROUGH HIS PROPHETS, HEB 1:1,**
- 2. BY ILLUSTRATING IT, IN OLD TESTAMENT TYPES AND SYMBOLS, HEB 9:9,**
- 3. BY WRITING SCRIPTURE, USING VARIOUS PERSONALITIES, EX. 34:1, AND**
- 4. BY ACTING IN HISTORY, THE CHIEF EVENT BEING THE SENDING OF HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST INTO THE WORLD TO REDEEM MANKIND, HEB 1:2.**

INSPIRATION

INSPIRATION IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING IN GOD'S MEN ASSURING THAT THEY RECEIVE AND RECORD GOD'S TRUTH WITHOUT ERROR. II SAM. 23:2; JER. 1:9; II TIM 3:16-17; AND II PETER 1:21, I COR. 2:13.

HERE IS A SIMPLE, BUT EXCELLENT DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION: "GOD GUIDED AND DIRECTED HIS MEN AND WITHOUT SETTING ASIDE OR DESTROYING THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES OR LITERARY STYLES HE SUPERNATURALLY GAVE HIS THOUGHTS AND GUIDED THE CHOICE OF EVERY WORD FROM THE WRITERS' VOCABULARY AS HE WANTED IT RECORDED." (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

OUR BASIC PRESUPPOSITION IS THAT THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD. IT IS THE ONLY RECORD OF GOD'S REDEEMING LOVE THROUGH CHRIST, AND OUR ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

ILLUMINATION

ILLUMINATION IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLING OUR MINDS TO GRASP THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD. IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO TURNS THE LIGHT ON SO THAT WE MAY COMPREHEND THE WORD OF GOD. THE SCRIPTURES THAT HELP US

TO UNDERSTAND THIS ARE: I COR 2:9-16 AND JOHN 16:13. TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES WE MUST READ AND MEDITATE UPON THEM WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. REMEMBER THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO ILLUMINATES GOD'S WORD IS THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT WHO ORIGINALLY GAVE IT IN REVELATION LONG AGO. WE MUST PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO OBEY GOD'S WORD OR WE WILL NOT FULLY COMPREHEND HIS WORD.

APPLICATION

APPLICATION IS THE ABILITY TO APPROPRIATE THE PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURES INTO DAILY LIVING. IT IS WHEN THE WORD OF GOD BECOMES REALITY NOT JUST IN THE MIND, BUT ALSO IN THE HEART, IN THE CONVERSATION AND IN THE ATTITUDES. THIS DOES NOT COME BY SOME MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE, BUT RATHER BY DAILY WALKING WITH THE LORD AND KNOWING HIM INTIMATELY, II TIM. 3:16-17.

GREEK LANGUAGE REVIEW

THE NEW TESTAMENT, EXCEPT FOR A FEW PHRASES, WAS WRITTEN IN KOINE GREEK. KOINE GREEK WAS ALSO THE COMMON LANGUAGE SPOKEN THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN WORLD DURING NEW TESTAMENT TIMES. IT WAS THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE BETWEEN 300 B.C. AND 300 A.D. ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE ROMAN WORLD WAS BI-LINGUAL. THUS, GREEK WAS A LANGUAGE ALMOST ALL PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD.

IT WILL BE HELPFUL FOR US TO REVIEW SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE LANGUAGE, ESPECIALLY THE MEANINGS OF CERTAIN VERB TENSES.

AS YOU KNOW, A VERB IS THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF A SENTENCE. THE REST OF THE SENTENCE IS BUILT AROUND IT. VERBS TELL US ABOUT ACTION AND HAVE TENSE, VOICE, MOOD, PERSON AND NUMBER.

TENSE TELLS US THE TIME OF ACTION; PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE. AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF TENSE IN GREEK IS THE VERB'S KIND OF ACTION.

ONE KIND OF ACTION IS CALLED PUNCTILIAR. THE PERIOD IS USED TO ILLUSTRATE THIS ACTION, PLUS IT MEANS ACTION COMPLETED IN A SINGLE UNIT OF TIME. THIS IS OFTEN CALLED POINT ACTION. IT LEAVES THE IMPRESSION THAT IT OCCURS SWIFTLY. THIS IS NOT EXACTLY CORRECT. IT IS BETTER TO THINK OF IT AS A COMPLETED SINGLE UNIT OF TIME. THE UNIT MAY IN FACT COVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. ANOTHER KIND IS ACTION IN PROGRESS OR CONTINUOUS. THIS ACTION IS CALLED LINEAR ACTION. A LINE IS USED TO ILLUSTRATE THIS ACTION. ANOTHER KIND IS ACTION COMPLETED WITH THE EMPHASIS ON THE CONTINUING CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACTION. THESE DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTIONS ARE EXPRESSED IN GREEK IN THE AORIST TENSE, THE IMPERFECT TENSE, THE FUTURE TENSE, THE PERFECT TENSE, THE PLUPERFECT TENSE AND THE PRESENT TENSE.

THE AORIST TENSE IS ACTION COMPLETED IN PAST TIME AND IS PUNCTILIAR OR CONTAINED AS A UNIT. THE AORIST USUALLY EMPHASIZES THE ACTION AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, SOMETIMES IT EMPHASIZES THE BEGINNING OF THE ACT AND SOMETIMES IT EMPHASIZES THE END OF THE ACTION. THE POINT IS THAT THE AORIST IS NOT CONTINUOUS ACTION. THE ACTION HAPPENED ONCE. FOR EXAMPLE, "HE DIED." THE AORIST TENSE IS A VERY IMPORTANT TENSE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE IMPERFECT TENSE IS CONTINUOUS ACTION IN PAST TIME. IT IS INCOMPLETE ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, "HE WAS BEATING THE MAN."

THE FUTURE TENSE MEANS THAT THE ACTION HAS NOT YET HAPPENED, BUT IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FUTURE. FOR EXAMPLE, "HE IS GOING TO DIE."

THE PERFECT TENSE MEANS THAT THE ACTION WAS COMPLETED, BUT THE RESULT OR EFFECT OF THE ACTION CONTINUES. FOR EXAMPLE IS, "IT IS WRITTEN." THE IDEA IS THAT IT WAS WRITTEN SOMETIME BEFORE THE SPEAKER SPEAKS AND THE RESULTS OR CONSEQUENCES OF THE WRITING CONTINUE, USUALLY EVEN AS THE SPEAKER IS SPEAKING. THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE RESULT OF THE ACTION.

THE PLUPERFECT MEANS THAT AN ACTION WAS COMPLETED AND THE RESULT OF THE ACTION CONTINUED UP TO A CERTAIN TIME.

THE PRESENT TENSE NORMALLY MEANS THE PRESENT TIME NOW EXISTING AND ACTION THAT IS CONTINUOUS OR LINEAR.

VOICE MEANS THE WAY THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE, USUALLY A PERSON, RELATES TO THE ACTION. THE ACTIVE VOICE MEANS THAT THE SUBJECT DOES THE ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, "HE IS BEATING." THE PASSIVE VOICE MEANS THE SUBJECT IS BEING ACTED UPON. FOR EXAMPLE, "HE IS BEING BEATEN." GREEK HAS A MIDDLE VOICE WHICH MEANS THE SUBJECT IS ACTING UPON HIMSELF.

MOOD MEANS WHETHER AN ACTION IS REALLY TAKING PLACE OR WHETHER IT IS POTENTIAL ACTION. THERE ARE FOUR MOODS IN GREEK. THE INDICATIVE MOOD EXPRESSES REAL ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, "THE MAN IS ESCAPING." THE IMPERATIVE MOOD EXPRESSES A COMMAND AND IS POTENTIAL ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE "ESCAPE." THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD IS POSSIBLE OR POTENTIAL ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, "IF THE MAN ESCAPES." THE OPTATIVE MOOD IS SELDOM USED AND MOVES FARTHER FROM REALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, "OH, THAT THE MAN WOULD ESCAPE."

WE ARE EXTREMELY FORTUNATE TO HAVE EXCELLENT GREEK LANGUAGE TOOLS TODAY. YOU SHOULD KEEP SOME OF THESE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS. MY FRIEND, DR. SPIROS ZODIATES HAS SPENT HIS LIFETIME PRODUCING HIS WORD STUDY NEW TESTAMENT AND HIS WORD STUDY DICTIONARY. YOU WILL FIND THEM VERY USEFUL.

THE INTER - BIBLICAL PERIOD

CHANGES BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

AS WE READ THE NEW TESTAMENT WE ARE IMMEDIATELY STRUCK WITH THE REALIZATION THAT THE WORLD GREATLY CHANGED BETWEEN MALACHI, THE LAST BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND MATTHEW, THE FIRST BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE TIME PERIOD BETWEEN MALACHI AND MATTHEW IS SOME 400 YEARS. NO PROPHET OF GOD SPOKE DURING THIS TIME; SO, THESE ARE CALLED THE SILENT YEARS. THESE ARE YEARS OF AGONIZING SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL UPHEAVAL IN ISRAEL'S AND JUDAH'S HISTORY. THE HISTORY BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR DISTINCT PERIODS: 1. PERSIAN, 538 - 332 B.C., 2. GREEK, 332 - 167 B.C., 3. HEBREW INDEPENDENCE, 167 - 63 B.C., AND 4. ROMAN, 63 B.C. - 70 A.D.

THE WORLD GREATLY CHANGED BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS, AND MANY DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRED WHICH ARE NOT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SUCH AS SYNAGOGUES, PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, HERODIANS, ZEALOTS, ROMANS, SAMARITANS,

PUBLICANS, AND THE SANHEDRIN, TO MENTION ONLY A FEW.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW TESTAMENT BETTER IT IS HELPFUL TO SURVEY BRIEFLY THE HIGH POINTS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY, WORLD HISTORY AND THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE NATION ISRAEL GOD BLESSED THEM WITH A PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF HIMSELF. FOLLOWING THEIR EMANCIPATION FROM EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY, EX. 20, GOD PROVIDED FOR THEIR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, MENTAL, MORAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS. THE NATION, HOWEVER, WAS DISOBEDIENT AND LONGED FOR THE FALSE SECURITY OF EGYPT, EX. 16:2-3; 32:1-FF. AT THE GIVING OF THE SECOND LAW (DEUTERONOMY) THROUGH MOSES GOD PROMISED THE NATION GREAT BLESSINGS IF THEY TRUSTED AND OBEYED HIM, DEUT. 28:1-14. MOSES ALSO WARNED THEM OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE, DEUT. 28:15-44.

THE CONQUEST OF JOSHUA WENT WELL, BUT AFTER JOSHUA, DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES, THE NATION WENT THROUGH CYCLE AFTER CYCLE OF SIN. EACH SIN CYCLE FOLLOWED THE SAME PATTERN: SIN, OPPRESSION, REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION. THE PEOPLE BECAME DISCONTENTED WITH BEING THE THEOCRATIC NATION GOD CALLED ISRAEL TO BE. THEY WANTED A KING LIKE THE OTHER NATIONS AROUND THEM. SAUL THE FIRST KING WAS PHYSICALLY TALL, BUT SPIRITUALLY SMALL, 1 SAM. 13:5-14. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID AS KING

BROUGHT TO THE THRONE A MAN WHO SOUGHT GOD, I SAM. 13:14; 16:1, 11 - 13, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS FAR FROM BEING MORALLY PERFECT. GOD PROMISED DAVID THAT HIS THRONE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER, II SAM. 7:16. DAVID'S SON, SOLOMON, CAME TO THE THRONE AFTER HIM AND EXTENDED THE NATION'S BOUNDARIES SIGNIFICANTLY. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY ZOOMED, BUT THE TAXES IMPOSED UPON THE COMMON PEOPLE LED TO GREAT UNREST. ALSO SOLOMON'S DECLINE IN HIS DEVOTION TO GOD HAD A TERRIBLE AFFECT UPON THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE NATION. AT SOLOMON'S DEATH HIS SON REHOBOAM ASCENDED TO THE THRONE WITH THE PROMISE OF GREATER TAXATION. THESE FACTORS CAUSED THE SPLIT OF THE KINGDOM. THE TEN NORTHERN TRIBES FOLLOWED JEREBOAM. THE SCRIPTURE SAID THE REASON FOR THE BREAK UP OF THE NATION WAS REBELLION, FORSAKING OF GOD AND THE ADOPTION OF THE PAGAN DEITIES, I KINGS 11:33. EACH OF THE TWO KINGDOMS EXPERIENCED THE REIGN OF MANY EVIL KINGS.

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WAS REDUCED TO TRIBUTARY STATUS BY ASSYRIA UNDER TIGLATH-PILESER III IN 732 B.C. IN 721 B.C. SAMARIA, ISRAEL'S CAPITAL, WAS FINALLY DESTROYED AFTER A LONG SIEGE, AND THE NATION'S LEADERS WERE CARRIED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY. ASSYRIA RESETTLED CONQUERED PEOPLE FROM OTHER NATIONS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL. THOSE WHO WERE LEFT IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM INTERMARRIED WITH THESE PEOPLE. THESE NEW PEOPLE BROUGHT THEIR PAGAN GODS WITH THEM. SO THEIR

DESCENDENTS WERE MIXED GENEALOGICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY. IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THESE PEOPLE WERE THE SAMARITANS.

BETWEEN 722 B.C. AND 625 B.C. THE BABYLONIANS GAINED DOMINANCE OVER THE ASSYRIANS, AND SOON THERE - AFTER THE BABYLONIAN ARMIES MARCHED THROUGH JUDAH. IN 586 - 587 B.C. JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH WAS DEFEATED AND THE LEADING PEOPLE OF THE NATION WERE CARRIED AWAY IN CAPTIVITY TO BABYLON IN THREE DEPORTATIONS, 605 B.C., 597 B.C. AND 586 B.C.

FIFTY YEARS LATER BABYLON WAS OVERTHROWN BY THE MEDES AND THE PERSIANS. THEIR FOREIGN POLICY OF HANDLING CAPTURED NATIONS WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE ASSYRIANS AND THE BABYLONIANS. SO IN 536 B.C. CYRUS THE GREAT, KING OF PERSIA, ISSUED HIS FAMOUS EDICT OF EMANCIPATION FOR THE JEWS, ALLOWING ZERUBBABEL AND ABOUT 50 THOUSAND JEWS TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM. THEY REBUILT THE TEMPLE IN 515 B.C. IN 458 B.C. EZRA, THE SCRIBE, WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO JUDAH WITH ABOUT TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE. THEN IN 446 B.C. ARTAXERXES I ALLOWED NEHEMIAH TO RETURN TO JUDAH FOR THE PURPOSE OF REBUILDING THE WALL AROUND JERUSALEM. BY THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY, JUDEA HAD BECOME ESTABLISHED AS A COUNTRY UNDER PERSIAN SUPERVISION. THE OLD TESTAMENT CLOSED IN ABOUT 397 B.C. WITH THE NATION STILL UNDER PERSIAN RULE.

PERSIAN RULE OVER PALESTINE LASTED UNTIL 333/331 B.C.

WHEN PALESTINE FELL TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT, RULER OF THE GRECO-MACEDONIAN EMPIRE WHICH HAD BEEN FOUNDED BY HIS FATHER, PHILIP OF MACEDON. PHILIP WAS ASSASSINATED, AND ALEXANDER AT 20 YEARS OF AGE TOOK HIS FATHER'S THRONE.

ALEXANDER UNITED THE GREEKS AND DEFEATED THE PERSIANS IN THREE GREAT BATTLES, AT GRANICUS IN 333 B.C., ISSUS IN 333 B.C. AND ARBELA IN 331 B.C. IN 332 B.C. ALEXANDER MARCHED ON JERUSALEM. HE WAS MET BY THE HIGH PRIEST JADDUA AND SOME OTHER PRIESTS WHO SHOWED HIM THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL CONCERNING THE OVERTHROW OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE. THIS CAUSED ALEXANDER TO SPARE JERUSALEM AND GIVE THE JEWS PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. THIS ALLOWED THOUSANDS OF JEWS TO MIGRATE TO ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT WHERE THEY WERE GRANTED GREEK CITIZENSHIP. AS COMMERCIAL TRADE INCREASED JEWS MOVED TO CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. THIS COLLECTIVE MIGRATION OF JEWS WAS CALLED THE DIASPORA. THESE JEWS ADOPTED GREEK CUSTOMS AND SOON ABANDONED THEIR HEBREW AND ARAMAIC LANGUAGE FOR GREEK. EVERYWHERE THE JEWS SETTLED THEY ESTABLISHED SYNAGOGUES. THE COMMON GREEK LANGUAGE AND THE SYNAGOGUES WERE LATER TO BECOME POWERFUL VEHICLES FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

IN THE THIRD CENTURY B.C. THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT WAS TRANSLATED INTO GREEK FOR THE JEWS OF THE DIASPORA. THIS GREEK TRANSLATION IS TODAY KNOWN AS THE SEPTUAGINT.

THE SYMBOL FOR THE SEPTUAGINT IS LXX. PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHUS, 285 - 247 B.C. MADE THIS TRANSLATION POSSIBLE.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE WORLD IS STILL EVIDENT. ONE OF HIS CHIEF GOALS WAS TO SPREAD HELLENISM, THE GREEK CULTURE, THROUGHOUT HIS EMPIRE. THE GREEK LANGUAGE SOON BECAME A COMMON WORLD WIDE TRADE LANGUAGE. EVENTUALLY ALMOST EVERYONE COULD SPEAK THIS LANGUAGE, WHICH WE CALL KOINE GREEK. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD THIS WAS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE RAPID SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

ALEXANDER DIED IN 323 B.C. IN PERSIA AT THE AGE OF 32 OR 33. THIS ENDED HIS DREAM OF UNITING THE EAST AND WEST INTO ONE GREAT EMPIRE, DOMINATED BY GREEK CULTURE.

AT ALEXANDER'S DEATH HIS VAST WORLD EMPIRE WAS QUICKLY DIVIDED AMONG HIS FOUR GENERALS: PTOLEMY, SELENUS, LYSIMACHUS AND CASSANDER. DANIEL 8:8 RELATES THE BREAKING OF THE HORN AND THE RISE OF FOUR SUCCESSIVE HORNS. MOST SCHOLARS AGREE THAT THIS REFERS TO ALEXANDER AND HIS FOUR SUCCESSORS.

STRATEGIC TRADE ROUTES RAN THROUGH PALESTINE AND CONTROL OF THEM CAUSED PALESTINE TO BECOME A BATTLE-GROUND BETWEEN THE PTOLEMY DYNASTY CENTERED IN EGYPT, AND THE SELEUCID DYNASTY CENTERED IN SYRIA, JUST NORTH OF PALESTINE.

THE PTOLEMY DYNASTY RULED PALESTINE FOR OVER 120 YEARS, BUT IN 203-204 B.C. A MEMBER OF THE SYRIAN SELEUCID DYNASTY, ANTIOCHUS III, THE GREAT, CAPTURED JERUSALEM AND JUDEA. DURING THE FOLLOWING YEARS OF RULE THE LAND WAS DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS. THE THREE MOST FAMOUS SECTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND GALILEE.

DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME THE JEWS WENT THROUGH TERRIBLE PERSECUTION AND DESTRUCTION OF THEIR WORSHIP. THE SON OF ANTIOCHUS III THE GREAT CAME TO POWER IN 175 B.C. HE WAS ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (175-163 B.C.), THE GREATEST ENEMY OF THE JEWS. HE OUTLAWED JEWISH WORSHIP, BANNED CIRCUMCISION, ABOLISHED TEMPLE SACRIFICES, DESTROYED ALL THE COPIES OF THE LAW HE COULD FIND AND APPOINTED HIS OWN GOVERNOR AND HIGH PRIEST. IN 168 B.C. HE REPLACED THE TEMPLE ALTAR WITH AN ALTAR TO JUPITER (ZEUS), ORDERED A SOW SACRIFICED ON THE ALTAR, THE FLESH BOILED AND THE LIQUID POURED THROUGHOUT THE TEMPLE. THROUGHOUT HIS RULE HIS ARMIES ATTACKED, ENSLAVED AND SLAUGHTERED THOUSANDS OF JEWS.

ENOUGH WAS ENOUGH! ONE OF THE MOST HEROIC PERIODS IN JEWISH HISTORY BURST FORTH. IT BEGAN IN THE VILLAGE OF MODEIN. A VERY OLD PRIEST NAMED MATTATHIAS WAS ORDERED BY AN EMISSARY OF ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES TO SACRIFICE TO A HEATHEN GOD. THIS WAS LIKE TRYING TO DRIVE

A WOODEN PEG THROUGH STEEL. HE REFUSED, KILLED THE COMMISSIONER OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, TORE DOWN THE PAGAN ALTAR AND FLED TO THE MOUNTAINS WITH HIS FIVE SONS, JUDAS, JONATHAN, SIMON, JOHANAN AND ELEAZAR. MANY OTHER PATRIOTS SOON FOLLOWED.

MATTATHIAS DIED WITHIN A YEAR. HIS SON JUDAS, NICK-NAMED MACCABEUS, MEANING THE HAMMER, TOOK HIS PLACE IN 166 B.C. AND WON MANY GREAT VICTORIES. EXACTLY THREE YEARS AFTER THE SACRIFICE OF THE PIG ON THE ALTAR THE JEWS WERE AGAIN ABLE TO SACRIFICE IN THE TEMPLE. THIS WAS DECEMBER 25, 164 B.C., OR THE 25TH OF KISLEV.

FINALLY, A LARGE ARMY FROM SYRIA CAME AND BESIEGED JERUSALEM. JEWISH PROVISIONS RAN OUT. THE CAUSE SEEMED LOST. BUT TROUBLE AT THE SYRIAN CAPITAL CAUSED THE ARMY TO RETURN HOME, AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES WERE SOON GRANTED TO THE JEWS. TROUBLE ALSO DEVELOPED IN THE JEWISH NATION AS THE ORTHODOX JEWS PROTECTING THE TRADITIONAL WAYS, FOUGHT WITH THE HELLENISTIC JEWS, WHO WANTED TO BRING IN GREEK CUSTOMS.

EVENTUALLY JUDAS MACCABEAS TRIED TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH ROME, THE DOMINATE WORLD POWER. HOWEVER BEFORE AN ALLIANCE COULD BE FORMED JUDAS MACCABEAS WAS KILLED IN BATTLE IN 160 B.C., AND HIS BROTHER JONATHAN ASSUMED LEADERSHIP. JONATHAN WAS AN ABLE LEADER, AND SOME SCHOLARS CREDIT HIM WITH UNITING

THE CIVIC AND PRIESTLY POWERS BY BECOMING THE HIGH PRIEST. THE HASMONEAN LINE OF HIGH PRIESTS EITHER STARTED WITH JONATHAN OR WITH HIS BROTHER SIMON; SCHOLARS DISAGREE ABOUT THE EXACT TIME. JONATHAN WAS KILLED IN 143 B.C., AND HIS BROTHER SIMON BECAME THE LEADER. AFTER EIGHT YEARS SIMON WAS KILLED, AND HIS SON JOHN HYRCANUS IN 134-135 B.C. BECAME THE HIGH PRIEST AND RULER. THE HASMONEAN DYNASTY IS USED TO DESIGNATE THE DESCENDANTS OF SIMON, THE LAST LIVING SON OF MATTATHIAS. THE NAME HASMONEAN PROBABLY COMES FROM THE GREAT-GRANDFATHER OF MATTATHIAS. (THE INTERPRETERS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE [NEW YORK: ABINGDON PRESS, 1962] VOL. 2, P. 529.)

JOHN HYRCANUS' RULE ENJOYED SOME PEACE. AT HIS DEATH HIS FIVE CHILDREN FOUGHT OVER HIS POSITION, AND ARISTOBULUS WON. HE TOOK THE TITLE OF KING AND RULED FOR ONE YEAR. AFTER ARISTOBULUS' DEATH HIS WIDOW SALOME ALEXANDRA RELEASED FROM PRISON ALEXANDER JANNEUS, THE BROTHER OF ARISTOBULUS AND MARRIED HIM. ALEXANDER JANNEUS THEN ASSUMED RULE, AND WAS IN POWER FROM 103-76 B.C. HE EXTENDED THE BOUNDARIES OF JUDEA TO WHERE THEY HAD BEEN DURING THE REIGN OF KING DAVID. ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT CALLED A KING, HE REIGNED AS ONE FOR 29 YEARS. AFTER ALEXANDER JANNEUS' DEATH HIS WIDOW ALEXANDRA RULED, BUT THE NATION EXPERIENCED RAPID DECLINE, AND AFTER HER DEATH HER TWO SONS ARISTOBULUS II AND HYRCANUS II FOUGHT TO GAIN POWER.

ANTIPATER, THE FATHER OF HEROD THE GREAT, MANAGED TO GAIN SUPPORT OF POMPEY, THE ROMAN GENERAL, FOR HYRCANUS II AS THE RULER. ARISTOBULUS II FOOLISHLY DEFIED ROME RESULTING IN THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. IN 63 B.C. POMPEY (GNAEUS POMPEIUS) CAPTURED JERUSALEM, SIEZED THE TEMPLE, MASSACRED PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE AND ENTERED THE HOLY OF HOLIES WHERE ONLY THE HIGH PRIEST WAS ALLOWED TO ENTER ONE DAY A YEAR ON YOM KIPPUR, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. THIS ACT ALIENATED EVERY LOYAL JEW. POMPEY THEN ENDED JUDEAN INDEPENDENCE AND MADE IT A PROVINCE OF ROME.

THE MACCABEES

MATTATHIAS 166 B.C.

JUDAS MACCABEES 166 - 160 B.C.

(SON OF MATTATHIAS)

JONATHAN 160 - 143 B.C.

(SON OF MATTATHIAS)

SIMON 143 - 135 B.C.

(SON OF MATTATHIAS)

JOHN HYRCANUS I 135 - 104 B.C.

(SON OF SIMON)

ARISTOBULUS I 104 - 103 B.C.

(SON OF JOHN HYRCANUS)

ALEXANDER JANNEUS 103 - 76 B.C.

(SON OF JOHN HYRCANUS AND

**BROTHER OF ARISTOBULUS)
SALOME ALEXANDRA 76-67 B.C.
(WIFE OF ARISTOBULUS AND THEN
ALEXANDER JANNEUS)
HYRCANUS II 67 B.C.
(3 MONTHS)
ARISTOBULUS II 67-63 B.C.**

THE ROMANS RULE PALESTINE

AFTER POMPEY'S VICTORY IN PALESTINE HE RETURNED TO ROME, WHERE GREAT POLITICAL UPHEAVAL FOLLOWED. IN 48 B.C. IN A BATTLE AT PHARSALUS, POMPEY WAS DEFEATED BY JULIUS CAESAR WHO BECAME THE DICTATOR OF ROME AND WAS GIVEN THE TITLE IMPERATOR. JULIUS CAESAR RULED FOUR YEARS AND WAS STABBED TO DEATH IN THE ROMAN SENATE IN 44 B.C.

AFTER MUCH CIVIL WAR GAIUS OCTAVIUS (OCTAVIAN), THE GREAT-NEPHEW OF JULIUS CAESAR, DEFEATED MARK ANTONY AT THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM IN 31 B.C. THE ROMAN EMPIRE OFFICIALLY CAME INTO BEING UNDER OCTAVIAN. THE SENATE CONFERRED UPON HIM THE TITLE AUGUSTUS IN 27 B.C. AUGUSTUS RULED UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 14 A.D. THIS PLACED HIM AS EMPEROR AT THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

DURING THE RULE OF JULIUS CAESAR, ANTIPATER WAS

APPOINTED PROCURATOR OF JUDEA IN 47 B.C. IN 40 B.C. ANTIPATER'S SON, HEROD THE GREAT WAS APPOINTED KING OF THE JEWS BY THE ROMAN SENATE. HE RULED UNTIL AFTER THE BIRTH OF JESUS AND DIED IN ABOUT 4 B.C.

HEROD WAS A CRUEL AND HEARTLESS KING, MURDERING MANY MEMBERS OF HIS OWN IMMEDIATE FAMILY INCLUDING HIS WIFE, MARRIAMNE AND HIS SONS ALEXANDER AND ARISTOBULUS.

HE WAS ALSO A GREAT BUILDER OF CITIES. IN HOPES OF ALLEVIATING POLITICAL TENSION AND GAINING JEWISH SUPPORT HE STARTED REBUILDING AND EXPANDING THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THIS PROJECT WAS NOT COMPLETED UNTIL 64 A.D., JUST SIX YEARS BEFORE IT WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY THE ROMANS IN 70 A.D.

JUDAISM CHANGED DRASTICALLY DURING THIS INTER-BIBLICAL PERIOD. THESE CHANGES BEGAN DURING THE BABYLONIAN EXILE WHEN THE SYNAGOGUE AND VARIOUS SECTS OF JUDAISM ORIGINATED. AFTER THE EXILE THE FEW PEOPLE WHO RETURNED TO PALESTINE FROM BABYLON WERE THE DEVOUT OF THE DEVOUT. THE NATION WAS CURED OF IDOLATRY WHICH WAS SO PREVALENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN ITS PLACE WAS ZEAL FOR THE LAW AND MESSIANIC HOPE. THESE CONCEPTS DOMINATED THEIR TOTAL DEVELOPMENT AS A PEOPLE. OUT OF THESE DESIRES DEVELOPED THE SYNAGOGUE. THE SYNAGOGUES PROVIDED PLACES FOR THE LOCAL CITIZENS TO HEAR

THE SCRIPTURES READ AND DISCUSSED. THE WORD SYNA-GOGUE CAME FROM TWO GREEK WORDS σὺν, “TOGETHER” AND ἄγω, “TO LEAD.” SYNAGOGUES WERE EVENTUALLY IN CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD.

THE PURPOSES FOR THE SYNAGOGUES AND THE TEMPLE WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. THERE WAS ONLY ONE TEMPLE, AND IT WAS IN JERUSALEM. THE CHIEF PURPOSES OF THE TEMPLE WERE TO PROVIDE A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE AND A PLACE FOR THE PEOPLE TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO GOD. SACRIFICES WERE NEVER OFFERED IN THE SYNAGOGUES. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE SYNAGOGUE WAS FOR INSTRUCTION IN THE SCRIPTURES. THE TEMPLE WAS OPERATED BY THE PRIESTS; WHEREAS, THE SYNAGOGUES WERE OPERATED BY THE PEOPLE. THE SYNAGOGUES EVENTUALLY ALSO BECAME PLACES OF WORSHIP.

WE FIND THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT JESUS, THE APOSTLES, AND LATER PAUL USED THE SYNAGOGUES AS A PLACE TO TEACH AND REASON WITH THE JEWS.

DEVELOPMENT OF SECTS

THE OFFICE AND POSITION OF THE SCRIBE ALSO CHANGED DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIBES BASICALLY COPIED THE LAW. BUT BY NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THE SCRIBES WERE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS IN INTERPRETING THE LAW. THEIR TITLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS A GREEK WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD GRAMMAR. THEY DETAILED AND EXTERNALIZED THE LAW SO THAT KEEPING THE LAW WAS SIMPLY OUTWARD ACTION. THIS DESTROYED THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW. THEY TOOK THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW OUT OF THE HEART AND EXTERNALIZED IT. BY THE TIME OF JESUS MOST OF THE SCRIBES WERE PROBABLY PHARISEES. THE SCRIBES ALSO DEVELOPED THE ORAL LAW AND THE ORAL TRADITIONS. THE ORAL LAW WAS LATER KNOWN AS THE MISHNA. THESE WERE RABBINICAL OPINIONS ON HOW TO KEEP THE LAW.

THE PHARISEES WERE MEN WHO DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO KEEPING THE WRITTEN AND ORAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LAW. AS A GROUP THEY AROSE DURING THE MACCABEAN PERIOD, PROBABLY DURING THE TIME OF JOHN HYRCANNUS 135- 105/104 B.C. THE NAME PHARISEE MEANS "SEPARATISTS". THE PHARISEES HAD GREAT INFLUENCE UPON AND RESPECT FROM THE COMMON PEOPLE. DURING NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THERE WERE PROBABLY ONLY ABOUT 6,000 PHARISEES.

THE SADDUCEES COMPOSED ANOTHER JEWISH SECT. THEY WERE MOSTLY PRIESTS, WHO BELONGED TO THE WEALTHY RULING ARISTOCRACY. THEY HELD THE CHIEF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS OFFICES. THE NAME SADDUCEE WAS PROBABLY DERIVED FROM THE NAME ZADOK, THE HIGH PRIEST DURING SOLOMON'S TIME. ALTHOUGH THEIR NUMBERS WERE FEW, THEIR POLITICAL INFLUENCE WAS TREMENDOUS.

THE SADDUCEES BELIEVED THAT IF THE JEWISH NATION WAS TO BE INFLUENTIAL AND PROSPEROUS IT HAD TO HAVE MONEY, ARMIES AND POLITICAL POWER. THE SADDUCEES BASICALLY WANTED TO ADJUST THE JEWISH NATION TO THE CHANGING WORLD. THEY, THEREFORE, REJECTED THE ORAL LAW AND APPROACHED THE WRITTEN LAW WITH SKEPTICISM.

THE THEOLOGICAL IDEAS AND THE POLITICAL METHODS OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES WERE SO DIFFERENT THEY OPPOSED EACH OTHER AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

THE HERODIANS, ANOTHER SECT, SUPPORTED THE HOUSE OF HEROD. THEY BELIEVED THAT THE HERODS THROUGH ALLIANCE WITH ROME HAD HELPED TO KEEP PEACE IN PALESTINE. THE LOYAL JEWS, HOWEVER, DETESTED THE NAME HEROD, BECAUSE HE WAS AN IDUMEAN, AND HAD COMMITTED MANY ATROCITIES AGAINST THE JEWS.

THE ZEALOTS, ANOTHER SECT, WERE INTENSE NATIONALISTS,

ADVOCATING VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF ALL FOREIGN RULERS. THIS GROUP CAME INTO BEING AS A RESULT OF A REVOLT IN 6 A.D. LED BY JUDAS OF GALILEE. SIMON THE ZEALOT, ONE OF JESUS TWELVE DISCIPLES, PROBABLY BELONGED TO THIS GROUP.

DEVELOPMENT OF LITERATURE

DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT THERE DEVELOPED THE INTER - BIBLICAL LITERATURE. THESE WRITINGS BEGAN DURING THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

IN BABYLON, MOST OF THE PEOPLE ABANDONED THE HEBREW LANGUAGE. THUS IN ORDER FOR THE PEOPLE TO KNOW THEIR FAITH IT WAS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC ORAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES BY THE SCRIBES. THESE ORAL EXPLANATIONS DEVELOPED INTO COMMENTARIES COMPOSED OF BOTH WRITTEN COMMENTS AND ORAL EXPLANATIONS ON THE LAW. THESE COMMENTARIES BECAME KNOWN AS MIDRASHIM. THE MIDRASHIM WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS, THE HALACHOTH AND THE HAGODOTH. THE HALACHOTH WAS RULES OF CONDUCT NOT COVERED BY THE LAW OF MOSES. THE HAGADOTH WAS COMPOSED OF EXPLANATIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, ETC. OF ALL JEWISH SCRIPTURE. MOST OF THIS WAS ORAL TRADITION. BETWEEN 200 B.C. AND 200 A.D. THESE MATERIALS WERE PUT TOGETHER AS THE MISHNA. THE MISHNA CONTINUED TO

GROW, AND COMMENTARIES DEVELOPED WHICH WERE COMMENTS ON THE ORAL LAW AND THE MISHNA. THESE COMMENTARIES WERE CALLED GEMARA. LATER THE MISHNA AND THE GEMARA WERE UNITED TO FORM THE TALMUD.

THE TALMUD IS COMPOSED OF THE RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC LAWS OF THE JEWS. THERE ARE TWO JEWISH TALMUDS, THE JERUSALEM TALMUD COMPLETED ABOUT 400 A.D. AND THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD COMPLETED ABOUT 500 A.D. THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD IS BY FAR THE LARGEST OF THE TWO AND HAS THE PLACE OF HIGHER AUTHORITY.

THE APOCRYPHA IS COMPOSED OF FOURTEEN BOOKS WRITTEN DURING THE INTER - BIBLICAL PERIOD BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THIRD CENTURIES B.C. THE JEWS AND EARLY CHRISTIANS GENERALLY DID NOT CONSIDER THE APOCRYPHA INSPIRED SCRIPTURE. THESE WRITINGS WERE NEVER IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, BUT WERE ADDED TO THE SEPTUAGINT WHEN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS TRANSLATED INTO GREEK.

WHEN THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE WAS TRANSLATED INTO LATIN IN THE SECOND CENTURY A.D. THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS TRANSLATED FROM THE SEPTUAGINT WHICH CONTAINED THE APOCRYPHA. THIS PROBABLY EXPLAINS ITS PRESENCE IN LATER VERSIONS. THE APOCRYPHA WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE VULGATE. THE VULGATE REMAINED THE EUROPEAN VERSION OF THE BIBLE UNTIL THE REFORMATION. THE REFORMERS REJECTED THE APOCRYPHA BELIEVING THESE WRITINGS WERE NOT INSPIRED. HOWEVER, THE COUNCIL OF TRENT IN 1546

(THE ROMAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL) IN REBELLION AGAINST THE REFORMATION HELD THESE BOOKS TO BE CANONICAL; AND SO THEY HAVE REMAINED IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE. THE CONTENTS OF THESE BOOKS GAVE RISE TO SUCH DOCTRINES AS PURGATORY AND PRAYING FOR THE DEAD.

THESE BOOKS ARE: I AND II ESDRAS, TOBIT, JUDITH, REST OF ESTHER, THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, ECCLESIASTICUS, BARUCH, THE SONG OF THE THREE HOLY CHILDREN, THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA, BEL AND THE DRAGON, THE PRAYER OF MANASSES, AND I AND II MACCABEES.

ANOTHER GROUP OF WRITINGS THAT EMERGED DURING THIS PERIOD IS KNOWN AS THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA. ORDINARILY PSEUDEPIGRAPHA MEANS JEWISH LITERATURE COMPOSED DURING THE INTER - BIBLICAL PERIOD APART FROM THE APOC - RYPHA. MUCH OF THIS LITERATURE IS APOCALYPTIC IN NATURE. THE WRITERS WROTE UNDER ASSUMED NAMES OF ANCIENT HEROES SUCH AS ENOCH. SOME OF THE LEAST KNOWN OF THESE BOOKS ARE: THE BOOKS OF ENOCH, THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSES, THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH AND THE BOOK OF JUBILEES.

A VERY IMPORTANT DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS WAS MADE IN 1947. THESE MANUSCRIPTS WERE HIDDEN IN CAVES, PROBABLY BY THE ESSENES, ON THE WEST BANK OF THE DEAD SEA. THESE ARE KNOWN AS THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS. OVER 600 PIECES OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS DATING FROM 200 B.C. TO 100 A.D. HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED.

THE DEAD SEAS SCROLLS ARE EXTREMELY VALUABLE TEXTUALLY, BECAUSE ONE OF THE SCROLLS IS THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT OF ISAIAH, 1,000 YEARS OLDER THAN ANY EXISTING ISAIAH MANUSCRIPT. THESE SCROLLS ARE ALSO EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN GIVING US KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON

THE HISTORY OF THE CANONIZATION OF THE SCRIPTURE IS INTERESTING AND NOT AS SIMPLE AS IS GENERALLY SUPPOSED. THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON IS COMPOSED OF BOOKS WHICH THE EARLY CHURCH CONSIDERED GOD-INSPIRED SCRIPTURE. THE CANON DEVELOPED BECAUSE EYE WITNESSES WERE DYING AND THERE WAS A NEED FOR:

- 1. A WRITTEN RECORD OF THE ACTS OF GOD IN HISTORY,**
- 2. A THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING BEHIND THESE ACTS,**
- 3. A STANDARD FOR THE CHURCH,**
- 4. AUTHENTICITY FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,**
- 5. TRUTH TO COMBAT HERSEY, AND**
- 6. A WORD FROM GOD TO AUTHENTICATE WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH.**

THE FIRST LIST OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WHICH WE KNOW ABOUT IS THE MURATORIAN CANON, DATED ABOUT 170 A.D. NOT ALL 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE ON THIS LIST. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA (260-340 A.D.) IN HIS MONUMENTAL ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN ABOUT 325 A.D. DIVIDED THE CHRISTIAN WRITINGS INTO THREE CATEGORIES: THE ACCEPTED, THE DISPUTED AND THOSE NOT GENUINE. THE 27 BOOKS OF OUR PRESENT NEW TESTAMENT WERE IN HIS FIRST TWO CATEGORIES. THE ONLY BOOKS IN HIS SECOND CATEGORY WERE: JAMES, 2 PETER, 2 AND 3 JOHN AND JUDE.

THE 27 BOOKS IN OUR NEW TESTAMENT WERE GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE, IN 397 A.D.

EACH BOOK WAS GIVEN FIVE TESTS:

- 1. DID AN APOSTLE OR ONE CLOSE TO AN APOSTLE WRITE THE BOOK?**
- 2. DID THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK HARMONIZE WITH THE VERBAL TRADITIONS OF THE APOSTLES?**
- 3. DID THE CHURCHES READ THE BOOK IN THEIR WORSHIP?**
- 4. DID THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS REFER TO THE BOOK IN THEIR WRITINGS?**
- 5. DID THE BOOK EDIFY THE READER?**

GOD NOT ONLY GAVE MEN REVELATION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WRITE HIS WORD; HE ALSO GUIDED IN THE

DESIGN AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOKS IN THE CANON. GOD HAS ALSO PROTECTED HIS WORD THROUGH THE CENTURIES.

AS YOU BEGIN YOUR EXAMINATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ALWAYS KEEP YOUR BIBLE OPEN AT THE TEXT. BEFORE EACH STUDY PRAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ILLUMINATE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR MIND AND HEART THAT YOU MAY COMPREHEND THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL TRUTHS WHICH GOD HAS FOR YOU.

AS WE HAVE SAID GOD WAS AT WORK IN THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON, BOTH IN THE SELECTION AND IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOKS. THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE NOT ARRANGED IN THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER IN WHICH THEY WERE WRITTEN. IN FACT, SEVERAL OF PAUL'S EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN BEFORE THE FIRST OF THE FOUR GOSPELS. HOWEVER, THE GOSPELS PREPARE US FOR THE EPISTLES; SO THEY ARE PLACED FIRST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. NOTICE ALSO THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS PREPARE US FOR THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THE FOUR GOSPELS

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOSPEL, BUT FOUR GOSPEL WRITERS. TOGETHER THEY COMPOSE A GREAT SYMPHONY, EACH PLAYING INDIVIDUAL PARTS AND TOGETHER MAKING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC.

THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS ARE CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. THE WORD SYNOPTIC IS FROM TWO GREEK WORDS MEANING "TO VIEW TOGETHER." ALTHOUGH THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS HAVE MANY THINGS IN COMMON, EACH WRITER ALSO HAS A UNIQUE POINT OF VIEW; AND WE CAN LEARN FROM THEIR DIVERSITY.

JESUS IS SO MAGNIFICENT THAT EACH GOSPEL WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE HELPS US TO COMPREHEND HIS GREATNESS. IT IS VERY EASY TO OVERSIMPLIFY EACH OF THE FOUR GOSPELS AND MAKE THE CATEGORIES TOO NARROW, BUT IT IS SOMETIMES HELPFUL TO NARROW THE WINDOW OF PERSPECTIVE IN ORDER TO SEE MORE CLEARLY, JUST AS AN ARTIST DOES WHEN HE SQUINTS HIS EYES TO SEE THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS ON THE FACE HE WISHES TO PAINT.

IRENÆUS, AN EARLY CHURCH FATHER, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO COMPARE THE DIFFERENT GOSPELS WITH THE FACES OF THE CHERUBIM IN EZEKIEL 1:10, THE LION, THE OX, THE MAN AND THE EAGLE. THIS COMPARISON VARIES WITH DIFFERENT WRITERS. THE BEST COMPARISON IS THAT THE LION REPRESENTS THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, WHOSE CHIEF EMPHASIS IS PLACED UPON ISRAEL'S KING, THE SON OF DAVID, THE LION OF JUDAH.

THE OX REPRESENTS THE GOSPEL OF MARK, FOR HE PRESENTS JESUS AS THE SERVANT OF MANKIND. HIS EMPHASIS IS ON WHAT JESUS DID. MARK IS PROBABLY WRITING CHIEFLY TO THE ROMAN PEOPLE. HIS PRESENTATION IS LIKE A SLIDE PROJECTOR, QUICK

AND FAST MOVING AS THE WORDS “STRAIGHTWAY,” “IMMEDIATELY” AND “FORTHWITH” INDICATE.

THE MAN REPRESENTS THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. LUKE PRESENTS JESUS AS THE PERFECT MAN AND THE FRIEND OF SINNERS. HE IS WRITING CHIEFLY FOR THE GREEK MIND; SO, HIS GOSPEL IS A GREAT DRAMA EMPHASIZING JESUS’ FEELING AND EMPATHY.

THE EAGLE REPRESENTS THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, FOR OF ALL CREATURES IT ASCENDS TO THE HIGHEST HEIGHTS AND GAZES INTO THE SUN’S BRIGHTNESS. JOHN PRESENTS JESUS TO ALL PEOPLE AS THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD AND GIVES THE MEANING OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING JESUS’ LIFE. JOHN ESPECIALLY FOCUSES ON JESUS’ DIVINE IDENTITY AND HIS PRIVATE INTERVIEWS. CAUTION MUST BE TAKEN NOT TO PRESS THE ANALOGY OF THE CHERUBIM TOO FAR, BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN, BOTH THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE FOUR GOSPEL WRITERS CRY, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO COME,” REV. 4:8.

EACH OF THE FOUR GOSPELS HAS ITS OWN PARTICULAR EMPHASIS AND PURPOSE. THE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS OF EACH GOSPEL IN ITS ENDING IS VERY INTERESTING. MATTHEW ENDS HIS GOSPEL WITH THE DETAILS OF THE RESURRECTION. MARK ENDS HIS GOSPEL TELLING OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST. LUKE CONCLUDES HIS GOSPEL WITH THE PROMISE OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND JOHN’S CONCLUDING EMPHASIS IS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS.

HIGHER CRITICISM

AS A STUDENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT YOU SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT “SOURCE CRITICISM,” “FORM CRITICISM,” “REDACTION CRITICISM,” AND OTHER TYPES OF “HIGHER CRITICISM” AS THEY RELATE TO THE GOSPELS.

SOURCE CRITICISM AROSE FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE UNITY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS COULD ONLY BE EXPLAINED ON THE BASIS OF LITERARY DEPENDENCE. SINCE MOST OF MARK IS CONTAINED IN MATTHEW AND LUKE, SOURCE CRITICS ASSUMED THAT MARK WAS WRITTEN FIRST, MATTHEW AND LUKE DREW MUCH OF THEIR MATERIALS FROM IT AND THAT EACH OF THEM DREW FROM A COMMON SOURCE OR SOURCES KNOWN AS “Q,” (GERMAN) “QUELLE,” AND FROM OTHER SOURCES “M” AND “L.” THESE SOURCES HAVE NEVER BEEN FOUND. HOWEVER, NO DOUBT, THE EARLY APOSTLES PASSED THE TRUTH IN ORAL AND WRITTEN FORM.

FORM CRITICISM ATTEMPTS TO STUDY THE ORIGINS OF THE GOSPELS FROM A LIFE SITUATION (SITZ IN LEBEN) APPROACH. IT BASICALLY SAYS THAT THE CHURCH CREATED THE GOSPELS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSE AND ATTRIBUTED THEIR WORK TO JESUS. THEIR ATTEMPT TO GET BACK TO THE ORIGINAL AUTHENTIC SAYINGS OF JESUS IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE ACCORDING TO THEM. RUDOLPH BULTMANN, ONE OF THE CHIEF PROPONENTS OF THIS SCHOOL OF THOUGHT THINKS THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT IN FAITH IS AN

EXISTENTIAL ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST NOT A HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HIM. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS METHOD IS THAT IT FAILS TO SEE THAT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE WAS FROM THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES PRESERVED THE TRUTH OF JESUS ACCURATELY.

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS, MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE ARE CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. SYNOPTIC IS FROM TWO GREEK WORDS MEANING "TOGETHER WITH" AND "TO SEE." THUS, SYNOPTIC MEANS TO SEE TOGETHER. THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS ARE WRITTEN SOMEWHAT FROM THE SAME POINT - OF - VIEW.

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM DESCRIBES THE ATTEMPTS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE SIMILARITIES AND THE DIFFERENCES IN THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS. THIS PROBLEM AS YOU CAN EASILY SEE RELATES TO SUCH QUESTIONS AS, WHO WROTE THESE GOSPELS? WHAT WERE THEIR SOURCES? WHAT WERE THE PURPOSES FOR WRITING THESE GOSPELS?

SCHOLARS HAVE PROBED FOR YEARS TO DISCOVER ANSWERS TO THE MULTITUDE OF PERPLEXING QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE THREE GOSPELS. MANY THEORIES HAVE BEEN ADVANCED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE LIKENESSES AND DIFFERENCES. ONE THEORY ASSUMES THAT EACH WRITER WROTE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE OTHERS AND DREW FROM ORAL TRADITION. ANOTHER THEORY IS THAT THE WRITERS USED AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT CALLED THE "Q" SOURCE WHICH WE

DO NOT HAVE. ANOTHER THEORY IS THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE DREW FROM MARK AS ONE SOURCE AND "Q" AS THE OTHER SOURCE. SCHOLARS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT ABOUT 500 OF MATTHEW'S 1068 VERSES ARE FROM MARK, WHO HAS 661 VERSES, AND THAT ABOUT 320 VERSES OF LUKE'S 1149 ARE DRAWN FROM MARK. ONLY ABOUT 50-55 VERSES OF MARK ARE NOT IN MATTHEW OR LUKE. THIS SURELY MEANS THAT THEY HAD MARK OR A COMMON SOURCE BEFORE THEM AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THEIR GOSPELS. (WILLIAM SCROGGIE, GUIDE TO THE GOSPELS [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY] PP. 85-86.)

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM IS REAL, AND IT APPEARS THAT THIS PROBLEM WILL NEVER BE SOLVED.

MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. MATTHEW'S PHRASE, "THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHETS," DEMONSTRATES THAT THE ROOTS OF THE GOSPEL ARE IN THE OLD TESTAMENTS AND THAT THE GOSPEL FULFILLS, COMPLETES AND GIVES MEANING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. THIS TRUTH IS FURTHER SEEN IN MATTHEW'S 53 OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS AND 76 REFERENCES TO OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES. MANY OF GOD'S PROMISES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE FULFILLED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE PRIMARY THEOLOGICAL PURPOSE OF MATTHEW IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE MESSIAH, THE KING, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. IT FLASHES WITH ROYAL COLORS OF PURPLE AND GOLD AS MATTHEW SPEAKS OF CHRIST THE KING AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW ALSO STRONGLY EMPHASIZES THE JEWISH LEADERS' STEEL RESISTANCE TO AND HARSH REJECTION OF THE KING. THE GOSPEL ALSO LOOKS BEYOND THIS REJECTION TO THE PROMISED RETURN OF THE TRIUMPHANT KING.

AUTHORSHIP

EARLIEST TRADITION HAS UNANIMOUSLY ATTRIBUTED THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW TO MATTHEW LEVI, ONE OF JESUS' TWELVE APOSTLES. THE STRENGTH OF THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR MATTHEW AS THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST GOSPEL IS EVIDENT IN MANY SOURCES. THE DIDACHE WRITTEN BETWEEN 80- 100 A.D. HAS MANY QUOTES FROM MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AND SHOWS THAT THIS GOSPEL WAS USED VERY EARLY IN THE CHURCH. (LEON MORRIS, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WILL - IAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY 1992], PP. 14 - 15. ROBERT H. GUNDRY, A SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1981] PP. 82 - 83.)

PAPIAS, ONE OF THE EARLIEST CHURCH FATHERS AND BISHOP OF HIEROPOLIS, LIVED FROM 60- 150 A.D. IN HIS WORK EXPOSITION OF THE ORACLES OF THE LORD, HE SAYS THAT MATTHEW WROTE DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD IN HEBREW.

DONALD GUTHRIE WRITES AT LENGTH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PAPIAS' STATEMENT ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF MATTHEW. (DONALD GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION [DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS: INTER - VARSITY PRESS, 1976] PP. 33-39.) THE TRUTH IS, WE REALLY DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT PAPIAS MEANT. HIS STATEMENT COULD BE INTERPRETED IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS. IT, HOWEVER, DOES INDICATE THAT AT A VERY EARLY DATE MATTHEW IS CREDITED WITH WRITING ABOUT THE SAYINGS OF JESUS.

ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH AND FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTERWARD MATTHEW WAS THE FAVORITE GOSPEL.

UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY IT WAS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW WAS THE FIRST OF THE GOSPELS TO BE WRITTEN AND THAT MARK WAS AN ABSTRACT OF MATTHEW. TODAY, HOWEVER, MOST SCHOLARS THINK THAT MARK WAS WRITTEN FIRST.

ONE OF THE ARGUMENTS SOMETIMES USED AGAINST MATTHEW AS THE AUTHOR IS THAT IF HE WERE AN APOSTLE HE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TO USE MARK AS A SOURCE. MARK'S CHIEF SOURCE IS SIMON PETER. THIS BEING SO, MATTHEW CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE GLADLY USED ANY INFORMATION THAT CAME FROM SIMON PETER. SURELY ONE APOSTLE WOULD WELCOME THE WORK OF ANOTHER.

THE EVIDENCE FOR MATTHEW AS THE WRITER OF THE FIRST GOSPEL IS FAR GREATER THAN THAT AGAINST HIM, AND HE IS COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS IT'S AUTHOR. LEON MORRIS HAS A WISE STATEMENT IN HIS COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW. HE SAYS, "... THERE IS MORE TO BE SAID FOR THE APOSTLE MATTHEW THAN RECENT SCHOLARSHIP COMMONLY ALLOWS AND MORE FOR MATTHEW THAN ANY OTHER CANDIDATE." (MORRIS, OP. CIT., P. 15.) WE ACCEPT MATTHEW THE APOSTLE AS THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST GOSPEL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

SOURCES

MATTHEW, BEING AN APOSTLE OF THE LORD, IS HIMSELF A MAJOR SOURCE. IF MARK WAS WRITTEN FIRST, AS MANY SCHOLARS THINK, AND MATTHEW HAD MARK IN HIS POSSESSION, HE WOULD HAVE SURELY DRAWN FROM IT SINCE MARK GOT MUCH OF HIS INFORMATION FROM SIMON PETER. MARK IS ALSO A PRIMARY SOURCE, BECAUSE HE IS AN EYE WITNESS TO MANY OF THESE EVENTS. LUKE IN HIS GOSPEL SAYS THAT MANY PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS HAD BEEN WRITTEN. MATTHEW MUST HAVE ALSO BEEN FAMILIAR WITH MANY OF THEM. WE KNOW THAT IN THIS PERIOD OF HISTORY PEOPLE TOOK SHORTHAND AND WERE PROLIFIC LETTER WRITERS.

DATE OF WRITING

THE DATE OF WRITING OF THE BOOK IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE. IT WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE LATE 40'S AND THE MID 60'S. MOST MODERN SCHOLARS DATE MATTHEW BETWEEN 70 A.D. AND 90 A.D., BUT THERE ARE MANY GOOD REASONS TO DATE IT EARLIER. AS WOULD BE EXPECTED A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE DATING OF MATTHEW IS THE DATE ESTABLISHED FOR THE WRITING OF MARK.

PLACE OF WRITING

WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE MATTHEW WAS WHEN HE WROTE HIS GOSPEL, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE WAS IN PALESTINE OR SYRIA. WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL IS TO CONVINCCE JEWS EVERYWHERE THAT JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH, THE KING, THE SUFFERING SERVANT ACCEPTED BY GOD AND REJECTED BY THE JEWISH LEADERS AND THE NATION OF ISRAEL. HE ALSO WANTS TO SHOW THAT JESUS IS FOR ALL PEOPLE AND THAT HIS KINGDOM IS FOR GENTILES AS WELL AS FOR JEWS, MATT. 8:11; 12:50. MATTHEW IS THE ONLY SYNOPTIC GOSPELS WHICH PRESENTS THE CHURCH AS THE CALLED OUT PEOPLE

OF GOD. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT JESUS PRESENTS THIS CONCEPT IN RESPONSE TO PETER'S CONFSSION. IT IS ALSO AT THIS POINT THAT JESUS BEGINS TO TEACH HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

THEMES IN MATTHEW

JESUS THE MESSIAH KING IS THE MAJOR THEME OF MATTHEW. MATTHEW PRESENTS JESUS AS THE CHRIST, THE KING PROMISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, OFFERED TO THE JEWS, REJECTED BY THEM, CRUCIFIED FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE, RESURRECTED BY GOD, ALIVE IN HEAVEN AND COMING AGAIN.

A KING HAS A DOMAIN; SO, MATTHEW USES THE TERM "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" SOME 32 TIMES. THIS GOSPEL ALSO RELATES REPENTANCE TO THE KINGDOM. THE IDEA OF REPENTANCE IS THAT GOD IS KING, THE KINGDOM IS THE REALM OVER WHICH HE RULES AND HIS SUBJECTS ARE TO SUBMIT TO HIM.

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN AND OTHERS POINT OUT THAT THE PHRASE "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" OCCURS ONLY IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW AND IS USED BY BOTH JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST, NEITHER OF WHOM EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE TERM. THIS INDICATES THAT THE JEWS UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF THE KINGDOM. THE IDEA OF KINGSHIP COMES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. AT THE FOUNDING OF THE NATION ISRAEL, IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS, GOD IS THE KING. GOD SAYS TO THE NATION "YOU

SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, AND A HOLY NATION.” THIS PASSAGE SAYS CLEARLY THAT GOD IS THE KING AND THAT ISRAEL IS TO BRING NATIONS TO HIM. THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT REPENT MEANS THE PEOPLE ARE NOT LIVING IN SUBMISSION TO GOD. REPENTANCE, THEREFORE, IS THE RESTORATION OF THE IDEA OF SUBMISSION TO GOD AND HIS IDEAL FOR THE NATION. THE GREEK WORD USED FOR REPENTANCE MEANS TO CHANGE ONE’S MIND AFTER CONSIDERATION. IT MEANS TO THINK AGAIN. SO HERE IT MEANS QUIT REBELLING AGAINST GOD’S DIVINE GOVERNMENT. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THE RULE AND REIGN OF GOD AND HIS DIVINE ORDER ON EARTH.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. IT IS YET TO COME, BUT IT IS ALSO IN THE MIDST OF THEM.

MATTHEW PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS ON JESUS’ TEACHINGS AND GROUPS THEM TOGETHER IN BLOCKS. JESUS’ MAIN PURPOSE IN HIS TEACHINGS IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE HEART IS THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL REALITY AND THAT A PERSON MUST HAVE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD INTERNALLY. SINCE THIS IS A GOSPEL ABOUT THE KINGDOM MATTHEW HAS GREAT TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD. HE KNOWS A MIGHTY GOD, ACTIVE AND AT WORK, WHOSE SOVEREIGN WILL IS IN EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS. HIS CENTRAL TEACHING ABOUT GOD IS THAT GOD IS GRACIOUS AND LOVING. HE REFERS TO HIM AS A FATHER, AND HE DOES THIS MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THIS IS EXCEPTIONAL SINCE MATTHEW IS WRITING

PRIMARILY, THOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY, TO JEWISH PEOPLE AND GOD AS A FATHER WAS NOT PROMINENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HE ALSO ARRANGES THINGS SO THEY ARE EASY TO REMEMBER. HE USES NUMERICAL GROUPINGS OF THREES AND SEVENS TO AID THE MEMORY. THIS METHOD IS UNDERSTANDABLE, BECAUSE THE COMMON PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE BOOKS.

MATTHEW HAS MANY PARABLES ABOUT THE KINGDOM. IN THE PARABLES HE OFTEN SAYS, "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE" AND GIVES A PARABLE TO SHOW SIMILARITIES. THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM ARE DESIGNED TO COMPEL PEOPLE TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT WHO JESUS CHRIST IS.

WHEN WE COMPARE MATTHEW AND MARK, WE SEE THAT MARK PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS UPON WHAT JESUS DID; WHEREAS, MATTHEW PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS UPON WHAT JESUS SAID.

MATTHEW, LIKE THE OTHER GOSPELS WRITERS, MAKES JESUS HIS CHIEF INTEREST. JESUS' FAVORITE WAY TO REFER TO HIMSELF IS THE TERM "SON OF MAN." MATTHEW USES THIS TITLE 32 TIMES. MATTHEW USES THE TERM "SON" TO COMMUNICATE JESUS' UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER. IN 2:15, GOD SAYS, "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER SATAN SAYS, "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD." IN 27:40, WHEN JESUS IS ON THE CROSS HIS ACCUSERS TAUNT HIM, "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD." EARLIER THEY HAD CHALLENGED HIM,

“TELL US IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD.” THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT, BUT THEY WANT HIM TO STATE IT SO THEY CAN ACCUSE HIM BEFORE ROME. AT CAESAR PHILIPPI IN THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER JESUS ASKS HIS DISCIPLES, “WHOM DO PEOPLE SAY THAT THE SON OF MAN IS?” THE TITLE, “SON OF MAN” IS NOT COMMONLY USED AS A MESSIANIC TERM, BUT FROM THIS POINT ON IN MATTHEW EVERY REFERENCE TO THE “SON OF MAN” DEALS WITH HIS REJECTION AND SUFFERING OR TO HIS EXALTATION AND GLORY.

MATTHEW ALSO USES THE PHRASE “THE CHRIST” MANY TIMES. PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE IS JESUS’ QUESTION TO THE PHARISEES IN 22:42, “WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE?” HE SILENCES THE PHARISEES, BECAUSE THEY CAN NOT ANSWER. IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, CHRIST IS NOT A PROPER NAME AS IT IS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, AT JESUS’ TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH COURT THE HIGH PRIEST SAYS, “I ADJURE YOU BEFORE THE LIVING GOD THAT YOU TELL US, ARE YOU THE CHRIST?” (LEON MORRIS, NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: INTER - VARSITY PRESS, 1992], P. 126.)

MATTHEW ALSO USES THE TERM “SON OF DAVID.” THIS TITLE IS BASED ON THE PROMISE GOD MADE TO DAVID THAT HIS LINE OF KINGSHIP WOULD CONTINUE FOREVER. THE MESSIAH IS LINKED WITH THE LINE OF DAVID. IT IS EVIDENT FROM MATTHEW 12:35 - 37 AND 22:41 - 46 THAT THE JEWISH LEADERS IDENTIFY THE MESSIAH AND THE SON OF DAVID. MATTHEW WANTS TO ESTABLISH THAT JESUS IS THIS PERSON. (DONALD

GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY [LEICESTER LEI 7GP, ENGLAND, INTER-VARSITY PRESS, 1981], PP. 252-256.)

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW COULD BE BRIEFLY OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

- I. THE KING IS REVEALED 1:1-4:16**
- II. THE KING PROCLAIMS HIS MESSAGE 4:17-7:29**
- III. THE KING ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY AND POWER 8:1-11:1**
- IV. THE KING IS OPPOSED 11:2-16:12**
- V. THE KING PREPARES HIS MEN 16:13-20:34**
- VI. THE KING IS REJECTED 20:34-27:66**
- VII. THE KING IS RESURRECTED 28**

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS:

- CHAPTERS 1-10 JESUS IS PRESENTED AS THE MESSIAH KING.**
- CHAPTERS 11-12 JESUS IS REJECTED BY THE LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE.**
- CHAPTER 13 JESUS GIVES PARABLES OF WHAT THE KINGDOM WILL BE LIKE DURING THE CHURCH AGE .**
- CHAPTERS 14-20 JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE CROSS.**
- CHAPTERS 21-27 JESUS IS CRUCIFIED AS THE KING.**
- CHAPTER 28 JESUS IS RESURRECTED AND ASCENDED AS THE KING WITH AUTHORITY AND POWER.**

TEXT

MATTHEW 1

- I. THE PROMISES OF GOD IN PROGRESS 1:1 - 17**
- II. THE PROMISES OF GOD FULFILLED 1:18 - 25**

VERSES 1 - 17 RECORD THE PROMISES OF GOD IN PROGRESS. THIS SECTION PRESENTS THE HUMAN ANCESTRAL GENEALOGY OF JESUS. MATTHEW SHOWS JESUS THE MAN AS THE LEGAL HEIR OF KING DAVID. MATTHEW BEGINS HIS GENEALOGY WITH ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE NATION ISRAEL. GOD HAD PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD WOULD BE BLESSED THROUGH HIS SEED. PAUL, IN GALATIANS 3:16, SHOWS THAT JESUS IS THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM ARE MADE TO CHRIST.

MATTHEW DIVIDES THE GENEALOGY INTO THREE PERIODS OF 14 GENERATIONS. THE FIRST PERIOD IS PRIMARILY THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS, FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID AND THE JUDGES. THE SECOND PERIOD IS THE TIME OF THE MONARCHY, FROM SOLOMON TO BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. THE THIRD PERIOD IS FROM THE END OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO THE TIME OF JESUS.

SOME SCHOLARS SAY THAT THE NUMBERS ASSIGNED TO THE HEBREW LETTERS WHICH SPELL THE NAME DAVID ADD UP TO FOURTEEN, AND MATTHEW IS SHOWING THAT THE KINGLY LINE REACHES ITS CLIMAX IN JESUS.

THE JEWS IN JESUS' TIME CONSIDERED GENEALOGIES EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND KEPT CAREFUL RECORDS IN THE TEMPLE. THE SCRIBES, NO DOUBT HAD CHECKED THE GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' BIRTH AND ANCESTRY IN THE TEMPLE. THESE RECORDS WERE THERE UNTIL THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE IN 70 A.D. THEY KNEW JESUS WAS IN THE ROYAL LEGAL LINE.

FOUR GENTILE WOMEN ARE INCLUDED IN THIS GENEALOGY, TWO CANAANITES, ONE MOABITE, AND ONE HITTITE. IT SEEMS AS IF MATTHEW IS SAYING THAT THE KING WHOM THE JEWS REJECTED IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH SINFUL HUMANITY. MATTHEW TRACES JESUS' LINE THROUGH JOSEPH. ALTHOUGH JOSEPH IS NOT THE NATURAL FATHER OF JESUS, HE GIVES JESUS THE LEGAL TITLE TO THE THRONE, BECAUSE HE IS THE HUSBAND OF MARY. HOWEVER, IN JEREMIAH 36:30 THERE IS A CURSE ON THIS LINE WHICH SAYS THAT NO ONE FROM THIS LINE WILL SIT ON THE THRONE. BUT MARY IS ALSO A DESCENDANT OF DAVID. THIS LINE IS PROBABLY TRACED BY THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. MARY'S LINE COMES THROUGH DAVID'S SON NATHAN AND THERE IS NO CURSE ON THIS LINE.

VERSES 1:18-25 PRESENTS THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE

KING AND SHOWS HOW THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE FULFILLED. THIS SECTION SHOWS THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL OF HISTORY, FOR JESUS IS BORN OF THE VIRGIN AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. FROM THIS SECTION WE LEARN:

- 1. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN HISTORY,**
- 2. THE GRACE OF GOD MAKES SALVATION AVAILABLE TO ALL,**
- 3. THINK AND PRAY BEFORE DECISIONS, AND**
- 4. OBEY WHEN GOD SPEAKS.**

THE NAME JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT COMES FROM THE NAME JOSHUA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHICH MEANS "SAVIOR" OR "YAHWEH IS SALVATION." EVERY TIME MARY STEPS OUT HER BACK DOOR IN NAZARETH AND CALLS JESUS FOR SUPPER THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN HEAR HER CALL, "SAVIOR, SAVIOR," CALLING HIM TO COME JUST AS THE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT CALLED FOR THE SAVIOR TO COME.

ALL THE MIRACLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE BUILT ON THIS MIRACLE OF MIRACLES, THE INCARNATION OF THE DIVINE PERSON OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MATTHEW 2

- I. THE MAGI'S DESIRE TO WORSHIP THE KING 2:1 - 12**
- II. HEROD'S DESIGN TO MURDER THE KING 2:13- 18**
- III. GOD'S DETERMINATION TO PROTECT HIS KING
2:13,22**
- IV. THE SCRIBES' INDIFFERENCE TO THEIR KING
2:4-6**
- V. GOD'S DESIGN TO FULFILL PROPHECY THROUGH
HIS KING 2:23**

THE MAGI DEMONSTRATE THE GREAT TRUTH THAT GOD DRAWS PEOPLE TO HIS SON. THE MAGI ARE PROBABLY THE FIRST GENTILES TO COME TO HIM. THEIR GIFTS PROPHECY HIS DESTINY, FOR GOLD IS THE GIFT FOR A KING, FRANKINCENSE IS THE GIFT FOR A PRIEST AND MYRRH IS THE GIFT IN PREPARATION FOR DEATH. IN SEVERAL PLACES MATTHEW EMPHASIZES THAT EVEN THE GENTILES ARE DRAWN TO JESUS. IN THIS CHAPTER, THERE ARE MANY TRUTHS ABOUT THOSE WHO REJECT AND THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE CHRIST.

MATTHEW 3

- I. PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE KING 3:1-12**
- II. PREPARING THE KING FOR HIS MISSION 3:13-16**
- III. PREPARING THE KING TO PLEASE GOD 3:17**

JOHN THE BAPTIZER FLASHES SUDDENLY UPON THE SCENE CALLING THE NATION TO REPENTANCE. HE FULFILLS ISAIAH 40:3. JOHN IS IN THE LINE OF THE PRIESTHOOD; HOWEVER, INSTEAD OF BECOMING A PRIEST, HE BECOMES A PROPHET. HE IS SENT FROM GOD WITH A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH. HIS MESSAGE IS CONVICTING, CLEANSING, REVEALING AND POINTING TOWARD JESUS WHOM HE SAYS WILL BAPTIZE WITH FIRE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. HE USES THE AXE, THE FAN AND THE FIRE AS SYMBOLS TO DESCRIBE JESUS' WORK.

JOHN'S BAPTISM IS NOT JUST A BAPTISM OF PURIFICATION. IT IS A SYMBOL OF A BREAK WITH THE PAST, A TURNING FROM SIN AND A TURNING TO THE KING.

JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY JOHN:

- 1. TO AUTHENTICATE THAT JOHN'S BAPTISM IS FROM GOD,**
- 2. TO AFFIRM THAT REPENTANCE IS THE WAY INTO GOD'S KINGDOM,**
- 3. TO IDENTIFY WITH SINFUL HUMANITY,**

- 4. TO ACCEPT GOD'S MISSION OF FULFILLING RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE THE RIGHTEOUSNES OF GOD.**
- 5. TO FULFILL THE "TYPE" OF THE PRIEST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, (THE PRIEST WAS WASHED THEN ANOINTED. WE SEE THIS IN JESUS' BAPTISM AND THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE UPON HIM.) AND**
- 6. TO PERHAPS GIVE A PICTURE OF THE SCAPEGOAT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, LEV. 16:1 - 10. (JESUS IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH SINFUL PEOPLE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT DROVE HIM INTO THE WILDERNESS.)**

AS JESUS COMES UP OUT OF THE WATER THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDS ANOINTING, FILLING AND EMPOWERING HIM FOR HIS MISSION. THE VOICE OF GOD AUTHENTICATES HIM AS THE MESSIAH. THIS IS THE PLACE IN SCRIPTURE WHERE ALL THREE PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD ARE SEEN TOGETHER AT ONE TIME. JESUS IS BAPTIZED, THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS AND THE FATHER SPEAKS.

MANY ANCIENT AND MODERN SECTS BELIEVE THAT AT HIS BAPTISM JESUS BECOMES THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD. THEY BELIEVE THAT HERE THE SPIRIT OF GOD COMES UPON HIM, AND HE BECOMES DIVINE. THIS IS NOT TRUE. HE WAS FROM BIRTH THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD. IT IS TRUE THAT AN EMPOWERING COMES TO JESUS AT THIS TIME FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MATTHEW 4

- I. THE KING PROVES HIMSELF 4:1 - 11**
- II. THE KING FULFILLS PROPHECY 4:12 - 17**
- III. THE KING SELECTS HIS MEN 4:18 - 22**
- IV. THE KING BEGINS HIS MINISTRY 4:23 - 25**

IN THE FIRST 11 VERSES, THE KING PROVES HE IS KING OVER HIMSELF AND SUBJECT TO THE KING OF HEAVEN.

AT HIS BAPTISM HE EXPERIENCES THE EMPOWERING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF THE FATHER FROM HEAVEN, NOW HE FACES THE HISS FROM HELL AS THE DEVIL STARTS THE GREATEST ASSAULT IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND.

THE TEMPTATIONS ARE RELATED: 1. TO HIS IDENTITY AS THE SON OF GOD AND THE MESSIAH OF ISRAEL, 2. TO HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD, AND 3. TO HIS MISSION FULFILLMENT. ANOTHER WAY TO CONSIDER THESE TEMPTATIONS IS HOW THEY ARE RELATED: 1. TO HIS PRIVATE NEEDS, 2. TO HIS SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND 3. TO HIS PERSONAL WORSHIP.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION HITS ON HIS PHYSICAL NEEDS AND APPETITES. IT ATTACKS THE GOODNESS OF GOD AND ATTEMPTS TO CREATE DOUBT IN HIS HEART. THE DEVIL QUESTIONS THE IDENTITY OF JESUS, "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD." HE IS CHALLENGING JESUS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS MISSION AS KING BY SATISFYING THE PHYSICAL APPETITES OF PEOPLE RATHER THAN

THEIR SPIRITUAL NEEDS. JESUS ANSWERS THE DEVIL FROM THE WORD OF GOD, DEUTERONOMY 8:3, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."

THE SECOND TEMPTATION APPEALS TO TESTING GOD BY EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN TRUSTING HIM BY FAITH. IT CHALLENGES THE INTELLECT WITH DOUBT, "IS THE WORD OF GOD TRUE?" THE DEVIL SAYS, "CAST YOURSELF DOWN." SATAN CHALLENGES JESUS TO THROW HIMSELF DOWN FROM THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE. SATAN CAN CHALLENGE JESUS, BUT SATAN DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO THROW HIM DOWN. JESUS HAS TO CHOOSE. TEMPTATION IS ALWAYS LIKE THIS. SATAN DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO THROW US DOWN. HE HAS ONLY THE POWER TO CHALLENGE US. AGAIN THIS TEMPTATION IS A QUESTION OF JESUS' IDENTITY, "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD." IT IS AN APPEAL TO THE LUST OF THE EYES; ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION BY THE SPECTACULAR RATHER THAN BY COMPASSION. AGAIN JESUS ANSWERS FROM THE SCRIPTURE, DEUTERONOMY 6:16.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION DEALS WITH PRIORITIES, "WHO IS FIRST IN YOUR LIFE? IS IT YOUR WILL OR GOD'S WILL?" THIS TEMPTATION IS TO COMPROMISE. THE DEVIL SAYS THAT THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS AND APPEALS TO THE PRIDE OF LIFE. AGAIN JESUS ANSWERS FROM THE SCRIPTURE, DEUTERONOMY 6:13.

THE DEVIL HAS SLANDERED JESUS IN 3 WAYS: PLEASURE, PRIDE, AND POSSESSIONS. JESUS DEFEATS THE DEVIL AS A MAN FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND ANSWERING FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

VERSES 12 - 17, TEACH ABOUT JESUS' MINISTRY OF LIGHT. JESUS FULFILLS THE PROPHECY FROM ISAIAH 9:1 - 2, THAT THE PEOPLE LIVING IN DARKNESS WILL SEE A GREAT LIGHT.

VERSES 18 - 22, TEACH ABOUT JESUS' MINISTRY OF LIFE. THE KING BEGINS TO SELECT HIS MEN. HIS MEN WILL BRING HIS LIFE TO PEOPLE.

MATTHEW 5,6,7

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IS THE MOST WONDERFUL SERMON EVER SPOKEN AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WRITING EVER WRITTEN. YET, IT IS ONE OF THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISAPPLIED PASSAGES IN ALL THE BIBLE.

IT MUST BE TAKEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT. IT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD APART FROM THE CROSS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

DRIVES PEOPLE TO GOD FOR HIS MERCY AND GRACE. FALLEN PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO LIVE THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT DOES NOT BRING SALVATION TO US. IT BRINGS US TO SALVATION.

WE MUST HAVE A THEOLOGY, BUT IT IS VERY EASY TO COME TO THE WORD OF GOD WITH A THEOLOGICAL GRID, RUN EVERYTHING THROUGH THE GRID AND DESTROY THE TRUTHS OF THE SCRIPTURE. SOME PEOPLE HAVE DONE THAT TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

JESUS GIVES THE SERMON TO HIS DISCIPLES TO TEACH THEM THAT TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES FIRST FROM THE HEART AND THEN PRODUCES EXTERNAL ACTION. JESUS ILLUSTRATES THIS TRUTH BY SHOWING THAT GOD SEES THE HEART; WHEREAS, PEOPLE SEE THE ACTIONS. ACTIONS ARE TO GLORIFY GOD, NOT TO GAIN THE PRAISE OF PEOPLE.

MATTHEW IS WRITING ESPECIALLY FOR THE JEWS, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY TO THE JEWS. THIS CAN EASILY BE DEMONSTRATED. IT IS A VERY GRAVE MISTAKE AND POOR EXEGESIS TO SAY THAT MATTHEW IS WRITING ONLY TO THE JEWS AND THAT MOST OF MATTHEW IS ONLY FOR THE KINGDOM AGE.

MATTHEW SHOWS REPEATEDLY THAT THE JEWS HAVE A FALSE IDEA OF THE KINGDOM. THEY THOUGHT OF IT POLITICALLY, MILITARILY, AND MATERIALISTICALLY RATHER THAN SPIRITUALLY.

MATTHEW 5

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN RELATIONSHIP TO ONESELF

- I. THE CHARACTER OF THE KING'S PEOPLE 5:1 - 12**
- II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE KING'S PEOPLE 5:13- 16**
- III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KING'S PEOPLE
5:17-20**
- IV. FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS OF TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS
5:21-48**

VERSES 1 - 12 TEACH ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF GOD'S PEOPLE. THE BEATITUDES MUST BE STUDIED AS A UNIT. THE FIRST THREE BEATITUDES GO TOGETHER AND TEACH US WHAT PEOPLE'S GREATEST NEED IS.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE TEACHES THAT IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OURSELVES SHOULD BE CONVICTION. THE SECOND TEACHES THAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR SIN SHOULD BE GODLY REPENTANCE. THE THIRD BEATITUDE TEACHES THAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS SHOULD BE HUMILITY. THESE ARE LIKE STAIRSTEPS. A PERSON CANNOT GET TO THE THIRD STEP WITHOUT CLIMBING THE FIRST TWO STEPS.

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE IS THE TURNING POINT IN THE UNIT. IT TEACHES THAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD SHOULD

BE DESIRE FOR HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT TELLS US THAT ONLY GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL FILL OUR DEEPEST NEED. THEN AFTER WE ARE FILLED WITH GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, WE WILL DO THE NEXT THREE BEATITUDES WHICH ARE TO EXTEND MERCY, TO BE PURE IN HEART AND TO MAKE PEACE. THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE IS THE WORLD'S REACTION TO GOD'S PEOPLE WHO EMBODY THESE BEATITUDES IN THEIR LIVES.

THE BEATITUDES BUILD ON EACH OTHER. THE FIFTH BEATITUDE DEPENDS ON THE FIRST BEATITUDE. A PERSON CAN ONLY BE MERCIFUL AFTER HE HAS BEEN POOR IN SPIRIT AND RECEIVED GOD'S MERCY. THE SIXTH BEATITUDE BUILDS ON THE SECOND. THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE BUILDS ON THE THIRD.

THE GREEK WORD μακαριος, TRANSLATED "BLESSED" OR "HAPPY," IS LIKE A BLESSING OF INNER JOY AND PEACE THAT COMES FROM GOD RATHER THAN FROM CIRCUMSTANCES.

A SERIES OF SERMONS OR TEACHING ON THE BEATITUDES COULD BE TITLED AS FOLLOWS:

1ST BEATITUDE "POVERTY TO RICHES"

2ND BEATITUDE "SADNESS TO SINGING"

3RD BEATITUDE "WEAKNESS TO MEEKNESS"

4TH BEATITUDE "STARVATION TO SALVATION"

5TH BEATITUDE "MERCILESSNESS TO MERCY"

6TH BEATITUDE "DEPRAVITY TO PURITY"

7TH BEATITUDE "WARMONGERS TO PEACEMAKERS"

8TH BEATITUDE "PERSECUTION TO REJOICING"

VERSES 13-16 TEACH ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE KING'S PEOPLE. SALT IS QUIET AND HIDDEN, BUT HAS POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON ALL THAT IT TOUCHES. ITS INFLUENCE IS OUT OF PROPORTION TO ITS SIZE. WHEN APPLIED IT HAS THE POWER TO PRESERVE, PURIFY, BITE, BURN, HEAL, PERMEATE, PENETRATE AND GIVE FLAVOR. LIGHT ON THE OTHER HAND IS A BRIGHT AND BOLD INFLUENCE. LIGHT DEFIES DEFINITION, AND ITS PURPOSE IS TO ILLUMINATE, TO GIVE DIRECTION, TO WARN, TO FOCUS ATTENTION, TO EXPOSE, TO WARM, TO PURIFY AND IN MODERN TIME TO CUT. OUR INFLUENCE FOR THE LORD IS TO BE LIKE BOTH SALT AND LIGHT.

VERSES 17-20 COMPARE JESUS' TEACHING TO THE LAW AND SAY THAT HE HAS COME TO FULFILL THE LAW. HE FULFILLS THE LAW BY HIS LIFE AND HIS DEATH. JESUS ALSO FULFILLS THE MORAL LAW, SINCE HE IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS EVER KEPT IT PERFECTLY. JESUS ALSO FULFILLS THE CEREMONIAL LAW, FOR HE COMPLETES THE TYPES, SYMBOLS AND PICTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE IS ALSO THE ONLY ONE WHO FULFILLS THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. THIS IS THE CHIEF POINT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

IN THIS SECTION JESUS REVEALS THAT GOD EXAMINES THE HEART. JESUS REACHES BACK TO GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT FOR THE LAW AND FOCUSES ON INNER RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE MOTIVES OF THE HEART. HIS POINT IS THAT GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT CREATED BY EXTERNAL CONDITIONS DESIGNED BY MEN. THE STERN FACTS OF THIS SECTION IS THAT WE NEED A

RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS BEYOND OURSELVES. WE NEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, AS THE LAST VERSE OF THIS CHAPTER SAYS.

IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT JESUS DRIVES US TO OUR KNEES, SHOWS US OUR HOPELESSNESS AND OFFERS US GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GRACE.

VERSES 21 - 48 HAVE FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS OF TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS. IN THIS SECTION JESUS CONTRASTS TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. FIRST, HE DEALS WITH MURDER. THEY HAD REDUCED IT TO AN ACT; WHEREAS, GOD LOOKS AT THE INTENT OF THE HEART. JESUS DEMONSTRATES THAT ANGER, HATRED AND CONTEMPT IN THE HEART VIOLATE THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE DECALOGUE.

THE SECOND ILLUSTRATION FOCUSES ON ADULTERY AND DIVORCE. HERE JESUS EXPOSES THE IMPURE DESIRE OF THE HEART WHICH CAUSE IMMORAL BEHAVIOR.

THE THIRD ILLUSTRATION SPEAKS ABOUT HONESTY OF SPEECH.

THE FOURTH ILLUSTRATION FORBIDS REVENGE. HE TELLS US TO RELEASE OUR RIGHTS.

THE FIFTH ILLUSTRATION DIFFERENTIATES BETWEEN GOD'S LOVE AND OUR LOVE. WITHOUT GOD'S LOVE IN A PERSON'S HEART A PERSON IS INCAPABLE OF THIS QUALITY OF LOVE.

MATTHEW 6

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

- I. THE NATURE OF GOOD DEEDS 6:1 - 4**
- II. THE NATURE OF PRAYER 6:5 - 15**
- III. THE NATURE OF FASTING 6:16 - 18**
- IV. THE NATURE OF WEALTH 6:19 - 24**
- V. THE NATURE OF TRUST 6:25 - 34**

IN VERSES 1 - 4, JESUS SAYS HELPING OTHERS IS NOT FOR SHOW. HE SAYS, THAT AS A PERSON GIVES HE SHOULD FIX HIS EYES ON GOD, NOT ON PEOPLE. IF YOU HAVE YOUR EYES ON PEOPLE YOU WANT THEM TO HAVE THEIR EYES ON YOU. THE PHARISEES OFTEN HAD SOMEONE BLOW A TRUMPET JUST BEFORE THEY GAVE MONEY TO THE NEEDY. JESUS SAYS, "DON'T SOUND A SILVER TRUMPET BEFORE YOU GIVE."

IN VERSES 5 - 15, JESUS TEACHES THAT PRAYER IS TALKING TO GOD NOT TO PEOPLE. POWER IN PRAYER IS FOUND IN THE SECRET PLACE NOT IN THE PUBLIC PLACE.

THE MODEL PRAYER, SOMETIMES CALLED THE LORD'S PRAYER IS JESUS' TEACHINGS ABOUT PRAYER. A WONDERFUL TEACHING OUTLINE FOR THE MODEL PRAYER IS:

- 1. THE THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, VERSE 9**
- 2. THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, VERSE 10**
- 3. THE BIOLOGY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, VERSE 11**
- 4. THE SOTERIOLOGY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, VERSES 12-13**
- 5. THE DOXOLOGY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, VERSE 13**

IN VERSES 16-18, FASTING COMES FROM THE HEART TO GOD AND IS NOT AN EXHIBITION OF SUPERIOR SPIRITUALITY.

IN VERSE 19-24, JESUS TEACHES HOW WEALTH RELATES TO HIS PEOPLE AND WORSHIP. TRUE WEALTH IS POSSESSING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

JESUS TEACHES THAT THE HEART GUARDS THE TREASURE. THE PERSON PLACES VALUE ON SOMETHING. THE PROBLEM IS IN THE HEART NOT IN THE WEALTH.

VERSE 24 SAYS THAT WE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON. WE CAN, HOWEVER, SERVE GOD WITH MAMMON. THE WORD SERVE MEANS "TO BOW DOWN BEFORE." AND THE WORD MAMMON MEANS "WEALTH." WE CAN EASILY SEE THAT GOD PLUS ANYTHING WE BOW DOWN BEFORE EQUALS IDOLATRY.

THE SINGLE EYE IS THE EYE OF THE HEART FOCUSED ON SPIRITUAL THINGS.

VERSE 33 IS AN ADMONITION TO SET PRIORITIES IN CORRECT ORDER.

MATTHEW 7

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS

- I. DISCIPLINE BEGINS WITH ONESELF 7:1 - 6**
- II. DIVINE HELP COMES TO THOSE WHO SEEK 7:7 - 12**
- III. DISCIPLESHIP COMES THROUGH OBEDIENCE
7:13 - 29**

THIS CHAPTER TEACHES ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF THE KING'S PEOPLE AS THEY RELATE TO OTHER PEOPLE. THIS TEACHING MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN BALANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT.

JESUS WARNS AGAINST PRONOUNCING FINAL JUDGEMENT ON OTHERS WITHOUT FIRST HAVING DEALT WITH ONE'S OWN SINS. THE EYE SPOKEN OF HERE IS THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK OF A PERSON.

THE SERMON ENDS WITH A SERIES OF WARNINGS AND CONTRASTS ABOUT OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE. IT HAS TWO GATES, TWO WAYS, TWO TREES, TWO FRUITS, TWO MEN, TWO HOUSES, TWO FOUNDATIONS AND TWO CONSEQUENCES OF THE STORM.

MATTHEW 8 AND 9

THE KING'S AUTHORITY AND POWER

- I. THE KING'S POWER OVER LEPROSY 8:1 - 4**
- II. THE KING'S POWER OVER PARALYSIS 8:5 - 13**
- III. THE KING'S POWER OVER FEVER 8:14 - 15**
- IV. THE KING'S POWER OVER ALL DISEASES 8:16 - 17**
- V. THE KING'S POWER OVER NATURE 8:23 - 27**
- VI. THE KING'S POWER OVER DEMONS 8:28 - 34**
- VII. THE KING'S POWER OVER SIN 9:1 - 8**
- VIII. THE KING'S POWER OVER DEATH 9:18 - 26**
- IX. THE KING'S POWER OVER SIGHT AND SPEECH
9:27 - 33**

WE NOW ENTER A NEW SECTION OF MATTHEW. CHAPTERS 5, 6 AND 7 HAVE PRESENTED THE WORDS OF JESUS. CHAPTERS 8 AND 9 PRESENT THE WORKS OF JESUS. IN 8:1, MATTHEW PICKS UP WITH WHAT JESUS WAS DOING BEFORE HE GIVES HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT. THIS SECTION CONNECTS WITH 4:23 - 25.

MATTHEW GROUPS THINGS IN BLOCKS. IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS, 8 AND 9, HE PUTS TOGETHER A BLOCK OF MIRACLES. THERE SEEMS TO BE THREE SETS OF MIRACLES WITH A TOTAL OF TEN MAJOR MIRACLES IN THESE CHAPTERS.

THE MIRACLES IN MATTHEW TEACH THAT JESUS FULFILLS ISAIAH 35:5-6 AND ISAIAH 53:4-5. THE FIRST GROUP OF MIRACLES SHOWS JESUS' POWER OVER PHYSICAL DISEASE.

THE FIRST MIRACLE, VERSES 1-4, IS HEALING BY THE KING'S TOUCH. LEPROSY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE DISEASE OF THE LIVING DEAD. ITS INCOMPREHENSIBLE CONSEQUENCES SEPARATES THE PERSON FROM EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING DEAR TO HIM. IT SEPARATES HIM FROM CEREMONIAL AND SACRIFICIAL CLEANSING SINCE HE CAN NOT GO TO THE TEMPLE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT LEPROSY IS A PARABLE OR SYMBOL OF SIN. IT IS THE PHYSICAL PARALLEL TO SPIRITUAL SICKNESS.

LEPROSY IS A HOPELESS DISEASE. THIS MIRACLE PRESENTS JESUS AS HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS. THE LEPER COMES BELIEVING THAT JESUS CAN HEAL HIM. MATTHEW SAYS THE LEPER WORSHIPPED JESUS. MATTHEW USES THE WORD προσεκυνει, MEANING "DID HOMAGE." THIS WORD IN ANCIENT GREEK CULTURE WAS ALWAYS USED ABOUT THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS.

JESUS HEALS THE MAN AND INSTRUCTS HIM TO GO THROUGH THE PROCESS DESCRIBED IN LEV. 14.

THE SECOND MIRACLE, VERSES 5-13, IS HEALING BY THE KING'S WORD. THIS IS THE HEALING OF A GENTILE PARALYTIC FROM A DISTANCE. THE PARALYTIC IS HELPLESS. SO, HERE JESUS IS PRESENTED AS HELP FOR THE HELPLESS.

GREAT INSIGHT IS SEEN IN THE CENTURION'S UNDERSTANDING THAT IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD JESUS IS UNDER AUTHORITY. JESUS HIMSELF SAYS HE ACTS ONLY BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER. MATTHEW IS SHOWING THAT THE GENTILES ARE DRAWN TO JESUS.

VERSES 14-15 RECORDS THE THIRD MIRACLE. IT REVEALS THE KING'S POWER OVER FEVER AS JESUS HEALS PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

VERSES 16-17 DISPLAY THE KING'S POWER OVER ALL DISEASES.

VERSES 18-22 FORM A BREAK BETWEEN THE MIRACLES. THIS SECTION REVEALS THE EFFECT OF MIRACLES ON PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE RESPOND WITH IMPULSIVENESS AND THEN EXCUSES. JESUS WARNS ALL POTENTIAL FOLLOWERS OF HIS TO COUNT THE COST BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES.

THE SECOND GROUP OF MIRACLES IS RECORDED IN 8:23-9:8.

VERSES 23-27 RECORD THE FOURTH MIRACLE, AND EXHIBIT IN A VIVID PICTURE THE KING'S POWER OVER NATURE. THE DISCIPLES ARE IN THEIR BOAT WHEN SUDDENLY AN EXTREME STORM ARISES. THE GREEK WORD USED HERE IS σεισμος (SEISMOS) FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD SEISMOGRAPH. THIS WORD MEANS EARTHQUAKE. IN TERROR THE DISCIPLES AWAKEN JESUS. HE COMMANDS THE SEA, "PEACE BE STILL," AND THE SILVER SEA

SITS DOWN SILENT BEFORE HIM. THE DISCIPLES ARE ALSO SILENCED IN AWE AND AMAZEMENT THAT EVEN THE WIND AND THE WAVES OBEY HIM. THE LESSON IS JESUS, THE GREAT STORM CALMER CALMS THE STORMS OF LIFE.

THE FIFTH MIRACLE, VERSES 28-34, REVEALS JESUS' AUTHORITY AND POWER OVER DEMONS. TWO DEMON POSSESSED MEN COME OUT OF THE TOMBS AND MEET JESUS. HE CASTS THE DEMONS OUT OF THE MEN. THE DEMONS THEN GO INTO A HERD OF PIGS. THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA COME TO JESUS AND ASK HIM TO LEAVE THEIR REGION. THIS SHOWS THE REJECTION OF CHRIST AND THE POWER OF GOD.

THE SIXTH MIRACLE, 9:1-8, REVEALS JESUS' POWER TO FORGIVE SIN AND TO HEAL PALSY, WHICH IS A TYPE OF PARALYSIS.

VERSES 9-17 FORM THE BREAK BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD GROUPS OF MIRACLES. IN THIS SECTION JESUS CALLS MATTHEW TO APOSTLESHIP AND GIVES THE PARABLES OF THE PATCHES AND THE WINESKINS.

VERSES 18-34 COMPOSE THE THIRD GROUP OF MIRACLES. THIS GROUP DEMONSTRATES JESUS' POWER OVER DEATH, DARKNESS, AND DEMONS.

CHAPTER 9, VERSES 18-26 DEMONSTRATE THE KING'S POWER OVER DEATH. JAIRUS, A JEWISH RULER, COMES TO JESUS REQUESTING HEALING FOR HIS DAUGHTER. JESUS' GROUP IS

MOVING TOWARDS JAIRUS' HOUSE WHEN THE SEVENTH MIRACLE OCCURS. THIS IS A HEALING FROM CERTAIN DEATH. A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD TOUCHES THE FRINGE OF JESUS' GARMENT. THE WORD TRANSLATED "FRINGE" IS κρασπεδου FROM κρασπεδον. IF WE STEP INTO THE TIME TUNNEL, WE SEE THAT IN THE FIRST CENTURY JEWISH MEN ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR THIS FRINGE AS STATED IN NUMBERS 15:37 - 39. IN ORDER TO KEEP THIS REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW A MAN WEARS A SASH OF MATERIAL CALLED A PRAYER SHAWL AROUND HIS NECK. THIS SHAWL HAS THE FRINGE REQUIRED BY THE LAW. IT GOES AROUND BEHIND THE NECK AND HANGS DOWN IN FRONT OF THE MAN. THE TORAH SAYS THAT THE TASSLES ON THE SHAWL HAVE TO BE BLUE, REPRESENTING THE BLUE APPEARANCE OF THE SKY. THIS IS TO REMIND THE MAN OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD. THE BLUE DYE FOR DYING THE TASSLES, IN JESUS' DAY, COSTS \$100,000 PER POUND. SO, THE LAW SAYS THAT IF ONE TASSLE IS BLUE IT FULFILLS THE TORAH. THIS PRAYER SHAWL REPRESENTS STATUS, AUTHORITY AND HOLINESS, THE MORE BLUE TASSELS, THE MORE STATUS. NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO TOUCH A MAN'S PRAYER SHAWL EXCEPT A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. (THIS INFORMATION COMES FROM A CONVERSATION WITH MY FRIEND CHARLES PAGE, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST AND SCHOLAR IN ISRAEL, WHO HAS MADE AN INTENSE STUDY OF THE CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND ORAL LAWS DURING THE TIME OF JESUS.)

THIS WOMAN IS ONE OF THE MOST DESPERATE WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE. THE LAW SAYS SHE IS UNCLEAN AND CANNOT TOUCH ANYONE. FOR TWELVE YEARS SHE HAS HAD NO

PHYSICAL CONTACT. SHE COMMITS A DESPERATE ACT, AND SHE GETS CAUGHT. THE CONSEQUENCES OF HER ACT ARE EXTREMELY SERIOUS. SHE IS UNCLEAN, AND SHE HAS TOUCHED THE PRAYER SHAWL, WHICH WAS FORBIDDEN EXCEPT BY A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. JESUS SAYS TO HER, "DAUGHTER, YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU PART OF MY FAMILY. YOU CAN TOUCH ME. I WILL MAKE YOU CLEAN." THE LESSON IS NO MATTER HOW UNCLEAN WE ARE WE CAN COME TO JESUS IN FAITH FOR CLEANSING, AND HE WILL TAKE US INTO HIS FAMILY.

DURING THIS DELAY JAIRUS' DAUGHTER DIES. JESUS COMES TO JAIRUS' HOUSE AND RESTORES HER LIFE.

THE TENTH MIRACLE, VERSES 27-33, DEMONSTRATES JESUS' POWER OVER DEMONS, SIGHT OF THE EYES AND SPEECH OF THE MOUTH.

IN 9:34, THE KING IS ACCUSED BY THE PHARISEES OF USING THE POWER OF SATAN TO HEAL. THEY CANNOT DENY THAT JESUS' POWER IS SUPERNATURAL. THEY KNOW IT IS EITHER DEMONIC OR DIVINE; SO, THEY CHOOSE THE DEMONIC AND BRING GREATER DARKNESS TO THEMSELVES.

MATTHEW 10

THE MINISTRY OF THE KING'S MEN

- I. THE EMPOWERING OF THE KING'S MEN 10:1
- II. THE NAMING OF THE KING'S MEN 10:2-4
- III. THE MISSION AND COMMISSIONING OF THE KING'S MEN 10:5-15
- IV. THE CHALLENGE TO THE KING'S MEN 10:16-42

IN THIS SECTION THE DISCIPLES ARE MOVED TO THE POSITION OF APOSTLES. THE WORD DISCIPLE IS μαθητας (MATHATAS) MEANING A "LEARNER." IT IS FROM THE ROOT "MATH" AND MEANS THOUGHT ACCOMPANIED BY ENDEAVOR. OUR WORDS "MATHEMATICS" AND "METHOD" ARE BOTH RELATED TO THIS WORD. THE VERB προσκαλεσαμενος, TRANSLATED "HAVING CALLED," MEANS HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES TO FACE HIM.

THE NAMES OF THE APOSTLES ARE IN THREE GROUPS OF FOURS. NOTICE THAT NONE OF THE OTHER GOSPELS CALL MATTHEW A PUBLICAN.

JESUS SENDS THEM ON A MISSION AND TELLS THEM WHAT TO TAKE, WHAT TO SAY AND WHAT TO DO. IN VERSE 11, THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORTHY" IS αξιος, AND MEANS OF EQUAL WEIGHT. IT HAS THE IDEA OF AN EQUATION WITH THINGS BEING OF THE SAME WEIGHT ON EACH SIDE OF THE EQUAL SIGN. HERE

IT MEANS THEIR RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE IS TO BE EQUAL WITH THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE.

IN VERSE 16, THE VERB $\gamma\iota\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$, “YOU BE” IS IN THE PRESENT IMPERATIVE, WHICH MEANS IT IS A COMMAND TO ACT CONTINUOUSLY IN THIS MANNER.

IN VERSES 17-21, JESUS PROMISES THAT DURING PERSECUTION THOSE FAITHFUL TO HIM WILL EXPERIENCE THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVING THEM THE THOUGHTS AND WORDS TO SPEAK. THIS SEEMS TO BE VERY NEAR TO WHAT HAPPENED AS MEN WROTE GOD’S WORD.

MATTHEW 11

REBELLION AGAINST THE KING

- I. THE KING'S HERALD IS REJECTED 11:1 - 19**
- II. THE HERALD'S QUESTION 11:2**
- III. THE HERALD IS REASSURED BY THE KING 11:2-6**
- IV. THE HERALD IS REGARDED HIGHLY BY THE KING
11:7-15**
- V. THE KING PRONOUNCES JUDGEMENT 11:14-24**
- VI. THE KING REVEALS THE FATHER 11:25-30**

IN CHAPTER 11, THE HOSTILITY TOWARD THE KING RISES LIKE A FLOODING RIVER. REBELLION AND REJECTION OCCUR BOTH TO THE KING AND TO HIS HERALD, JOHN THE BAPTIZER.

FROM PRISON JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS HIS DISCIPLES TO ASK JESUS, "SHOULD WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK THERE ARE TWO WORDS FOR ANOTHER. THE WORD USED HERE MEANS ANOTHER OF A DIFFERENT KIND. JESUS ANSWERS BY POINTING TO THE RESULTS OF HIS MINISTRY.

VERSES 25 - 30 TEACH THE GREAT TRUTHS THAT:

- 1. WORLDLY WISDOM DOES NOT GIVE SAVING KNOWLEDGE,**
- 2. DIVINE WISDOM COMES FROM THE SON OF GOD,**
- 3. THE WORLD IS NEVER PLEASED WITH THE CHILDREN OF GOD,
AND**
- 4. THE GREATER THE LIGHT, THE GREATER THE RESPONSIBILITY.**

MATTHEW 12

THE KING IN CONFLICT WITH THE PHARISEES

- I. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER THE SABBATH 12:1 - 21**
- II. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER SATAN 12:22 - 30**
- III. THE KING SPEAKS ABOUT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN 12:31 - 32**
- IV. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER SIGNS 12:38 - 50**

IN CHAPTER 11, THE KING'S HERALD IS REJECTED. IN CHAPTER 12, THE KING IS REJECTED. IN THIS CHAPTER, MATTHEW PRESENTS A SERIES OF INSTANCES TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE PHARISEES OPPOSE JESUS.

IN THESE VERSES 1 - 21 MOMENTOUS CONFLICT RESULTS CONCERNING JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER THE SABBATH. JESUS ANSWERS THE PHARISEES BY GOING BACK TO GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT FOR THE SABBATH WHICH WAS TO BRING HONOR TO GOD AND HOLINESS TO HIS PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THE LEGALISTIC REGULATIONS OF THE PHARISEES MISSED THE INTENT OF THE SABBATH AND ROBBED THEM OF ITS BLESSINGS.

THE SECOND CONFLICT IN THIS SECTION VERSES 22 - 30 IS RELATED TO THE SOURCE OF JESUS' POWER. JESUS HEALS A

MAN WHO IS BOTH BLIND AND MUTE. THIS MIRACLE SHOWS THAT JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER BLINDNESS, DARKNESS, EYES AND SIGHT. THE PHARISEES, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BELIEVE, SO THEY ATTRIBUTE THE SOURCE OF JESUS' HEALING POWER TO BEELZEBUB OR SATAN.

IN VERSES 31 - 32 JESUS TEACHES THAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS MALICIOUSLY ATTRIBUTING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE DEVIL. HE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THIS PLACES A PERSON IN A MUCH MORE DANGEROUS POSITION THAN THOSE WHO IGNORE OR EVEN REJECT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THEIR LIVES. JESUS WORDS ARE SO CLEAR ONE WONDERS HOW THERE CAN BE SO MUCH CONFUSION ON THIS PASSAGE.

THE THIRD CONFLICT, VERSES 38 - 50, ARISES WHEN THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES WANT JESUS TO WORK A MIRACLE TO PROVE THAT HE IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS. THEY HAVE SEEN MANY SIGNS, BUT THEY CANNOT DISCERN THEM.

JESUS ILLUSTRATES THAT THE UNBELIEF OF ISRAEL, EVEN THOUGH SWEEP AWAY AT THE EXILE, HAS RETURNED WITH GREAT POWER.

MATTHEW 13

THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

- I. THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS 13:18-23**
- II. THE PARABLES OF THE TARES, THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN 13:24-43**
- III. THE PARABLES OF THE TREASURE, THE PEARL AND THE NET 13:44-46**
- IV. NO HONOR FOR A PROPHET IN HIS OWN COUNTRY 13:51-58**

MATTHEW GROUPS SEVEN PARABLES TOGETHER. THE SCRIPTURE, BOTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT, OFTEN USES NUMBERS AS AIDS IN TEACHING TRUTHS. SEVEN IN SCRIPTURE IS THE COMPLETE NUMBER AND THESE PARABLES GIVE A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE KINGDOM DURING THE CHURCH AGE.

JESUS LABELS THE TRUTHS IN THESE PARABLES “THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE WORD TRANSLATED MYSTERY DOES NOT MEAN MYSTERIOUS OR DIFFICULT TO SOLVE. RATHER, IT MEANS A TRUTH WHICH HAS BEEN HIDDEN IN THE PAST AND WHICH GOD NOW REVEALS.

THESE PARABLES ARE CONCERNED WITH THE PERIOD OF TIME BETWEEN THE REJECTION OF JESUS AND HIS FINAL RETURN TO BRING IN HIS KINGDOM. THESE PARABLES TELL

ABOUT THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM DURING THE CHURCH AGE AND THE RESPONSE OF THOSE WHO HEAR.

THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED PARABLE IS παραβολη. IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, παρα MEANING "BESIDE," AND βαλλω MEANING "I THROW." A PARABLE, THEREFORE, IS AN EARTHY TRUTH THROWN BESIDE A HEAVENLY TRUTH TO ILLUSTRATE THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES:

- 1. TO MAKE TRUTH PLAIN AND COMPREHENDIBLE,**
- 2. TO HIDE SPIRITUAL TRUTH FROM THOSE WHO ARE PURPOSEFULLY BLIND,**
- 3. TO KEEP THOSE WHO ARE HOSTILE TO HIM FROM ATTACKING HIM UNTIL THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND**
- 4. TO MAKE HIS TRUTH EASY TO REMEMBER.**

THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS, VERSES 18-23, TEACHES THAT THE CONDITION OF THE HEART DETERMINES HOW GOD'S WORD IS RECEIVED. IT IS A WARNING TO ALL WHO HEAR GOD'S WORD, AND AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL WHO PREACH GOD'S WORD.

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES, VERSES 24-43, TEACHES THAT WHEREVER GOD PLANTS TRUE BELIEVERS SATAN PLANTS FALSE SEED THAT ENTANGLES AND HINDERS THE TRUE SEED'S GROWTH. TRUE BELIEVERS AND FALSE

BELIEVERS ARE SIDE BY SIDE UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE.

THE USUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE MUSTARD SEED IS THAT THE SEED IS EXTREMELY SMALL BUT WILL PRODUCE GREAT RESULTS. SO THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM APPEARS SMALL BUT PRODUCES GREAT GROWTH. LEAVEN REPRESENTS THE SLOW SILENT WORK THAT AFFECTS EVERYTHING AROUND IT.

IF, HOWEVER, JESUS INTENDS TO CONNECT THE TEACHING IN THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN WITH THE TEACHING IN THE PARABLE OF THE TARES, THEN IT SEEMS THAT THE MUSTARD SEED REPRESENTS WHAT GROWS VERY RAPIDLY BUT IS NOT GOING TO LAST. THE LEAVEN IS EVIL FALSE TEACHINGS WHICH PERMEATE THE GOOD.

THE PARABLES, IN VERSES 44 - 46, OF THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL TEACH THAT WHEN A PERSON RECOGNIZES THE TRUE VALUE OF THE KINGDOM THEN THAT PERSON WILL MAKE ANY SACRIFICE TO GAIN IT.

THE PARABLE OF THE NET TEACHES THAT GOOD AND EVIL WILL EXIST UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE, AND THEN THE EVIL WILL BE DISCARDED.

JESUS IS AGAIN REJECTED IN NAZARETH, HIS HOMETOWN, VERSES 51 - 58. AFTER THIS REJECTION JESUS WITHDRAWS FROM THE PUBLIC INTO PRIVATE PLACES SO THAT HE MAY PREPARE HIS DISCIPLES FOR HIS DEPARTURE FROM THEM.

MATTHEW 14

JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES FOR THEIR WORK

- I. THE KING'S HERALD IS BEHEADED 14:1 - 12**
- II. THE KING FEEDS THE 5,000 14:13 - 21**
- III. THE KING WALKS ON THE WATER 14:22 - 36**

IN VERSES 1 - 12 WE SEE:

- 1. A RIGHTEOUS PROPHET EXHIBITS COURAGE AND CHARACTER,**
- 2. AN EXCITING DANCER BRINGS LUST AND DEATH,**
- 3. AN IMMORAL WOMAN'S REVENGE DESTROYS GOD'S PROPHET,**
- 4. A FOOLISH KING'S WEAKNESS REVEAL HIS TRUE CHARACTER, AND**
- 5. THE DEATH OF A PROPHET.**

AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST JESUS WITH DRAWS FROM THE PUBLIC:

- 1. TO TEACH HIS DISCIPLES,**
- 2. TO REFLECT UPON JOHN'S DEATH,**
- 3. TO REST, AND**
- 4. TO TEMPORARILY ESCAPE REJECTION.**

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN EXPLAINS THE EVENT OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000, VERSES 13 - 21, SO WE WILL LOOK AT IT IN MORE DETAIL IN THAT STUDY.

THE TRUTHS WE MAY DRAW FROM PETER'S EXPERIENCE OF WALKING ON THE WATER, VERSES 22 - 36, ARE:

- 1. KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS AND NOT ON THOSE THINGS THAT DISTRACT YOU,**
- 2. TAKE YOUR EYES OFF JESUS AND YOU WILL SINK,**
- 3. HAVE FAITH IN JESUS AND NOT IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS,**
- 4. FAITH AND DOUBT BRING CONTRASTING RESULTS, AND**
- 5. JESUS IS PRESENT WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE COME.**

MATTHEW 15

THE KING TEACHES ABOUT THE IMPURE HEART AND SHOWS THE COMPASSION OF HIS HEART

- I. UNRIGHTEOUSNESS PROCEEDS OUT OF AN IMPURE HEART 15:1 -20**
- II. COMPASSION FOR A WOMAN OF GREAT FAITH 15:21 -28**
- III. COMPASSION FOR THE MULTITUDES 15:29 -39**

IN VERSES 1 -20 JESUS TEACHES THAT UNRIGHTEOUSNESS PROCEEDS OUT OF AN IMPURE HEART. THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL HAVE PLACED TRADITION ABOVE THEIR MISSION. IN THESE VERSES JESUS STRIKES AT THE HEART OF THEIR TRADITION SHOWING THAT EXTERNAL BEHAVIOR DOES NOT PURIFY THE INTERNAL; RATHER, THE INTERNAL HEART OF MAN IS WHAT DEFILES HIM. THEIR MISSION, AS GOD'S PEOPLE, WAS TO BE TO HIM "A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS," BRINGING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO HIM. INSTEAD THEY PLACED THEIR INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURE ABOVE THE SCRIPTURE ITSELF. JESUS ALSO ATTACKS THEIR THEOLOGY AND PRACTICES. ONE OF THESE PRACTICES IS CALLED CORBAN. IT MEANS THAT A PERSON COULD PRONOUNCE HIS PROPERTY DEDICATED TO GOD, CONTINUE TO USE IT HIMSELF, AND REFUSE TO USE IT TO HELP HIS AGED PARENTS.

IN VERSES 21 -28 JESUS UPSETS THE PHARISEES, BUT HIS TIME HAS NOT COME; SO, HE WITHDRAWS TO GENTILE COUNTRY.

WHILE HE IS THERE HE HEALS A DEMON POSSESSED GENTILE GIRL. THE MOTHER OF THE GIRL CRIES TO JESUS FOR PITY. SHE IS A GENTILE, BUT SHE COMES TO HIM WITH A JEWISH TITLE, "SON OF DAVID." JESUS IS SILENT GIVING HER NO ANSWER. FINALLY, SHE WORSHIPS HIM AND CRIES, "LORD, HELP ME." HE THEN STATES HIS MISSION AND REJECTS HER REQUEST, BUT HE USES THE WORD κυνάριας MEANING LITTLE DOG OR THE DOGS THAT PLAYED AROUND THE HOUSES. SHE THEN USES THE SAME ARGUMENT THAT JESUS HAS USED ON MANY OCCASIONS. IT IS SIMILAR TO WHEN JESUS SAID, "IF YOU BEING EVIL KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE TO YOU." SHE SAYS, "IF YOUR PEOPLE FEED THE LITTLE DOGS, SURELY YOU WILL GIVE ME JUST A LITTLE CRUMB OF PITY." THEN JESUS RELEASES HIS POWER TO HEAL AND PRAISES HER FOR HER FAITH.

THE PEOPLE IN VERSES 29-39 ARE MOSTLY GENTILES. JESUS HEALS THEM, AND THEN FEEDS THE 4,000. THE GREAT TRUTH HERE IS THAT JESUS IS THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE.

MATTHEW 16

THE GREAT CONFESSION

**I. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES SEEK A SIGN
16:1-5**

II. THE DISCIPLES MISUNDERSTAND 16:6-12

**III. PETER CONFESSES JESUS AS THE CHRIST THE
SON OF GOD 16:13-20**

**IV. JESUS SHOWS THE DISCIPLES THE WAY OF THE
CROSS 16:21-28**

THIS IS JESUS' FINAL CRISIS IN GALILEE, VERSES 1 - 5. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES WANT A SIGN FROM JESUS TO PROVE THAT HE IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS. JESUS ANSWERS THAT THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE LACK OF EVIDENCE. IT IS THEIR HEARTS' INABILITY TO DISCERN THE TRUTH.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES CROSS THE LAKE AGAIN, VERSES 6 - 12. THIS TIME THE DISCIPLES FORGET TO BRING BREAD. THEY MISUNDERSTAND HIS WARNING AGAINST THE FALSE TEACHING OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES.

IN VERSES 13 - 20 JESUS CLARIFIES HIS IDENTITY FOR HIS DISCIPLES. JESUS ASKS THEM, "WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?" IN ESSENCE THE ANSWERS ARE THE SAME TODAY AS THEN. HE THEN ASKS THE DISCIPLES, "WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?" PETER ANSWERS, "YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."

JESUS SAYS THAT IT IS BY DIVINE REVELATION FROM THE FATHER THAT PETER KNOWS WHO HE IS. JUST BEFORE THIS IN VERSES 1 - 5 THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES SHOW THAT GOD HAS NOT REVEALED TO THEM WHO JESUS IS. HIS DISCIPLES MUST UNDERSTAND WHO HE IS, FOR HIS WORK HAS LITTLE MEANING IF HE IS NOT THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

JESUS TAKES PETER'S CONFSSION AND REVEALS THE FOUNDATION OF HIS CHURCH. JESUS IN MATTHEW 21:42 - 52 AND PETER IN I PT. 2:4 - 8 ALSO REVEAL THE FOUNDATION. JESUS SAYS TO PETER, "YOU ARE *πετρος*," (MEANING "A SMALL ROCK") AND ON THIS *πετρα*, ("MEANING A FOUNDATION STONE") I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH."

THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH JESUS IS GOING TO BUILD HIS CHURCH IS EXTREMELY CLEAR. HE IS GOING TO BUILD HIS CHURCH ON GOD'S REVELATION TO PEOPLE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE FOUNDATION STONE, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

JESUS IS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE OR CAPSTONE OF THE CHURCH, MATT. 21:42 - 52; ACTS 4:11 - 12; I COR. 3:11; EPH. 2:20; AND I PETER 2:4 - 8. HE IS THE STONE OF STUMBLING, ROM. 9:32 AND THE CRUSHING STONE OF MATT. 21:44. HE IS THE SMITING STONE TO THE GENTILE NATION, DAN. 2:34.

IN THIS SAME PASSAGE JESUS SPEAKS OF THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM. KEYS REPRESENT AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO OPEN AND TO CLOSE. JESUS GRANTS THE CHURCH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO REPRESENT ON EARTH WHAT HAS ALREADY

BEEN APPROVED IN HEAVEN FOR THE KINGDOM.

IN VERSES 21 - 28 JESUS SHOWS THE DISCIPLES THE WAY OF THE CROSS. JESUS TEACHES THEM THE CROSS COMES BEFORE THE CROWN. PETER COMPREHENDS THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE PERSON JESUS, BUT HE CANNOT AS YET GRASP THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH OF THE ATONEMENT. PETER SEES THE CROSS AS A CONTRADICTION TO THE CONCEPT OF THE MESSIAH.

THE PHRASE, "TAKE UP YOUR CROSS" MEANS CRUCIFIXION OF SELF. THE CROSS IS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH. A CROSS DOES NOT MEAN SOME BURDEN, TRIAL OR DIFFICULTY IN LIFE. TAKING UP OUR CROSS MEANS THE CRUCIFIXION OF OUR OLD NATURE.

THIS CHAPTER CLOSES AS THE KING REVEALS THE KINGDOM THAT WILL BE MANIFESTED AT HIS SECOND COMING.

MATTHEW 17

- I. THE KING'S GLORY BURSTS FORTH ON THE MOUNTAIN 17:1 - 13
- II. THE DISCIPLES' DEFEAT IN THE VALLEY 17:14- 16
- III. THE KING HEALS AN EPILEPTIC 17:17-21
- IV. THE KING TEACHES ABOUT HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION 17:22-23
- V. THE KING HONORS THE TEMPLE TAX 17:24-27

THE KING'S GLORY BURSTS FORTH ON THE MOUNTAIN IN VERSES 1 - 13. THE WORD TRANSLATED "TRANSFIGURE" IS THE WORD μεταμορφωθη. OUR WORD "METAMORPHOSIS" COMES FROM THIS WORD. IT MEANS TO CHANGE FROM WITHIN. THE THREE DISCIPLES WATCH. IT IS ALMOST LIKE LIGHT FROM JESUS INNER BEING BURSTING FORTH. THE SPLENDOR OF THE KING OF KINGS IS MANIFESTED TO HIS INNER CIRCLE OF DISCIPLES. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE THE GLORY OF GOD WHEN HIS PRESENCE ENTERED THE TABERNACLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. A CLOUD COVERS THE DISCIPLES AND AS GOD SPEAKS, THE DISCIPLES FALL ON THEIR FACES IN TERROR. THE FATHER AUTHENTICATES THE KING IN THIS EVENT. THIS PREPARES JESUS FOR THE AGONY OF THE CROSS.

PETER WANTS TO STAY ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP FOREVER, BUT THE BATTLES OF LIFE HAVE TO BE FOUGHT IN THE VALLEY. JESUS DESCENDS FROM THE MOUNTAIN WITH HIS DISCIPLES TO FACE THE EVIL FORCES.

THE DISCIPLES ARE DEFEATED IN THE VALLEY, VERSES 14 - 16, AND THE KING HEALS AN EPILEPTIC, VERSES 17 - 21. IN THIS PICTURE WE SEE:

- 1. THE DEMON, DISEASE AND DESTRUCTION IN THE BOY,**
- 2. THE DISTRESS OF THE FATHER,**
- 3. THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE DISCIPLES, AND**
- 4. THE DIVINE POWER OF THE KING TO HEAL.**

THE DISCIPLES FAIL. THE FATHER KNEELS. JESUS SPEAKS. THE DEMON FLEES. AND THE BOY IS FREE.

IN THESE VERSES 22 - 23 JESUS CONNECTS HIS DEATH WITH HIS RESURRECTION. THE PHASE "SHALL BE DELIVERED UP," EITHER MEANS THAT THE FATHER WILL GIVE THE SON FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD, OR THAT HE WILL BE GIVEN OVER TO THE ROMANS TO BE CRUCIFIED.

IN VERSES 24 - 27 THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTING THE ANNUAL TAX FOR THE UPKEEP OF THE TEMPLE COME TO REMIND PETER THAT JESUS NEEDS TO PAY THIS TAX. THE UP-KEEP OF THE TEMPLE IS DEPENDANT ON THIS TAX, WHICH IS EQUIVILANT TO TWO DAYS WAGES FOR A WORKING MAN AND IS REQUIRED OF ALMOST ALL JEWISH ADULT MALES. IT IS ABOUT HALF A SHEKEL OR A DIDRACHMAS. THE TAX HAS ITS ROOTS IN EXODUS 30:11 - 16.

JESUS ASKS PETER A PENETRATING QUESTION THAT IDENTIFIES THE PEOPLE WHO PAY TRIBUTE MONEY. THE POINT THAT JESUS WANTS PETER TO COMPREHEND IS THAT SINCE JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, FOR WHOM THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT, HE IS EXEMPT FROM THE TAX.

IF JESUS DOES NOT PAY THIS TAX IT WILL APPEAR TO THE PEOPLE THAT HE IS OPPOSING THE TEMPLE. JESUS INSTRUCTS PETER TO USE A HOOK AND CATCH A FISH. THIS IS THE ONLY TIME A HOOK IS USED FOR FISHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE OTHER TIMES IT SPEAKS OF FISHING IT REFERS TO A NET.

MATTHEW 18, 19 AND 20 THE KING EDUCATES HIS MEN

MATTHEW 18

- I. GUIDANCE FOR GREATNESS 18:1-14**
- II. HEART MOTIVATED FORGIVENESS 18:15-35**

JESUS IS SLOWLY MAKING HIS WAY TOWARD JERUSALEM AND THE CROSS. AS HE BEGINS THIS JOURNEY HE TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES THE MEANING OF BEING LEADERS IN HIS KINGDOM.

THE DISCIPLES TRULY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH WHO IS GOING TO BRING IN HIS KINGDOM. LOOKING FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO THIS COMING KINGDOM THEY COME TO JESUS WITH THE QUESTIONS: “WHO WILL BE THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM?” AND “WHO WILL SIT NEXT TO YOU IN YOUR KINGDOM?” JESUS USES THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO TEACH THEM ABOUT SPIRITUAL GREATNESS. JESUS TAKES A LITTLE CHILD AS A VISUAL TEACHING AID, SETS THE CHILD RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEM AND SAYS THAT THEY MUST BE CONVERTED OR CHANGED AND BECOME AS A LITTLE CHILD TO ENTER THE KINGDOM. THIS CONVERSION HE DESCRIBES IS SIMILAR TO THE NEW BIRTH OF JOHN 3. CONVERSION IS SO IMPORTANT THAT JESUS SAYS ONE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM WITHOUT IT. IN GREEK A DOUBLE NEGATIVE IS USED. THIS MEANS TWO WORDS FOR “NOT” ARE USED TOGETHER IN THIS SENTENCE. THIS IS INCORRECT GRAMMAR IN

ENGLISH, BUT IN GREEK IT ADDS GREAT EMPHASIS TO THE STATEMENT.

JESUS THEN GIVES A SEVERE WARNING TO THOSE WHO LEAD ASTRAY ANYONE WHO BELIEVES AND HAS FAITH IN HIM. THE SEVERITY IS EXTREMELY STRONG IN THE GREEK WORDS. THE WORD IN VERSE SIX TRANSLATED “TO OFFEND” OR “TO CAUSE TO STUMBLE” IS SKANDALON, AND IS THE WORD FOR TRIPPING THE BAIT STICK IN A TRAP OR FOR THE BAIT STICK. THE WORD TRANSLATED “MILLSTONE” HAS A WORD AFTER IT MEANING “TURNED BY A DONKEY.” I HAVE SEEN THESE LARGE MILLSTONES IN ISRAEL. THEY ARE HUGE AND WEIGH AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT.

IN VERSES 15 - 35, JESUS TELLS HOW TO SETTLE DISPUTES BETWEEN BELIEVING BROTHERS AND SISTERS. FIRST, THE ONE SINNED AGAINST IS TO GO BY HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHER TO RESTORE THE FELLOWSHIP. IF THAT DOES NOT RESULT IN FELLOWSHIP HE IS TO TAKE ONE OR TWO PEOPLE WITH HIM. IF THIS STILL DOES NOT BRING A SOLUTION, HE IS TO BRING THE MATTER TO THE CHURCH.

IN THE GREEK TEXT THIS IS NOT NEARLY AS SOFT AS WE MAKE IT SOUND IN ENGLISH. THE KING JAMES SAYS, “GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT”. THE LITERAL GREEK IS “GO AND REPROVE HIM.” THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “REPROVE” IS ελεγχον.

IN VERSES 19 - 20, JESUS PROMISES HIS PRESENCE WITH BELIEVERS WHEN THEY ASSEMBLE IN HIS NAME. IN HIS NAME MEANS IN HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER.

IN VERSE 21, PETER COMPARES HIMSELF WITH THE PARISEES WHO TEACH THAT ONE SHOULD FORGIVE THREE TIMES. PETER THINKS HE IS SPIRITUALLY SUPERIOR TO THEM, BECAUSE HE IS WILLING TO FORGIVE SEVEN TIMES. JESUS RESPONDS BY SHOWING PETER THAT IT IS THE ATTITUDE OF FORGIVENESS WHICH GOD SEEKS RATHER THAN A CALCULABLE NUMBER OF TIMES.

JESUS ILLUSTRATES HIS TEACHING ABOUT FORGIVENESS WITH HIS PARABLE OF THE STEWARDS. TO THE PEOPLE WHO HEAR THIS IT IS A HUMOROUS PARABLE WITH A POWERFUL ENDING ABOUT THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD AND THE RESPONSE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE WHO RECEIVE GOD'S FORGIVENESS. ONE SERVANT OWES HIS MASTER 10,000 TALENTS OR PROBABLY IN U.S. CURRENCY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. THE TOTAL ANNUAL ROMAN TAX REVENUES FOR THE FIVE PROVINCES OF PALESTINE IS ONLY 8,000 TO 10,000 TALENTS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE IN PALESTINE FOR ONE MAN TO OWE ANOTHER MAN THIS AMOUNT OF MONEY. ALL THE PEOPLE LISTENING KNOW THAT THE AMOUNT THE SERVANT OWES IS SO ENORMOUS THAT IT CAN NEVER BE REPAYED. IT IS HUMOROUS BECAUSE IT IS SO RIDICULOUS. IN THE PARABLE, THE MONEY IS CALLED FOR ON THE DAY IT IS DUE. THERE IS NO MONEY. THE MAN, HIS WIFE AND HIS CHILDREN ARE TO BE SOLD INTO SLAVERY. HE FALLS DOWN AND THE GREEK AROIST TENSE MEANS HE KEEPS ON PLEADING FOR TIME AND KEEPS SAYING "ALL TO YOU I WILL PAY". THE LORD OF THE BONDMAN KNOWS HE CAN NOT REPAY THE LOAN, SO HE

FORGIVES HIM THE DEBT. THE GREEK WORD IS “FORGAVE,” NOT “CANCELLED” AS SOME TRANSLATIONS STATE IT.

THE SERVANT WHO HAS BEEN FORGIVEN THIS IMPOSSIBLE DEBT IN HUMAN TERMS FINDS A FELLOW SERVANT WHO OWES HIM A HUNDRED DENARII. THIS IS EQUAL TO ABOUT 100 DAYS’ WAGES, SIZEABLE BUT INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED TO WHAT THE FIRST SERVANT OWED. THE SERVANT WHO HAS BEEN FORGIVEN REFUSES TO FORGIVE AND INSTEAD PUTS THE MAN INTO PRISON. THE LORD OF THE FIRST SERVANT HEARS OF HIS LACK OF MERCY AND THROWS HIM INTO PRISON.

THIS PARABLE IS ABOUT OUR ENORMOUS DEBT TO GOD, WHICH IS SO GREAT THAT WE CAN NEVER REPAY IT. IT ALSO TEACHES US ABOUT HANDLING THE GRACE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD. WE FORGIVE, BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.

FORGIVENESS HAS THREE DIMENSIONS: 1. DOWNWARD FROM GOD, 2. INWARD TO ONESELF, AND 3. OUTWARD TO OTHERS. THE GREEK WORD MOST OFTEN TRANSLATED “FORGIVE” IS FROM TWO WORDS MEANING “TO SEND AWAY.”

MATTHEW 19

- I. THE KING DECLARES THE SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE 19:1-12**
- II. THE KING BLESSES THE CHILDREN 19:13-15**
- III. THE KING CONFRONTS THE RICH YOUNG RULER 19:16-22**
- IV. THE KING REVEALS THE REWARDS FOR FOLLOWING HIM 19:23-30**

AT THIS POINT JESUS CROSSES OVER TO THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER AND CONTINUES TO MAKE HIS WAY SLOWLY TOWARD JERUSALEM. IT IS DURING THIS TIME THAT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS IN CHAPTERS 19 AND 20 OCCUR.

IN VERSES 1 - 12, THE PHARISEES IN AN ATTEMPT TO TRAP JESUS QUESTION HIM ABOUT DIVORCE. THE JEWISH LEADERS ARE THEMSELVES DIVIDED IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF MOSES' TEACHING ABOUT DIVORCE. THEIR TWO CHIEF AUTHORITIES ARE SHAMMAI AND HILLEL. SHAMMI HELD THAT DIVORCE COULD ONLY BE FOR ADULTERY OR SOME FORM OF SEXUAL UNCLEANNESS. HILLEL ADVOCATED THAT DIVORCE COULD BE FOR ALMOST ANY REASON.

IN THE FIRST TWELVE VERSES JESUS TAKES THEM BACK TO GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT FOR MARRIAGE. HE POINTS THEM TO GENESIS WHERE THE WOMAN AND MAN ARE CONSECRATED

AND DEDICATED TO EACH OTHER. GOD NEVER INTENDS FOR DIVORCE. THE JEWS HAVE PERVERTED MOSES' LAW. JESUS CORRECTS THEM, SAYING THAT MOSES DID NOT REQUIRE DIVORCE BUT ALLOWED DIVORCE BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF THE PEOPLES' HEARTS. JESUS TEACHES THAT DIVORCE IS PERMITTED FOR ONLY ONE CAUSE, FORNICATION. FORNICATION USUALLY MEANS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE AMONG THE UNMARRIED. THIS BEING SO IT SEEMS JESUS IS SAYING THAT IF A WOMAN COMES TO THE MARRIAGE NOT A VIRGIN SHE COULD BE DIVORCED. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE IMMEDIATELY. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE PENALTY FOR ADULTERY, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN MARRIED PEOPLE WAS NOT DIVORCE; IT WAS STONING. HOWEVER, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE IS NOT ONE RECORDED CASE OF STONING BECAUSE OF ADULTERY. I TAKE THIS TO SHOW BOTH THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOD AND ALSO HIS GREAT MERCY. JESUS' TEACHING ON DIVORCE IS, THEREFORE, DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE JEWISH TEACHERS.

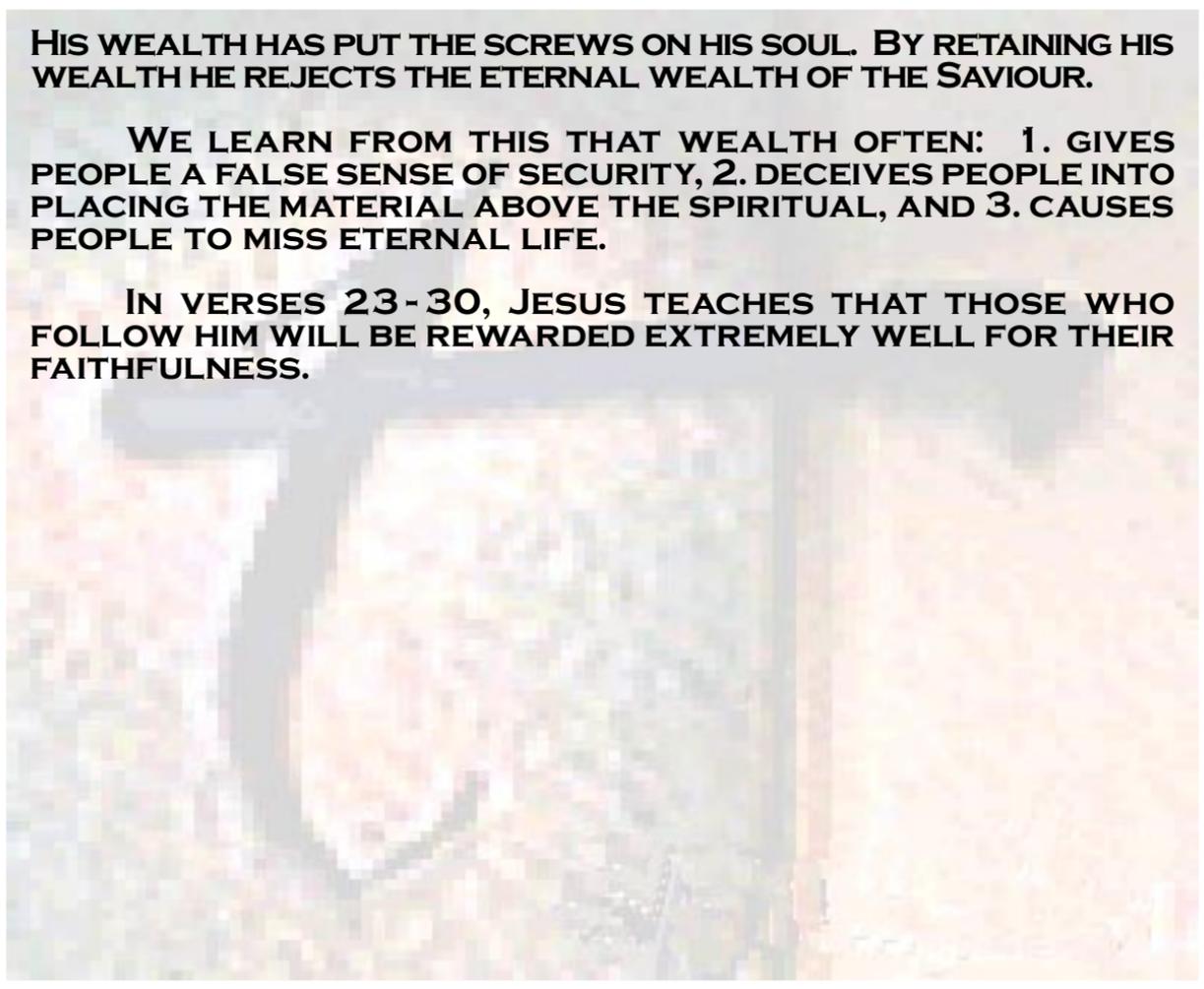
IN VERSES 13- 15, JESUS PLACES FOREVER A HIGH REGARD FOR CHILDREN AND BRINGS THEM TO HIM. JESUS HAS JUST TAUGHT ABOUT THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE. NOW HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE CHILDREN THAT COME FROM MARRIAGE.

IN VERSES 16- 22, JESUS STRIKES AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLINESHIP AND REVEALS THE COST OF FOLLOWING HIM. THE RICH YOUNG RULER IN THIS ENCOUNTER WILL NOT LET GO OF EARTH TO TAKE HOLD OF HEAVEN. ALL THAT HE HAS HAS HIM.

HIS WEALTH HAS PUT THE SCREWS ON HIS SOUL. BY RETAINING HIS WEALTH HE REJECTS THE ETERNAL WEALTH OF THE SAVIOUR.

WE LEARN FROM THIS THAT WEALTH OFTEN: 1. GIVES PEOPLE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY, 2. DECEIVES PEOPLE INTO PLACING THE MATERIAL ABOVE THE SPIRITUAL, AND 3. CAUSES PEOPLE TO MISS ETERNAL LIFE.

IN VERSES 23-30, JESUS TEACHES THAT THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM WILL BE REWARDED EXTREMELY WELL FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS.



MATTHEW 20

I. PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

20:1 - 16

II. THE KING PROPHESIES THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE RESURRECTION 20:17-19

III. THE KING TEACHES ABOUT TRUE GREATNESS 20:20-28

IV. THE KING HEALS TWO BLIND MEN 20:29-34

THE GREAT TRUTH OF THIS PARABLE IS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE MOTIVES OF THOSE WHO SERVE HIM. GOD OWNS THE VINEYARD; THEREFORE, HE CAN DO AS HE WISHES WITH THE VINEYARD AND HIS MONEY.

VERSE 10 SHOULD BE VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHAPTER 19, VERSE 27. PETER ASSUMES SINCE THE APOSTLES ARE THE FIRST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS THEY WILL GET MORE IN THE KINGDOM. JESUS TEACHES THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE. THE PRINCIPLE IN THE PARABLE IS SERVE GOD AND TRUST HIM.

THE WORD IN VERSE 13 TRANSLATED "FRIEND" MEANS A FALSE FRIEND, ONE WHO IS INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN HIS OWN INTEREST. (SPIROS ZODHIATES, THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY, NEW TESTAMENT [CHATTANOOGA, TN.: AMG PUBLISHING, 1992] 2083, P. 663.)

IN VERSES 17-20, JESUS AGAIN ATTEMPTS TO PREPARE HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE CRUCIFIXION. IT SHOWS THAT JESUS KNEW WHAT WAS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH HIS REDEEMING WORK.

VERSES 20-21 RECORD AN IGNORANT REQUEST; VERSES 22-23 RECORD AN INFORMED REPLY; AND VERSES 24-28 RECORD AN INDIGNANT RESPONSE. THE MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOHN COMES TO JESUS WITH A REQUEST THAT JESUS WILL GIVE HER SONS THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT SEATS IN HIS KINGDOM. THE OTHER TEN DISCIPLES ARE UPSET, BECAUSE THEY TOO WANT THE FIRST SEATS.

VERSES 29-34 COULD BE CALLED THE KING'S HEALING TOUCH. ALTHOUGH THE TWO BLIND MEN DO NOT HAVE PHYSICAL SIGHT, THEY DO HAVE SPIRITUAL INSIGHT. THEY CALL HIM "SON OF DAVID" AND "LORD". THE TITLE "SON OF DAVID" SEEMS TO IMPLY THAT JESUS TOUCHES THEIR FAITH. JESUS ALSO TOUCHES THEIR EYES, AND THEY RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT AND FOLLOW HIM.

MATTHEW SEEMS TO BE SETTING UP A SPIRITUAL CONTRAST THAT HE WILL COMPLETE IN THE NEXT CHAPTER. MATTHEW SHOWS THAT THE JEWISH LEADERS REFUSE TO SEE, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO REMAIN IN THEIR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

THIS HEALING MIRACLE REVEALS JESUS AS THE LIGHT OF MEN, AND SHOWS THAT HE CAN TAKE AWAY BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

MATTHEW 21

THE KING'S AUTHORITY

- I. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER HIS CITY 21:1 - 11**
- II. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER HIS TEMPLE
21:12-17**
- III. THE KING'S AUTHORITY OVER THE FIG TREE
21:18-22**
- IV. THE KING'S AUTHORITY IS QUESTIONED 21:23-27**
- V. THE KING'S PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS 21:28-32**
- VI. THE KING'S PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS
21:33-46**

CHAPTERS 21, 22 AND 23 COULD BE ENTITLED, "THE KING IS REJECTED".

IN CHAPTER 21, THREE ACTS OF AUTHORITY BY JESUS REVEAL THE STATE OF THE NATION, THE SPIRITUAL LEVEL TO WHICH THEIR LEADERS HAVE FALLEN AND THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST.

VERSES 1 - 11, BEGINS PASSION WEEK WITH JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, FULFILLING THE PROPHECY OF ZECH. 9:9. AS JESUS ENTERS THE CITY THE MULTITUDES CALL HIM THE PROPHET. THEY DO NOT CALL HIM THE KING. THE

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY IS A VAGUE HINT OF THE FINAL COMING OF THE KING WHEN HE WILL APPEAR IN ALL HIS GLORY AT THE END OF THE AGE.

IN VERSES 12-17, JESUS GOES INTO THE TEMPLE AND THE SCENE BEFORE HIM MAKES HIM PASSIONATELY AWARE THAT ISRAEL HAS DESERTED HER CALLING. CENTURIES AGO WHEN GOD CALLED ISRAEL HE SAID, "YOU SHALL BE TO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." GOD'S DESIRE IS THAT ISRAEL BRING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO HIM. INSTEAD THROUGHOUT THEIR HISTORY THEY HATED THE OTHER NATIONS. THIS HATRED IS SEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE BOOK OF JONAH. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IT IS SEEN CLEARLY IN ACTS 22:21-23, AS PAUL GIVES HIS DEFENSE BEFORE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. WHEN PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS SENT HIM TO THE NATIONS AS AN APOSTLE, THE JEWISH PEOPLE RIOT AND SCREAM FOR HIS DEATH.

THE MONEY CHANGING AND SELLING OF SACRIFICES THAT JESUS SEES WAS TAKING PLACE IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE TEMPLE WHERE GENTILES ARE ALLOWED TO PRAY AND SEEK GOD. ISRAEL HAS DESERTED HER CALL AND MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR GENTILES TO COME TO GOD. A COMMON MODERN DAY INTERPRETATION OF THIS EVENT IS THAT THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THEY WERE BUYING AND SELLING IN THE TEMPLE. THIS IS TO MISS THE MEANING OF THIS PASSAGE. TO UNDERSTAND THIS PASSAGE WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT AND PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL.

PEOPLE COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE THE PASSOVER. JEWISH MALES ARE REQUIRED TO PAY THE TEMPLE TAX WITH A PLAIN COIN WITH NO IMAGE ON IT. THEY, THEREFORE, HAVE TO EXCHANGE THEIR COINS. THIS IS WHAT THE MONEY CHANGERS ARE DOING IN THE TEMPLE. THE JEWISH PILGRIMS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES CAN NOT BRING SACRIFICES WITH THEM FROM SUCH DISTANCES, SO PRE-INSPECTED SACRIFICIES ARE PROVIDED FOR THEM TO PURCHASE IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES. AT FIRST THESE PRACTICES WERE PROBABLY CONVENIENCES FOR THOSE WHO HAD TRAVELED FAR. AS TIME PASSES THIS PRACTICE PROBABLY MOVES INTO THE COURT OF THE GENTILES, GREED DEVELOPED AND TURNS INTO ABUSE AND EXTORTION.

BY THROWING THE MONEY CHANGERS AND SELLERS OF ANIMALS OUT OF THE TEMPLE JESUS REBUKES: 1. THE LEADERS FOR THEIR DESERTION OF GOD'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE, AND 2. THE NATION FOR ITS SPIRITUAL DISREGARD FOR TRUE WORSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. THIS ACT ALSO REVEALS JESUS' IDENTITY AND SHOWS THAT HE HAS COMPLETE AUTHORITY OVER THE TEMPLE. HIS ACT OF AUTHORITY ALSO PROVOKES INDIGNATION FROM THE JEWISH LEADERS.

IN VERSES 18-20, JESUS' ACT OF CURSING THE FIG TREE IS SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL'S FUTURE AND IS A WARNING TO ALL WHO MAKE CLAIMS OF SPIRITUALITY, BUT BEAR NO FRUIT. THE TREE HAS LEAVES FOR SHOW, BUT NO FRUIT. IN THIS EVENT JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT POWER IN PRAYER.

VERSES 23-27 COULD BE OUTLINED:

VERSE 23 JESUS' AUTHORITY IS QUESTIONED,

VERSE 25 LIGHT IS GIVEN,

VERSE 25-27 LIGHT IS REJECTED, AND

VERSE 27C NO MORE LIGHT IS GIVEN.

FOLLOWING THESE THREE ACTS OF AUTHORITY AND REJECTION JESUS GIVES THREE PARABLES OF JUDGEMENT. TWO OF THESE PARABLES ARE IN CHAPTER 22.

THE TEACHING OF THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS, VERSES 28-32 IS CLEAR. MANY OF ILL REPUTE HAD SAID "NO" TO GOD'S LAWS, BUT REPENT IN RESPONSE TO JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PREACHING; WHEREAS, THE JEWISH LEADERS HAVE SAID "YES" TO GOD'S LAW, BUT SAY NO TO KEEPING HIS LAW. THIS IS EVIDENT BY THE FACT THAT AT THIS TIME THEY ARE PLOTTING JESUS' DEATH, AND THEY DO NOT REPENT.

VERSES 28-29 TEACH THAT REPENTANCE BRINGS PERFORMANCE.

VERSE 30 TEACHES THAT PROFESSION WITHOUT PERFORMANCE REVEALS NO REPENTANCE.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS, VERSES 33-46

IS THE SECOND PARABLE IN THIS SERIES. THE PARABLE HAS RIFLE SHOT ACCURACY, AND THE LEADERS CANNOT MISS THAT THE VINEYARD OWNER IS GOD, THE VINEYARD IS ISRAEL, THE HUSBANDMEN ARE THE RULERS OF ISRAEL, THE SERVANTS ARE THE PROPHETS, THE SON IS JESUS, THE RETURN OF THE OWNER IS GOD'S JUDGEMENT AND THE OTHER HUSBANDMEN ARE THE GENTILES.

THE TRUTHS OF THESE VERSES ARE:

- 1. GOD'S RIGHTFUL SOVEREIGNTY,**
- 2. GOD'S REMARKABLE TRUST,**
- 3. GOD'S RESTRAINED POWER,**
- 4. GOD'S RADICAL LOVE, AND**
- 5. GOD'S REQUIRED JUDGEMENT. (SOURCE UNKNOWN)**

MATTHEW 22

I. THE KING'S PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

22:1 - 14

II. THE KING IS QUESTIONED ABOUT TRIBUTE

22:15 - 22

III. THE KING IS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE RESURRECTION 22:23 - 33

IV. THE KING IS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE COMMANDMENTS 22:34 - 40

V. THE KING QUESTIONS THE PHARISEES 22:41 - 46

THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST, VERSES 1 - 4, IS THE THIRD PARABLE IN THIS SERIES. IN THE PARABLE THE KING REQUIRES THE WEARING OF THE ROBE THAT HE PROVIDES. THE CUSTOM DURING THIS TIME WAS FOR THE PERSON HOSTING THE BANQUET TO PROVIDE THE ROBE FOR THE GUESTS. IF THE GUEST DID NOT WEAR THE ROBE, IT WAS A GREAT INSULT TO THE HOST. THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING IS THAT THE MAN HAS MADE NO PREPARATION TO MEET GOD. HE HAS NOT PUT ON THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

FOLLOWING THESE THREE PARABLES JESUS' ENEMIES TRY TO DISCREDIT HIM.

IN VERSES 15 - 22, JESUS' ENEMIES BELIEVE THEY CAN TRAP HIM WITH THE QUESTION ABOUT TRIBUTE. EITHER WAY

HE ANSWERS HE IS IN TROUBLE. IF HE SAYS, "DO NOT PAY TRIBUTE TO ROME," HE IS IN TROUBLE WITH THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT. IF HE SAYS, "PAY TRIBUTE," HE IS IN TROUBLE WITH THE PEOPLE.

JESUS ASKS FOR A COIN. THE FACT THAT THEY POSSESS A COIN SHOWS THAT THEY ACCEPT BOTH THE POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND THE PRIVILEGES OF ROME. JESUS ILLUSTRATES THAT THEY HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO BOTH GOVERNMENT AND GOD. CAESAR'S IMAGE IS ON THE COIN, SIGNIFYING HIS AUTHORITY OVER THE PERSON WHO USES IT AS CURRENCY. GOD'S IMAGE IS ON MAN EVEN THOUGH THE FALL PERVERTS IT. THAT IMAGE SIGNIFIES GOD'S AUTHORITY OVER MAN.

IN VERSES 23-33, THE SADDUCEES QUESTION JESUS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION, BUT TRY TO USE THE DOCTRINE TO TRAP JESUS. IN JESUS' ANSWER HE TEACHES THAT THE POWER OF GOD IS BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION, AND AFFIRMS BOTH SPIRITUAL LIFE AFTER DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION.

IN VERSES 34-40, JESUS IS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT. THE PHARISEES ARE PLEASED THAT JESUS DEFEATS THE SADDUCEES. IN THEIR SMUG SUPERIORITY THEY THINK THEY CAN TRAP JESUS IN A THEOLOGICAL DEBATE BY GETTING HIM TO CHOOSE ONE SIDE OR ANOTHER OF AN ISSUE. INSTEAD HE STRIKES AT THE HEART OF THE ISSUE AND TEACHES THEM THE PRIORITY OF LOVE.

JESUS QUESTIONS THE PHARISEES IN VERSES 41 - 46. JESUS' QUESTION IS THE ISSUE WHERE ALL HERESIES FAIL. HE ASKS THEM WHOSE SON CHRIST IS AND HOW DAVID COULD SPEAK OF THE MESSIAH AS BOTH HIS SON AND HIS LORD. THEY CANNOT ANSWER. THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER. THE MESSIAH IS BOTH THE SON OF DAVID AND THE SON OF GOD.



MATTHEW 23

I. THE KING WARNS HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST HYPOCRISY 23:1 - 12

II. THE KING PRONOUNCES WOES AGAINST THE PHARISEES 23:13-28

IN VERSES 1 - 12, JESUS WARNS HIS DISCIPLES NOT TO BE LIKE THE PHARISEES WHO DO GOOD DEEDS TO BE SEEN OF MEN AND WISH TO EXALT THEMSELVES ABOVE OTHERS.

IN RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION JESUS PRONOUNCES SEVEN WOES UPON THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, VERSES 13-39. AS HE PRONOUNCES DOOM UPON THEM TEARS ARE IN HIS SOUL. HE SEES GOD'S LOVE BEING REJECTED. JESUS' HEART IS TORN, FOR HE LOVES HIS CITY AND HIS PEOPLE, BUT THEY HAVE REJECTED HIM.

JESUS' MINISTRY HAD BEGUN WITH THE BLESSINGS OF THE BEATITUDES FOR THE PEOPLE. NOW IT ENDS WITH THE WOES OF CONDEMNATION FOR THE LEADERS. THE FIRST THREE WOES ARE PRONOUNCED AGAINST THEIR TEACHINGS. THE FOURTH WOE REBUKES BOTH THEIR ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS. AND THE LAST THREE WOES ARE PRONOUNCED AGAINST THEIR EXTERNAL SHOW AND INTERNAL HYPOCRISY. GOD'S LOVE HAS BEEN REJECTED, AND THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THEIR ENMITY AGAINST GOD.

JESUS' LAST CRY, IN VERSE 39, LOOKS FORWARD TO THE TIME WHEN HE WILL RETURN IN GLORY TO REIGN AS KING. HE SAYS, "...YOU SHALL SEE ME NO MORE TILL YOU SAY, "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD." THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "BLESSED" IS A PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, WHICH STRESSES THE STATE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE COMPLETED RESULTS OF THE ACTION.



MATTHEW 24 - 25

THE KING'S TEACHING ABOUT HIS RETURN

CHAPTERS 24 AND 25 DEAL WITH THE KING'S RETURN OR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. THESE CHAPTERS TEACH BELIEVERS: 1. TO KEEP THE HOPE ALIVE THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN, 2. TO BE READY FOR CHRIST'S RETURN, 3. TO BE ON GUARD AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS, 4. TO NOT SET DATES FOR CHRIST'S RETURN, AND 5. TO HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL OF ESCHATOLOGICAL MATTERS.

THESE CHAPTERS ARE ESCHATOLOGICAL WHICH MEANS THAT THEY ARE TEACHINGS ABOUT LAST THINGS, ESPECIALLY ABOUT JUDGEMENT AND SALVATION. INTERWOVEN IN THESE CHAPTERS IS THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM IN 70 A.D. UNDER THE COMMAND OF TITUS, THE ROMAN GENERAL AND THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AT THE END OF TIME WHICH IS PROPHESED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO GUARD AGAINST PRIDEFUL, UN-LOVING AND DOGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF THESE CHAPTERS. THEY ARE NOT MEANT TO DIVIDE THE PEOPLE OF GOD. THIS SECTION IS DIFFICULT, BECAUSE MATTHEW GIVES ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE TOTAL PICTURE OF THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

THE DISCUSSION STARTS AS JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

LOOK AT THE BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE WITH ITS WHITE MARBLE STONES GLISTENING MAGNIFICENTLY IN THE SUN. JESUS TELLS THEM THAT THE TEMPLE WILL BE DESTROYED. AT THIS TIME, JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES CROSS OVER INTO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES; SO THIS SECTION IS CALLED THE MOUNT OF OLIVES DISCOURSE. THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS THREE QUESTIONS: 1. WHEN WILL THE TEMPLE BE DESTROYED? 2. WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S COMING? AND 3. WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE WORLD? THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS ARE WOVEN TOGETHER SO THAT IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE THEM. WHEN YOU CONFRONT SOMEONE WHO IS ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT HE HAS SEPARATED THESE QUESTIONS, YOU CAN BE SURE HE HAS NOT.



MATTHEW 24

I. THE KING TEACHES ABOUT THE PRESENT AGE

24:1 - 14

II. THE KING SPEAKS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

24:15 - 28

III. THE KING REVEALS THE SIGNS OF HIS RETURN

24:29 - 31

IV. THE KING TEACHES FAITHFULNESS 24:32 - 51

IN VERSES 1 - 14, JESUS PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE IN 70 A.D. IS BUT A REFLECTION OF THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION THAT WILL OCCUR AT THE END OF TIME. VERSE 2 SAYS THAT NOT ONE STONE WILL BE LEFT ON ANOTHER, BUT AT THE END OF THE DESTRUCTION IN 70 A.D. PARTS OF THE WESTERN, SOUTHWEST AND SOUTHEAST WALLS WERE STANDING. JESUS' REFERENCE IN VERSE 2 IS EITHER A GENERAL REFERENCE OR IT IS A LITERAL REFERENCE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

JESUS TELLS ABOUT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORY UNTIL THE TIME OF HIS RETURN. THE SEVERITY OF THESE TIMES ARE NOT TO PREVENT THE DISCIPLES FROM PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

VERSES 15 - 28 REFER TO THE GREAT TRIBULATION WHICH WILL COME JUST BEFORE THE RETURN OF JESUS. THE REFERENCES

TO FALSE CHRISTS OR ANTICHRISTS SURELY REFERS TO THE "MAN OF SIN" WHICH PAUL SPEAKS OF IN HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA.

IN VERSES 29 - 31, JESUS GIVES A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE STARTLING SIGNS THAT WILL PRECEDE AND INDICATE THE COMING OF CHRIST.

VERSES 32 - 51 TEACH THAT JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE TO WATCH AND TO BE PREPARED FOR HIS COMING. THE EVENTS PRECEDING HIS COMING WILL BE LIKE THEY WERE IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, WICKED PEOPLE, LIVING WITH DISREGARD FOR GOD'S PLANS AND SEEKING ONLY THE MATERIAL WORLD.

VERSE 34 HAS A STARTLING STATEMENT. A LITERAL TRANSLATION IS: "AMEN, I SAY TO YOU, NO NOT (A DOUBLE NEGATIVE) WILL HAVE PASSED AWAY THIS GENERATION UNTIL ALL THESE SHALL HAVE OCCURRED (OR COME INTO EXISTENCE). LENSKI POINTS OUT THAT "DOR" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS GENERALLY TRANSLATED BY γενεα IN THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX) AND USUALLY REFERS TO A PARTICULAR KIND OR TYPE OF MEN. (R. C. H. LENSKI, THE INTERPRETATION OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL [MINNEAPOLIS: AUGSBURG PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1964] P. 952.) JESUS IS PROBABLY SAYING THAT THE TYPE OF EVIL HE HAS DESCRIBED WILL EXIST IN THEIR GENERATION. JESUS SAYS IN VERSE 36 THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW THE EXACT TIME OF HIS COMING, HE ONLY KNOWS WHAT THINGS WILL BE LIKE.

MATTHEW 25

I. THE KING GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

25:1 - 13

II. THE KING GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

25:31 - 46

III. THE KING COMES AS THE JUDGE 25:32 - 46

JESUS USES THESE PARABLES TO TEACH HIS DISCIPLES THE NECESSITY OF BEING PREPARED FOR HIS COMING AGAIN.

VERSES 1 - 13, THE PARABLE OF THE 10 VIRGINS TEACH THAT JESUS' FOLLOWERS ARE TO BE PREPARED FOR HIS COMING. THE NUMBER 10 IN SCRIPTURE IS OFTEN USED SYMBOLICALLY. IT OFTEN SIGNIFIES REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETENESS. IT STILL DOES TODAY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE DRAW A CONTINUUM, 1 - 10. FURTHER, ACCORDING TO JEWISH NOTIONS 10 COMPOSED A CONGREGATION.

THE SETTING FOR THE PARABLE IS A WEDDING PARTY. IN THEIR CUSTOM ONLY THOSE WHO CARRIED LIGHTS AND OTHER THINGS FOR THE EVENT WERE A PART OF THE WEDDING PARTY AND COULD GET INTO THE WEDDING FEAST. THEY PLAYED GAMES AT WEDDINGS JUST AS WE DO. WE THROW RICE, AND TIE TIN CANS TO CARS AND WRITE ON CAR WINDOWS, "JUST MARRIED." THEY SET THE DATE FOR THE WEDDING, BUT NOT THE SPECIFIC HOUR.

THIS ADDED SUSPENSE. THE GROOM TRIED TO COME WHEN HE WAS LEAST EXPECTED AND SNATCH AWAY THE BRIDE. ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE READY FOLLOWED HIM. WHEN THE FIVE FOOLISH GIRLS WITH THE OIL GOT TO THE GROOM'S HOUSE, THE DOOR WAS SHUT AND NO ONE ELSE COULD ENTER. THE WEDDING FEAST WENT ON FOR SEVERAL DAYS. THE HUMOROUS GOSSIP IN THE CITY WOULD BE ABOUT THE FIVE GIRLS WHO GOT CAUGHT UNPREPARED AND MISSED THE FUN OF THE WEDDING FEAST. JESUS' TEACHING IS THAT THOSE WHO ARE NOT PREPARED ARE GOING TO MISS GOD'S GREAT PARTY.

THE OIL IN THE PARABLE IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT. IT SEEMS TO STAND FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE. IT TEACHES THAT OUTWARD PROFESSION IS NOT ENOUGH. THERE MUST BE THE LIGHT OR THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN SHINING OUT TO ILLUMINATE THE WORLD. ANOTHER ETERNAL TRUTH OF THE PARABLE IS THAT INTERNAL POWER MUST BE PRESENT AT THE TIME OF TESTING, FOR THEN IT CANNOT BE BORROWED. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO MAKE THE PREPARATIONS.

IN VERSES 14-30, JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS. JESUS CONTINUES TO DRIVE HOME THE TRUTH OF BEING PREPARED FOR HIS SECOND COMING. THIS PARABLE CAN BE DIVIDED HOMILETICALLY INTO THREE PARTS: 1. THE RECEIVING, 2. THE RISKING AND 3. THE RECKONING.

VERSES 31-46 PICTURE JESUS AS THE KING SITTING UPON HIS THRONE. THESE VERSES TEACH: 1. JUDGEMENT IS A

REALITY, 2. DIVISION IS FINAL, 3. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IS CERTAIN, AND 4. ETERNAL LIFE IS SECURE. THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS GIVEN TO THIS SECTION EVEN AMONG CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALS. THIS PASSAGE DOES NOT SPEAK OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT OF THE UNSAVED FROM REV. 20, NOR IS IT THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SAINTS' WORKS FROM II COR. 5:1 - 11. THIS JUDGEMENT IS AT THE CLOSE OF THE TRIBULATION. MANY ASSUME THAT IT IS A DIVISION OF NATIONS, BUT IN THE GREEK IN VERSE 32, THE WORD "THEM" IS MASCULINE AND "NATIONS" IS NEUTER. EVEN THE READING IN ENGLISH DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY THAT IT IS THE NATIONS THAT ARE DIVIDED FROM EACH OTHER. THE SHEEP AND GOATS WILL BE INDIVIDUALS IN EVERY NATION. THE SHEEP WILL BE THOSE WHOSE FAITH IN CHRIST WILL BE REVEALED BY THEIR LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN.



MATTHEW 26-28

IN CHAPTERS 26 THROUGH 28 THE PULSE OF THE MESSAGE QUICKENS AS THE TRIAL, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE KING TAKE CENTER STAGE. THESE CHAPTERS ALSO DIRECT OUR ATTENTION TO THE CHARACTERS AROUND THE CROSS.

MATTHEW 26

- I. THE KING IS ANOINTED 26:1 - 13**
- II. THE KING IS BETRAYED 26:14 - 16**
- III. THE KING AT THE LAST SUPPER 26:17 - 35**
- IV. THE KING PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE 26:36 - 46**
- V. THE KING IS ARRESTED 26:47 - 56**
- VI. THE KING BEFORE CAIAPHAS 26:57 - 68**
- VII. THE KING IS DENIED 26:69 - 75**

VERSES 1 - 16 RECORD THE MOVEMENTS TOWARD THE CROSS FROM TWO DIRECTIONS, ONE FROM GOD'S SIDE AND THE OTHER FROM SATAN'S. JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES WHEN AND HOW HIS DEATH WILL OCCUR. THE RULERS DECIDE IT WILL NOT BE DURING THE FEAST. MATTHEW SHOWS THAT THE CRESCENDOS OF TIME, METHOD AND PLACE RESPOND TO THE BATON OF GOD, NOT TO THE AUTHORITY OF MEN.

MATTHEW ALSO PRESENTS THE STARK CONTRAST OF THE ANOINTING OF JESUS WITH OIL BY A WOMAN AND THE BETRAYAL OF JESU BY JUDAS. THE CONTRAST IS CALCULATED IN THE GREAT VALUE OF THE OINTMENT AND THE PRICE OF A COMMON SLAVE.

ONE OF THE GREAT HOMILETICAL TRUTHS OF THE ANOINTING IS YOU CAN NOT POUR PERFUME ON JESUS WITHOUT GETTING SOME ON YOURSELF. GENERATIONS REMEMBER THE WOMAN WITH TENDERNESS AND APPRECIATION.

SOME OF THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM JUDAS ARE: AN OUTWARD WALK WITH JESUS DOES NOT GUARANTEE AN INWARD HEART LOYAL TO HIM. AND NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A BESETTING SIN. JUDAS' SOUL IS DROWNED IN THE SIN OF GREED.

IN VERSES 17 - 35, THE KING CELEBRATES THE PASSOVER WITH HIS DISCIPLES. THE PASSOVER IS A FREEDOM CELEBRATION OF DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPTIAN SLAVERY AND BONDAGE. BY FAITH THE ANCESTORS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL APPLIED THE BLOOD OF A LAMB TO THEIR DOOR POST. FOR THE CHRISTIAN JESUS FULFILLS THE PASSOVER. HE IS THE LAMB WHOSE BLOOD IS APPLIED BY FAITH TO THE DOOR OF THE HEART AS WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN BY HIS DEATH.

IN VERSES 35 - 56, THE KING IS IN GETHSEMANE. MATTHEW WANTS TO MAKE SURE WE UNDERSTAND THAT JESUS IS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.

THE GREEK WORD IN VERSE 50 REFERRING TO JUDAS τραπε (HETIRE), TRANSLATED “FRIEND” MEANS A FALSE FRIEND. (ZODHIATES, OP. CIT., 2083, PP. 662 -663.)

HE TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT THIS IS NOT PANDORAH’S BOX OF CALAMITY, THAT IF HE ASKS, GOD WILL SEND 12 LEGIONS OF ANGELS TO RESCUE HIM. THAT IS 72,000 ANGELS. REMEMBER THAT IT TOOK ONLY A COUPLE OF THEM TO STRIKE THE MEN OF SODOM BLIND SO THAT THEY COULD NOT FIND THE DOOR IN FRONT OF THEM.

THE AGONY OF THE CROSS IS BEFORE JESUS. THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE IS WHERE THE FINAL DECISION TO GO TO THE CROSS IS LOCKED IN PLACE.

IN VERSES 57 -75, CAIAPHAS IS BEFORE THE KING, NOT THE KING BEFORE CAIAPHAS. THERE ARE REALLY TWO SCENES IN THIS PASSAGE. THE FIRST IS AN ILLEGAL TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN. THE COURT IS FILLED WITH LIES, FALSE WITNESSES AND ILLEGAL PROCEDURES. THESE EVENTS ENERGIZE AND FULFILL ISA. 53:7. JESUS ALSO QUOTES FROM DAN 7:13. THE CHARGE AGAINST JESUS IS BLASPHEMY. THE HIGH PRIEST TEARS HIS GARMENTS WHICH THE OLD TESTAMENT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS. IN DOING SO HE TORE THE PRIESTHOOD FROM ISRAEL. THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS ALMOST READY TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

THE SECOND SCENE IS IN THE COURTYARD. SIMON PETER IS

SIFTED LIKE SAND IN SATAN'S HAND. HIS COURAGE FAILS. PETER, THE ROCK MAN IS GROUND TO DUST BY THE WORDS OF A LITTLE MAID. DOWN HE GOES IN DENIAL THAT HE EVEN KNOWS JESUS. THREE TIMES HE LIES. HE CURSES AND GETS ANGRY. THEN HE HEARS THE COCK CROW, REMEMBERS JESUS PREDICTION AND GOES OUT INTO THE NIGHT WEeping BITTERLY. HE HAS REGRET AND REMORSE, BUT HE ALSO HAS GODLY REPENTANCE. THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PETER AND JUDAS. JUDAS HAS REGRET AND REMORSE, BUT NOT GODLY REPENTANCE. WE WILL SEE THIS MORE CLEARLY IN CHAPTER 27.



MATTHEW 27

I. THE KING BEFORE PILATE 27:1 - 2; 11 - 26

II. JUDAS RETURNS THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER
27:3 - 10

III. THE KING IS CRUCIFIED 27:27 - 56

IV. THE KING IS BURIED 27:57:66

MATTHEW 27:1 - 10 PICTURES THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS, HIS FINAL WORDS AND FATAL ACTIONS AS HE DESTROYS HIMSELF. JUDAS DELIBERATELY CHOOSES HIS ACTION AND THEN SORROWFULLY REGRETS THE CONSEQUENCES. THINGS DO NOT COME TOGETHER AS HE HAS DESIGNED THEM. THAT IS ALWAYS THE WAY IT IS WHEN WE TRY TO BEND GOD'S WILL TO OUR WAY. JUDAS TRIES TO BEND GOD TO HIS WAY. THAT IS ALWAYS DEMONIC. THE WORD μεταμεληθεις IN VERSE 3 SHOULD BE TRANSLATED "HAVING REGRETTED." REMORSE IS ALSO A GOOD RENDERING OF THIS WORD. BLACKWELDER TELLS US THAT "WHEN THE NEW TESTAMENT SPEAKS OF MERE SORROW FOR ACTION, IT USES 'METAMELOMAI.'" (BOISE W. BLACKWELDER, LIGHT FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER HOUSE, 1976] PP. 46 - 47.) HE ALSO POINTS OUT, "THAT GENUINE REPENTANCE TO WHICH REMISSION OF SINS IS PROMISED IS ALWAYS EXPRESSED BY [THE GREEK WORD] 'METHANE.'" (IBID., PP. 46 - 47.)

JUDAS SAYS, IN VERSE 4, TO THE PRIESTS, “αμαπτον παραδους αιμα αθων” “I SINNED DELIVERING UP BLOOD GUILTLESS.” “I SINNED” IS AN AORIST TENSE VERB LIMITING AND SIGNIFYING ONE ACT OR UNIT OF ACTS CONNECTED WITH THIS EVENT. AS WE SEE IN THE GREEK WORDS GODLY REPENTANCE IS MISSING IN JUDAS.

IN VERSES 11 - 32, PILATE, GOVERNOR OF THE ROMAN PROVINCE IS BEFORE THE KING. SEVERAL TIMES I HAVE SEEN THE INSCRIPTION AT CAESAREA WHICH GIVES PILATE’S TITLE AS “PRE - FECT.” THIS IS A TITLE USED OF ROMAN MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WERE PLACED IN CHARGE OF DIFFICULT AREAS. (SEE ALSO MORRIS, OP. CIT., P. 692.)

PILATE DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT JESUS. HE IS, HOWEVER, LIKE EVERY PERSON WHO IS CONFRONTED WITH JESUS. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE NEUTRAL. HE HAS TO MAKE A DECISION. HE KNOWS JESUS IS INNOCENT. THIS IS A SAD SAGA OF CONSCIENCE, COMPROMISE, AND COLLAPSE. HE ATTEMPTS TO COMPROMISE WITH THE JEWISH LEADERS BY RELEASING JESUS AT THE FEAST. BUT THEY CRY FOR THE RELEASE OF BARABBAS. THE NAME BARABBAS MEANS “SON OF THE FATHER.” JUDAS HAD SAID JESUS WAS INNOCENT, NOW PILATE DECLARES IT. PILATE’S QUESTION, “WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS WHO IS CALLED THE CHRIST?” IS THE QUESTION OF THE CENTURIES. PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS IN WATER, BUT IT IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE RHETORIC OF RATIONALIZATION. IT DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE SIN OF HIS HEART OR HIS REJECTION OF JESUS.

THE GREATEST TRAGEDY OF ALL IS THE JEWISH LEADERS WHO REJECT THEIR MESSIAH, LIE, CHANGE THE CHARGES AGAINST JESUS AND PERSUADE THE PEOPLE TO CALL DOWN GOD'S WRATH UPON THE NATION, "HIS BLOOD BE ON US, AND OUR CHILDREN." THIS IS LIKE TAKING A JET TO A DISASTER.

VERSES 33-66 GIVE THE HORRIBLE EVENTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL OF THE KING. THE ACCUSATION OF HIS CRIMES ON THE SIGN OVER HIS HEAD, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS," COULD BE THE TITLE OF THE GOSPEL OF
M A T T H E W .

SIN IS SO SERIOUS THAT WHEN GOD DEALS WITH IT ON THE CROSS EVEN THE TECTONIC BELTS OF THE EARTH ARE AFFECTED, FOR THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD SHAKE. THE SPIRITUAL WORLD ALSO SHAKES, FOR AFTER THE RESURRECTION THE BODIES OF MANY SAINTS APPEAR IN JERUSALEM, VERSE 53.

THE MEANING OF THE ATONEMENT IS IN THE TEARING OF THE CURTAIN WHICH SEPARATED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE TEMPLE. JESUS' DEATH AS THE SON OF GOD OPENS THE WAY FOR PEACE WITH GOD.

MATTHEW 28

I. THE KING IS RESURRECTED 28:1 - 10

II. THE CHIEF PRIESTS BRIBE THE SOLDIERS 28:1 - 10

III. THE KING GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION 28:16-20

THE COLORS OF ROYALTY, PURPLE AND GOLD, ARE IN THE SKY ON THE RESURRECTION MORNING.

THE ANGEL COMES IN A GREAT EARTHQUAKE AND ROLLS THE STONE AWAY FROM THE TOMB. HIS APPEARANCE IS LIKE LIGHTENING. THE GUARDS ARE PARALYZED WITH FEAR, AND BECOME LIKE DEAD MEN. THE ANGEL DOES NOT ROLL THE STONE AWAY TO LET JESUS OUT. HE ROLLS THE STONE AWAY TO LET THE WOMEN IN. THE WOMEN COME TO EMBALM HIM, DEAD. HE COMES FORTH TO EMBRACE THEM, ALIVE. THE SONG OF THE RESURRECTION GOES RINGING THROUGH THE RAFTERS OF THEIR SOULS. THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH IS, ETERNAL LIFE CANNOT STAY IN A GRAVE.

THE RESURRECTION AUTHENTICATES:

- 1. THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, 1:14: 10:17-18;**
- 2. THAT THE WORD OF GOD, THE SCRIPTURES IS TRUE, ACTS 2:31, PS. 16:10;**
- 3. THAT THERE IS POWER TO LIVE THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE;**

4. THAT THERE IS A HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVEN; AND
5. THAT CHRIST IS THE HOPE OF FUTURE RESURRECTION.

IN THIS SECTION WE SEE:

1. THAT MEN UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GOD,
2. THAT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP COMES FROM THE RESURRECTION,
3. THAT EVIL NEVER BELIEVES THE TRUTH,
4. THAT JESUS HAS ALL AUTHORITY,
5. THAT WE ARE COMMISSIONED TO MAKE DISCIPLES, AND
6. THAT JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH US.

MATTHEW'S LAST SENTENCE IN GREEK IS MAGNIFICENT. IN HIS LAST WORDS JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH GOD AND GIVES HIS DISCIPLES A GREAT PROMISE, "και ιδου, εγω μεθ υμων ειμι παντας τας ημερας εως της συντελειας του αιωνος." THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THESE WORDS IS SIGNIFICANT, "AND SEE, I WITH YOU I AM ALL THE DAYS UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE AGE." AS YOU CAN SEE JESUS' PROMISE TO BE WITH US FOREVER IS EVEN IN THE GREEK SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION. THE WORD "YOU" IS SURROUNDED BY THE WORDS "I" AND "I AM." THIS PLACES EMPHASIS UPON HIS ABIDING PRESENCE WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

MARK

INTRODUCTION

ALMOST ALL OF MARK IS INCLUDED IN MATTHEW AND LUKE; THEREFORE, BECAUSE OF TIME AND SPACE LIMITATIONS WE WILL GIVE ONLY A VERY SHORT OVERVIEW OF MARK.

AUTHORSHIP

FROM EARLIEST TRADITION THE GOSPEL OF MARK HAS RECEIVED UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATION THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY JOHN MARK. JOHN MARK IS MENTIONED EIGHT TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. HIS JEWISH NAME IS JOHN, AND HIS ROMAN NAME IS MARK.

THERE IS NO SERIOUS EVIDENCE TO CAST DOUBT ON JOHN MARK AS THE AUTHOR OF THE SECOND GOSPEL. THERE ARE MANY PERSONAL TOUCHES IN THE GOSPEL, AND SOME OF THE AROIST TENSE VERBS SEEMS TO INDICATE A PERSONAL WITNESS. THE RECORD OF THE YOUNG MAN IN MARK 14:51 - 52 HAS SUCH A PERSONAL TOUCH TO IT THAT SOME SCHOLARS HAVE WONDERED IF THIS YOUNG MAN IS NOT JOHN MARK HIMSELF. HE WOULD

PROBABLY HAVE BEEN ABOUT THIS YOUNG MAN'S AGE AT THE TIME OF THIS EVENT.

DATE OF WRITING

PAPIAS, BISHOP OF HIEROPOLIS, WHO LIVED 60- 150 A.D. AND SEEMS TO HAVE HAD SOME ASSOCIATION WITH THE APOSTLE JOHN, WROTE THE EXPOSITION OF THE ORACLES OF THE LORD. IN THIS WRITING HE SAID THAT MARK WAS THE EARLIEST OF THE FOUR GOSPELS. (SEE W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, A GUIDE TO THE GOSPELS [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY] P. 39.) MOST SCHOLARS TODAY BELIEVE THAT MARK WAS THE EARLIEST OF THE FOUR GOSPELS. THE DATES GENERALLY GIVEN FOR ITS WRITING ARE 40 A.D. TO 75 A.D. IF IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE 40'S THAT MAKES IT ONE OF THE EARLIEST NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS, PRECEDED PROBABLY ONLY BY JAMES AND PERHAPS I THESSALONIANS. NO EXACT DATE CAN BE ESTABLISHED, BUT IT SEEMS THAT AN EARLY DATE BETWEEN 40 A.D. AND 55 A.D. IS APPROPRIATE.

SOURCES

JOHN MARK FROM HIS YOUTH IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CHURCH AND SEEMS TO BE ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO PETER. PETER IN I PETER 5:13 CALLS HIM "MARK, MY SON." IT HAS BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT PETER IS THE MAJOR SOURCE FOR

MARK. PAPIAS, IN EXPOSITION OF THE ORACLES, SAYS THAT THE APOSTLE PETER WAS THE CHIEF SOURCE OF MARK'S GOSPEL. (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, OP. CIT., P. 39) MARK HIMSELF WAS ALSO A MAJOR SOURCE OF INFORMATION, AS HE WAS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH MANY OF THE EARLY DISCIPLES. IN FACT, HE PROBABLY KNEW JESUS. HE WAS CERTAINLY KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE HISTORICAL FACTS SURROUNDING JESUS, THE DISCIPLES AND THE EARLY CHURCH. THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE TRUE SINCE HIS MOTHER'S HOUSE WAS A GATHERING PLACE FOR THE EARLY DISCIPLES, AS ACTS 12:12 INDICATES.

ACTS 12 AND 13 RECORD THAT PAUL AND BARNABAS WERE SENT WITH FINANCIAL AID FROM THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH TO THE BELIEVERS IN JERUSALEM WHO WERE SUFFERING FROM FAMINE. ON THE RETURN TRIP TO ANTIOCH, THEY BROUGHT JOHN MARK WITH THEM, ACTS 12:25. WE ALSO KNOW FROM THE SCRIPTURE THAT JOHN MARK WAS A COUSIN OF BARNABAS.

HE WAS ALSO A COMPANION OF PAUL AND BARNABAS ON THEIR FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. HOWEVER, PART WAY THROUGH THE JOURNEY, FOR SOME REASON MARK RETURNED HOME. WHEN PAUL AND BARNABAS PROPOSED A SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY PAUL REFUSED TO TAKE JOHN MARK WITH THEM. SO BARNABAS TOOK JOHN MARK WITH HIM, AND THEY WENT ON A MISSIONARY JOURNEY TO CYPRUS, ACTS 15:37-39.

SEVERAL YEARS PASS, AND WE DO NOT KNOW ALL THAT INTERVENED, BUT WE LEARN FROM COL. 4:10 THAT JOHN MARK AND PAUL LATER HAD A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH EACH OTHER. COLOSSIANS WAS WRITTEN DURING PAUL'S FIRST IMPRISONMENT IN ROME. IN II TIM. 4:11, PAUL WRITES TO TIMOTHY FROM ROME PROBABLY DURING HIS SECOND IMPRISONMENT, AND TELLS HIM TO COME AND TO BRING JOHN MARK WITH HIM, FOR HE WOULD DO HIM GOOD.

KEY VERSE

THE KEY VERSE IN MARK IS 10:45.

LOCATION OF WRITING

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT AN ABSOLUTE ANSWER TO WHERE JOHN MARK WAS WHEN HE WROTE HIS GOSPEL. MOST SCHOLARS THINK THAT HE WAS PROBABLY IN ROME.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT MARK WAS WRITING FOR THE GENTILES AND ESPECIALLY THE ROMANS. THIS GOSPEL, HOWEVER, REACHED FAR BEYOND SUCH A LIMITED SCOPE.

PURPOSES FOR WRITING

THE PURPOSES FOR WRITING THE GOSPEL WERE:

- 1. TO RELATE THE STORY FROM THE BASIS OF PETER'S OWN EXPERIENCE,**
- 2. TO MAKE THE GOSPEL STORY CONSISTENT IN THE CHURCHES, AND**
- 3. TO STRENGTHEN CHRISTIANS.**

THIS WOULD BE TRUE ESPECIALLY IF THE GOSPEL OF MARK WAS WRITTEN IN THE EARLY 60'S UNDER THE RULE AND PERSECUTION OF NERO.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

MARK WRITES IN FLASHES LIKE A SLIDE PROJECTOR THROWING SLIDES ON THE SCREEN IN RAPID SUCCESSION, PICTURING THE ACTION AND WORK OF THE SAVIOR. MARK IS A GREAT MOVING DRAMA WRITTEN IN PRESENT TENSE RATHER THAN IN PAST TENSE. IT IS AS IF MARK IS SAYING "LOOK AT WHAT JESUS DOES AND YOU WILL KNOW WHO HE IS." MARK PRESENTS JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD IN ACTION SLOWLY MOVING TOWARD THE CROSS. MARK PRESENTS JESUS AS A MAN, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF MEN.

SOME OF THE OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL

OF MARK ARE:

- 1. SIMON PETER IS THE HERO NEXT TO JESUS.**
- 2. THE GOSPEL HAS A DRAMATIC AND URGENT CHARACTER ABOUT IT.**
- 3. THERE IS A SENSE OF MYSTERY TO HIS STORY.**
- 4. IT GIVES A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.**
- 5. MIRACLES SEEM TO BE RECORDED IN ORDER.**
- 6. EMPHASIS IS ON THE DEEDS AND ACTIONS OF JESUS.**
- 7. EMPHASIS IS ON JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.**
- 8. EMPHASIS IS ON JESUS AS THE SON OF MAN.**
- 9. STRONG EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE SUFFERING OF JESUS.**
- 10. ALMOST HALF OF MARK'S GOSPEL IS THE PASSION STORY.**
- 11. MARK SEEMS TO QUOTE WORDS OR PHRASES FROM ARAMAIC.**

MANUSCRIPTS OF MARK

THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF THE LAST CHAPTER OF MARK ARE MISSING FROM THE TWO MOST ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS ALTHOUGH VATICANUS, ONE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS, HAS A SPACE LEFT AFTER VERSE 8, AS IF THERE WERE MORE. THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS OF MARK END IN THREE DIFFERENT PLACES. THE SHORT ENDING IS 16:3, AND THE LONGER ENDING IS THE REST OF THE CHAPTER. IF THESE VERSES WERE ADDED LATER, THEY WERE ADDED VERY EARLY AND PERHAPS BY MARK OR AN AUTHENTIC PERSON IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

THE GREAT MAJORITY OF MANUSCRIPTS, HOWEVER HAVE THE COMPLETE CHAPTER. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS GUIDED THE FORMATION OF HIS SCRIPTURE; THEREFORE, WE DEAL WITH MARK AS IT HAS COME TO US.

OUTLINE OF MARK

- I. PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY 1:1 - 1:13**
- II. JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE 1:4 - 9:50**
- III. JESUS' MINISTRY ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM 10:1 - 52**
- IV. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM 11:1 - 15:47**
- V. JESUS' MINISTRY COMPLETED 16:1 - 20**

LUKE

A MAN WITH A MESSAGE FOR ALL MEN

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE BOOK OF LUKE IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOOKS EVER WRITTEN. IT IS THE UNFOLDING STORY OF JESUS THE IDEAL MAN, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD AND THE SON OF GOD. ITS BEAUTY LIES IN ITS UNIQUE PARABLES AND THE CAREFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF JESUS' LIFE.

LUKE ALONE TELLS US OF THE ANGELS JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST CHILD TO THE SHEPHERDS ON THE JUDEAN HILLSIDE. IT ALONE TELLS US THE TWO MOST FAMOUS PARABLES, THE GOOD SAMARITAN AND THE PRODIGAL SON.

THE BOOK OF LUKE IS THE RESULT OF CAREFUL RESEARCH.

IT HAS A WELL PLANNED SEQUENCE. NOT ONLY IS LUKE'S GOSPEL WELL CONSTRUCTED, IT HAS A CONTINUING RECORD OF JESUS' WORK IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. LUKE - ACTS GO TOGETHER AS VOLUMES ONE AND TWO. THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN WE EXAMINE BOTH PREFACES, LUKE 1:1 - 4 AND ACTS 1:1 - 5.

LUKE IS ALSO THE LONGEST OF THE GOSPELS. MATTHEW HAS MORE CHAPTERS, BUT LUKE HAS MORE WORDS. THE VOLUME OF LUKE - ACTS ALONE WOULD MAKE THIS WORK SIGNIFICANT FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT. TOGETHER THEY COMPOSE APPROXIMATELY 27PER CENT. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LUKE IS A BOOK OF STYLE. IT CONTAINS 261 WORDS WHICH DO NOT OCCUR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT HAS A STYLE EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STREET, BUT IT ALSO CONTAINS SOME OF THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

AUTHORSHIP

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES WERE WRITTEN BY THE SAME AUTHOR. THE MAJORITY OF SCHOLARS, BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN, AGREE THAT THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FROM BOTH BOOKS SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION. LINGUISTIC STUDIES REVEAL THAT LUKE AND ACTS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF WORDS AND PHRASES THAT ARE EITHER IDENTICAL OR HAVE COMMON ORIGINS. BOTH

BOOKS HAVE A STYLE THAT MADE THEM VERY READABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

IN ACTS 1:1, THE AUTHOR CLAIMS THAT HE HAD WRITTEN TO THEOPHILUS A PREVIOUS OR FIRST, *πρωτον* (PROTON), ACCOUNT OF THE THINGS WHICH JESUS BEGAN BOTH TO DO AND TO TEACH. IT IS LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT THIS FIRST ACCOUNT WAS THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, FOR AT THE BEGINNING OF ACTS THE AUTHOR GIVES A SHORT SURVEY OF THE CONTENTS OF LUKE.

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE COME TO US WITHOUT AN AUTHOR'S NAME ATTACHED. THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT, HOWEVER, PROBABLY DID HAVE A NAME ATTACHED. IF NOT IT WAS SURELY BECAUSE THE ORIGINAL READERS KNEW WHO WROTE IT.

THE THIRD GOSPEL COMES DOWN TO US WITH A STRONG TRADITION THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY LUKE THE PHYSICIAN AND COMPANION OF PAUL.

THE FIRST RECORDS WHICH CREDIT LUKE WITH WRITING BOTH THE THIRD GOSPEL AND ACTS COME FROM IRENAEUS IN HIS WORK AGAINST HERESIES, WRITTEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 180- 185 A.D. THE MURATORIAN CANON COMPOSED NEAR THE END OF THE SECOND CENTURY ALSO AFFIRMS LUKE AS THE AUTHOR.

THE MAN LUKE IS MENTIONED THREE TIMES IN THE NEW

TESTAMENT, COL. 4:14, 2 TIM. 4:11 AND PHILEMON 24. LUKE, THE PHYSICIAN AND ASSOCIATE OF PAUL WAS PROBABLY A GENTILE SINCE HIS NAME IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE LIST OF MEN OF THE CIRCUMCISION AT COLOSSE WHICH IS RECORDED IN COLOSSIANS 4:10-11.

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS THE “WE” SECTIONS, 16:10-17; 20:5, 15; 21:1-18; AND 27:1-28:16, INDICATE THAT LUKE WAS PRESENT DURING THOSE TIMES. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, HOWEVER CONTAINS NONE OF THESE “WE” SECTIONS. THEREFORE, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE AUTHOR OF LUKE WAS NOT PRESENT DURING THE EVENTS RECORDED IN THIS BOOK. ALTHOUGH LUKE WAS NOT PRESENT DURING THE EVENTS, THE GOSPEL OF LUKE IS OBVIOUSLY THE RESULT OF CAREFUL RESEARCH.

THE FACT THAT LUKE WAS A PHYSICIAN SEEMS TO HAVE INFLUENCED HIS STYLE OF WRITING. FOR EXAMPLE, HE GIVES JESUS’ HEALING MIRACLES A VERY SPECIAL PLACE. IN THESE HEALING MIRACLES HE GIVES CASE HISTORIES, TYPE REPORTS, AGES, THE LENGTH OF TIME THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN ILL AND OTHER STRATEGIC HEALTH MATTERS. HE EVEN SEEMS TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN PHYSICAL ILLNESS AND DEMON POSSESSION.

HIS MEDICAL TRAINING ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE INFLUENCED HIS VOCABULARY. ALTHOUGH SOME SCHOLARS TODAY DO NOT THINK THAT WE CAN FIND MUCH OF A DISTINCT MEDICAL VOCABULARY IN LUKE, CERTAIN MEDICAL WORDS ARE USED IN

THE BOOK. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORD THAT IS USED FOR NEEDLE WHEN JESUS SAYS, "IT IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN THAN IT IS FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE," IS THE WORD FOR A SURGEON'S NEEDLE.

THE MAN LUKE WAS:

**A DEVOTED FOLLOWER OF CHRIST,
A TRAINED PHYSICIAN,
A TRUE FRIEND,
A FAITHFUL MISSIONARY,
A CAREFUL RESEARCHER
A GIFTED WRITER, AND
A PAINTER OF SUPERB WORD PICTURES.**

SOURCES

SINCE LUKE WAS NOT AN EYEWITNESS TO THE EVENTS OF THE THIRD GOSPEL HE HAD TO USE SOURCES FOR HIS INFORMATION. HE SAYS THAT OTHER ACCOUNTS HAD BEEN WRITTEN AND THAT HE HAD CAREFULLY RESEARCHED THE EVENTS. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT ONE OF LUKE'S SOURCES WAS THE BOOK OF MARK. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THINKING THIS. ONE IS THAT THEY WERE BOTH MEMBERS OF PAUL'S GROUP OF MISSIONARY CO-WORKERS. ANOTHER IS THAT THE WORDING IN MANY OF LUKE'S NARRATIVES IS

ALMOST THE SAME AS MARK'S, EXCEPT IN THE PREFACES, TRANSITIONS, SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS. LUKE USED ABOUT 50 TO 70 PER CENT. OF THE CONTENT OF MARK. LUKE SUBSTITUTED WORDS THAT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY SOMEONE WHO HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF PALESTINE OR THE JEWISH RELIGION.

SCHOLARS ALSO POINT OUT THAT SECTIONS OF LUKE ARE PARALLEL AND SOMETIMES VERBATIM OF SECTIONS IN MATTHEW. THIS INDICATES THAT THEY BOTH PROBABLY DREW FROM A COMMON SOURCE WHICH SCHOLARS HAVE DESIGNATED "Q." IF THERE IS A "Q" SOURCE, IT IS THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT LUKE POSSESSED A COPY OF MATTHEW AND FOLLOWED HIM OR THAT MATTHEW POSSESSED THE WRITING OF LUKE AND FOLLOWED HIM DEPENDING ON WHICH WAS WRITTEN FIRST. SOME SIMILARITIES ALSO EXIST BETWEEN JOHN AND LUKE. THESE THINGS SEEM TO INDICATE TO ME THAT THERE WAS A VERY EARLY COMMON SOURCE THAT HAD POWERFUL INFLUENCE UPON THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OR THAT THE FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNICATION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE MUCH BETTER THAN SCHOLARS HAVE GENERALLY ASSUMED.

IT IS ALSO EVIDENT THAT LUKE USED A PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES NOT USED BY ANY OF THE OTHER NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS. THIS IS CALLED THE "L" SOURCE. LUKE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE EYE WITNESSES TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST AND TO THE FORMATION OF THE CHURCH. THESE PEOPLE ARE THE PRIMARY SOURCES FROM WHICH HE ACQUIRED HIS INFORMATION. IN FACT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS PAUL, THE APOSTLE TO THE NATIONS, IS A PRIMARY SOURCE.

THE ONE SOURCE THAT MAKES THEM ALL RELATE TOGETHER AND ALSO MAKES THEM UNIQUE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH INSPIRED ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS.

DATE OF WRITING

ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT AN EXACT DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THIS GOSPEL ACTS 1:2 INDICATES THAT LUKE WAS WRITTEN BEFORE ACTS. THEREFORE, WE MUST DATE LUKE IN RELATIONSHIP TO ACTS. A COMMON DATE GIVEN FOR THE WRITING OF LUKE IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 55 - 65 A.D. THE REASON GIVEN FOR THIS TIME PERIOD IS THAT ACTS HAS A VERY ABRUPT ENDING AND DOES NOT TELL THE OUTCOME OF PAUL'S TRIAL; THEREFORE, SOME SCHOLARS CONCLUDE THAT ACTS WAS WRITTEN BEFORE PAUL WAS RELEASED FROM WHAT WAS PROBABLY HIS FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT. THIS MEANS ACTS WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 62 A.D., WHICH IS A REASONABLE DATE TO BELIEVE THAT PAUL WAS RELEASED. THIS, OF COURSE, MEANS THAT THE GOSPEL OF LUKE WAS WRITTEN BEFORE THIS DATE. ANOTHER REASON FOR THINKING THAT ACTS WAS WRITTEN BEFORE 70 A.D. IS BECAUSE ACTS DOES NOT MENTION THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

SOME SCHOLARS HAVE WANTED TO DATE THE BOOKS LATER THAN 90 A.D. IF THIS WERE SO, IT SEEMS THERE WOULD BE REFERENCES TO PAUL'S EPISTLES, BECAUSE THEY WERE BEING WIDELY CIRCULATED BY THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

THE DATING OF LUKE IS PART OF “THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM,” AS SCHOLARS HAVE CALLED IT. FOR YEARS SCHOLARS HAVE EXERTED GREAT EFFORT TRYING TO ARRIVE AT DATES FOR THE FOUR GOSPELS WITHOUT MUCH REAL SUCCESS. IT CAN PROBABLY BE CONCLUDED THAT NO DATES WILL EVER BE CONFIRMED WITH CERTAINTY.

LOCATION OF THE WRITING

WE DO NOT KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE WRITING OF LUKE, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN FROM ROME OR ACHAIA, A PROVINCE OF ANCIENT GREECE.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

LUKE WROTE CHIEFLY FOR GENTILE PEOPLE AND GREEKS IN PARTICULAR. THIS IS SUGGESTED:

1. BY HIS VOCABULARY. FOR EXAMPLE, LUKE ALMOST ALWAYS USES GREEK TERMS INSTEAD OF JEWISH. LUKE ALWAYS USES THE GREEK TERM “MASTER” TO REFER TO JESUS INSTEAD OF THE JEWISH TERM “RABBI.”

2. BY THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS. LUKE TRACES THE ORIGIN OF JESUS TO ADAM RATHER THAN TO ABRAHAM.

3. BY HIS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF JESUS. LUKE DOES NOT USE THE OLD TESTAMENT TO SHOW THAT JESUS WAS THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH SCRIPTURE AS DOES MATTHEW. IN LUKE, JESUS IS THE MAN FOR EVERYONE, THE SAVIOR AND LORD OF ALL.

LUKE IS SIMILAR TO A MISSIONARY TRACT. ALL THROUGH THE GOSPEL LUKE TEACHES THAT GOD'S LOVE HAS NO LIMITS AND IS FOR ALL GENTILES AS WELL AS JEWS. THIS UNIVERSALITY OF LUKE BEGINS WITH THE ANGELS' MESSAGE OF GOOD WILL TO ALL MEN. SIMEON IN THE TEMPLE, WHEN JESUS WAS A BABY, FORETOLD THAT JESUS WOULD TO BE A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES. THIS UNIVERSALITY IS CONTINUED IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN AND IN THE RECORD OF THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEN LEPERS IS THAT THE ONE WHO RETURNED TO THANK JESUS WAS A SAMARITAN. THE UNIVERSALITY OF LUKE IS COMPLETED IN JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION TO GO TO ALL NATIONS.

PURPOSES FOR WRITING

1. LUKE'S PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE THIRD GOSPEL WAS TO GIVE THEOPHILUS AN ACCURATE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING JESUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS. LUKE STATES THIS PURPOSE CLEARLY IN 1:3-4. IN VERSE 4, THE GREEK WORDS TRANSLATED "THE CERTAINTY" IS την ασφαλειαν, FROM σφαλλομαι, MEANING

“TO STUMBLE” OR “TO TRIP UP”, AND α , WHICH IS THE NEGATIVE AND MEANS “NOT”. THE WORD MEANS CERTAINTY, TRUTH, FIRMNESS AND SECURITY.

2. ANOTHER PURPOSE LUKE HAD IN MIND WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT CHRISTIANITY ONTOLOGICALLY ORIGINATED IN THE JEWISH FAITH, THAT JESUS WAS THEIR LONG AWAITED MESSIAH, AND THAT THE BREAK BETWEEN THE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS CAME WHEN THE JEWS REJECTED THEIR MESSIAH. BY THE TIME LUKE WAS WRITTEN, CHRISTIANITY WAS SPREADING RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. JUDAISM HAD POLITICALLY MANEUVERED THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM WAS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT.

3. LUKE ALSO WROTE HIS GOSPEL TO AFFIRM THAT CHRISTIANS WERE LOYAL CITIZENS OF ROME AND WERE NOT POLITICALLY DANGEROUS. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, ALTHOUGH NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE EXISTS, THAT LUKE HOPED TO INFLUENCE A ROMAN OFFICIAL WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP GAIN PAUL’S RELEASE FROM PRISON.

4. LUKE ALSO HAD OTHER PURPOSES WOVEN INTO HIS GOSPEL. HE CORRECTED SOME THEOLOGICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS. ONE OF HIS THEOLOGICAL CONCERNS IS ESCHATOLOGICAL AND IS RELATED TO THE DELAY OF THE PAROUSIA. LUKE, LIKE JOHN, HAS AN ESCHATOLOGY THAT ENCOURAGES BELIEVERS TO MOVE FORWARD IN THEIR FAITH, WORK IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY

SPIRIT AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THE PAROUSIA. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT LUKE HAS A “REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY”. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT LUKE HAS A WELL BALANCED ESCHATOLOGY, AND IS NOT LIMITED ONLY TO REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY, FOR HE IS LOOKING FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

5. LUKE ESPECIALLY FOCUSES ON THE APPEAL OF JESUS TO ALL PEOPLE.

THEMES

LUKE TARGETS CERTAIN THEMES TO COMMUNICATE HIS MESSAGE:

1. PRAYER IS ONE OF HIS MOST IMPORTANT THEMES. LUKE PAINTS JESUS PRAYING DURING THE GREAT CRISIS MOMENTS OF HIS LIFE. SOME EXAMPLES ARE:

- A. AT HIS BAPTISM 3:21,**
- B. BEFORE HIS FIRST CONFRONTATION WITH THE PHARISEES 5:16,**
- C. AT THE CALLING OF THE TWELVE 6:12, AND**
- D. ON THE CROSS 23:34.**

JESUS ALSO GIVES EXTENDED TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER, 11:5-8, AND 18:1-14. THE PHRASE “OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY” SUMS UP THE THEME AND MEANS UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. ANOTHER THEME IS IDENTIFYING JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD, THE TEACHER AND HEALER.

3. ANOTHER THEME FOCUSES ON LIVING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN LUKE - ACTS THERE ARE AT LEAST 70 REFERENCES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. LUKE TEACHES THAT THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE KEY TO THE ENERGY AND FORCE THAT EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED JESUS AND THE EARLY DISCIPLES.

4. A THEME THAT OCCUPIES A GREAT DEAL OF SPACE IN THE GOSPEL IS THE SUBJECT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

5. ONE OF THE UNIQUE THEMES OF LUKE IS GOD'S SEEKING AND PURSUING LOVE AND GRACE. THE PARABLES OF LOST THINGS ILLUSTRATE THIS SUPERBLY. THE HEART OF LUKE IS SEEN IN THE JOY OF THE SHEPHERD WHO FINDS HIS LOST SHEEP, THE JOY OF THE WOMAN WHO FINDS HER LOST COIN, THE JOY OF THE FATHER WHOSE LOST SON RETURNS HOME AND THE FATHER PLEADING WITH HIS ELDER SON TO JOIN THE JOY. LUKE REVEALS GOD AS BEING LIKE THAT.

6. FAITH IS ANOTHER MAJOR THEME FOR LUKE. THE HEALING MIRACLES ILLUSTRATE THIS TRUTH.

7. LUKE'S GOSPEL ALSO GIVES A SPECIAL CONCERN FOR WOMEN. THE BOOK OF ACTS SHOWS THIS SAME CONCERN.

8. JUST AS LUKE FOCUSES UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT HE ALSO CALLS ATTENTION TO THE WORK OF DEMONS, δαιμονιον, AND THE DEVIL, διαβολος. LUKE USUALLY USES "DEVIL" INSTEAD OF "SATAN."

9. LUKE DESCRIBES DISCIPLESHIP, ITS DUTIES AND ITS REWARDS. HE USES DIFFERENT TEACHING METHODS TO IMPART THIS TRUTH TO HIS DISCIPLES. HE USES THE OBJECT LESSON OF THE CHILD TO ILLUSTRATE HUMILITY. HE USES THE PARABLES MANY TIMES TO TEACH ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

THE JOURNEY MOTIF

LUKE'S SUPERB LITERARY ABILITY SHINES IN HIS DRAMATIC USE OF THE JOURNEY MOTIF. HE ALSO BUILDS THIS MOTIF IN ACTS. PHYSICAL JOURNEYS ARE OFTEN SYMBOLIC MOTIFS FOR SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS. LUKE - ACTS IS THE JOURNEY OF SALVATION FROM THE JEWISH BACKGROUND THROUGH THE WORK OF CHRIST AND INTO THE CHURCH. LUKE COULD BE TITLED, "THE JOURNEY OF SALVATION FROM HEAVEN TO CALVARY AND TO HEAVEN AGAIN." AND ACTS COULD BE APPROPRIATELY TITLED, "THE JOURNEY OF CHRISTIANITY FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME."

IN LUKE THERE ARE SUCH JOURNEYS AS ZACHARIAS' JOURNEY TO THE TEMPLE, MARY'S JOURNEY TO ELIZABETH'S

HOUSE, MARY AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM, THE SHEPHERDS' JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM, JESUS' JOURNEY FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM AND THE JOURNEY OF THE TWO TO EMMAUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION. EVEN JOHN THE APOSTLE HAS A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY BEGINNING WITH WANTING TO CALL DOWN FIRE FROM HEAVEN ON THE SAMARITAN VILLAGE WHEN THEY WILL NOT GIVE JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES FOOD TO HIS LATER JOURNEY TO SAMARIA TO HELP IN AN EVANGELISTIC EFFORT. THESE PHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNEYS ARE ALSO SPIRITUAL.

LUKE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

A FEW YEARS AGO SOME BRITISH SCHOLARS SUGGESTED THAT LUKE MAY HAVE WRITTEN HIS GOSPEL TO CORRESPOND TO THE FIRST SIX BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEY PRESENTED THEIR THEORY AS FOLLOWS:

GENESIS CORRESPONDS TO THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS. EXODUS IS SEEN AS JESUS LEADING HIS PEOPLE OUT OF THE BONDAGE OF SIN. THIS IS THE NEW EXODUS. JESUS' FORTY DAYS OF TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS CORRESPONDS TO THE FORTY YEARS OF WANDERING OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS. LEVITICUS IS PARALLELED BY THE CHARGE TO THE TWELVE, AND LUKE 6:20 IS THE ORDINATION SERMON TO THE NEW LEVITES. NUMBERS CORRESPONDS TO THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY. DEUTERONOMY IS PARALLELED BY THE TEACHING SECTIONS OF

JESUS AS THE NEW LAW GIVER, SUPERSIDING THE JEWISH LAW. THIS THEORY BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT WHEN IT COMES TO JOSHUA. JOSHUA IS SUPPOSED TO CORRESPOND TO THE PASSION AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. RAHAB OF JERICHO, WHO REPENTED AT THE TIME OF THE INVASION OF PALESTINE, IS PARALLELED BY THE REPENTANCE OF ZACCHAEUS, WHICH ALSO TOOK PLACE NEAR JERICHO.

THIS THEORY SEEMS TO STRETCH TYPOLOGY A LITTLE TOO FAR. TYPOLOGY WAS USED BY THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND IS A VERY VALUABLE SPIRITUAL TOOL TO ADD INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING TO THE SCRIPTURE WHEN USED WITH CAUTION AND UNDERSTANDING.

OUTLINE OF LUKE

A SHORT, EASY - TO - REMEMBER OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF LUKE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- I. THE INTRODUCTION OR PREFACE LUKE 1:1 - 4**
- II. PREPARATION FOR JESUS' MINISTRY LUKE 1:5 - 4:13**
- III. JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE LUKE 4:14 - 9:50**
- IV. JESUS' MINISTRY ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM LUKE 9:51 - 19:27**
- V. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM LUKE 19:28 - 24:53**

CENTRAL POINT

THE CENTRAL POINT OF LUKE IS IN CHAPTER 9, THE CAESAREA - PHILIPPI EVENT, WHEN PETER CONFESSES JESUS AS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

TEXT

LUKE 1

I. INTRODUCTION L:1 -4

II. JOHN'S BIRTH IS PROMISED 1:5 -25

III. JESUS' BIRTH IS ANNOUNCED 1:26 -38

IV. JESUS' MOTHER PRAISES GOD 1:39 -56

V. JOHN IS BORN AND NAMED 1:57 -66

VI. JOHN'S FATHER PRAISES GOD 1:67 -80

I. INTRODUCTION 1:1 -4

THE PREFACE IN LUKE IS SOME OF THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, SECOND ONLY TO THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

IN THE PREFACE, LUKE TELLS US THAT HE DID CAREFUL RESEARCH FOR THE WRITING OF THIS GOSPEL. HIS MOST RELIABLE INFORMATION CAME FROM EYE - WITNESSES. THE GREEK WORD

αυτοπται IS TRANSLATED “EYE-WITNESSES.” OUR WORD “AUTOPSY” IS RELATED TO THIS WORD. THE PURPOSE OF AN AUTOPSY IS TO FIND THE TRUTH. THE HOLY SPIRIT LED LUKE TO PEOPLE WHO HAD EXPERIENCED THE HISTORICAL EVENTS. LUKE SAYS THAT HE WANTED TO GIVE AN ACCURATE, TRUTHFUL ACCOUNT OF THE GOSPEL. THE WORD “CERTAINTY” IN 1:4, IS **ασφαλειαν**, AND PROBABLY COULD BE TRANSLATED “REAL FACTS” OR THE “SOLID TRUTH” AS MOFFATT TRANSLATED IT.

THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH IS TO PUSH BACK THE PERIPHERY OF KNOWLEDGE. THIS MEANS GIVING NEW INFORMATION ACCURATELY OR GIVING NEW MEANING TO PREVIOUSLY KNOWN INFORMATION. LUKE CERTAINLY QUALIFIES AS A GREAT WRITER, BECAUSE HE POSSESSED EXCELLENT WRITING SKILLS, DID EXTENSIVE RESEARCH, WROTE WITH INTEGRITY AND POETIC IMAGERY. AN EXAMPLE OF LUKE’S CAREFUL RESEARCH IS SEEN IN HIS DATING OF THE EVENTS IN 3:1 - 2.

BOTH THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND THE BOOK OF ACTS ARE WRITTEN TO A PERSON NAMED THEOPHILUS. THE WORD THEOPHILUS COMES FROM TWO GREEK WORDS, **θεος** MEANING “GOD,” AND **φιλια** MEANING “LOVE” OR “FRIEND.” THUS, THE WORD MEANS “ONE WHO LOVES GOD.” THEOPHILUS MAY HAVE BEEN A REAL PERSON OR THIS NAME MAY HAVE BEEN USED TO HIDE SOMEONE’S IDENTITY.

MANY SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THEOPHILUS. SOME OF THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. THERE WAS A REAL MAN BY THIS NAME WHOM LUKE WISHED TO INSTRUCT.

2, THE TERM “MOST EXCELLENT” IN FRONT OF HIS NAME MAY SUGGEST THAT HE WAS A ROMAN OFFICIAL, AND LUKE WISHED TO PROVE TO HIM THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS NOT A RELIGION OF CANNIBALISM OR WHICH SOUGHT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT.

3. THEOPHILUS MAY BE A NAME USED TO REPRESENT ANYONE WHO READS THE BOOK, OR

4. IT MAY SYMBOLIZE ALL CHRISTIANS.

II. JOHN’S BIRTH IS PROMISED 1:2-25

HEROD THE GREAT, A SAVAGE TYRANT WHO WAS WAITING HIS TURN FOR THE LAKE OF FIRE, WAS APPOINTED KING OVER PALESTINE BY THE ROMAN SENATE IN 37 B.C. AND REMAINED IN THAT POSITION UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 4 B.C. SOMETIME DURING OR BEFORE 4 B.C. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS WERE BOTH BORN.

ZACHARIAS, THE FATHER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, WAS A JEWISH PRIEST. THE PRIESTS WERE DESCENDENTS OF AARON. BY THIS TIME IN HISTORY THERE WERE SO MANY PRIESTS THAT ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF THEM WERE NEEDED AT THE TEMPLE AT ANY ONE TIME. SOME SCHOLARS ESTIMATE THAT AT THIS TIME THERE WERE AS MANY AS 20,000 PRIESTS IN PALESTINE. THESE PRIESTS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWENTY-FOUR GROUPS, AND ZACHARIAS BELONGED TO THE GROUP OF ABJAH.

ZACHARIAS WAS MARRIED TO A WOMEN NAMED ELIZABETH WHO WAS ALSO A DESCENDENT OF AARON. THEY WERE BOTH VERY HONORABLE PEOPLE. THE WORDS USED OF THEM ARE δικαιοι, MEANING "RIGHTEOUS" AND αμεμπτοι MEANING "BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD." THEY WERE OLD, AND THEY HAD NO CHILDREN. ON A CERTAIN DAY ZACHARIAS WAS CHOSEN BY LOT TO OFFER OR BURN THE INCENSE IN THE TEMPLE. EACH PRIEST SERVED WITH HIS DIVISION, AND EACH DIVISION SERVED ONLY ABOUT TWO WEEKS OUT OF EACH YEAR. AT THE TEMPLE THERE WAS ALWAYS A MORNING AND AN EVENING SACRIFICE. BEFORE EACH SACRIFICE WAS MADE INCENSE WAS BURNED ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR IN THE HOLY PLACE. THE PRIEST WHO BURNED THIS INCENSE WAS CHOSEN BY LOT. A PRIEST MIGHT LIVE HIS WHOLE LIFETIME AND NEVER BE CHOSEN TO OFFER THE INCENSE.

ON THIS DAY THE LOT, A WHITE STONE, FALLS TO ZACHARIAS, AND HE GOES IN TO BURN THE INCENSE. AS HE BURNS THE INCENSE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENS. A MESSENGER FROM GOD APPEARS TO HIM AND ANNOUNCES THAT A SON WILL BE BORN TO HIM AND ELIZABETH. THEY ARE TO NAME HIM JOHN, MEANING "YAHWEH HAS BEEN GRACIOUS."

IN THOSE DAYS IT WAS CONSIDERED A DISFAVOR FROM GOD NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN. ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH ARE BOTH OLD, AND IT IS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO HAVE A CHILD; SO, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THE MESSAGE. GETTING THIS CONCEPT INTO HIS BRAIN MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE TRYING TO NAIL

JELLO TO A FENCE POST. THE GREEK EMPHASIZES HIS STATEMENT “I AM AN OLD MAN,” AND CONTRASTS GABRIEL’S REPLY, “I AM GABRIEL, WHO STANDS BEFORE GOD, AND I WAS SENT ...” BECAUSE ZACHARIAS LETS THE HATCHET OF UNBELIEF ATTACK HIM, HE IS STRICKEN, AND THE POWER TO SPEAK IS TAKEN FROM HIM. HE TEMPORARILY SUFFERS AMNESIA AND FORGETS THAT ABRAHAM AND SARAH HAD A CHILD BORN TO THEM AFTER THEY WERE TOO OLD TO PRODUCE CHILDREN.

WHEN THE CHILD ARRIVES HE IS APPROPRIATELY NAMED JOHN, MEANING “GOD HAS BEEN GRACIOUS.”

CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS SET JOHN APART FROM OTHERS. HE DID NOT DRINK WINE OR STRONG DRINK. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THIS IS A NAZARITE VOW, AS RECORDED IN NUMBERS 6:3. A NAZARITE VOW, HOWEVER, REQUIRED THAT THE HAIR NOT BE CUT. SO IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THIS IS EXACTLY THE SAME. THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THIS ARE: 1. THAT HE WAS NOT TO DRINK WINE OR ANY INTOXICATING DRINK, AND 2. HE WOULD BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH WAS THE SIGN OF A PROPHET.

JESUS PAYS JOHN THE HIGHEST TRIBUTE THAT CAN BE GIVEN TO A MAN. JOHN’S GREATNESS WAS IN HIS MESSAGE, HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS WITNESS TO JESUS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS THAT “HE DID NO MIRACLES.”

III. JESUS' BIRTH IS ANNOUNCED 1:26-38

THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES TO MARY THAT SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO THE MESSIAH. EARLIER, THE ANGEL HAD ANNOUNCED TO ELIZABETH THAT SHE WOULD GIVE BIRTH TO JOHN. ELIZABETH FEELS THAT THE BIRTH OF HER SON WILL TAKE AWAY HER PUBLIC DISGRACE. MARY, ON THE OTHER HAND, KNOWS THAT THE BIRTH OF HER SON WILL BRING HER PUBLIC DISGRACE, SINCE SHE IS BETROTHED, NOT YET MARRIED TO JOSEPH. SHE IS BEWILDERED AT THE NEWS AND ESPECIALLY BY ITS MESSENGER. AN ANGEL FROM GOD SUDDENLY APPEARS TO HER. THE WORD ANGEL IN BOTH HEBREW AND GREEK MEANS "MESSENGER." PEOPLE HAVE TROUBLE WITH THIS EVENT, BECAUSE THE IDEA THAT GOD CAN OR WILL INVADE HISTORY, OR THAT HE WILL WORK IN PEOPLE'S LIVES IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE WITHOUT REVELATION FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE WORD *κεχαριτωμενη* IN VERSE 28, IS USUALLY TRANSLATED "HIGHLY FAVOURED" OR "FAVOURED ONE." IT LITERALLY MEANS "GRACED ONE" OR "ONE HAVING BEEN GRACED." THE ROOT WORD *χαρις*, "GRACE" IS IN THE WORD. GRACE MEANS "THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD." THE VERB IS IN THE PASSIVE VOICE AND MEANS GRACE GIVEN BY GOD.

THE MESSENGER SAYS THAT MARY HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO BE THE MOTHER OF JESUS. THE NAME JESUS IS THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW WORD JOSHUA WHICH MEANS "YAHWEH IS SALVATION." VERSE 32 SAYS, "AND LORD GOD SHALL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF DAVID HIS FATHER."

IN VERSE 34, MARY ASKS HOW THIS IS TO COME ABOUT SINCE SHE IS NOT MARRIED. IN VERSE 35, THE MESSENGER GIVES HER THE ANSWER, "THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU AND THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW YOU." THE WORD SPIRIT IN GREEK IS NEUTER AND IN HEBREW IT IS USUALLY FEMININE. THE VERBS "COME UPON" AND "OVERSHADOW" ARE NOT WORDS USED OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT GOD'S SPIRIT IS THE AGENT OF CREATION. AND ACCORDING TO PAUL A NEW ADAM COMES INTO BEING. SO, THE SIGNIFICANCE HERE IS CREATION RATHER THAN CONCEPTION.

MARY THEN GOES TO VISIT ELIZABETH WHO PRAISES HER AND CALLS HER BLESSED. MARY IS CALLED BLESSED, BECAUSE SHE BELIEVES THE PROMISES OF GOD, THAT HE WOULD SEND HIS MESSIAH, VERSE 45. THE BLESSING APPLIES TO ALL WHO BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES.

THE CHARACTER OF MARY IS SEEN IN HER ANSWER AS SHE OPENS HER HEART IN OBEDIENCE TO THE MESSENGER, "... BE IT UNTO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD."

IV. JESUS' MOTHER PRAISES GOD 1:39-56

MARY PRAISES GOD WITH THE SUMMUM BONUM OF CHRISTMAS AND CHRISTIANITY. IT IS SIMILAR IN JOY AND THANKSGIVING TO HANNAH'S SONG OF JOY AT THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL IN I SAMUEL 2:1 - 10. MARY'S SONG IS ONE OF THE

MOST EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. GOD DROPS A BENEFICIAL BOMB UPON THE WORLD IN THREE INTERVENTIONS:

- 1. HE SCATTERED THE HAUGHTY AND PROUD IN THE PLANS AND THOUGHTS OF THEIR HEARTS - SPIRITUAL INTERVENTION.**
- 2. HE CAST DOWN RULERS FROM THRONES - SOCIAL INTERVENTION.**
- 3. THE HUNGRY HE FILLED; THE RICH HE SENT AWAY EMPTY - ECONOMIC INTERVENTION.**

MARY THEN RETURNS TO HER HOME. WE ARE NOT TOLD WHETHER IT IS TO HER PARENTS' HOME OR TO JOSEPH'S HOME.

V. JOHN IS BORN AND NAMED 1:57-66
ZACHARIAS, ELIZABETH AND THEIR NEIGHBORS ARE REJOICING AT THE BIRTH OF JOHN, AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY JOHN IS PREPARED FOR THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION. IN SCRIPTURE EIGHT IS OFTEN THE NUMBER OF NEW BEGINNING. THIS WAS A NEW GENERATION AND A WONDERFUL NEW BEGINNING FOR THIS FAMILY AND A NEW BEGINNING FOR MANKIND AS JOHN WOULD POINT THE WAY TO JESUS.

CIRCUMCISION SIGNIFIES THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE, GEN. 17:11. ON THIS DAY THE CHILD IS NAMED. THE NEIGHBORS ASSUME THAT HIS NAME WILL BE THE SAME AS HIS FATHER. THEY EVEN CALL HIM BY THAT NAME. BUT

ELIZABETH SAYS HIS NAME IS JOHN. THEY ASK ZACHARIAS, AND HE WRITES ON A TABLET “JOHN,” MEANING “THE LORD HAS BEEN GRACIOUS.” AND THUS, HE IS NAMED. THE PEOPLE ARE AMAZED; AND SOME OF THEM DECIDE TO WATCH TO SEE WHAT JOHN WILL BECOME.

VI. JOHN’S FATHER PRAISES GOD 1:67-80

AT THE NAMING OF JOHN, ZACHARIAS BURSTS FORTH IN A SONG OF PRAISE CALLED “THE BENEDICTUS.” BENEDICTUS IS THE FIRST WORD OF ZACHARIAS’ PRAISE IN THE LATIN VERSION. IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS SONG OF PRAISE ZACHARIAS SPEAKS ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT HOPE AND PROPHECY OF THE COMING MESSIAH. IN THE SECOND PART, HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE ONE WHO WOULD PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE MESSIAH.

THERE ARE SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND PHRASES IN THIS SONG. ONE OF THE PHRASES IS “HORN OF SALVATION” IN VERSE 69. A HORN IN ISRAEL SYMBOLIZED STRENGTH AND POWER. SOME ANIMALS USED THEIR HORNS AS WEAPONS. IN ISRAEL A RAM’S HORN WAS USED TO SOUND THE CALL TO BATTLE. AND IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION THE LAMB HAS A HORN.

“HOUSE OF DAVID” IS ANOTHER PHRASE USED HERE. DAVID HAD BEEN THEIR GREATEST KING. HE WAS HELD AS THE IDEAL LEADER, AND GOD HAD PROMISED HIM AN ENDURING KINGDOM.

IN VERSE 73, THERE IS A REFERENCE TO THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM.

THEN VERSE 76 GIVES THE PURPOSE OF THE FORERUNNER, WHO GOES BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAY. THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE WHICH SAYS, "I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER, AND HE SHALL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME," MALACHI 3:1. SEE ALSO ISAIAH 40:3-4.

VERSE 77 SPEAKS OF "THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION IN THE REMISSION OF SINS." THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED REMISSION IN THE KING JAMES IS $\alpha\phi\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota$. GERHARD KITTEL POINTS OUT THAT THIS WORD IN THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (LXX) IS USED TO TRANSLATE WORDS MEANING "TO RELEASE." (GERHARD KITTEL [ED.], THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1964] VOL. I, P. 509.)

AT THE TIME LUKE WRITES HIS GOSPEL EARLY PRIMITIVE FORMS OF GNOSTICISM WERE TRYING TO MAKE THEIR WAY INTO THE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AND ITS THEOLOGY. KNOWLEDGE IN GNOSTIC CIRCLES WAS SECRET KNOWLEDGE, WHICH COULD BE OBTAINED BY CERTAIN RITUALS. LUKE, IN VERSE 77, USES THE WORD KNOWLEDGE IN CONTRAST TO THE GNOSTIC MEANING OF KNOWLEDGE. LUKE MEANS KNOWLEDGE FROM ACTUAL CONCRETE EXPERIENCE OF HAVING ONE'S SINS REMITTED OR TAKEN AWAY. THIS KNOWLEDGE RESULTS NOT BECAUSE ONE

LEARNS THE ANSWERS TO A BODY OF RULES, BUT BECAUSE A NEW RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN CREATED BETWEEN THE PERSON AND GOD.

IN VERSES 78 - 79, WE FIND SOME OF THE SAME LANGUAGE AS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. THESE VERSES ALSO HAVE A STRONG REFERENCE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

VERSE 80 DESCRIBES JOHN AS ONE WHO GROWS UP STRONG IN THE SPIRIT. HE IS IN THE WILDERNESS UNTIL HE BEGINS TO PREACH. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE TRIED TO CONNECT JOHN WITH THE ESSENCE OF THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY. NO DOUBT THERE WERE SOME THINGS IN HIS LIFE SIMILAR TO THEIRS, BUT THERE WERE ALSO MANY THINGS WHICH WERE DIFFERENT. THERE IS NO CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM.

LUKE 2

- I. JESUS IS BORN 2:1 - 20**
- II. JESUS IS PRESENTED TO THE LORD 2:21 - 24**
- III. JESUS IS BLESSED BY SIMEON AND ANNA 2:25 - 40**
- IV. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE 2:41 - 52**

I. JESUS IS BORN 2:1 - 20

DATING JESUS' BIRTH IS VERY DIFFICULT. HOWEVER, WE KNOW THAT QUIRINIUS WAS GOVERNOR OF PALESTINE FROM 6 B.C. - 4 B.C. SIR WILLIAM RAMSEY SAYS THAT QUIRINIUS WAS ALSO IN PALESTINE IN 8 B.C. SERVING AS A KIND OF CO-GOVERNOR IN CHARGE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS. ALTHOUGH NO RECORD OF A CENSUS DURING THIS PERIOD HAS BEEN FOUND, WE DO KNOW FROM LATER RECORDS THAT CENSUSES WERE TAKEN EVERY 14 YEARS AND THAT A CENSUS DID OCCUR IN 6 A.D.

A CENSUS WAS TAKEN FOR TWO MAJOR PURPOSES: 1. TAXES AND 2. MILITARY SERVICE. JEWS WERE EXEMPT FROM MILITARY DUTY PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEIR RELIGION FORBODE THEM TO MARCH ON THE SABBATH. A CENSUS, THEREFORE, IN PALESTINE SERVED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF TAXES.

JESUS WAS BORN DURING THE REIGN OF CAESAR AUGUSTUS, WHO RULED THE ROMAN EMPIRE FROM 27 B.C. TO 14 A.D. AT CENSUS TIME EACH FAMILY RETURNED TO THEIR ANCESTRAL HOME; SO, MARY AND JOSEPH BEING DESCENDENTS OF DAVID

GO FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM I SAM. 17:12. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES IS ABOUT 80-85 MILES. DAVID HAD BEEN BORN IN THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE THIS.

WE ARE IMMEDIATELY CAPTURED BY THE WORDS “SWADDLING CLOTHES,” “MANGER” AND “NO ROOM IN THE INN.” THESE WORDS DESCRIBE THE EVENTS OF THAT NIGHT. “NO ROOM” IS SYMBOLIC OF THE WORLD’S RECEPTION AND RECOGNITION OF HIM. IN REALITY THE MANGER OR THE PLACE WHERE ANIMALS WERE KEPT MAY HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO THEM BY A MERCIFUL PERSON, FOR THE PLACE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRIVATE AND COMFORTABLE.

LUKE 2:8-14 IS THE FATHER ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF HIS SON. IT APPEARS STRANGE THAT HE ANNOUNCES IT TO THE SHEPHERDS. THE SHEPHERDS ARE SIMPLE FOLK. THEIR TASKS ARE OF SUCH NATURE THERE IS NO WAY THEY CAN KEEP THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND CEREMONIAL CLEANSINGS. THEY CANNOT COME TO GOD. SO GOD COMES TO THEM. IT IS NIGHT, AND SUDDENLY A MESSENGER FROM GOD APPEARS IN THE FIELD BESIDE THEM. THEY GET THE MESSAGE IN STEREOPHONIC SOUND. THIS IS “THE GLORIA” OR “THE GLORIA EXCELSIS,” THE THIRD GREAT SONG OF CHRISTMAS RECORDED IN LUKE. THE LAST PART OF THE SONG, IN VERSE 14, IS DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET. THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF VERSE 14 IS: “GLORY IN HIGHEST TO GOD, AND ON EARTH PEACE, IN MEN GOOD PLEASURE.” THIS SEEMS TO MEAN THAT EITHER MEN WILL HAVE PEACE AND GOOD

PLEASURE AS A RESULT OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE, OR THAT IT IS GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE TO BRING PEACE TO HIS WORLD, OR TO MEN OF HIS CHOOSING. THE PHRASE TRANSLATED IN VERSE 11, "CHRIST THE LORD" HAS ALSO BEEN TRANSLATED, "THE LORD'S CHRIST," AND "THE ANOINTED LORD." CHRIST MEANS ANOINTED. IN THE GREEK IT IS $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$, "CHRIST LORD," WITH NO ARTICLE BEFORE THE WORD "LORD". THE MESSAGE IS THAT JESUS IS GOD'S ANOINTED, AND IS TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE SHEPHERDS FLY LIKE THE WIND TO SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. IN VERSE 16, THE GREEK WORD $\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, TRANSLATED "HAVING HASTED" MEANS TO CUT ACROSS, TO JUMP OVER FENCES, TO GO WITH DILIGENT SPEED.

THESE ARE UNUSUAL EVENTS, AND MARY IN AMAZEMENT PONDERES THESE THINGS IN THE DEEPEST PART OF HER HEART. THIS MEANS SHE WONDERS WHAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME OF ALL THIS.

II. JESUS IS PRESENTED TO THE LORD 2:21 -24

IN THESE VERSES GOD'S HISTORY IS HONORED IN THREE ACTS:

- 1. THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS,**
- 2. THE REDEMPTION OF THE FIRST BORN, AND**
- 3. THE PURIFICATION OF MARY.**

IN JEWISH CULTURE THE ACT OF CIRCUMCISION, THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT, OCCURS EIGHT DAYS AFTER BIRTH. ON THIS

DAY JESUS IS GIVEN HIS NAME, PROPHESYING HIS FUTURE. HE IS DESTINED TO FULFILL HIS NAME, FOR HE BECOMES THE "SALVATION OF THE LORD". EVERY TIME MARY CALLS JESUS FOR SUPPER THE PEOPLE OF NAZARETH HEAR HER CALL, "SAVIOR! SAVIOR!" JUST AS THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, CENTURIES BEFORE HAD CALLED HIM TO COME.

THE ACT OF PURIFICATION IS TECHNICALLY FOR THE MOTHER. IT TAKES PLACE 33 DAYS AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION, LEVITICUS 12:8. THE OFFERING OF A LAMB AND A PIGEON OR A TURTLEDOVE IS REQUIRED. IF THE FAMILY WAS POOR A PIGEON OR A TURTLEDOVE COULD BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THE LAMB. MARY AND JOSEPH USE THE SUBSTITUTE, BECAUSE THEY ARE POOR. FROM THIS WE CONCLUDE THAT THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST HAVE NOT YET ARRIVED BRINGING THEIR MAGNIFICENT GIFTS.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE FIRST BORN COMES FROM EXODUS 13:2, 12 - 16, AND NUMBERS 18:16. THIS TAKES PLACE WHEN THE CHILD IS 31 DAYS OR OLDER. JESUS' PARENTS PRESENT HIM TO THE LORD. NOTICE JESUS IS NOT BAPTIZED UNTIL HE CAME TO THE AGE WHERE HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING AND WHY HE IS DOING IT. THE IDEA BEHIND THE RITUAL OF REDEMPTION OF THE FIRST BORN IS THAT THE FIRST BORN BELONGS TO GOD. THE PARENTS SYMBOLICALLY BUY BACK THE CHILD. THE PRICE IS FIVE SHEKELS.

**III. JESUS IS BLESSED BY SIMEON AND ANNA 2:25 - 40
SIMEON IS A MAN FILLED WITH HOPE AND FAITH IN WHAT**

GOD IS GOING TO DO IN THE FUTURE. VERSE 25 SAYS SIMEON IS δικαιος και ευλαβης, "JUST AND DEVOUT." IN GREEK THE WORDS "JUST" AND "RIGHTEOUS" COME FROM THE SAME ROOT. THE WORDS ARE SPELLED AND PRONOUNCED ALMOST ALIKE, EXCEPT FOR THE ENDINGS, WHICH DISTINGUISH THE WORDS AS A NOUN, VERB, OR ANOTHER PART OF SPEECH. SIMEON IS ALSO FILLED AND CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN HIS PRAYER HE CALLS HIMSELF A SLAVE OF GOD AND CALLS GOD HIS MASTER. HIS PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING IS ANOTHER SONG OF CHRISTMAS AND IS CALLED THE "NUNC DIMITTIS".

MARY AND JOSEPH WONDER AT THE THINGS SIMEON SAYS IN HIS PRAYER. SIMEON BLESSES THEM AND SPEAKS ABOUT THE CHILD. HE SAYS HE IS A LIGHT FOR REVELATION OF GENTILES AND GLORY TO ISRAEL. HE ALSO PROPHESES SORROW FOR MARY. SIMEON BY THE REVELATION OF GOD CONNECTS THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF ISAIAH 42:6, 49:6, AND 52:10 WITH JESUS. THIS EVENT IN THE THIRD GOSPEL REVEALS LUKE'S PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS' REDEMPTIVE WORK. SIMEON'S PROPHECY THAT JESUS WILL CAUSE MANY TO FALL AND MANY TO RISE IS FULFILLED EVERY DAY. THOSE WHO REJECT HIM FALL, AND THOSE WHO ACCEPT HIM RISE.

IN THE TEMPLE MARY AND JOSEPH ALSO MEET A DEVOUT PROPHETESS NAMED ANNA. SHE IS EITHER 84 YEARS OF AGE OR SHE HAS BEEN A WIDOW FOR 84 YEARS. WE CANNOT TELL WHICH IT IS FROM THE GREEK TEXT. SHE SPEAKS ABOUT JESUS TO THE PEOPLE IN THE TEMPLE WHO ARE LOOKING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL.

VERSE 39 TELLS OF THE FAMILY'S RETURN TO NAZARETH. LUKE DOES NOT RECORD THE FAMILY FLEEING INTO EGYPT OR ESCAPING HEROD'S SWORD.

VERSE 40 IS THE SUMMATION OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD FROM BIRTH TO TWELVE YEARS OF AGE. THE GREEK SAYS THAT HE "GREW AND BECAME STRONG IN SPIRIT, BEING FILLED WITH WISDOM, AND GOD'S GRACE WAS UPON HIM." THE WORD GRACE IN GREEK IS RELATED TO THE WORD GIFT. WE CONCLUDE FROM THIS THAT JESUS IS WELL ENDOWED WITH GOD'S GIFTS.

IV. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE 2:41 - 52

IN THIS SECTION THE BOY JESUS SEES BOTH HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS HEAVENLY PARENT AND TO HIS EARTHLY PARENTS. THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF PALESTINE MET AT THE TEMPLE FOR AS MANY OF THE THREE GREAT FESTIVALS AS POSSIBLE. FROM NAZARETH THEY CAME THE LONG JOURNEY OF SOME 80 OR 85 MILES.

IN THE JEWISH CULTURE A BOY BECAME A SON OF THE LAW AT THIRTEEN. THIS MEANT THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE TO KEEP THE LAW.

IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS IS TWELVE YEARS OF AGE. HE COMES TO JERUSALEM IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT YEAR WHEN HE WILL BE A SON OF THE LAW. AFTER THE GREAT CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER THE FAMILIES START HOME. AT THE

END OF THE FIRST DAY'S JOURNEY THEY CANNOT FIND JESUS. IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND HOW THIS HAPPENED. THE MEN TRAVELED TOGETHER, AND SOME OF THE BOYS PROBABLY TRAVELED WITH THEM. JESUS IS THE AGE WHERE MARY ASSUMES THAT HE IS WITH JOSEPH, AND JOSEPH ASSUMES THAT HE IS WITH MARY. AT THE END OF THE DAY THE FAMILY UNITS GATHER TOGETHER, AND JESUS CANNOT BE FOUND. SO THEY RETURN TO JERUSALEM LOOKING FOR HIM. IT TAKES THEM THREE DAYS TO FIND JESUS. WHY? BECAUSE THEY LOOKED IN THE WRONG PLACES. IT IS STILL TRUE TODAY. PEOPLE CANNOT FIND JESUS, BECAUSE THEY LOOK IN THE WRONG PLACES. FINALLY MARY AND JOSEPH LOOK IN THE TEMPLE.

IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR THE SANHEDRIN, THE JEWISH HIGH COURT COMPOSED OF 70 MEMBERS AND THE HIGH PRIEST, TO MEET IN THE TEMPLE COURT DURING SPECIAL FEAST DAYS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND DISCUSS MATTERS OF INTEREST. WHEN MARY AND JOSEPH FIND JESUS HE IS ASKING THE LEADERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS THEY ARE ASKING HIM. HIS QUESTIONS AS WELL AS HIS ANSWERS AMAZE THEM. A PERSON'S QUESTIONS OFTEN REVEAL HIS DEPTH OF THOUGHT AND PERCEPTION. THE WORD TRANSLATED "ASTONISHED" IN VERSE 48, AND THE WORD TRANSLATED "AMAZED" IN VERSE 47, ARE DIFFERENT WORDS. IN VERSE 48, MARY AND JOSEPH ARE "ASTONISHED" WHEN THEY SEE HIM IN THE TEMPLE TALKING WITH THE ELDERS. THE WORD TRANSLATED ASTONISHED MEANS "TO STICK OUT". IN ENGLISH IT COULD BE TRANSLATED, "THEIR EYES ALMOST POPPED OUT OF THEIR HEADS." MARY CALLS HIM A

CHILD, ΤΕΚΝΟΝ. “WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS TO US? WE WERE DISTRESSED.” JESUS’ ANSWER COULD BE TRANSLATED, “WHY WERE YOU LOOKING FOR ME? DON’T YOU KNOW IT IS NECESSARY FOR ME TO BE IN MY FATHER’S AFFAIRS (BUSINESS)?” THE WORD “AFFAIRS” OR “BUSINESS” IS NOT IN THE GREEK, BUT THE IDEA IS THERE. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND. IS THIS A GENERATION OR A COMMUNICATIONS GAP? NEITHER, THIS IS A SPIRITUAL GAP. THE REASON THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND JESUS’ REPLY IS BECAUSE JESUS TAKES THE WORD “FATHER” AND SWITCHES IT FROM JOSEPH TO GOD. THIS IS PERCEPTIVE INSIGHT INDEED, FOR A 12 YEAR OLD, EVEN FOR JESUS.

VERSE 52 IS THE RECORD OF HIS ADOLESCENCE FROM AGE TWELVE TO THE TIME OF HIS MINISTRY.

LUKE 3

- I. THE PREACHING OF JOHN 3:1 - 20
- II. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS 3:21 - 22
- III. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS 3:23 - 38

I. THE PREACHING OF JOHN 3:1 - 20

MORE THAN ANY OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITER LUKE CAREFULLY DATES JOHN'S MINISTRY BY CORRELATING IT WITH HIS CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL, NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND EVENTS.

FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE JOHN THERE HAVE BEEN NO PROPHETS. SUDDENLY JOHN EMERGES FROM THE WILDERNESS. THIS SOUNDS LIKE JEREMIAH 1:1 - 4. IN SYMBOLIC TERMS THE WILDERNESS MEANS A TIME OF TESTING, PROVING, AND DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY CHARACTER TO OVERCOME THE ENEMY OR TO ACHIEVE A TASK. IT IS IN THE WILDERNESS THAT JOHN IS PREPARED, JUST AS IT WAS IN THE WILDERNESS THAT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE DEVELOPED AND DISCIPLINED TO GO INTO PALESTINE TO POSSESS THE PROMISED LAND. JESUS TOO WILL COME OUT OF THE WILDERNESS WITH HIS MISSION OBJECTIVES SET.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHIEF PURPOSES ARE: TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE FOR THE COMING OF JESUS THE MESSIAH, AND TO BE THE LINK BETWEEN THE OLD COVENANT AND THE NEW

COVENANT – THE DISPENSATION OF LAW AND THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE. VERSES 4-6 ARE FROM ISAIAH 40:3-5, WHICH DESCRIBE A CITY’S PREPARATION FOR A VISIT FROM THEIR KING. THIS WAS A COMMON PRACTICE IN THE EAST. THE ROADS WERE MADE PASSABLE WHEN THE KING WAS COMING. JOHN IS CHALLENGING THEM, “GET YOUR LIVES IN ORDER FOR THE COMING OF THE KING.” IN THE EAST NOT ONLY WERE THE HIGHWAYS PREPARED, A HERALD ALSO WENT BEFORE THE KING TELLING THE PEOPLE THE TIME WHEN THE KING WOULD ARRIVE. THEY GOT EVERYTHING IN ORDER INCLUDING THE ROADS.

JOHN’S MESSAGE IS, “REPENT, PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR THE COMING KING.” JOHN’S SIGN OF REPENTANCE IS BAPTISM. THE GREEK WORD FOR REPENTANCE IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, “TO CHANGE” AND THE “MIND.” THE HEBREW WORD FOR REPENTANCE MEANS “TO TURN” OR “RETURN.” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT REPENTANCE ALMOST ALWAYS MEANS A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER EXCEPT PERHAPS IN ONE CASE. REPENTANCE IS AN ACT OF THE WILL. IT IS A TURNING FROM SIN TO GOD.

SINCE THE JEWISH PEOPLE DID NOT BAPTIZE JEWS, JOHN’S BAPTISM PRESENTS MANY QUESTIONS. WE HAVE NO REFERENCE TO RELATE IT TO EXCEPT PROSELYTE BAPTISM. THIS MEANS THAT JOHN IS TREATING THE JEWS AS PAGANS, DEMANDING THAT THEY REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED AS A SIGN OF THEIR REPENTANCE. OTHERS SCHOLARS TRY TO CONNECT HIS BAPTISM WITH THE ESSENES OF QUMRAN. IT SEEMS MORE

LIKELY THAT JOHN'S BAPTISM IS RELATED TO PROSELYTE BAPTISM, AND HE IS TELLING THE PEOPLE THAT THEIR RACIAL PRIVILEGES MEAN NOTHING BEFORE GOD, VERSES 7 - 9.

THE CROWDS ASK JOHN WHAT THEY SHOULD DO WHEN THEIR LIFE SITUATIONS ARE TERRIBLE, VERSE 10. JOHN'S ANSWERS SOUND LIKE THE HEBREW 8TH CENTURY PROPHETS. A SUMMATION OF THIS PROPHETIC ETHIC IS IN MICAH 6:8.

VERSES 15 - 17 HAVE A QUESTION. SINCE THE PROPHETIC VOICE HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR 400 YEARS, THE PEOPLE ASK, "COULD JOHN POSSIBLY BE THE MESSIAH?" JOHN'S ANSWER IS AN EMPHATIC "NO!" JOHN SAYS THAT HE IS NOT EVEN WORTHY TO REMOVE JESUS' SANDALS, WHICH WAS THE TASKS OF A SLAVE.

JOHN SAYS THAT THE MESSIAH WILL BAPTIZE WITH FIRE. HE USES FIRE AS SYMBOLIC OF JUDGEMENT. THIS IS EVIDENT FROM JOHN'S USE OF THE ILLUSTRATION OF SEPARATING CHAFF FROM THE WHEAT. THE IDEA IN THIS ILLUSTRATION IS PURIFICATION OR SEPARATING THE REAL FROM THE DROSS WHICH CLINGS TO THE GRAIN. IN VERSE 17, THE WORD TRANSLATED "UNQUENCHABLE" IS THE WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD "ASBESTOS."

VERSE 18 SAYS THAT JOHN ALSO SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE ABOUT MANY OTHER THINGS. WE ASSUME THESE THING HAVE TO DO WITH DAILY LIVING AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

VERSES 19 AND 20 IS THE RECORD OF JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT BY HEROD ANTIPAS. HEROD ANTIPAS IS THE SON OF HEROD THE GREAT, WHO WAS THE KING WHEN JESUS WAS BORN. JOHN'S POPULARITY WITH THE PEOPLE, NO DOUBT, THREATEN ANTIPAS.

JOHN HAD ALSO ACCUSED ANTIPAS OF ADULTERY, BECAUSE HE HAD MARRIED HERODIAS THE WIFE OF ONE OF HIS BROTHERS. THIS IS A VERY COMPLICATED AFFAIR. HEROD THE GREAT HAD TEN WIVES. HEROD PRACTICED, AS I CALL IT, PROGRESSIVE POLYGAMY. POLYGAMY IS BEING MARRIED TO SEVERAL WOMEN OR MEN AT THE SAME TIME. PROGRESSIVE POLYGAMY IN AMERICA IS BEING MARRIED TO MANY WOMEN OR MEN, BUT TO ONLY ONE AT A TIME. HEROD THE GREAT ALSO HAD SEVERAL SONS. ANTIPAS WAS HIS SON BY A WOMAN NAMED MALTHACE. ARISTOBULUS WAS ANOTHER SON BY A WOMAN NAMED MARIAMNE. HIS SON ARISTOBULUS HAD A DAUGHTER, HERODIAS. THIS IS THE WOMAN JOHN THE BAPTIST IS TALKING ABOUT. HEROD THE GREAT HAD ANOTHER SON NAMED HEROD PHILIP WHO LIVED IN ROME. HEROD PHILIP MARRIED HERODIAS. HEROD ANTIPAS VISITED ROME, AND WHILE HE WAS THERE HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH HERODIAS, HIS HALF-BROTHER'S WIFE, AND MARRIED HER. ANTIPAS AND HERODIAS BOTH HAD TO DIVORCE THEIR MATES TO MARRY EACH OTHER. SO, SHE WAS HIS NIECE, HIS FORMER SISTER - IN - LAW, AND NOW HIS WIFE. JOHN'S WORDS STUNG LIKE A HORNET, AND HEROD ANTIPAS PUT HIM IN JAIL, MATTHEW 14:5 - 12 AND MARK 6:17 - 29.

II. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS 3:21 -22

IN GREEK THESE VERSES ARE RATHER DIFFICULT. OBVIOUSLY LUKE DID NOT RECORD EVERYTHING IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. IN THESE VERSES HE USES THE PAST PARTICIPLE WHICH CONNECTS THIS SECTION WITH SOMETHING WHICH HAS GONE BEFORE. HOWEVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL EXACTLY WHAT HE INTENDS TO CONNECT.

THROUGH THE CENTURIES PEOPLE HAVE WONDERED WHY JESUS CAME TO JOHN TO BE BAPTIZED. THE PEOPLE CAME TO JOHN BASICALLY TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS AND TO IDENTIFY WITH THE HOPE OF THE COMING MESSIAH WHICH JOHN PROMISED.

JESUS COMES FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, FOR HE HAD NO SIN OF WHICH TO REPENT, AND HE IS THE MESSIAH. JESUS COMES:

- 1. TO APPROVE JOHN'S MINISTRY,**
- 2. TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH MANKIND,**
- 3. TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S WILL, AND**
- 4. TO FULFILL RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

ONE OF THE GOSPELS SAYS HE CAME TO BE BAPTIZED "TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS." JESUS IS INWARDLY RIGHTEOUS. OUTWARD THIS IS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD THAT HE ACCEPTS THE MISSION THE FATHER HAS GIVEN HIM. RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES FROM GOD, AND JESUS IS GOING TO BE THE AGENT THROUGH WHICH GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES. AT HIS BAPTISM

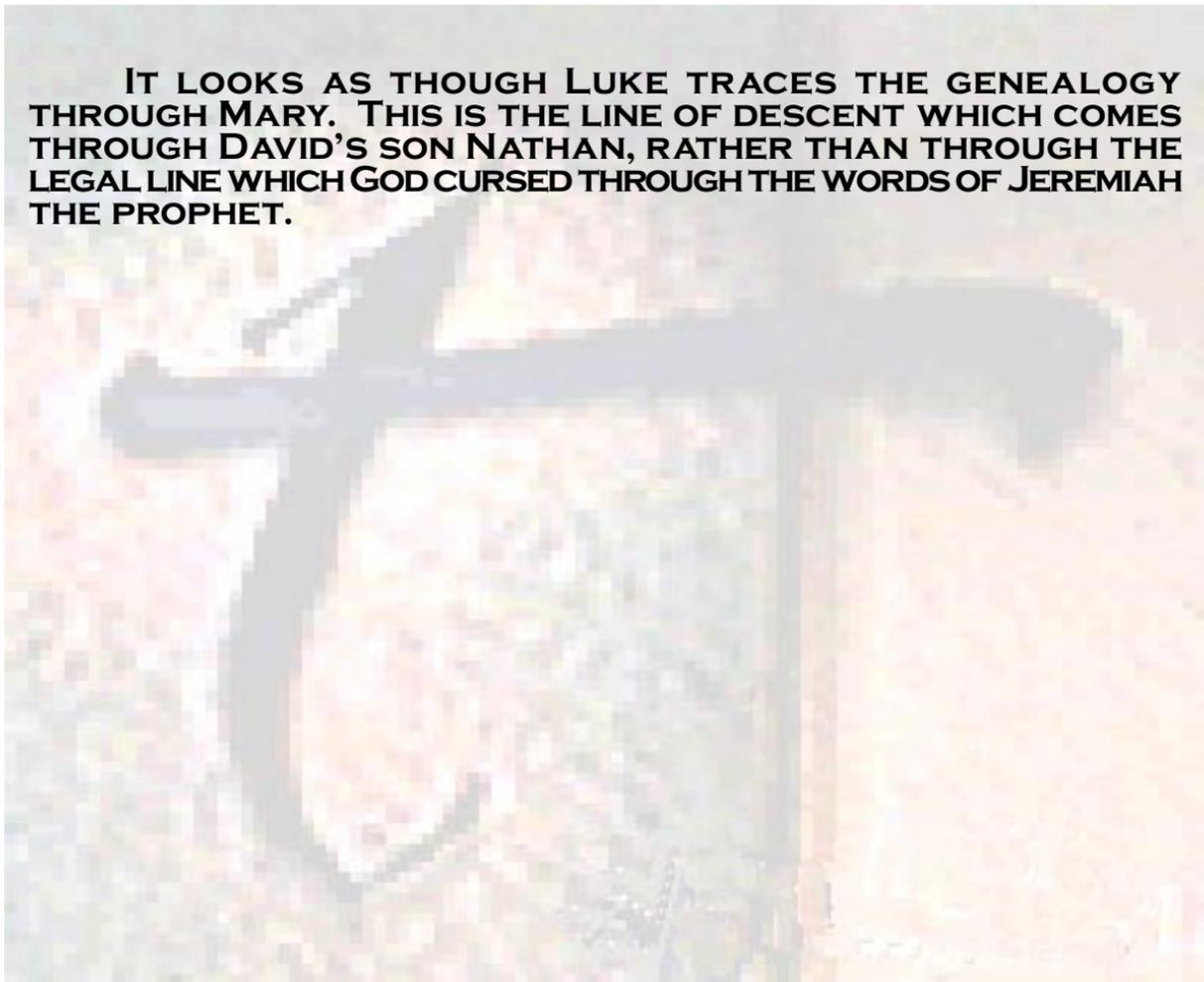
HE RECEIVES HIS FINAL ASSURANCE THAT HE IS THE ONE SENT FROM GOD. THE BAPTISM ALSO INDICATES AN EMPOWERING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY. THE PHRASE, "YOU ARE MY SON THE BELOVED" IS FROM PSALM 2:7 AND WAS COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS A DESCRIPTION OF THE MESSIAH. THE PHRASE, "IN YOU I HAVE FOUND DELIGHT" OR "AM WELL PLEASED" COMES FROM ISAIAH 42:1, AND IS SPEAKING OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT. HERE THE IDEA OF THE MESSIAH AND THE SUFFERING SERVANT ARE UNITED. SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME JESUS IS AWARE THAT THE MESSIAH AND THE SUFFERING SERVANT IN ISAIAH ARE THE SAME PERSON. HE SURELY KNEW BEFORE THIS. IT IS CLEAR FROM THIS PASSAGE THAT THE TWO ARE RELATED. LUKE ALONE RECORDS THAT JESUS IS PRAYING AT THE TIME. IT IS VERY SIGNIFICANT THAT THE TEMPTATIONS COME FOLLOWING THIS EVENT. LUKE SEES THEM AS VERY CLOSELY RELATED. LUKE DOES INSERT THE GENEALOGIES IN BETWEEN THESE EVENTS AS MATTHEW DOES. AS WE SHALL SEE THE TEMPTATIONS REVOLVE AROUND JESUS' UNDERSTANDING OF HIMSELF, HIS MISSION AND THE METHODS HE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVES.

III. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS 3:23-38

THE GENEALOGY IN LUKE IS GIVEN:

1. TO SHOW JESUS' HUMANITY,
2. TO SHOW THAT JESUS IS FOR ALL HUMANITY, AND
3. TO SHOW THAT HE FULFILLS THE QUALIFICATIONS AS THE SON OF DAVID.

IT LOOKS AS THOUGH LUKE TRACES THE GENEALOGY THROUGH MARY. THIS IS THE LINE OF DESCENT WHICH COMES THROUGH DAVID'S SON NATHAN, RATHER THAN THROUGH THE LEGAL LINE WHICH GOD CURSED THROUGH THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH THE PROPHET.



LUKE 4

- I. JESUS RESISTS THE DEVIL 4:1 - 29
- II. JESUS PROCLAIMS HIS MISSION 4:14 - 30
- III. JESUS PERFORMS HIS MIRACLES 4:31 - 44

I. JESUS RESISTS THE DEVIL 4:1 - 29

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE BIBLE. THE PEDDLER OF POISON LOADS HIS RIFLE WITH DECEPTION AND FIRES HIS BEST SHOT AT THE HEART OF MANKIND'S ONLY HOPE. DURING THE TEMPTATIONS JESUS AFFIRMS THE FOUNDATIONS UPON WHICH HE WILL BUILD HIS LIFE AND HIS MISSION. ONE CANNOT OVER EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OUTCOME OF THIS EVENT FOR THE ATONEMENT AND SALVATION OF MANKIND AS JESUS STANDS AGAINST THE HEAD OF THE COHESIVE FORCES OF EVIL. THE KEY TO JESUS' VICTORY IS RECORDED IN VERSE 1, WHEN HE IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH IS HIS SOURCE OF POWER. IF WE ARE GOING TO BE VICTORIOUS OVER SATAN WE MUST HAVE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SATAN SHOWS JESUS THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS OF HIS PEERS. HE ATTEMPTS TO APPLY PRESSURE ON JESUS' DECISIONS. SATAN IS PROPOSING THAT JESUS SHORT CIRCUIT GOD'S WILL. SATAN'S FORCES ARE ALWAYS URGING US TO OCCUPY THE THRONE OF CONTROL IN OUR HEARTS RATHER THAN GIVING THIS CONTROL TO GOD.

THE WILDERNESS IS EXTREMELY MISERABLE. THE CLIFFS ARE HUNDREDS OF FEET HIGH. THE INTENSE HEAT MAKES IT LIKE A FURNACE. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE DESERT IS LONELINESS AND HARDSHIP. ALONE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT JESUS MAKES HIS HARD DECISIONS.

FROM THE PERSONAL STAND POINT THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS ACCORDING TO LUKE ARE RELATED TO: 1. PERSONAL SECURITY, 2. POWER, AND 3. PRIDE. JESUS IS TEMPTED IN THE AREAS OF HIS LEGITIMATE NEEDS, HIS SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND HIS PERSONAL WORSHIP.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION APPEALS TO PERSONAL SECURITY OR PHYSICAL APPETITE. IT IS THE TEMPTATION TO DOUBT THE GOODNESS OF GOD. WE CAN ALL RELATE TO THIS. SECURITY IS THE BASE OF ALL OUR NEEDS. ABRAHAM MASLOW RECOGNIZES THIS IN HIS HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS. JESUS HAD NO SECURITY, EXCEPT IN HIS FATHER. HE SAID TO THOSE WHO WANTED TO FOLLOW HIM THAT HE HAD NO PLACE TO LAY HIS HEAD. JESUS RECOGNIZES THAT WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT NEEDS THAN PHYSICAL ONES. OUR PHYSICAL NEEDS ARE FOR EXISTENCE, BUT OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS ARE FOR ETERNAL LIFE. CERTAINLY, PEOPLE WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED JESUS IF HE HAD USED SATAN'S METHODS, BUT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO ATONEMENT. PEOPLE AND NATIONS THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAVE FOLLOWED SATAN'S PLAN. JESUS ANSWERS THE FIRST TEMPTATION FROM DEUTERONOMY 8:3.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION PROMISES POWER. IT IS THE TEMPTATION TO DOUBT THE POWER OF GOD AND TO BE DISLOYAL TO HIM. THE TEMPTATION IS, COMPROMISE WITH EVIL AND ACHIEVE THE GOAL FASTER AND EASIER. IN ESSENCE SATAN SAYS, "THIS IS MY WORLD, AND YOU CAN RULE ONLY IF YOU COMPROMISE WITH ME." ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE PRESENTED TO JESUS IF HE WILL COMPROMISE. SATAN COULD HAVE GIVEN THEM TO HIM, FOR HE IS THE RULER OF THE WORLD, AS JOHN 12:31 AND 2 COR. 4:4, TELL US. HIS POWER, HOWEVER, WILL ULTIMATELY BE DEFEATED. SATAN MIGHT TEMPORARILY GIVE HIS KINGDOMS TO ANOTHER, BUT IT IS ONLY FOR A SEASON, BECAUSE ULTIMATELY THEY WILL BE TAKEN FROM HIM. THIS IS THE TEMPTATION TO COMPROMISE. IT IS EASY TO GET CAUGHT ON THE UNEVEN GROUND OF COMPROMISE. JESUS ANSWERS THE SECOND TEMPTATION FROM DEUT. 6:13.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION DEALS WITH PRIDE OR TRUST IN ONESELF. IT IS THE TEMPTATION TO RISE ON THE WINGS OF INDEPENDENCE. IN JESUS' CASE IT FOCUSES UPON HIS IDENTITY. IT IS A TEMPTATION TO PLACE HIMSELF IN NEEDLESS PERIL. THIS TEMPTATION IS RELATED TO DOUBT. SATAN SAYS, "IF YOU ARE WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, PROVE GOD BY TESTING HIM." IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TESTING GOD SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT ACCEPTABLE FOR THE IMMATURE, BUT NOT FOR THOSE WHO WERE TRUSTING GOD AND WALKING BY FAITH. IN EXODUS 17:2, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE GUILTY OF TESTING GOD. THEY WERE SEEING JUST HOW FAR HE WOULD

LET THEM GO. MOSES IN HIS SPEECH IN DEUT. 6:16 WARNED THEM NOT TO TEST GOD AGAIN. JESUS KNEW THE POWER OF THE UNUSUAL ALWAYS EXCITES AND GETS A HEARING. HE ALSO KNOWS THAT IT IS ALWAYS TEMPORARY.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS, AND OUR TEMPTATIONS ARE VERY MUCH ALIKE. THEY USUALLY APPEAL TO:

- 1. THE LUST OF THE FLESH,**
- 2. THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND**
- 3. THE PRIDE OF LIFE.**

THE USUALLY ASK US:

- 1. WHO WILL YOU TRUST?**
- 2. WHO WILL YOU SERVE?**
- 3. WHO WILL YOU GLORIFY?**

THE TEMPTATIONS ALSO RELATE TO THE MODEL PRAYER AND OUR DEPENDANCE UPON GOD. "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD." "THY KINGDOM COME." "AND THINE IS THE GLORY AND POWER FOREVER."

II. JESUS PROCLAIMS HIS MISSION 4:14-30

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY IN GALILEE. GALILEE IS SAID TO HAVE FLOWED WITH HONEY, MEANING THAT IT IS A FERTILE LAND, PRODUCING CROPS AND VINEYARDS.

THE PEOPLE OF GALILEE WERE GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE PAGAN NATIONS SURROUNDING THEM. GALILEE WAS REFERRED TO AS GALILEE OF THE GENTILES. THEIR LANGUAGE ACCENT WAS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF PALESTINE. ONE OF THE GENERALIZATIONS MADE ABOUT THEM WAS THAT THEY RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY TO EMOTIONAL STIMULI. WE SEE THIS CHARACTERISTIC EXHIBITED CLEARLY IN THE SONS OF THUNDER, JAMES AND JOHN.

LUKE 4:16 - 30 IS THE RECORD OF JESUS' FIRST SERMON. IT WAS DELIVERED IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN NAZARETH, HIS HOMETOWN. SCHOLARS DISAGREE ABOUT THE SIZE OF NAZARETH DURING JESUS' LIFETIME. SOME THINK IT WAS A VERY SMALL VILLAGE OF A FEW DOZEN FAMILIES. OTHERS THINK THAT IT WAS A SIZABLE TOWN. PROBABLY IT WAS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. NAZARETH IS SITUATED ON A HILL FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON, WHERE DEBORAH AND BARAK FOUGHT THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL, WHERE GIDEON WON HIS VICTORIES, WHERE SAUL WAS DEFEATED BY THE PHILISTINES AND WHERE JOSIAH WAS KILLED IN BATTLE. MT. CARMEL COULD ALSO BE SEEN FROM NAZARETH, WHERE ELIJAH HAD CONFRONTED THE 450 PROPHETS OF BAAL.

THE GREAT HIGHWAY RUNNING FROM EGYPT TO DAMASCUS, PASSED CLOSE TO NAZARETH, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN MUST HAVE HAD SOME INTERCHANGE WITH THESE TRAVELERS.

JESUS' FIRST PUBLIC REJECTION IS DURING HIS FIRST SERMON IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH. SYNAGOGUES ARE NOT TO

BE CONFUSED WITH THE TEMPLE. THERE WERE MANY SYNAGOGUES, BUT ONLY ONE TEMPLE WHICH WAS AT JERUSALEM. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE TEMPLE WAS TO PROVIDE A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE TO MAKE SACRIFICES TO GOD. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE SYNAGOGUE WAS TO PROVIDE A PLACE FOR TEACHING, LEARNING, AND WORSHIP. TODAY, THE LOCAL CHURCH PARALLELS THE SYNAGOGUE, AND THE HEART OF THE REGENERATE BELIEVER PARALLELS THE TEMPLE WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELLS. IN ANCIENT TIMES GOD'S SPIRIT DWELT IN THE TEMPLE AND REVEALED HIS GLORY. TODAY GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT DWELLS IN THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER AND IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCH.

THE SYNAGOGUE SERVICE HAD THREE PARTS: 1. WORSHIP, WHERE PRAYERS WERE OFFERED, 2. READING OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND 3. TEACHING.

JESUS GOES INTO THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH, IS ASKED TO SPEAK, STANDS TO READ THE SCRIPTURE AND SITS DOWN TO EXPLAIN IT. HE READS FROM ISAIAH AND EXPLAINS HIS MISSION. SINCE JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY, HIS MISSION AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH ARE BASICALLY THE SAME.

THE PEOPLE OF NAZARETH ARE UPSET, FIRST BECAUSE HE DOES NONE OF HIS MIRACLES IN NAZARETH AND SECOND BECAUSE OF HIS EMPHASIS UPON GOD SENDING MERCY TO GENTILE PEOPLE THROUGH THE ANCIENT PROPHET. THE SERMON LIKE

A BLOWTORCH GETS IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. HIS HOME TOWN PEOPLE ARE GOING TO STONE HIM WHEN HE MAKES AN UNUSUAL ESCAPE. TRUTH ALWAYS ELUDES THOSE WHO WISH TO KILL IT RATHER THAN EMBRACE IT.

III. JESUS PERFORMS HIS MIRACLES 4:31 - 44

FIRST IS THE RECORD OF THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN. THE UNUSUAL THING HERE IS THE MANNER JESUS USED TO CAST THE DEMON OUT OF THE MAN. THE PEOPLE WERE USED TO SEEING DEMON EXORCISM, BUT IT WAS USUALLY A DIFFICULT AND LONG PROCESS. JESUS DOES IT BY ONE COMMAND.

LUKE 4:38 - 41 RECORDS JESUS' HEALING OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW. WHEN EVENING COMES THE SABBATH REGULATION ON HEALING IS PASSED; SO, THE PEOPLE BRING THE SICK TO BE HEALED.

THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THE DEMONS ACKNOWLEDGED HIM, BUT JESUS COMMANDED THEM TO BE SILENT. PEOPLE TODAY HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH THE IDEA OF DEMONS. THE INTERPRETATIONS OF DEMONS TODAY ARE:

- 1. THAT THERE ARE DEMONS IN THE WORLD NOW, OR**
- 2. THAT DEMON POSSESSION WAS A PRIMITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL AND OTHER TYPES OF ILLNESSES.**

ANOTHER QUESTION OFTEN ASKED IS ABOUT JESUS' UNDERSTANDING OF DEMONS. SOME SCHOLARS SAY HE WAS A CHILD OF THE AGE IN WHICH HE LIVED, AND HE ASSUMED SUCH ILLNESSES WERE CAUSED BY DEMONS. OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CAUSED DEMONS TO MANIFEST THEMSELVES, BUT TODAY THEY ARE NOT A PART OF OUR WORLD. STILL OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE THERE WERE DEMONS THEN AND THERE ARE DEMONS TODAY, AND THEY STILL MANIFEST THEMSELVES TODAY AS THEY DID THEN. THERE IS A WIDE VARIETY OF OPINIONS AMONG CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMONIC ACTIVITY AND MENTAL ILLNESS. HOWEVER, I HAVE OBSERVED THAT SOME MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE ARE EXTREMELY PERCEPTIVE IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM. IT SEEMS TODAY THAT THERE ARE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISORDERS WHICH HAVE NO DIRECT DEMONIC INFLUENCE, BUT THERE ARE ALSO DISORDERS WHICH HAVE DEMONIC CAUSES. THESE ARE MORE RARE THAN SOME PEOPLE THINK AND MORE COMMON THAN OTHER PEOPLE THINK.

PAUL TILlich SAYS, "... AS THE EXAMPLE OF THE DEMONIACS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOW, PEOPLE FAR BELOW THE AVERAGE CAN HAVE FLASHES OF INSIGHT WHICH THE MASSES AND EVEN THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS DO NOT HAVE: THE PROFOUND ANXIETY PRODUCED BY THE PRESENCE OF JESUS REVEALS TO THEM IN A VERY EARLY STAGE OF HIS APPEARANCE HIS MESSIANIC CHARACTER. THE HISTORY OF HUMAN CULTURE PROVES THAT AGAIN AND AGAIN NEUROTIC ANXIETY BREAKS THROUGH THE WALLS OF ORDINARY SELF - AFFIRMATION AND

**OPENS UP LEVELS OF REALITY WHICH ARE NORMALLY HIDDEN.”
(PAUL TILLICH, THE COURAGE TO BE [NEW HAVEN & LONDON:
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1952] P. 67.)**

**WE DO NOT KNOW WHY JESUS WANTED THE DEMONS TO
BE SILENT UNLESS:**

- 1. THE PEOPLE WERE NOT READY TO RECEIVE THE NEWS OF WHO HE WAS, OR**
- 2. HE DID NOT WANT THE WORD COMING FROM THIS TYPE OF SOURCES, OR**
- 3. HE WAS AFRAID THE PEOPLE WOULD UNDERSTAND HIS MISSION ONLY IN TERMS OF A POPULAR CONCEPT OF THE MESSIAH INSTEAD OF A SCRIPTURAL CONCEPT WHICH HE WAS GOING TO FULFILL. SCHOLARS SOMETIMES REFER TO JESUS’ RELUCTANCE TO LET HIS IDENTITY BE KNOWN AS THE “MESSIANIC SECRET.”**

LUKE 5

- I. JESUS CALLS THE FIRST DISCIPLES 5:1 - 11**
- II. JESUS HEALS A LEPER 5:12- 16**
- III. JESUS FORGIVES SIN 5:17-26**
- IV. JESUS CALLS LEVI 5:27-32**
- V. JESUS ANSWERS A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING
5:33-39**

I. JESUS CALLS THE FIRST DISCIPLES 5:1 - 11

IN THIS SECTION JESUS SITS IN SIMON'S BOAT ON LAKE GENNESARET (GALILEE) AND TEACHES THE MULTITUDES. IF YOU HAVE BEEN TO ISRAEL, YOU KNOW THAT A PERSON CAN STAND AT THE EDGE OF THE SEA, SPEAK IN A NORMAL VOICE AND THE PEOPLE ON THE HILLSIDES CAN HEAR CLEARLY. THE ACOUSTICS FOR SOME STRANGE REASON ARE EXCELLENT.

AFTER THIS TIME OF TEACHING, JESUS PERFORMS A MIRACLE FOR THE MEN WHOM HE IS ABOUT TO CALL AS HIS DISCIPLES. HE TELLS THEM TO CAST THEIR NETS INTO THE SEA. THEIR CATCH IS SO GREAT IT FILLS TWO BOATS. THIS MIRACLE IS SURELY A SIGN ABOUT SOULS WHO WILL COME INTO THE KINGDOM AS A RESULT OF THE DISCIPLES' MINISTRY. JESUS THEN CALLS SIMON, JAMES AND JOHN, WHO LEAVE EVERYTHING AND FOLLOW HIM. THEIR PRIORITIES CHANGE, WHICH IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE MAKE A TOTAL COMMITMENT TO JESUS.

II. JESUS HEALS A LEPER 5:12-16

LEPROSY WAS A FEARED DISEASE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. LEPERS WERE LIKE WALKING DEAD PEOPLE. FEW PEOPLE RECOVERED FROM ITS DEVASTATING EFFECTS. AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY, SKIN DISEASES OF ALL TYPES WERE CLASSIFIED IN THIS CATEGORY. SO CONTAGIOUS WERE THESE DISEASES THAT THE PERSON AFFECTED HAD TO CRY OUT TO ANYONE APPROACHING, "UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!" THEIR WORDS TOLD THEIR DOOM. JESUS DOES WHAT NO ONE WANTS TO DO. HE REACHES OUT, PHYSICALLY TOUCHES THE UNTOUCHABLE AND HEALS HIM.

III. JESUS FORGIVES SIN 5:17-26

THE MEN WHO CARRY THE PARALYZED MAN ON HIS BED CANNOT GET INTO THE HOUSE TO JESUS; SO, THEY TEAR A HOLE IN THE ROOF AND LOWER THE MAN THROUGH THE OPENING. AT THIS TIME IN ISRAEL SUFFERING AND SICKNESS WERE THOUGHT TO BE THE DIRECT RESULT OF SIN. IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE IT MAY BE SO, FOR JESUS DEALS FIRST WITH THE MAN'S SIN AND THEN WITH HIS SICKNESS. THE PHARISEES ARE UPSET THAT JESUS CLAIMS TO HAVE AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS. TO THEM THIS IS A BOAST OF EQUALITY WITH GOD AND THEREFORE BLASPHEMY. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME LUKE RECORDS AN ORGANIZED OBSERVATION OF JESUS BY THE PHARISEES.

JESUS THEN USES THE TERM "SON OF MAN" TO SPEAK ABOUT HIMSELF TO THE MAN HE IS ABOUT TO HEAL. "SON OF

MAN” IS JESUS’ FAVORITE TERM TO REFER TO HIMSELF. HE USES THIS TERM IN DIFFERENT WAYS. TWO OF THESE WAYS ARE:

- 1. TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH PEOPLE, AND**
- 2. TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH THE FIGURE IN DANIEL 7:13.**

IV. JESUS CALLS LEVI 5:27 - 32

LEVI (MATTHEW) IS A TAX COLLECTOR. A PERSON ENGAGED IN THIS OCCUPATION PLACED HIMSELF IN DISGRACE AND DISRESPECT AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE. IT IS BEYOND THEIR WILDEST IMAGINATION THAT JESUS CALLS HIM TO BE A DISCIPLE. LEVI IS PROBABLY AS AMAZED AS THEY ARE, BUT HE FOLLOWS HIM. ONE OF THE HARSH CHARGES BY THE PHARISEES IN THEIR SAVAGE SATIRE AGAINST JESUS IS THAT HE ATE WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE’S SYSTEM OF TAX COLLECTING CAUSED BITTERNESS AND HATRED IN THEIR SUBJECTED PEOPLE. ROME TOOK BIDS FOR THE TAX COLLECTING POSITIONS AND AWARDED THEM TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS. IN TURN THE CHIEF TAX COLLECTOR COULD ENGAGE OTHERS IN HIS SERVICE. THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF ROME MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE TAX COLLECTOR TO SET THE TAXES. THIS MEANT THAT EXTREMELY UNFAIR TAXES COULD BE COLLECTED. TAXES INCLUDED SUCH THINGS AS: 1. POLL TAXES, 2. GROUND TAX, 3. INCOME TAX, AND 4. TAXES CHARGED ON ANIMALS, CARTS AND THE NUMBER OF WHEELS ON A CART.

HONEST TAX COLLECTORS WERE AS SCARCE AS HEN'S TEETH. THE GNAWING GREED IN THE HEART OF THE TAX COLLECTOR BROUGHT WEALTH. WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT MATTHEW LEVI EXCEPT THAT JESUS LOOKED AROUND THE CORNER OF TOMORROW AND HARNESSSED MATTHEW'S POTENTIAL CHARACTER QUALITIES AND SPIRITUAL THIRST.

MATTHEW LEAVES ALL, EXCEPT HIS PEN. WITH IT HE ERECTS ONE OF THE GREATEST MONUMENTS EVER DEDICATED TO JESUS, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

V. JESUS ANSWERS A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

5:33-39

THE OLD TESTAMENT REQUIRED PEOPLE TO FAST ONLY ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. FOUR ADDITIONAL DAYS WERE ALSO USUALLY OBSERVED. THESE FAST DAYS WERE TO REMEMBER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, ZECH. 7:3-5 AND 8:19. THE PHARISEES, HOWEVER, HAD ADDED MANY FAST DAYS. THE USUAL CUSTOM WAS TO FAST ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS. THESE DAYS SEEM TO HAVE DEVELOPED FROM THE TRADITION THAT MOSES WENT UP ON MOUNT SINAI TO RECEIVE THE LAW ON A MONDAY AND RETURNED ON A THURSDAY.

THE MAN WHO ASKS JESUS THE QUESTION ABOUT FASTING EVIDENTLY THINKS THAT MUCH FASTING SHOWS SPIRITUALITY; THEREFORE, JESUS SHOULD REQUIRE HIS DISCIPLES TO FAST OFTEN. JESUS' ANSWER IS THAT FASTING EXPRESSES AN

INWARD REALITY AND IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE AN EXTERNALLY IMPOSED ARTIFICIAL OBSERVANCE TO IMPRESS OTHERS.

JESUS IS DESTROYING THE IDEA THAT THE DEVOUT GO THROUGH CERTAIN OUTWARD DISTASTEFUL MANIFESTATIONS TO SHOW THEIR PIETY. THE PHARISEES FAKED THEIR DEVOUTNESS BY PUTTING WHITE ON THEIR FACES. JESUS LATER REFERS TO THEM AS WHITE WASHED GRAVES FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES, MEANING THAT GOD'S LIFE WAS NOT IN THEM. PIETY IS ALWAYS IN THE HEART. JESUS EXPOSES THE EMPTY CAVERNS OF THE HEART TO SHOW THAT WE NEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD TO FILL IT.

JESUS REPLIES TO THE QUESTION WHY THE DISCIPLES DID NOT FAST EACH WEEK WITH A PARABLE. THE PARABLE IS A WINDOW LOOKING IN ON THE FIRST WEEK OF A JEWISH MARRIAGE. IN JEWISH LIFE A MARRIAGE CEREMONY WAS THE MOST JOYFUL OF EVENTS. THE COUPLE INVITED THEIR DEAREST FRIENDS TO SPEND THE FIRST WEEK WITH THEM. THIS WAS A TIME OF GREAT CELEBRATION. THE COUPLE WAS RELIEVED OF ALL THEIR DUTIES FOR THE WEEK. THEIR JOY WAS THE JOY OF THEIR NEW RELATIONSHIP. SO, TOO, THE GOOD NEWS IS THE JOY OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS AND THE BELIEVER AND BETWEEN OTHER BELIEVERS. THIS IS THE PARABLE ABOUT THE NEW WINE AND THE OLD WINESKINS.

LUKE 6

I. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

6:1 - 11

II. JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE 6:12 - 16

III. JESUS PREACHES TO THE MULTITUDES 6:17 - 49

I. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

6:1 - 11

THIS SECTION DEALS WITH TWO SABBATH CONTROVERSIES. BREAKING THE SABBATH IN THE JEWISH CULTURE OF JESUS TIME WAS ONE OF THE MOST SEVERE BREACHES OF THE LAW. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A SERIOUS AFFRONT TO GOD. THE PENALTIES FOR BREAKING THIS LAW ARE RECORDED IN EXODUS 31:14 AND NUM. 15:32 - 36.

ON ONE SABBATH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES GO THROUGH A WHEAT FIELD. MOST TRANSLATIONS READ CORN FIELD. THE DISCIPLES PICK SOME OF THE WHEAT AND EAT IT. THIS IS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE, FOR DEUTERONOMY 23:25 STATES THAT A PERSON WALKING THROUGH A WHEAT FIELD MAY PICK WHEAT AS LONG AS THE PERSON DOES NOT USE A SICKLE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE DISCIPLES DO IT ON THE SABBATH. ACCORDING TO THE PHARISEES BY PICKING THE HEADS OF WHEAT THEY ARE REAPING ON THE SABBATH. WHEN THEY RUB THE GRAINS TOGETHER THEY ARE THRESHING, SEPARATING AND PREPARING FOOD, BECAUSE THEY EAT IT.

THE PHARISEES ARE EXTREMELY UPSET THAT THE DISCIPLES ARE GUILTY OF WORKING ON THE SABBATH. JESUS USES THE OLD TESTAMENT TO SHOW THE PHARISEES THAT THEY ARE GUILTY OF GRANTING CERTAIN PRIVILEGES AND SPECIAL ALLOWANCES TO THOSE WHOM THEY CHOOSE. HE USES THE EVENTS OF 1 SAMUEL 21:1 - 6 TO CONFRONT THEM. THIS EVENT HAD TO DO WITH THE TWELVE LOAVES WHICH THE PRIESTS PLACED ON THE ALTAR IN FRONT OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE TEMPLE. EACH SABBATH TWELVE NEW LOAVES WERE PLACED THERE, AND THE OLD LOAVES WERE EATEN BY THE PRIESTS. ACCORDING TO 1 SAMUEL 21:1 - 6 DAVID AND HIS HUNGRY MEN ATE THESE LOAVES ON THE SABBATH.

JESUS REALLY THROWS THE PHARISEES INTO A RAGE WHEN HE CLAIMS TO BE LORD OF THE SABBATH. "LORD" MEANS RULER AND HAS CONNOTATIONS RELATING IT TO THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. JESUS SAYS IN MARK 2:27, "THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH." JESUS PLACES HUMAN NEED, COMPASSION, AND UNDERSTANDING AS THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE LAW.

THE SECOND SABBATH CONTROVERSY, LUKE 6:6 - 11, OCCURS WHEN JESUS HEALS A MAN'S WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH. IT WAS LEGAL TO SAVE A LIFE ON THE SABBATH BUT NOT TO HEAL OR HELP. JESUS ASKS THEM IN VERSE 9, "IS IT LAWFUL ON THE SABBATH DAYS TO DO GOOD, OR TO DO EVIL, TO SAVE LIFE, OR TO DESTROY IT." EVEN AS THEY ARE DISCUSSING THIS THEY ARE SEEKING A WAY TO DESTROY HIM. THEY ARE SO

SPIRITUALLY BLIND THEY CANNOT SEE THAT THEY ARE BREAKING THE LAW BY SEEKING TO DESTROY JESUS.

II. JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE 6:12-16

IN THESE VERSES JESUS PRAYS BEFORE MAKING THE DECISION WHICH WOULD FLING THE SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD. HE CALLS TWELVE MEN TO FORSAKE ALL AND FOLLOW HIM. THEY APPEAR TO BE A MOST UNLIKELY CREW. THESE MEN, WHEN TAUGHT BY JESUS AND EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT PERFORM ONE OF THE GREATEST MIRACLES OF THE AGES. THEY TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD.

III. JESUS PREACHES TO THE MULTITUDES 6:17-49

THIS SECTION IS OFTEN CALLED THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN. MATTHEW HAS A SIMILAR SERMON CALLED THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. NO DOUBT, JESUS DELIVERED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME SERMON MANY TIMES. WE WONDER IF WHAT HE SAID MADE SENSE TO THE PEOPLE THEN, AND IF IT MAKES SENSE TO PEOPLE TODAY, EVEN THOSE IN THE CHURCH.

THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE SERMON IS THAT THE REWARDS OF GOD ARE ETERNAL AND SPIRITUAL WHILE THE REWARDS OF THE WORLD ARE TEMPORAL AND MATERIAL. HE DROPS A SPIRITUAL BOMB ON THE RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY OF HIS DAY. THOSE WHO THINK JESUS DID NOT SPEAK OF ETERNAL REWARDS NEED TO READ THIS PASSAGE. IN VERSE 23 JESUS SAYS, "REJOICE AND LEAP FOR JOY FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN." AND IN VERSE 24, THE VERB SPEAKING OF THE RICH IS PRESENT, ACTIVE,

INDICATIVE AND SHOULD BE TRANSLATED, “YOU ARE RECEIVING,” MEANING THEY ARE BEING REWARDED NOW. THE GREEK WORD USED HERE IS A COMMON WORD USED IN AN UNUSUAL WAY. THE KING JAMES VERSION TRANSLATES IT “YOU ARE RECEIVING YOUR CONSOLATION.” THE GREEK WORD IS παρακλησιν (PARAKLASIN), AND IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS PARA, MEANING “BESIDE,” AND KALEO, MEANING “TO CALL.” IT MEANS THE REWARD IS CALLED BESIDE THE PERSON, NOW. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE PERSON WILL GET NO MORE REWARD!

IN VERSES 27 - 38, JESUS IS TEACHING ABOUT LOVE. THE GREEK LANGUAGE HAS SEVERAL WORDS THAT CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY OUR WORD LOVE. TWO OF THESE GREEK WORDS ARE USED OFTEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, “PHILIA” AND “AGAPE.” THREE OF THESE GREEK WORDS HAVE MADE THEIR WAY INTO ENGLISH, “EROS,” “PHILIA” AND “AGAPE.” OUR ONE WORD “LOVE” CANNOT CONTAIN ALL THE IDEAS THAT ARE EXPRESSED IN THESE GREEK WORDS. A SIMPLIFIED AND AN EASY WAY TO REMEMBER THEIR BASIC MEANING IS: EROS - SENSUAL, PHILIA - SOCIAL, AND AGAPE - SACRIFICIAL. AGAPE LOVE REFERS TO GOD’S TYPE OF LOVE. JESUS IN THIS SECTION IS OBVIOUSLY TALKING ABOUT A LOVE WHICH COMES ONLY FROM GOD.

VERSE 31 IS OFTEN CALLED “THE GOLDEN RULE.” JESUS STATED POSITIVELY A CONCEPT THAT HAD BEEN PRESENTED NEGATIVELY MANY TIMES BY MEN IN THE ANCIENT PAST. CHRISTIAN CONCERN IS THE ESSENCE OF THIS PASSAGE.

VERSE 38 PRESENTS THE CONCEPT THAT A PERSON RECEIVES WHAT HE GIVES. IT IS A PICTURE OF A FULL BASKET PRESSED DOWN AND MORE ADDED UNTIL IT IS FULL AGAIN. THE PHRASE IN THE VERSE, "THEY GIVE INTO YOUR BOSOM" MEANS AS A RESULT OF YOUR GENEROSITY YOUR POCKET WILL BE FULL. THE PEOPLE WORE ROBES, AND THEIR ROBES COULD BE PULLED SO THAT A LARGE POCKET WAS FORMED AND THINGS COULD BE CARRIED IN IT. THE IDEA IS THAT SOME PEOPLE WILL RESPOND AND SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION.

THIS CHAPTER CONCLUDES WITH JESUS TELLING THE PARABLE OF THE TWO HOUSES. IN PALESTINE THE FOUNDATION OF A HOUSE HAD TO BE FOUNDED ON THE BED ROCK OR THE HOUSE WOULD BE SWEEP AWAY BY THE FLOODS IN THE RAINY SEASON. JESUS IS COMPARING THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF A PERSON TO THE FOUNDATION OF A HOUSE. THE WISE PERSON BUILDS ON THE SOLID ROCK.

LUKE 7

I. JESUS PRAISES THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION

7:1 - 10

II. JESUS RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON FROM DEATH

7:11 - 17

III. JESUS AFFIRMS JOHN 7:18 - 35

IV. JESUS FORGIVES A SINNER 7:36 - 50

I. JESUS PRAISES THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION 7:1 - 10

IN THE ROMAN ARMY A CENTURION WAS IN CHARGE OF 100 SOLDIERS. THE ROMAN ARMY'S POWER DEPENDED ON THE DISCIPLINE AND LEADERSHIP OF THESE CENTURIONS. THIS CENTURION WAS A MOST UNUSUAL PERSON AND HAD QUITE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS SLAVES THAN MOST ROMANS. SLAVES WERE GENERALLY CONSIDERED OBJECTS. ARISTOTLE CALLED SLAVES ANIMATED TOOLS. THIS CENTURION HAD EVEN BUILT A SYNAGOGUE FOR THE JEWS. NOW HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF HIS SLAVE. IN VERSE 10 THE WORD $\psi\alpha\iota\nu\omicron\nu\nu\tau\alpha$, TRANSLATED "WHOLE," MEANS IN GOOD HEALTH.

II. JESUS RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON FROM DEATH 7:11 - 17

THESE VERSES REVEAL THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST. THE LANGUAGE HERE IS VERY STRONG AND SHOWS DEEP FEELING. THE DEAD LAD WAS LYING IN A BASKET-TYPE CONTAINER CALLED A BIER, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT HAVE CASKETS. IN

VERSE 13 LUKE CALLS JESUS "LORD" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS GOSPEL.

IN THIS PASSAGE WE HAVE:

- 1. THE GRIEF OF A MOTHER,**
- 2. THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST,**
- 3. THE CONQUERING OF DEATH,**
- 4. THE FEAR OF THE PEOPLE, AND**
- 5. THE GLORIFYING OF GOD.**

III. JESUS AFFIRMS JOHN 7:18-29

THESE VERSES TELL US ABOUT THE DOUBT OF A GREAT MAN. JOHN IS IN PRISON, AND IN HIS ALONENESS, HIS LEGS ARE SHACKLED BY THE LEG CHAINS OF DOUBT. HE REALIZES THAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS. HE DOES NOT REPRESS OR SUPPRESS HIS DOUBTS; INSTEAD, HE BRINGS THEM TO JESUS. HE LEARNS THAT GOD'S WAYS ARE NEVER LIMITED BY WHAT HUMAN BEINGS UNDERSTAND, WANT OR EXPECT.

IV. JESUS FORGIVES A SINNER 7:36-50

VERSES 30-35 SHOW THAT PEOPLE HAVE FREE WILL TO REBEL AGAINST GOD. THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES WERE SO MULE-HEADED THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN EITHER TO GOD'S SERVANTS OR TO HIS SON.

VERSES 36-50 IS A CONTRAST BETWEEN A SELF-RIGHTEOUS SINNER AND A REPENTANT SINNER. EXAMINING THE CUSTOM AND THE CULTURE OF THE FIRST CENTURY IN PALESTINE HELPS

TO UNDERSTAND THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE. THE WEALTHY OFTEN BUILT THEIR HOUSES AROUND A SQUARE OPEN COURTYARD. GUESTS WERE USUALLY ENTERTAINED IN THIS COURTYARD. WHEN AN IMPORTANT GUEST VISITED A HOME THE CUSTOM ALLOWED PEOPLE OF THE TOWN OR VILLAGE TO COME INTO THE COURTYARD AND LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATIONS. WHEN A RABBI CAME THE HOST GREETED HIM WITH THE KISS OF PEACE, WATER WAS POURED OVER HIS DUSTY TIRED FEET AND A DROP OF OIL WAS PUT ON HIS HEAD. THEIR SANDALS WERE REMOVED WHEN THEY CAME INTO THE HOUSE. THE PEOPLE RECLINED ON LOW COUCHES AS THEY ATE.

THE HOST, SIMON, IS A PHARISEE. WHY HE INVITES JESUS TO HIS HOUSE WE DO NOT KNOW. PERHAPS HE IS CURIOUS ABOUT THIS YOUNG MAN'S UNUSUAL ABILITIES. WE KNOW FROM THE TEXT THAT THE WOMAN IN THE STORY HAS A BAD REPUTATION. THIS WOMAN IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH MARY THE SISTER OF LAZARUS OR MARY MAGDALENE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT EITHER OF THE OTHER TWO MARYS HAD A BAD REPUTATION. JESUS HAD DELIVERED MARY MAGDALENE FROM DEMON POSSESSION, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN SHE HAD A BAD REPUTATION. THE WOMAN HEARS JESUS SPEAKING AND HIS SONG OF FORGIVENESS GOES RINGING THROUGH THE RAFTERS OF HER HEART. SHE FORGETS WHERE SHE IS AND TAKING THE LITTLE BOTTLE OF PERFUME FROM AROUND HER NECK SHE POURS IT ON JESUS' FEET. THEN TAKING DOWN HER HAIR SHE WIPES HIS FEET WITH HER HAIR. FOR A WOMAN TO TAKE DOWN HER HAIR IN PUBLIC WAS A SIGN OF IMMODESTY. ALL THE WHILE

SHE IS CRYING. IN THIS EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING GOD'S FORGIVENESS AND LOVE SHE LOSES AWARENESS OF EVERYTHING EXCEPT JESUS.

IN ISRAEL, I HAVE SEEN TEAR BOTTLES FROM THE TIME OF JESUS. THEY ARE SMALL, LONG, NARROW VASES. MY FRIEND, CHARLES PAGE, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST IN ISRAEL AND AN AUTHORITY IN ANCIENT PRACTICES, TELLS ME THAT IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE WOMEN CAUGHT THEIR TEARS IN THESE BOTTLES. THEY CAUGHT THEIR HAPPY TEARS IN ONE BOTTLE AND THEIR TEARS OF SORROW IN ANOTHER BOTTLE.

WHEN THE WOMAN WASHED JESUS' FEET WITH HER TEARS, PERHAPS SHE Poured OUT THE BOTTLE CONTAINING HER LIFETIME TEARS OF SORROW, FOR BY HIS FORGIVENESS HE HAD TURNED HER LIFETIME TEARS OF SORROW INTO TEARS OF JOY. THIS WOMAN HAS BEEN REMEMBERED THROUGH THE CENTURIES. WE TOO CAN BRING ALL THE SORROWFUL TEARS OF A LIFETIME AND POUR THEM OUT AT JESUS FEET.

JESUS THEN ASKS SIMON THE PHARISEE ABOUT THE TWO DEBTORS AND REBUKES HIM FOR CONDEMNING THIS WOMAN IN HIS MIND WHEN HE HAD NOT EVEN FOLLOWED THE COMMON PRACTICE OF COURTESY.

THE ETERNAL LESSON PRESENTED IN THIS EVENT IS, YOU CANNOT POUR PERFUME ON JESUS WITHOUT GETTING SOME ON YOURSELF.

THE FOLLOWING SPEAKING OR TEACHING OUTLINE CONTRASTS THE TWO SINNERS:

I. THE SELF - RIGHTEOUS SINNER

SIMON WAS SPIRITUALLY BLIND:

- 1. HE DID NOT KNOW JESUS' HEART.**
- 2. HE DID NOT KNOW HIS OWN HEART.**
- 3. HE DID NOT KNOW THE WOMAN'S HEART.**
- 4. HE DID NOT KNOW JESUS KNEW HIS HEART.**

SIMON MISUNDERSTOOD:

- 1. JESUS AS A FALSE PROPHET,**
- 2. HIMSELF AS A SAINT,**
- 3. THE WOMAN AS A LOST SINNER.**

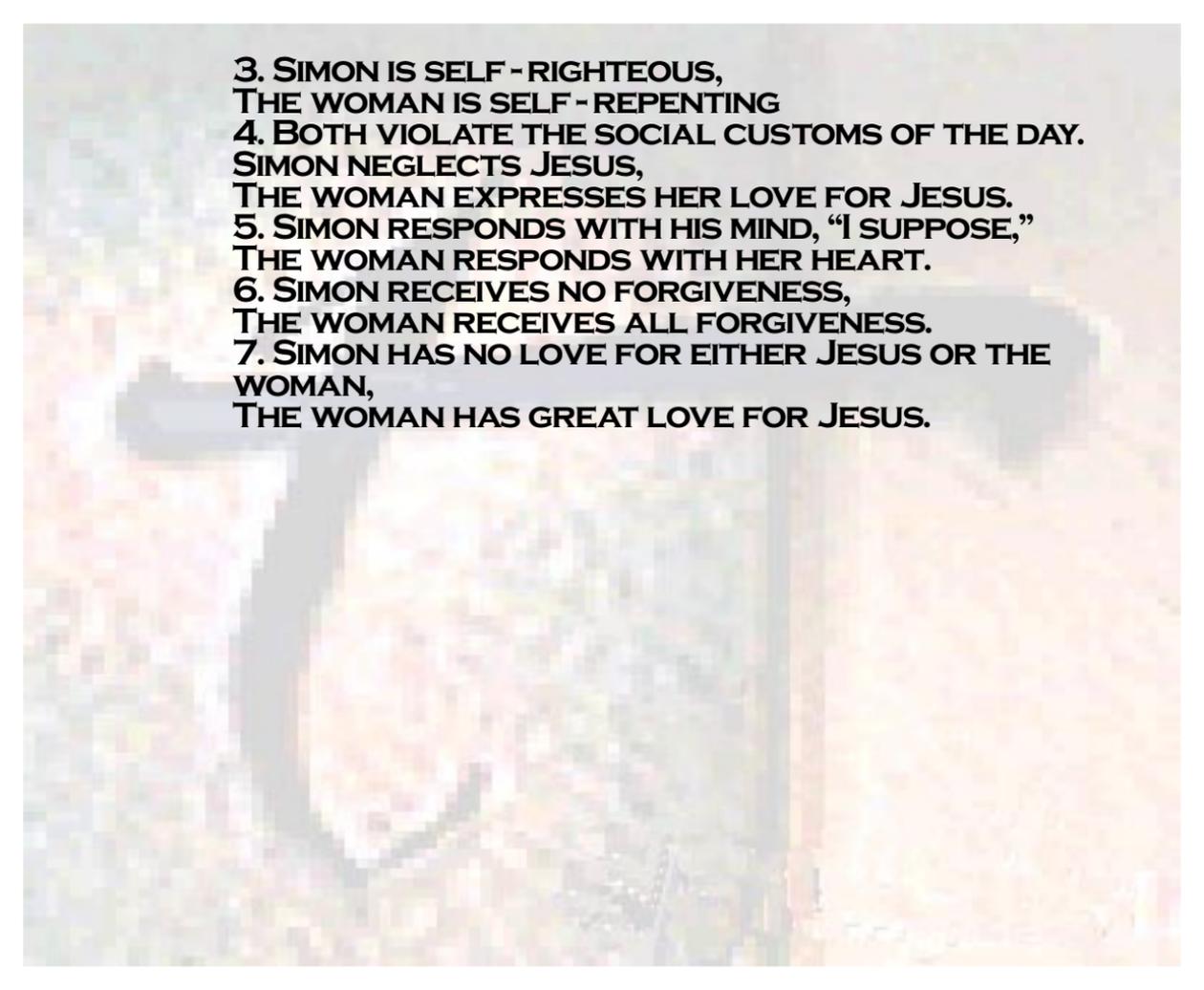
II. THE REPENTANT SINNER

THE WOMAN UNDERSTOOD:

- 1. HERSELF AS A SINNER,**
- 2. JESUS AS THE FORGIVER,**
- 3. HERSELF AS FORGIVEN,**
- 4. ONLY A TINY BIT OF THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS.**

III. CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE TWO SINNERS

- 1. JESUS COMES TO SIMON,
THE WOMAN COMES TO JESUS.**
- 2. SIMON IS RESPECTABLE,
THE WOMAN IS NOT RESPECTABLE,
JESUS KNOWS THE HEART OF BOTH.**

- 
- 3. SIMON IS SELF - RIGHTEOUS,
THE WOMAN IS SELF - REPENTING**
 - 4. BOTH VIOLATE THE SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF THE DAY.
SIMON NEGLECTS JESUS,
THE WOMAN EXPRESSES HER LOVE FOR JESUS.**
 - 5. SIMON RESPONDS WITH HIS MIND, "I SUPPOSE,"
THE WOMAN RESPONDS WITH HER HEART.**
 - 6. SIMON RECEIVES NO FORGIVENESS,
THE WOMAN RECEIVES ALL FORGIVENESS.**
 - 7. SIMON HAS NO LOVE FOR EITHER JESUS OR THE
WOMAN,
THE WOMAN HAS GREAT LOVE FOR JESUS.**

LUKE 8

- I. JESUS PREACHES THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM 8:1 - 3
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS 8:4 - 18
- III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT HEARING AND DOING THE WORD OF GOD 8:19 - 21
- IV. JESUS STILLS THE STORM 8:22 - 25
- V. JESUS HEALS THE GADERENE DEMONIAK 8:26 - 39
- VI. JESUS RAISES THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS AND HEALS THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD 8:40 - 56

I. JESUS PREACHES THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM 8:1 - 3
IT WAS A COMMON PRACTICE TO HELP SUPPORT A RABBI AND THE WOMEN IN THESE VERSES WERE FOLLOWING THIS CUSTOM. SOME OF THESE WOMEN HAD BEEN HEALED FROM INFIRMITIES AND DIFFICULTIES. ONE OF THE WOMEN IS THE WIFE OF THE STEWARD OF HEROD AND THE MARY WHO IS MENTIONED HERE IS FROM THE TOWN OF MAGDALA.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS 8:4 - 18
THIS PARABLE SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WONDERFUL PARABLES THAT FOLLOW. JESUS USED PARABLES AS A TEACHING METHOD SO THAT: THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM WOULD NOT HAVE DIRECT GROUNDS TO ACCUSE HIM, AND THOSE WHO FOLLOWED HIM COULD REMEMBER HIS TEACHINGS AND UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL TRUTHS.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS IS ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT HEARING AND DOING THE WORD OF GOD 8:19-21

THIS PASSAGE DEALS WITH THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE AND DOING THE WILL OF GOD. LUKE PLACES THIS PASSAGE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PARABLE ABOUT HEARING THE WORD OF GOD.

IV. JESUS STILLS THE STORM 8:22-25

IN THIS SECTION JESUS IS THE MASTER OF THE SEA. THE SEA REPRESENTS NATURE; THEREFORE, JESUS IS MASTER OF NATURE. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MIRACLE IS TO TEACH THE DISCIPLES TO TRUST IN HIM AND NOT FEAR.

SUDDEN STORMS ON THE SEA OF GALILEE WERE NOT UNUSUAL. I ONCE MET A GROUP AT TIBERIAS THAT HAD BEEN THE DAY BEFORE IN A BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE. THE LEADER OF THE GROUP TOLD ME THAT A SEVERE STORM CAME UP SUDDENLY WHILE THEY WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER BEEN SO FRIGHTENED IN ALL HIS LIFE.

V. JESUS HEALS THE GADERENE DEMONIAK 8:26-39

THIS MAN CALLS HIMSELF "LEGION," MEANING THERE WERE MANY DEMON SPIRITS IN HIM. A REGULAR ROMAN LEGION WAS COMPOSED OF ABOUT 6,000 SOLDIERS. JESUS CASTS THE DEMONS OUT OF THE MAN. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MIRACLE IS

TO TEACH THAT JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE EVIL DEMONIC SPIRITUAL WORLD. THE DEMONS GO INTO THE HERD OF SWINE NEARBY, AND THE SWINE PLUNGE INTO THE SEA. THIS UPSETS THE PEOPLE OF THIS TERRITORY SO MUCH THEY ASK JESUS TO LEAVE. JESUS DOES DISTURB PEOPLE. EVEN TODAY WHEN THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED WITH CLARITY IN A CHURCH SOME PEOPLE LEAVE AND SOME REFUSE TO ATTEND BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT THEIR WORLD DISTURBED.

VI. JESUS RAISES THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS AND HEALS THE WOMAN WITH INCURABLE BLEEDING 8:40-56

JAIRUS, THE RULER OF A SYNAGOGUE, COMES TO JESUS SEEKING HEALING FOR HIS 12 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER.

ON THE WAY TO JAIRUS' HOUSE A WOMAN WITH A DEADLY INCURABLE BLEEDING DISEASE TOUCHES JESUS. THIS BLEEDING DISEASE MAKES HER UNCLEAN; SHE IS, THEREFORE, FORBIDDEN BY LAW TO TOUCH ANYONE. SHE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO TOUCH ANYONE FOR TWELVE YEARS. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA OF THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE MAKES HER ONE OF THE MOST DESPERATE WOMEN IN ALL SCRIPTURE. THE HOPE WHICH HAS SUSTAINED HER LIKE WATER THROUGH HER DESERT OF SICKNESS IS ABOUT EXHAUSTED. IN HER DESPERATION, SHE SEEKS HEALING FROM JESUS. SHE BELIEVES THAT IF SHE CAN JUST TOUCH THE EDGE OF JESUS' ROBE SHE WILL BE HEALED. SHE REACHES UP AND TOUCHES THE FRINGE, *κρασπεδου*, OF HIS GARMENT. THIS WORD IN THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX) MEANS THE FRINGES AND TASSELS WHICH EVERY JEWISH MAN WAS COMMANDED TO WEAR. THIS

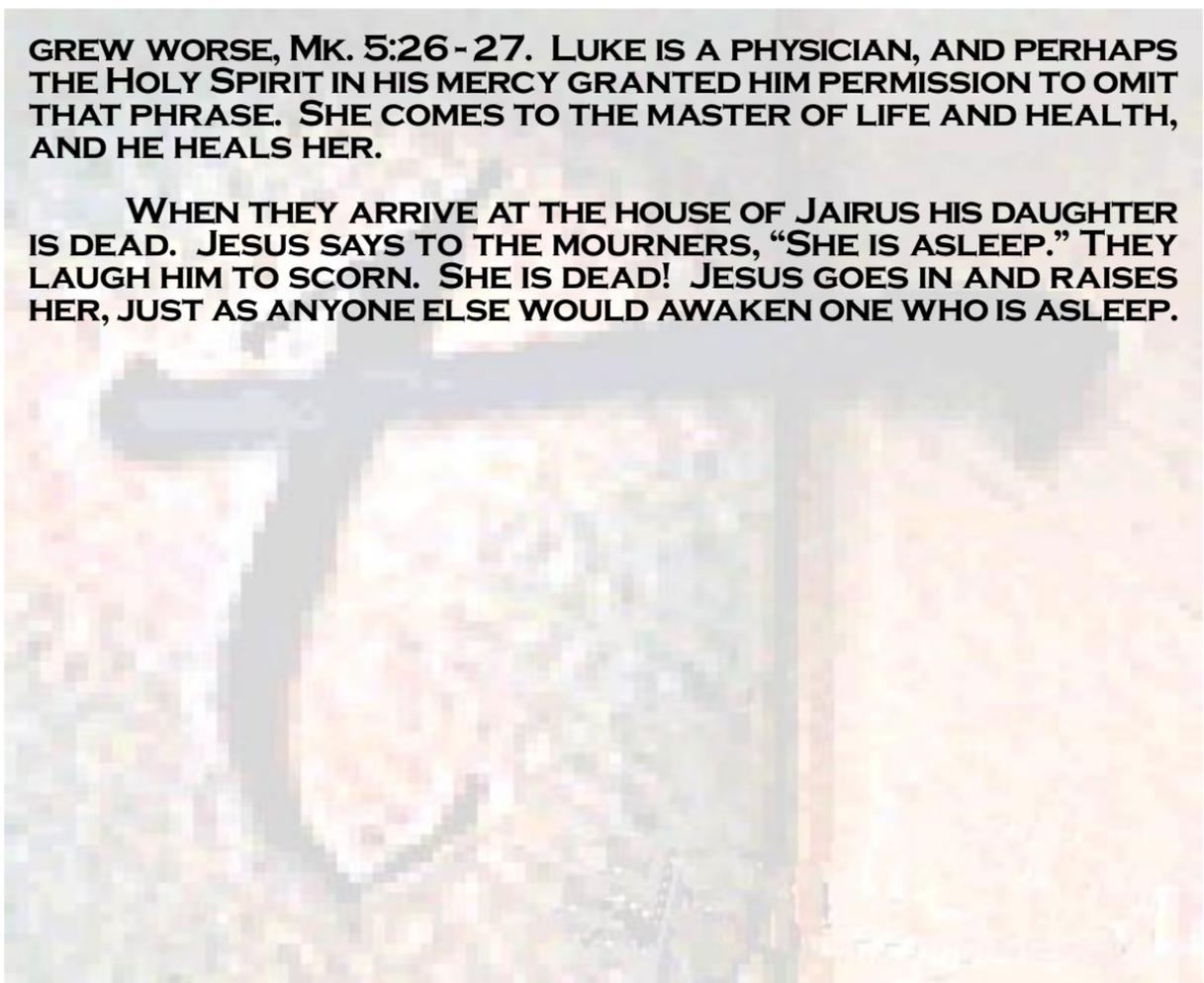
COMMAND IS IN NUMBERS 15:38 - 39. EVERY JEWISH MAN HAD HIS PRAYER SHAWL WHICH WENT AROUND THE BACK OF HIS NECK AND HUNG DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM. ON THIS PRAYER SHAWL WERE THE TASSELS. THE LAW SAID THAT THESE TASSELS HAD TO BE BLUE. AT THE TIME OF JESUS THE BLUE DYE FOR DYING THESE TASSELS COST \$100,000 A POUND. BECAUSE OF THIS GREAT EXPENSE JEWISH ORAL LAW SAID THAT IF ONE TASSEL WAS BLUE, IT FULFILLED THE LAW. THE PRAYER SHAWL SYMBOLIZED STATUS, AUTHORITY AND HOLINESS. THE MORE BLUE TASSELS, THE MORE STATUS. THIS PRAYER SHAWL SYMBOLIZED THAT THEY WERE THE COVENANT PEOPLE OF GOD. IT WITNESSED TO THEIR HOLINESS.

THE WOMAN ACTS OUT OF DESPERATION. SHE TOUCHES THE EDGE OF THE SHAWL AND GETS CAUGHT. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS ACT OF INTRUSION. MY FRIEND CHARLES PAGE, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST IN ISRAEL, TELLS ME IT WAS AGAINST THE ORAL LAW FOR ANYONE TO TOUCH THE PRAYER SHAWL OF ANOTHER PERSON UNLESS THAT PERSON WAS A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. RED FLAG, THE FIRST WORD JESUS SAYS TO HER IS "DAUGHTER." HE MEANS, "YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU A PART OF MY FAMILY. YOUR CAN TOUCH MY PRAYER SHAWL." SHE KNOWS WHAT HE IS TELLING HER. SHE GETS HER HEALING, AND SHE CAN TOUCH PEOPLE AGAIN.

LUKE SAYS THAT SHE HAD SPENT EVERYTHING SHE HAD ON PHYSICIANS, AND THEY HAD NOT HELPED HER. IT IS INTERESTING THAT MARK SAYS THAT IN SPITE OF SEEING THE PHYSICIANS SHE

GREW WORSE, Mk. 5:26-27. LUKE IS A PHYSICIAN, AND PERHAPS THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS MERCY GRANTED HIM PERMISSION TO OMIT THAT PHRASE. SHE COMES TO THE MASTER OF LIFE AND HEALTH, AND HE HEALS HER.

WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT THE HOUSE OF JAIRUS HIS DAUGHTER IS DEAD. JESUS SAYS TO THE MOURNERS, "SHE IS ASLEEP." THEY LAUGH HIM TO SCORN. SHE IS DEAD! JESUS GOES IN AND RAISES HER, JUST AS ANYONE ELSE WOULD AWAKEN ONE WHO IS ASLEEP.



LUKE 9

- I. JESUS SENDS THE TWELVE ON A MISSION 9:1 - 9
- II. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND 9:10 - 17
- III. JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH 9:8 - 27
- IV. JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED 9:28 - 36
- V. JESUS HEALS A BOY WITH A DEMON 9:37 - 45
- VI. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT TRUE GREATNESS
9:46 - 50
- VII. JESUS REBUKES HARSHNESS, INSINCERITY AND
LACK OF COMMITMENT 9:51 - 62

I. JESUS SENDS THE TWELVE ON A MISSION 9:1 - 9

JESUS SENDS HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES ON A MISSION TRIP. THEY ARE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AND HEAL AS THEY TRAVEL FAST AND EFFECTIVELY. HEROD HEARS ALL THAT IS HAPPENING AND HE WANTS TO SEE JESUS.

II. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND 9:10 - 17

GENERAL BOOTH, THE FOUNDER OF THE SALVATION ARMY, WAS ACCUSED OF OFFERING FOOD AND MEALS TO POOR PEOPLE INSTEAD OF THE SIMPLE GOSPEL. HE ANSWERED, "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMFORT MEN'S HEARTS WITH THE LOVE OF GOD WHEN THEIR FEET ARE PERISHING WITH COLD." THE FEEDING OF THE MULTITUDES IS RECORDED IN ALL FOUR GOSPELS. THE REASON IS BECAUSE IT SHOWS SO CLEARLY THAT JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE. HIS COMPASSION REACHES TO EVERY PERSON AND THEIR NEEDS.

III. JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH 9:18 - 27

THIS IS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE GOSPEL. THE QUESTION JESUS ASKS IS: "WHOM DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?" HE KNOWS THAT THE RISING TIDE OF HOSTILITY AGAINST HIM MEANS THAT THE CROSS IS JUST AHEAD. PROBABLY BEFORE HIS BAPTISM HE HAD KNOWN THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH AND THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF ISAIAH.

VERSES 23 - 27 GIVE THE QUALIFICATION FOR DISCIPLESHIP. THE DISCIPLE IS TO TAKE HIS CROSS DAILY. THE CROSS IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH TO THE SELF.

IV. JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED 9:28 - 36

JESUS TAKES PETER, JAMES AND JOHN UP INTO THE MOUNTAIN TO PRAY. AS JESUS IS PRAYING HE IS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM. MOSES THE GREAT LAW GIVER AND ELIJAH THE GREATEST OF THE PROPHETS APPEAR AND TALK WITH JESUS ABOUT HIS EXODUS AT JERUSALEM. VERSE 32 SAYS WHEN THE DISCIPLES AWOKE, "THEY SAW HIS GLORY, AND THE TWO MEN THAT STOOD WITH HIM." WE MISS SO MUCH BECAUSE WE ARE SPIRITUALLY ASLEEP. WE ABSTRACT THINGS OUT OF EVERY PHENOMENON. USUALLY WE ABSTRACT OUT THE SPIRITUAL.

PETER WANTS TO STAY ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP FOREVER, BUT JESUS BRINGS THEM DOWN INTO THE VALLEY. THE TRUTH HERE IS THAT STRENGTH AND POWER ARE GAINED ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP, BUT THE BATTLES OF LIFE ARE FOUGHT AND THE VICTORIES WON IN THE VALLEYS.

V. JESUS HEALS A BOY WITH A DEMON 9:37 - 45

THEY COME DOWN THE MOUNTAIN THE NEXT DAY AND ARE MET BY A MAN WHO PLEADS WITH JESUS TO HEAL HIS SON.

VERSE 42 SAYS THE DEMON THREW THE BOY DOWN. THIS IS THE WORD USED OF A BOXER WHO GIVES A KNOCK OUT BLOW OR A WRESTLER WHO THROWS HIS OPPONENT. JESUS TAKES THE SITUATION IN HAND AND HEALS THE LAD.

VI. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT TRUE GREATNESS 9:46 - 50

THE DISCIPLES HAVE JUST FAILED, AND YET THEY THINK THEY ARE GREAT. THE RUBBER OF TRUTH HAD NOT YET HIT THE ROAD OF REALITY. THIS IS HUMAN NATURE EXHIBITED IN ITS FULLNESS.

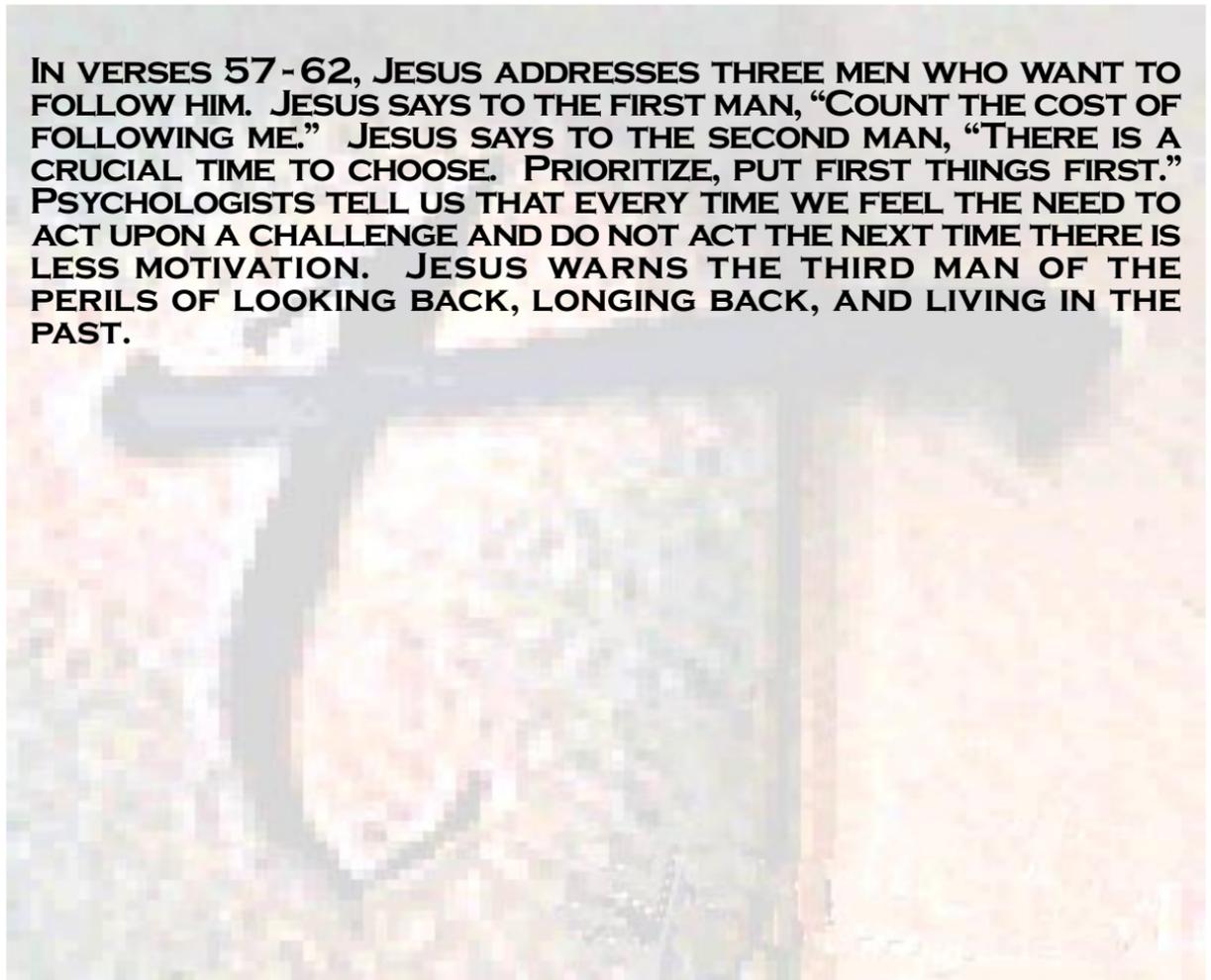
VERSES 49 - 50 TEACH US THAT GOD CAN WORK THROUGH PEOPLE OTHER THAN OURSELVES. WE HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON GOD.

VII. JESUS REBUKES HARSHNESS, INSINCERITY AND LACK OF COMMITMENT 9:51 - 62

IN VERSE 51, JESUS STEADFASTLY SETS HIS FACE TO GO TO JERUSALEM AND THE CROSS. THIS IS THE TURNING POINT IN THE GOSPEL. AFTER THIS JESUS' FACE IS ALWAYS TOWARD THE CROSS.

VERSES 52 - 56 SHOW HOW PEOPLE ACT WHEN THEY HAVE POWER OVER OTHERS WHO DISAGREE WITH THEM. THEY WILL BURN THEM.

IN VERSES 57-62, JESUS ADDRESSES THREE MEN WHO WANT TO FOLLOW HIM. JESUS SAYS TO THE FIRST MAN, "COUNT THE COST OF FOLLOWING ME." JESUS SAYS TO THE SECOND MAN, "THERE IS A CRUCIAL TIME TO CHOOSE. PRIORITIZE, PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST." PSYCHOLOGISTS TELL US THAT EVERY TIME WE FEEL THE NEED TO ACT UPON A CHALLENGE AND DO NOT ACT THE NEXT TIME THERE IS LESS MOTIVATION. JESUS WARNS THE THIRD MAN OF THE PERILS OF LOOKING BACK, LONGING BACK, AND LIVING IN THE PAST.



LUKE 10

- I. JESUS SENDS OUT THE SEVENTY 10:1 -24**
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN 10:25-37**
- III. JESUS TEACHES MARY AND MARTHA 10:38-42**

I. JESUS SENDS OUT THE SEVENTY 10:1 -24

THE NUMBER 70 IS A SYMBOLIC NUMBER IN SCRIPTURE. MOSES CHOSE 70 ELDERS. THE NUMBER OF THE SANHEDRIN WAS 70 PLUS THE HIGH PRIEST. SEVENTY WAS BELIEVED TO BE THE NUMBER OF THE NATIONS IN THE WORLD.

THE HARD PHRASE IN THIS PASSAGE IS “I SAW SATAN FALL LIKE LIGHTENING FROM HEAVEN.” THIS IS A WARNING TO THE SEVENTY THAT WHAT THEY HAVE WITNESSED IS THE POWER OF GOD, AND THEY ARE NOT TO LET PRIDE ENTER AND STEAL GOD’S GLORY. SATAN’S SIN WAS PRIDE. HE WAS CAST OUT OF HEAVEN, BECAUSE HE WANTED TO STEAL GOD’S GLORY. IN THIS STATEMENT JESUS REMEMBERS THE PAST AND ALSO FORESEES THE FINAL DEFEAT OF SATAN ON THE EARTH.

IN VERSES 21 -24, JESUS REJOICES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND CLAIMS GOD AS HIS FATHER.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN 10:25-37

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN IS PROMPTED BY A LAWYER'S INQUIRY ABOUT HOW TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE. JESUS ANSWERS THE QUESTION WITH A QUESTION. THE LAWYER GIVES A SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW FROM DEUTERONOMY 6:5 AND LEVITICUS 19:18. JESUS THEN GIVES THE PARABLE.

THE EVENTS OF THE PARABLE TAKE PLACE ON THE ROAD BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND JERICO. JERUSALEM IS 2,300 FEET ABOVE SEA-LEVEL. JERICO IS 1,200 FEET BELOW SEA LEVEL. IN 20 MILES THE ROAD DROPS ALMOST 3,600 FEET. THIS ROAD WAS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. A MAN TRAVELING ON THE ROAD IS BEATEN AND ROBBED BY THIEVES WHO LEAVE HIM TO DIE. A PRIEST PASSES HIM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD WITHOUT STOPPING TO HELP HIM. LATER A LEVITE ALSO PASSES HIM WITHOUT HELPING HIM. THEN A SAMARITAN PASSES BY, STOPS, BINDS UP HIS WOUNDS, HIM, PUTS HIM ON HIS DONKEY AND TAKES HIM TO AN INN. SAMARITAN'S HEART IS RIGHT AND HIS CREDIT IS GOOD. THE JEWS HATED THE SAMARITANS AND DEFINED NEIGHBORS ONLY AS THEIR FELLOW JEWS. SOMEONE SUMMARIZED THE PHILOSOPHIES OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE PARABLE IN THIS WAY: "THE THIEVES BEAT HIM UP; THE PRIEST AND THE LEVITE PASSED HIM UP AND THE SAMARITAN PICKED HIM UP." SOMEONE ELSE HAS SAID OF THEIR PHILOSOPHIES: THE THIEVES, "WHAT IS THINE IS MINE, I WILL TAKE IT." THE PRIEST AND THE LEVITE, "WHAT IS MINE IS MINE, I WILL KEEP IT." THE SAMARITAN, "WHAT IS MINE IS THINE, I'LL SHARE IT."

III. JESUS TEACHES MARY AND MARTHA 10:38-42

THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE WARNS US ABOUT PRIORITIES AND MISSING THE GREAT SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES WHICH CAN BE OURS. MARTHA AND MARY HAVE DIFFERENT TEMPERAMENTS. MARTHA IS A VERY ACTIVE PERSON, ALWAYS CONCERNED THAT EVERYTHING IS DONE TO PERFECTION. SHE IS CONCERNED ABOUT MEETING THE OUTWARD NEEDS. MARY UNDERSTANDS JESUS' HEART. SHE WANTS TO KNOW JESUS BETTER. SHE WANTS TO SPEND TIME WITH HIM. JESUS SAYS SHE HAS CHOSEN CORRECTLY.



LUKE 11

- I. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER 11:1-13
- II. JESUS REBUKES UNBELIEF 11:14-28
- III. JESUS GIVES THE SIGN OF JONAH 11:29-36
- IV. JESUS PRONOUNCES WOES UPON THE PHARISEES AND LAWYERS 11:37-54

I. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER 11:1-13

THE DISCIPLES KNOW WHERE JESUS' POWER IS, SO THEY ASK HIM TO TEACH THEM TO PRAY. HE GIVES THEM HIS THEOLOGY OF PRAYER IN THE MODEL PRAYER. THIS PRAYER COVERS ALL OF LIFE FROM PAST SINS TO PRESENT NEEDS AND FUTURE TEMPTATIONS.

IN VERSES 5-13, JESUS CONTRASTS MEN WITH GOD. IN THE CULTURE IT WAS A DISGRACE NOT TO HELP PROVIDE HOSPITALITY TO A GUEST. HIS POINT ILLUSTRATES THAT IF PEOPLE WILL RESPOND TO EACH OTHER IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES JUST BECAUSE THEY FEAR PUBLIC OPINION SURELY GOD WILL RESPOND TO US BECAUSE HE LOVES US.

II. JESUS REBUKES UNBELIEF 11:14-28

JESUS CASTS A DEMON OUT OF A MAN AND HIS ENEMIES USE THIS AS AN OCCASION TO SLANDER HIM. THEY ACCUSE HIM OF CASTING OUT DEVILS BY THE POWER OF BEELZEBUB. JESUS ANSWERS THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT HIM BY SHOWING HOW RIDICULOUS THEIR CHARGE IS. THEN HE TELLS THE PARABLE OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

JESUS INTENDS FOR THIS PARABLE TO HAVE AN APPLICATION TO THE NATION ISRAEL. BEFORE THE NATION ISRAEL IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES WAS TAKEN INTO CAPTIVITY THE PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS SHOWING THEIR UNBELIEF BY GOING AFTER IDOLS. WHEN THEY CAME BACK FROM CAPTIVITY THEY HAD LEARNED THEIR LESSON. THEY NO LONGER SERVED IDOLS; THAT DEMON WAS GONE, BUT OTHER KINDS OF DEMONS HAD COME LIKE PRIDE AND HYPOCRISY.

THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE FOR TODAY IS THAT REFORMATION MAY GET RID OF SOME BAD HABITS AND SINS, BUT UNLESS THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD COMES INTO THE LIFE WORSE SINS AND HABITS WILL COME TO FILL THE VACUUM. ONE CANNOT REMAIN NEUTRAL.

ENEMIES OF THE FAITH HAVE ALWAYS SLANDERED GOD'S PEOPLE. GLADSTONE, A GREAT BELIEVER IN CHRIST, AND A PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND WORKED FOR THE REFORM OF FALLEN WOMEN. HIS ENEMIES SUGGESTED IT WAS FOR OTHER REASONS RATHER THAN CONCERN. A MORAL CHARGE IS OFTEN BROUGHT BY ENEMIES, BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO COMBAT. ONE MINISTER IN AN AREA I ONCE SERVED WAS ASKED TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF SLANDER. I ASKED ONE OF THE LEADING FAMILIES OF THE CHURCH HE SERVED ABOUT THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGE. THEY SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY THEMSELVES WERE NOT SORRY TO SEE HIM LEAVE, THEY WERE SURE THE CHARGE AGAINST HIM WAS A LIE. THEY SAID THE CHARGE CAUSED PEOPLE TO MAKE INFERENCES AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS THAT WERE NOT TRUE.

III. JESUS GIVES THE SIGN OF JONAH 11:29-36

THEY WANT A SIGN THAT JESUS IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS. THEY HAVE HAD ALL KINDS OF SIGNS, BUT PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE BLIND WILL NOT SEE. THE SIGN THAT JESUS GIVES THEM IS THE SIGN OF JONAH WHICH IS THREE DAYS IN THE GRAVE. JESUS ALSO TEACHES THAT PRIVILEGE DEMANDS RESPONSIBILITY.

VERSES 33-36 TEACH HOW TO GLORIFY GOD BY ONE'S LIFE. SOME AUTHORITIES SAY THAT AS MUCH AS FOUR FIFTHS OF WHAT WE KNOW WE LEARN BY OBSERVATION THROUGH SIGHT. IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD IN ORDER TO SEE A PERSON MUST HAVE SPIRITUAL EYES. A LIGHT IS DESIGNED TO ILLUMINATE A ROOM. GOD DESIGNED THE EYE TO LIGHT THE BODY, AND HE DESIGNED THE HEART WITH SPIRITUAL EYES. JESUS IS TELLING THEM THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE A SIGN IF HE GAVE THEM ONE. THEIR PROBLEM WAS NOT LACK OF SIGNS, BUT THE LACK OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT.

IV. JESUS PRONOUNCES WOES UPON THE PHARISEES AND LAWYERS 11:37-54

JESUS PRONOUNCES SIX WOES ON THEM. HE IS SHOWING THEM THAT CLEANSING THE HEART IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CLEANSING THE HANDS, BECAUSE WATER ON THE HANDS DOES NOT TAKE HATRED FROM THE HEART, VERSE 41. THIS SECTION SHOWS HYPOCRISY CONCEALED AND HYPOCRISY REVEALED. THE PHARISEES HAD WORKED OUT THE DETAILS OF CEREMONIALLY WASHING THEIR HANDS. THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO GIVE THEM

RIGHTEOUSNESS. JESUS PURPOSELY DID NOT WASH HIS HANDS TO ILLUSTRATE THAT UNCLEANNESS COMES FROM THE INNER PERSON, NOT FROM EXTERNAL ACTION. THE ACCUSATION HERE IS THREEFOLD: 1. JESUS ACCUSES THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES OF ROBBING THE COMMON PEOPLE OF THE JOY OF SERVING GOD. THE PHARISEES PERVERTED THE SCRIPTURES BY DRAWING FROM THEM RULES THAT NO ONE COULD KEEP. 2. JESUS ACCUSES THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES OF PROFESSING TO LOVE THE DEAD PROPHETS, BUT KILLING THEIR CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS. 3. JESUS ACCUSES THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES OF CAUSING THE COMMON PEOPLE TO MISUNDERSTAND GOD AND HIS WORD.



LUKE 12

- I. JESUS REBUKES AND ENCOURAGES 12:1 - 12
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL
12:13-21
- III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRIORITIES 12:22 - 34
- IV. JESUS TEACHES FAITHFULNESS 12:35 - 48
- V. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE BRINGS DIVISION
12:48 - 59

I. JESUS REBUKES AND ENCOURAGES 12:1 - 12

CHAPTER 12 IS LIKE SEEING MANY JEWELS IN A BOWL AND TRYING TO DECIDE WHICH ONE TO PICK UP. JESUS IS WARNING, ENCOURAGING, AND TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES. THESE FIRST 12 VERSES COULD BE TITLED: "MAN'S HYPOCRISY REVEALED, GOD'S CONCERN REAL AND GOD'S JUDGMENT SURE."

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL 12:13-21

IN THIS PARABLE JESUS SHOWS THE INSECURITY OF RICHES. HE TEACHES THAT SILVER AND GOLD SLIP THROUGH OUR FINGERS, BUT OUR SOULS LIVE ON FOREVER.

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRIORITIES 12:22 - 34

JESUS TEACHES THAT TRUST IN GOD GIVES SECURITY RATHER THAN WORRY OR THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD. HE TEACHES THAT IF ONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM,

GOD WILL SUPPLY HIS NEEDS.

IV. JESUS TEACHES FAITHFULNESS 12:35-48

IN VERSES 36-48, JESUS GIVES A WARNING ABOUT BEING PREPARED FOR HIS RETURN.

V. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE BRINGS DIVISION 12:49-59

VERSES 49-59 TEACH THAT THERE ARE TO BE NO DIVIDED LOYALTIES AND THAT JUDGMENT IS SURE. THIS PASSAGE ALSO TEACHES THAT MAN'S CASE WILL GO AGAINST HIM IN JUDGMENT, SO HE NEEDS TO MAKE PEACE WITH GOD NOW.

LUKE 13

- I. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT REPENTANCE 13:1 -9
- II. JESUS HEALS A WOMAN ON THE SABBATH
13:10-21
- III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE URGENCY OF
SALVATION 13:22 - 30
- IV. JESUS GIVES WARNINGS TO HEROD AND TO
JERUSALEM 13:31 - 35

I. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT REPENTANCE 13:1 -9
JESUS PLACES A CURRENT EVENT AS A TRUMPET TO HIS LIPS TO CALL THE PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THIS EVENT WAS JERUSALEM'S NEED FOR A NEW WATER SYSTEM. PILATE INTENDED TO BUILD IT WITH MONEY FROM THE TEMPLE TREASURY. THE PEOPLE OBJECTED AND MOBS DEMONSTRATED THEIR DISAPPROVAL. SO PILATE SENT SOLDIERS DISGUISED AS CIVILIANS WITH CLOAKS OVER THEIR UNIFORMS INTO THE CROWDS. AT A SIGNAL THE SOLDIERS USED CLUBS TO BEAT THE PEOPLE AWAY. IN THEIR FRUSTRATIONS THE SOLDIERS BECAME VERY VIOLENT AND KILLED MANY PEOPLE. JESUS SHOWS THAT EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS THAT IS BAD DOES NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE EVIL. SIN AND SUFFERING HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH CAUSE AND EFFECT BY CERTAIN PEOPLE. ONE OF THE CHIEF PURPOSES OF THE BOOK OF JOB IS TO SHOW THAT THE TWO DO NOT NECESSARILY GO TOGETHER. JESUS DECLARES THAT UNLESS PEOPLE REPENT THEY WILL PERISH.

IN VERSES 6 - 9, JESUS USES A PARABLE TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT HE HAS JUST TAUGHT ABOUT REPENTANCE. THIS PARABLE TEACHES MERCY, A SECOND OPPORTUNITY, BUT ALSO THE FACT OF A FINAL OPPORTUNITY. THE PARABLE APPLIES TO THE NATION ISRAEL, AND IS ALSO A WARNING TO ALL.

II. JESUS HEALS A WOMAN ON THE SABBATH 13:10-21

THE HEALING OF THIS WOMAN IS ON THE SABBATH. THE PHARISEES CONSIDER HEALING AS WORK. THE HEAD OF THE SYNAGOGUE ATTEMPTS TO PERSUADE THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS HAS BROKEN THE SABBATH BECAUSE HE HAS HEALED A WOMAN ON THE SABBATH. JESUS IS RESTORING THE SABBATH TO ITS ORIGINAL INTENT. JESUS ANSWERS THAT THEY LOOSE THEIR ANIMALS TO GET WATER, BUT THEY CONDEMN HIM FOR LOOSING A WOMAN FROM THE BONDAGE OF SICKNESS.

IN VERSES 18 - 19, JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED. IN THE EAST A LARGE TREE WAS THE SYMBOL OF A GREAT EMPIRE. JESUS IS TEACHING THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD, EVEN IF IT IS SMALL WILL GROW.

VERSES 20-21 TEACH THAT THE KINGDOM STARTS ON THE INSIDE FROM A SMALL BEGINNING, WORKS FROM THE INSIDE AND CHANGES THE FORM.

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE URGENCY OF SALVATION 13:22 - 30

JESUS SAYS, "THOSE WHO ARE LAST WILL BE FIRST, AND THOSE WHO ARE FIRST SHALL BE LAST." THIS SAYING REFERS TO THE WORLD'S STANDARDS AND GOD'S STANDARDS IN HIS KINGDOM. THE NARROW DOOR IN THIS PASSAGE SYMBOLIZES REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

IV. JESUS GIVES WARNING TO HEROD AND TO JERUSALEM 13:31 - 35

SOME OF THE PHARISEES ARE EITHER WARNING HIM OF THE DANGER FROM HEROD OR THEY ARE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN JESUS. JESUS REFERS TO HEROD AS A FOX. THE FOX STILL SYMBOLIZES THE SLIEST OF ANIMALS. IN THE EAST THE FOX IS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE OF ANIMALS. THIS IS THE REASON WHY WHEN THE FOX WAS USED AS A METAPHOR TO SPEAK OF A MAN IT MEANT A WORTHLESS ONE.

IN THIS PASSAGE, THERE IS A CRY OF SADNESS IN JESUS' VOICE AS HE SPEAKS OF JERUSALEM AND THE PROPHETS.

LUKE 14

I. JESUS HEALS A MAN ON THE SABBATH 14:1 - 6

**II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT HUMILITY AND PRIDE
14:7 - 14**

**III. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE
FEAST 14:15 - 24**

**IV. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE COST OF
DISCIPLESHIP 14:25 - 35**

I. JESUS HEALS A MAN ON THE SABBATH 14:1 - 6

IT IS THE SABBATH, AND JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH DROPSY. JESUS ANSWERS THOSE WHO OBJECT TO HIS HEALING WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THEY WOULD RESCUE ONE OF THEIR ANIMALS IF IT FELL INTO A WELL ON THE SABBATH. OPEN WELLS WERE FAIRLY COMMON IN PALESTINE AND ANIMALS DID FALL INTO THEM. JESUS ACCUSES THEM OF HAVING MORE REGARD FOR THEIR OWN ANIMALS THAN FOR THEIR PEOPLE.

II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT HUMILITY AND PRIDE 14:7 - 14

IN THIS SECTION JESUS TEACHES THAT TRUE HUMILITY IS THE STATE WHICH GOD HONORS IN PEOPLE.

**III. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST
14:15 - 24**

JESUS USES THE OCCASION OF EATING AT A PHARISEE'S HOUSE TO GIVE THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET. HE POINTS

OUT TO THEM THE FOOLISHNESS OF REFUSING TO ACCEPT HIS SALVATION. THE JEWS ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT MESSIANIC BANQUET. IN THE EAST IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR A PERSON TO SEND OUT AN INVITATION TO A GREAT BANQUET. IN THE INVITATION THE DAY AND THE HOUR WAS NOT SET. THE PERSON RESPONDED "YES" OR "NO." THEN ON THE DAY OF THE BANQUET A SERVANT WAS SENT TO ANNOUNCE IT. TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION AT FIRST AND THEN TO REFUSE IT AT THE LAST WAS AN EXTREME INSULT.

IN THE PARABLE THE MASTER IS GOD. THOSE WHO REFUSE THE INVITATION ARE THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL. THEY INSULT GOD. THEREFORE, GOD INVITES BEGGARS AND SINNERS TO COME TO JESUS

IV. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

14:25-35

JESUS OFTEN USES HYPERBOLE. THE IDEA IN THIS SECTION IS COUNTING THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP. ONE IS NOT TO MAKE ANY PERSON OR ANY OBJECT HIS GOD. TRUE DISCIPLESHIP IS A READINESS TO RENOUNCE ANYTHING THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF FOLLOWING CHRIST.

LUKE 15

- I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP
15:1 - 7**
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN
15:8 - 10**
- III. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL
SON 15:11 - 32**

I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP 15:1 - 7

THIS IS THE CHAPTER OF THE LOST THINGS. THE SHEEP IS LOST BY CARELESSNESS. THE COIN IS LOST BY ACCIDENT OR NEGLIGENCE. THE SON IS LOST BY DELIBERATE CHOICE. THIS PARABLE TEACHES JOY OVER A REPENTANT SINNER.

IN THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN THERE IS: 1. THE SADNESS OVER THE LOST. 2. THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST. 3. THE CELEBRATION OF JOY FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE LOST. IN THIS PARABLE GOD IS A SEEKING GOD.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN 15:8 - 10

THIS COIN WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE TEN PIECES OF SILVER WORN AS A WOMAN'S MARRIAGE NECKLACE OR HEADADDRESS. THE BEDOIN WOMEN WORE A HEADBAND OF TEN COINS WHEN THEY WERE MARRIED. THE VILLAGE WOMEN OFTEN WORE A MARRIAGE NECKLACE OF COINS. THE LOSS OF THIS COIN IS

EQUIVALENT TO A WOMAN TODAY LOSING HER WEDDING OR ENGAGEMENT RING, OR THE DIAMOND OUT OF IT.

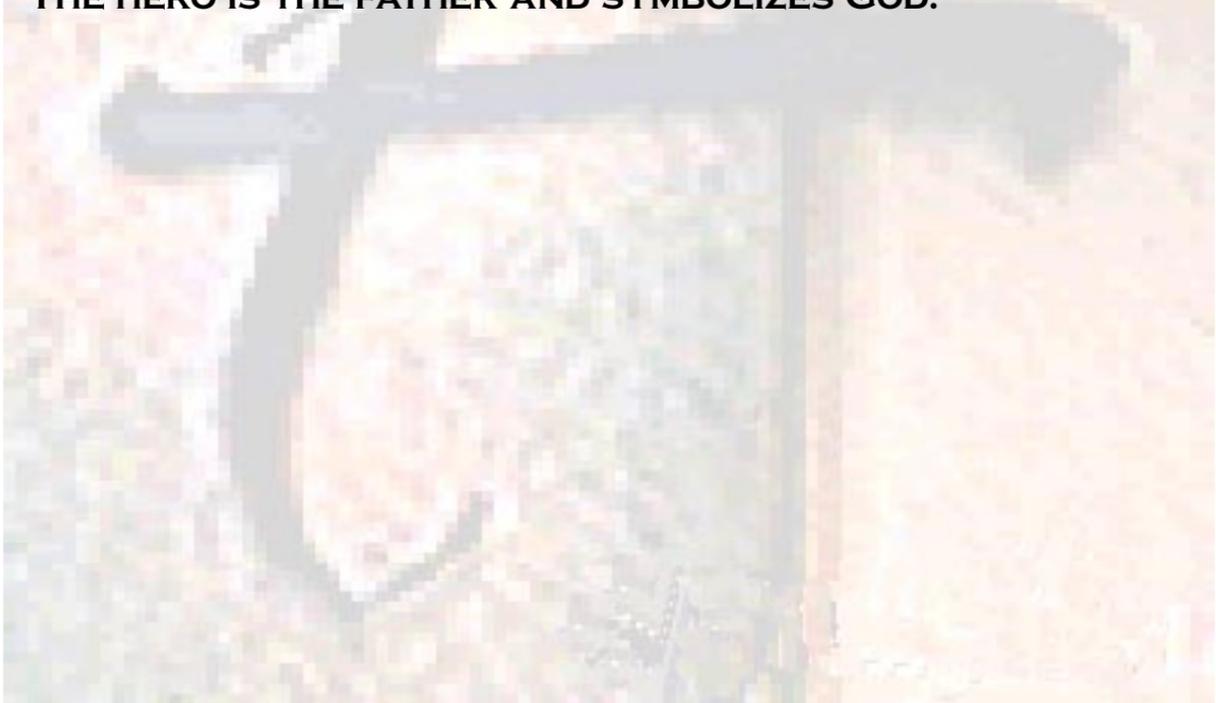
III. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON 15:11-32

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF THIS PARABLE IS THE FORGIVING FATHER. IN JEWISH LAW THE ELDEST SON GOT TWO THIRDS OF THE INHERITANCE, THE YOUNGEST SON GOT ONE THIRD. THEY DID NOT GET THEIR INHERITANCE UNTIL THE FATHER DIED. THE YOUNG MAN IN ESSENCE IS SAYING, "I WISH YOU WERE DEAD AND I WILL TREAT YOU AS DEAD. GIVE ME MY INHERITANCE." THIS WAS COMPLETELY FOREIGN TO THEIR CULTURE. THEY COULD HARDLY IMAGINE SUCH AN ACTION.

IN THE PARABLE, THE FATHER STANDS FOR GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD IS THE KING. HE IS SELDOM PICTURED AS A FATHER. JESUS' EMPHASIS ON THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD IS UNIQUE. THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN THE BIBLE THAT GOD IS IN A HURRY. MERIT AND GRACE ARE CONTRASTED IN THIS PARABLE, FOR IN SPITE OF WHAT THE SON DOES THE FATHER LOVES AND FORGIVES HIM. THE SON SAYS, "I WILL LET GO OF MY FATHER. I WILL BE MY OWN BOSS." WHEN HE COMES TO HIMSELF HE REALIZES TO WHOM HE BELONGS. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER IS RESTORED.

WHEN THE SON COMES HOME THE FATHER GREETES HIM WITH FIVE GIFTS: THE KISS, THE ROBE, THE RING, THE SHOES, AND THE FATTED CALF. THE KISS SIGNIFIES RECONCILIATION.

THE ROBE SIGNIFIES HONOR. THE RING SIGNIFIES AUTHORITY. THE SHOES SIGNIFY FREEDOM, FOR ONLY A SON WORE SHOES. SLAVES WORE NO SHOES. THE FATTED CALF SIGNIFIES A COVENANT MEAL. IT MEANS FRIENDSHIP FOREVER. IN ARAB CULTURE TODAY IT STILL MEANS FRIENDS FOREVER, BUT NOT IN JEWISH CULTURE TODAY. THAT IS THE REASON THE OLDER BROTHER WOULD NOT GO IN TO THE FEAST. HE KNEW IT MEANT FRIENDS FOREVER. THE HERO IS THE FATHER AND SYMBOLIZES GOD.



LUKE 16

I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST STEWARD 16:1 - 13

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS 16:14-31

I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST STEWARD 16:1 - 13

JESUS SHOWS HOW CLEVER PEOPLE ARE IN DEVISING WAYS TO DO EVIL. THIS MAN MISUSES HIS MASTER'S GOODS. THE IDEA IS THAT WE ARE TO USE OUR TALENTS AND WEALTH WISELY TO STORE UP ETERNAL BENEFITS WHILE WE STILL HAVE LIFE UPON THIS EARTH.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS 16:14-31

IN VERSES 14-18, JESUS CONFRONTS THE PHARISEES BECAUSE THEY JUSTIFY THEIR ACTIONS BEFORE MEN WHILE THEIR HEARTS ARE EVIL BEFORE GOD. LUKE 16:19-31 IS THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. TO UNDERSTAND THIS PARABLE, WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE CULTURE OF THAT DAY. PEOPLE ATE WITH THEIR HANDS. THERE WERE NO NAPKINS AND EATING UTENSILS AS TODAY. THE WEALTHY USED BREAD AS THEIR NAPKINS. THEY WIPED THEIR HANDS ON PIECES OF

BREAD AND THEN THREW THEM AWAY. THESE PIECES OF BREAD WERE WHAT LAZARUS ATE. ALTHOUGH THE RICH MAN HAD NO SYMPATHY, NO CONCERN, NO MERCY AND NO RESPONSE TO GOD, HE WAS RESPONSIBLE TO GOD FOR WHO HE WAS AND WHAT HE HAD. THE CONTEMPORARY WARNING IS AIMED AT THE PHARISEES, BUT THERE IS ALSO AN ETERNAL WARNING HERE FOR ALL PEOPLE.



LUKE 17

- I. JESUS WARNS AGAINST CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN
17:1 - 4**
- II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT FAITH 17:5 - 6**
- III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT DUTY 17:7 - 10**
- IV. JESUS HEALS THE TEN LEPERS 17:11 - 19**
- V. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE COMING OF THE
KINGDOM 17:20 - 37**

I. JESUS WARNS AGAINST CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN 7:1 - 4
VERSES 1 - 10 HAVE FOUR WARNINGS FOR HIS DISCIPLES:
FIRST, ABOUT CAUSING ANOTHER TO SIN; SECOND, ABOUT BEING
WILLING TO FORGIVE; THIRD, ABOUT SEEKING FAITH; AND
FOURTH, ABOUT THE DANGER OF PRIDE AND THINKING THAT A
PERSON DESERVES GOD'S PRAISE FOR HIS WORKS.

JESUS SAYS WE MAY CAUSE OTHERS TO SIN BECAUSE OF
LACK OF LOVE, LACK OF FAITH AND LACK OF FORGIVENESS.

II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT FAITH 17:5 - 6
JESUS TEACHES THAT GENUINE FAITH CAN BRING INCOM-
PREHENSIBLE RESULTS.

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT DUTY 17:7 - 10
JESUS TEACHES THAT NO HUMAN WORKS EVER GIVE A
PERSON A CLAIM UPON GOD. HE ILLUSTRATES THIS TRUTH WITH
THE PARABLE OF THE "UNPROFITABLE SERVANT."

IV. JESUS HEALS THE TEN LEPERS 17:11 - 19

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT TEN LEPERS. ONE WAS A SAMARITAN, WHO CAME BACK TO THANK JESUS AND THE RESULT WAS HE GOT MORE THAN JUST PHYSICAL HEALING. THE SECOND TIME, HE LEFT WITH WHOLENESS.

V. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM 17:20-37

IN VERSE 21, JESUS SAYS THE KINGDOM IS PRESENT IN HIM AND HIS WORK. THIS SECTION ALSO SPEAKS OF CHRIST'S RETURN AT THE END OF THIS AGE WHEN THE KINGDOM BECOMES VISIBLE. JESUS SAYS THAT BEFORE THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM THERE WILL BE A LONG DELAY ACCOMPANIED BY MUCH SUFFERING AND PAIN. BUT THAT IT WILL COME SUDDENLY LIKE LIGHTENING. JUDGEMENT AND SEPARATION OF PEOPLE RESULT FROM HIS COMING AT THE END OF THE AGE FOLLOWED BY PEACE.

LUKE 18

- I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW 18:1-8
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN 18:9-14
- III. JESUS WELCOMES LITTLE CHILDREN 18:15-17
- IV. JESUS CONFRONTS THE RICH YOUNG RULER 18:18-30
- V. JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH 18:31-34
- VI. JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN 18:35-43

I. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW 18:1-8

IN THIS PARABLE, JESUS IS TEACHING ABOUT PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER AND THE NATURE OF GOD. JESUS CONTRASTS THE RESPONSE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE, WHO DOES NOT CARE ABOUT ANYONE, WITH GOD WHO DOES CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE. VERSE 8 IS A WARNING TO ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS TO BE PERSISTENT IN SEEKING GOD

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN 18:9-14

JESUS IS CONTRASTING HUMILITY AND PRIDE. HE ILLUSTRATES THIS WITH THE PARABLE OF THE MAN WITH A CONTRITE HEART WHO CRIES FOR GOD'S MERCY, AND THE MAN WHO TELLS HIMSELF HOW GOOD AND GREAT HE IS.

III. JESUS WELCOMES THE LITTLE CHILDREN 18:15-17

IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF CHILDLIKENESS, TRUST AND OBEDIENCE FOR ENTRANCE INTO OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

IV. JESUS CONFRONTS THE RICH YOUNG RULER 18:18-30

THIS IS THE EVENT OF THE RICH YOUNG RULER WHO COMES TO JESUS TO INQUIRE HOW HE MIGHT GAIN ETERNAL LIFE. THIS YOUNG MAN HAS NEVER OBEYED THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW. JESUS DEALS DIRECTLY WITH THE YOUNG MAN'S PARTICULAR PROBLEM. THIS PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO ALL WHO WOULD FOLLOW JESUS. THE PERSON WHO FOLLOWS JESUS MUST GIVE UP WHATEVER STANDS IN THE WAY OF COMPLETE LOYALTY TO JESUS. IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE IT IS THE MAN'S WEALTH. HE HAS TO CHOSE BETWEEN WEALTH OR FOLLOWING JESUS. HE TEMPORARILY KEEPS HIS WEALTH, BUT HE LOSES THE ETERNAL SAVIOR.

JESUS WARNS THAT THE TEMPORAL RICHES OF THE EARTH KEEP PEOPLE FROM GAINING THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD.

V. JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH 18:31-34

JESUS IS NEARING THE END OF HIS JOURNEY AT JERUSALEM. AGAIN HE TELLS HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION, BUT THE DISCIPLES DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

VI. JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN 18:35-43

AS JESUS COMES NEAR JERICHO HE HEALS A BLIND MAN.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE IS NO RECORD OF A BLIND PERSON BEING HEALED. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO HEALS THE BLIND. THE HEALING OF THE BLIND IS RELATE TO THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM.



LUKE 19

- I. JESUS CALLS ZACCHAEUS 19:1 - 10**
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS
19:11 - 28**
- III. JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM
19:29 - 40**
- IV. JESUS CRIES OVER JERUSALEM 19:41 - 44**
- V. JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE 19:45 - 47**

I. JESUS CALLS ZACCHAEUS 19:1 - 10

AS JESUS PASSES THROUGH JERICHO HE MEETS A RICH PUBLICAN NAMED ZACCHAEUS WHO BECAUSE OF HIS SHORT STATURE AND THE HUGE CROWDS HAS TO CLIMB A TREE TO SEE JESUS. JESUS BRINGS SALVATION TO ZACCHAEUS. ZACCHAEUS BY HIS FAITH SHOWS THAT HE IS A TRUE SON OF ABRAHAM. THIS STATEMENT OF RESTORATION IS MADE BECAUSE HE HAD BECOME AN OUTCAST FROM THE HERITAGE OF ABRAHAM.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS 19:11 - 28

JESUS TELLS THIS PARABLE TO PREVENT THE DISCIPLES FROM THINKING THAT HE IS GOING TO BRING IN THE KINGDOM WHEN THEY GET TO JERUSALEM. JESUS SHOWS THEM IN THE PARABLE THAT THERE WILL BE A LONG DELAY BEFORE THE KINGDOM WILL BE BROUGHT IN, AND UNTIL THAT TIME THEY ARE TO FAITHFULLY SERVE HIM.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THIS PARABLE IS THE EVENTS SURROUNDING HEROD WHO INHERITED JUDEA FROM HIS FATHER, HEROD THE GREAT. HE HAD TO GO TO ROME TO RECEIVE HIS APPOINTMENT. AT THE SAME TIME THE JEWS SENT AN EMBASSY TO ROME TO INFORM AUGUSTUS THAT THEY DID NOT WANT HEROD AS THEIR KING. HEROD LEFT SOME MEN IN CHARGE UNTIL HE RETURNED. JESUS USED THIS EVENT TO TEACH FAITHFULNESS UNTIL HE RETURNS.

III. JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM 19:29-40

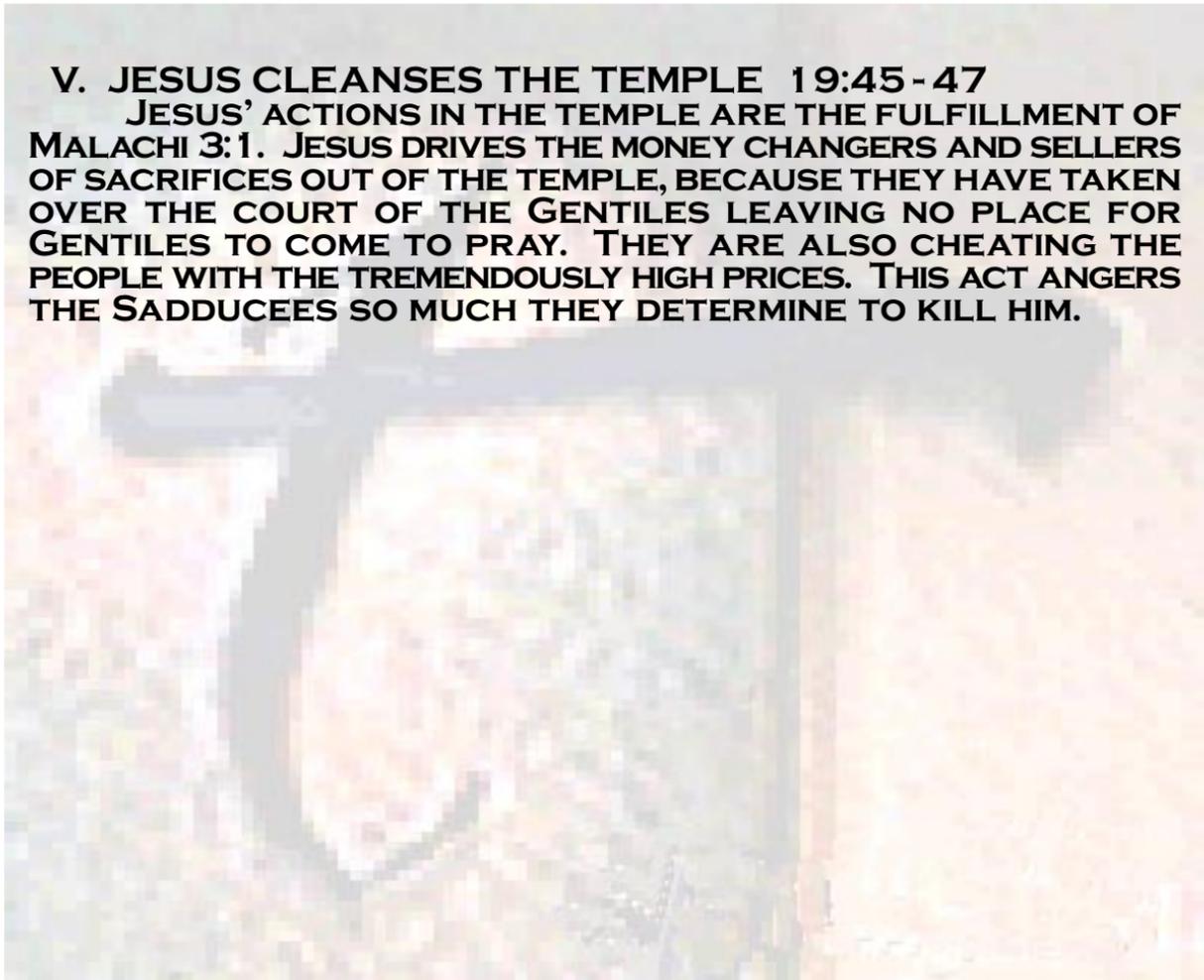
THIS SECTION RECORDS JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. THIS IS A DRAMATIC CLAIM TO BE THE KING. THE PEOPLE SHOUT THE PSALM THAT WAS SUNG AS PEOPLE ENTERED THE TEMPLE AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. MANY SCHOLARS SEE THIS AS JESUS LAST APPEAL TO THEM TO ACCEPT HIM AS KING. THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE HOSTILE, NOT ENTHUSIASTIC. THEY CALL HIM TEACHER NOT KING. WHEN A KING CAME TO A CITY IN PEACE HE RODE A DONKEY. WHEN HE CAME IN WAR AS A CONQUEROR HE RODE A HORSE. JESUS' ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM COULD BE COMPARED TO THE ENTRY OF SOLOMON INTO THE CITY WHEN HE BECAME KING, I KINGS 1:33.

IV. JESUS CRIES OVER JERUSALEM 19:41-44

JESUS COMES TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES WHICH GIVES HIM A MAGNIFICENT FULL VIEW OF THE CITY. HE CRIES OVER THE CITY, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THEY ARE REJECTING HIM EVEN THOUGH IT APPEARS FROM THEIR EMOTIONAL RESPONSE THAT THEY ARE ACCEPTING HIM.

V. JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE 19:45-47

JESUS' ACTIONS IN THE TEMPLE ARE THE FULFILLMENT OF MALACHI 3:1. JESUS DRIVES THE MONEY CHANGERS AND SELLERS OF SACRIFICES OUT OF THE TEMPLE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE COURT OF THE GENTILES LEAVING NO PLACE FOR GENTILES TO COME TO PRAY. THEY ARE ALSO CHEATING THE PEOPLE WITH THE TREMENDOUSLY HIGH PRICES. THIS ACT ANGERS THE SADDUCEES SO MUCH THEY DETERMINE TO KILL HIM.



LUKE 20

- I. JESUS HAS AN AUTHORITY CONFLICT WITH THE LEADERS 20:1 - 8**
- II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD KEEPERS 20:9- 18**
- III. JESUS TEACHES THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOD AND GOVERNMENT 20:19- 26**
- IV. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE RESURRECTION 20:27 - 40**
- V. JESUS SHOWS THAT THE MESSIAH IS DIVINE 20:41 - 47**

I. JESUS HAS AN AUTHORITY CONFLICT WITH THE LEADERS 20:1 - 8

THE JEWISH LEADERS QUESTION JESUS' AUTHORITY TO THROW THE MONEY CHANGERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY ALSO RELATES TO HIS TEACHINGS. JESUS ASKS THEM A QUESTION ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST'S AUTHORITY; "WAS IT FROM HEAVEN (GOD) OR FROM MEN?" THE PEOPLE CONSIDERED JOHN A PROPHET FROM GOD. IF THOSE QUESTIONING JESUS ANSWERED FROM MEN THE PEOPLE WOULD TURN AGAINST THEM. THEY COULD NOT ANSWER FROM GOD, BECAUSE THEY HAD REFUSED TO BELIEVE HIS MESSAGE OR ACCEPT HIS BAPTISM. SO, THEY ANSWERED THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW.

II. JESUS GIVES THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD KEEPERS 20:9-18

THERE IS NO DOUBT THE LEADERS UNDERSTOOD THIS PARABLE. THE OWNER OF THE VINEYARD REPRESENTS GOD, THE VINEYARD ISRAEL, THE TENANTS THE JEWISH RULERS, THE MESSENGERS THE PROPHETS AND THE SON IS JESUS. THIS PARABLE TELLS OF BOTH THE PATIENCE OF GOD AND THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD. IN THE PARABLE, JESUS CLAIMS THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD AND THOSE WHO REJECT HIM WILL BE CRUSHED.

III. JESUS TEACHES THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOD AND GOVERNMENT

THE LEADERS WANT TO CAPTURE JESUS BUT ARE AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE SO THEY CONTINUE TO TRY TO TRAP JESUS IN HIS TEACHING. THEY COME WITH A QUESTION ABOUT TRIBUTE MONEY TO ROME. THE SIGN OF KINGSHIP WAS THE COINAGE OF MONEY. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS THE TEMPLE HAD SPECIAL COINS WITH NO IMAGE IMPRINTED ON THEM. GOD WAS THE KING. KINGSHIP MEANT THE RIGHT TO TAX THE KINGDOM'S SUBJECTS. JESUS ASKS TO SEE THE COIN. THEY PRODUCE A COIN WHICH SHOWS BY THEIR CARRYING IT THAT THEY ARE SUBMITTING TO CAESAR'S AUTHORITY AND RULE. JESUS SAYS IN ESSENCE TO THE PHARISEES, "IF YOU USE THE EMPEROR'S MONEY, HE HAS A RIGHT TO DEMAND IT IN TAXES. THE COINS BELONG TO HIM. THE STATE DESERVES SOME LOYALTY FOR THE ORDER THAT EXISTS." HIS CHIEF POINT IS THAT THE IMAGE OF GOD IS ON MAN AND THAT GOD IS THE SUPREME KING.

**IV. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE RESURRECTION 20:27 - 40
THE SADDUCEES CONFRONT JESUS ABOUT THE
RESURRECTION USING THE QUESTION OF LEVIRATE MARRIAGE.**

THE SADDUCEES ACCEPTED ONLY THE PENTATEUCH (THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT) AND DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE RESURRECTION WAS TAUGHT IN THESE BOOKS. THE SADDUCEES TAUGHT THAT WHEN A PERSON DIED HE REMAINED DEAD. JESUS POINTS OUT THAT GOD IS THE GOD OF THE LIVING. IN EXODUS, GOD SAID TO MOSES THAT HE WAS THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB. WHEN GOD SAID THIS THEY WERE ALREADY DEAD, PHYSICALLY. JESUS IS SHOWING THAT THEY ARE ALIVE. THE SADDUCEES ASK JESUS A RIDICULOUS QUESTION BECAUSE THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION. HE, HOWEVER, ANSWERS THEM ON THEIR OWN GROUND. THEY BELIEVED ONLY IN THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND JESUS ANSWERS THEM FROM EXODUS WHICH IS ON THEIR OWN GROUND.

V. JESUS SHOWS THAT THE MESSIAH IS DIVINE 20:41 - 47

IN THIS SECTION JESUS SHOWS FROM SCRIPTURE THAT THE MESSIAH (CHRIST THE ANOINTED ONE) WOULD BE DIVINE. JESUS NOT ONLY SILENCED HIS ENEMIES HE ALSO SHOWED THEIR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THEIR OWN SCRIPTURES.

LUKE 21

I. JESUS SEES A WIDOW WITH TWO MITES 21:1 - 4

II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE PRESENT AGE
21:5-19

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF
JERUSALEM 21:20-24

IV. JESUS GIVES SIGNS OF HIS RETURN 21:29-37

I. JESUS SEES A WIDOW WITH TWO MITES 21:1 - 4

JESUS SEES THE WIDOW CAST TWO MITES, ALL SHE HAS, INTO THE COLLECTION. IN THE COURT OF THE WOMEN THERE WAS A ROW OF OFFERING CHESTS. EACH CHEST HAD AN OPENING AT THE TOP SHAPED LIKE A TRUMPET. AS OFFERINGS WERE PUT IN, THE MORE COINS THE LOUDER THE NOISE SO THAT PEOPLE COULD SEE THE PERSON WHO WAS PUTTING IN A LARGE OFFERING. THE TWO MITES, THE *λεπτα* (LEPTA), THAT THE WIDOW PUT IN MADE LITTLE NOISE. SHE WAS NOT SEEKING THE PRAISE OF THE PEOPLE, BUT WAS EXPRESSING HER THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE TO GOD.

II. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE PRESENT AGE 21:5-19

THIS PROPHETIC PASSAGE REFERS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND ALSO TO THE END OF TIME. JERUSALEM FELL TO THE ROMANS IN 70 A.D., AND WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED. WHEN THE WORLD WILL COME TO AN END ONLY GOD KNOWS. THIS TEACHING BEGAN WITH A QUESTION FROM THE DISCIPLES

AS THEY WERE ADMIRING THE BEAUTY OF THE TEMPLE. JESUS DESCRIBES THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. THE DISCIPLES ASK WHAT WILL BE THE SIGNS WHEN THIS WILL TAKE PLACE. THIS WAS THE THIRD TEMPLE, CALLED HEROD'S TEMPLE. JESUS DESCRIBES THIS PRESENT AGE WITH ITS UNREST, WAR, FAMINE, FALSE PROPHETS, PERSECUTIONS AND ENCOURAGES AND CHALLENGES HIS DISCIPLES TO BE FAITHFUL AND STRONG IN THEIR WITNESS.

III. JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM 21:20-24

JESUS' PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM CAME TO PASS IN 70 A.D. THE ROMAN GENERAL TITUS LAYED SIEGE TO THE CITY, THOUSANDS OF JEWS WERE SLAUGHTERED AND THOUSANDS MORE WERE CARRIED AWAY INTO SLAVERY. THIS PASSAGE ALSO REFERS TO THE RETURN OF CHRIST. THE MESSAGE IS WATCH AND BE PREPARED.

IV. JESUS GIVES SIGNS OF HIS RETURN 21:29-36

LUKE 22

- I. JESUS IS BETRAYED 22:1 - 6
- II. JESUS CELEBRATES THE LAST SUPPER 22:7 - 38
- III. JESUS IN GETHSEMANE 22:39 - 46
- IV. JESUS IS ARRESTED 22:47 - 53
- V. JESUS DENIED BY PETER 22:54 - 62
- VI. JESUS ON TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH LEADERS
22:63-71

I. JESUS IS BETRAYED 22:1 - 6

VERSES 1 - 6 SAY THAT IT IS PASSOVER TIME. PASSOVER IS THE GREAT JEWISH FREEDOM CELEBRATION WHEN ISRAEL WAS RELEASED FROM EGYPTIAN SLAVERY. THE FINAL ACT IN THIS EVENT WAS THE SLAYING OF A LAMB AND PLACING THE BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS OF EACH HOUSE AS A SIGN OF FAITH IN GOD. THE DEATH ANGEL SAW THE BLOOD AND “PASSED OVER” THAT HOUSE. IF NO BLOOD WAS ON THE DOORPOSTS THE DEATH ANGEL TOUCHED THE ELDEST IN THAT HOUSEHOLD.

NOW “THE” LAMB IS ABOUT TO BE SLAIN FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF THOSE HELD IN BONDAGE BY SIN.

THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL ARE READY TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH, BUT THEY HOPE TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE PASSOVER WHEN ALL THE PILGRIMS IN THE CITY HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES. TREACHERY, HOWEVER, CHANGES THEIR PLANS.

JUDAS ISCARIOT COMES TO NEGOTIATE A PLAN OF BETRAYAL. JUDAS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS. HE DELIBERATELY YIELDS HIS WILL TO PLAN AND CARRY THROUGH THIS ACT. NO ONE KNOWS ALL OF JUDAS'S MOTIVES. THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT JUDAS WALKED WITH JESUS EVERYDAY WITHOUT TRUSTING HIM COMPLETELY AND WITHOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF TO HIM. THIS IS A WARNING TO ANYONE WHO ATTEMPTS TO CONFORM JESUS TO THE DESIRES OF HIS/HER OWN HEART.

II. JESUS CELEBRATES THE LORD SUPPER 22:7 - 38

VERSES 7 - 38 ARE THE EVENTS OF THE LAST PASSOVER WHICH JESUS SPENDS WITH HIS DISCIPLES. JESUS TRANSFORMS THE PASSOVER INTO THE LORD'S SUPPER BY FILLING IT FULL OF MEANING.

THE LORD'S SUPPER FOCUSES ON GOD'S LOVE, CHRIST'S SACRIFICE, JESUS' RETURN, CHRISTIAN UNITY AND THE BELIEVER'S CONSECRATION.

AT THE LAST SUPPER JESUS WARNS PETER OF THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE HE IS ABOUT TO FACE. HE ENCOURAGES PETER BY TELLING HIM THAT HE HAS PRAYED FOR HIM. HE EVEN TELLS HIM THAT AFTER THE FLOUNDERING OF HIS FAITH HE IS TO STABILIZE HIS BROTHERS.

III. JESUS IN GETHSEMANE 22:39 - 46

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES UNDER THE CLOAK OF NIGHT LEAVE THE UPPER ROOM, DESCEND INTO THE VALLEY, CROSS THE KIDRON AND ASCEND INTO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

JESUS LEAVES HIS DISCIPLES AND GOES A SHORT DISTANCE, KNEELS DOWN AND PRAYS. GREAT DISTRESS WEIGHS HEAVILY UPON HIM AS THE REALITY OF THE CROSS STABS LIKE A DAGGER INTO HIS BEING. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS, HE ONLY CAN BEAR THIS IDENTIFICATION WITH SIN. IT IS NOW AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN, WITH JESUS, "YOUR WILL, FATHER!"

IV. JESUS IS ARRESTED 22:47-53

IT IS NIGHT AND THE DISCIPLE OF DARKNESS, JUDAS, LEADS THE BAND TO ARREST JESUS. WITH A FALSE KISS HE IDENTIFIES THE SAVIOR.

WHEN THE DISCIPLES SEE WHAT IS GOING TO FOLLOW THEY ARE READY TO FIGHT. ONE OF THE DISCIPLES CUTS OFF THE EAR OF THE HIGH PRIEST'S SERVANT.

V. JESUS DENIED BY PETER 22:54-62

PETER WOULD HAVE NEVER DREAMED IN HIS WILDEST IMAGINATION THAT HE WOULD DENY JESUS. HE OVERESTIMATED HIS SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND UNDERESTIMATED HIS FLESH.

JESUS DOES NOT RESIST WHEN THEY ARREST HIM. PETER'S BRAIN CANNOT CALCULATE JESUS' RESPONSE AND HIS LOGIC CRASHES ON THE ROCKS OF MISUNDERSTANDING. BY THE TIME THEY GET TO THE HIGH PRIEST'S HOUSE IT SEEMS TO PETER THAT HIS DREAMS HAVE COLLAPSED AROUND HIS FEET. PETER FIGURING ALL THIS OUT IS LIKE SPREADING NETS TO CATCH THE WIND.

THEN THE LITTLE MAID KNOCKS THE COURAGE OUT OF HIM. HE LIES. THREE TIMES HE LIES ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS. ON THE LAST DENIAL THE COCK CROWS. LUKE ALONE OF THE GOSPELS RECORDS THAT THE LORD TURNS AND LOOKS AT PETER. HIS GAZE STINGS THE HEART OF PETER LIKE A HORNET. PETER IN GREAT GRIEF RUNS TO HIDE BEHIND THE DARKNESS.

VI. JESUS ON TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH LEADERS 22:63-71

JESUS HAS BEEN BETRAYED BY JUDAS, DENIED BY PETER AND NOW HE IS ABUSED BY HIS ENEMIES WHICH STRIKE HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN.

AS THE DAWN BEGINS TO PUSH THE PHYSICAL DARKNESS AWAY THEY LEAD JESUS AWAY TO STAND TRIAL BEFORE THE SPIRITUAL DARKNESS OF THE SANHEDRIN. LUKE'S NARRATIVE COVERS ONLY ONE OF THE TRIALS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN. MARK HAS TWO TRIALS. THEY HAVE ALREADY CONDEMNED JESUS IN THEIR HEARTS, NOW THEY PRESS FOR EVIDENCE. THEY ASK TWO QUESTIONS: "ARE YOU THE MESSIAH?" AND "ARE YOU THE SON OF GOD?" THESE ARE POLITICAL AND THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO INCRIMINATE HIM. REASON HAS GONE BERSERK. JESUS IS ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY. HOWEVER, THEIR ACCUSATION WILL HAVE NO WEIGHT IN THE ROMAN COURT. THEY MUST GO TO THE ROMAN COURT, BECAUSE THEY WANT THE DEATH PENALTY. ROME HAD TAKEN THE AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER THE DEATH PENALTY AWAY FROM THEM EXCEPT IN ONE CASE. THE ONE CASE WAS IF A GENTILE ENTERED THE TEMPLE. SO THEY CHANGE THEIR ACCUSATION AGAINST JESUS WHEN THEY COME TO PILATE.

LUKE 23

- I. JESUS ON TRIAL BEFORE PILATE 23:1 -25**
- II. JESUS IS CRUCIFIED 23:26 - 38**
- III. JESUS SAVES THE THIEF 23:39 -43**
- IV. JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL 23:44 -49**
- V. JESUS' BURIAL 23:51 -56**

I. JESUS ON TRIAL BEFORE PILATE 23:1 -25

THE ACCUSATION WHICH THE CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES AND THE SANHEDRIN BRING TO PILATE AGAINST JESUS ARE LIES, BOTH DIRECT AND IMPLIED. THE POLITICAL CHARGE IS TREASON AGAINST ROME. PILATE IS NO FOOL. HE KNOWS HOW TO EVALUATE EVIDENCE. HE DECLARES JESUS, NOT GUILTY. THEY PRESS PILATE FOR A GUILTY DECISION. PILATE LOOKS FOR AN EXIT OUT OF THIS DECEPTIVE MAZE. SINCE JESUS IS FROM GALILEE PILATE SENDS HIM TO HEROD ANTIPAS WHO IS IN JERUSALEM AT THE TIME. HEROD WANTS THE EXCITEMENT OF MAGIC AND GETS THE DULLNESS OF SILENCE. HEROD SENDS JESUS BACK TO PILATE.

PILATE IS NO LONGER THE JUDGE, HE IS NOW THE DEFENSE FOR JESUS. THREE TIMES HE ATTEMPTS TO RELEASE JESUS. THE JEWISH LEADERS TIGHTEN THE NOOSE UNTIL HE CANNOT BREATHE JUSTICE. JUSTICE SUFFERS A MISCARRIAGE. THE VOICE GOD SENT INTO THE WORLD MUST BE SILENCED.

II. JESUS IS CRUCIFIED 23:26 - 38

LUKE CONNECTS THE REJECTION OF JESUS WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. THE GREEN WOOD AND THE DRY WOOD OF VERSE 31 REFERS TO THE CROSS IN VERSE 26. THIS IS THE IDEA THAT IF THIS IS TERRIBLE NOW IT WILL BE MANY TIMES WORSE IN THE FUTURE, FOR GREEN WOOD IS HARD TO BREAK AND ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BURN, BUT DRY WOOD BREAKS EASILY AND BURNS QUICKLY. THE "THEY" IN VERSE 31, MAY REFER TO EITHER THE JEWISH LEADERS OR TO THE ROMANS.

IN VERSE 26, SIMON OF CYRENE BECOMES THE FIRST TO TAKE UP THE CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS. THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES UNTOLD THOUSANDS HAVE FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.

JESUS AND TWO CRIMINALS, PROBABLY POLITICAL INSURRECTIONIST, ARE LED TO THE HILL CALLED THE SKULL AND CRUCIFIED.

JESUS' CRY IS, "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." WE HAVE THE RECORD THAT JESUS SAID SEVEN PHRASES ON THE CROSS. LUKE RECORDS THREE OF THESE.

FOR THE SOLDIERS THIS SINISTER ASSIGNMENT IS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK. FOR THEM THIS WAS JUST A RIDICULOUS REBEL WHO THOUGHT HE COULD DEFY THE MIGHTY ROMAN EMPIRE.

HE COULD NOT EVEN SAVE HIMSELF MUCH LESS PALESTINE. TO THE JEWISH LEADERS IT WAS UNTHINKABLE THAT GOD WOULD PERMIT HIS MESSIAH TO BE CURSED BY GENTILES, PUTTING HIM ON A TREE.

THE PARADOX OF THAT HEINOUS ACCUSATION, "IF YOU ARE THE KING OF THE JEWS, SAVE YOURSELF!" RUNG THROUGH THE HALLS OF HELL.

THE SPIRITUAL REALITY IS BECAUSE HE WAS THE KING HE COULD NOT SAVE HIMSELF. THAT WAS PREDESTINED IN ETERNITY AND AFFIRMED IN THE GARDEN. JESUS BECOMES THE YES! TO ALL GOD'S PROMISES.

II. JESUS SAVES THE THIEF 23:39 - 43

LUKE CONTRASTS THE RESPONSE OF THE TWO THIEVES TO JESUS. ONE HAS ONLY SIGHT TO SEE THE SITUATION ON THE HILL. THE OTHER RECEIVES INSIGHT TO SEE JESUS AS THE MESSIAH; THAT IS WHAT HE MEANS WHEN HE SAYS "REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU COME "INTO YOUR KINGLY POWER" OR AS SOME MANUSCRIPTS SAY "INTO YOUR KINGDOM." HE WANTS JESUS TO REMEMBER HIM AT THE PAROUSIA. JESUS PROMISES HIM PARADISE. THIS IS LUKE'S RECORD OF JESUS SECOND PHRASE OR "WORD" FROM THE CROSS. IN THE MORNING THE THIEF GETS A CROSS, AT NOONDAY HE GETS A SAVIOR AND IN THE EVENING HE GETS PARADISE WITH JESUS. THE WORD PARADISE COMES FROM A PERSIAN WORD MEANING "GARDEN." HERE IT MEANS THE PLACE OF THE DEAD WHERE THE RIGHTEOUS GO. JESUS PROMISES HIM A RELATIONSHIP OF FELLOWSHIP.

IV. JESUS' DEATH 23:44-49

GOLGOTHA'S MIDNIGHT HOUR COMES AT NOON AND CLINGS TO THE EARTH UNTIL THREE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON. JUST AS THE SUN'S LIGHT FADES IT SEEMS THAT THE SON'S LIFE WILL FAIL. BUT THE CROSS SPLITS THE DARKNESS JUST AS IT SPLITS THE VEIL (CURTAIN) IN THE TEMPLE.

THE DARKNESS SIGNIFIES THE COSMIC CRIME IN THE CROSS, THAT HUMAN SIN BRINGS NO LIGHT. BUT THE SPLITTING OF THE VEIL MEANS THAT THE GLORY OF GOD SHINES THROUGH, BECAUSE JESUS THE ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST HAS MADE THE EVERLASTING SACRIFICE OF HIS BLOOD AT THE MERCY SEAT IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. THE CROSS OPENS THE WAY INTO GOD'S PRESENCE.

LUKE'S THIRD PHRASE FROM THE CROSS, "FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT," WAS THE PRAYER THAT JEWISH CHILDREN SAID BEFORE THEY WENT TO SLEEP.

THE CENTURION, AN OFFICER IN CHARGE OF 100 MEN, SUPERVISES THE CRUCIFIXION. HE SEES THE EVENTS AND IS CONVINCED THAT JESUS WAS INNOCENT. PILATE, HEROD AND THE CENTURION, ALL ROMAN REPRESENTATIVES DECLARE JESUS NOT GUILTY.

V. JESUS' BURIAL LUKE 23:51 - 56

JOSEPH FROM ARIMATHEA, A GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS MAN GOES TO PILATE AND ASKS FOR THE BODY OF JESUS. HE TAKES JESUS' BODY DOWN FROM THE CROSS, WRAPS IT IN LINEN CLOTH AND BURIES THE BODY IN HIS OWN NEW TOMB WHICH HAD BEEN CUT OUT OF THE ROCK. IT IS FRIDAY, THE DAY OF PREPARATION FOR THE SABBATH.

THE WOMEN FROM GALILEE FOLLOW JOSEPH AND OBSERVE THE TOMB. THEY SEE HOW JESUS IS PLACED AND THEY GO TO PREPARE SPICES.

LUKE 24

- I. JESUS IS NOT IN THE TOMB 24:1 - 12**
- II. JESUS WALKS TO EMMAUS 24:13 - 35**
- III. JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES 24:36 - 43**
- IV. JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES 24:44 - 49**
- V. JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN 24:50 - 53**

I. JESUS IS NOT IN THE TOMB 24:1 - 12

THE SABBATH PUSHES FRIDAY INTO YESTERDAY AND STANDS READY TO WELCOME THE DAWN OF THE NEW DAY. IT IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. WHAT'S MORE, IT IS THE FIRST DAY OF FOREVER. THE WOMEN COME SADLY WITH THEIR SPICES ONLY TO JOYFULLY DISCOVER THEY HAD WASTED THEIR TIME IN PREPARING THEM. RITUAL THAT SEEKS TO EMBALM A DEAD CHRIST IS ALWAYS A WASTE OF TIME NO MATTER HOW GOOD IT SMELLS.

THE WOMEN COME TO ANOINT A DEAD MAN. THEY ENTER THE TOMB AND ARE CAUGHT IN THE GRIP OF PERPLEXITY AND FEAR. JESUS' BODY IS GONE AND SUDDENLY TWO MEN IN DAZZLING SHINY CLOTHES APPEAR. THESE ARE MEN LIKE THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE, AND THEY BRING A MESSAGE THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD BEFORE, "HE IS RISEN!"

THE WOMEN WITH A RAINBOW IN THEIR SKY, BECAUSE THEY REMEMBER THE PROMISE, SAIL LIKE THE WIND TO TAKE THE NEWS TO THE DISCIPLES. THE DISCIPLES DO NOT BELIEVE. THEY THINK IT IS THE IMAGINATION OF GRIEF.

MATTHEW RECORDS THAT PETER RUNS TO THE TOMB, LOOKS INSIDE, SEES THE LINEN CLOTHES, GOES HOME AND TRIES TO REASON IN HIS MIND A LOGICAL ANSWER. NEEDLESS TO SAY WITHOUT SUCCESS.

II. JESUS WALKS TO EMMAUS 24:13-35

TWO OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS ARE ON THEIR WAY FROM JERUSALEM TO EMMAUS. SAD AND CONFUSED THEY DISCUSS THE EVENTS OF THE PAST DAYS WHEN A TRAVELER JOINS THEM. THEY SHARE WITH HIM THE TRAGIC EVENTS. BEFORE LONG HE TURNS THE MIRROR OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ON THESE EVENTS AND UNRAVELS THE MEANING OF THE MYSTERY.

AT THEIR JOURNEY'S END THEY INVITE HIM TO STAY THE NIGHT WITH THEM. HE BREAKS THE BREAD, BLESSES IT, GIVES IT TO THEM AND THEIR EYES ARE OPENED. THEY SEE JESUS ALIVE, AND THEN HE IS GONE. HE HAS BROKEN THE BREAD OF LIFE TO THEM ALL THE WAY TO EMMAUS AND THEIR HEARTS BURN WITHIN THEM. THE INDEX FINGER OF THE STORY POINTS TO THE TRUTHS THAT JESUS WALKS WITH HIS PEOPLE ON THEIR JOURNEYS OF LIFE, THAT HEARTS OF TRUE BELIEVERS RESPOND TO SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK ABOUT JESUS, AND THAT RECOGNITION OF WHO JESUS IS COMES FROM PRAYER AND THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD OF SCRIPTURE.

THEY ARE TIRED IN BODY, BUT THEIR SOULS ARE RESTED. WITH JOYFUL EAGERNESS THEY IMMEDIATELY GO BACK TO JERUSALEM TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS THAT JESUS IS ALIVE. WHEN THEY GET THERE THEY DISCOVER THAT JESUS HAS ALSO APPEARED TO PETER.

III. JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES 24:36 - 43

LUKE'S PURPOSE FOR INCLUDING THIS PASSAGE IS TO GIVE A STRONG TESTIMONY OF THE LITERAL BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS. REMEMBER LUKE WAS A PHYSICIAN WHO ENGAGED IN CAREFUL RESEARCH FOR THE WRITING OF THIS DOCUMENT. HE WAS ALSO A MAN OF FAITH WHO HAD WITNESSED THE HAND OF GOD IN MANY PLACES IN THE WORLD AS HE TRAVELED WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL.

THE ELEVEN APOSTLES AND THE TWO DISCIPLES WHO HAD RETURNED FROM EMMAUS AND SOME OTHER PEOPLE ARE TALKING AND SUDDENLY JESUS IS IN THEIR MIDST. THEY ARE TERRIFIED. JESUS CALMS THEM AND SHOWS THEM THE MYSTERY, THE MARVEL AND THE MAJESTY OF HIS RESURRECTED BODY.

IV. JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES 24:44 - 49

IN THESE LAST SECTIONS LUKE WANTS HIS READERS TO COMPREHEND THAT JESUS FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES, THAT THE CHRIST MUST SUFFER AND BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THAT THEY ARE TO PREACH REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS IN ALL THE NATIONS AND THAT JESUS WILL EMPOWER THEM BY SENDING THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

V. JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN 24:50 - 53

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS OCCURS ABOUT 40 DAYS AFTER THE RESURRECTION. THE ASCENSION IS NECESSARY SO THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN BE SENT TO EMPOWER THE DISCIPLES.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS A MAGNIFICENT MULTI-LEVEL BOOK. ITS CONCEPTS ARE SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR A CHILD TO COMPREHEND, YET PROFOUND ENOUGH FOR A GREAT SCHOLAR TO SPEND HIS ENTIRE LIFETIME STUDYING. IT IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK EVER WRITTEN. IT TELLS WHO JESUS IS, WHAT HE DID ON THE CROSS, HOW HE CAN BE KNOWN PERSONALLY AND HOW A PERSON CAN RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH HIM.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS A PORTRAIT OF JESUS, RATHER THAN A PHOTOGRAPH. A PHOTOGRAPHER WORKS FOR A PHYSICAL LIKENESS OF THE PERSON; WHEREAS, A PORTRAIT PAINTER ATTEMPTS TO PAINT THE PERSON'S HEART IN HIS/HER FACE. JOHN PAINTS THE GLORY OF THE FATHER IN JESUS' FACE.

FOR CENTURIES THE FOUR EMBLEMS OF EZEKIEL 1:10 AND

REV. 4:7, THE MAN, THE LION, THE OX AND THE EAGLE HAVE BEEN USED TO DESCRIBE THE FOUR GOSPELS. THE EMBLEMS HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED IN VARIOUS WAYS; HOWEVER, THE MOST COMMONLY ACCEPTED INTERPRETATION IS:

1. THE LION REPRESENTS MATTHEW, BECAUSE HE PRESENTS JESUS AS THE MESSIAH, THE KING OF ISRAEL, THE LION OF JUDAH.

2. THE MAN REPRESENTS MARK, FOR HE CALLS ATTENTION TO THE HUMANITY OF JESUS.

3. THE OX REPRESENTS LUKE, BECAUSE LUKE FOCUSES ON JESUS AS OUR SACRIFICE.

4. THE EAGLE REPRESENTS JOHN, BECAUSE THE EAGLE SOARS HIGHER INTO THE SKY THAN ANY OTHER LIVING CREATURE, AND IT ALONE CAN LOOK STRAIGHT INTO THE SUN AND NOT BE DAZZLED. JOHN OF ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS HAS THE MOST PENETRATING GAZE INTO THE ETERNAL MIND OF GOD. THUS, MANY PEOPLE BY STUDYING THE BOOK OF JOHN FIND THEMSELVES CLOSER TO GOD AND HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, THAN BY STUDYING ANY OTHER BOOK IN THE WORLD.

THE GENIUS OF JOHN AS A LITERARY ARTIST IS SEEN IN HIS ABILITY TO REACH PROFOUND THEOLOGICAL DEPTHS WHILE EXPRESSING HIS THOUGHTS IN THE SIMPLEST TERMS. JOHN GIVES BOTH THE HISTORICAL FACTS AND THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING BEHIND THE FACTS.

AUTHORSHIP

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW IS THAT THE APOSTLE JOHN WROTE THE FOURTH GOSPEL, AND THAT HE IS THE "BELOVED DISCIPLE." IF WE DO NOT ACCEPT HIM AS THE "BELOVED DISCIPLE" OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL, THEN ALL OUR INFORMATION ABOUT JOHN THE APOSTLE MUST COME FROM THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS, BECAUSE JOHN'S NAME IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL. IF WE ACCEPT HIM AS THE "BELOVED DISCIPLE," THEN WE HAVE A GREAT DEAL MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HIM, BECAUSE HE IS ALWAYS PRESENT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL. JOHN PROBABLY REFERS TO HIMSELF AS THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED TO SHOW THAT THE LOVE OF JESUS CHANGED AND TRANSFORMED HIM.

THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT FOR JOHN THE APOSTLE AS THE AUTHOR OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE. THE AUTHOR CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN AN EYEWITNESS TO JESUS' MINISTRY AND TO THE HISTORICAL EVENTS OF THE GOSPEL. THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN THE GREEK SAYS, "THIS IS THE DISCIPLE WHO BEARS WITNESS CONCERNING THESE THINGS, AND WROTE THESE THINGS: AND WE KNOW THAT TRUE IS HIS WITNESS," 21:24. THESE WORDS COME EITHER FROM THE AUTHOR OR FROM THOSE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH HIM. EVERY ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT OF JOHN CONTAINS THIS STATEMENT, AND WE HAVE EARLIER AND HIGHER QUALITY MANUSCRIPTS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAN ANY OTHER BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

FURTHER INTERNAL EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATES THAT JOHN HAD A DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF PALESTINE AND ESPECIALLY JERUSALEM. FOR EXAMPLE, HE KNOWS THAT THE POOL OF BETHESDA IS NEAR THE SHEEP GATE, 5:1 - 2. HE KNOWS THE POOL OF SILOAM WHERE JESUS SENDS THE BLIND MAN, 9:7. HE KNOWS THAT JESUS WALKED IN A CERTAIN PART OF THE TEMPLE KNOWN AS SOLOMON'S PORCH. HE KNOWS THE BROOK JESUS CROSSED OVER TO GO INTO THE GARDEN, 19:1. HE KNOWS THERE ARE TWO BETHANY'S, 1:28 AND 12:1. HE KNOWS THAT SYCHAR IS NEAR SHECHEM, 4:5.

THE PRESENT TITLE, "ACCORDING TO JOHN," WAS ASSIGNED TO IT IN THE SECOND CENTURY. THIS IS GETTING CLOSE TO THE DATE CONSERVATIVE SCHOLARS SET AS THE TIME FOR ITS WRITING.

SOME OF THE BEST EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR JOHN THE APOSTLE AS THE AUTHOR OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL COMES FROM ONE OF THE EARLIEST CHURCH FATHERS, IRENAEUS THE BISHOP OF LYON IN THE SECOND CENTURY. IRENAEUS DIED A MARTYR'S DEATH IN 155 A.D. HE KNEW POLYCARP, A DISCIPLE OF JOHN THE APOSTLE. HISTORICALLY THIS PUTS US VERY CLOSE TO THE APOSTLE. IRENAEUS DOES NOT SAY THAT JOHN WROTE THE GOSPEL, BUT HE GIVES IT HIS BLESSING.

THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE IS COMPOSED OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL, I, II, AND III JOHN AND REVELATION. OF THESE

ONLY REVELATION CLAIMS TO BE WRITTEN BY A MAN NAMED JOHN. IN II AND III JOHN THE AUTHOR CALLS HIMSELF THE ELDER. IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL THE AUTHOR ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE PRESENT. IN I JOHN HE SPEAKS IN FIRST PERSON, "I" AND "WE." IT SEEMS REASONABLE THAT JOHN THE APOSTLE WROTE ALL FIVE PIECES OF LITERATURE UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THEY WERE WRITTEN BY DIFFERENT MEN.

SOME SCHOLARS TODAY DO NOT THINK THAT JOHN THE APOSTLE WROTE THE FOURTH GOSPEL. THEY GIVE VARIOUS REASONS FOR NOT ACCEPTING HIS AUTHORSHIP. HOWEVER, THE GREAT GREEK SCHOLAR WESTCOTT CONSIDERED THESE OBJECTIONS, AND STILL THOUGHT THAT THE BEST EVIDENCE WAS FOR JOHN THE APOSTLE. (LEON MORRIS, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS, 1971] P.9)

THE SUGGESTIONS SCHOLARS HAVE GIVEN AS TO WHO WROTE THE FOURTH GOSPEL ARE MANY AND SOMETIMES HUMOROUS. ONE SUGGESTION IS THE RICH YOUNG RULER, BECAUSE THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH HIM SAYS THAT JESUS LOOKED ON HIM AND LOVED HIM. OTHER SUGGESTIONS ARE LAZARUS AND JOHN MARK. SOME SCHOLARS SUGGEST AN UNKNOWN GNOSTIC WRITER. NONE OF THESE FIT THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

SCHOLARS HAVE GIVEN THE FOLLOWING REASONS FOR REJECTING JOHN THE APOSTLE AS THE AUTHOR OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL:

1. JOHN WAS A GALILEAN, BUT THE GOSPEL DOES NOT TALK MUCH ABOUT GALILEE.

2. JOHN WAS A FISHERMAN, YET THE GOSPEL SAYS LITTLE ABOUT THE SEA OR FISHING.

3. JOHN, HIS BROTHER JAMES, AND PETER COMPOSED THE INNER CIRCLE, YET JAMES IS NEVER MENTIONED AND THE INNER CIRCLE IS IGNORED.

4. JOHN'S CHARACTER AS THE BELOVED DISCIPLE IS NOT FIERY LIKE THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

5. JOHN WAS PRESENT AT THE TRANSFIGURATION, THE CAESAREAN PHILIPPI CONFSSION, THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND GETHSEMANE, YET NONE OF THESE ARE MENTIONED IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, MANY VERY GOOD REASONS WHY THESE ARE NOT MENTIONED. IF WE ASSUME THAT JOHN HAD THE GOSPELS OF MARK AND LUKE AND POSSIBLY MATTHEW WHEN HE WROTE HIS GOSPEL, THEN HE KNEW THEIR CONTENTS. THUS, THE CHURCH HAD THIS MATERIAL WRITTEN DOWN AND THERE WAS NO NEED TO STATE IT AGAIN. JOHN WAS ALSO ABLE TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE WITH THE MATERIALS HE USED. SELDOM IS IT POINTED OUT THAT PAPER WAS NOT PLENTIFUL AS IT IS NOW, PRODUCED BY THE MILLIONS OF TONS. THEY HAD TO WATCH THEIR WRITING SPACE VERY CAREFULLY.

THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAT WILL NEVER BE ANSWERED.

SOURCES

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED BY SCHOLARS IS, “WHAT WERE HIS SOURCES?” IF JOHN THE APOSTLE WROTE THE FOURTH GOSPEL, THEN JOHN WAS THE PRIMARY SOURCE. SINCE HE WAS AN APOSTLE, MUCH OF HIS LIFE HAD BEEN SPENT WITH OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES. IN THE PAST SCHOLARS THOUGHT THAT THE AUTHOR KNEW THE OTHER THREE GOSPELS AND USED MARK AND PROBABLY LUKE. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT HE HAD MARK BEFORE HIM AS HE WROTE. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOHN AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS EITHER MEAN HE DID NOT KNOW THEM OR HE KNEW THEM, BUT DID NOT REPEAT MANY OF THE THINGS THEY WROTE. THE LAST VIEW HOLDS THAT HE GAVE THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING TO THE EVENTS OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. SOME SCHOLARS QUESTION WHETHER JOHN WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE OTHER GOSPELS. C. H. DODD ARGUES FOR THE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SYNOPTICS, AND C. K. BARRETT DEFENDS DEPENDENCE ON THEM. IF JOHN HAD THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS, HE FILLS IN THE GAPS. IF HE DID NOT HAVE THEM, WHY DID HE LEAVE OUT SOME VERY SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE AND EVENTS?

DATE OF WRITING

THE FOURTH GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 60 A.D. AND 95 A.D. RECENT FINDINGS HAVE CAUSED SCHOLARSHIP TO PUSH THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF JOHN MUCH EARLIER THAN WAS FORMERLY ASSUMED. IN 1934 A FRAGMENT OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN WAS FOUND IN EGYPT. THIS FRAGMENT, NOW IN THE RYLANDS LIBRARY IN MANCHESTER, ENGLAND, IS KNOWN AS B. RYLANDS PAPYRUS 457. THIS PAPYRUS CONTAINS JOHN 18:31 - 33,37. IT IS DATED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 120 A.D. AND 150 A.D. THE DATE FOR WRITING THE GOSPEL MUST BE PUSHED BACK EARLIER THAN THIS TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE GOSPEL TO ARRIVE IN EGYPT. THE DATE IS PROBABLY MUCH EARLIER THAN SOME MODERN SCHOLARS WOULD LIKE TO ADMIT. WE HAVE EARLIER MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR THE FOURTH GOSPEL THAN FOR ANY OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOK.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

JOHN WAS WRITTEN TO BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS, TO JEWS AND TO GENTILES. PROBABLY BY THE TIME THE GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN GENTILES COMPOSED A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE CHURCH POPULATION.

PLACE OF WRITING

WE DO NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN WHERE THE FOURTH

GOSPEL WAS COMPOSED. MOST SCHOLARS THINK IT WAS PROBABLY COMPOSED IN EPHESUS; HOWEVER, OTHER PLACES LIKE ANTIOCH OR ALEXANDRIA ARE POSSIBILITIES.

PURPOSES FOR WRITING

JOHN STATES VERY CLEARLY IN 20:31 HIS PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR WRITING HIS GOSPEL. “BUT THESE SIGNS (V. 30) HAVE BEEN WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BELIEVING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME.” JOHN 19:35 SAYS THAT HE HAD SEEN JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS AND HE WAS GIVING THIS WITNESS, “THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE.” BOTH OF THESE VERSES SAY, ἵνα πιστευσητε. THESE ARE VERBS, SECOND PERSON, PLURAL, ACTIVE, AORIST, SUBJUNCTIVE. THE AORIST TENSE FOCUSES UPON A UNIT OF TIME IN THE PAST. WHEN INA IS USED WITH THE SUBJUNCTIVE IT USUALLY EXPRESSES PURPOSE AND IS BETTER TRANSLATED “IN ORDER THAT” RATHER THAN “THAT.” THIS CONSTRUCTION LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT JOHN IS ALSO WRITING TO PEOPLE WHO ARE BELIEVERS, AND IS SAYING, “I HAVE WRITTEN THIS THAT YOUR BELIEF WILL BE DEFINITE OR FIRM.” WE, THEREFORE, CONCLUDE THAT JOHN’S PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO BRING PEOPLE TO FIRM BELIEF IN JESUS, BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES AND TO ANCHOR BELIEVERS FIRMLY IN THE FAITH.

A CAREFUL READING OF JOHN ALSO REVEALS THAT HE HAD MANY OTHER OBJECTIVES. SOME OF THESE PURPOSES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

1. TO TEACH THE NECESSITY OF JESUS COMING IN HUMAN FLESH AS A MAN. THIS WAS TO COMBAT EARLY GNOSTICISM IN THE CHURCH WHICH DENIED JESUS HUMANITY.

2. TO PUT JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. SOME PEOPLE HAD ELEVATED JOHN TO A GREATER POSITION THAN HE HAD ASSIGNED HIMSELF.

3. TO ATTACK THE ROOTS OF GNOSTIC HERESIES WHICH WERE BEGINNING TO MAKE THEIR WAY INTO THE CHURCH.

4. TO GIVE SPIRITUAL MEANING TO THE HISTORICAL EVENTS SURROUNDING JESUS AND HIS DEEDS.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

IT IS VERY EVIDENT THAT JOHN SAW THE ROOTS OF THE GOSPEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE "I AM" SAYINGS DEFINITELY COME FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND IDENTIFY JESUS WITH THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ONE OF JOHN'S PURPOSES FOR WRITING THE FOURTH GOSPEL WAS TO COMBAT EARLY FORMS OF GNOSTICISM. AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY THE GREEK - ROMAN WORLD HAD BEEN GREATLY INFLUENCED BY SUCH PHILOSOPHIES AS STOICISM AND GNOSTICISM. CONCEPTS SUCH AS THE "LOGOS" WERE RELATED

TO GNOSTICISM. STOICISM ADVOCATED BROTHERHOOD, PURPOSE IN THE WORLD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSON KEEPING DETACHED FROM THINGS WHICH MIGHT CAUSE EMOTIONAL STRESS. GNOSTICISM DEVELOPED INTO A COMPLETE SYSTEM IN THE SECOND CENTURY, BUT PRIMITIVE FORMS EXISTED IN THE LAST OF THE FIRST CENTURY. GNOSTICISM WAS INVADING THE CHURCH AND PERVERTING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

ONE OF THE CHIEF IDEAS OF GNOSTICISM WAS ETERNAL DUALISM. GNOSTICS BELIEVED THAT GOD WAS GOOD, BECAUSE HE WAS SPIRITUAL, AND MATERIAL THINGS WERE EVIL. MOST OF THEIR THINKING GREW OUT OF THIS CONCEPT OF DUALISM. THE HERETICAL IDEAS OF THE DOSETICS IN THE EARLY CHURCH WAS RELATED TO THIS CONCEPT. THE DOSETICS BELIEVED THAT JESUS WAS A SPIRIT AND ONLY APPEARED TO BE A MAN.

SINCE GNOSTICS BELIEVED MATERIAL THINGS WERE EVIL THEY HAD TROUBLE WITH THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BECAUSE HE WAS THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD. ACCORDING TO GNOSTIC THEORY GOD CREATED THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE, THEN CREATED EMULATIONS THAT WENT OUT FROM HIM, AND THE FURTHER THEY GOT FROM HIM THE LESS THEY WERE LIKE HIM. THE EARTH WAS FINALLY CREATED BY ONE OF THESE EMULATIONS. ACCORDING TO THE GNOSTICS, JESUS COULD NOT BE A REAL PHYSICAL HUMAN MAN. THE ULTIMATE THEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THIS SYSTEM WAS THAT THEY DENIED THE INCARNATION AND ATONEMENT OF JESUS. THE EXTREME DANGER OF THIS PHILOSOPHY FOR THE EARLY CHURCH CANNOT BE OVERESTIMATED.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

ONE OF THE CHIEF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS THAT JOHN FOCUSES ON THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF THE HISTORICAL FACTS; WHEREAS THE SYNOPTICS REPORT THE FACTS. ANOTHER VERY NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IS THEIR TIME SEQUENCE. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS FOCUS ON JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE. THEY HAVE JESUS IN JERUSALEM ONLY ONCE DURING HIS MINISTRY. JOHN, ON THE OTHER HAND HAS JESUS IN JERUSALEM MANY TIMES, ESPECIALLY AT THE FEASTS. ANOTHER EVENT THAT IS VERY PROMINENT IN THE GOSPELS IS THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE WHEN JESUS THREW OUT THE MONEY CHANGERS. IN THE SYNOPTICS THIS COMES AT THE CLOSE OF JESUS' MINISTRY, BECAUSE THAT IS THE TIME WHEN HE IS IN JERUSALEM. IN JOHN THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE COMES AT THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THESE ARE TWO SEPARATE EVENTS, WHILE OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE THERE IS ONLY ONE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

WE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT IN THE SYNOPTICS THERE ARE HINTS THAT JESUS HAD BEEN IN JERUSALEM BEFORE, FOR HE SAYS AS HE WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM, "HOW OFT WOULD I HAVE GATHERED YOU UNDER MY WING AS A CHICKEN GATHERS HER CHICKS," MATTHEW 23:37 AND LUKE 13:34.

JOHN'S GOSPEL SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT JESUS' MINISTRY IS ABOUT THREE YEARS; WHEREAS, THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS INDICATE HIS MINISTRY WAS ONLY ABOUT ONE YEAR.

JOHN'S CHRONOLOGY ALSO DIFFERS FROM THE SYNOPTICS. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT NONE OF THE WRITERS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS WERE WRITING A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF JESUS' LIFE. THAT WAS NOT THEIR PURPOSE. ONE OF THE MOST OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SYNOPTICS AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS THE DATE, NOT THE DAY, ON WHICH JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED. IN JOHN'S GOSPEL JESUS IS CRUCIFIED AT THE SAME TIME THE PASCAL LAMBS WERE KILLED FOR THE PASSOVER. IN THE SYNOPTICS THEY ARE KILLED THE DAY BEFORE JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED.

ALL FOUR GOSPELS AGREE THAT JESUS ATE THE PASSOVER ON THURSDAY EVENING, WAS CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY AND WAS RESURRECTED ON SUNDAY. THE DIFFERENCE IS THE SYNOPTICS DATE THURSDAY AS THE 14TH OF NISAN; WHEREAS, JOHN DATES FRIDAY AS THE 14TH OF NISAN. THE POINT IS THAT IN JEWISH HISTORY THE PASCAL LAMBS WERE SLAIN IN THE AFTER-NOON OF THE 14TH DAY OF NISAN IN PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER WHICH WAS EATEN IN THE EVENING.

ACCORDING TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS JESUS ATE THE PASSOVER ON THURSDAY EVENING AT THE REGULAR TIME, AND THE PASSOVER LAMBS HAD ALREADY BEEN KILLED IN THE AFTER-NOON. ACCORDING TO JOHN JESUS ATE THE PASSOVER ON THURSDAY EVENING, THE DAY BEFORE PASSOVER, AND THE

PASSOVER LAMBS WOULD BE KILLED THE NEXT DAY. THIS MEANS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL JESUS IS CRUCIFIED AT THE SAME TIME THE PASCAL LAMBS ARE KILLED. THIS CERTAINLY GIVES MEANING TO JOHN THE BAPTIST PROCLAMATION, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD." FOR THE SCRIPTURES COMPARE MARK 14:12, 15:1 AND JOHN 13:1, 29; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42.

TO SUMMARIZE, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SYNOPTICS AND JOHN IS THAT THE SYNOPTICS DATE THURSDAY AS THE 14TH OF NISAN; WHEREAS, JOHN DATES FRIDAY AS THE 14TH OF NISAN. THIS MEANS THAT JOHN HAS JESUS EAT THE PASSOVER A DAY EARLIER THAN THE JEWS OR MORE EXACTLY SINCE THE DAY STARTED AT 6:00 IN THE EVENING, HE EATS THE PASSOVER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY RATHER THAN AT THE CLOSE. (G. H. C. MACGREGOR, JOHN, THE MOFFATT COMMENTARY [NEW YORK, HARPER AND BROTHER, 1928] P. XIII.) JOHN SEEMS TO BE CORRECT. THE SYNOPTICS, HOWEVER, MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THEIR DATE. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT JOHN MAY HAVE SET THE TIME TO DRIVE HOME THE TRUTH THAT JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD. I BELIEVE JOHN IS CAREFUL TO GIVE AN ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS.

DESIGN OF THE BOOK

BISHOP WESCOTT HAS A VERY INSIGHTFUL AND POWERFUL STATEMENT THAT RELATES TO THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK. HE

SAID, "THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN FROM FIRST TO LAST IS A RECORD OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MEN'S THOUGHTS OF CHRIST, AND CHRIST'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF." (QUOTED BY G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, THE TEACHING OF CHRIST [TERRYTOWN, NEW YORK: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1913] P. 33.)

A. H. MCNEILE SAID, "THE BOOK DIVIDES INTO TWO SECTIONS OF UNEQUAL LENGTH, I- XIII, AND XIII- XX, WHICH TEACHES RESPECTIVELY THAT CHRIST BROUGHT LIFE INTO THE WORLD, AND THAT THE LIFE BECAME FULLY AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH HIS SELF- SACRIFICE AND DEATH." (A. H. MC NEILE, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, [OXFORD, THE CLARIDON PRESS, 1953] P. 267, SEE ALSO PP. 277- FF.)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS DESIGNED TO PROCLAIM THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD AND THAT BY BELIEVING IN HIM A PERSON RECEIVES ETERNAL LIFE, JOHN 20:30

JOHN SELECTS AND CONSTRUCTS HIS GOSPEL AROUND SEVEN GREAT MIRACLES THAT HE CALLS SIGNS. A SIGN IN JOHN'S GOSPEL MEANS A MIRACULOUS HAPPENING WHICH POINTS BEYOND ITSELF TO A GREAT SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

THERE ARE ABOUT FOURTEEN DISCOURSES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL. JOHN SELECTS SEVEN OF THESE DISCOURSES FROM JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY AND INTERFACES THEM WITH THE SEVEN GREAT SIGNS. JOHN SURELY INTENDS FOR THE

DISCOURSES TO EXPLAIN THE SIGNS, BECAUSE THE FIRST SIGN IS CORRELATED WITH THE FIRST DISCOURSE AND THIS CORRELATION CONTINUES THROUGH ALL SEVEN SIGNS AND SEVEN DISCOURSES. JOHN ALSO STRATEGICALLY PLACES IN HIS GOSPEL SEVEN GREAT "I AM" STATEMENTS OF JESUS.

THE SEVEN SIGNS

THE SEVEN SIGNS SPEAK OF THE DIVINITY OF JESUS:

- 1. THE WATER TURNED INTO WINE, 2:1 - 11**
- 2. THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON, 4:46 - 53**
- 3. THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN, 5:1 - 16**
- 4. THE FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND, 6:1 - 13**
- 5. THE WALKING OF CHRIST ON THE WATER, 6:16 - 21**
- 6. THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND, 9:1 - 7**
- 7. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, 11:33 - 44**

THESE SIGNS ILLUSTRATE JESUS AS:

1. OUR JOY, 2. OUR FAITH, 3. OUR HEALER, 4. OUR FOOD, 5. OUR GUIDE, 6. OUR LIGHT, AND 7. OUR LIFE.

THESE SEVEN SIGNS POINT TO JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD WHO BRINGS ETERNAL LIFE. THERE IS ALSO AN EIGHTH SIGN THAT IS GIVEN PRIVATELY TO THE DISCIPLES, JOHN 21:4-11. IN SCRIPTURE EIGHT SEEM TO SIGNIFY A NEW BEGINNING, AND THIS IS A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE DISCIPLES.

THE SEVEN GREAT "I AM" SAYINGS

- 1. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE, 6:35-51**
- 2. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, 9:5**
- 3. I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD, 10:1-9**
- 4. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, 10:11-16**
- 5. I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, 11:25**
- 6. I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE, 14:16**
- 7. I AM THE TRUE VINE, 15:1**

THE SEVEN DISCOURSES

- 1. THE NEW BIRTH, 3:1-21**
- 2. THE WATER OF LIFE, 4:1-26**
- 3. THE LIFE OF THE FATHER IS IN THE SON, 5:17-29**
- 4. THE BREAD OF LIFE, 6:22-66**
- 5. THE WELL OF SALVATION, 7:1-52**
- 6. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, 8:12-20**
- 7. THE GOOD SHEPHERD, 10:1-42**

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL, JOHN 20:30 - 31

A. THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

B. THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

C. THAT BY BELIEVING YOU HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME

II. THE PERSON OF THE GOSPEL

THE SEVEN "I AM" SAYINGS IDENTIFYING JESUS WITH GOD

III. THE PROOF OF THE GOSPEL

THE SEVEN SIGNS AND THE SEVEN WITNESSES

IV. THE PERIL OF THE GOSPEL

CONTRAST BETWEEN BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

V. THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL, JOHN 3:16

TEXT

JESUS GOD'S SON

BEFORE GETTING INTO THE TEXT IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT CHAPTER ONE CONTAINS THE CONCEPTS AND WORDS THAT JOHN WILL USE THROUGHOUT HIS GOSPEL TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE. THIS CHAPTER FOCUSES ON JESUS AS GOD'S SON. AN INTERESTING OUT-LINE OF THE CHAPTER IS:

I. WORDS ABOUT HIM

A. THE WORD 1:1 - 2, 14

- B. THE AGENT OF CREATION 1:3**
- C. THE LIFE 1:4**
- D. THE LIGHT 1:4-5**
- E. THE GIVER OF RIGHTS 1:12**
- F. THE SON OF GOD 1:15-18**
- G. THE DECLARER OF GOD 1:18**
- H. THE CHRIST 1:19-28, 35-42**
- I. THE LAMB OF GOD 1:29, 35-36**
- J. KING OF ISRAEL 1:43-49**
- K. THE SON OF MAN 1:50-51**

II. WORKS BY HIM

- A. CREATES THE WORLD 1:1-4**
- B. SAVES THE SINNERS 1:9-13**
- C. REVEALS THE FATHER 1:15-18**
- E. BAPTIZES WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT 1:33**
- F. KNOWS 1:42, 47-48; 2:23-25**
- G. FORGIVES 1:29**
- H. IS THE WAY 1:50-51**

III. WITNESSES TO HIM

- A. JOHN THE BAPTIST 1:7,15,29,35**
- B. JOHN THE APOSTLE 1:14**
- C. THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS 1:23,45,
NATHANAEL WAS PROBABLY READING THE
PROPHETS.**
- D. THE HOLY SPIRIT 1:33-34**
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JOHN 1

THE WORD INCARNATE

I. THE INTRODUCTION 1:1 - 18

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST WITNESSES TO THE SON OF GOD 1:19-34

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I. THE INTRODUCTION 1:1 - 18

THE FIRST EIGHTEEN VERSES FORM A UNIT CALLED THE PROLOGUE. THESE EIGHTEEN VERSES SET FORTH THE MAJOR THEMES OF THE BOOK. JOHN IS A LITERARY GENIUS COMPOSING THE FOURTH GOSPEL LIKE A GREAT SYMPHONY. THE THEMES OF THE PROLOGUE KEEP RECURRING THROUGHOUT THE BOOK.

VERSES 1 AND 2 MAY HAVE BEEN A CHRISTIAN HYMN. SCHOLARS POINT OUT THAT THE STYLE OF THESE VERSES SEEMS TO BE RELATED TO SEMITIC POETRY. THIS TYPE OF POETRY IS CALLED "STAIR STEP" PARALLELISM. EACH NEW LINE CARRIES FORWARD THE CONTROLLING IDEA OF THE PRECEDING LINE. FOLLOWING THIS PATTERN OF THOUGHT THE FIRST LINE WOULD BE, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD." THE SECOND LINE REPEATS THE WORD, "WORD." "AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD." THE THIRD LINE REPEATS THE WORD "GOD," "AND GOD IS WHAT THE WORD WAS." THIS IS REPEATED IN VERSES 4-5, "IN HIM LIFE WAS,

AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN, AND THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS SHINES, AND THE DARKNESS CANNOT EXTINGUISH IT.” THESE VERSES EASILY FIT THE BEAT OF THE SONG “JOY TO THE WORLD.”

JOHN MAY HAVE INCORPORATED A HYMN OR MAY HAVE WRITTEN THESE VERSES HIMSELF. THESE ARE SOME OF THE MOST PROFOUND VERSES EVER WRITTEN. THE REASON THESE VERSES ARE SO PROFOUND IS THAT THEY USE THE WORD “WORD” TO COMMUNICATE THEIR MESSAGE. JOHN IS ATTEMPTING TO GET THE ATTENTION OF ALL PEOPLE, JEWS, GREEKS AND ROMANS, BOTH BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS. WITH ONE WORD HE OPENS THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF BOTH JEWS AND GREEKS. WHAT IS THAT WORD? IT IS THE WORD *λογος* (LOGOS) “WORD.” THIS IS THE LOGOS CONCEPT.

JOHN DRAWS THIS CONCEPT CHIEFLY FROM HIS HEBREW - JEWISH BACKGROUND. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD EXISTS. OUT OF HIS EXISTENCE COMES THOUGHT. AND OUT OF HIS THOUGHT COMES ACTION. THE ACTS OF GOD IN HISTORY BECOME THE BASIS OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. CHRISTIANITY COMES INTO BEING BY THE HISTORICAL ACTS OF GOD. CHRISTIANITY IS NOT JUST ANOTHER WAY OF THINKING. THE SALVATION OF MAN COMES OUT OF CERTAIN HISTORICAL ACTS WHICH CAN NEVER BE REPEATED. JESUS CANNOT BE HISTORICALLY CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED AGAIN.

JOHN SHOWS THAT THE “WORD” IS MORE THAN A SOUND

OR A SYMBOL FOR SOMETHING ELSE. THE WORD IS GOD IN THOUGHT AND ACTION; THE VERY MIND OF GOD.

THE ANCIENT HEBREWS BELIEVED THAT ONCE A WORD WAS SPOKEN IT WAS ALIVE AND WENT FORTH TO ACCOMPLISH ITS INTENDED PURPOSE. THIS CERTAINLY AFFECTS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GENESIS 1, WHEN GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE LIGHT." GOD SPOKE, AND HIS WORD WENT FORTH TO OBEY HIS COMMAND. ON THE HUMAN LEVEL WE HAVE SOME POWER SIMILAR TO THIS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF I SEE YOU GOING AHEAD OF ME AND I CALL YOUR NAME YOU WILL TURN YOUR HEAD. BY SPEAKING YOUR NAME MY WORDS ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSE I HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER YOU. THIS CONCEPT IS VERY ANCIENT. SOME ANCIENT KINGS HAD NAMES WHICH ONLY THEIR FAMILIES KNEW. THEY BELIEVED THAT ANYONE WHO KNEW THEIR NAMES HAD SOME POWER OVER THEM.

THE COMMANDMENT, "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN," ESTABLISHES THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SPOKEN WORD. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THIS CONCEPT IN CREATION, WHEN GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE LIGHT." IT IS ALSO SEEN IN THE CREATION OF MANKIND. GOD BREATHED INTO MAN THE BREATH OF LIFE, HIS WIND. WORDS ARE MADE WITH WIND, SO IN A SENSE THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN IS CONNECTED WITH MAN'S ABILITY TO SPEAK WORDS.

GOD SAID, "MY WORD WILL NOT RETURN TO ME VOID (EMPTY)." THIS MEANS HIS WORD WILL ACCOMPLISH THE

PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT IS SENT. THE TOWER OF BABEL IS NOT JUST AN ANCIENT EXPLANATION OF THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD. WHEN PEOPLE TRIED TO BECOME GOD WHAT DID THEY LOOSE? THEY LOST THEIR POWER TO COMMUNICATE UNDERSTANDABLE WORDS. THEIR WORDS COULD NO LONGER GO FORTH TO ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSE. AT PENTECOST THERE WAS A REVERSAL OF THE TOWER OF BABEL. THE DISCIPLES THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SPOKE IN THE LANGUAGES OF THE PEOPLE. THROUGHOUT GOD'S WORD GOD GIVES POWER TO SPEAK HIS WORD. WHEN STEPHEN SPOKE THE PEOPLE WERE PIERCED IN THEIR HEARTS. GOD'S WORD SAYS, "BELIEVING COMES BY THE HEARING OF THE WORD."

THE ANCIENT HEBREW LANGUAGE HAD A LIMITED VOCABULARY. ONE REASON MAY HAVE BEEN THEIR REVERENCE FOR WORDS. I UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN TODAY IN THE DESERTS OF THE NEAR EAST, WHERE THE PEOPLE LIVE AS THEY DID IN THE TIME OF THE ANCIENT PATRIARCHS, IF A MAN WITH HIS SON MEETS AN ENEMY WHO CURSES THEM THE MAN WILL THROW HIS SON TO THE GROUND AND FALL ON TOP OF HIM SO THAT THE CURSES WILL NOT HARM HIM. THIS IS JUST WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF SOMEONE WITH A GUN STARTED SHOOTING AT YOUR SON.

WHEN JESUS WAS BORN, HEBREW AS A LANGUAGE WAS PRETTY WELL FORGOTTEN EXCEPT BY THE SCHOLARS. THE COMMON PEOPLE OF PALESTINE SPOKE ARAMAIC AND GREEK. THE LAW OR TORAH AND THE WRITINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HAD TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ARAMAIC SO THE PEOPLE COULD

UNDERSTAND THEM. THESE TRANSLATIONS WERE CALLED THE TARGUMS. IN THE SYNAGOGUES THE SCRIPTURES WERE READ IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW AND THEN READ IN THE TARGUMS. AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD WAS CONSIDERED EXTREMELY IMPORTANT; SO, IN THE TARGUMS WHEN THE PERSONAL NAME OF GOD OCCURRED THEY SUBSTITUTED THE WORD "LORD" OR "WORD OF GOD." EXODUS 19:17 SAYS "MOSES BROUGHT FORTH THE PEOPLE . . . TO MEET WITH GOD." THE TARGUMS SAID, "TO MEET WITH THE WORD OF GOD." JOHN CAPTURES BOTH THE ANCIENT HEBREW AND THE JEWISH CONCEPTS OF HIS DAY IN THE WORD, "WORD."

JOHN ALSO KNEW THE PHILOSOPHICAL GREEK CONCEPTS, BECAUSE HE HAD LIVED IN EPHESUS FOR SOME TIME. LIVING IN EPHESUS, NO DOUBT, HAD A POWERFUL INFLUENCE UPON HIS CHOICE OF THE WORD, λογος "WORD."

IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD THE λογος (LOGOS) WAS A TERM WIDELY USED BY EDUCATED PEOPLE. THE IDEA OF "LOGOS" STARTED IN EPHESUS ABOUT 600 YEARS BEFORE THIS BY A MAN NAMED HERACLITUS. REMEMBER, EPHESUS IS THE CITY WHERE MANY SCHOLARS BELIEVE JOHN WROTE THIS GOSPEL. HERACLITUS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PHILOSOPHERS TO TEACH THAT THE WORLD WAS IN A STATE OF FLUX. EVERYTHING WAS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. BUT AT THE CENTER OF ALL THIS CHANGE HERACLITUS PROPOSED A PRINCIPLE WHICH GAVE IT ORDER AND COHESION. THIS PRINCIPLE HE CALLED THE λογος σπερματικός (LOGOS SPERMATIKOS) OR SEMINAL REASON.

THE STOICS ALSO CONSIDERED THE LOGOS AS GOD GIVING THE UNIVERSE STABILITY. THIS CONCEPT IMPLIES THAT THERE IS A MIND BEHIND THE UNIVERSE GIVING IT ORDER.

THE MAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO RELATE JEWISH WISDOM WITH GREEK WISDOM WAS A JEW FROM ALEXANDRIA NAMED PHILO. W. F. HOWARD SAYS, "PHILO USES THE TERM LOGOS TO EXPRESS THE CONCEPT OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE TRANSCENDENT GOD AND THE UNIVERSE, AN IMMANENT POWER ACTIVE IN CREATION AND REVELATION, BUT THOUGH THE LOGOS IS OFTEN PERSONIFIED, IT IS NEVER TRULY PERSONALIZED." (W. F. HOWARD, CHRISTIANITY ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN [LONDON: DUCKWORTH, 1958] P. 38.)

THE LOGOS ALSO HAD A CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND EVEN BEFORE JOHN WROTE HIS GOSPEL. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF ACTS THE EARLY CHRISTIANS CONSIDER THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES "A MINISTRY OF THE WORD," ACT 6:4. THEY CONSIDER THIS WORK SO IMPORTANT THAT DEACONS ARE APPOINTED SO THE APOSTLES CAN BE GIVEN TO PRAYER AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD. THIS CONCEPT ESTABLISHED PRIORITIES IN THE CHURCH.

THE WRITER OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS NOT THE FIRST TO USE THE TERM LOGOS, BUT HE IS THE ONE WHO GAVE IT FULL MEANING. HE USES IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT IS INTELLIGIBLE TO GREEKS, JEWS AND CHRISTIANS ALIKE.

IN JOHN 1:1, THE PHRASE "THE WORD WAS GOD" IS SIGNIFICANT, BECAUSE THE GREEK DOES NOT HAVE THE ARTICLE

BEFORE THE WORD GOD. IN GREEK THE ARTICLE USUALLY OCCURS BEFORE A NOUN LIKE GOD. WHEN THE ARTICLE IS OMITTED THE NOUN BECOMES LIKE AN ADJECTIVE. IT DESCRIBES. IN THIS CASE IT LEAVES ROOM FOR THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST. THESE VERSES ALSO STRESS BOTH THE UNITY AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE LOGOS AND GOD.

IN GENESIS CHAPTER 1, WE SEE SIMILARITIES TO JOHN CHAPTER 1. JOHN IS TEACHING THAT CHRIST WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. ETERNITY COMES INTO TIME AS THE WORD EXISTED WITH GOD AND THEN COMES INTO HUMANITY. WILLIAM HULL SAYS, "ONE BASIC PURPOSE OF THE PROLOGUE OR INTRODUCTION IS TO IDENTIFY THE HISTORICAL JESUS WITH THE ETERNAL LOGOS AND THEREBY CONTEND THAT WHAT MEN HEARD IN HIS BRIEF MINISTRY IS WHAT GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN TRYING TO SAY TO THE WORLD." (WILLIAM HULL, JOHN, BROADMAN COMMENTARY, VOL. 9 [NASHVILLE, TN: BROADMAN PRESS, 1970] P. 213.) HULL ALSO POINTS OUT THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE PROLOGUE IN STATING THAT THE WORD EXISTED IN THE BEGINNING WAS TO SHOW THAT JESUS WAS OLDER THAN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AND THE ANCIENT PATRIARCHS.

IN VERSE 3, THE "WORD" IS THE AGENT OF CREATION. JOHN ATTACKS GNOSTICISM BY ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRIT AND MATTER. THE GNOSTICS DID NOT BELIEVE THAT GOD CREATED MATTER. JOHN SHOWS THAT THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS LIKE JESUS WHO IS THE WORD. THE IDEA IS THAT THE WORLD BELONGS TO GOD BY THE RIGHT OF CREATION.

THIS MEANS THAT THE SOURCE OF THE MATERIAL WORLD IS SPIRITUAL. THEREFORE, THE WORLD WILL ULTIMATELY BE JUDGED BY SPIRITUAL VALUES.

IN VERSES 4-5, JOHN STRESSES HIS BASIC THEMES OF LIFE AND LIGHT. BY LIFE HE MEANS MORE THAN EXISTENCE. HE MEANS THAT JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE. HE HAS JUST TALKED ABOUT THE WORD LIVING IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE WORD IS THE QUALITY OF GOD'S LIFE. AND THE CHIEF TASK OF JESUS, ACCORDING TO JOHN IS TO BRING GOD'S LIFE OR ETERNAL LIFE TO US.

THE MESSAGE FROM MANY OF OUR PULPITS IS "TRY HARDER, DO THE BEST YOU CAN, LIFT YOURSELF UP, LIFE IS WORTH LIVING." IF WE READ JOHN CAREFULLY, WE SHOULD QUESTION WHETHER LIFE IS WORTH LIVING AT ALL WITHOUT JESUS. WHY? BECAUSE JESUS IS THE LIFE OF GOD. WITHOUT JESUS THERE IS NO LIFE, ONLY EXISTENCE, JOHN 3:16, 5:26, 5:40, 10:10, 10:28, 14:6, AND 20:31.

IN THESE VERSES JOHN PRESENTS JESUS AS THE LIGHT AND THE LIFE OF MEN. JESUS CALLS HIMSELF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IN 8:12 AND 9:5. HE EVEN GOES FURTHER AND TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT THEY ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, MATTHEW 5 THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. THUS, HIS PEOPLE ARE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT, 12:36. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LIGHT? WHAT DOES LIGHT DO? THERE ARE NO LIMIT TO THE POSSIBILITIES. WE ARE SEEING THIS WITH THE

DEVELOPMENT OF LAZAR BEAMS. OUR PHYSICAL LIVES DEPEND ON LIGHT FROM THE SUN, AND OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES DEPEND ON LIGHT FROM THE SON.

VERSE 4, DRAMATIZES THE STARK CONTRAST OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS. DARKNESS MEANS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD WHICH OPPOSES CHRIST. IN GENESIS 1, DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP AND GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE LIGHT." WHAT DOES DARKNESS SYMBOLIZE? IS IT NOT THE DEVIL, EVIL, CRIME, IGNORANCE, THE ABSENCE OF GOOD AND THE LACK OF GODLY KNOWLEDGE OR THE REJECTION OF TRUTH? THE GOSPEL OF JOHN USES DARKNESS TO MEAN EXISTENCE WITHOUT CHRIST. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 6:17 THE DISCIPLES ARE IN THE BOAT AT NIGHT WITHOUT JESUS. JUDAS GOES INTO THE DARKNESS IN 13:30. MARY MAGDALENE COMES IN THE DARKNESS TO THE TOMB. FIRST, SHE IS IN THE LITERAL PHYSICAL DARKNESS, AND SECOND SHE IS IN THE DARKNESS OF GRIEF AND DESPAIR, BECAUSE SHE THINKS JESUS IS DEAD. SHE IS ALSO IN THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE, BECAUSE SHE DOES NOT KNOW THAT JESUS IS ALIVE. IN JOHN WE SEE THE JOURNEYS PEOPLE TAKE ARE OFTEN FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT. NICODEMUS COMES IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT TO MEET JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

IN THE CONCEPT OF DARKNESS JOHN PRESENTS JESUS' FIRST WALL OF RESISTANCE. DARKNESS SIGNIFIES MORE THAN PHYSICAL DARKNESS. IT REPRESENTS A DARK KINGDOM. IN VERSE 5, THE WORD TRANSLATED "EXTINGUISH" CAN MEAN:

1. THE DARKNESS HAS NEVER COMPREHENDED, UNDERSTOOD OR DISCERNED THE MEANING OF THE LIGHT. PAUL SAYS IN ROMANS, "TO THE GREEK THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS, BUT TO US WHO BELIEVE IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION." 2. THE DARKNESS HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME OR EXTINGUISH THE LIGHT. THIS MEANS AS A FIRE IS PUT OUT. THE AORIST TENSE OF THE VERB IN VERSE FIVE IMPLIES THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SINGLE INSTANCE OF SUCH A DEFEAT.

VERSES 6-8, COMPOSE A SECTION ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIZER, THE FIRST WITNESS TO THE LIGHT. ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS TO PLACE JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. EVIDENTLY SOME PEOPLE WERE TURNING THE SPOTLIGHT ON JOHN, HOLDING HIM IN TOO HIGH ESTEEM AND NEGLECTING JESUS. IN FACT WE READ IN ACTS THAT PAUL FOUND IN EPHESUS, WHERE THIS GOSPEL WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN, A GROUP WHO KNEW ONLY JOHN'S BAPTISM. SIMILAR PROBLEMS STILL EXIST. FOR SOME PEOPLE PREACHING IS ONLY CONDEMNATION, "REPENT OR YOU WILL PERISH IN THE FIRES OF HELL." JESUS' MESSAGE CERTAINLY SPEAKS OF REPENTANCE, JUDGMENT AND HELL, BUT HIS MESSAGE IS ALWAYS PACKED WITH PROMISE, HOPE AND JOY. JESUS CAME PREACHING, "REPENT, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." BUT HE SPOKE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AS FEASTS, PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS. HE WAS SAYING, "REPENT, OR YOU WILL MISS GOD'S GREAT PARTY."

JESUS SAID THAT JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST OF MEN, BUT JOHN MADE NO SUCH CLAIM FOR HIMSELF. HE SAW HIS PURPOSE CLEARLY. HE WAS TO POINT PEOPLE TO JESUS. HE KNEW HE WAS A WITNESS TO JESUS. WHO IS A WITNESS? A WITNESS IS ONE WHO TESTIFIES ABOUT WHAT HE HAS SEEN. IF A PERSON HAS NOT SEEN ANYTHING HE IS ONLY REPORTING HERESAY HE CANNOT BE A WITNESS. JOHN WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD TO BE A WITNESS TO THE LIGHT. YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY. HE WAS SENT FROM GOD, BUT THAT DID NOT KEEP HIM OUT OF JAIL NOR DID IT KEEP HIM FROM LOSING HIS LIFE.

IN VERSES 9-13, THERE ARE TWO BARRIERS TO THE WORD, THE WORLD AND JESUS' OWN PEOPLE. THERE ARE TWO WORDS IN GREEK WHICH CAN BE TRANSLATED "TRUE." HOWEVER, THERE IS A SHADE OF DIFFERENCE IN THEIR MEANING. ONE WORD MEANS TRUE AS OPPOSED TO FALSE. THE OTHER WORD MEANS REAL OR GENUINE INSTEAD OF UNREAL OR A SUBSTITUTE. THIS IS THE WORD JOHN USES IN VERSE NINE. JESUS IS THE REAL LIGHT, THE GENUINE LIGHT FROM GOD. JOHN IS SPEAKING TO THOSE OF PLATONIC PHILOSOPHY WHO SAW EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD AS A FORM OR SHADOW OF THE REAL THING. JOHN SAY JESUS IS THE REAL THING. THE REAL LIGHT HAS COME TO ILLUMINATE PEOPLES' LIVES. THIS IS A STATEMENT ABOUT GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE. IT ALSO IMPLIES THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LIGHT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

GENERAL OR NATURAL REVELATION ADVOCATES THAT

ENOUGH OF GOD IS REVEALED IN THE HUMAN HEART FOR ALL PEOPLE TO HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OR AWARENESS OF GOD. WHEN JOHN SAYS THAT JESUS IS THE TRUE OR THE REAL LIGHT WE IMMEDIATELY THINK OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS WHERE PAUL POINTS OUT THAT IN A FALLEN WORLD PEOPLE SUBSTITUTE THINGS FOR GOD.

VERSE 11 IS A SAD VERSE. GOD CALLED THE JEWISH PEOPLE, DELIVERED THEM OUT OF SLAVERY IN THE EXODUS, GAVE THEM THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS AND FINALLY SENT THE MESSIAH. BUT WHEN THE MESSIAH CAME, THEY REJECTED HIM. THE PHRASE, "THERE WAS NO ROOM IN THE INN," IS A SYMBOL OF NO PLACE FOR HIM IN THE WORLD HE CREATED OR THE PEOPLE HE CHOSE.

VERSE 12 EXPLAINS HOW PEOPLE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD. JOHN ALWAYS USES THE TERM "CHILDREN" TO REFER TO BELIEVERS. HE NEVER USES THE TERM "SON" TO REFER TO BELIEVERS. HE ALWAYS USES THE TERM "SON" TO REFER TO JESUS. IN VERSE 12 ALL WHO RECEIVE, BELIEVE, TRUST, AND RELY UPON JESUS ARE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD. THEY DID NOT POSSESS THIS POWER BY THEMSELVES. THEY WERE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY. POWER MEANS THE ABILITY TO DO IT. A WRESTLER HAS POWER TO THROW ANOTHER MAN TO THE MAT; WHEREAS, A POLICEMAN WHO DIRECTS TRAFFIC DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO STOP AN AUTOMOBILE WITH HIS HAND, BUT HE DOES HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO STOP THE AUTOMOBILE. THE DRIVER OF THE AUTOMOBILE KNOWS THAT THE AUTHORITY OF

THE POLICEMAN'S HAND SYMBOLIZES THE POWER OF THE STATE TO REVOKE HIS LICENSE, PLACE HIM UNDER ARREST, AND REMOVE HIM FROM THE HIGHWAY.

VERSE 12 SAYS, "WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME". IN JEWISH TRADITION THE NAME REFLECTED THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF A PERSON. TO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME WAS TO BELIEVE IN HIS CHARACTER. THEREFORE, ONE BECOMES A CHILD OF GOD WHEN HE/SHE RECEIVES JESUS THE WORD BY BELIEVING IN HIS CHARACTER, WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE ON THE CROSS.

VERSE 13 CONTINUES TO DESCRIBE HOW WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, NOT BY BLOODS (PLURAL IN THE GREEK) MEANING NOBLE BIRTH NOR BECAUSE WE WILL IT TO BE SO, BUT BECAUSE GOD WILLS IT TO BE SO. GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE. THE WORD "BORN" IN VERSE 13 SHOULD BE TRANSLATED "BEGOTTEN" OF GOD. IN SCRIPTURE THE WORD "BEGOTTEN" IS USED OF A FATHER ABOUT HIS CHILD, AND THE WORD "BORN" IS USED ABOUT THE MOTHER. THIS IS HOW THE BELIEVER IS RELATED TO THE NEW COVENANT. THE PERSON IS BEGOTTEN OF GOD.

VERSES 14-18 ARE THE PINNACLE OF THE PROLOGUE. THE STATEMENT IS ABOUT THE INCARNATION. THE WORD BECOMES FLESH. THE WORD REMAINS THE WORD, TAKES ON FLESH, AND BECOMES CHRIST. FLESH AS USED HERE MEANS BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT, BUT NOT SINFUL FLESH. THE GREEKS COULD HARDLY IMAGINE A GOD WHO WOULD BE INVOLVED IN HUMAN REDEMPTION. TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE FOR GOD TO BECOME A

HUMAN WAS BLASPHEMOUS. THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN SCRIPTURE.

JOHN'S (LOGOS) "WORD" IS THE REASON OR MIND OF GOD WHO BECOMES A MAN. THE "WORD" BECOMES FLESH LIKE US. THE "WORD" SHARES IN OUR PLIGHT AS HUMAN BEINGS. THE PHRASE TRANSLATED "DWELT AMONG US" LITERALLY CAN BE TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK "PITCHED HIS TENT AMONG US." IN VERSE 14 THE WORD TRANSLATED "DWELL" IS εσκηνωσεν. THE "ε" IS AN AUGMENT AND THE "ωσεν" IS THE VERB ENDING. THE GREEK ROOT IS FROM A NOUN MEANING "TENT." THE SOUND OF THIS GREEK WORD IS ALSO IN THE HEBREW WORD "SHEKINAH," WHICH SPEAKS OF THE GLORY OF GOD AS HE COMES INTO THE TABERNACLE OF ISRAEL TO DWELL AMONG HIS PEOPLE. SO JOHN IS SAYING JESUS IS THE GLORY OF GOD COME TO DWELL AMONG HIS PEOPLE.

JOHN ADDS TO THIS, "WE BEHELD HIS GLORY." THE WORD BEHELD IS BETTER TRANSLATED "DISCERNED." IT IS THE WORD εθεασαμεθα, AND IT MEANS MORE THAN TO SEE OR TO LOOK AT. IT MEANS THEY DISCERNED GOD IN HIM.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "GLORY" IS δοξαν FROM WHICH OUR ENGLISH WORD DOXOLOGY COMES. THE OLD TESTAMENT REACHES ITS GREATEST POINT WHEN GOD'S GLORY APPEARS. WHEN GOD COMES TO DWELL IN THE TABERNACLE THE GLORY OF GOD IS SO POWERFUL THAT MOSES CAN NOT ENTER THE TABERNACLE. WHEN MOSES RECEIVES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE GLORY OF GOD COMES UPON HIM. GLORY IS THE REVELATION OF GOD'S DIVINE CHARACTER IN PERFECTION AND POWER.

IN JOHN GLORY MEANS PRAISE TO GOD FOR CHRIST. THE WORD GLORY IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DEFINE. IT MEANS SOMETHING LIKE THE GREATEST, THE SUPREME, THE ULTIMATE. THE "ONLY BEGOTTEN" MEANS UNIQUE ONE OR NO ONE ELSE LIKE HIM. EVERYTHING APPEARS AS NOTHING WHEN COMPARED WITH CHRIST.

NEXT WE COME TO TWO EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT WORDS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL. THE FIRST WORD IS $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma$, GRACE. GRACE IS ALWAYS CONNECTED WITH THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT IS BECAUSE OF GOD'S GRACE THAT HE CHOOSES ISRAEL. GRACE IS ALSO CONNECTED WITH GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS BOTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, EXODUS 34:6 - 7, AND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. JESUS IS GOD'S GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, PETER 5:12. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE TIED TOGETHER BY GOD'S GRACE. IT IS GOD'S GRACE THAT RESTORES MANKIND'S FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

TRUTH, $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ IS THE SECOND SIGNIFICANT WORD. IN JOHN, TRUTH BASICALLY MEANS REALITY, OR WHAT IS LEFT WHEN EVERYTHING IS STRIPPED AWAY. PILATE ASKED JESUS IN A MODERN CYNICAL FASHION, "WHAT IS TRUTH?" PILATE WAS, NO DOUBT, WELL EDUCATED AND TRAVELED IN CIRCLES OF CULTURE AND SOPHISTICATION WHERE THE IDEAS OF THE

PHILOSOPHERS WERE DISCUSSED; SO, HE DID NOT WAIT FOR SOME BACKWOODS TEACHER TO EXPOUND HIS THEORY OF TRUTH. IN PHILOSOPHY THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE THEORIES ABOUT TRUTH; THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY, THE COHERENCE THEORY AND THE PRAGMATIC THEORY. IN THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY SOMETHING IS TRUE IF IT COINCIDES WITH ACTUAL FACT. IN THE COHERENCE THEORY SOMETHING IS TRUE IF IT COHESIVELY HOLDS TOGETHER A SYSTEM. IN THE PRAGMATIC THEORY SOMETHING IS TRUE IF IT WORKS. JESUS FULFILLS ALL OF THESE. TRUTH FOR THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS NOT SOME FAR OFF ABSTRACTION OR THEORY. IT IS WHAT JESUS IS, AND WHAT JESUS DOES, JOHN 3:21; 8:32; 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; AND 18:37.

VERSE 15 BEGINS THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER AND SHIFTS THE EMPHASIS FROM JOHN TO JESUS. JOHN HAS LEFT AN INDELIBLE IMPRESSION UPON THE PEOPLE. IN MODERN TIMES A GROUP WHO STILL FOLLOWED JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS DISCOVERED IN PERSIA. JESUS HIMSELF HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NO GREATER MAN THAN JOHN HAD EVER LIVED. THE FOURTH GOSPEL, HOWEVER, IS ALWAYS CAREFUL TO IDENTIFY JOHN ONLY AS THE ONE WHO MADE THE WAY FOR JESUS, ISAIAH 40:3-5.

VERSE 16 HAS THE PHRASE “GRACE UPON GRACE.” THE IDEA IS THAT GOD’S GRACE IS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT FOR ANY NEED. OUR NEEDS ARE DIFFERENT AT VARIOUS TIMES, BUT GOD’S GRACE IS ALWAYS SUFFICIENT.

VERSE 18 SAYS THAT JESUS IS ABLE TO REVEAL GOD BECAUSE OF HIS INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THE PHRASE "IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER" IS AN EXPRESSION OF DEEPEST INTIMACY. WE FIND THE PHRASE AGAIN IN THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. LAZARUS DIES AND GOES TO THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM.

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST WITNESSES TO THE SON OF GOD 1:19-34

IN VERSES 19-28, THE EMISSARIES FROM THE PHARISEES COME TO ASK JOHN WHO HE IS. THEY ASK IF HE IS ELIJAH, THE PROPHET OF WHOM MOSES SPOKE OR IF HE IS THE CHRIST. SOME OF THE PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT ELIJAH WOULD RETURN FROM THE DEAD BEFORE THE MESSIAH CAME, MAL. 4:5. THE PROPHET THE PHARISEES ASK ABOUT REFERS TO DEUTERONOMY 18:15,18. JOHN THE BAPTIST SAYS HE IS A VOICE, MEANING THAT HIS MESSAGE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHO HE IS. JOHN SAYS HE IS PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH. HE SAYS HE IS TO BE EVEN A SLAVE OF THE ONE TO COME.

THEY ARE ALSO PUZZLED BY JOHN'S BAPTISM. THEY BAPTIZED GENTILES, BUT NOT JEWS. IT WAS A RITE FOR GENTILES WHO CAME INTO THE JEWISH RELIGION. JOHN'S MESSAGE IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ARE LIKE PAGANS NOT KNOWING GOD AND NEEDING REPENTANCE. THE LESSON IS CLEAR, SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF TRUE REPENTANCE.

IN VERSES 29 - 34, IS THE TITLE “THE LAMB OF GOD.” WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT THE FOURTH GOSPEL DATES THE CRUCIFIXION ON THE DAY WHEN THE PASSOVER LAMBS WERE KILLED. THE MEANING IS THAT IN THIS ACT OF DYING JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD. EARLY CHRISTIANS MUST HAVE DISCERNED IN JOHN THE BAPTIST’S THEME, “THE LAMB OF GOD” SPIRITUAL TRUTH WHICH FILLED THEM WITH AWE. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY KNOW:

1. THAT AT THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM THE DAY BEGINS AND THE DAY ENDS WITH THE SACRIFICE OF A LAMB, EXODUS 29:38 - 42. THESE SACRIFICES TOOK PLACE TWICE EACH DAY UNTIL THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED IN 70 A.D.

2. THAT THE LAMB IS ALSO RELATED TO THE PASSOVER, EXODUS 12:1 - 13.

3. THAT THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF ISAIAH IS RELATED TO THE IDEA OF ONE WHO SUFFERS FOR THE PEOPLE, ACTS 8:32 - 35, ISAIAH, 53.

4. THAT THE LAMB IS ALSO RELATED TO THE INTERBIBLICAL WRITINGS WHICH PICTURED THE HORNED LAMB AS A CONQUEROR.

JOHN THE BAPTIST PROBABLY SAW IN THE IDEA OF THE LAMB OF GOD BOTH ONE WHO SUFFERS AND ONE WHO CONQUERS. THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE IS THAT THE LAMB BOTH SUFFERS AND CONQUERS AND IN SUFFERING.

THE WORDS HOLY SPIRIT OCCUR IN VERSE 33. HOLY

MEANS SEPARATE OR DIFFERENT FROM. SPIRIT IN HEBREW IS “RUACH” MEANING WIND. IN JOHN 3, JESUS USES THE ANALOGY OF THE WIND AND ITS POWER TO EXPLAIN TRUTHS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO NICODEMUS. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD’S POWERFUL LIVING SPIRIT, ISAIAH 61:1, EZEKIEL 36:26-27. JOHN SAYS THAT JESUS IS THE ONE WHO BAPTIZES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE GREEK WORD IS “IN.” THIS MEANS THAT JESUS BRINGS PEOPLE THE LIFE OF GOD. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS IDENTIFY THE DESCENDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT JESUS’ BAPTISM AS THE TIME WHEN JESUS IS EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED FOR HIS WORK.

JOHN’S BAPTISM WAS SYMBOLIC OF CLEANSING, PURIFICATION AND DEDICATION TO FOLLOW GOD’S WAY. JESUS’ BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES A FLOODING WITH GOD’S LIFE AND POWER. THE GREEK WORD BAPTISM MEANS TO SUBMERGE, SOAK OR SATURATE. THE IDEA IS THOSE WHO ARE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL OVERFLOW WITH POWER TO WITNESS.

III. THE SON OF GOD DRAWS DISCIPLES 1:35-51

IN VERSES 35-42, TWO OF JOHN’S DISCIPLES FOLLOW JESUS. THEY RESPOND TO HIS QUESTION “WHAT ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR? WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?” BY ASKING A QUESTION WHICH MEANS, “MAY WE COME AND LEARN FROM YOU?” ONE OF THESE DISCIPLES REMEMBERS DISTINCTLY THE EXACT TIME OF DAY. IF HE IS REFERRING TO HEBREW TIME, IT IS ABOUT FOUR O’CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON. IF HE IS REFERRING TO ROMAN TIME IT IS TEN O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

IN THIS PASSAGE WE CATCH A GLIMPSE OF ANDREW, AN ORDINARY MAN WHO BECOMES AN EXTRAORDINARY DISCIPLE. HE IS THE FIRST PERSON WE KNOW OF WHO COMES TO JESUS AS RESULT OF AN INVITATION. ANDREW IS A GREEK NAME MEANING “MANLY.” [LEON MORRIS, REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER, 1986] VOL. 1, P. 42.) HIS WONDERFUL GIFT IS TO INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO JESUS. IN THIS PASSAGE HE BRINGS SIMON PETER TO JESUS. ANOTHER TIME HE BRINGS THE LITTLE BOY WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES, JOHN 6:8 -9. ANOTHER TIME HE BRINGS THE GREEKS WHO ARE SEEKING TO SEE JESUS, JOHN 12:22. ANDREW DOES NOT POSSESS THE UP FRONT GIFTS. HE IS ALWAYS IN THE BACKGROUND, BUT IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR ANDREW THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO SIMON PETER TO PREACH ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

JESUS LOOKS AT SIMON. THE WORD LOOK, εμβλεψας, MEANS TO GAZE DEEPLY. JESUS SEES WHAT HE WILL MAKE OF HIM. JESUS CHANGES HIS NAME TO CEPHAS OR PETER. THE CHANGING OF A NAME IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS CONNECTED WITH THE CHANGING OF THE PERSON’S CHARACTER.

IN VERSES 43 - 51, JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES GO TO GALILEE. HERE JESUS CALLS PHILIP, “FOLLOW ME.” PHILIP IS A GREEK NAME MEANING, “LOVER OF HORSES.” PHILIP THEN FOUND NATHANAEL. NATHANAEL IS PROBABLY BARTHOLOMEW IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. NATHANAEL MEANS, “GOD HAS GIVEN.”

JESUS HAS A VERY UNUSUAL CONVERSATION WITH NATHANAEL. JOHN PROBABLY RECORDS ONLY A FRAGMENT OF THIS CONVERSATION. THE PLOWSHEAR OF JESUS' DISCERNMENT DUG DEEP IN NATHANAEL'S HEART AND HE TURNS UP WHAT NATHANAEL WANTS TO BECOME. THE PHRASE "UNDER THE FIG TREE" PERHAPS MEANS JESUS HAD DIVINE DISCERNMENT AND SAW HIM STUDYING THE SCRIPTURE OR THINKING AS HE SAT UNDER A FIG TREE. IT WAS THE CUSTOM FOR A PERSON TO STUDY THE LAW IN THE SHADE OF A FIG TREE. IN FACT MANY FAMILIES MADE A KIND OF EXTRA ROOM USING A FIG TREE'S SHADE AS THE ROOF AND PROTECTION FROM THE SUN. NATHANAEL'S QUESTION, "CAN ANY GOOD THING COME FROM NAZARETH?" INDICATES HE IS WELL VERSED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES, AND HE KNOWS THAT NAZARETH IS NOT MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE AS THE HOME OF THE MESSIAH. ALSO WHEN JESUS TALKS ABOUT THE HEAVENS OPENING AND THE ANGELS ASCENDING AND DESCENDING THIS SEEMS TO IMPLY THAT NATHANAEL MUST HAVE RECENTLY STUDIED THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY OF JACOB'S DREAM OF THE LADDER AND THE ANGELS GOING UP AND DOWN, GENESIS 28:10-13. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JACOB'S LADDER AND THE CHANGE OF JACOB'S CHARACTER MAY HAVE CREATED THE DESIRE IN NATHANAEL TO SEEK GOD AND BE HIS MAN. JESUS SAYS NATHANAEL IS WITHOUT GUILF, AND NO CHARACTER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT HAD MORE GUILF THAN JACOB UNTIL GOD CHANGED HIS CHARACTER AND HIS NAME TO ISRAEL.

JOHN 2

THE GLORY OF JESUS UNFOLDS

- I. JESUS TURNS THE WATER INTO WINE: THE FIRST SIGN 2:1 - 11**
- II. JESUS DRIVES THE MERCHANTS OUT OF THE TEMPLE 2:12-22**
- III. JESUS KNOWS THE HUMAN HEART 2:23-25**

I. JESUS TURNS THE WATER INTO WINE: THE FIRST SIGN 2:1 - 11

REMEMBER, THE FOUNDATION STONES OF JOHN'S GOSPEL ARE THE SEVEN GREAT SIGNS WITH AN EIGHTH ONE ADDED ESPECIALLY FOR THE DISCIPLES.

THIS IS THE FIRST SIGN. AS DO ALL THE OTHER SIGNS, IT POINTS BEYOND ITSELF TO A SPIRITUAL MEANING. THIS SIGN IS A MIRACLE AT A JEWISH WEDDING. JEWISH WEDDINGS WERE GREAT CELEBRATIONS. THE BRIDE AND GROOM WERE RELIEVED OF THEIR DUTIES FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO ALLOW THEM TO CELEBRATE WITH THEIR FRIENDS. THIS COUPLE WAS PROBABLY POOR. IN THEIR CULTURE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO BE GOOD HOSTS WERE FAR MORE SEVERE THAN WE CAN IMAGINE. THESE WERE NOT DRUNKEN EVENTS AS OUR CULTURE MIGHT SUGGEST. THE

RABBIS REQUIRED WINE TO BE DRUNK THREE PARTS WATER AND ONE PART WINE. BESIDE THAT, THERE WAS NO DISTILLING PROCESS IN THOSE DAYS. ON THE THIRD DAY THE WINE RAN OUT. THEIR JOY ALSO RAN OUT.

THIS IS THE CONTEXT OF JESUS TURNING THE WATER INTO WINE. THE RECORD SAYS THERE WERE SIX STONE JARS. THEY WERE STONE JARS, NOT CLAY JARS, FOR ONLY STONE JARS COULD CONTAIN WATER FOR PURIFYING PURPOSES. THE REASON IS THAT GOD CREATES STONE, MAN MAKES CLAY. SIX IN SCRIPTURE IS THE NUMBER OF INCOMPLETENESS, BECAUSE IT FALLS SHORT OF SEVEN, THE COMPLETE NUMBER. WE SEE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION SIX IS THE NUMBER MEANING MAN WITHOUT GOD.

THE WEDDING FEAST IS A PICTURE OF THE NATION ISRAEL WHOSE JOY HAD RUN OUT. THE NATION WAS EMPTY AND INCOMPLETE. THIS IS ALSO A STORY OF SALVATION. THESE WERE PURIFYING WATERPOTS. JOHN IS SAYING THAT JESUS CAME TO TRANSFORM THE JEWISH SYSTEM OF PURIFICATION TO THE WAY OF GRACE AND THE GOSPEL. A SIGN POINTS BEYOND ITSELF AND PRODUCES BELIEF THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, AS IS SEEN IN THE PHRASE "... AND HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM." BELIEF IN JOHN IS BASED ON HISTORICAL AND SPIRITUAL EVIDENCE, AS HE SAID IN I JOHN, "WE BEHELD, . . . WHICH WE HAVE SEEN, TOUCHED, HANDLED."

ALEXANDER MACLARAN SAYS ABOUT THIS MIRACLE, "... SILENTLY HE WILLED, AND 'THE CONSCIOUS WATER KNEW ITS

LORD, AND BLUSHED.’ THIS IS THE GLORY OF THE INCARNATE WORD.” (ALEXANDER MACLAREN, EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE ST. JOHN CHAPTERS I TO VIII [NEW YORK: HODDER & STOUGHTON] P. 116.)

II. JESUS DRIVES THE MERCHANTS OUT OF THE TEMPLE 2:12-22

THE OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES FOR THIS PASSAGE ARE MALACHI 3:1 - 3 AND ZACHARIAH 14:21. JOHN PLACES THIS EVENT IN THE TIME TUNNEL AT THE BEGINNING OF JESUS’ MINISTRY; WHEREAS, THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS HAVE IT AT THE END OF JESUS’ MINISTRY. PROBABLY THERE WERE TWO CLEANSINGS OF THE TEMPLE. MOST SCHOLARS, HOWEVER, THINK THAT THIS EVENT OCCURRED ONLY ONCE, AND SINCE IT WAS NOT THE INTENT OF THE GOSPEL WRITERS TO GIVE A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF JESUS’ LIFE EACH WRITER PLACED IT ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE HE HAD FOR HIS BOOK.

THE MONEY CHANGERS HAD SET UP THEIR WARES IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES. JESUS CAME TO THE PASSOVER AT JERUSALEM, WENT INTO THE TEMPLE AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS COLLIDED HEADLONG WITH THE DESECRATION OF HIS FATHER’S HOUSE. IN RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION HIS ANGER FLASHED LIKE LIGHTENING. HE KICKED OUT THE MONEY CHANGERS, THE ANIMALS AND THEIR MERCHANTISERS.

THE TEMPLE TAX WHICH WAS REQUIRED OF ALL MALES ANNUALLY COULD NOT BE PAID IN ROMAN COINS, BECAUSE THEY HAD THE INSCRIPTION OF CAESAR ON THEM SIGNIFYING THE AUTHORITY, POWER AND OWNERSHIP OF ROME. NO COINS WITH AN IMAGE ON THEM COULD BE USED IN THE TEMPLE. THE ROMAN COINS HAD TO BE CHANGED FOR COINS WITH NO INSCRIPTIONS ON THEM. COINS WERE MINTED BY THE TEMPLE AUTHORITIES AND EXCHANGED FOR THE ROMAN COINS. THE PRICE CHARGED THE PEOPLE TO EXCHANGE THESE COINS WAS HIGHWAY ROBBERY.

JESUS THREW THE MONEY CHANGERS AND THOSE WHO SOLD ANIMALS OUT OF THE TEMPLE IN ORDER TO CLEANSE IT OF GREED AND TO SET IT APART THAT ALL PEOPLE MIGHT BE WELCOME TO SEEK THE FATHER. ALL THIS WAS TAKING PLACE IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES WHICH WAS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE TEMPLE WHERE THE GENTILES COULD WORSHIP GOD. WHEN GOD HAD CALLED ISRAEL HE SAID TO THEM, "YOU ARE TO BE TO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." THAT MEANT THEY WERE TO BRING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO HIM. THEY HAD NOT DONE IT. IN FACT, THIS ACT OF GREED, IN THE TEMPLE, KEPT THE GENTILES FROM WORSHIP. THE NOISE AND CONFUSION SQUEEZED OUT THE ATMOSPHERE OF PRAYER. THE PRACTICE OF PROVIDING SACRIFICES AND EXCHANGING MONEY PROBABLY BEGAN AS A CONVENIENCE FOR TRAVELERS WHO CAME TO JERUSALEM TO WORSHIP. IT ENDED, HOWEVER, MAKING GREAT PROFITS FOR A FEW AND MAKING WORSHIP IMPOSSIBLE FOR MANY.

IN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE IT CONVENIENT FOR TRAVELERS

TO GET THEIR MONEY CHANGED FOR THE TEMPLE TAX AND TO GET ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES, THEY HAD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GENTILES TO MEET GOD. THIS SIGNIFIES THAT GOD'S HOUSE IS TO BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER. SINNERS MUST NOT BE REPELLED.

THE NEXT DAY THE SADDUCEES QUESTION JESUS ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY TO CLEANSE THE TEMPLE. IT IS AMAZING THAT THEY DO NOT TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION AGAINST JESUS. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT THIS ACT IS THE REASON THE JEWISH LEADERS ULTIMATELY PUT JESUS TO DEATH.

THE LEADERS WANT A SIGN. CLEANING THE TEMPLE IS A MESSIANIC SIGN, BUT THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT IT. THEY WANT TO DICTATE THE SIGN. SATAN HAD ENCOURAGED JESUS IN EACH TEMPTATION TO GIVE THEM A SIGN. SATAN MEANT GIVE THEM A SIGN THEY WILL ACCEPT. JOHN SHOWS THAT JESUS GAVE THE SIGNS, BUT THE SPIRITUALLY BLIND COULD NOT SEE THEM.

THE ONLY SIGN JESUS GIVES THEM IS, "DESTROY THIS TEMPLE, AND IN THREE DAY I WILL RAISE IT UP." JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT HIS CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION, BUT THE JEWISH LEADERS THINK HE IS SPEAKING ABOUT THE ACTUAL STONE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THE TEMPLE HAD BEEN IN THE PROCESS OF BEING CONSTRUCTED FOR 46 YEARS, AND WAS NOT FINISHED EVEN AT THE TIME JESUS WAS SPEAKING.

AT THE TRIAL OF JESUS ONE OF THE ACCUSATIONS IS THAT

HE SAID HE WOULD DESTROY THE TEMPLE, MATTHEW 26:61. THE CHARGE AGAINST STEPHEN, THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR, IS THAT HE WANTED TO DO AWAY WITH THE TEMPLE, ACTS 6:14.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AFTER PENTECOST THE BELIEVERS ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. CHRIST INDWELLS BELIEVERS, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT; THUS, SINS IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS AND THE NOISE OF A BUSY SCHEDULE OF BUYING AND SELLING MAY KEEP US FROM GOD.

AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN TWO CLEANSINGS OF THE TEMPLE, ONE AT THE BEGINNING AND ONE AT THE END. A TRUTH THAT CAN BE DRAWN FROM THIS IS THAT REFORMATION MAY RESULT IN AN EMPTY TEMPLE, BUT IF THE GLORY OF GOD DOES NOT COME IN AND FILL IT THE OLD WAYS WILL RETURN. MACLAREN SAYS, "THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP THE WORLD OUT OF MY HEART IS TO HAVE CHRIST FILL IT." (MACLAREN, OP. CIT., P. 132.)

THE LESSONS FROM THIS PASSAGE ARE:

- 1. GREED DEFILES GOD'S TEMPLE AND DESTROYS WORSHIP.**
- 2. SPIRITUAL CLEANSING IS NECESSARY FOR TRUE WORSHIP.**
- 3. UNBELIEF WILL NOT BELIEVE EVEN WHEN PROOF IS PROVIDED.**
- 4. UNBELIEF UNCHECKED, IN THE END BECOMES REJECTION.**

VERSE 19 SHOWS THAT THE CROSS IS AT THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY. THERE IS PROPHETIC WARNING HERE: THE DEATH OF JESUS WAS THE DESTRUCTION NOT ONLY OF HIS PHYSICAL BODY

BUT OF THE ACTUAL JEWISH TEMPLE AS WELL. WHEN JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED HIS ATONEMENT BROUGHT GOD AND PEOPLE TOGETHER WHICH WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE JEWISH TEMPLE. WHEN THE JEWISH TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED SO WERE ITS SACRIFICES AND WORSHIP. THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD DESTROYED JESUS, BUT INSTEAD THEY DESTROYED THEIR OWN TEMPLE. JOHN LOVES THESE DOUBLE MEANINGS. WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES, "SINCE WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IF JESUS COULD WHAT WOULD HE THROW OUT OF OUR LIVES?"

III. JESUS KNOWS THE HEART OF HUMANITY 2:23-25

IN VERSES 23-24, THE TENSES MEAN THAT JESUS KEPT ON REFUSING TO TRUST HIMSELF TO THEM. THIS TRUTH MEANS THAT FAITH BASED SOLELY UPON THE EMOTIONAL EXCITEMENT GENERATED BY UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES IS IN ADEQUATE AND UNRELIABLE.

WILLIAM BARCLAY GIVES US EXCELLENT INSIGHT INTO THIS PASSAGE. HE SAYS THE NEW TESTAMENT USES THREE DIFFERENT WORDS TO SPEAK OF MIRACLES. ONE WORD IS "TERAS." IT MEANS AN ASTONISHING SURPRISE. THE NEW TESTAMENT NEVER USES THIS WORD ALONE ABOUT THE WORKS OF JESUS. THE SECOND WORD IS "DUNAMIS." IT MEANS POWER WHICH ACCOMPLISHES THINGS THAT ANYONE CAN RECOGNIZE. THE THIRD WORD IS "SEMEION." IT MEANS A SIGN. A SIGN REVEALED SOMETHING ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON DOING THE SIGN, AND NOT EVERYONE RECOGNIZES IT. A MIRACLE HAS ALL THREE OF THESE ELEMENTS IN IT, BUT IT IS THE SIGN THAT POINTS TO GOD. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, JOHN [PHILADELPHIA: THE WEASTMINSTER PRESS, 1956] VOL. 1, PP. 107-108.)

JOHN 3

THE NEW BIRTH

- I. JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS: THE FIRST DISCOURSE 3:1 - 21
- II. JOHN WITNESSES THAT JESUS MUST INCREASE 3:22 - 36

I. JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS: THE FIRST DISCOURSE 3:1 - 21

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS BUILT AROUND 7 SIGNS WHICH JESUS DID, 7 SAYINGS WHICH HE SAID AND 7 GREAT DISCOURSES IN WHICH HE WAS INVOLVED. THIS IS THE FIRST DISCOURSE, AND IT IS ABOUT:

THE NEW BIRTH, 1 - 2
GOD'S LOVE, 15 - 17
BELIEF 15 - 16,
ETERNAL LIFE, 15 - 17
JUDGMENT, 18 - 19
LIGHT AND DARKNESS, 19 - 21

NICODEMUS' ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS ILLUSTRATES THE TYPE OF FAITH THAT IS GENERATED BY AND BUILT UPON SOMETHING OTHER THAN UPON THE PERSON OF JESUS. JOHN STATES THIS

TRUTH AT THE CLOSE OF CHAPTER TWO. NOW IN CHAPTER 3, NICODEMUS IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THOSE WHO ARE IMPRESSED BY THE MIRACLES.

NICODEMUS IS A PHARISEE. THE NAME PHARISEE MEANS SEPARATE ONES. AT THE TIME OF JESUS, THERE WERE ABOUT 6,000 OF THESE MEN WHO HAD DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO KEEPING THE WRITTEN LAWS AND THE MINUTE DETAILS OF THE ORAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THESE LAWS.

NICODEMUS IS A RULER OF THE JEWS, AND A MEMBER OF THE SANHEDRIN, THE HIGHEST COURT OF THE LAND. THE SANHEDRIN IS COMPOSED OF 70 MEN AND THE HIGH PRIEST. NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS EITHER AS THEIR OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OR AS A MAN WITH HIS OWN PERSONAL INTERESTS. THESE DO NOT NECESSARILY EXCLUDE EACH OTHER. HE COMES TO SPEAK WITH JESUS AT NIGHT. THE RABBIS THOUGHT NIGHT WAS THE BEST TIME TO STUDY THE LAW; SO, HE MAY HAVE COME FOR THAT REASON. HOWEVER, JOHN USES DARKNESS AS A MOTIF TO TEACH; AND HE MAY MEAN THAT NICODEMUS IS COMING IN DARKNESS TO THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

NICODEMUS SAYS TO JESUS, "WE KNOW YOU ARE A TEACHER COME FROM GOD." REALLY HE WAS GOD COME TO TEACH. NICODEMUS THINKS OF JESUS AS A TEACHER. JESUS THINKS OF HIMSELF AS THE SAVIOR, AND HE POINTS NICODEMUS TO THE CROSS. THIS EVENT ALSO SIGNIFIES THAT NICODEMUS IS COMING FROM JUDAISM'S DARKNESS TO CHRIST'S LIGHT.

JESUS TELLS NICODEMUS, “αμην αμην,” “TRULY, TRULY.” OUR ENGLISH WORD AMEN IS A TRANSLITERATION OF THIS GREEK WORD. IT MEANS HERE THAT THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS NOT NEW INFORMATION BEING TAUGHT, BUT RATHER A NEW BEGINNING, A NEW BIRTH. THE WORD TRANSLATED “ANEW” IS “ανωθεν,” WHICH MEANS ABOVE OR AGAIN. THE WORD ACTUALLY HAS THREE MEANINGS. IT CAN MEAN: 1. COMPLETELY OR RADICALLY. 2. A SECOND TIME, AND 3. FROM ABOVE, FROM GOD. SEE I PETER 1:3, 22, 23, JAMES 1:18; ROM, 6:1 - 11, I COR. 3:1 - 2, II COR. 5:17; EPH. 4:22 - 24.

JESUS USES WIND TO REPRESENT BOTH THE AGENCY OF THIS NEW BIRTH AND THE FREEDOM AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE SEE FROM THIS PASSAGE THAT WE CANNOT CHANNEL GOD’S POWER, BUT WE CAN WITNESS GOD’S POWER. NICODEMUS WAS BOUND BY LEGALISM; WHEREAS, THE BELIEVER IS FREE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS FREEDOM CAME TO THE EARLY DISCIPLES WHEN GOD SENT THE MIGHTY RUSHING WIND OF PENTECOST INTO THEM.

THIS SECTION COULD BE CALLED, “THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH.” IT COULD BE DIVIDED HOMILETICALLY AS FOLLOWS:

1. WHY IS THE NEW BIRTH NECESSARY? THE ANSWER IS IN JOHN 2:23 - 25, THE THREE VERSES THAT PRECEDE THIS PASSAGE. JESUS KNEW WHAT WAS IN PEOPLE, AND HE DID NOT TRUST HIMSELF TO THEM. WE ALSO SEE JESUS’ PERCEPTION

OF PEOPLE IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. MATTHEW 5 BEGINS, "AND SEEING THE MULTITUDES." THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "SEEING" IS AN ANCIENT WORD WHICH HAS THE MEANING OF INSIGHT INTO SOMETHING OR TO PIERCE BENEATH THE SURFACE, TO SEE THE ESSENCE OR THE TRUTH OF SOMETHING. IN MATTHEW 5, JESUS SEES THE HEART OF MANKIND AND HIS DEEPEST NEEDS. JESUS GIVES THE BEATITUDES TO FILL PEOPLES DEEPEST NEEDS.

THE END OF JOHN 2 REVEALS JESUS' INSIGHT INTO MANKIND. JESUS KNEW MANKIND NEEDS A NEW BIRTH, THE SUBJECT OF JOHN 3. THE NEW BIRTH IS NEEDED BY ALL, BUT CAN ONLY BE GIVEN BY GOD. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD."

2. WHO NEEDS THE NEW BIRTH? NICODEMUS UNDERSTOOD THAT JESUS WAS SAYING A PERSON HAS TO BE BORN FROM ABOVE, FROM GOD. JESUS WAS TELLING HIM HE NEEDED A NEW SELF. THE CENTER OF ALL PROBLEMS IS OLD SELF FOR THAT IS WHERE THE SINNER IS.

NICODEMUS KNEW HE HAD A NEED. HE JUST DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A NEW BIRTH. HE HAD GONE TOO FAR THROUGH TOO MANY DOORS IN HIS LIFE AND HAD THROWN AWAY THE KEYS. HE COULD NOT GET BACK THROUGH THE DOORS. HE BELIEVED THAT CHARACTER WAS THE PRODUCT OF ALL THE PAST EXPERIENCES. 1 COR. 2:14 SAYS THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

3. WHAT IS THE NEW BIRTH? IN BIRTH, FIRST THERE IS CONCEPTION WHICH IS THE BASIS OF OUR BELONGING, "BEGOTTEN FROM ABOVE." IN THE SCRIPTURE THE WORD BEGOTTEN IS USED OF THE FATHER. IN SPIRITUAL BIRTH GOD THE FATHER PUTS HIS SEED IN US. THUS, WE BELONG TO GOD.

IN BIRTH, SECOND THERE IS THE RECEPTION INTO THE WORLD. IN SPIRITUAL BIRTH IT IS RECEPTION INTO GOD'S KINGDOM. OUR RECEPTION GIVES US COURAGE FOR OUR BEING.

IN BIRTH, THIRD THERE IS THE PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD. THIS IS GROWTH. WE CALL THIS PROCESS MATURATION. IN SPIRITUAL BIRTH WE HAVE A NEW PERCEPTION OF GOD AND HIS WORLD. WE SEE THE POTENTIAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH BEFORE US. THIS IS OUR HOPE OF BECOMING LIKE JESUS. THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW BIRTH IS TO BRING US INTO THE LIKENESS OF JESUS.

4. HOW DOES THE NEW BIRTH HAPPEN? FIRST, THERE IS DENIAL. "IT CAN'T HAPPEN. IT CAN'T BE ME. I DON'T NEED IT." SECOND, THERE IS BARGAINING. "YES, BUT LET ME DO SOMETHING." THIRD, THERE IS DEFIANCE. "I CAN'T. I WON'T GIVE UP MY SELF." FOURTH, THERE IS ACCEPTANCE. "YES."

A FAMOUS WORLD MISSIONARY HAD A WOMAN COME TO HIM WANTING TO FIND GOD. FIRST, SHE GAVE HIM HER WHISKEY BOTTLE AND HER GOLD CIGARETTE CASE. FINALLY, SHE CAME IN REPENTANCE AND FAITH, AND EXPERIENCED THE NEW BIRTH.

THEN SHE REALIZED THAT SHE HAD TRIED TO GIVE GOD HER WHISKEY AND HER CIGARETTES IN LIEU OF HERSELF.

5. WILL THE NEW BIRTH HAPPEN TO YOU? VERSE 5 SPEAKS OF WATER. IF THIS SPEAKS OF BAPTISM THEN IT IS THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, WHICH IS REPENTANCE, BECAUSE NICODEMUS CAME BEFORE CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. FURTHER, BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF DEATH NOT BIRTH, ROM. 6: 1 FF. JESUS CAME TO SAVE, BUT HE DID NOT BAPTIZE, JOHN 4:2. SEE I PETER 1:23, JAMES 1:18, EPH. 5:26 AND TITUS 3:5. SOME HAVE ASSOCIATED THIS BAPTISM WITH THE WASHING OF THE WORD, MEANING THE WORD OF GOD. OTHERS HAVE SEEN THIS BAPTISM REFERRING TO PHYSICAL BIRTH, REFERRING BACK TO VERSE FOUR, AS A BABY IS CONTAINED IN A SACK OF WATER.

JOHN 3:16-21 IS THE GOSPEL IN MINIATURE. JESUS IS NOT MAN'S SACRIFICE TO AN ANGRY GOD; RATHER HE IS GOD COMING IN LOVE TO SINFUL MANKIND TO PROVIDE THE PROPITIATION AS A FREE GIFT. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED PROPITIATION HAS THE MEANING OF TURNING AWAY GOD'S WRATH. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT CONCEPT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH IS OFTEN AVOIDED BY MODERN THEOLOGIANs AND TRANSLATORS.

JOHN 3:16 CAN BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE INITIATIVE OF GOD'S LOVE. THE KEY WORD OF JOHN 3:16 IS "SO." "SO" INDICATES THE QUALITY AND THE QUANTITY OF GOD'S LOVE. I JOHN SAYS, "WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST

LOVED US.” GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE. HIS LOVE IS A SEEKING LOVE. THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE ONE LOST SHEEP ILLUSTRATES THIS TRUTH. GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO GIVE HIS SON TO REDEEM US.

2. THE INCARNATION OF GOD’S LOVE. EMMANUEL MEANS GOD COMES IN HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.

3. THE INVITATION OF GOD’S LOVE. WHOSOEVER BELIEVES MAY COME.

4. THE INDWELLING OF GOD’S LOVE. THE QUALITY OF THE INDWELLING IS GOD’S LIFE. THE QUANTITY OF THE INDWELLING IS EVERLASTING.

VERSES 14-15 IS A REFERENCE TO NUMBERS 21:8-9. THIS IS THE SERPANT THAT MOSES LIFTED UP ON THE POLE IN THE WILDERNESS IS AN OLD TESTAMENT TYPE OF CHRIST. JOHN GIVES THE PHRASE, “LIFTED ON HIGH” A DOUBLE MEANING, LIFTED ON THE CROSS AND LIFTED TO ASCEND THE THRONE IN HEAVEN.

IN VERSE 18, THE WORD “CONDEMNED” CAN MEAN SENTENCED. IT HAS THE DOUBLE MEANING OF “TO JUDGE” AND “TO SEPARATE.” (G. H. C. MACGREGOR, OP. CIT., P. 83.)

II. JOHN WITNESSES THAT JESUS MUST INCREASE

3:22-36

IN THIS SECTION SOME OF THE MAJOR IDEAS ARE:

1. MINISTRY GIFTS ARE FROM GOD, VERSE 27; 2. JOHN IS NOT THE CHRIST, VERSES 28-30; 3. JESUS SPEAKS THE WORDS OF GOD, VERSE 34; AND 4. THE FATHER GIVES ALL THINGS INTO JESUS' HANDS, VERSE 35.

A DISCUSSION AND AN ARGUMENT AROSE BETWEEN SOME OF THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND SOME OF THE JEWISH LEADERS. PERHAPS THE LEADERS WERE TRYING TO CREATE DISSENSION AND ILL WILL BETWEEN JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS.

AGAIN WE SEE THAT THE WRITER OF THIS GOSPEL IS PUTTING JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS INTO PROPER SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE. JOHN KNOWS WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE IS SUPPOSED TO DO. WE ALSO SEE THE LOYALTY OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES TO HIM. JOHN KNEW THAT HE WAS THE "SHOSHBEN," THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM WHO PREPARED EVERYTHING FOR THE COMING OF THE GROOM. THE "SHOSHBEN" BROUGHT THE BRIDE AND GROOM TOGETHER. HE WORKED OUT THE DETAILS OF THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT. HE EVEN GUARDED THE BRIDAL SUITE AND LET NO ONE IN EXCEPT THE GROOM. THIS SECTION IS A PICTORIAL REFERENCE TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND TO THE CHURCH AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. GOD WAS THE BRIDEGROOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, EX. 34:15; DEUT. 31:16; PS. 73:27; ISAIAH 54:5; II COR. 11:2; EPH. 5:22-23. JOHN IS TRYING TO BRING TOGETHER ISRAEL AND JESUS. HE IS PREPARING THE WAY. NOW IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO GO HIS WAY REJOICING.

VERSE 33 SPEAKS OF IMPRINTING A SEAL. THE PROCESS REFERRED TO IS POURING HOT WAX ON A DOCUMENT AND PRESSING A SIGNET RING INTO IT. THIS SEAL GAVE AUTHORITY TO THE DOCUMENT.

VERSE 34 SPEAKS OF GOD AND SAYS, “. . . GIVETH NOT THE SPIRIT BY MEASURE . . .” ONE QUESTION WHICH PEOPLE ASK IS “WASN’T THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WORLD BEFORE PENTECOST?” THE ANSWER IS, “YES, THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS IN THE WORLD, BUT AT PENTECOST GOD RELEASED HIM AND HIS POWER IN A NEW WAY.”

VERSE 36 CONTAINS THE WORD “BELIEVE.” JOHN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY, USES THE VERB “BELIEVE” RATHER THAN THE NOUN “FAITH.” IN GREEK BOTH WORDS, BELIEVE AND FAITH COME FROM THE SAME ROOT, LOOK THE SAME AND SOUND THE SAME EXCEPT THEIR ENDINGS ARE DIFFERENT. THE VERB BELIEVE INDICATES ACTION, AND JOHN USES THIS WORD IN THE SENSE OF TAKING A PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS. BELIEVE FOR JOHN MEANS A LIFE RESPONSE TO JESUS NOT JUST A MENTAL ASSENT TO A SET OF PROPOSITIONS ABOUT HIM.

JOHN 4

THE WATER OF LIFE

- I. JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL: THE SECOND DISCOURSE 4:1 - 26**
- II. JESUS TEACHES THE DISCIPLES ABOUT WITNESSING 4:27 - 38**
- III. JESUS' WORD CAUSES MANY SAMARITANS TO BELIEVE 4:39 - 42**
- IV. JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON: THE SECOND SIGN 4:43 - 54**

CHAPTER ONE HAS: 1. WATER FOR A WOMAN, 2. FAITH FOR A FATHER, AND 3. HEALING FOR A SON.

I. JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL: THE SECOND DISCOURSE 4:1 - 26

THIS DISCOURSE IS THE WATER OF LIFE FOR A THIRSTY WOMAN. THIS SECTION COULD BE TITLED, "LOVE BREAKS THE SOCIAL BARRIERS" OR "SOUL THIRST; WHEN NOTHING SEEMS TO SATISFY."

THE BACKGROUND OF THIS INCIDENT LIES IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL. AFTER SOLOMON'S REIGN AS KING THE NATION SPLIT INTO TWO NATIONS. THE TEN NORTHERN TRIBES BECAME THE NATION ISRAEL, AND THE TWO SOUTHERN TRIBES, JUDAH AND BENJAMIN, BECAME THE NATION JUDAH.

IN 722/721 B.C., THE NORTHERN KINGDOM WAS CONQUERED AND TAKEN AWAY BY ASSYRIA INTO CAPTIVITY. THE MILITARY PRACTICE OF ASSYRIA WAS TO TRANSPORT THE EDUCATED AND SKILLED LEADERS TO ANOTHER COUNTRY. REORGANIZING THEIR SOCIETY KEPT THEM SO BUSY THEY HAD NO TIME TO REBEL. ASSYRIA ALSO TRANSPORTED OTHER PEOPLE INTO THE COUNTRY WHERE THE NORTHERN TRIBES HAD BEEN. THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS WAS INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN THE PEOPLE LEFT AND THE NEW PAGAN PEOPLE. GOD HAD INSTRUCTED ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT NOT TO INTERMARRY WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. THESE INTER-MARRIAGES WERE IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO GOD'S COMMAND.

IN 587/586 B.C., THE LEADING PEOPLE OF THE TRIBES OF JUDAH, BENJAMIN AND LEVI, WHO COMPOSED THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM, WERE TAKEN AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY BY BABYLON, BUT THEY SURVIVED AS A GROUP. SINCE THEY WERE CHIEFLY OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH THEY BECAME KNOWN AS JEWS. LATER UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ZERUBBABEL, EZRA AND NEHEMIAH SOME FIFTY TO SIXTY THOUSAND PEOPLE RETURNED TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE, THE CITY WALLS AND THEIR SOCIETY. THE PEOPLE NORTH OF JUDAH, THE SAMARITANS WHO WERE DESCENDENTS OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES AND THE PAGAN PEOPLE BROUGHT INTO THEIR LAND, OFFERED TO HELP REBUILD THE WALLS. THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH, WHO WERE NOW CALLED JEWS, FEARED INTERMARRIAGE WITH THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE A PURE WORSHIP OF GOD. THE SAMARITANS FEARED THAT THE WALL WOULD BE

REBUILT AROUND JERUSALEM; SO, THEY TRIED TO TRAMPLE THE JEWS WITH TROUBLE. THE SAMARITANS HAD CORRUPTED THE HEBREW RELIGION BY ADDING STRANGE AND PAGAN ELEMENTS. THIS CAUSED HATRED TO DEVELOP BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES. THE SAMARITANS WERE REGARDED BY THE JEWS AS UNCLEAN SWINE. THE JEWS TAUGHT THAT A JEW SHOULD NOT SPEAK TO A SAMARITAN. THIS IS NOT SURPRISING SINCE A JEW WOULD NOT SPEAK TO A JEWISH WOMAN OUTSIDE HIS FAMILY IN PUBLIC. AND A RABBI WOULD NOT EVEN SPEAK TO HIS WIFE OR DAUGHTER IN PUBLIC. IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS DISMANTLES THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SPEAKS TO A SAMARITAN WOMAN IN PUBLIC.

SAMARIA IS LOCATED BETWEEN GALILEE AND JUDEA. EVERY TIME A JEW WENT FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM HE CROSSED THE JORDAN RIVER TO THE EAST AND WENT DOWN ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE SO THAT HE DID NOT HAVE TO GO THROUGH SAMARIA. HE THEN CROSSED BACK OVER THE JORDAN AND WENT INTO JERUSALEM.

INSTEAD OF TAKING THE USUAL ROUTE JESUS WENT IN A STRAIGHT LINE TOWARD GALILEE. THE DISCIPLES MUST HAVE ASSUMED HE WAS IN A HURRY. THEY SURELY MUST HAVE COMPLAINED, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT TO GO THROUGH SAMARIA.

THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "HE NEEDS MUST GO THROUGH SAMARIA." JOHN USES "MUST" IN SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT

PLACES. IN SPEAKING TO NICODEMUS JESUS SAYS, "YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN." JOHN THE BAPTIST SAYS, "HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE." HERE IT SAYS "HE MUST NEEDS GO THROUGH SAMARIA" AND LATER JESUS SAYS TO THE WOMAN, "THEY THAT WORSHIP GOD MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH."

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES COME TO A FORK IN THE ROAD. AT THE FORK IS A WELL DUG BY JACOB. JACOB HAD GIVEN THIS LAND TO HIS SON JOSEPH, GEN 48:52. JOSEPH, YOU REMEMBER, WAS SOLD INTO EGYPT BY HIS BROTHERS, BUT AFTER YEARS OF UNUSUAL EVENTS AND FAITHFULNESS TO GOD HE BECAME SECOND TO THE PHARAOH OF EGYPT. AFTER HIS DEATH HIS BONES WERE BROUGHT BACK AND BURIED IN THE VICINITY WHERE THIS EVENT IS TAKING PLACE, JOSHUA 24:32. THE WELL WHERE JESUS MEETS THE WOMAN IS ABOUT A MILE SOUTH OF THE CITY OF SYCHAR. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE TOWN WAS SYCHEM, BUT THE JEWS CHANGED IT IN JEST TO SYCHAR WHICH MEANS "CITY OF DRUNKARDS." (MCGREGOR, OP. CIT., P. 95.)

IT IS NOON WHEN THEY GET TO THE WELL. THE DISCIPLES ARE HUNGRY; SO THEY GO INTO THE VILLAGE TO BUY FOOD. THIS IN ITSELF SHOWS THAT JESUS HAD ALREADY TORPEDOED THEIR PREJUDICE WITH HIS ACCEPTANCE OF PEOPLE, FOR ORDINARILY THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BOUGHT ANYTHING FROM THIS VILLAGE OR ANY OTHER SAMARITAN VILLAGE. WHILE THEY ARE GONE A WOMAN COMES TO DRAW WATER. WHY DOES SHE COME TO

THIS PARTICULAR WELL AT THIS TIME OF DAY? THERE WERE PROBABLY OTHER WELLS IN THE VILLAGE. THERE WERE ALSO SPRINGS IN THE AREA. NOON IS NOT THE ORDINARY TIME FOR A WOMAN TO DRAW WATER. POSSIBLY SHE CAME TO THIS WELL, AT THIS TIME OF DAY, BECAUSE SHE DID NOT WANT TO MEET THE OTHER WOMEN OF THE VILLAGE.

JOHN TELLS US THE HIGH POINTS OF THIS CONVERSATION OF THE CENTURIES. JESUS ASKS HER FOR A DRINK. A JEWISH ORAL LAW FROWNED UPON A JEWISH MAN SPEAKING TO A WOMAN IN PUBLIC. SHE IS SHOCKED. HE IS A JEWISH MAN. SHE IS A WOMAN AND EVEN WORSE A SAMARITAN. EVEN MORE SHOCKING, SHE IS LIVING IN ADULTERY; SO, SHE IS UNCLEAN. WE DO NOT KNOW THE TONE OF HER VOICE WHEN SHE ANSWERS HIM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER SHE IS SERIOUS OR FLIPPANT, BUT WE CAN BE SURE SHE IS SHOCKED AT HIS REQUEST FOR A DRINK. AT THIS TIME IN JEWISH ORAL LAW ACCORDING TO MY FRIEND CHARLES PAGE, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST AND AUTHORITY ON ANCIENT JEWISH CULTURE, IF A PERSON GAVE ANOTHER PERSON A DRINK THEY AGREED TO BE FRIENDS FOR A YEAR. JESUS IS ASKING HER TO BE HIS FRIEND. WHEN HE PROMISES HER LIVING WATER HE IS TELLING HER THAT HE WILL BE HER FRIEND FOREVER.

EVIDENTLY SHE DOES NOT GIVE HIM THIS DRINK IMMEDIATELY. SHE NEEDS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HIM BEFORE SHE IS WILLING TO BECOME HIS FRIEND. JESUS IS FRIENDLY, PROBING, REVEALING AND HEALING IN THIS ENCOUNTER. HE SPEAKS TO HER ABOUT LIVING WATER WHICH OBVIOUSLY HAS A PHYSICAL AND A SPIRITUAL

MEANING. LIVING WATER IS A TERM USED TO SPEAK OF FLOWING OR RUNNING WATER AS OPPOSED TO RAIN WATER COLLECTED IN A CISTERN. THE TERM ALSO MEANS SPIRITUAL WATER THAT QUENCHES THE THIRSTY SOUL. THE PSALMIST SAID ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, "MY HEART PANTETH AFTER THEE LIKE A HART PANTETH AFTER THE WATERBROOK." ISAIAH 12:3 PROMISED THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD DRAW WATER WITH JOY FROM THE WELLS OF SALVATION. THIS WOMAN, LIKE NICODEMUS IN CHAPTER 3, MISUNDERSTOOD JESUS AND TOOK HIM TO MEAN PHYSICAL WATER. HER SPIRITUAL INSIGHT IS NOT ATTUNED TO THE THINGS OF GOD; SO, JESUS HAS TO LEAD HER SLOWLY TO THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

THE SAMARITANS WERE LIKE THE PEOPLE OF JEREMIAH 2:13 WHO HAD LEFT GOD, THE SPRING OF LIVING WATERS, AND DUG CISTERNS WITH CRACKS IN THEM. THE CISTERNS DRIED UP, BECAUSE THE WATER RAN OUT THROUGH THE CRACKS.

THE WOMAN MAY HAVE UNDERSTOOD JESUS AND CHIDED HIM SAYING, "GIVE ME THIS WATER SO I DON'T HAVE TO COME HERE AND DRAW." THIS COULD BE COMPARED TO NICODEMUS, IN JOHN 3, WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEW BIRTH AND ASKS, "HOW CAN A MAN ENTER A SECOND TIME INTO HIS MOTHER'S WOMB?"

JESUS BEGINS TO PROBE. HE SAYS, "CALL YOUR HUSBAND." THEN HER SIN IS OUT IN THE OPEN. HER INNER SELF IS EXPOSED. JESUS MUST FIRST REVEAL HER SIN AND HER TRUE SELF

BEFORE HE CAN SHOW HER THE WAY OF FORGIVENESS. REDEMPTION BEGINS WITH A SENSE OF SIN AND NEED. SOME COMMENTATORS TRY TO SEE IN THE WOMAN'S FIVE HUSBANDS THE GODS WHICH THE ANCESTORS OF THE SAMARITANS WORSHIPED. THIS IS NOT LIKELY, BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPED SEVEN GODS AT THE SAME TIME, NOT IN SEQUENTIAL ORDER. ANYWAY THERE ARE FIVE HUSBANDS AND THE MAN SHE IS LIVING WITH NOW. THAT IS SIX. THE NUMBER SIX SHOWS THE INADEQUACY AND IMPERFECTION OF HER DOMESTIC AFFAIRS WHICH HAVE FAILED TO SATISFY HER DEEPEST LONGINGS. JESUS STRIKES AT HER HEART, HER DEEPEST LONGINGS AND HER DRIVING PASSIONS. HE ALWAYS DOES. HE SPEAKS OF HER HUSBAND. THIS IS SOMEHOW RELATED TO WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN HER LIFE. BUT SOMEHOW THIS RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT SATISFY HER DEEPEST NEEDS. SHE TRIES TO SIDESTEP THE ISSUE AND CHANGE THE SUBJECT; SO, SHE BEGINS TO ASK ABOUT WORSHIP. THIS IS A RELIGIOUS QUESTION WHICH IS OFTEN USED BY PEOPLE TO AVOID A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS.

THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM OF THE SAMARITANS WAS HUMANLY DESIGNED, NOT REVELATIONALLY REVEALED AND RECEIVED. THEY EXCLUDED HEBREW REVELATION THEY DISLIKED AND ADDED THE PAGAN ELEMENTS THEY DID LIKE. THEY CHOSE TO ACCEPT ONLY THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEY REJECTED THE PROPHETS WITH THEIR MESSAGE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE PSALMS WITH THEIR PRAISES AND THE WISDOM LITERATURE WITH ITS GODLY INSIGHT.

JESUS TELLS THE WOMAN THAT GOD MUST BE WORSHIPPED IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. THIS MEANS THAT TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD MUST ARISE OUT OF INTERNAL MOTIVATION AND DEVOTION TO GOD AND ACCORDING TO GOD'S DESIGN AND DESIRE. WORSHIP MUST FIRST BE AN INTERNAL RELATIONSHIP BEFORE IT CAN BE AN EXTERNAL ACT.

SIX TIMES JESUS HAS INTERJECTED HIS CONVERSATION INTO HER LIFE. ON THE SEVENTH TIME HE TELLS HER THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH. NOTICE THE NUMBERS SIX AND SEVEN. THE SIX MEN IN HER LIFE HAVE BEEN INADEQUATE TO SATISFY HER SPIRITUAL NATURE. JESUS IS THE SEVENTH MAN IN HER LIFE. SEVEN IS THE COMPLETE NUMBER IN THE SCRIPTURE, AND JESUS IS THE SPIRITUAL COMPLETENESS THAT SHE NEEDS. SHE FORGETS HER WATER POT AND GOES ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA.

SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS SAFE COMING TO THE WELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY. SHE WAS JUST GOING ABOUT HER REGULAR BUSINESS. THAT IS THE WAY GOD OFTEN WORKS. WE THINK WE ARE SAFE, AND THEN GOD INVADES OUR TURF.

THE WOMAN CAME TO DRAW A LITTLE WATER TO QUENCH HER THIRST FROM A TEMPORAL WELL. INSTEAD SHE DREW ETERNAL LIFE FROM THE INEXHAUSTABLE SPRING OF GOD.

II. JESUS TEACHES THE DISCIPLES ABOUT WITNESSING 4:27-38

VERSES 31 - 38 REVEAL JESUS' MOTIVES, HIS MISSION, HIS METHOD AND HIS MESSAGE.

III. JESUS' WORD CAUSES MANY SAMARITANS TO BELIEVE 4:39-42

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SAMARITANS IS THAT THEY BELIEVE IN JESUS AS THE MESSIAH BECAUSE THEY SEE, HEAR AND EXPERIENCE FOR THEMSELVES.

IV. JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON: THE SECOND SIGN 4:43-54

VERSES 43-54 TEACH ABOUT THE NEW LIFE. THE SECOND GREAT SIGN IN JOHN'S GOSPEL IS THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. JESUS IS IN CANA. THE NOBLEMAN, WHOSE SON IS SICK AND ABOUT TO DIE, LIVES IN CAPERNAUM SOME 25 MILES AWAY. HIS FAITH ARISES OUT OF DESPERATE NEED, VERSE 49. HE TRAVELS A DAY'S JOURNEY FROM CAPERNAUM TO SEE JESUS. JESUS SAYS, "GO YOUR WAY. YOUR SON LIVES." SUDDENLY, THE TRUTH FLASHES UPON THE MAN. IF JESUS' WORD IS NOT TRUE, HIS TOUCH WILL NOT HEAL EITHER. THE MAN BELIEVES JESUS' WORD. HIS FAITH IS SURE, AS IS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT HE STAYED IN CANA AND DID NOT GO HOME IMMEDIATELY, VERSE 52.

THIS IS A SINCERE AND EARNEST MAN. THIS IS A MAN IN GREAT NEED. HE STARTS ON A JOURNEY TO FIND A PHYSICIAN

AND INSTEAD FINDS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. WHEN HE STARTS THE JOURNEY THE WHOLE WORLD IS A SICK ROOM; IN IT IS A DEATH BED AND ON IT IS HIS SON, BUT WHEN HE RETURNS HE SEES A WORLD OF HEALTH AND HOPE AND IN IT HIS SON WITH A FUTURE AND A FAMILY WITH SALVATION.

WE CAN IDENTIFY WITH THIS MAN. WE HAVE ALL EXPERIENCED SIMILAR EVENTS. I PREACHED A SERMON YEARS AGO TITLED "PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE." MY SON WAS FOUR YEARS OF AGE AND HAD A VERY LARGE KIDNEY STONE. HE WAS OPERATED ON, AND AS HE LAY AT DEATH'S DOOR WE DISCOVERED THAT GOD GAVE US FAITH BEYOND FAITH.

JOHN 5

- I. JESUS HEALS A LAME MAN ON THE SABBATH: THE THIRD SIGN 5:1 - 16**
- II. JESUS TEACHES THAT THE LIFE OF THE FATHER IS IN HIM: THE THIRD DISCOURSE 17-29**
- III. JESUS TEACHES THAT HIS POWER IS FROM HIS FATHER 5:30-47**

I. JESUS HEALS A LAME MAN ON THE SABBATH: THE THIRD SIGN 5:1 - 16

HUMAN POWERLESSNESS MAKES POSSIBLE THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. THAT IS THE TRUTH THAT STANDS LIKE A GREAT BEACON IN THIS PASSAGE. IT ALSO TEACHES THAT JESUS IS THE LORD OF THE SABBATH, 5:1 - 47.

THIS IS THE THIRD SIGN. THE FIRST THREE SIGNS SHOW HOW A PERSON IS SAVED. IN THE FIRST SIGN JESUS CHANGES WATER TO WINE. THIS IS SALVATION BY THE WORD. JESUS SPOKE THE WORD AND IT WAS SO. MARY SAID TO THE SERVANTS, "DO WHATSOEVER HE TELLS YOU." IN THE SECOND SIGN JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. IT SHOWS SALVATION BY FAITH. THE NOBLEMAN HAD NO VISIBLE MEANS TO SEE THAT HIS SON WAS HEALED. THIS IS THE THIRD SIGN AND SHOWS THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE.

EACH SIGN IS USUALLY FOLLOWED BY A DISCOURSE OR AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE.

VERSE 2 HAS MANY VARIATIONS IN THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS, AND THE TEXTS ARE NOT CLEAR IN THEIR SYNTAX. THE VARIOUS MANUSCRIPTS GIVE THREE DIFFERENT NAMES FOR THIS POOL: 1. BETHESDA, MEANING "HOUSE OF MERCY" OR "HOUSE OF EMISSION". BETH MEANS HOUSE, THUS BETHEL MEANS "HOUSE OF GOD" AND BETHLEHEM MEANS "HOUSE OF BREAD." 2. BETHZATHA MEANS "HOUSE OF THE OLIVE." 3. BETHSAIDA MEANS "HOUSE OF FISHING" (MACGREGOR, OP. CIT., PP.167- 168 AND HULL, OP. CIT., PP. 261 -262.)

VERSE 2 SAYS THAT THE POOL IS NEAR THE SHEEP GATE. THIS COULD BE THE GATE MENTIONED IN NEH. 3:1. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THIS IS THE GATE THROUGH WHICH THE SACRIFICIAL LAMBS WERE LED TO THE TEMPLE. THUS, WE GET THE NAME SHEEP GATE. THE MAN IS LYING AT THE POOL WHICH HAS FIVE PORCHES AROUND IT. THE NUMBER FIVE IN SCRIPTURE IS OFTEN A SYMBOLIC NUMBER FOR GRACE. IN THIS PASSAGE JESUS EXTENDS GOD'S GRACE TO A LAME MAN. IF WE TRACE THE NUMBER FIVE THROUGH SCRIPTURE WE SEE JOSEPH SITS BEFORE BENJAMIN FIVE TIMES AS MUCH AS HE SITS BEFORE HIS OTHER BROTHERS, GEN 43:34. HE GIVES BENJAMIN FIVE CHANGES OF CLOTHES, GEN. 45:22. THE MEASUREMENTS IN THE TABERNACLE ARE MULTIPLES OF FIVE. THE TABERNACLE IS THE CHIEF SYMBOL OF GOD'S MERCY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FIVE IS ALSO A SYMBOL FOR GOD'S MERCY. FOR EXAMPLE, JESUS FED THE MULTITUDES WITH FIVE BARLEY LOAVES.

IN THIS SECTION WE SEE THE LAMB OF GOD ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE CROSS, THE GREAT ALTAR OF SACRIFICE. HE STOPS AND EXTENDS GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE TO A HELPLESS MAN. THE MAN SYMBOLIZES THE CONDITION OF LOST PEOPLE, IMPOTENT, POWERLESS TO HELP THEMSELVES AND UNABLE TO WALK IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD, SEE ROM. 7.

THIS POOL HAD A REPUTATION FOR GIVING HEALTH. EVIDENTLY THERE WAS A BELIEF AMONG THE PEOPLE THAT WHEN THE WATERS MOVED, BY SOME SUDDEN RUSHING OF A SPRING OR SOMETHING OF THAT SORT, THE FIRST PERSON IN THE POOL WOULD BE HEALED. THE MAN SAID HE HAD NO ONE TO HELP HIM INTO THE HEALING WATERS. NOTICE, JESUS IS THE ONE WHO BRINGS HIM HEALING BOTH IN BODY AND IN SPIRIT. NOTICE ALSO THAT JOHN USES WATER THROUGHOUT HIS GOSPEL TO ILLUSTRATE HIS TRUTHS. FOR EXAMPLE, JOHN COMES BAPTIZING WITH WATER. IN CANA JESUS CHANGES THE WATER INTO WINE. IN CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS JESUS SPEAKS OF BEING BORN AGAIN BY THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT. AT THE WELL IN SAMARIA JESUS GIVES A WOMAN ETERNAL WATER AND IN THIS PASSAGE WATER IS THE MAN'S HOPE, BUT HE IS HELPLESS BECAUSE HE CAN'T GET TO IT BY HIMSELF.

ALLEGORY IS FUN TO PLAY WITH, BUT LIKE FIRE IT IS SOMETIMES DANGEROUS IF IT TAKES AWAY POWER FOR THE PRESENT. SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE ALLEGORICALLY INTERPRETED THIS EVENT. THEY SEE THE MAN REPRESENTING THE NATION

ISRAEL, AND THE FIVE PORCHES REPRESENTING THE FIVE BOOKS OF LAW. THE 38 YEARS THE MAN WAS AN INVALID REPRESENTS THE 38 YEARS ISRAEL WONDERED IN THE WILDERNESS. THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH TO SUCH INTERPRETATIONS, BUT THIS IS NOT THE CENTRAL IDEA IN THIS PASSAGE.

JESUS COMES TO THE MAN AND ASKS A QUESTION THAT SEEMS TO BE UNNECESSARY. HE ASKS IF THE MAN WANTS TO BE HEALED OR MADE WHOLE. SOME PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO BE MADE WHOLE. SOME PEOPLE GET MILEAGE OUT OF SICKNESS. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PEOPLE USE SICKNESS TO BIND OTHER PEOPLE TO THEM. SUCH SUGGESTIONS GIVES US INSIGHT INTO JESUS' QUESTION.

THE LAME MAN ANSWERS JESUS, "I HAVE NO MAN TO HELP ME IN THE POOL." JESUS THEN COMMANDS HIM TO DO WHAT HE CANNOT DO, AND HE DOES IT. A MIRACLE OCCURS; HE BEGINS TO WALK. IT WOULD SEEM THAT HIS PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED, BUT HE IMMEDIATELY GETS INTO TROUBLE. HE IS CARRYING HIS BED ON THE SABBATH. IT HAD CARRIED HIM FOR 38 YEARS. HE, THINKS IT IS TIME FOR HIM TO CARRY IT. HE IS SO EXCITED THE UNIMPORTANT BECOMES INSIGNIFICANT. HE FORGETS WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK IT IS. IT IS THE SABBATH, AND THE SCRIBES HAVE WORKED OUT ALL TYPES OF DETAILED LAWS ABOUT THE SABBATH. ONE SAID A PERSON COULD NOT CARRY A BURDEN ON THE SABBATH. HE IS CARRYING HIS BED ON THE SABBATH, AND THAT IS WORK. HE IS IN REAL TROUBLE WITH THE JEWISH LEADERS.

JESUS FINDS THE MAN IN THE TEMPLE. HE MAY BE THERE GIVING THANKS TO GOD OR HE MAY BE THERE SEEKING FORGIVENESS FOR CARRYING HIS BED ON THE SABBATH. THE JEWISH LEADERS MAY HAVE THROWN HIM OUT OF THE TEMPLE AND EXCOMMUNICATED HIM FROM ISRAEL.

JESUS FINDS HIM AND TELLS HIM TO SIN NO MORE. IT WAS A COMMON BELIEF, IN THAT DAY, THAT SIN CAUSED ALL INDIVIDUAL SUFFERING. JESUS TELLS HIM TO SIN NO MORE SO THAT HE WILL NOT ASSUME THAT HE GOT AWAY WITH HIS SIN.

THE MAN THEN GOES TO INFORM THE PHARISEES THAT JESUS DID THIS GREAT MIRACLE AND GAVE HIM THE AUTHORITY TO CARRY HIS BED ON THE SABBATH. THE MAN IS BEGINNING TO CONFESS WITH HIS MOUTH WHO JESUS IS.

THIS MIRACLE IS NOTHING LESS THAN A SIGN OF THE MESSIANIC AGE. ISAIAH 35:6 REFERRING TO THE MESSIANIC AGE SAYS THE LAME MAN SHALL LEAP AS A HART (DEER).

II. JESUS TEACHES THAT THE LIFE OF THE FATHER IS IN HIM 5:17-29

THE PHARISEES HOSTILITY TOWARD JESUS BUILDS RAPIDLY, TURNS TO HATRED AND THEN TO A DESIRE FOR MURDER. ONE ACT OF JESUS SURELY WOULD NOT HAVE BROUGHT THIS MUCH HOSTILITY. THE VERB USED IN VERSE 16 MEANS THAT HE CONTINUALLY OR REPEATEDLY HEALED ON THE SABBATH.

WHEN THEY CONFRONT JESUS HIS BRILLIANT ANSWERS DEFEAT THEM. HE IDENTIFIES HIS WORK WITH GOD'S WORK. HE SAYS, "GOD WORKS UNTIL NOW AND I WORK." THE RABBIS THEMSELVES SAID THAT GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM THE WORK OF CREATION, BUT THAT HIS WORKS OF MERCY AND SUSTAINING THE WORLD CONTINUED EVEN ON THE SABBATH.

THE PHARISEES CREATED ALL KINDS OF VERY METICULOUS, STRICT AND RIDICULOUS RULES FOR KEEPING THE SABBATH. FOR EXAMPLE A PERSON COULD NOT TIE A KNOT IN A ROPE, BUT HE COULD TIE A KNOT ON A GIRDLE. SO, THEY TIED A GIRDLE TO A BUCKET AND TO A ROPE AND DREW WATER. THIS WAY, THEY COULD ESCAPE THEIR OWN LAW. THESE RULES WENT ON ENDLESSLY. IN JESUS' ARGUMENT, HE SHOWS THAT WHAT HE DID ON THE SABBATH WAS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT GOD DID ON THE SABBATH.

JESUS SAYS IN VERSE 19, "THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF." THE PHRASE IS REPEATED IN VERSE 30 AND GIVES THE MEANING. JESUS DID NOT ACT ON HIS WILL BUT BY THE WILL OF HIS FATHER. THE PHRASE TRANSLATED "NOTHING OF HIMSELF" IN GREEK IS "NOTHING OUT OF HIMSELF," MEANING THAT THE ORIGIN OF EVERYTHING HE DID CAME FROM GOD. HE WAS NOT INDEPENDENT FROM GOD, BUT RATHER INTERDEPENDENT WITH GOD. THIS TRUTH IS ALSO RELATED TO THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS. SATAN TRIED TO GET HIM TO BE INDEPENDENT OF GOD. THAT IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF ALL SIN, INDEPENDENCE FROM GOD. OBEDIENCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS DEPENDENCE

UPON GOD. THE HISTORY OF MANKIND ILLUSTRATES THIS. ADAM AND EVE WERE DISOBEDIENT TO GOD. SAUL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WANTED TO BE PARTIALLY OBEDIENT WHICH IS REALLY DISOBEDIENCE. THE OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATES THAT DISOBEDIENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THE NATION ISRAEL WAS THE CHIEF CAUSE OF THEIR PROBLEMS.

VERSES 24-25 SPEAK OF ETERNAL LIFE AS A PRESENT POSSESSION. JESUS CLAIMS EQUALITY WITH GOD IN THESE VERSES. HE CLAIMS THE POWER OF FINAL JUDGEMENT AND THE POWER TO GIVE ETERNAL LIFE. A CONTEMPORARY PHYSICAL ILLUSTRATION COULD BE USED TO ILLUMINATE THIS SPIRITUAL TRUTH. A SON OF A GOOD FRIEND OF OURS WAS ON HARD DRUGS, HAD COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL OF HIS MIND AND HAD TO BE COMMITTED TO AN INSTITUTION. THE PSYCHIATRIST GAVE THEM NO HOPE. I REMEMBER THEIR EXTREME ANGUISH. ABOUT THREE YEARS LATER THE YOUNG MAN BEGAN TO RECOVER AND IN THE FOURTH YEAR HE CAME HOME. ONE DAY HE SAID, "DAD, IT IS LIKE JESUS BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE DEAD." THE SAME IS TRUE IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

III. JESUS TEACHES THAT HIS POWER IS FROM HIS FATHER 5:30-47

ONE OF THE THEORIES PRESENTED BY THE OPPONENTS OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST IS THAT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH IT GAVE JESUS HIGHER AND HIGHER STATUS UNTIL HE WAS ACCEPTED AS GOD. THIS IS NOT IN THE SCRIPTURE. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES DENIED JESUS' DEITY FROM THE

BEGINNING. THIS WAS THE CHIEF CHARGE AGAINST JESUS AT THE JEWISH PART OF HIS TRIALS.

IN VERSE 31 JESUS SAYS THAT HIS WITNESS ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO PROVE HIS DEITY. IN VERSE 39 HE SAYS THE SCRIPTURES TESTIFY ABOUT HIM. IN JOHN 8:13-16, JESUS SAYS THE FATHER WITNESSES TO HIM.

VERSE 32 IS GENERALLY BELIEVED TO REFER TO JOHN THE BAPTIST; HOWEVER, IT REALLY REFERS TO GOD THE FATHER.

VERSE 34 SHOWS THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURE WHICH SAYS THAT GOD IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH. JESUS WANTS THEM TO BE SAVED AND IS TELLING THEM TO LOOK AND FIND THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM.

VERSE 35 SAYS THAT FOR A SEASON THEY WERE INTRIGUED WITH JOHN THE BAPTIST, BUT THEY SOON REJECTED HIS WITNESS. WE HAVE HERE ILLUSTRATED THE TRUTH OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS. THE SOWER SOWED THE SEED AND SOME OF IT FELL ON SHALLOW SOIL AND THE SEED QUICKLY SPRANG UP AND THEN DIED.

IN VERSE 39, JESUS CHALLENGES THE JEWISH LEADERS TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. THE WORD TRANSLATED "SEARCH" IS USED OF A HUNTER TRACKING GAME BY FOLLOWING THE TRACKS ON THE GROUND. GOD LEAVES HIS TRAIL ALL THROUGH SCRIPTURE. THEY HAD SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURE

TO FIND WHERE THE MESSIAH WOULD BE BORN WHEN HEROD CALLED THEM TO ANSWER THE QUESTION OF THE MAGI. THEY TOLD NICODEMUS IN JOHN 7:52 TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURE FOR NO PROPHET COMES FROM GALILEE. AFTER ALL THEY LIVED IN THE "BIBLE BELT" OF ISRAEL. BUT THEY MISSED THEIR MESSIAH. JESUS SAYS THAT MOSES WILL ACCUSE THEM.

IN VERSE 43, JESUS SAYS, "I HAVE COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME" MEANING, IN HIS CHARACTER AND NATURE. IN THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE JESUS REFERS TO ANTI-CHRIST, FOR HE SAYS, "... IF SOMEONE ELSE COMES IN HIS OWN NAME, YOU WILL ACCEPT HIM."

JOHN 6

JESUS IN GALILEE

- I. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND: THE FOURTH SIGN 6:1 - 15
- II. JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA: THE FIFTH SIGN 6:16 - 21
- III. JESUS TEACHES TO DO THE WORK OF GOD IS TO BELIEVE ON HIM: THE FOURTH DISCOURSE 6:22 - 32
- IV. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE IS THE BREAD OF LIFE 6:33 - 60
- V. JESUS TEACHES THAT NO ONE COMES TO GOD UNLESS GOD DRAWS HIM 6:44
- VI. ETERNAL LIFE COMES FROM UNION WITH CHRIST 6:44 - 59
- VII. JESUS' MESSAGE DIVIDES 6:60 - 71

I. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND: THE FOURTH SIGN 6:1 - 15
JESUS' MAJOR TASK IS TO DISCIPLE THE TWELVE. IN THIS PROCESS HE TEACHES THEM BOTH BY WORD AND ACTION. WHEN ONE OF THE GOSPELS SPEAKS OF JESUS CALLING HIS DISCIPLES IT SAYS "THAT THEY MIGHT BE WITH HIM."

IT IS THE PASSOVER TIME. AS PEOPLE ARE TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM TO CELEBRATE THEIR MINDS ARE FOCUSED UPON GOD'S DELIVERANCE IN THE PAST, AND THEIR HOPES WERE HIGH FOR ONE WHO WOULD FREE THEM IN THE FUTURE.

OF ALL THE MIRACLES JESUS PERFORMED THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND IS THE ONLY ONE RECORDED BY ALL FOUR GOSPELS. THIS SHOWS ITS TREMENDOUS IMPACT UPON THE DISCIPLES. IT IS ODD THAT IT IS EXPRESSED IN SUCH A SIMPLE MATTER OF FACT WAY. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE WAY IT HAPPENED.

THIS MIRACLE THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAS BEEN DEALT WITH HARSHLY BY THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IT. SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE THAT THE LITTLE BOY SHARED HIS LUNCH AND JESUS USED THAT AS AN EXAMPLE TO GET ALL THE PEOPLE TO SHARE THEIR LUNCHES OR THAT THE DISCIPLES HID FOOD IN A CAVE AND DISTRIBUTED IT. BUT THE SCRIPTURE IS LIKE AN ANVIL, IT HAS WORN OUT MANY A HAMMER.

JESUS SEES THE GREAT MULTITUDES AND HAS COMPASSION ON THEM, BECAUSE THEY NEED TO EAT. PHILIP REPRESENTS A LOT OF US. HE SEES THIS AS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK. HE IS BUSINESS MINDED AND FIGURES IN PHYSICAL RATHER SPIRITUAL TERMS. HE FIGURES 200 DENARII WILL NOT BUY ENOUGH BREAD TO FEED THE PEOPLE. ARTHUR PINK SAYS THAT 200 IS A MULTIPLE OF 20 AND IN THE SCRIPTURE 20 MEANS A VAIN EXPECTANCY. FOR EXAMPLE, JACOB WAITED 20 YEARS TO GAIN POSSESSION

OF HIS PROPERTY AND INDEPENDENCE FROM LABAN, GEN 31:41. IN JUDGES 4:3, THE NATION ISRAEL WAITED 20 YEARS TO BE FREE FROM JABIN, A KING OF CANAAN. THE ARK WAS IN KIRJATH-JEARIM FOR 20 YEARS, I SAM. 30:10; II SAM. 14:26. IN REV. 9:16 JOHN SPEAKS OF THE ARMY OF 200 MILLION. (ARTHUR W. PINK, EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1945] VOL. 1, P.291.)

IN THIS MIRACLE, ANDREW IS THE INTRODUCER; HE BRINGS THE LITTLE BOY WITH THE FISH AND THE LOAVES TO JESUS. JESUS HAS THE PEOPLE SIT DOWN. THE WORD TRANSLATED "SIT DOWN" *αναπασειν* MEANS TO RECLINE. CAN YOU IMAGINE THE PUSHING AND SHOVING IF THE PEOPLE HAD STOOD UP? GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER AND COMMON SENSE. THEY OBEY AND ARE BLESSED.

JESUS TAKES THE FIVE LOAVES AND FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND MEN PLUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THE NUMBER FIVE IN SCRIPTURE IS REGARDED BY SOME SCHOLARS AS A SIGN OF GRACE. HOWEVER, IN JOHN, THIS NUMBER DOES NOT SEEM SIGNIFICANT, BECAUSE IT IS NOT USED VERY OFTEN.

IN VERSE 11, THE WORD TRANSLATED "BROKE" IS IN A TENSE MEANING AN INSTANTANEOUS ACT, WHEREAS, THE WORD "GAVE" IS IN A TENSE MEANING CONTINUOUS ACTION OF GIVING.

TWELVE BASKETS ARE LEFT OVER. THIS IS INTERESTING SINCE IT WAS A COMMON PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE TRAVELING TO CARRY WITH THEM A BOTTLE SHAPED BASKET. THIS MEANS THAT EACH DISCIPLE HAS HIS BASKET FULL.

THE PEOPLE ARE FILLED AND SEEING A FULL STOMACH AS THE POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW THEY WANT TO FORCE HIM TO BECOME KING. JESUS' RESPONSE SHOWS THAT HE REGARDS THE SPIRITUAL MORE HIGHLY THAN THE PHYSICAL. THROUGHOUT HIS GOSPEL, JOHN MAKES THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL. THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE STILL FAVOR THE PHYSICAL OVER THE SPIRITUAL. THIS MIRACLE CAN BE RELATED TO THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF JESUS. JESUS COULD HAVE FED PEOPLE REGULARLY IF HE HAD CHOSEN. THIS IS WHAT SATAN HAD TEMPTED HIM TO DO. JESUS DID IT HERE BECAUSE THE PEOPLE NEEDED FOOD, AND THE DISCIPLES NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND BOTH HIS POWER AND THE NATURE OF MANKIND.

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT OUR MOTIVATIONS. WHY DO WE LOVE AND SERVE JESUS? IS IT FOR WHAT WE GET? DO WE TRY TO MOLD HIM INTO OUR IMAGE? THAT IS WHAT THE PEOPLE DID. THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A MESSIAH THAT FIT THEIR DESIRES AND DESIGN.

II. JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA: THE FIFTH SIGN 6:16-21

THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL STORY THAT A FISHERMAN WOULD TREASURE FOREVER. JOHN SAYS THEY ROWED ABOUT

THREE OR FOUR MILES. WILLIAM BARCLAY POINTS OUT THAT THE CONTEXT TELLS US THAT THIS WAS THE PASSOVER SEASON, AND THE PASSOVER SEASON WAS THE TIME OF THE FULL MOON. THE MOON WOULD HAVE BEEN A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT AS IT LIT UP THE SEA AND REFLECTED ALL THE SHADOWS. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 1, P. 211.)

THEY SEE JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER. EVIDENTLY IT WAS AN EERIE FEELING SEEING HIM WALK ON THE WATER AND THEN HAVING HIM CALL TO THEM. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN GREEK IS NOT AS CLEAR HERE AS IN MARK'S ACCOUNT. IN MARK THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE MEANING, MARK 6:46 - 51. MARK SAYS THEY WERE IN THE SEA AND JESUS WALKED ON THE WATER TO THEM. WHY ISN'T JOHN MORE CLEAR? THE ANSWER TO THAT GOES BACK TO THE REASONS JOHN WROTE THE GOSPEL. HE IS COMPARING EARLY FORMS OF GNOSTIC TEACHING, AND THE GNOSTICS VIEWED JESUS AS A GHOST-LIKE PERSON. THIS WAS NECESSARY TO THEIR PHILOSOPHY SINCE THEY CONSIDERED ALL MATERIAL THINGS EVIL.

THE DISCIPLES ARE IN THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT WITHOUT JESUS. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN THIS DARKNESS IN CHAPTER 1 IN THE PROLOGUE AND IN CHAPTER 3 IN THE STORY OF NICODEMUS. HERE THEY ARE IN THE DARKNESS BECAUSE "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD" IS NOT WITH THEM.

THE DISCIPLES WERE CONSTANTLY WITH JESUS FROM THEIR CALL UNTIL THE ASCENSION, AND THEY TELL US IN THE

GOSPELS THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING SUPERHUMAN AND AWESOME IN HIS BEING. PETER ONCE FELL DOWN BEFORE HIM AND CRIED, "DEPART FROM ME FOR I AM A SINFUL MAN." WHEN WE LOOK AT JESUS THERE IS ALWAYS THAT INDESCRIBABLE AND INDEFINABLE PART OF HIM THAT DEFIES OUR UNDERSTANDING.

III. JESUS TEACHES THE WORK OF GOD IS TO BELIEVE ON HIM:

THE FOURTH DISCOURSE 6:22 - 32

VERSE 23 SAYS THAT BOATS PUT IN NEAR THE PLACE OF THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND. THE CROWDS EVIDENTLY GET ON THESE BOATS AND GO TO CAPERNAUM LOOKING FOR JESUS. CAPERNAUM HAS BEEN HIS HEADQUARTERS FOR SOMETIME. WHEN THEY FIND JESUS THEY ASK HIM HOW HE GOT THERE. HE ANSWERS BY QUESTIONING THEIR MOTIVES. HE GIVES THEM A WARNING ABOUT SEEKING ONLY THE TEMPORAL AND NEGLECTING THE ETERNAL. THIS IS ANOTHER OF JOHN'S CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

IN VERSE 27, THERE IS AN INTERESTING PHRASE "FOR HIM HATH GOD THE FATHER SEALED." THE WORD "SEALED" OCCURS MANY TIMES IN THE BIBLE. THE WORD "SEAL" BASICALLY HAS THE SAME MEANING TODAY THAT IT HAD IN JOHN'S GOSPEL. WE SAY THAT A PRODUCT HAS THE "GOOD HOUSEKEEPING" SEAL. WE MEAN THAT IT HAS THEIR APPROVAL AS A GOOD PRODUCT. I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THE WORD "SEAL". I WAS VERY SMALL AND MY GRANDMOTHER WAS CANNING VEGETABLES. THE EXTREMELY HOT JARS WERE ON A TABLE. SHE LET THEM

COOL AND I ASKED HER WHAT SHE WAS DOING. SHE SAID SHE WAS LETTING THEM SEAL. THEN THEY BEGAN TO POP. SHE TOLD ME THAT THE SOUND MEANT THEY WERE SEALED AND NOW THEY WOULD NOT SPOIL BECAUSE THE AIR COULD NOT GET INTO THE JARS. SO SEAL ALSO MEANS TO KEEP PURE.

IN ANCIENT TIMES THE SEAL MEANT OWNERSHIP OR AUTHORITY. IT WAS USED ON DOCUMENTS TO SHOW THEIR AUTHENTICITY. THE SEAL ALSO GUARANTEED THE CONTENTS OF SOMETHING. A SEAL WAS A SIGNATURE OR SYMBOL CARVED ON THE TOP OF A RING. HOT WAX WAS POURED OUT AND AS IT COOLED THE SEAL WAS IMPRINTED IN THE WAX. THEN WHEN THE WAX COOLED IT LEFT A FIRM IMPRESSION. I HAVE SEEN SEVERAL OF THESE SIGNET RINGS DATING BEFORE CHRIST. THEY BELONGED TO A FRIEND OF MINE WHO HAS A VALUABLE COLLECTION OF ANCIENT RINGS AND LAMPS. HE IS ALSO THE MAN WHO DESIGNED THE REPLICA OF AARON'S BREASTPLATE WHICH IS ON EXHIBIT AT GREEN LAKE, WISC.

WILLIAM BARCLAY SAYS THE RABBIS HAD A SAYING: "THE SEAL OF GOD IS TRUTH." TRUTH IN HEBREW IS SPELLED WITH THREE LETTERS, THE FIRST, THE MIDDLE AND THE LAST LETTERS OF THEIR ALPHABET. THEY INTENDED TO SIGNIFY BY THE SPELLING THAT GOD IS THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE AND THE END OF LIFE. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 1, P. 217.) THIS CERTAINLY SHOWS THE TRUTH OF JESUS' STATEMENT, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE." "I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA." JESUS WAS SEALED BY GOD. MOST PEOPLE THINK THAT THIS

WAS AT JESUS' BAPTISM WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDED UPON HIM. IT COULD HAVE BEEN AT HIS CONCEPTION.

IN VERSES 28 - 32 THE PEOPLE ASK HIM WHAT THEY NEED TO DO TO DO GOD'S WORKS AND FIND HIS FAVOR. THEY USED THE WORD "WORKS," PLURAL, BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT IN TERMS OF WORKING FOR SALVATION. THEY HAD NO CONCEPT OF GRACE AS A GIFT. JESUS ANSWERS IN THE SINGULAR "WORK OF GOD". NOTICE THAT "TO BELIEVE" IS THE WORK OF GOD. BELIEVING IS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH ALL ELSE BUILDS. THEY ARE SPEAKING ABOUT THE EXTERIOR PERSON. HE IS SPEAKING ABOUT THE INNER PERSON. THE STRENGTH WITHIN ALWAYS DETERMINES THE STRENGTH WITHOUT.

THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT HE IS MAKING A MESSIANIC CLAIM. SO THEY WANT TO SEE A SIGN. THESE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE WHO WITNESSED THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND. THEY REMIND HIM OF THE MANNA IN THE DESERT. THEY SAY THAT MOSES GAVE MANNA TO THEIR FATHERS. THEY ARE TRYING TO MANIPULATE HIM TO FEED THEM JUST LIKE MOSES DID THEIR FOREFATHERS. JESUS REMINDS THEM THAT GOD WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE THEM MANNA, NOT MOSES.

IV. JESUS TEACHES THAT HE IS THE BREAD OF LIFE 6:33-60

THE BACKGROUND FOR THIS SECTION IS THE OLD TESTAMENT. JESUS HAS COMPARED HIMSELF TO THE LADDER THAT JACOB SAW AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE WAY TO GOD; THE BRASS

SERPENT AS THE SAVIOR OF MEN, AND NOW AS THE MANNA FROM HEAVEN TO FEED THE HUNGRY HEART OF HUMANITY.

IN VERSE 35 WE SEE THE SAME TYPE OF PHRASE THAT HE USED WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL, "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE."

VERSE 37 SHOWS JESUS WELCOMING WITH OPEN ARMS ALL THOSE WHO WILL COME TO HIM.

VERSES 47 - 51 REMINDS US THAT THE MANNA WHICH THE PEOPLE ATE SPOILED IF THEY KEPT IT, AND THE PEOPLE WHO ATE THE MANNA EVENTUALLY DIED. IN CONTRAST THE ETERNAL LIFE WHICH JESUS GIVES, BECAUSE HE IS THE BREAD OF LIFE, LASTS FOREVER.

V. JESUS TEACHES THAT NO ONE COMES TO GOD UNLESS GOD DRAWS HIM 44

THIS TEACHING IS ONE OF THE BASIC FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURE.

**VI. ETERNAL LIFE COMES FROM UNION WITH CHRIST
6:44 - 59**

THIS SECTION REFERS TO THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND LOOKS FORWARD TO THE ATONEMENT IN THE FUTURE. WHEN A SACRIFICE WAS MADE ONLY PART OF THE ANIMAL WAS CONSUMED BY FIRE. PART OF IT WAS GIVEN TO THE PRIESTS AND PART TO THE WORSHIPPERS WHO

BROUGHT IT. THE WORSHIPPERS ATE IT WITH THEIR FAMILY OR FRIENDS. THIS IN ITSELF WAS AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WAS PRESENT AND ACCEPTED THE GIFT. JESUS TOOK THE PASSOVER MEAL AND RELATED IT TO THE PASCHAL SACRIFICE AND THEN TO HIMSELF.

THE SYMBOLISM OF EATING THE BODY AND DRINKING THE BLOOD HAS AN INTERESTING TWIST. ONE OF THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST THE EARLY CHRISTIANS BY THE ROMANS WAS THAT THEY PRACTICED CANNIBALISM. THE BODY OF JESUS REPRESENTS HIS HUMANITY. HE SO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH US THAT SIN PIERCED HIS BODY ON THE CROSS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT LIFE WAS IN THE BLOOD. WHEN A SACRIFICE WAS MADE THE LIFE FLOWED OUT BEFORE GOD.

THERE IS NO LORD'S SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE HE GIVES THE TEACHING BEHIND THE LORD'S SUPPER. JOHN IS SAYING THAT THE LIFE AND PRESENCE OF JESUS AS A DAILY POSSESSION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A MEAL AND IS NOT LIMITED AND CONFINED TO ONE MEAL.

VERSE 58 USES TWO DIFFERENT WORDS FOR "EATING." THE FIRST, "NOT AS YOUR FATHERS ATE" MEANS TO "EAT UNTIL IT IS CONSUMED." THE WORDS "HE THAT EATS THIS BREAD SHALL LIVE FOREVER" MEANS "TO FEED UPON." IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES WE MUST CONSTANTLY FEED UPON JESUS.

VII. JESUS' MESSAGE DIVIDES 6:60-71

IN VERSE 60, THE WORD TRANSLATED "HARD," σκληρος, MEANS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT. THEY UNDERSTOOD, BUT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT. THE PHRASE "MANY ... OF HIS DISCIPLES" DOES NOT REFER TO THE TWELVE, BUT RATHER TO THE LARGER GROUP OF DISCIPLES.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "MURMURING," γογγυζουσιν, FROM γογγυσμος IS AN ONOMATOPOEIC WORD AND SOUNDS LIKE THE MURMURING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

VERSE 65 IS THE CAP STONE OF THIS SECTION. JESUS TELLS THEM THAT NO ONE IS ABLE TO COME TO HIM UNLESS THIS IS GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FATHER. THEIR RESPONSE TO JESUS SHOWS THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN DRAWN BY GOD.

VERSE 66 SAYS MANY OF THEM WALKED NO MORE WITH HIM. HIS POPULARITY DIMINISHES GREATLY. "TO WALK" MEANS "TO LEARN FROM" OR "TO BE IN AGREEMENT WITH." THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS' SCHOOLS WERE CONDUCTED AS THE TEACHER WALKED AND TALKED WITH HIS PUPILS AS THEY LEARNED FROM HIM.

JESUS THEN TURNS TO THE TWELVE AND GIVES THEM THE CHOICE OF FOLLOWING OR LEAVING HIM. JESUS IN THE GREEK ASKS THE QUESTION "ARE YOU ALSO WISHING TO GO AWAY?" HE IS ASKING THEM IF THEY HAVE DOUBTS. PETER ANSWERS, "LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF LIFE ETERNAL."

PETER IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS IN THE BIBLE. HE IS A MAN'S MAN. HE IS HONEST, SINCERE, INTENSE AND COMPLEX. HE IS THE LEADER. HE IS THE ONE JESUS DEPENDS UPON. HE DARES MORE THAN HE CAN DO. HIS REACH ALWAYS EXCEEDS HIS GRASP. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ALL THAT IS HAPPENING, BUT HE FEELS VERY DEEPLY AND HIS LOYALTY IS UNQUESTIONED BY HIMSELF OR ANYONE ELSE UNTIL THE DENIAL. THE DENIAL SEEMS TO BE NECESSARY FOR HIM TO SEE HIMSELF AND HIS ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF DEPENDING UPON GOD. HERE PETER CUTS TO THE CORE OF THE MATTER AND SEES THE TRUTH THAT THERE IS NO WHERE ELSE TO GO. PETER SEES BEYOND THE LOAF AND THE FLOUR AND THE FISH. HE SEES THE HAND OF GOD. HE SEES THE QUALITY OF JESUS' LIFE AND KNOWS THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TO LOOK ANY FURTHER.



JOHN 7

AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLE: THE FIFTH DISCOURSE 7:1 - 52

- I. JESUS' DEBATE WITH HIS BROTHERS 7:1 - 13
- II. JESUS TEACHES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
7:14 - 24
- III. THE MULTITUDES QUESTION WHETHER JESUS IS
THE CHRIST 7:25 - 43
- IV. THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWISH LEADERS 7:44 - 52

I. JESUS' DEBATE WITH HIS BROTHERS 7:1 - 13

IN THIS CHAPTER EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT JESUS. THEY ARE MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT WHO HE IS. THIS CHAPTER RECORDS THESE RESPONSES. HIS BROTHERS CHIDE HIM TO GO TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND DEMONSTRATE HIS POWERS TO THE WORLD, IF HE HAS SUCH POWERS. THIS CHALLENGE HAS A FAMILIAR RING, SIMILAR TO THE TEMPTATIONS. JESUS SAYS TO THEM HIS TIME HAS NOT COME. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE GREEK WORD FOR TIME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE WORD USED HERE, IN VERSE 6, GENERALLY MEANS AN OPPORTUNITY OR THE BEST POSSIBLE TIME. (SPIROS ZODIATES, THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY NEW TESTAMENT. [CHATTANOOGA, TN: AMG PUBLISHERS, 1992] PP. 805 - 806.)

HE SAYS TO HIS BROTHERS, "YOU GO AHEAD AND GO. I CAN'T GO NOW OR I WILL MISS MY OPPORTUNITY." LATER IN THE FEAST HE GOES TO JERUSALEM AND USES THE END OF THE FEAST AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROCLAIM HIS TRUTH IN A DRAMATIC WAY.

IN THIS SECTION, WE SEE DOUBT BY HIS BROTHERS BEFORE THE FEAST, DEBATE WITH THE PHARISEES DURING THE FEAST AND DISCUSSION AMONG THE CROWDS ABOUT WHO HE IS AFTER THE FEAST.

II. JESUS TEACHES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES 7:14-24

VERSE 14 IMPLIES FAR MORE THAN IT SAYS. JESUS HAS BEEN TO THE TEMPLE SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE THIS. JOHN HAS MENTIONED TWO OF THESE TIMES. FIRST, THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE AND SECOND, THE TIME JESUS FINDS THE MAN WHOM HE HAD HEALED AT THE POOL OF BETHSAIDA IN THE TEMPLE GIVING THANKS. THIS TIME JESUS IS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE. EVIDENTLY HIS TEACHING IS PROFOUND, FOR VERSE 15 SAYS THAT THE LEADERS ARE AMAZED AND MARVEL AT HIS TEACHING.

III. THE MULTITUDES QUESTION WHETHER JESUS IS THE CHRIST 7:25-43

IN THIS SECTION, JESUS CONFRONTS THE LEADERS WITH THE FACT THAT THEY WISH TO KILL HIM, BECAUSE HE HEALS ON THE SABBATH. IN VERSES 22 AND 23, JESUS SHOWED THAT

THE LEADERS PRACTICED CIRCUMCISION ON THE SABBATH, WHICH IS MUTILATION OF THE BODY. YET THEY ARE SEEKING TO KILL HIM BECAUSE HE HEALS AND DOES GOOD ON THE SABBATH.

IN VERSES 33-36 JESUS FORETELLS HIS ASCENSION. THIS SECTION RECORDS THE EVENTS OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. THERE WERE SEVEN FEASTS EACH YEAR, THREE OF WHICH WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT. DEUT. 16:16 TELLS ABOUT THESE THREE FEASTS, PASSOVER, PENTECOST, AND TABERNACLES. THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE EVENTS IS SEEN IN THE FACT THAT EVERY ADULT JEWISH MALE WITHIN 15 MILES OF JERUSALEM WAS REQUIRED TO ATTEND THESE THREE FEASTS. THEIR IMPORTANCE IS ALSO SEEN IN THE FACT THAT PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TRIED TO COME TO THESE FEASTS AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES WAS THE MOST POPULAR, JOYOUS AND ELABORATE OF ALL THE JEWISH FESTIVALS. IT LASTED FOR SEVEN DAYS PLUS ONE ADDITIONAL DAY. DURING THIS TIME THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL LIVED IN BOOTHS OR TENT-LIKE AFFAIRS MADE FROM BRANCHES TO COMMEMORATE GOD'S LEADERSHIP IN THEIR LIVES IN THE WILDERNESS AS THEY WERE ON THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE FEAST WAS TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN HOW GOD HAD LED THEM THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, LEV. 23:34-44; DT. 16:13-16; NUM. 29:12-40.

THIS FEAST WAS HELD BEGINNING ON THE 15TH DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH, WHICH IS IN OUR FALL SEPTEMBER-

OCTOBER. Ex. 23:16; 34:22 ALSO TELLS US THAT IT WAS A HARVEST CELEBRATION, THANKING GOD FOR BLESSING THEM WITH SUCCESSFUL CROPS.

EVERY DAY OF THE FEAST THE PEOPLE WERE LED BY THE HIGH PRIEST INTO THE TEMPLE COURTS. THERE THEY ENCIRCLED THE BRAZEN ALTAR WAVING PALMS AND PRAISING GOD. THE HIGH PRIEST TOOK A GOLDEN PITCHER AND LED THE PEOPLE DOWN TO THE POOL OF SILOAM. HE DREW WATER FROM THE POOL AND BROUGHT IT BACK TO THE ALTAR. ON THE WAY THEY PASSED THROUGH THE GATE KNOWN AS THE WATER GATE. AS THEY PASSED THROUGH THE GATE THE PEOPLE BROKE INTO SINGING FROM ISAIAH 12:3, "WITH JOY SHALL YE DRAW WATER FROM THE WELLS OF SALVATION."

ON THEY CAME TO THE GREAT BRAZEN ALTAR IN THE TEMPLE WHERE THE HIGH PRIEST Poured THE WATER ON THE ALTAR AS AN OFFERING TO GOD. AS THE WATER WAS BEING Poured OUT THE TEMPLE CHOIR SANG THE HALLEL, PSALMS 113-118. AS THE CHOIR CAME TO THE DRAMATIC PLACES OF THE PSALMS THE PEOPLE SHOUTED AND WAVED THEIR PALMS. THE JEWISH PEOPLE CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF LACKING ENTHUSIASM IN THEIR FESTIVALS AND WORSHIP. THIS WAS DONE IN MEMORY OF MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK FROM WHICH THE WATER FLOWED IN THE WILDERNESS.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE FEAST THE WHOLE PROCESS WAS REPEATED EXCEPT THIS TIME, THEY MARCHED AROUND THE ALTAR SEVEN TIMES SIGNIFYING THE SEVEN TIMES JOSHUA

MARCHED AROUND JERICO, JOSHUA 6.

IT WAS AT THE MOMENT OF TENSE EXCITEMENT AND DRAMATIC RITUAL WHEN THE HIGH PRIEST WAS READY TO POUR OUT THE WATER ON THE ALTAR THAT JESUS STOOD AND SHOUTED WITH A STRONG VOICE, VERSE 37 - 38, "IF ANYONE THIRST, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK. HE THAT BELIEVES ON ME, AS SAID THE SCRIPTURE, RIVERS OUT OF HIS BELLY SHALL FLOW OF WATER LIVING." (LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK)

IN VERSE 38, HE SAYS THAT LIVING WATERS WILL FLOW FROM HIM. THIS IS THE LIVING WATER HE PROMISED THE WOMAN AT THE WELL. THE GREEK SAYS THE LIVING WATER WILL FLOW FROM THE STOMACH OR THE BELLY. THE STOMACH WAS WHERE THE EMOTIONS WERE BELIEVED TO RESIDE. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE SINCE THE DIAPHRAGM IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE CHEST CAVITY AND THE STOMACH. WHEN YOU GRIEVE WHERE DO YOU HURT? YOU HURT IN YOUR DIAPHRAGM AREA FROM CRYING AND CATCHING YOUR BREATH. JESUS IS SAYING THAT THE STREAMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL CLEANSE THE DEEPEST PART OF A PERSON.

JESUS HAS IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH JACOB'S LADDER WHEN HE TALKS WITH NATHANAEL, WITH THE BRAZEN SERPENT WHEN HE TALKS TO NICODEMUS AND WITH MANKIND WHEN HE GIVES THE BREAD OF LIFE DISCOURSE. HERE HE IDENTIFIES WITH THE ROCK IN THE WILDERNESS FROM WHICH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL RECEIVED LIFE GIVING WATER. (ALEXANDER McCLAREN, EXPOSITIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE:

IN VERSE 39, JOHN SAYS JESUS SPOKE ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS WAS A PROMISE BEFORE PENTECOST. IT IS TRAGIC THAT MANY CHRISTIANS STILL LIVE AS IF PENTECOST IS YET TO COME.

JOHN SAYS JESUS WAS NOT YET GLORIFIED. THERE ARE TWO INSTANCES WHEN JESUS IS SPOKEN OF AS BEING GLORIFIED. ONE IS THE CRUCIFIXION. JESUS SAID, "NOW IS THE HOUR COME THAT THE SON OF MAN IS GLORIFIED." THE OTHER INSTANCE IS THE RESURRECTION.

IV. THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWISH LEADERS 7:44-52

WHEN THE JEWISH LEADERS HEAR THERE IS DIVISION AMONG THE PEOPLE, VERSE 43, THEY SEND THE TEMPLE POLICE TO TAKE JESUS, BUT THEY CAN NOT. WHEN THE PHARISEES ASK THEM WHY THEY HAVE NOT TAKEN JESUS THEY ANSWER, "NO ONE EVER SPOKE THE WAY THIS MAN DOES," VERSE 46.

IN VERSE 51, NICODEMUS OBJECTS TO THE CONDEMNATION AGAINST JESUS WITHOUT A FAIR TRIAL. NICODEMUS HAS MOVED FROM QUESTIONING JESUS TO QUESTIONING THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND PHARISEES. IN JOHN 3, HE HAD COME TO JESUS AT NIGHT SEARCHING FOR LIGHT. JESUS TELLS HIM TO BE BORN AGAIN. IN JOHN 7, HE IS DEFENDING THE TRUTH. IN JOHN 19, NICODEMUS IS IDENTIFYING WITH THE TRUTH. IN VERSE 52, THE PHARISEES TELL NICODEMUS TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURE AND SEE IF A PROPHET COMES FROM GALILEE.

JOHN 8

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: THE SIXTH DISCOURSE

- I. JESUS AND THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY 8:1 - 11
- II. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD 8:12-20
- III. JESUS DEBATES HIS CREDENTIALS 8:21 -59

I. JESUS AND THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY 8:1 - 11

VERSES 1 - 11 FILL US WITH A SENSE OF AWE. SOME PEOPLE READ THIS EVENT, DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT AND WISH IT HAD NOT HAPPENED. OTHER PEOPLE INTERPRET IT AS APPROVAL FOR IMMORAL CONDUCT, WHICH IT IS NOT. THIS INTERPRETATION ALMOST ALWAYS LEAVES OUT THE CONCLUSION WHEN JESUS SAYS, "GO AND SIN NO MORE."

JESUS COMES AT DAWN TO THE TEMPLE, VERSE 2. HE GOES INTO THE COURT OF THE WOMEN, VERSE 20, AND SITS DOWN TO TEACH. IT WAS TRADITIONAL PROTOCOL FOR A RABBI TO SIT WHEN HE GAVE HIS OFFICIAL TEACHING.

WHILE JESUS IS TEACHING A COMMOTION ARISES. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES DRAG A WOMAN BEFORE JESUS. SHE IS THE BAIT FOR THEIR TRAP. THEY ARE SURE THEY HAVE JESUS THIS TIME. THEY TELL HIM THAT SHE HAS BEEN CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY, AND THAT MOSES' LAW SAYS THAT SHE

SHOULD BE STONED, LEV. 20:10, DEUT. 22:13-24. THEN THEY ASK HIM WHAT SHOULD BE DONE. SHE IS EVIDENTLY GUILTY. FROM THE LETTER OF THE LAW THEY ARE CORRECT. HOWEVER, FROM GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE THEY ARE WRONG. THERE IS NOT A SINGLE CASE OF ANYONE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BEING STONED FOR ADULTERY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE ROMANS HAD TAKEN AWAY THE JEWS' AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER THE DEATH PENALTY. THAT IS THE REASON THE JEWISH LEADERS HAD TO BRING JESUS TO THE ROMAN OFFICIALS TO BE CRUCIFIED. IF JESUS SAYS STONE HER HE BREAKS ROMAN LAW, BECAUSE THE JEWISH PEOPLE COULD NOT ADMINISTER THE DEATH PENALTY. IF HE SAYS LET HER GO HE WOULD BE TEACHING THEM TO BREAK THE LAW OF MOSES. THEY ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE TRAP IS SET. JESUS HAS NO WAY OUT.

JESUS STOOPS DOWN AND WRITES ON THE GROUND. THEY THINK THEY HAVE HIM, AND AS THE GREEK IMPLIES THEY CONTINUALLY TO PRESS HIM FOR AN ANSWER. ARTHUR PINK HAS SOME CLASSIC STATEMENTS ABOUT THIS PASSAGE. HE SAYS JESUS, BY STOOPING DOWN AND WRITING WITH HIS FINGER WAS SAYING IN SYMBOLIC ACTION, "YOU REMIND ME OF THE LAW! WHY, IT WAS MY FINGER WHICH WROTE THAT LAW!" (EX. 31:18) (PINK, *OP. CIT.*, VOL. 2, P. 14.) WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE WROTE EXCEPT THAT THE WORD TRANSLATED "WRITE" MEANS TO WRITE AGAINST SOMEONE. (BARCLAY, *OP. CIT.*, VOL. 2, P. 14.) IT LOOKS AS IF HE WROTE THE SECRET SINS OF THE MEN WHO WERE STANDING THERE.

THEN HE STOOD AND GAVE HIS TEACHING. IN ESSENCE HE SAID, "YOU HAVE THE LAW, STONE HER, BUT LET HIM WHO IS WITHOUT SIN CAST THE FIRST STONE." THEN HE BENT DOWN AND STARTED TO WRITE AGAIN. HIS WRITING IS ALMOST LIKE THE HAND WROTE JUDGEMENT UPON THE WALL OF BELSHAZZAR'S PALACE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL. WHATEVER HE WROTE IT MADE THEM FEEL LIKE THEY WERE STARING GOD EYEBALL TO EYEBALL.

THE SOUND OF SILENCE WAS AWESOME. GOD'S SPOTLIGHT WAS ON EVERY SOUL. THEY LEFT FROM THE ELDEST TO THE YOUNGEST. THEY WERE DWARFED BY THEIR OWN FRAUD. THE OLDER A PERSON IS AND THE MORE EXPERIENCE HE HAS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE AND WITH HIMSELF THE MORE HE RECOGNIZES HIS POTENTIAL SINS. GOETHE WROTE, "ONE NEED ONLY GROW OLD TO BECOME GENTLER IN ONE'S JUDGMENT. I SEE NO FAULT COMMITTED WHICH I COULD NOT HAVE COMMITTED MYSELF."

JESUS GOT UP AND THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES WERE GONE. ONLY JESUS AND THE WOMAN WERE LEFT. THAT IS THE WAY IT WILL BE SOMEDAY, JUST YOU AND JESUS.

THE STORY IS OPEN-ENDED, BECAUSE THE FINAL JUDGMENT HAS NOT COME. WE ARE REMINDED OF JOHN 1:17, "FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES, BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST."

ARTHUR PINK ADDS FORCE TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS SCRIPTURE. HOWEVER, LET ME WARN YOU, DO NOT READ INTO A SCRIPTURE MORE THAN IS THERE AND DO NOT LEAVE OUT WHAT IS THERE. PINK SAYS THAT THIS ILLUSTRATES JESUS' LABELING OF THE NATION ISRAEL AS "AN EVIL AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION," MATT 12:37. THE JEWISH LEADERS REPRESENTED THE NATION. THEY WERE ACCORDING TO THE PROPHETS THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE OF YAHWEH. IN STOOPING DOWN AND WRITING IN THE DUST HE MINGLED THE DUST WITH THE WORD. "HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM FIRST CAST A STONE AT HER." JOHN 8:7. THIS WAS BITTER TO THE PROUD SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. THEIR STRENGTH WITHERED AND THUS PROVED THEIR UNFAITHFULNESS. (PINK, OP. CIT., PP. 19-21.)

II. JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD 8:12-20

THIS SCENE TAKES PLACE IN THE COURT OF THE WOMEN. AGAINST THE WALLS OF THE PORCHES AROUND THE COURT YARD WERE THIRTEEN TREASURE CHESTS SHAPED LIKE TRUMPETS AND CALLED TRUMPETS. THE HALF SHEKEL REQUIRED OF EVERY JEWISH MALE FOR THE UPKEEP OF THE TEMPLE WAS PLACED IN THE FIRST TWO CHESTS. THE COST OF TWO PIGEONS WHICH A WOMAN HAD TO SACRIFICE AFTER THE BIRTH OF A CHILD, LEV.12:8 WAS PLACED IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH CHESTS. OFFERINGS FOR THE COST OF THE WOOD WHICH KEPT THE ALTAR FIRE BURNING WERE PLACED IN THE FIFTH CHEST. OFFERINGS FOR THE INCENSE USED AT THE TEMPLE SERVICE WERE PLACED IN THE SIXTH CHEST. OFFERINGS FOR THE UPKEEP OF THE

GOLDEN VESSELS WERE PLACED IN THE SEVENTH CHEST. OFFERINGS FOR GENERAL USAGE IN THE TEMPLE WERE PLACED IN THE OTHER SIX CHESTS. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL 2, P.12).

WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH TIME OCCURS BETWEEN VERSES 11 AND 12, BUT IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO PLACE THIS SECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. ON THE NIGHT OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST FOUR GREAT CANDELABRAS WERE LIT IN THE COURT OF THE WOMEN AS A REMINDER OF THE PILLAR OF FIRE THAT GUIDED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS AT NIGHT. (MOFFATT, OP. CIT., P. 192 AND BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 12). IT IS SAID THAT THESE CANDELABRAS WERE SO BRIGHT THEY LIT UP MANY PARTS OF THE CITY. ALL NIGHT LONG THE BEST MEN OF ISRAEL DANCED BEFORE THE LORD IN PRAISE AND SANG PSALMS AND HYMNS.

IN VERSE 12, JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. THE ONE WHO FOLLOWS ME IN NO WISE SHALL WALK IN THE DARKNESS BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF THE LIFE." HERE JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH THE PILLAR OF FIRE, THE LIGHT FOR ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS. THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THE SYMBOLIC IDENTIFICATIONS THAT JESUS MAKES WITH OLD TESTAMENT REALITIES. THIS IS ALSO THE SECOND OF THE GREAT "I AM" SAYINGS. THE STATEMENT IS ALSO MESSIANIC, FOR ISAIAH 42:6 SPEAKS OF THE MESSIAH AS BEING FOR A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES. IN SCRIPTURE, GOD IS LIGHT, JOHN 4:24, I JOHN 1:5, 4:8, Ps. 27:1, Is. 60:19, JOHN 29:3, AND

MICAH 7:8. IN JOHN 12:46, WE SEE THAT JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF MORAL LIGHT; HE ALSO GIVES SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE.

IN 8:12 THE WORD TRANSLATED "FOLLOW" IS USED IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS. IT OFTEN MEANS A SOLDIER FOLLOWING HIS CAPTAIN OR A SLAVE HIS MASTER. IT CAN ALSO MEAN GIVING OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF A CITY OF STATE OR IT CAN BE USED ABOUT A PUPIL FOLLOWING THE TEACHER'S TREND OF THOUGHT. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 14.) THE JEWISH LEADERS KNOW WHAT HE IS SAYING, BUT THEY DENY IT.

III. JESUS DEBATES HIS CREDENTIALS 8:21 - 59

JESUS' STATEMENT IN VERSE 22 CAUSES THEM TO WONDER IF HE WILL COMMIT SUICIDE. THEY BELIEVED THAT THE LOWEST PLACE OF THE DEAD WAS RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE. JESUS SHOWS IN VERSE 23 THAT HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY WERE SAYING, AND HE SAYS THEY WERE FROM BENEATH AND HE WAS FROM ABOVE. HE SAYS THEY WERE OF THE WORLD, BUT HE WAS NOT OF THE WORLD, VERSE 23. THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORLD" OCCURS ABOUT 95 TIMES IN JOHN. THE IDEA BEHIND THE WORD WORLD AS JOHN USES IT MEANS OPPOSITE OR OPPOSED TO ALL THAT IS FROM GOD. GOD WAS THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD; HE LOVES THE WORLD, BUT THE WORLD IS SEPARATED FROM HIM AND DOES NOT KNOW HIM.

IN VERSES 31 - 32, JOHN GIVES AN ORDER FOR DISCIPLESHIP: 1. BELIEVE, 2. CONTINUE IN THE WORD, 3. KNOW, 4. BE

FREE, FREE FROM UNBELIEF, FREE FROM IGNORANCE OF THE WORD, FREE FROM SIN.

IN VERSE 33, THE PHARISEES' STATEMENT THAT THEY ARE FREE REFLECTS THEIR PROUD INDEPENDENT SPIRIT WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE JEWS, BUT IT WAS ALSO A LIE, BECAUSE THEIR HISTORY SHOWS THEY HAD BEEN CONSTANTLY IN BONDAGE, AND THEY WERE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME IN BONDAGE TO ROME. JESUS IS SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION AND SAYS, "WHOSOEVER COMMITTED SIN IS A SLAVE TO SIN."

VERSE 35 REFERS TO THEIR FALSE BELIEF THAT BECAUSE THEY WERE DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM THEY HAD AN EXCLUSIVE, PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. JESUS POINTS OUT THAT THEY WERE SLAVES NOT SONS AND GOD COULD EXPEL THEM AT ANY TIME. SOMEONE HAS CORRECTLY SAID THAT GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN ONLY CHILDREN.

JESUS TELLS THEM THEIR REAL FATHER IS THE DEVIL. THE DEVIL IS THE FATHER OF DECEPTION AND DEATH.

IN VERSES 56 - 59, JESUS TELLS THEM THAT ABRAHAM REJOICED TO SEE HIS DAY, GEN 12:3. THE JEWS BELIEVED THAT ABRAHAM HAD ALREADY SEEN THE DAY OF THE MESSIAH. THEY ANSWER JESUS BY INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF HIS STATEMENT DIFFERENTLY THAN THE WAY HE USED IT. WE HAVE SEEN THAT SEVERAL TIMES IN JOHN. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN JESUS SPOKE WITH NICODEMUS ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH, NICODEMUS

ANSWERED FROM THE PHYSICAL RATHER THAN THE SPIRITUAL LEVEL. SO DID THE WOMAN AT THE WELL. SHE SPEAKS OF PHYSICAL WATER AND JESUS SPEAKS OF SPIRITUAL WATER. THE PHARISEES DO IT HERE. THEY ANSWER, "WHY, YOU ARE NOT EVEN OLD ENOUGH TO RETIRE AND YOU CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN ABRAHAM." THE LEVITES RETIRED AT FIFTY YEARS OF AGE, SO THE PHARISEES ARE REFERRING TO JESUS AS A YOUNG MAN.

JESUS ANSWERS THEM WITH AN "I AM" STATEMENT WHICH IS THE NAME GOD USED OF HIMSELF WHEN MOSES ASKED GOD WHOM HE SHOULD TELL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD SENT HIM.

CHAPTER 8 BEGINS IN THE DARKNESS OF SIN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHAPTER JESUS SAYS HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH THE PHARISEES REFUSING TO BELIEVE. THIS EVENT EITHER TAKES PLACE AS THE GREAT CANDELABRA LAMPS WERE LIT IN THE TEMPLE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES OR ELSE IT TOOK PLACE, AS THE CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF JOHN WOULD INDICATE, AFTER THE GREAT LAMPS HAD BEEN EXTINGUISHED. THE LATTER WOULD SYMBOLIZE THAT THE LIGHT OF GOD'S SHEKINAH GLORY HAD GONE OUT OF ISRAEL.

CHAPTER NINE IS THE PROOF THAT JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

JOHN 9

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND: THE SIXTH SIGN 9:1 - 41

- I. THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION OF BLINDNESS AND SIN
9:1 - 4
- II. THE MAN BORN BLIND HEALED 9:5 - 7
- III. THE MAN BORN BLIND INTERROGATED 9:8 - 23
- IV. THE MAN BORN BLIND EXCOMMUNICATED
9:24 - 34
- V. THE MAN BORN BLIND BELIEVES 9:35 - 39
- VI. THE BLINDNESS OF THE PHARISEES 9:40 - 41

THIS IS THE SIXTH GREAT SIGN THAT OCCURS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL TO SHOW THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD. IN CHAPTER 8, JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." IN THIS CHAPTER HE DEMONSTRATES THIS REALITY BY GIVING SIGHT TO A MAN WHO HAS NEVER EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL LIGHT IN HIS EYES. IN THE PROCESS JESUS ALSO GIVES HIM SPIRITUAL LIGHT AND INSIGHT. THIS IS ANOTHER CASE IN JOHN WHERE A SPIRITUAL TEACHING IS FOLLOWED BY A PHYSICAL MIRACLE TO ADD IMPACT TO THE TRUTH. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE IS NO RECORD OF A BLIND PERSON BEING HEALED. AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THERE IS NO RECORD OF ANYONE BEING HEALED OF BLINDNESS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ISAIAH CONNECTS THE MESSIANIC AGE AND THE RECEIVING OF SIGHT. JOHN PLACES THE MIRACLE HERE TO SHOW THAT JESUS IS THE

MESSIAH. SINCE THIS MAN WAS BORN BLIND THIS MIRACLE IS MORE THAN HEALING; IT IS CREATION. THE DISCIPLES MUST KNOW ABOUT THIS MAN, FOR THEY KNOW THAT HE WAS BORN BLIND.

THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS AN AGE OLD QUESTION, DID THIS MAN SIN OR WAS IT HIS PARENTS? THE JEWS CONNECTED INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL SUFFERING WITH INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL SIN. WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS QUESTION, BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE IN OUR CULTURE THE IDEA THAT PERSONAL SUFFERING IS ALWAYS CONNECTED WITH SIN. EVEN THE BOOK OF JOB DID NOT HELP THEM GET RID OF THIS IDEA. ONE OF THE ISSUES THAT THE BOOK OF JOB ADDRESSES IS THAT PHYSICAL SUFFERING IS NOT NECESSARILY CONNECTED WITH SIN. THE QUESTION THE DISCIPLES ASKED ABOUT SIN AS THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING IS IN A WAY RELEVANT, BECAUSE SIN AT THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY BROUGHT SUFFERING. SUFFERING IS UNIVERSAL, NOT PARTICULAR. THE PROBLEM WAS THE DISCIPLES, AS DID THE FRIENDS OF JOB HAD DONE; THEY MADE THIS APPLY TO A PARTICULAR CASE. I ONCE SAW A PEANUTS CARTOON THAT SUMMED UP THE PROBLEM. LINUS HAS A SLIVER IN HIS FINGER AND IS SHOWING IT TO HIS FRIEND WHEN LUCY COMES UP AND SAYS, "I KNOW ALL ABOUT MATTERS LIKE THAT; YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING VERY EVIL AND YOU ARE NOW SUFFERING FOR IT." ABOUT THAT TIME LINUS SAYS, "IT'S GONE; IT JUST POPPED OUT," AND CHARLIE BROWN SAID, "THUS ENDS OUR THEOLOGICAL LESSON FOR TODAY."

IN THIS SECTION, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD GIVES SIGHT TO A MAN IN PERPETUAL NIGHT. THIS EVENT COULD BE HOMILETICALLY OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. THE HEALING 9:1 - 7**
- 2. THE HEATED CONTROVERSY 9:8 - 34**
- 3. THE HEART FELT CONVERSION 9:35 - 41**

IN VERSE 6, JESUS BEGAN HIS PROCESS OF CREATING SIGHT. HE APPLIES CLAY TO THE BLIND EYES AND COMMANDS THE MAN TO GO WASH IN THE POOL OF SILOAM. THE MAN MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO OBEY. HE GOES TO THE POOL BLIND AND COMES AWAY SEEING. THOSE WHO REALIZE THAT THE MAN CAN SEE DEBATE WHETHER THIS IS THE SAME MAN OR SOMEONE ELSE. THE MAN DECLARES THAT HE IS THE SAME PERSON WHO WAS BLIND BUT NOW CAN SEE, BECAUSE HE WAS HEALED BY A MAN NAMED JESUS. THESE PEOPLE SCURRY THE BLIND MAN OFF TO THE PHARISEES, AND THE PHARISEES QUESTION HIM. THE PROBLEM FOR THE PHARISEES IS IN VERSE 14. JESUS HAD MADE THE CLAY OUT OF DUST AND SALIVA ON THE SABBATH DAY. THE PHARISEES CANNOT DENY THAT THE MAN WAS BLIND AND THAT NOW HE CAN SEE, BUT THEY CHARGE THAT JESUS IS A SABBATH BREAKER. HE CANNOT BE FROM GOD. THE PHARISEES WANT TO PROVE THAT THE MAN HAD NEVER BEEN BLIND; SO, THEY CALL HIS PARENTS AS WITNESSES. THE PARENTS FEAR EXCOMMUNICATION WHICH MEANS DEVASTATING RESULTS FOR THEIR PERSONAL AND BUSINESS LIVES. PRIDE BLINDS THE SPIRITUAL EYES OF THE PHARISEES; THEY CANNOT RECEIVE SPIRITUAL SIGHT BECAUSE THEY CANNOT ACCEPT JESUS.

JOHN 10

THE GOOD SHEPHERD: THE SEVENTH DISCOURSE

- I. JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD 10:1 - 6**
- II. JESUS THE DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD 10:7 - 21**
- III. JESUS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD 10:22 - 42**

I. JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD 10:1 - 6

CHAPTER 10 MUST BE LOOKED AT IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE EVENTS THAT HAVE COME BEFORE THIS. IN CHAPTER 9, JESUS PUTS CLAY ON THE EYES OF THE MAN BORN BLIND AND TELLS HIM TO GO WASH IN THE POOL OF SILOAM. HE WASHES AND SEES FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE. THE PEOPLE WHO ASK HIM HOW HE RECEIVED HIS SIGHT TAKE HIM TO THE PHARISEES. A CONFRONTATION FOLLOWS WITH THE PHARISEES, AND THEY EXCOMMUNICATE THE MAN FROM THE SYNAGOGUE. THEN THERE IS A CONFRONTATION WITH JESUS ABOUT THEIR BLINDNESS.

THIS CHAPTER MAY BE A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 9 WITH THE PHARISEES OR IT MAY BE ANOTHER TIME AND JOHN INSERTS IT HERE BECAUSE IT FITS WITH THE THEOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF HIS MATERIAL.

IF THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION WITH THE

PHARISEES, JESUS IS TELLING THEM THAT THEY ARE SCATTERING THE SHEEP AS EVIDENCED BY THIS MAN HEARING JESUS' VOICE AND THE PHARISEES EXCOMMUNICATING HIM.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL OF JOHN, JESUS HAS COMPARED HIMSELF TO THE LADDER FROM HEAVEN WHICH JACOB SAW, THE MANNA WHICH THE PEOPLE ATE IN THE WILDERNESS, THE ROCK WHICH GAVE THE WATER IN THE WILDERNESS, THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, AND OTHER DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS. NOW HE SAYS HE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE DOOR TO SALVATION.

THE FIRST PART OF CHAPTER 10 MAY BE DESCRIBED AS A PARABLE. THERE ARE THREE PICTURES IN THIS PARABLE. IN EACH PICTURE THE TIME OF DAY, THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE APPLICATION ARE DIFFERENT.

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL THE PICTURES OF JESUS. THE SHEPHERD WAS A COMMON SIGHT IN PALESTINE. JUDEA WAS ROUGH AND ROCKY, WITH FLOCKS OF SHEEP SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE HILLS. THE LIFE OF A SHEPHERD WAS TOUGH. HE HAD TO BE CONSTANTLY ON WATCH FOR SHARP CLIFFS AND WILD ANIMALS LOOKING FOR PREY. CENTURIES BEFORE THIS, JUST BEFORE HE FOUGHT THE GIANT GOLIATH, DAVID TOLD SAUL THAT HE HAD FOUGHT OFF A BEAR AND A LION WHILE WATCHING HIS FATHER'S SHEEP. SHEPHERDS ALSO FACED THE DANGER OF ROBBERS, FOR SHEEP WERE WORTH MONEY. THIS MEANT THAT THE SHEPHERD SOMETIMES HAD TO RISK HIS LIFE. THERE ARE

REPORTS OF SHEPHERDS BEING KILLED BY ROBBERS DEFENDING THEIR SHEEP. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 70.)

THE SHEPHERD HAD TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON. IN ISRAEL THE GREAT PATRIARCHS HAD BEEN SHEPHERDS. THEIR LAW GIVER AND LEADER MOSES WAS A SHEPHERD, EX. 2:16-17; 3:1. JACOB WAS A SHEPHERD, GEN. 30:31, 38-40. SO WAS HIS SON JOSEPH, GEN. 37:2. AND THEIR GREAT KING DAVID WAS A SHEPHERD BOY. WE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT DAVID WAS SOME LITTLE BOY WHO PLAYED IN THE MEADOWS WHILE THE SHEEP WANDERED AROUND. HE WAS A YOUNG MAN WITH A VERY RESPONSIBLE JOB. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT AT JESUS' BIRTH THE SHEPHERDS WERE THE FIRST TO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE.

IN JUDEA THE SHEEP WERE KEPT MOSTLY FOR THEIR WOOL RATHER THAN FOR MEAT; THEREFORE, A SHEEP MIGHT BE WITH A SHEPHERD FOR YEARS. THE IDEA OF A SHEPHERD IS A PICTURE OF A KIND, BRAVE, STRONG, RESPONSIBLE PERSON.

GOD IS PICTURED IN SCRIPTURE AS THE SHEPHERD, PS. 23; GEN. 49:24; AND ISAIAH 40:11 SPEAKS OF THE MESSIAH AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD. THE IDEA OF JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD OCCURS OFTEN IN SCRIPTURE, MATT. 19:12; LK. 15:4; MATT. 9:36; LK. 12:32; MARK 14:27; MATT. 26:31; 1 PETER 2:25; HEB. 13:20. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P.62-63.)

THIS IS A MORNING SCENE. IN THE VILLAGES THERE WERE

CONTROL SHEEP FOLDS WHERE SHEPHERDS TOOK THEIR SHEEP AND THEN WENT TO THEIR HOMES OR IF THEY WERE IN A STRANGE VILLAGE TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE TO SLEEP. THE FOLD WAS SURROUNDED BY HIGH WALLS AND ONE OPENING. A KEEPER, CALLED A PORTER IN THE KING JAMES VERSION, GUARDED THE OPENING WHICH WAS THE DOOR. HE KNEW THE INDIVIDUAL SHEPHERDS AND ONLY ADMITTED THEM TO THE FOLD. THE FLOCKS WERE ALL MIXED TOGETHER IN THE ONE FOLD. WHEN THE MORNING CAME THE SHEPHERDS STOOD AT DIFFERENT PLACES AND CALLED THE SHEEP OUT OF THE FOLD. THE SHEEP WOULD GO ONLY TO THEIR SHEPHERD, BECAUSE THEY KNEW HIS VOICE. THEY WOULD NOT FOLLOW A STRANGE VOICE. I HAVE KNOWN PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN SHEPHERDS CALL THEIR SHEEP LIKE THIS. ELROY HIBB, A FRIEND OF MINE, WHO IS NOW DECEASED, HAD BEEN IN ISRAEL MANY TIMES AND TOLD ME ABOUT SEEING THIS VERY THING HAPPEN. AS WE HAVE SEEN IN CHAPTER 9, THE BLIND MAN HEARS JESUS' VOICE AND FOLLOWS HIM, BECAUSE HE IS ONE OF HIS SHEEP. JESUS ALSO CALLS HIS OTHER SHEEP, ANDREW AND JOHN: "FOLLOW ME AND I WILL MAKE YOU TO BECOME FISHERS OF MEN." MATTHEW, "FOLLOW ME." ZACCHAEUS "COME DOWN, I MUST ABIDE WITH YOU." LAZARUS, "COME FORTH." IN THE GARDEN, "MARY," AND SHE IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED HIM. (PINK, OP.CIT., P. 107). THEY KNOW HIS VOICE. DO WE KNOW HIS VOICE?

II. JESUS THE DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD 10:7-21

VERSES 7 - 10 IS THE SECOND SCENE. WHEN SHEPHERDS WERE GRAZING THEIR SHEEP AND IT WAS TOO FAR TO RETURN

TO THE VILLAGE AT NIGHT THEY OFTEN PLACED THE SHEEP IN CAVES AND FOLDS ON THE HILLSIDES. THE SHEPHERD WOULD SIT IN THE DOORWAY AND ANY WILD ANIMAL HAD TO GET ACROSS HIM TO GET TO THE SHEEP. HE MIGHT EVEN TAKE THEM TO THE CAVE OR FOLD AT NOONTIME, AND THEY COULD GO OUT AND IN WITH FREEDOM. THEY WERE SAFE, BECAUSE THEY WERE PROTECTED BY THEIR SHEPHERD.

VERSE 8 PROBABLY REFERS TO ALL THE FALSE MESSIAHS THAT HAD ATTEMPTED TO DECEIVE ISRAEL. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THIS VERSE REFERS TO THE PROPHETS BEFORE JESUS AND IS A LITERARY SAYING SIMILAR TO WHEN JESUS SAID, "HE THAT COMETH AFTER ME MUST HATE FATHER AND MOTHER, BROTHER AND SISTER." OTHER SCHOLARS THINK THAT IT REFERS TO THE PHARISEES AND JEWISH LEADERS.

VERSE 10 IS A FAVORITE OF MANY PEOPLE. NOTICE JOHN'S USE OF THE PHRASE, "I AM." ALSO NOTICE JOHN'S CONCEPT OF "LIFE." JOHN BELIEVES THAT A PERSON HAS LIFE ONLY IF HE HAS JESUS. THE KING JAMES VERSION SAYS, "... THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY." THE GREEK DOES NOT HAVE THE WORD "MORE." IT SAYS LITERALLY, "I CAME THAT LIFE THEY MIGHT HAVE AND ABUNDANTLY MIGHT HAVE." THE MEANING IS THERE IS NO ABUNDANT LIFE WITHOUT JESUS, ONLY EXISTANCE.

VERSES 11 - 18 IS THE THIRD SCENE. IN THESE VERSES JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD." THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE SHEEP IN THE FIELD AND THE SHEPHERD PROTECTING

THE SHEEP. IN GREEK THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WORD FOR GOOD. THE WORD USED HERE FOR GOOD MEANS GOOD MORAL CHARACTER. IT ALSO MEANS ATTRACTIVE, WINSOME AND BEAUTIFUL.

IN THIS SECTION, JESUS SAYS, “AND MY LIFE I LAY DOWN FOR THE SHEEP.” THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP WERE BOTH IN DANGER FROM ROBBERS AND WILD ANIMALS. IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO A SHEEP THE SHEPHERD WAS REQUIRED TO GIVE EVIDENCE THAT HE TRIED TO PREVENT THE KILLING OR STEALING OF THE SHEEP. AMOS 3:12 AND EXODUS 22:13 SPEAK OF THE EVIDENCE THAT A SHEPHERD HAD TO PRESENT. HE HAD TO SHOW THAT HE HAD PUT UP A STRUGGLE TO PROTECT THE SHEEP. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 70). JESUS IN HIS STATEMENT IS REFERRING TO THE CROSS.

VERSE 16 IN THE GREEK READS, “AND OTHER SHEEP I HAVE, WHICH ARE NOT OF THIS FOLD; THOSE ALSO IT BEHOOVES ME TO BRING, AND MY VOICE THEY WILL HEAR; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING THE KING JAMES VERSION, THE WORD “FLOCK” IN THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE IS INCORRECTLY TRANSLATED “FOLD”. THE WORD FOLD GOES BACK TO THE VULGATE, AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS PRETTY MUCH BUILT ITS THEOLOGY ON THE WORD “FOLD,” THAT OUTSIDE THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH THERE IS NO SALVATION. (IBID., VOL. 2, P. 75)

VERSE 16 IS AN ALLEGORY. THE QUESTION IS WHAT THE

WORDS FLOCK AND FOLD REPRESENT. THE FLOCK MEANS THE REDEEMED PEOPLE OF GOD. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST WORD FOLD MEANS ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES WHO WOULD BELIEVE ARE THE OTHER SHEEP.

III. JESUS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD 10:22-42

VERSE 22 SPEAKS OF THE FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION OR AS IT IS ALSO CALLED, THE FEAST OF LIGHTS. TODAY IT IS CALLED HANUKKAH. IT IS CELEBRATED IN DECEMBER NEAR OUR CHRISTMAS. IT CELEBRATES THE PURIFICATION AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN 164 B.C. IN 170 B.C. ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES, A SYRIAN RULER, OFFERED A PIG ON THE ALTAR AS PART OF HIS CAMPAIGN TO STAMP OUT JUDAISM. (IBID., VOL.2 P. 81). THE MACABEES FAMILY FREED ISRAEL FROM SYRIA IN 164 B.C. AND REINSTITUTED TEMPLE WORSHIP.

IN THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE IT IS WINTER, PERHAPS SIGNIFYING THE COLDNESS WHICH THE PHARISEES HAVE TOWARD JESUS. HE IS ON SOLOMONS'S PORCH OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE JUST AS HE IS OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE OF THEIR HEARTS.

IN VERSES 31 - 38, THE PHARISEES ARE READY TO STONE JESUS. THEY SAY THAT HE CLAIMS TO BE GOD. JESUS ANSWERS THEM FROM Ps. 82:6. HE POINTS OUT THAT THE PSALMIST SPEAKS OF MEN WHO HAVE BEEN DIVERSELY COMMISSIONED AS GODS AND SONS OF THE HIGHEST. IN ESSENCE HE ASKS THEM, "SHOULD NOT YOUR MESSIAH MAKE A GREATER CLAIM?"

VERSES 39 - 42 RECORD THAT JESUS GOES BACK TO THE PLACE OF HIS BAPTISM, AND MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE ON HIM.

JOHN 1 1

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS: THE SEVENTH SIGN 1 1:1 -57

I. THE DEATH OF LAZARUS 1 1:1 - 16

**II. THE COMFORTING OF MARY AND MARTHA
1 1:17-37**

III. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS 1 1:38-44

IV. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE LEADERS 1 1:45-57

I. THE DEATH OF LAZARUS 1 1:1 - 16

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTH GREAT SIGN, THE RAISING OF LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD. THIS SECTION CONTRASTS THE GREAT LOVE JESUS HAS FOR LAZARUS AND THE EXTREME HATRED THE PHARISEES' HAVE FOR JESUS. ONE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THEMES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS THE LOVE OF GOD. JOHN ALSO MAKES IT CLEAR THAT GOD'S LOVE CAN BE REJECTED. HE ALSO PRESENTS THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING GOD'S LOVE.

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER JESUS IS THE PRESERVER OF LIFE, THE GOOD SHEPHERD WHO LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP. IN THIS CHAPTER JESUS IS THE LIFE GIVER, BECAUSE HE HAS THE POWER TO RESTORE LIFE.

IN THE OTHER GOSPELS THERE ARE ALSO RECORDS OF

JESUS GIVING LIFE TO THE DEAD. IN LK. 8:49 - 56 HE GIVES LIFE TO A LITTLE GIRL WHO HAD JUST DIED. IN LUKE 7:11 - 17 HE GIVES LIFE TO A YOUNG MAN, PERHAPS AN ADOLESCENT, WHO HAD BEEN DEAD FOR ABOUT A DAY. IN THIS PASSAGE HE GIVES LIFE TO AN ADULT WHO HAS BEEN DEAD FOUR DAYS. THEY WERE ALL DEAD. THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE DEPTH OF DECAY. THE LESSON IS THAT THE DEPTH OF SIN'S DECAY IN A PERSON'S LIFE IS NO BARRIER TO JESUS.

THE NAME LAZARUS MEANS, "GOD IS MY HELP." IT IS THE SAME NAME AS ELEAZAR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. (IBID., VOL. 2, P. 93.) IN VERSE 3, THEY SEND WORD TO JESUS THAT LAZARUS IS SICK, BUT THEY DO NOT ASK HIM TO COME TO BETHANY. BETHANY MEANS "HOUSE OF FIGS" OR "HOUSE OF AFFLICTION."

IN VERSES 8 AND 9, JESUS SAYS THAT THOSE WHO HAVE HIS LIGHT CAN GET THROUGH THE DAY WITHOUT STUMBLING. STUMBLING IN VERSE 10 DESCRIBES LIFE WITHOUT JESUS.

II. THE COMFORTING OF MARY AND MARTHA 11:17-37

LAZARUS DIES, AND JESUS WAITS FOUR DAYS BEFORE HE GOES TO BETHANY. WHEN HE ARRIVES HE FEELS THE GRIEF AND AGONY OF MARY AND MARTHA AND COMFORTING THEM INDIVIDUALLY HE TELLS THEM, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE." VERSES 20-27 GIVE EVIDENCE THAT THEY BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION AND LIFE AFTER DEATH, JOHN 16:9-11; JOB 14:7-12.

VERSES 17-19 SAY THAT MANY PEOPLE CAME TO COMFORT MARY AND MARTHA. THE BURIAL IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY TOOK PLACE ON THE SAME DAY AS THE DEATH. THE MOURNING, HOWEVER, LASTED 7 DAYS.

THE PHRASES IN VERSE 33, "HE GROANED IN SPIRIT, AND TROUBLED HIMSELF," SHOWS HOW DEEPLY JESUS IS MOVED. WHEN THESE GREEK WORDS ARE USED IN OTHER PLACES THEY SEEMS TO IMPLY STRAIN AND EVEN ANGER.

THEY ESCORT JESUS TO THE TOMB IN VERSE 34. TOMBS WERE OFTEN IN CAVES. THE BODY OF THE DECEASED PERSON WAS PLACED ON A SHELF IN THE TOMB, AND A STONE WAS ROLLED AGAINST THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE.

III. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS 11:38-44

THIS IS THE SEVENTH SIGN. IN VERSE 39, JESUS SAYS, "TAKE AWAY THE STONE." MARTHA OBJECTS, BECAUSE LAZARUS HAS BEEN IN THE TOMB FOUR DAYS. IN PALESTINE DECAY OCCURS RAPIDLY. THE PAIN OF GRIEF AND UNBELIEF IS ALL AROUND JESUS. THIS MUST HAVE TOUCHED HIM GREATLY. THE EVENTS OF THE RAISING OF LAZARUS ARE SO INTENSE AND DRAMATIC THAT JOHN RECORDS THEM QUICKLY AND IN A VERY SHORT SPACE.

IN VERSES 41B-42 JESUS PRAYS. A RATHER LITERAL TRANSLATION IS: "FATHER, I THANK YOU THAT YOU HEARD ME; AND I KNEW THAT YOU ALWAYS HEAR ME; BUT ON ACCOUNT OF

THE CROWD WHO STANDS AROUND I SAID IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT BELIEVE YOU DID SEND ME.”

IN THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, JESUS IS:

**THE GOD GLORIFIER,
THE LOVE GIVER,
THE GRIEF BEARER,
THE HOPE BRINGER,
THE DEATH DEFEATOR,
THE LIFE GIVER, AND
THE BOND BREAKER.**

IV. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE LEADERS 11:45-57

VERSES 45-46 TELL OF THE UNBELIEF AND HOSTILITY OF THE PHARISEES. THE EVIDENCE THAT JESUS IS THE GIVER OF LIFE SHINES BRIGHTLY THROUGH THE VEIL OF DEATH AND STILL THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE.

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES ARE NOW UNITED AGAINST JESUS. MOST OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS ARE SADDUCEES. THE SADDUCEES DID NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION, AND THE RAISING OF LAZARUS THREATENS THEIR BASIC BELIEF STRUCTURE. THEIR SYSTEM IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN THE TRUTH. THEY HAD DETACHED THEIR MIND FROM REASON.

VERSES 49-51 IS THE PROPHECY MADE BY CAIAPHAS, THE HIGH PRIEST. CAIAPHAS' STATEMENT IS USED BY JOHN TO GIVE ONE OF HIS DOUBLE MEANINGS. CAIAPHAS MAKES HIS STATEMENT ABOUT

THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL REALM, BUT JOHN SHOWS THAT IT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ATONEMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL AND BIBLICAL REALM.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS WAS THE DECISIVE EVENT IN THE JEWISH LEADERS' DECISION TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH.

JESUS RETREATS WITH HIS DISCIPLES TO INSTRUCT THEM AND TO PREPARE THEM FOR HIS DEATH. JESUS GOES TO EPHRAIM, A VILLAGE ABOUT 15 MILES FROM JERUSALEM, 11:54. THIS IS JUST FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM JERUSALEM TO BE SAFE FROM HIS ENEMIES AND CLOSE ENOUGH TO RETURN ANYTIME HE CHOOSES.

JOHN 12

- I. JESUS' ANOINTING IN BETHANY 12:1 - 11
- II. JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY 12:12-19
- III. JESUS' FINAL TEACHINGS IN THE TEMPLE
12:20-50

CHAPTER 12 CONTAINS A SELECTIVE ACCOUNT OF JESUS' LAST DAYS. FROM THIS POINT TO THE END OF JOHN'S GOSPEL JESUS SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME TRAINING HIS DISCIPLES.

I. JESUS' ANOINTING IN BETHANY 12:1 - 11

JESUS RETURNS TO BETHANY WHERE LAZARUS LIVED. A DINNER IS HELD THERE IN HIS HONOR. JOHN REMEMBERS THE EXACT DAY THAT THIS HAPPENED, SIX DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER. USING HIS BACK STITCH WORD, "THEREFORE," JOHN CONNECTS THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER WITH THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER. JOHN REFERS TO THE JEWISH FEASTS MORE THAN ANY OF THE OTHER GOSPEL WRITERS. JOHN TEACHES THAT JESUS FULFILLS THE MEANING OF THE FEASTS.

IN HIS GOSPEL, JOHN RECORDS TWO PREVIOUS PASSOVERS AND THIS IS THE THIRD. THE EVENTS RECORDED HERE MOVE QUICKLY TO THE FULFILLMENT OF PASSOVER.

THERE IS AN ANOINTING OF JESUS IN EACH OF THE FOUR GOSPELS, BUT THEY ARE PROBABLY NOT THE SAME EVENT. IN

MATTHEW AND MARK THE EVENTS ARE AT SIMON THE LEPER'S HOUSE. IN LUKE AN ANOINTING IS AT THE HOUSE OF A PHARISEE NAMED SIMON. IN LUKE THE EVENT IS IN GALILEE NOT JUDEA, AND THE WOMAN IS AN IMMORAL WOMAN. THERE IS NO INDICATION ANYWHERE IN SCRIPTURE THAT MARY THE SISTER OF LAZARUS FITS THIS DESCRIPTION. IF MATTHEW, MARK AND JOHN ARE THE SAME EVENT SHE ALSO ANOINTS BOTH HIS HEAD AND HIS FEET. JOHN'S GOSPEL ONLY RECORDS THAT SHE POURS THE PERFUMED OIL ON JESUS' FEET. IT WAS, HOWEVER, USUALLY THE HEAD NOT THE FEET THAT WAS ANOINTED.

MARY USES A λιτραν (LITRAN), ABOUT 12 OZ. OF PERFUMED OIL FROM THE NARD PLANT. EVIDENTLY IT WAS NOT DILUTED, BECAUSE THE WORD πιστικης (PURE) IS USED IN VERSE 3. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "PURE" IS SIMILAR TO THE WORD FAITHFUL. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE CONNECTED THIS WORD TO THE PISTACHIO TREE. OTHER SCHOLARS THINK IT REFERS TO A TRADE NAME OF THE OIL.

IN SCRIPTURE, MARY IS A PICTURE OF WORSHIP. EACH TIME WE SEE HER SHE IS AT JESUS' FEET. THE FIRST TIME WE SEE HER SHE IS LISTENING TO HIS WORD. FROM THIS PASSAGE WE SHOULD BE CHALLENGED TO BE AT JESUS' FEET LISTENING TO HIS WORD. IN THE NEXT PICTURE OF MARY SHE FALLS AT JESUS' FEET AND IS LEANING ON HIM FOR STRENGTH IN HER GRIEF. IN THE THIRD PICTURE, SHE IS AT JESUS' FEET LOVING HIM FOR WHO HE IS AND FOR RAISING HER BROTHER LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD.

MARY POURS THE PERFUME ON JESUS' FEET SHOWING HER

HUMILITY. THEN SHE WIPES IT AWAY WITH THE HAIR OF HER HEAD. JOHN REMEMBERS THE MAJESTIC KINGLY SMELL WHEN THE PERFUMED OIL PERMEATED THE AIR. THE WONDERFUL SMELL OF TRUE WORSHIP ALWAYS PERMEATES THE AIR.

LETTING HER HAIR DOWN IN PUBLIC WAS A SIGN OF AN IMMORAL WOMAN. EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT MARY INDICATES OTHERWISE. JESUS MIRACLE OF BRINGING LAZARUS BACK FROM THE DEAD MADE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE SEEM TRIVIAL AND UNIMPORTANT.

THE LESSON: YOU CANNOT POUR PERFUME ON JESUS WITHOUT GETTING SOME ON YOURSELF! THE OINTMENT IN THE FLASK REPRESENTS HER LIFE POURED OUT TO JESUS IN LOVE. A LESSON FOR US IS THAT WE CANNOT GO THROUGH LIFE WITH OUR LIFE SHUT UP IN A FLASK. SHE RISKED HER REPUTATION AND HER STATUS AS A JEWISH WOMAN, BECAUSE SHE COULD HAVE BEEN EXCOMMUNICATED FROM THE SYNAGOGUE FOR BEING A FRIEND OF JESUS. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES PLANNED TO KILL JESUS, AND WERE HOSTILE TO ANYONE SPEAKING WELL OF HIM.

IN 12:4-8, MARTHA AS USUAL IS SERVING AND HURRYING TO ACCOMPLISH ALL THE HOUSEHOLD TASKS. ANOTHER CHARACTER IN THIS PASSAGE IS JUDAS. HIS HYPOCRISY ONLY SERVES TO CONTRAST WITH MARY'S GENUINE LOVE AND MAKE IT MORE BEAUTIFUL.

LAZARUS IS ALSO A CHARACTER IN THIS PASSAGE. PEOPLE COME TO SEE HIM, WHO HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD. HE IS A LIVING WITNESS TO THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. THE QUESTION: "DOES ANYONE COME TO SEE US BECAUSE WE ARE LIVING WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION POWER OF JESUS CHRIST?" WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, AND JESUS GAVE US LIFE.

II. JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY 12:12-19

IN JOHN 12:12-19, AS THE PASSOVER APPROACHES. JERUSALEM OVERFLOWS WITH PEOPLE. JEWS COME FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE. SCHOLARS ESTIMATE AS MANY AS A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE WERE IN JERUSALEM AT PASSOVER.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD WAS SO EARTH SHAKING THAT THE WORD SPREAD LIKE WILD FIRE AMONG THE POPULACE. THEY WANTED A MAN WITH SUCH MIRACULOUS POWERS. THE PASSOVER WAS THE LOOM ON WHICH POLITICAL FREEDOM WAS WOVEN. GREAT JOY FILLED THE AIR AND IT WAS EASY FOR THEM TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE EXCITEMENT AS THE PROPHET ENTERING JERUSALEM RIDING ON A DONKEY. WE HAVE SEEN HOW THE PEOPLE USED PALM BRANCHES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. MOSES HAD GIVEN THE INSTRUCTION IN LEV. 23:40. ALSO IN REV. 7:9 THE PEOPLE HAVE PALMS IN THEIR HANDS.

SPREADING THEIR CLOTHES AND PALMS IN FRONT OF JESUS THE PEOPLE SHOUT, "HOSANNAH!" "SAVE NOW." THIS IS PSALM 118:25-26 FROM THE HALLEL. THE WORD HALLEL MEANS, "PRAISE GOD." THEY PRAISE GOD QUITE UNAWARE

THAT THEY SHOULD BE PRAISING HIM FOR WHAT JESUS IS ABOUT TO DO ON THE CROSS.

SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT JESUS RODE AN UNBROKEN COLT, WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN AND BURIED IN A NEW TOMB. RIDING THE DONKEY INTO JERUSALEM AFFIRMED THAT HE WAS GOD'S ANOINTED ONE. THIS IS A DRAMATIC PRESENTATION OF ZECHARIAH 9:9.

WHEN A KING RODE A HORSE INTO A CITY HE DECLARED VICTORY. WHEN HE RODE A DONKEY HE CAME IN PEACE. JESUS THE KING COMES INTO HIS OWN CITY OFFERING PEACE. HE COMES NOT FOR HIS CORONATION. HE COMES FOR HIS CRUCIFIXION.

III. JESUS' FINAL TEACHINGS IN THE TEMPLE 12:20-50

IN JOHN 12:20-22, GOD BEGINS TO DRAW THE GENTILES EVEN BEFORE JESUS' DEATH. IN VERSE 21, SOME GREEKS COME TO PHILIP SAYING, "SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS." THE GREEK NAME PHILIP MEANS LOVER OF HORSES. PHILIP NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO TAKES THEM TO ANDREW. INTERESTINGLY THE NAME ANDREW IS ALSO GREEK AND MEANS MANLY. EVERY TIME WE SEE ANDREW IN JOHN'S GOSPEL HE IS INTRODUCING SOMEONE TO JESUS.

AT JESUS' BIRTH THE MAGI, GENTILES FROM THE EAST, SEEK HIM. NOW AS HE NEARS DEATH, GREEKS, AGAIN GENTILES, SEEK HIM.

IN JOHN 12:23-36, JESUS USES THE TERM "SON OF MAN."

THIS TERM COMES FROM DANIEL 7:13. IN CHAPTER SEVEN THE WORLD KINGDOMS ARE SO WICKED DANIEL SYMBOLICALLY DESCRIBES THEM AS ANIMALS. DANIEL PROPHECIES THAT GOD WILL SEND A NEW POWER WHICH WILL BE PEACEFUL AND NOT SAVAGE. THE JEWISH CONCEPT WAS THAT THIS SON OF MAN WOULD BE A CONQUEROR.

JESUS SAID HE WOULD BE GLORIFIED. HE MEANT HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD WOULD GLORIFY THE FATHER. IN CONTRAST THE PEOPLE THOUGHT POLITICAL POWER AND MIGHT BROUGHT GLORY. JESUS' GLORY CAME IN THE VICTORY OF THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION. IN THEM HE DEFEATED SIN AND DEATH.

VERSES 35 - 36 ARE THE LAST WORDS OF WARNING JESUS GIVES THE PHARISEES. HE WARNS THEM ABOUT CLOSING THEIR MINDS TO THE LIGHT, HARDENING THEIR HEARTS TO THE TRUTH AND LETTING SALVATION PASS WITHOUT ACCEPTING IT. THE LEADERS REJECT THE LIGHT. JESUS IS THE LIGHT. SO HE HIDES HIMSELF FROM THEM.

IN 12:37 - 50 ARE TWO QUOTES FROM ISAIAH 53:1 - 2 AND 6:9 - 10. CHAPTER 12, VERSE 40 IS DIFFICULT, BUT TRUE. GOD DOES BLIND PEOPLE'S EYES. HE REVEALS TO PEOPLE WHO THEY REALLY ARE, AND RATHER THAN CHANGE THEY GO BLIND TO THE TRUTH.

VERSES 42 - 43 ARE FRIGHTENING WORDS. THE PHARISEES MARCH TO THE PRAISE OF MEN. THEY LOVE HUMAN PRAISE MORE THAN GOD'S PRAISE.

VERSE 47 SAYS THAT JESUS CAME TO SAVE US.

VERSES 44-50 ARE THE LAST WORDS JESUS GAVE TO THE MULTITUDES. THIS IS ANOTHER WARNING AS FIERCE AS A HOT DESERT WIND.

JOHN 13

JESUS SPEAKS OF HIS GLORIFICATION

- I. JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET 13:1 -20**
- II. JESUS WARNS THE TRAITOR 13:21 -30**
- III. JESUS GIVES A NEW COMMANDMENT 13:31 -38**

CHAPTERS 13- 17 FORM A UNIT. IN THIS SECTION, JESUS ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES, PREPARES THE DISCIPLES FOR HIS DEATH AND THEIR MINISTRY. IN CHAPTER 13, JESUS TEACHES THREE GREAT LESSONS: BE HUMBLE, SEEK HOLINESS AND AVOID HYPOCRISY.

- I. JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET JOHN 13:1 -20**
THIS SECTION TEACHES THAT ONLY JESUS CAN WASH US AND MAKE US CLEAN. JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET ON THE VERY NIGHT HE IS BETRAYED. THE NEXT DAY HE IS CRUCIFIED.

JOHN RECORDS JESUS WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET; WHEREAS THE OTHER GOSPELS RECORD THE LAST SUPPER.

AT THE LAST SUPPER THE DISCIPLES ARE ARGUING ABOUT WHO WILL BE THE GREATEST AND OCCUPY THE HIGHEST POSITION IN THE KINGDOM. EVIDENTLY THEY THINK JESUS IS ABOUT TO INAUGURATE HIS KINGDOM. THEY THINK DISCIPLESHIP QUALIFIES THEM TO BE RULERS IN THIS KINGDOM, LUKE 22:24. JESUS HAS TO GET THEIR ATTENTION. THE ATTITUDES OF THEIR HEARTS NEEDED TO CHANGE. HIS HEART IS HEAVY, BECAUSE THEIR HEARTS ARE NOT RIGHT. WASHING THEIR FEET KNOCKED THE SOCKS OFF THEIR PRIDE. THE WASHING OF FEET WAS THE TASK OF A SLAVE OR THE LEAST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE FAMILY. THE CUSTOM WAS FOR A PERSON TO BATH BEFORE A FEAST; THEN WHEN THE PERSON CAME TO HIS HOST'S HOUSE A SERVANT WASHED HIS FEET. IN THE DRY SEASON DUST COVERED THE ROADS SEVERAL INCHES THICK. IN THE RAINY SEASON THE ROADS WERE MUDDY. NOT ONE OF THE DISCIPLES WAS ABOUT TO WASH THE OTHER DISCIPLES' FEET. IF HE DID IT MEANT HE HAD A LESS IMPORTANT POSITION IN THE KINGDOM.

TAKING A TOWEL JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. HIS ATTITUDE AND ACTION TEACHES THEM A LESSON OF LOVE AND HUMILITY THEY WILL NEVER FORGET.

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER JOHN RECORDS THE ANOINTING OF JESUS' FEET. JOHN CONTRASTS THESE TWO ACTIONS. JESUS' FEET ARE ANOINTED. THE DISCIPLES' FEET ARE WASHED. JESUS IS PURE. THEY ARE DEFILED. THEY HAVE PRIDE. HE HAS HUMILITY.

(PINK, OP. CIT., P. 293.)

JESUS KNEELS. THIS VIVID PICTURE REMAINS FOREVER IN PETER'S MIND, I PETER 5:5 - 6.

IN VERSES 8 - 10, JESUS SPEAKS TO PETER ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF BEING HOLY. JESUS TELLS PETER THAT HE MUST HAVE HIS TOTAL LIFE CLEAN, MEANING SALVATION. THEN HE EMPHASIZES THAT THE DAILY WALK MUST HAVE DAILY CLEANSING. THIS IS CONFESSING OUR SINS. WHEN GOD SAVES US HE WASHES US ALL OVER. BUT DAILY WALKING IN THE WORLD GETS OUR FEET DIRTY, AND WE NEED TO CONFESS OUR SINS.

II. JESUS WARNS THE TRAITOR 13:21 - 30

IN JOHN 13:21 - 30 IS JUDAS BETRAYS JESUS. JUDAS HAS HAD MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO REPENT. EVEN AT THE LAST SUPPER JESUS OFFERS HIM A WAY OF ESCAPE. ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, AT THE LAST SUPPER, JUDAS WAS AT JESUS' LEFT. THE CUSTOM WAS FOR THE PERSON TO RECLINE ON A LOW COUCH WITH THE HEAD FACING THE TABLE AND THE FEET AWAY FROM THE TABLE. THE PERSON RESTED HIS HEAD IN HIS LEFT HAND AND ATE WITH HIS RIGHT HAND. JOHN WAS ON JESUS' RIGHT AND LEANED BACKWARD ON JESUS' CHEST. THE LESSON HERE IS THAT THE PERSON WHO STAYS CLOSEST TO THE HEART OF JESUS IS THE ONE WHO LOVES HIM MOST, AND IN THE END FOLLOWS HIM TO LIGHT AND LIFE. RECENT ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT IN JESUS' DAY LOW U-SHAPED TABLES WERE USED AT THE PASSOVER. WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE PLACE OF HONOR WAS ON THE LEFT OF THE HOST. JESUS

PURPOSELY SAT JUDAS IN THIS POSITION SO HE COULD TALK WITH HIM. OUTWARDLY JUDAS IS A SAINT; INWARDLY HE IS A DEVIL. HE IS THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF HYPOCRISY. HIS SIN WAS THAT HE WANTED TO SHORT CIRCUIT GOD'S PLAN. JUDAS, MORE PERCEPTIVE THAN THE OTHER DISCIPLES, SAW THAT JESUS' KINGDOM WAS NOT GOING TO BE LIKE HE HAD ORIGINALLY THOUGHT. JUDAS WANTED TO SPUR JESUS TO ACTION. HE KNEW JESUS HAD THE POWER , IF HE WOULD JUST USE IT.

IN VERSE 30, JUDAS GOES OUT INTO THE NIGHT. HE LEAVES JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD AND GOES INTO HIS OWN NIGHT. HERE AGAIN WE SEE JOHN'S CONTRAST OF LIGHT AND NIGHT (DARKNESS). JUDAS MAKES A DELIBERATE CHOICE. HIS DECISION IS PREMEDITATED. HE IS NOT PREDESTINED. GOD SIMPLY USES JUDAS' TREACHERY TO GLORIFY HIS SON.

IN CONTRAST PETER'S FALL IS ACCIDENTAL. IT IS NOT PREMEDITATED. HE FAILS AT HIS STRONGEST POINT. IF HE FAILS AT HIS STRONGEST POINT, WHAT ABOUT HIS WEAKEST POINT? THIS REVEALS PETER DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HIS OWN HEART. HE IS OVER CONFIDENT. HE IS DEPENDING ON HIS OWN POWER. HE HAS NOT YET EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

III. JESUS GIVES A NEW COMMANDMENT 13:31 - 38

THE NIGHT STARTS WITH THE DISCIPLES QUARRELING ABOUT WHO WILL BE THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM. THE NIGHT ENDS WITH JESUS GIVING THE DISCIPLES THE NEW COMMANDMENT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. THE NIGHT STARTS WITH STRIFE AND ENDS WITH LOVE. JESUS PUT THE STARS IN THEIR NIGHT.

JOHN 14

COMFORT FOR THE TROUBLED HEART

- I. JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES 14:1 - 11**
- II. JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT 14:12 - 31**

I. JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES 14:1 - 11

WHY ARE THE DISCIPLES TROUBLED? HE HAS JUST TOLD THEM:

- 1. THAT HE IS LEAVING THEM,**
- 2. THAT SOMEBODY IN THE GROUP IS GOING TO BETRAY HIM,**
- AND 3. THAT PETER IS GOING TO DENY HIM.**

II. JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT 14:12 - 31

WHEN JESUS TELLS THEM THESE THINGS THEY ARE EMOTIONALLY SHAKEN. JESUS COMFORTS THEM BY TELLING THEM THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO LEAVE IN ORDER FOR THEM TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT. HE SAYS:

- 1. BELIEVE IN ME, IN MY MISSIONS AND IN MY RETURN.**
- 2. I AM THE WAY. I AM THE TRUTH. I AM THE LIFE.**
- 3. YOU WILL DO GREATER WORKS THAN I HAVE DONE.**
- 4. I WILL DO WHAT YOU ASK IN MY NAME.**
- 5. GOD WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER WHO IS LIKE ME.**
- 6. I WILL REVEAL MYSELF TO YOU.**
- 7. I GIVE YOU MY PEACE.**

EVERY GREAT SPIRITUAL MOUNTAIN IN THEIR LIVES IS ABOUT TO COLLAPSE INTO THE SEA OF DESPAIR. ALL THE VOLCANOES IN THEIR SOULS ARE ABOUT TO ERUPT. THEY DESPERATELY NEED HIS STABILIZING HAND AND HIS SURE WORD. JOHN SOMETIMES USES LANGUAGE THAT CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH IN VARIOUS WAYS. WE HAVE SEEN THAT JOHN OFTEN HAS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MEANING FOR AN EVENT. HE USUALLY GIVES PHYSICAL EVENTS SPIRITUAL MEANING. THIS PASSAGE CAN BE TRANSLATED IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, BECAUSE THE WORD "BELIEVE" IS EITHER IN THE GREEK INDICATIVE MOOD OR IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD. THE INDICATIVE MOOD IS TRANSLATED "YOU BELIEVE" OR "YOU ARE BELIEVING." THE IMPERATIVE, A COMMAND IS TRANSLATED, "BELIEVE!"

"LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED." HE IS REINFORCING THEIR FAITH. IT IS NOT THE EXTERNAL EVENTS THAT GET US. IT IS THE LACK OF INNER RESOURCES THAT GETS US DOWN.

IN VERSE 1, HE TELLS THEM TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN HIM. HE TELLS THEM ABOUT THE PLACE DEAREST TO HIS HEART, "IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE." HE IS GETTING READY TO GO HOME. DO YOU THINK JESUS IS GETTING EXCITED? HE IS EXCITED, BECAUSE HIS HOME IS GOING TO BE THEIR HOME. HE SAYS THAT HE IS GOING HOME AND THEN WILL COME BACK AND GET THEM.

THREE TIMES IN SCRIPTURE JESUS REFERS TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE. AS FAR AS I KNOW HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN THE BIBLE WHO MAKES SUCH A REFERENCE. IN THE TEMPLE, JOHN 2:16 HE SAYS, "YOU HAVE MADE MY FATHER'S HOUSE A DEN OF THIEVES." IN THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON HE REFERS TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE. IN THIS SCRIPTURE THE PHRASE MEANS HEAVEN. HEAVEN IS REFERRED TO IN THE BIBLE AS A CITY, A KINGDOM, A MANSION AND PARADISE, BUT THE BEST WORD IS THE FATHERS' HOUSE.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "MANSIONS" MEANS RESTING PLACES OR ABODES ALONG THE WAY. THE IDEA OF RESTING PLACES SIGNIFIES A MOVING, DYNAMIC ELEMENT IN ETERNAL LIFE. VERSE 2 EMPHASIZES THIS TRUTH. THERE IS ROOM FOR ALL WHO WILL ENTER. THE SWIFTEST MIND CANNOT SPRINT FAST ENOUGH TO GRASP THE FULL REALITY OF THIS CONCEPT.

IN VERSE 3, THE STATEMENT "I WILL COME AGAIN" REFERS TO THE SECOND COMING. TODAY THERE ARE TWO THEOLOGICAL EXTREMES CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING. ONE EXTREME NEVER MENTIONS IT. THE OTHER TALKS ABOUT NOTHING ELSE. BOTH ARE LIKE TRYING TO WATCH A BASEBALL GAME THROUGH A KNOTHOLE. THIS DOCTRINE MUST BE BALANCED BY TOTAL SCRIPTURE.

JOHN 14:5 - 11 RECORDS THOMAS' WORDS OF DOUBT, "WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING." JESUS' ANSWER IS ONE OF THE GREATEST AFFIRMATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

“I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.” THE “I AM” STATEMENTS ARE JOHN’S FAVORITE METHOD OF IDENTIFYING JESUS WITH THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. FOR OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES ABOUT “THE WAY” SEE DEUT. 5:32 - 33, DEUT. 31:29, AND ISAIAH 30:21; ABOUT “THE TRUTH” SEE Ps. 26:3, Ps. 119:30, HEB. 10:19 - 22; ABOUT “THE LIFE,” SEE PROV 6:23, PROV. 10:17, Ps 16:11.

VERSES 8 - 12 ARE KEY VERSES IN JOHN. THEY REFER BACK TO THE PROLOGUE AND CARRY FORWARD THE THEME OF JOHN 1:1.

IN VERSE 13, JESUS SAYS, “ASK IN MY NAME.” THIS MEANS IN HIS CHARACTER AND NATURE.

VERSES 15 - 31 EMPHASIZE THAT JESUS HAS BEEN THE COMFORTING AND STABILIZING FORCE IN THE DISCIPLES’ LIVES. NOW HE IS GOING TO HIS FATHER. THE MAIN POINT OF THIS SECTION IS THAT HE IS GOING TO ASK THE FATHER TO SEND THEM “THE PARACLETE,” THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THREE SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS SUMMARIZE THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: 1. JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR US. 2. JESUS WAS RESURRECTED TO GIVE HIS LIFE TO US. 3. JESUS ASCENDED AND CAME IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE HIS LIFE THROUGH US.

JOHN 15

JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

I. THE DISCIPLES MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST 15:1 - 11

**II. THE DISCIPLES MUST LOVE THE BRETHREN
15:12-17**

**III. THE DISCIPLES WILL BE HATED BY THE WORLD
15:18-25**

**IV. THE DISCIPLES WILL RECEIVE POWER FROM THE
HOLY SPIRIT 15:26-29**

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH HOW THE BELIEVER IS RELATED TO JESUS, TO OTHER BELIEVERS AND TO THE WORLD.

I. THE DISCIPLES MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST 15:1 - 11

ONCE AGAIN, JOHN RACES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR THE BASIS AND BACKGROUND OF HIS CONCEPTS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL IS CALLED THE VINE AND GOD'S VINEYARD. ON THE DOOR OF THE HOLY PLACE IN THE TEMPLE AN IMAGE OF A GREAT GOLDEN VINE SIGNIFIED THAT ISRAEL WAS GOD'S VINE. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 201.) THE PROPHETS, HOWEVER, ALWAYS SPOKE OF ISRAEL AS A WILD VINE, EMPTY AND NOT PRODUCING FRUIT, ISAIAH 5:1 - 7, JEREMIAH 2:21, AND HOSEA 10:1. IN THIS SECTION JESUS SAYS HE IS THE TRUE VINE. THIS MEANS HE IS THE TRUE REMNANT OF ISRAEL. HE WILL CARRY OUT THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE THAT GOD HAD FOR ISRAEL. THE GREEK WORD $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\eta$ TRANSLATED "TRUE" MEANS GENUINE AS OPPOSED TO FALSE. JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE.

JESUS SAYS EVERY BRANCH THAT DOES NOT BEAR FRUIT WILL BE TAKEN AWAY. EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARS FRUIT HE CLEANSSES SO IT WILL BEAR MORE FRUIT. WASHING THE PARASITES AND DISEASES OFF THE VINES WAS A COMMON PRACTICE. A BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT UNLESS IT IS CONNECTED TO THE VINE IS JESUS' MAIN POINT. NEITHER CAN A PERSON BEAR SPIRITUAL FRUIT UNLESS HE IS CONNECTED TO JESUS.

EVERYONE KNEW WHAT JESUS MEANT ABOUT THE BRANCHES BEING CAST INTO THE FIRE AND BURNED. THEY BURNED THE DEAD AND DRY BRANCHES FROM THEIR VINEYARDS. IT IS VERY INTERESTING THAT IT WAS SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT WHEN PEOPLE BROUGHT FIRE WOOD FOR THE TEMPLE THE VINE COULD NOT BE BROUGHT. (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., VOL. 2, P. 203.)

GOD WILL DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO HELP US BEAR FRUIT IS THE MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE. WE ARE NOT TOLD HERE WHAT THE FRUIT IS. MANY SCHOLARS THINK IT MEANS REACHING NEW PEOPLE FOR CHRIST. HOWEVER, SCRIPTURE SPEAKS OF OTHER FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT; LOVE AND ITS CLUSTER, JOY, PEACE, LONG SUFFERING, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS AND SELF - CONTROL, GAL. 5:22.

VERSE 6 IN THE GREEK TEXT LITERALLY READS, "UNLESS ANYONE ABIDE IN ME, HE IS CAST OUT AS THE BRANCH, AND IS DRIED UP AND THEY GATHER THEM AND INTO A FIRE CAST, AND

IT IS BURNED.” THE CASTING FORTH OF THE VINE HAS THE IDEA OF STRIPPING AWAY THE NON-PRODUCING BRANCHES. IT PROBABLY DOES NOT MEAN A BRANCH WHICH NEVER BORE FRUIT, BUT ONE THAT NO LONGER BEARS FRUIT. THIS IS THE SAME IDEA AS THE SALT LOOSING ITS POWER, MATT. 5:15. WHAT IS BURNED IN VERSE 6? I COR. 3:15 HAS THE SAME IDEA. IT SAYS, “ει τινος το εργον κατακαησεται, ζημιωθησεται, αυτος δε σωθησεται, ουτως δε ως δια πυρος.” “IF OF ANYONE THE WORK SHALL BE CONSUMED, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS, BUT HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED, BUT SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”

THE CUP IN THE LORD’S SUPPER IS SPOKEN OF AS THE “FRUIT OF THE VINE,” MK. 14:25, MATT. 26:29, LUKE 22:18. THE LORD’S SUPPER, THUS, REMINDS US TO ABIDE IN CHRIST.

II. THE DISCIPLES MUST LOVE THE BRETHREN 15:12-17

JOHN 15:12-17 TEACHES THAT LOVE IS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DISCIPLES AND BETWEEN THE DISCIPLES AND THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. THIS IS ALSO THE THEME OF I JOHN. THIS IS AGAPE LOVE, THE SACRIFICIAL LOVE THAT GOD MANIFESTS IN THE CROSS. IT IS NOT ROMANTIC NOR SENTIMENTAL LOVE. IT IS GOD-LIKE LOVE. IT COMES FROM THE NATURE OF GOD AND IS THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

VERSE 13 IS WHAT JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES THE NIGHT BEFORE HE WAS CRUCIFIED. A LITERAL GREEK TRANSLATION OF WHAT HE SAYS IS, “GREATER THAN THIS LOVE NO ONE HAS, THAT ONE HIS LIFE SHOULD LAY DOWN FOR HIS FRIENDS.”

VERSE 16 AFFIRMS THAT THE DISCIPLES HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AND APPOINTED TO BEAR FRUIT. THIS VERSE GOES AGAINST WHAT WE GENERALLY THINK. WE THINK THAT WHEN WE PRAY, IT ENABLES US TO BEAR FRUIT. THIS VERSE SEEMS TO SAY THAT BEARING FRUIT ENABLES US TO PRAY.

III. THE DISCIPLES WILL BE HATED BY THE WORLD 15:18-25

IN JOHN 15:18-27, JESUS CONTRASTS THE HATRED OF THE WORLD WITH THE LOVE OF THE DISCIPLES. THE WAY WE KNOW WE ARE DISCIPLES IS BY THE WAY THE WORLD OPPOSES US. WHY DOES THE WORLD HATE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS? BECAUSE:

- 1. THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW GOD.**
- 2. JESUS REVEALED THE WORLD'S SIN.**
- 3. IT HATES JESUS, AND HE IS IN HIS DISCIPLES.**

VERSES 22-24 TEACH THAT REVELATION DEMANDS RESPONSIBILITY. IN THIS SECTION JOHN TEACHES THAT THE WORDS AND THE WORKS OF JESUS REVEAL WHO HE IS AND THAT BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES CRUCIFIED JESUS. THIS MEANS THAT ALL ARE SINNERS BEFORE GOD.

JOHN 16

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK

- I. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS THE WORLD 16:1 - 11
- II. THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES THE DISCIPLES
16:12-13
- III. THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST 16:14-15
- IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE DISCIPLES JOY
16:16-22
- V. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE DISCIPLES VICTORY
16:23-33

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT THE WORK WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL DO THROUGH HIS FOLLOWERS. IT TEACHES THAT THE DISCIPLE CANNOT LIVE VICTORIOUSLY WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS THE WORLD 16:1 - 11.

THESE VERSES CONNECT WITH VERSE 30 OF CHAPTER 14. VERSE 2 PROPHECIES THAT THE "BAN" AGAINST THE DISCIPLES WILL BE HARD. JESUS KNOWS THAT SOME OF HIS FUTURE DISCIPLES WILL DENY PROFESSION.

JESUS TELLS THEM THAT HE HAS TO LEAVE THEM IN ORDER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO COME. HE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS ABSENT FROM THE WORLD. HE MEANS THAT

AFTER HIS DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BEGIN A UNIQUE WORK.

IN VERSE 3 THE WORD TRANSLATED “KNOW” MEANS TO KNOW BY EXPERIENCE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT “TO KNOW” IS USED OF INTIMATE SEXUAL RELATIONS. IT SAYS ADAM “KNEW” EVE, AND SHE BORE A SON. IT MEANS “UNION WITH.” TO KNOW JESUS IS TO BE IN UNION WITH HIM. THAT IS THE MEANING OF PAUL’S KEY PHRASE “IN CHRIST.” JESUS SAYS THEY ARE NOT EXPERIENCING A DAILY WALK WITH GOD.

VERSE 7 IS ONE OF JOHN’S CONTRASTS. JESUS IS GOING AWAY, BUT THE COMFORTER IS COMING. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PRESENT, BUT NOW THE HOLY SPIRIT’S TASK WILL BE TO CONVICT THE UNSAVED WORLD THROUGH THE CHURCH. JESUS SHOULD BE IN THE WORLD REIGNING AS KING, BUT THE WORLD CRUCIFIED HIM; SO, NOW THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CONVICTING THE WORLD OF THIS SIN. THE WORD TRANSLATED “REPROVE” OR “CONVICT”, *ἐλεγεῖ*, WAS USED ABOUT THE CROSS-EXAMINATION OF A WITNESS. THE IDEA IN THE WORD IS CONTINUALLY CROSS-EXAMINING UNTIL A PERSON SEES HIS ERROR OR SEES SOME TRUTH HE HAS NOT SEEN BEFORE. THE CONVICTION IS:

1. OF SIN, VERSE 8. THIS IS THE SIN OF UNBELIEF. UNBELIEF RESULTS IN REJECTING CHRIST AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SIN CONDEMNS, JOHN 3:18-21.

2. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. THE SPIRIT’S PRESENCE CONVICTS THE WORLD OF CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

3. OF JUDGMENT. THIS IS JUDGMENT WHICH THE CROSS BROUGHT ON THE WORLD.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES THE DISCIPLES 16:12- 14

VERSE 13 IS OFTEN MISINTERPRETED BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE TRANSLATIONS. A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK SAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT SPEAK "FROM HIMSELF." THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE SAYS, "... HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL THE TRUTH; NOT FOR HE WILL SPEAK FROM HIMSELF, BUT WHATSOEVER HE MAY HEAR HE WILL SPEAK; AND THE THINGS COMING HE WILL ANNOUNCE TO YOU." THE IDEA IS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT SPEAK FROM HIS OWN AUTHORITY, BUT FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER. HE HEARS GOD THE FATHER AND SPEAKS HIS WORDS. A COMMON MISINTERPRETATION IS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT SPEAK ABOUT HIMSELF. THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECTS THE WRITING OF THE BIBLE, AND THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH MEANS HE DOES SPEAK ABOUT HIMSELF. JESUS SAYS THE SAME THING WHEN HE SAYS HE DOES NOT SPEAK OUT OF HIS OWN AUTHORITY. JESUS SAYS HE SPEAKS FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS CHRIST 16:14- 15

THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY WRITING A BOOK ABOUT HIM, MAKING BELIEVERS CONFORM TO HIM AND FINDING A BRIDE FOR HIM.

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES JOY TO THE DISCIPLES 16:16-22

WHAT IS JOY? JOY IS A FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. JOY COMES INTERNALLY FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT; WHEREAS, HAPPINESS COMES FROM EXTERNAL HAPPENINGS.

**V. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE DISCIPLES VICTORY
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST 16:23-33.**

THESE VERSES ARE REINFORCED BY ROM. 8:26-27. WE PRAY TO THE FATHER, THROUGH THE SON, IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. JUDE 20 SAYS, "PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT." IT MEANS DO NOT PRAY IN THE POWER OF THE FLESH. SEE ALSO JAMES 4:1-10.

VERSE 33 IS LIKE READING THE LAST PAGE OF HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS IT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST VERSES IN THE BIBLE. THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS AN EXTENDED HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THIS VERSE. THE THEME OF THIS VERSE IS THAT CHRIST OVERCOMES THE WORLD.

JOHN 17

THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

- I. JESUS PRAYS THAT HE WILL GLORIFY GOD 17:1 - 5
- II. JESUS PRAYS THAT HIS PRESENT DISCIPLES WILL BE HOLY 17:6 - 19
- III. JESUS PRAYS THAT HIS FUTURE DISCIPLES WILL BE UNITED 17:20 - 26.

THIS CHAPTER DIVIDES INTO THREE PARTS. JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF, HIS DISCIPLES AND HIS CHURCH.

I. JESUS PRAYS THAT HE WILL GLORIFY GOD 17:1 - 5

JESUS PRAYS BEFORE AND DURING ALL THE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN HIS LIFE. SOME OF THEM ARE: HIS BAPTISM, LK. 3:21; HIS STRENUOUS WORK MK. 1:35; HIS SELECTION OF THE TWELVE, LK. 6:12; HIS TRANSFIGURATION, LK. 9:29; THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, JOHN 11:41; AND THE END OF HIS LIFE, LK. 23:46.

IN VERSE 1, HE PRAYS, "FATHER, THE HOUR HAS COME." THIS REFERS TO THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION. THE WORD "GLORIFY" IN VERSE 1 MEANS TO MAKE KNOWN, TO GIVE VALUE TO, OR TO ILLUMINATE.

VERSES 2 - 3 SAY THAT JESUS WILL GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO HIS DISCIPLES. VERSE 3, ONE OF THE BEST DEFINITIONS OF

ETERNAL LIFE IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE, SAYS IN GREEK, "AND THIS IS THE ETERNAL LIFE, THAT THEY SHOULD KNOW YOU, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND WHOM YOU DID SEND JESUS CHRIST." THE WORD "KNOW" MEANS TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE.

VERSE 4 SPEAKS OF THE WORK WHICH HE HAS FINISHED. VERSE 6 SAYS THAT HE HAS REVEALED OR MANIFESTED GOD'S NAME TO THE MEN GOD GAVE HIM.

II. JESUS PRAYS THAT HIS DISCIPLES WILL BE SANCTIFIED 17:16-19

IN VERSE 16, "NAME" MEANS CHARACTER AND NATURE. THIS SAYS THAT GOD GAVE THE DISCIPLES TO JESUS.

IN VERSE 17, JESUS PRAYS THAT THE FATHER WILL SANCTIFY THE DISCIPLES. THE VERSE SEEMS TO MEAN THAT THE WORD OF GOD WILL SANCTIFY THEM.

III. JESUS PRAYS THAT HIS CHURCH WILL BE UNITED 17:20-26

JESUS PRAYS SEVEN TIMES IN THIS PRAYER THAT HIS FOLLOWERS WILL BE ONE. HE PRAYS FOR A DEEP SPIRITUAL COHESION BETWEEN BELIEVERS. THE BASIS OF THIS UNITY IS THEIR SALVATION WHICH COMES FROM FAITH IN JESUS' ATONING DEATH. HE COMPARES THIS TO THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE AND THE FATHER HAVE. IN VERSE 22, THE WORD TRANSLATED "HAVE GIVEN" OCCURS TWICE AND IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE EACH TIME. THIS MEANS THAT THE EVENT OCCURRED IN THE

PAST, IS PERMANENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT EVENT CONTINUE UNTIL THE PRESENT.

THE UNITY OF THE DISCIPLES PRODUCES RESULTS. THE NATURAL RESULT IS OUTREACH TO BRING PEOPLE TO CHRIST AND HIS SALVATION. VERSE 23 SAYS WHEN UNITY COMES IT WILL CAUSE THE WORLD, KOSMOV, TO KNOW THAT GOD SENT JESUS, THAT GOD LOVED BOTH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

IN VERSE 20, HE PRAYS FOR ALL OF HIS FUTURE DISCIPLES.

JOHN 18

CHRIST THE KING DENIED, BETRAYED AND REJECTED

I. JESUS' ARREST IN THE GARDEN 18:1 - 11

II. JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH HIGH COURT
18:12-27

III. JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE 18:28-40

JESUS IS IN TOTAL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION. HE IS NOT A VICTIM. HE IS NOT DEFEATED. HE IS THE UNDISPUTED VICTOR. THAT IS JOHN'S POINT IN THIS CHAPTER. HE IS ACHIEVING ALL THAT GOD SENT HIM TO DO. IN THIS CHAPTER JOHN FOCUSES ON THE EVENTS WHICH SENT JESUS TO THE CROSS.

I. JESUS' ARREST IN THE GARDEN 18:1 - 11

CHRIST IS ABOUT TO BE BETRAYED BY JUDAS, DENIED BY PETER, DESERTED BY THE DISCIPLES AND REJECTED BY THE NATION.

JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES LEAVE THE UPPER ROOM, GO DOWN INTO THE KEDRON VALLEY, CROSS THE BROOK KEDRON AND GO INTO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. KEDRON IN HEBREW MEANS "DARK WATERS." THIS SIGNIFIES THE DARK WATERS THROUGH WHICH JESUS IS ABOUT TO PASS. (PINK, OP. CIT., P. 156)

A CHANNEL RAN FROM THE ALTAR IN THE TEMPLE DOWN TO THE KEDRON BROOK. AS THE PASSOVER LAMBS WERE SLAIN THE BLOOD RAN INTO THIS CHANNEL AND DOWN TO THE KEDRON. A CENSUS TAKEN 30 YEARS LATER RECORDS THAT THOUSANDS OF LAMBS WERE KILLED FOR PASSOVER. THE BLOOD WAS TURNING THE KEDRON RED WHEN JESUS CROSSES OVER IT. IN THE SUMMER, THE BROOK DRIED UP. IN THE WINTER, IT FLOWED FREELY.

JESUS GOES OUTSIDE THE CITY, AND FULFILLS THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING THAT “THE VICTIM FOR THE SIN OFFERING (UNLIKE THE BURNT OFFERING) WAS DESTROYED “WITHOUT (OUTSIDE) THE CAMP,” LEV. 4:12,21; 16:27. (PINK, OP. CIT., PP.156 - 157.) JESUS STARTS HIS SUFFERING HERE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, HEB 13:12.

WE ALSO SEE AN OLD TESTAMENT PARALLEL IN II SAMUEL 15:23,30 - 31 WHEN KING DAVID WAS BETRAYED BY HIS FALSE FRIEND AHITHOPHEL. THERE WAS REBELLION IN HIS KINGDOM, AND DAVID ESCAPED BY CROSSING THE KEDRON.

IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN THE FALL CAME THROUGH SATAN. NOW VICTORY OVER SATAN BEGINS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

THE CONTRASTS OF EDEN AND GETHSEMANE ARE:

**IN EDEN JOY, IN GETHSEMANE PAIN,
IN EDEN ADAM HID FROM GOD, IN GETHSEMANE JESUS
SOUGHT GOD'S WILL,
IN EDEN DISOBEDIENCE, IN GETHSEMANE OBEDIENCE,
IN EDEN SIN, IN GETHSEMANE SUFFERING,
IN EDEN THE FALL, IN GETHSEMANE VICTORY,
IN EDEN ADAM STOLE THE FRUIT, IN GETHSEMANE JESUS
TOOK THE CUP,
IN EDEN, ADAM WAS DRIVEN FROM THE GARDEN; IN
GETHSEMANE, JESUS WAS LED,
IN EDEN THE SWORD WAS DRAWN, GEN 3:24, IN
GETHSEMANE THE SWORD WAS PUT AWAY, JOHN
18:11.**

IN VERSE 1, JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES GO INTO THE GARDEN.

**IN VERSE 2, JUDAS KNOWS WHERE TO FIND THEM. EVIDENTLY
THEY HAVE BEEN THERE MANY TIMES.**

**IN VERSE 3, JUDAS BRINGS THE σπειρον AND THE OFFICERS
OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS. THE WORD TRANSLATED BAND PROBABLY
MEANS A COHORT OF ROMAN SOLDIERS. A ROMAN LEGION WAS
DIVIDED INTO COHORTS AND CENTURIES. A COHORT WAS A TENTH
OF A LEGION. A STANDARD LEGION WAS 6,000 SOLDIERS, BUT
LEGIONS SOMETIMES HAD LESS. A BAND COULD HAVE BEEN AS
MANY AS 200 TO 600 SOLDIERS.**

PASSOVER WAS A NATIONAL FREEDOM FESTIVAL WHEN

EMOTION AND PATRIOTISM RAN HIGH. ROME FEARED UPRISINGS AND REBELLIONS AT THESE NATIONAL FESTIVALS. SO, THEY PREPARED FOR SUCH EVENTS WITH THE NECESSARY SOLDIERS TO HANDLE ANY DIFFICULTIES. LOOK AT ACT 23:23 AND COUNT THE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS THEY USED SEVERAL YEARS LATER TO TRANSPORT PAUL FROM JERUSALEM TO CAESAREA, 200 FOOT SOLDIERS, 70 HORSEMEN AND 200 SPEARMEN.

JUDAS IS PICTURED BY SOME AS AN OVERZEALOUS INNOCENT ADMIRER WHO WANTED TO PUSH JESUS INTO BRINGING IN THE KINGDOM. OTHERS SEE HIM AS A DEMONIC MONSTER. JUDAS, NO DOUBT, IS BRIGHT, AND HE IS NOT AFTER JUST 30 PIECES OF SILVER. HE IS AFTER A PART OF A KINGDOM. IT SEEMS THAT WHEN HE COMPREHENDS THAT JESUS IS NOT GOING TO BRING IN THE KINGDOM HE TRIES TO FORCE HIS HAND BY BETRAYING HIM.

IT IS PASSEOVER. THE MOON IS FULL; YET THEY COME WITH LANTERNS, BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY WILL HAVE TO SEARCH FOR JESUS IN DARK HIDING PLACES. INSTEAD HE PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THEM. THEY ARE IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS, AND THE LIGHT THEY BRING IS NOT ENOUGH FOR THEM TO COMPREHEND WHO HE IS. THIS SIGNIFIES THAT OUR HUMAN WAYS CANNOT REVEAL TO US THE FACE OF GOD, II COR. 4:3 - 4,6. NIGHT AND DARKNESS IN JOHN OFTEN SYMBOLIZES SPIRITUAL DARKNESS. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE TRUE LIGHT WITH THEM. THEY HAVE ONLY ARTIFICIAL LIGHT. IT IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE THAT THEY COME WITH LANTERNS AND TORCHES TO ARREST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

IN VERSE 4, JESUS ASKS, “WHOM DO YOU SEEK?” HE IS MAKING THEM IDENTIFY HIM SO THAT HIS DISCIPLES CAN GO FREE.

IN VERSE 5, THEY ANSWER, “JESUS THE NAZARENE.” JESUS ANSWERS, “I AM.” THIS IS THE “I AM” OF EXODUS 3:14. NOTICE AGAIN JOHN’S USE OF THE “I AM.” THE OVERPOWERING PRESENCE OF JESUS IS SO STRONG THEY CAN NOT STAND. THEY FALL BACKWARD TO THE GROUND. THIS SIGNIFIES THE ROYAL POWER OF KING JESUS. NOTICE THEY DID NOT FALL FORWARD IN WORSHIP. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS ONE DAY ALL WILL FALL BEFORE HIM TO CONFESS THAT HE IS LORD, PHIL. 2:7 - 11. A SECOND TIME HE ASKS THEM THE QUESTION. JOHN WANTS HIS READERS TO KNOW THAT IN ALL THESE EVENTS JESUS IS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL.

PETER DRAWS HIS SWORD, SLASHES AWAY AND ALMOST STARTS A BATTLE. JESUS TELLS THE DISCIPLES TO LEAVE. EVERYTHING IS MOVING AT SUCH LIGHTNING SPEED THEY HARDLY KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING.

II. JESUS’ TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH HIGH COURT 18:12-27

PETER AND PROBABLY JOHN, FOLLOW THE ARRESTING OFFICERS TO ANNAS’ OFFICE. JOHN IS THE ONLY GOSPEL THAT TELLS US THIS FACT. EVIDENTLY JOHN IS THE DISCIPLE WHO KNOWS ANNAS OR SOMEONE IN HIS HOUSEHOLD WHO LETS HIM INSIDE. ANNAS IS REALLY THE POWER BEHIND THE HIGH

PRIEST'S OFFICE. FIVE OF HIS SONS HAD HELD THE HIGH PRIEST'S OFFICE, AND HIS SON-IN-LAW, CAIAPHAS, BY ROMAN APPROVAL, IS HIGH PRIEST AT THIS TIME.

VERSE 17 IS PETER'S DENIAL OF CHRIST. THE QUESTION THE YOUNG MAID ASKS PETER IMPLIES IN THE GREEK A NEGATIVE ANSWER.

VERSE 18 SHOWS THE COLDNESS OF PETER'S COURAGE. HE HAS TO WARM BY THE FIRE. PETER HAD FOUGHT IN THE FLESH IN THE GARDEN, AND HE CONTINUES FIGHTING IN THE FLESH IN THE COURTYARD. HE CONTINUES TO DENY.

THE LESSON THAT PETER MUST LEARN IS THAT HE CANNOT DEPEND UPON THE ARM OF THE FLESH TO KEEP HIMSELF TRUE TO JESUS. HE MUST LEARN TO DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT. TO THIS POINT PETER HAS NOT COMPREHENDED THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH NOR THE NEED FOR THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS LIFE. JUST BEFORE THIS JESUS TALKED ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT WHOM HE WOULD SEND TO EMPOWER THEM. PETER IS NORMALLY BOLD. HE IS THE LEADER AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE DISCIPLES. HE HAD JUST DECLARED THAT HE WILL BE TRUE, BUT SATAN PUTS HIM IN THE PALM OF A LITTLE MAIDEN AND SIFTS HIM LIKE SAND THROUGH HER FINGERS.

THE SECOND LESSON THAT PETER MUST LEARN IS THE POWER OF SATAN. HUMAN STRENGTH IS NOT A MATCH FOR

THE ACCUSER. SATAN IS CALLED THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE PEOPLE SIMPLY ASK PETER THE QUESTION, SATAN TAKES THE QUESTION, TWISTS IT AND ACCUSES PETER OF BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS.

THERE IS ALSO A PICTURE OF ANNAS HERE. HE IS THE POWER BEHIND THE OFFICE OF HIGH PRIEST. JESUS AT THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE HAD HIT THE HIGH PRIEST'S HOUSEHOLD WHERE IT HURTS THE MOST, RIGHT IN THE POCKET BOOK. ANNAS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A PERSON WHO WILL GO TO ANY ENDS TO DESTROY AND MURDER, IF THAT IS WHAT IT TAKES TO PROTECT HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS.

JESUS' TRIAL IS A FARCE, A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE. IN VERSES 19-23, JESUS TELLS THE HIGH PRIEST TO EXAMINE HIM LEGALLY AND PROPERLY. THE TRIAL IS ILLEGAL IN ALMOST EVERY DETAIL. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS AT NIGHT, JESUS IS ASSUMED GUILTY, AND IS NOT ALLOWED A DEFENSE.

III. JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE 18:28-40

IN VERSES 28-40, PILATE COMPROMISES HIS CONSCIENCE. THE JEWISH LEADERS PRESSURE HIM TO BREAK THE LAW. THEY DEMAND HE PRONOUNCE THE DEATH SENTENCE ON JESUS WITHOUT A TRIAL. THE JEWS HATE PILATE. AND PILATE HATES THE JEWS. THEY HAVE MADE HIS LIFE MISERABLE. THEY HAVE REBELLED AGAINST EVERYTHING THAT HE HAS TRIED TO ACCOMPLISH. IT IS PASSOVER; HE IS A GENTILE; AND IF THEY GO INTO HIS HALL THEY WILL BE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN. SO, HE COMES OUT TO THEM.

THEIR CHARGE AGAINST JESUS IN THE JEWISH COURT WILL NOT HOLD UP IN THE ROMAN COURT. SO FROM THEIR REPERTOIRE OF HATE THEY INVENT A NEW CHARGE. THEY CHARGE HIM WITH CLAIMING TO BE A KING.

PILATE ASKS JESUS IF HE IS A KING, AND JESUS ANSWERS PILATE BY ASKING HIM IF HE MEANS THIS IN A ROMAN SENSE OR IN A JEWISH SENSE. PILATE UNDERSTANDS THAT JESUS IS NOT A POLITICAL KING. BUT HE IS CAUGHT LIKE A FLY IN THE JEWISH WEB.

IN 18:33- 19:15, PILATE GOES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN JESUS AND THE JEWS AT LEAST SEVEN TIMES. PROBABLY THERE IS NOT A MORE DIFFICULT REGION IN THE WHOLE ROMAN EMPIRE TO GOVERN THAN PALESTINE. PILATE MUST HAVE HAD THE REPUTATION THAT HE COULD HANDLE THESE DIFFICULT PEOPLE. HE BECAME GOVERNOR IN 26 A.D. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING HE SHOWED COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR THE JEWS. ON THE TOP OF THE ROMAN SOLDIERS' STANDARDS WERE LITTLE BUSTS OF CAESAR. THESE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE REMOVED BEFORE ENTERING JERUSALEM, BECAUSE OF THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST GRAVEN IMAGES. PILATE REFUSED TO COMMAND HIS SOLDIERS TO REMOVE THE IMAGES. PILATE IS HARDHEADED AND HARDHEARTED.

PILATE KNOWS THE CUSTOMS. HE KNOWS THAT IT IS CUSTOMARY TO RELEASE A PRISONER AT THIS SEASON. HE HOPES HE CAN RELEASE JESUS. INSTEAD THE JEWS SCREAM FOR HIM TO CRUCIFY JESUS AND RELEASE THE INSURRECTION-IST, BARABBAS. THE NAME BARABBAS MEANS SON OF THE FATHER OR SON OF THE RABBI. EVIDENTLY, HE IS THE SON OF A WELL KNOWN MAN OR RABBI. BARABBAS, IN THE THEOLOGICAL SENSE REPRESENTS EACH ONE OF US, FOR HE IS RELEASED AND JESUS IS CRUCIFIED. JESUS IS THE SON OF THE REAL ETERNAL FATHER.



JOHN 19

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED

I. JESUS IS RIDICULED BY THE SOLDIERS 19:1 - 3

**II. JESUS IS DECLARED NOT GUILTY BY PILATE
19:4 - 14**

**III. JESUS IS REJECTED BY THE JEWISH LEADERS
19:15**

IV. JESUS IS CRUCIFIED BY THE ROMANS 19:16 - 37

V. JESUS IS BURIED BY TWO DISCIPLES 19:38 - 42

I. JESUS IS RIDICULED BY THE SOLDIERS 19:1 - 3

JOHN 19:1 - 16 IS A CONTINUATION OF JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE. PILATE ATTEMPTS TO SATISFY THE JEWISH LEADERS' LUST FOR BLOOD BY HAVING JESUS SCOURGED. SCOURGING WAS THE FIRST STAGE OF CRUCIFIXION. IT WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER THE SENTENCING. HERE IT TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE SENTENCING BECAUSE PILATE'S HANDS ARE RACING UP AND DOWN THE KEYBOARD OF POLITICS TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT NOTE TO RELEASE JESUS. HE HOPES THAT THE SCOURGING WOULD BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY THE JEWS. SCOURGING WAS DONE WITH A MULTIPLE THONG WHIP. THESE THINGS HAD PIECES OF BONE AND IRON TIED INTO THEM WHICH DUG INTO THE MUSCLES, PENETRATED THE VEINS AND ARTERIES AND TORE OUT CHUNKS OF FLESH. SOME MEN DIED. SOME WENT MAD. JESUS ROSE UP IN HIS RIGHT MIND. THE SOLDIERS

PUT A CROWN OF THORNS ON JESUS' HEAD, A PURPLE ROBE AROUND HIS SHOULDERS, HIT HIM IN THE FACE AND HAILED HIM KING OF THE JEWS. JOHN DOES NOT ELABORATE ON JESUS' GREAT PAIN AND SUFFERING. HE SIMPLY STATES THE FACTS. JESUS STOOD UP, A MASS OF RAW FLESH AND BLOOD. HE IS ALSO PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED, BECAUSE OF NO SLEEP THE NIGHT BEFORE.

II. JESUS IS DECLARED NOT GUILTY BY PILATE 19:4- 14

IN VERSE 4, PILATE DECLARES NO FAULT IN JESUS. THIS MAKES THE SCOURGING ILLEGAL. PILATE'S PHRASE IN VERSE 5, "LOOK, THE MAN," PROBABLY MEANS SEE THE MAGNIFICENT SPIRIT WITHIN HIM. THE JEWISH LEADERS FRIGHTEN PILATE WHEN THEY TELL HIM THAT JESUS CLAIMED TO BE THE SON OF GOD. PILATE HAS THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING VERY UNUSUAL IS HAPPENING, BUT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS. THE GREEKS AND ROMANS BELIEVED IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE GODS TO COME IN HUMAN FORM. EVEN PILATE ASKS JESUS IF HE IS FROM ABOVE. JESUS DOES NOT ANSWER. HE DOES NOT ANSWER WHEN A MAN IS COMPROMISING HIS CONSCIENCE. PILATE CANNOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS WILL NOT ANSWER. ASTONISHED THAT JESUS IS NOT BEGGING FOR MERCY. HE REMINDS JESUS OF THE ROMAN AUTHORITY HE WIELDS EITHER TO RELEASE OR TO CRUCIFY HIM. IN VERSE 11, JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT GOD'S ULTIMATE AUTHORITY OVER THE WORLD OF MANKIND. PILATE DOES NOT KNOW IT, BUT HE HAS COLLIDED HEAD-ON WITH ULTIMATE REALTY.

III. JESUS IS REJECTED BY THE JEWISH LEADERS 19:15

IN VERSE 15, THE JEWISH LEADERS SHOUT, "WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR." PILATE IS SHOCKED, FOR ALL THE PREVIOUS PROBLEMS HE HAD WITH THEM AROSE FROM THEIR REJECTION OF CAESAR. WITH THIS PROCLAMATION THEY GIVE UP THEIR MESSIANIC HOPES. THEY GIVE UP GOD AS THEIR KING.

IV. JESUS IS CRUCIFIED BY THE ROMANS 19:16-37

JOHN 19:17-30 RECORDS THAT PILATE WOULD NOT LET THE JEWS FORGET THEIR CHARGE AGAINST JESUS. HE WRITES JESUS' CRIME ON A PLACARD AND PLACES IT OVER THE CROSS, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." VERSE 20 SAYS THAT IT WAS READ BY MANY JEWS. THAT WAS BECAUSE JEWS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WERE AT THE PASSOVER FEAST. THE CHIEF PRIESTS OF THE JEWS IN VERSE 21, AS RECORDED IN THE GREEK TEXT, SAY TO PILATE, "WRITE NOT, THE KING OF THE JEWS, BUT THAT HE SAID, KING I AM OF THE JEWS." AGAIN JOHN EMPHASIZES ONE OF JESUS' "I AM" STATEMENTS. THIS TIME IT IS IN THE MOUTHS OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS.

THE TITLE WAS WRITTEN IN THREE LANGUAGES: HEBREW THE LANGUAGE OF REVEALED RELIGION, GREEK THE LANGUAGE OF CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY AND LATIN THE LANGUAGE OF LAW AND GOVERNMENT. PILATE WRITES MORE THAN HE KNOWS, FOR JESUS IS THE KING OF KINGS. HE IS THE KING OF ALL RELIGION, THE KING OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION AND THE KING OF LAW AND GOVERNMENT. THE TITLE ALSO SPEAKS OF THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN, FOR SIN IS IN ALL THREE. THE PLACARD IS CARRIED IN

FRONT OF THE SQUARE OF FOUR SOLDIERS AROUND JESUS ONE IN FRONT, ONE BEHIND AND ONE ON EACH SIDE.

THE SOLDIERS AT THE CROSS FULFILL PROPHECY WHEN THEY GAMBLE FOR JESUS' ROBE AND GIVE HIM THE VINEGAR, Ps. 22:18 AND Ps. 69:21. THEY ALSO FULFILL PROPHECY WHEN THEY PIERCE HIS SIDE AND DO NOT BREAK ANY OF HIS BONES, Ps. 34:20; Ex. 12:46 AND ZECH. 12:10.

JESUS ON THE CROSS IN THE MIDST OF ALL THE PAIN SEES HIS MOTHER AND HIS DISCIPLE JOHN. HE COMMITS HIS MOTHER INTO JOHN'S CARE.

JESUS KNOWS THE SCRIPTURES ARE FULFILLED. HE HAS COMPLETED HIS WORK. IN VERSE 30, HE SAYS, "τετελεσται" (TETELESTI) "IT HAS BEEN FINISHED." THIS WORD WAS USED IN BUSINESS MEANING THE PRICE IS PAID IN FULL. SHEPHERDS USED IT WHEN THEY FOUND A LAMB THAT WAS PERFECT. SERVANTS USED IT WHEN THEY REPORTED TO THEIR MASTER THAT THEIR WORK WAS COMPLETED.

THE SOLDIERS POUR VINEGAR IN A SPONGE AND PUSH IT UP TO HIM WITH A HYSSOP. IN EX. 12:22, HYSSOP WAS USED TO PUT THE BLOOD ON THE DOOR POSTS AT THE PASSOVER. THE MENTION OF HYSSOP IS JOHN'S WAY OF SAYING THAT JESUS IS THE GREAT PASSOVER LAMB OF GOD.

THE ROMANS WERE EXTREMELY CRUEL IN THEIR PUNISH

MENTS. WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED A MAN THEY LEFT HIM ON THE CROSS. SOMETIMES IT TOOK DAYS FOR A MAN TO DIE. SOME WENT STARK RAVING MAD FROM THE PAIN, THE AGONY OF THE THIRST AND THE INFECTED WOUNDS.

THE JEWISH LAW MORE MERCIFUL STATED THAT WHEN A PERSON WAS HUNG ON A TREE HE HAD TO BE BURIED BEFORE NIGHT, DEUTERONOMY 21:22 - 23. THESE MEN COULD NOT BE LEFT ON THE CROSSES OVER THE SABBATH. IN ORDER TO HASTEN THESE CRIMINAL'S DEATHS THEY SMASH THEIR LEGS WITH WOODEN MALLETS. THE SHOCK OF SMASHING THE LEGS KILL THEM OR THEY SUFFOCATE BECAUSE THEY CAN NOT PUSH UP WITH THEIR FEET TO GET AIR INTO THEIR LUNGS.

WHEN THEY COME TO JESUS HE IS ALREADY DEAD; SO, THEY PIERCE HIS SIDE WITH A SPEAR, THUS FULFILLING THE SCRIPTURE, NUMBERS 9:12 AND ZECHARIAH 12:10. WHEN THEY PIERCE HIS SIDE BLOOD AND WATER COME OUT. JOHN SHOWS JESUS' HUMANITY. HE IS PROBABLY COMBATING THE EARLY PHASES OF GNOSTICISM. JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD AS JOHN SAY IN 1:29. HIS BLOOD IS THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT. THE WATER MAY REPRESENT THE WATER OF THE WORD OR THE WATER OF BAPTISM THAT A BELIEVER GOES THROUGH IN IDENTIFYING WITH JESUS' DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

V. JESUS IS BURIED BY TWO DISCIPLES 19:38-42

IN JOHN 19:37-42, JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA, A SECRET DISCIPLE OF JESUS, COMES AND ASKS FOR THE BODY OF JESUS. NICODEMUS ALSO COMES WITH SPICES TO PREPARE THE BODY OF JESUS FOR BURIAL. THESE MEN ARE PROBABLY BOTH ON THE SANHEDRIN. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THEY WERE PRESENT OR ABSENT DURING THE MEETINGS OF THE SANHEDRIN WHEN ALL THE PREVIOUS EVENTS TOOK PLACE. BEFORE JESUS DEATH THEY WERE SECRET DISCIPLES; WHEREAS, AFTER HIS DEATH THEY SEEM TO BE PUBLIC DISCIPLES. THIS IS PUZZLING. WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO BE THE DISCIPLE OF A DEAD MAN? YET ALL OVER THE WORLD DISCIPLES OF DEAD RELIGIOUS LEADERS MAKE PILGRIMAGES TO THEIR TOMBS.

JOHN STATES THE TRUTH OF THE CROSS IN 12:32. JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS DRAWS PEOPLE OF FAITH. THE CROSS TO SOME PEOPLE IS RIDICULOUS. TO OTHERS IT IS A STUMBLING BLOCK. BUT TO MEN OF FAITH IT IS A SPIRITUAL MAGNET.

JOHN 20

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

I. JOHN SEES THE EVIDENCE AND BELIEVES 20:1 - 10

II. MARY SEES THE LORD AND BELIEVES 20:11 - 18

III. THE DISCIPLES SEE THE LORD AND BELIEVE

20:19 - 25

IV. THOMAS SEES THE LORD AND BELIEVES 20:26 - 29

V. JOHN WRITES THAT WE MIGHT SEE AND BELIEVE

20:30 - 31

I. JOHN SEES THE EVIDENCE AND BELIEVES 20:1 - 10

THIS PASSAGE RECORDS THE FIRST EVENTS OF THE RESURRECTION MORNING. THREE DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE CRUCIFIXION, AND THE DISCIPLES THINK JESUS IS DEAD. MARY MAGDALENE COMES TO THE TOMB WHILE IT IS STILL DARK AND FINDS THE TOMB EMPTY. SHE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO; SO, SHE HURRIES TO GET PETER AND JOHN. PETER AND JOHN RUN TO THE TOMB AND SEE THAT IT IS EMPTY.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE ARE TYPES WHICH ARE LIKE SHADOWS OF THE REALITY TO COME. ONE OF THE BEST TYPES OF CHRIST AND THE RESURRECTION IS IN GEN. 22. IT IS THE RECORD OF GOD CALLING ABRAHAM TO OFFER ISAAC AS A SACRIFICE TO HIM. IT TOOK THREE DAYS FOR ABRAHAM AND ISAAC TO TRAVEL TO MOUNT MORIAH WHERE THE SACRIFICE WAS TO BE MADE.

ISAAC WAS DEAD FOR THREE DAYS IN ABRAHAM'S MIND, BECAUSE HE HAD ALL READY GIVEN HIM TO GOD. ON THE THIRD DAY GOD RESTORED THE LIFE OF ISAAC BY PROVIDING A RAM FOR THE SACRIFICE, HEB. 11:17-19.

JEWISH LAW REQUIRED TWO MALE WITNESSES TO ESTABLISH A FACT. PETER AND JOHN, THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED, ARE THESE TWO WITNESSES.

VERSES 6-8 DESCRIBE JOHN SEEING THE GRAVE CLOTHES LYING AS IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN UNWRAPPED AND THE HEAD PIECE FOLDED AND LYING IN A SEPARATE PLACE BY ITSELF. JOHN REALIZES THAT IF THIEVES HAD STOLEN THE BODY OF JESUS THEY WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT IT IN THIS MANNER. THE IDEA IMPLIED IN THE TEXT IS THAT JESUS SIMPLY PASSED THROUGH THEM. JOHN SEES AND BELIEVES, VERSE 8.

II. MARY SEES THE LORD AND BELIEVES 20:11-18

AS WE HAVE SEEN MARY MAGDALENE, OUT OF WHOM LUKE SAYS JESUS CAST SEVEN DEVILS, IS THE FIRST TO COME TO THE TOMB. IT IS STILL DARK. SHE SEE THAT THE STONE HAS BEEN MOVED FROM THE DOOR OF THE TOMB; SO, SHE RUNS TO GET PETER AND JOHN. PETER AND JOHN PROBABLY OUT RUN HER AND COME TO THE TOMB FIRST. THEY SEE THAT IT IS EMPTY, AND THEY LEAVE. MARY MAGDALENE PROBABLY CATCHES UP WITH THEM AND STAYS AT THE TOMB. SHE IS WEEPING AND STOOPING DOWN LOOKS INTO THE TOMB. SHE SEES TWO

ANGELS SITTING AT THE PLACE WHERE JESUS WAS LAID. ONE IS WHERE HIS HEAD WAS AND THE OTHER WHERE HIS FEET WERE. SHE THEN TURNS AROUND AND SEES SOMEONE STANDING BEHIND HER. SHE THINKS IT IS THE GARDENER. THIS IS A VERY TENDER PASSAGE. THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED GRIEF WILL FEEL ITS MOOD AND UNDERSTAND HER FEELING.

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM WORLD WAR II CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF THE MOOD OF THIS PASSAGE. A SOLDIER WAS REPORTED KILLED IN ACTION. THE PARENTS HAD A MEMORIAL SERVICE. THERE, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN A MISTAKE. ANOTHER YOUNG MAN BY THE SAME NAME HAD BEEN KILLED IN ACTION AND THE WRONG FAMILY HAD BEEN NOTIFIED. THIS YOUNG MAN WAS GIVEN A LEAVE AFTER MONTHS IN COMBAT. HE DECIDED HE WOULD SURPRISE HIS FOLKS. SO HE CAME IN ON THE BUS. HIS DAD'S SHOE SHOP WAS JUST A FEW DOORS FROM THE BUS STATION; SO, HE WALKED THERE QUICKLY. HIS DAD WAS BENT OVER A BUFFER. HE SAID, "DAD." THE OLD MAN STOPPED FOR JUST A SECOND. AGAIN HE SAID, "DAD." THIS TIME HE PAUSED ONLY FOR A INSTANT. THE THIRD TIME HE SAID, "DAD" AND HE PUT HIS HAND ON HIS SHOULDER. GRIEF TURNED TO WONDERFUL JOY.

WHEN JESUS CALLS HER NAME GRIEF DIES TO JOY. SHE DOES NOT SEE HIM THROUGH HER TEARS, BUT WHEN HE CALLS HER NAME SHE KNOWS HIM. THIS IS A GREAT PICTURE OF THE PASSAGE, "MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE."

THERE IS AN UNUSUAL SAYING IN VERSE 17. JESUS SAYS, "TOUCH ME NOT, FOR I HAVE NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER." IN CONTRAST TO THIS IN VERSE 27 HE SAYS TO THOMAS, "BRING YOUR HAND AND PUT IT INTO MY SIDE." IN VERSE 17 THE TENSE OF THE VERB IS PRESENT IMPERATIVE AND MEANS "STOP HOLDING ON TO ME." SHE IS SELFISHLY CLINGING TO HIM. HE IS STILL LIMITED TO ONE PLACE, BUT WHEN HE IS ASCENDED AND COMES TO THEM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS HE PROMISED IN JOHN 14, HE IS NOT BE LIMITED TO ONE PLACE. A SPIRITUAL LESSON IS THAT WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO CLING TO JESUS FOR OURSELVES AND FORGET TO GO AND TELL. SHE GOES AND TELLS PETER AND JOHN IN THE EMERGENCY OF SEEING THE STONE ROLLED AWAY, BUT WHEN SHE FINDS JESUS SHE WANTS TO STAY THERE FOREVER. PETER HAD RESPONDED THE SAME WAY ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

III. THE DISCIPLES SEE THE LORD AND BELIEVE 20:19-25

VERSE 17 RECORDS THE FIRST TIME JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES HIS BRETHREN. HE IS ESTABLISHING THE REALITY OF A NEW FELLOWSHIP BY THE COVENANT OF HIS BLOOD AND THE POWER OF HIS PRESENCE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

VERSE 19 SAYS THAT THE DISCIPLES WERE AFRAID OF THE JEWISH LEADERS. THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE NOT GOING TO ADMIT TO THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. THE DISCIPLES PROBABLY THINK THEY WILL BE CHARGED WITH GRAVE ROBBERY.

IT IS AT THIS MOMENT THAT JESUS APPEARS TO THEM. HE

GIVES THEM HIS PEACE, COMMISSIONS THEM TO GO AS HIS REPRESENTATIVES AND EMPOWERS THEM FOR THEIR WITNESSING MINISTRY. VERSE 22 SAYS, "AND HAVING SAID THIS, HE BREATHED INTO THEM, AND SAID, 'RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.'" JUST AS CHRIST ENTERED HIS MINISTRY ANOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT; SO, HIS DISCIPLES ENTERED THEIR MINISTRY ANOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. ARTHUR PINK POINTS OUT THAT THE WORD "BREATHED" IN VERSE 22 DOES NOT OCCUR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT IS THE SAME WORD USED BY THE TRANSLATORS OF THE SEPTUAGINT IN GENESIS 2:7 WHERE IT SAYS THAT GOD "BREATHED" INTO MAN THE BREATH OF LIFE AND HE BECAME A LIVING SOUL. THIS IS THE ORIGINAL CREATION. WHEN JESUS BREATHES INTO HIS DISCIPLES THE HOLY SPIRIT, HE IS IMPARTING TO THEM HIS VERY LIFE. THIS IS HIS FIRST DEED AFTER THE RESURRECTION. WE GENERALLY ASSUME THAT THE EMPOWERMENT FOR THEIR TASK OF WITNESS DID NOT COME UNTIL PENTECOST. IT IS, HOWEVER, EVIDENT THAT IT COMES RIGHT HERE IN VERSE 22.

IV. THOMAS SEES THE LORD AND BELIEVES 20:26-29

THOMAS MADE THE MISTAKE OF NOT BEING WITH THE OTHER DISCIPLES WHEN JESUS APPEARED TO THEM. THE NATURE OF THOMAS IS ALWAYS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND A LITTLE SKEPTICAL. THOMAS IS HONEST. HE DOES NOT PRETEND TO BELIEVE, BUT WHEN THE EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED HE BELIEVES. SOME PEOPLE WILL NOT BELIEVE EVIDENCE EVEN WHEN THEY SEE IT. NOT THOMAS, HE IS AN HONEST DOUBTER.

VERSE 26 SAYS, AFTER EIGHT DAYS JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES AGAIN. THIS TIME THOMAS IS WITH THEM. HE SEE JESUS AND BELIEVES. THE NUMBER EIGHT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT HERE. THE NUMBER EIGHT IN SCRIPTURE MEANS A NEW BEGINNING. THIS IS CERTAINLY A NEW BEGINNING FOR THOMAS AND THE DISCIPLES.

V. JOHN WRITES THAT WE MAY BELIEVE 20:30-31

VERSES 30-31 CONTAIN THE KEY TO THE BOOK OF JOHN. WE HAVE DEALT WITH THIS PASSAGE IN THE INTRODUCTION UNDER THE PURPOSE OF JOHN'S WRITING.

JOHN 21

I. JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES AT TIBERIAS

21:1-14

II. JESUS COMMISSIONS PETER 21:15-23

III. JOHN'S WITNESS AUTHENTICATED 21:24-25

I. JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES AT TIBERIAS

21:1-14

TIBERIAS, GALILEE AND GENNESARET ARE ALL THE SAME SEA WITH DIFFERENT NAMES. SEVEN DISCIPLES ARE AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS FISHING WHEN JESUS APPEARS TO THEM. THEY HAVE FISHED ALL NIGHT AND CAUGHT NOTHING. NIGHT FISHING WAS COMMON ON TIBERIAS. IN VERSE 3, PETER'S STATEMENT, "I GO TO FISH," SEEMS TO IMPLY THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHICH DIRECTION IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM HE SHOULD TAKE. IT IS NIGHT, AND JESUS IS NOT WITH THEM. THIS MAY SIGNIFY THEIR SPIRITUAL DARKNESS. THEY FISH ALL NIGHT WITHOUT JESUS AND CATCH NOTHING. THIS MAY SIGNIFY THEIR FRUITLESSNESS. THEY HAD BEEN CALLED TO BE FISHERS OF MEN, BUT THEY CANNOT EVEN CATCH FISH WHICH THEY WERE TRAINED TO DO. THE MORNING COMES AND JESUS IS ON THE SEASHORE. THE DISCIPLES AT FIRST DO NOT RECOGNIZE HIM. HE CALLS TO THEM AND ASKS IF THEY HAVE CAUGHT ANY FISH. THEY ANSWER, "NO," AND HE TELLS THEM TO CAST THEIR NETS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SHIP. WHEN THEY DO, THE NET IS SO FULL THEY DO NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DRAW IT IN. THIS IS WHEN JOHN REALIZES JESUS AND SAYS TO PETER, "IT

IS THE LORD.” PETER IS SO EXCITED, HE JUMPS INTO THE SEA AND SWIMS TO THE SHORE. THEY DRAW THE NET WHICH HAS 153 LARGE FISH IN IT. THE NET IS NOT TORN EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE MANY LARGE FISH. THE 153 FISH IS SIGNIFICANT, BECAUSE IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THERE WERE 153 NATIONS IN THE WORLD AT THAT TIME. THEY WERE CALLED TO BE FISHERS OF MEN IN EVERY NATION. THE FACT THAT THEIR NET DID NOT BREAK SIGNIFIES THAT THE GOSPEL HOLDS SECURE.

II. JESUS COMMISSIONS PETER 21:15-23

AFTER THEY HAVE EATEN, JESUS SAYS TO SIMON PETER, “DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?” THIS CONVERSATION IS RELATED TO PETER’S DENIAL OF JESUS AT THE TRIAL. JESUS PUTS HIS FINGER DIRECTLY ON THE PROBLEM. PETER DENIED JESUS BECAUSE HE DID NOT LOVE HIM ENOUGH. HE IS TRYING TO TEACH PETER THAT LOVE MUST COME FROM GOD NOT FROM THE FLESH. JESUS USES THE WORD “AGAPE” WHEN HE ASKS PETER, “DO YOU LOVE ME?” PETER ANSWERS, “I HAVE AFFECTION FOR YOU,” OR “I HAVE BROTHERLY LOVE FOR YOU.” THIS IS THE GREEK WORD “PHILIO.” JESUS THEN TELLS HIM, “FEED MY LAMBS.” JESUS ASKS PETER A SECOND TIME, “DO YOU LOVE ME?” AGAIN HE USES THE WORD “AGAPE” (LOVE). PETER AGAIN ANSWERS, “YOU KNOW I HAVE BROTHERLY LOVE FOR YOU.” HE WILL NOT USE THE SAME WORD THAT JESUS USES FOR LOVE. HE IS NOT GOING TO BOAST AS HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST ABOUT HIS LOVE FOR JESUS. JESUS THEN SAYS TO HIM, “SHEPHERD MY SHEEP.” THEN THE THIRD TIME, JESUS ASKS, “DO YOU HAVE BROTHERLY LOVE FOR ME?” THIS TIME, JESUS USES THE SAME

WORD FOR LOVE WHICH PETER HAS USED IN HIS ANSWERS. THIS TIME, JESUS SAYS, "FEED MY SHEEP." THREE TIMES JESUS HAS ASKED PETER IF HE LOVES HIM, ONE TIME FOR EACH TIME THAT PETER HAD DENIED HIM. THIS IS A DEMAND FOR DEVOTION, AND GIVES PETER HIS COMMISSION AS THE GREAT UNDERSHEPHERD.

A FEW VERSES LATER JESUS PREDICTS THAT THE DEATH OF PETER WOULD GLORIFY GOD. PETER'S DEATH WOULD GLORIFY HIS MASTER. TRADITION TELLS US THAT PETER WAS CRUCIFIED UPSIDE DOWN, BECAUSE HE DID NOT FEEL WORTHY TO BE CRUCIFIED AS HIS LORD. IN THE LAST PART OF THIS CHAPTER, JESUS TELLS PETER TO SIMPLY FOLLOW HIM AND NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO JOHN. THE PHRASE, "YOU FOLLOW ME," LITERALLY MEANS ACCOMPANY OR TRAVEL WITH ME. THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH HERE IS JESUS TELLS PETER TO WALK WITH HIM IN HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE.

JOHN IN VERSE 23, EVIDENTLY CORRECTS THE MISINFORMATION BEING PASSED THAT JESUS HAD SAID JOHN WOULD NOT DIE UNTIL CHRIST'S RETURN.

III. JOHN'S WITNESS AUTHENTICATED 21:24-25

THIS SEEMS TO BE AN ADDITION BY A DISCIPLE OF JOHN TO AUTHENTICATE JOHN'S WRITING. IN VERSE 24, IT SAYS, "WE KNOW THAT HIS WITNESS IS TRUE." THE BOOK ENDS STATING THAT THE ACCOUNTS IN THE BOOK ARE SELECTED FROM THE DEEDS WHICH JESUS DID, AND IF ALL OF HIS DEEDS WERE RECORDED THE WORLD COULD NOT CONTAIN THE BOOK.

ACTS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS IT IS IMPERATIVE TO HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE YOU READ THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS IS “ACTS OF APOSTLES” OR “ACTS OF APOSTOLIC MEN.” ACTS COULD ALSO BE CALLED “THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,” OR “THE GREAT COMMISSION BOOK,” BECAUSE IT INSTRUCTS THE BELIEVER CONCERNING:

- 1. THE CONTINUING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT,**
- 2. THE RECORD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST, AND**
- 3. THE TRACING OF THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME.**

AUTHORSHIP

THERE ARE THREE REFERENCES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO LUKE THE PHYSICIAN AND COLLEAGUE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL, COLOSSIANS 4:14, PHILEMON 1:24 AND 2 TIMOTHY 4:11.

LUKE, PROBABLY A GENTILE, IS ONE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MOST FAITHFUL FRIENDS. THE CONCLUSION THAT HE IS A GENTILE IS DRAWN FROM COLOSSIANS 4:11 - 14. COLOSSIANS 4:11 IS THE CONCLUSION OF A LIST OF GREETINGS FROM JEWISH PEOPLE WHO ARE WITH PAUL. VERSE 12 STARTS A NEW LIST WHICH WE ASSUME IS COMPOSED OF GENTILE CHRISTIANS. LUKE'S NAME IS INCLUDED IN THIS LIST, VERSE 14. IF LUKE IS A GENTILE, THEN HE IS PROBABLY THE ONLY GENTILE WRITER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

COLOSSIANS 4:14 ALSO REFERS TO LUKE THE PHYSICIAN. AS A PHYSICIAN HE USES SOME MEDICAL TERMS IN HIS WRITINGS. PRESENT SCHOLARS DO NOT PLACE AS MUCH EMPHASIS ON THIS AS SCHOLARS OF THE PAST; HOWEVER, IT STILL HAS SOME VALIDITY. IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, PROBABLY WRITTEN BEFORE ACTS, HE USES SEVERAL WORDS THAT A PHYSICIAN MIGHT HAVE USED. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT IN LUKE 4:35 HE USES THE MEDICAL WORD FOR CONVULSIONS. ALSO WHEN HE QUOTES JESUS' SAYING THAT IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO GET INTO HEAVEN, THE WORD HE USES FOR A NEEDLE IS A SURGEON'S NEEDLE; WHEREAS, THE OTHER WRITERS USE THE WORD FOR A HOUSEHOLD NEEDLE.

DATE OF WRITING

SCHOLARS GENERALLY AGREE THAT ACTS MUST HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BETWEEN 60 A.D. AND 85 A.D. DATING THE WRITING OF ACTS IS A DIFFICULT PROBLEM. ACTS PROBABLY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN EARLIER THAN 54 A.D., BECAUSE IN ACTS 11:28 THE REFERENCE TO THE FAMINE AND THE RULE OF CLAUDIUS SEEMS TO HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, AND WE KNOW THAT CLAUDIUS REIGNED FROM 41 - 54 A.D. SINCE NO EVENT IS REFERRED TO IN ACTS LATER THAN 62 A.D. IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT ACTS WAS WRITTEN BETWEEN 62 - 63 A.D. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT SOME SCHOLARS HAVE GIVEN DATES AS LATE AS 130 A.D. THE DATING OF ACTS, OF COURSE, IS RELATED TO THE DATING OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, BECAUSE LUKE SAYS HE HAS WRITTEN THEOPHILUS A PREVIOUS ACCOUNT OF THE THINGS JESUS DID AND TAUGHT. COMMENTARIES WILL GIVE YOU THE REASONS FOR THE VARIOUS DATES ASSIGNED TO ACTS.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

ACTS IS WRITTEN TO THEOPHILUS. THEOPHILUS COMES FROM TWO GREEK WORDS, θεος, "GOD" AND φιλεος, "LOVE" MEANING "ONE WHO LOVES GOD." THEOPHILUS MAY HAVE BEEN A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, FOR LUKE CALLS HIM "YOUR EXCELLENCY," 1:3, OR HE MAY HAVE BEEN A PERSON LUKE KNEW. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THE NAME THEOPHILUS STANDS FOR ANYONE WHO LOVES GOD.

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT LUKE WROTE HIS TWO VOLUMES, LUKE AND ACTS TO A ROMAN OFFICIAL DEMONSTRATING THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS THE TRUE RELIGION OF GOD, AND THAT LUKE USED THE NAME THEOPHILUS TO PROTECT THE OFFICIAL SINCE IT WAS POLITICALLY DANGEROUS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY LUKE WROTE ACTS:

- 1. TO SHOW THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS NOT DANGEROUS TO ROME,**
- 2. TO SHOW THAT CHRISTIANS WERE GOOD CITIZENS, (IF THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED CHRISTIANITY AS A SEPARATE RELIGION FROM JUDAISM, THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS PROBLEMS, FOR NEW RELIGIONS WERE ILLEGAL AND ROME WAS HOSTILE TO THEM.**
- 3. TO SHOW THAT CHRISTIANITY TRANSCENDED ALL NATIONAL AND RACIAL BARRIERS,**
- 4. TO CHALLENGE CHRISTIANS TO CARRY OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION, AND**
- 5. TO SHOW HOW CHRISTIANITY HAD REACHED FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME.**

DESIGN OF THE BOOK

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF ACTS SHOWS US THAT ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE WRITER IS TO TRACE THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME. ACTS FALLS NATURALLY INTO THREE DIVISIONS. EACH DIVISION SHOWS THE CHURCH FULFILLING THE TASKS RECORDED IN ACTS 1:8. CHAPTERS 1-7 SUMMARIZES THE WITNESS IN JERUSALEM, CHAPTERS 8-12 TRACE THE WITNESS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA AND CHAPTERS 13-28 TRACE THE WITNESS TO THE WORLD. THE BOOK COULD BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. CHAPTERS 1 - 7 THE CHURCH EMPOWERED**
- 2. CHAPTERS 8 - 12 THE CHURCH EVANGELIZING**
- 3. CHAPTERS 13 - 28 THE CHURCH EXPANDING**

THE BOOK COULD ALSO BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. CHAPTERS 1-12 DEMONSTRATE THAT JERUSALEM HAS BEEN THE CENTER OF OUTREACH FOR THE WITNESS TO THE JEWS IN PALESTINE, AND THAT PETER HAS BEEN THE PROMINENT PERSON. IN THE SECOND PART, CHAPTERS 13-28, ANTIOCH BECOMES THE CENTER OF OUTREACH AND PAUL BECOMES THE DOMINATE FIGURE. AT ANTIOCH THE WITNESS IS FIRST TO THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION AND THEN TO THE GENTILES.

ACTS IS ALSO DESIGNED AS A CONTINUATION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE PRESENTS WHAT JESUS DID WHILE HE WAS PHYSICALLY ON THE EARTH. LUKE SAYS IN ACTS 1:1 THAT HE WROTE IN HIS GOSPEL WHAT JESUS BEGAN BOTH

TO DO AND TO TEACH. IN ACTS, LUKE WRITES WHAT JESUS CONTINUED TO DO AND TEACH THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. THE BOOK OF ACTS IS A DIVINELY DIRECTED SELECTION OF SOME OF THESE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS IS A BRIDGE BOOK FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE EPISTLES. IF WE DID NOT HAVE THE BOOK OF ACTS WE WOULD KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE FORMATION AND THE ACTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH. EVEN WITH THIS BOOK WE HAVE A LIMITED HISTORICAL OVERVIEW, BECAUSE ACTS FOCUSES UPON THE MINISTRY OF PETER AND PAUL AND DOES NOT TRACE THE ACTIONS OF THE OTHER APOSTLES WHO ARE ALSO CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

THE KEY VERSE OF THE BOOK IS ACTS 1:8, "BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU; AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE END OF THE EARTH." (NKJV.)

J. SIDLOW BAXTER SUMMARIZES THE TRUTH OF THIS VERSE AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT,

2. THE SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT, AND
3. THE GEOGRAPHIC COMMITMENT.

BAXTER SAYS ACTS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

1. CHAPTERS 2-7 WITNESS IN JERUSALEM
2. CHAPTERS 8-12 WITNESS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA , AND
3. CHAPTERS 13-28 WITNESS IN THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH. (J. SIDLOW BAXTER, EXPLORE THE BOOK, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1976] VOL. 6, P. 11.)

IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF ACTS, LUKE COVERS THE 40 DAYS JESUS IS WITH THE DISCIPLES BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION AND THE 10 DAYS AFTER THE ASCENSION WHEN THE DISCIPLES WAIT FOR THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. DURING THE 40 DAYS JESUS IS WITH THEM, VERSE 3 SAYS HE TEACHES THEM CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

IN VERSE 6, THE DISCIPLES ASK THE QUESTION, “LORD, WILL YOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL?” THEY OBVIOUSLY ARE ASKING ABOUT THE FUTURE EVENT WHEN GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL AND JESUS REIGNS AS KING. LUKE IN HIS WRITINGS USES TWO PHRASES “KINGDOM OF GOD” AND “KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.” IT SEEMS THAT HE MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEM. JESUS ANSWERS THE DISCIPLES’ QUESTION SAYING THAT ONLY GOD THE FATHER KNOWS THE TIME, BUT UNTIL THAT TIME, THEY ARE TO FERVENTLY WITNESS IN THE WORLD.

LUKE WRITES THE FIRST FIFTEEN CHAPTERS OF ACTS IN THE THIRD PERSON, "THEY DID THUS AND SO." MOST OF THE REST OF THE BOOK HE WRITES IN FIRST PERSON, "WE DID THUS AND SO," INDICATING THAT HE IS AN EYE-WITNESS TO THE EVENTS.

LUKE WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE READER COMPREHENDS THAT JESUS IS ALIVE, ACTIVE AND WORKING IN THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

TEXT

ACTS 1

THE PROMISE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. JESUS COMMANDS THEM TO WAIT FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT 1:1-3**
- II. THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS FOR WITNESS 1:4-8**
- III. JESUS ASCENDS AND THE ANGELS PROMISE A COMING KING 1:9-11**
- IV. THE DISCIPLES PRAY AND OBEY 1:12-14**
- V. THE FATE OF THE TRAITOR 1:15-20**
- VI. THE APOSTLES SELECT A NEW APOSTLE 1:15-26**

AN OUTLINE OF ACTS 1:1-11 COULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

- I. THE RESURRECTION PROVED 1:1 - 3**
 - A. JESUS WALKED WITH THEM 1:3A**
 - B. JESUS TALKED WITH THEM 1:3 - 4**
 - 1. ABOUT THE KING'S KINGDOM 1:3 - 1**
 - 2. ABOUT THE KING'S GIFT 1:4**
- II. THE RESOURCE PROMISED 1:4 - 8**
 - A. PATIENCE IN WAITING 1:4 - 8**
 - B. PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER**
 - C. POWER IN WITNESS 1:8**
- III. THE RETURN PREDICTED 1:9 - 11**
 - A. RETURN TO REIGN**
 - B. RETURN TO RECEIVE HIS OWN (SEE JOHN 14)**

IN CHAPTER ONE LUKE RECORDS THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION OF JESUS. JUST AS JESUS ENTERS TIME AND SPACE, AS WE HUMANS KNOW IT, HE ALSO LEAVES IT AND NOW STANDS ABOVE IT, AND IS NOT LIMITED BY IT. THE ASCENSION WAS NECESSARY FOR JESUS' PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL HIS DISCIPLES THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES INTELLECTUALLY BEFORE HIS ASCENSION BY HIS TEACHINGS. HE PREPARES THEM EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY BY HIS RESURRECTION. AFTER HIS ASCENSION HE PREPARES THEM SPIRITUALLY BY EMPOWERING THEM WITH HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO DRAW A CLEAR CUT LINE BETWEEN THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. HOWEVER, FOR CERTAIN,

EVERYTHING THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES POINTS TO THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST. THROUGHOUT ACTS THE HOLY SPIRIT WITNESSES TO CHRIST.

IN CHAPTER ONE, LUKE RECORDS THE PROMISE JESUS MAKES TO THE DISCIPLES CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERING THEM TO WITNESS. A QUESTION PEOPLE OFTEN ASK IS, "WHEN DID THE HOLY SPIRIT COME INTO EXISTENCE?" THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT HE ALWAYS EXISTED. AN ANALOGY IS THAT ATOMIC POWER HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT BEEN UNTIL VERY RECENTLY THAT WE COULD USE IT. UNTIL RECENTLY, WE DID NOT EVEN KNOW IT EXISTED. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, BUT NOT UNTIL THE DAY OF PENTECOST DOES HE COME TO HIS PEOPLE WITH FULL POWER.

THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS IS TO EMPOWER THE DISCIPLES TO BE CHRIST'S WITNESSES. THESE SAME MEN WHO DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO WITNESS BEFORE PENTECOST, RECEIVED THE POWER AND COURAGE WHEN THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. WHO IS A WITNESS? A WITNESS IS ONE WHO TELLS ABOUT HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. IT IS MOST INTERESTING THAT THE GREEK WORD WITNESS AND OUR ENGLISH WORD MARTYR ARE VERY CLOSELY RELATED.

AFTER JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT HE ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN. WE REGARD HEAVEN AS A PLACE AND A STATE OF HAPPINESS WHERE GOD IS. THE PEOPLE IN JESUS' TIME THOUGHT OF THE WORLD AS FLAT AND HEAVEN AS BEING UP.

THUS, JESUS BY GOING UP INTO THE HEAVENS GIVE HIS DISCIPLES PROOF THAT HE IS RETURNING TO HIS FATHER. UP IS CORRECT, BECAUSE HE GOES INTO A HIGHER PLACE AT THE ASCENSION. THE DISCIPLES RETURN JOYFULLY TO JERUSALEM, BECAUSE HE HAS PROMISED THAT HE WILL BE WITH THEM.

THE ANGELS ALSO PROMISE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. IT IS RATHER FOOLISH TO SPECULATE WHEN AND HOW THIS EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE, EXCEPT FROM GOD'S WORD. WE, LIKE THE FIRST DISCIPLES ARE TO BE EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO BE WITNESSES TO CHRIST AND TO BE READY FOR HIS RETURN.

VERSE 15 SAYS THAT THERE WERE ABOUT 120 DISCIPLES AT THIS TIME. THIS IS FEWER THAN 1 IN 30,000 WHEN COMPARING THEM TO THE POPULATION OF PALESTINE. THIS IS AN UNBELIEVABLE MINORITY IN PALESTINE MUCH LESS IN THE WORLD. THEIR COMMAND IS TO GO INTO ALL THE WORLD. THIS FIRST CHAPTER ALSO RECORDS THAT JUDAS BETRAYED JESUS AND THEN COMMITTED SUICIDE. WHY DID JUDAS BETRAY JESUS? SOME OF THE EXPLANATIONS ARE:

- 1. JUDAS WAS GREEDY FOR MONEY. THIS SEEMS TO BE A SECONDARY REASON AND NOT THE PRIMARY REASON, BECAUSE 30 PIECES OF SILVER WAS NOT A VERY LARGE AMOUNT. HOWEVER, IT WAS ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY A PIECE OF PROPERTY.**
- 2. JUDAS WAS AFRAID AND TURNED TRAITOR.**
- 3. ISCARIOT MAY BE A FORM OF A GREEK WORD MEANING DAGGER BEARER. THERE WERE SEVERAL DAGGER**

BEARING GROUPS TRYING TO FREE PALESTINE FROM ROME. JUDAS MAY HAVE BELONGED TO ONE OF THESE GROUPS. HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT JESUS WOULD FREE THE NATION AND WHEN HE SAW THAT JESUS WAS NOT GOING TO DO IT HE BETRAYED HIM.

IN ACTS 1:21 - 26, THE DISCIPLES CHOOSE SOMEONE TO TAKE JUDAS' PLACE. IT IS NOT BECAUSE JUDAS IS DEAD THAT THEY REPLACE HIM; BUT RATHER, BECAUSE HE BETRAYED JESUS. HOW DID THEY CHOOSE THE MAN? THEY NOMINATE TWO MEN, JOSEPH JUSTUS, CALLED BARSABAS, AND MATTHIAS. THEY CAST LOTS TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION. WE ARE NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE WHAT "CASTING LOTS" MEANS. IT SEEMS THAT THEY EITHER HAVE TWO STONES OF DIFFERENT COLOR OR THEY WRITE THE MEN'S NAMES ON THE STONES, PUT THEM INTO A CONTAINER OR BOTTLE, SHAKE THE CONTAINER AND THE STONE THAT FALLS OUT FIRST IS CHOSEN.

THE FIRST QUALIFICATION OF AN APOSTLE IS THAT HE HAS TO HAVE KNOWN CHRIST. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFERENCE IN KNOWING ABOUT JESUS AND KNOWING HIM.

A SECOND QUALIFICATION IS THAT THE MAN MUST HAVE BEEN A WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION. THIS MEANS FOR AN APOSTLE JESUS IS A LIVING PERSON. THE REASON HE MUST KNOW JESUS IS BECAUSE HE MUST WITNESS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE WITH JESUS CHRIST.

ACTS 2

THE DISCIPLES ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

I. THE DISCIPLES ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT 2:1 - 4

II. THE PEOPLE HEAR THE GOSPEL IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE 2:5 - 13

III. PETER PREACHES JESUS AS LORD 2:14 - 36

IV. THE NEW DISCIPLES BELIEVE AND ARE BAPTIZED 2:37 - 42

V. THE DISCIPLES ARE UNITED 2:43 - 46

VI. THE LORD ADDS TO THE CHURCH DAILY 2:47

ACTS 2 RECORDS THE EVENTS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST. WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES THE DISCIPLES SEE TONGUES LIKE FIRE AND HEAR A SOUND LIKE A MIGHTY WIND. THEY SURELY REMEMBER JOHN THE BAPTIST SAYING THAT JESUS WOULD BAPTIZE THEM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE. FIRE AND WIND IN THE SCRIPTURE ARE SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES TO INDWELL THEM AND TO EMPOWER THEM WITH THE RESURRECTION POWER OF JESUS. GAL. 2:20 BECOMES A LIVING REALITY.

PENTECOST IS ONE OF THE THREE JEWISH FESTIVALS THAT EVERY JEWISH MALE LIVING WITHIN 15 MILES OF JERUSALEM IS LEGALLY BOUND TO ATTEND. ANOTHER NAME FOR PENTECOST IS FEAST OF WEEKS. IT IS CALLED THIS BECAUSE IT COMES ON THE 50TH DAY AFTER PASSOVER OR 7X7, A WEEK OF WEEKS. PENTECOST CELEBRATES BOTH GOD'S GIVING OF THE

LAW TO MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI AND THE YEAR'S COMPLETED HARVEST. NO WORK IS TO BE DONE ON THAT DAY, AND THE PEOPLE COME TO JERUSALEM TO WORSHIP AND CELEBRATE.

ACTS 2:14-42 RECORDS THE FIRST SERMON PREACHED AFTER THE ASCENSION. FOUR TYPES OF PREACHING CHARACTERIZE THE MESSAGES OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

THE FIRST TYPE IS THE "KERYGMA". IT MEANS A HERALD'S MESSAGE. THE HERALD IS THE TOWN CRIER. SINCE THERE ARE NO TELEVISIONS OR RADIOS THE HERALD CRIES OUT THE NEWS TO THE PEOPLE. "KERYGMA" PREACHING IS A SIMPLE STATEMENT OF THE FACTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE. (SEE C. H. DODD, THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS, NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS, 1960.)

THE SECOND TYPE IS THE "DIDACHE". THIS IS TEACHING OR EXPLAINING THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE.

THE THIRD TYPE IS THE "PARAKLESIS". THIS IS URGING OF THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE.

THE FOURTH TYPE IS THE "HOMILIA". THIS IS THE TREATMENT OF ANY SUBJECT PERTAINING TO LIFE AS IT RELATES TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. CHRISTIAN PREACHING USUALLY HAS ALL FOUR OF THESE ELEMENTS IN IT.

THE "KERYGMA" OR CENTRAL CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FOLLOWS A PATTERN WITH FIVE PARTS TO IT:

1. THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, (THIS HAS WITHIN IT THE IDEA THAT GOD HAS A MORAL LAW IN THE UNIVERSE AND THAT HE IS WORKING SLOWLY BUT SURELY AROUND AND THROUGH MAN'S FREEDOM AND MISTAKES TO BRING THE UNIVERSE TO HIS PURPOSE.)

2. THAT CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH, (THE DISCIPLES SEE THE CROSS AS THE CENTER OF HISTORY.)

3. THAT CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED, THAT HE WAS BURIED, THAT HE WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THAT THEY HAD SEEN HIM, AND THAT NOW HE IS ALIVE AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

4. THAT ONE DAY CHRIST WILL RETURN.

5. THAT CHRIST IS THE SALVATION OF GOD. (THIS IS A PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS OF SIN.)

PETER'S SERMON HAS ALL THESE ELEMENTS IN IT.

ACTS 2:14-21 RECORDS THAT THE PEOPLE SEE THE DISCIPLES AND THINK THEY ARE DRUNK. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN DOING SOMETHING UNUSUAL. PAUL IN EPH. 5:18 TURNS THIS AROUND AND SAYS TO THE CHRISTIANS AT EPHESUS, "DO NOT BE DRUNK WITH WINES, BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT." UNBELIEVERS IN ACTS 2, RESPOND IN AMAZEMENT, PUZZLEMENT AND RIDICULE.

PETER ANSWERS THEIR RESPONSE WITH HIS FAMOUS SERMON. THE BACKGROUND OF THIS SERMON IS THE JEWISH BELIEF THAT THEY ARE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE AND THAT ONE DAY THE MESSIAH WILL BREAK INTO HISTORY. THE JEWS, AT THAT TIME IN HISTORY, DIVIDED TIME INTO TWO AGES, THE PRESENT EVIL AGE AND THE AGE TO COME WHEN GOD WOULD RULE. PETER SAYS THAT IN CHRIST GOD HAS OPENED THE DOOR OF THE AGE TO COME AND THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST CAN ENTER THIS NEW AGE.

IN ACTS 2:22 -36, PETER SAYS THAT THE CROSS IS NO ACCIDENT. THAT THE CROSS IS THE METHOD GOD USES TO BRING SALVATION TO PEOPLE. HE ALSO INSISTS THAT THE MEN WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. AT THE CROSS WE SEE THE LOVE OF GOD FORGIVING PEOPLE, AND AT THE SAME TIME WE SEE THE HEARTLESS SIN OF MEN. THE RESURRECTION IS THE FINAL PROOF THAT JESUS IS INDEED THE CHRIST. WE MAY BE SURE THAT IF THERE HAD BEEN NO RESURRECTION THERE WOULD BE NO CHURCH. THE CHURCH CONTINUES THROUGH PEOPLE WHO KNOW THAT THE RESURRECTION IS TRUE, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE LIVING CHRIST. EVERY SUNDAY IS A WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION.

THE CROSS REVEALS THE HEART OF GOD AND THE ATONEMENT THAT CHRIST MADE FOR OUR SINS. THROUGH THE CENTURIES PEOPLE HAVE SET FORTH VARIOUS THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT AND HAVE TRIED TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CROSS. ONE THING IS CERTAIN. EVERY THEORY OF MAN ABOUT THE ATONEMENT IS INADEQUATE. THE REALITY OF GOD'S DEED THROUGH THE CROSS IS BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION.

PETER, IN ACTS 2:37 - 41, PROCLAIMS THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE GUILTY OF CRUCIFYING CHRIST. PETER CALLS FOR REPENTANCE. WHAT IS REPENTANCE? REPENTANCE IS A PERSON'S RESPONSE TO GOD. GODLY REPENTANCE MEANS A CHANGE OF MIND AND A CHANGE OF ACTION. IT MUST BE BOTH. A PERSON MAY SEE THAT HIS ACTIONS ARE WRONG, AND YET NOT BE WILLING TO CHANGE HIS ACTIONS. IF THIS IS SO HE HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND. THIS IS NOT REPENTANCE THAT COMES FROM GOD. ON THE OTHER HAND, A PERSON MAY CHANGE HIS ACTIONS FEARING THE CONSEQUENCES, BUT NOT CHANGE HIS MIND. REGRET AND REMORSE MUST NOT BE CONFUSED WITH GODLY REPENTANCE.

LUKE SAYS THAT ABOUT 3,000 PEOPLE REPENT AND ARE BAPTIZED. BAPTISM IS A WASHING OF THE BODY SYMBOLIZING THAT THE HEART HAS BEEN CLEANSSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. BAPTISM IS IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST, A SIGN THAT THE PERSON HAS COMMITTED HIS LIFE TO CHRIST.

ACTS 2:42 - 47 DESCRIBES THE EARLY CHURCH AS A TEACHING AND A LEARNING CHURCH. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS ARE JEWS AND THE JEWS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT EDUCATING THEIR PEOPLE TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S RULES FOR LIFE. THEIR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS ARE INTERTWINED LIKE THE ROOTS OF A TREE. THEIR LAW WHICH IS A PART OF OUR OLD TESTAMENT CONTAINS BOTH THEIR CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS RULES. THESE EARLY CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO EDUCATE THEIR PEOPLE IN JESUS' TEACHINGS. THEY TEACH

CAREFULLY THE MESSAGE THAT JESUS HAS GIVEN THEM. AT FIRST THE APOSTLES ARE THE TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH, BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS. HE HAS TAUGHT THEM CAREFULLY AND THOROUGHLY. BEING WITH JEWS IS STILL A GOOD CRITERIA FOR A TEACHER. THEIR TEACHINGS CONTAIN THE FACTS AND EVENTS OF THE LORD'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS. THE INSTRUCTION CONCERN THE THINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WHICH WAS JESUS' CENTRAL THEME. OFTEN THE APOSTOLIC TEACHINGS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SET IN WORD PATTERNS LIKE A SONG, SO THEY COULD BE LEARNED EASILY.

THIS IS ALSO A CHURCH OF FELLOWSHIP. THEY ARE AS ONE FAMILY OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS. UNITY OF PURPOSE AND INTENT IS THEIR CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, MANY TIMES, THAT THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER WITH ONE ACCORD. I REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT A MAN WHO HAD SEVEN SONS WHO QUARRELED AMONG THEMSELVES, A GREAT DEAL. HE CONFRONTED THEM ABOUT IT OFTEN, BUT IT DID NO GOOD. FINALLY, ONE DAY HE TOOK SEVEN STICKS, BOUND THEM TOGETHER INTO ONE BUNDLE, CALLED ALL THE BOYS IN, GAVE THE BUNDLE TO THE YOUNGEST AND TOLD HIM TO BREAK IT. TRY AS HE WOULD HE COULD NOT BREAK THE STICKS. THEN HE HANDED THE BUNDLE TO EACH BOY IN TURN, BUT NONE OF THEM COULD BREAK IT. FINALLY, THEY GAVE UP. HE THEN CUT THE STRING, GAVE EACH SON A STICK AND SAID "NOW, BREAK YOUR STICKS ALL TOGETHER." EVERY CHURCH COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS PARABLE.

THIS IS A SHARING CHURCH. THEY TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER. BECAUSE SOME OF THE PEOPLE HAVE

GREAT NEEDS THEY DECIDE TO POOL THEIR FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND HAVE ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS IN COMMON. THIS IS NOT COMMUNISTIC, FOR IT IS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. THEY LATER ABANDON THIS PRACTICE, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY DISCOVER IT IS BETTER FOR EACH PERSON TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSIONS.

THIS IS A WORSHIPING CHURCH. THEY MET DAILY IN THEIR HOMES AND WORSHIPED THE LORD. THE PASSAGE SAYS THAT THEY BROKE BREAD TOGETHER. THIS CAN MEAN THAT THEY ATE TOGETHER, OR IT CAN MEAN THAT THEY ATE THE LORD'S SUPPER. EATING TOGETHER IS A SIGN OF FELLOWSHIP THAT BREAKS DOWN SEPARATING BARRIERS.

THIS IS A PRAYING CHURCH. THEY SPEAK TO GOD AND THEN THEY SPEAK TO MEN. THEY GO TO GOD, RECEIVE HIS POWER AND THEN GO TO MEN WITH THIS POWER.

THIS IS A JOYFUL CHURCH LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS 3

HEALING AND PREACHING IN JESUS' NAME

I. THE LAME MAN HEALED 3:1 - 10

II. PETER PREACHES JESUS' DEATH WAS IN THE PLAN OF GOD 3:11 - 26

THE EVENTS OF ACTS 3:1 - 10 ARE BEST UNDERSTOOD WHEN WE EXAMINE THE BACKGROUND. THE JEWISH DAY OFFICIALLY BEGINS AT 6 P.M. IN THE EVENING. HOWEVER, THEY CALCULATE HOURS FROM 6 A.M. IN THE MORNING. THE THIRD HOUR IN THEIR DAY IS 9 A.M., THE SIXTH HOUR IS 12 NOON, AND THE NINTH HOUR IS 3 P.M. THEY DESIGNATE THESE HOURS AS SPECIAL TIMES FOR PRAYER. THE DISCIPLES, CONTINUE TO KEEP THESE PRAYER TIMES. THE HOUR OF PRAYER ARRIVES AND PETER AND JOHN GO TO PRAY. BEGGARS OFTEN SIT CLOSE TO THE TEMPLE. THEY HAVE DISCOVERED THAT PEOPLE GOING TO THE TEMPLE ARE MORE GENEROUS THAN AT OTHER TIMES. PETER AND JOHN SAY TO THIS MAN, "IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST WALK." THE MAN BEGAN TO WALK. FROM ANCIENT TIMES GREAT SIGNIFICANCE HAS BEEN ATTACHED TO A NAME. THE BELIEF IS THAT THE NAME OF A PERSON CARRIES TO SOME DEGREE THE INFLUENCE AND POWER OF THAT PERSON. A MIRACLE OCCURS. A MIRACLE IS NOT SOME EVENT THAT NECESSARILY DEFIES NATURAL LAW. IT MAY BE AN EVENT WHEN GOD WORKS THROUGH A HIGHER LAW THAN WE KNOW. THE JEWISH COUNSEL, THE SANHEDRIN, DOES NOT DENY THE MIRACLE. YOU CAN BE SURE THAT IF MIRACLES DID NOT OCCUR IN THE EARLY CHURCH THE ENEMIES OF CHRISTIANITY WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO POINT IT OUT.

GOD STILL CLOTHES HIS MIRACLES IN MYSTERY AND UNCERTAINTY. GOD'S FIRE HAS NOT GONE OUT. HE STILL HEALS TODAY. DENYING IT IS LIKE TRYING TO SNEAK DAYLIGHT PAST A ROOSTER. HOWEVER, SOME POPULAR TYPES OF FAITH HEALING TODAY ARE STAGED BY FRAUDS AND SENSATIONALISTS WHO EMPHASIZE ONLY THE PHYSICAL AND NEGLECT THE SPIRITUAL. ON THE OTHER HAND, TO DENY GOD'S POWER TO TODAY IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. GOD IS STILL IN THE MIRACLE BUSINESS.

OUTLINE:

I. THE MEETING

- A. THE WORSHIP OF PETER AND JOHN BROUGHT HEALING TO THE MAN, V. 1**
- B. THE WORD OF JESUS BROUGHT JOY TO THE MAN, VS. 6-8**
- C. THE WITNESS OF THE MAN BROUGHT AMAZEMENT TO THE CROWDS, V. 9**

II. THE MESSAGE

- A. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S CROSS**
 - 1. FOR CHRIST'S GLORIFICATION**
 - A. CHRIST RECEIVED THE CROSS**
 - B. CHRIST RESURRECTED TO A CROWN**
 - 2. FOR OUR GODLINESS**
- B. THE POWER OF CHRIST'S NAME, V. 16**
- C. THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.**
 - 1. REPENT SO GOD CAN SEND OUR SINS AWAY, V.19**
 - 2. REPENT SO GOD CAN SEND THE SAVIOR OUR WAY, V.20**

ACTS 3:11 - 16 PRESENTS THREE MORE DOMINATE THEMES IN EARLY CHRISTIAN PREACHING:

- 1. THAT THE CRUCIFIXION IS THE BLACKEST CRIME IN ALL OF HISTORY. (THE ROMAN GOVERNOR HIMSELF KNEW THAT THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST WAS A GREAT INJUSTICE.)**
- 2. THAT THE RESURRECTION HAS VINDICATED CHRIST. (IF THE RESURRECTION HAD NOT HAPPENED THE MEMORY OF CHRIST WOULD HAVE GROWN FAINTER AND FAINTER.)**
- 3. THAT THE POWER OF THE RISEN LORD HAS BROUGHT THIS MIRACLE. (IT HAD NOT BEEN WROUGHT BY ANY POWER OF THEIR OWN, EITHER INHERENT IN THEM SELVES OR OF THEIR OWN MERITS OR PIETY.)**

THIS PASSAGE ALSO SPEAKS OF THE PRINCE OF LIFE. THE IDEA IS THAT THE ONE WHO GOES FIRST IS THE LEADER.

IN ACTS 3:17-26, PETER SAYS THAT THEY CRUCIFIED CHRIST THROUGH IGNORANCE, BUT THE TIME OF IGNORANCE HAS PASSED, BECAUSE THEY NOW HAVE BEEN TOLD PLAINLY WHO CHRIST IS. THEY MUST NOW REPENT AND BELIEVE. THEY MUST FIRST CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND SECOND CHANGE THEIR LIVES. REPENTANCE IS BASICALLY A CHANGE IN THE WAY A PERSON SEES THINGS. THE PERSON SEES FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REPENTANCE ARE:

- 1. IT AFFECTS THE PAST. (SINS ARE ERASED FROM THE RECORDS. ANCIENT WRITING WAS UPON PAPYRUS. THE INK THAT WAS USED HAD NO ACID IN IT. SO THE INK DID NOT SINK INTO THE PAPER-LIKE MATERIAL. WHEN THE WRITER WANTED TO ERASE THE WRITING HE TOOK A WET SPONGE AND SIMPLY WIPED IT AWAY. THIS IS WHAT GOD DOES.)**
- 2. IT BRINGS A NEW FUTURE. (IT GIVES A NEW START.)**
- 3. IT EMPOWERS THE PRESENT.**

NEXT LUKE WRITES OF THE RETURN OF CHRIST. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS CONCEPT IS THAT HISTORY AND THE WORLD ARE MOVING TOWARD THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THE IDEA IS THAT GOD IS WORKING OUT HIS PLAN FOR MANKIND, AND CHRIST WILL BRING THIS PLAN TO COMPLETION.

ACTS 4

THE BOLDNESS OF THE APOSTLES

- I. PETER AND JOHN ARE ARRESTED 4:1 - 7
- II. PETER PREACHES TO THE JEWISH LEADERS 4:8 - 22
- III. THE BELIEVERS PRAY FOR BOLDNESS 4:23 - 30
- IV. THE BELIEVERS ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT 4:31
- V. THE BELIEVERS SHARE WITH EACH OTHER 4:32 - 37

ACTS 4:1 - 7 RECORDS THE ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN. THIS TAKES PLACE ABOUT FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON, TIME FOR THE TEMPLE GATES TO BE CLOSED. THE TEMPLE HAS MANY COURTS AROUND IT. THE COURT OF THE GENTILES IS THE LARGEST AND BUSIEST OF ALL. ANYONE OF ANY NATION CAN COME INTO THIS COURT AS LONG AS THE PERSON FOLLOWS THE GENERAL LAWS OF DECENCY. THERE ARE ALSO TWO GREAT PORCHES THAT ARE CONNECTED WITH THE TEMPLE, THE ROYAL PORCH AND SOLOMON'S PORCH. THESE PORCHES ARE USUALLY FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO CAME TO WORSHIP AND LEARN. SIGHTSEERS OFTEN CAME TO VISIT, FOR A TRIP TO JERUSALEM WAS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT A SURVEY OF THE TEMPLE. ON THIS DAY THE CROWDS PROBABLY LINGER LONGER THAN USUAL.

PETER'S AND JOHN'S SPEAKING EXCITE AND AROUSE THE JEWISH LEADERS. THE JEWISH LEADERS MOST CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE TEMPLE ARE THE SADDUCEES. THE

SADDUCEES DENY AND DEFY THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, THE APOSTLES TEACH A RESURRECTION, AND THE SADDUCEES DO NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION. SECOND, AND MOST IMPORTANT, THE SADDUCEES DO NOT WANT THE STATUS QUO CHANGED. THEY RECEIVE THEIR JOB APPOINTMENTS BY THE APPROVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. A BASIC REQUIREMENT OF THEIR APPOINTMENTS IS TO KEEP NATIONAL PEACE. THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT IS VERY LENIENT ON MOST MATTERS, BUT IN THE MATTER OF CIVIL STRIFE THEY ARE EXTREMELY STRICT. THE SADDUCEES FEAR THAT IF THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT GETS A START STRIFE WILL SOON FOLLOW. SO THEY TRY TO SILENCE THIS MOVEMENT BY HAVING THEM ARRESTED.

THE ARREST IS MADE BY THE CAPTAIN OF THE TEMPLE. THE TEMPLE ORGANIZATION HAVE A REGULAR GUARD AND THE CAPTAIN OF THIS GUARD IS PROBABLY THE SAME MAN AS THE SAGAN WHO RANKS NEXT TO THE HIGH PRIEST. AFTER THE ARREST IT SEEMS PETER AND JOHN ARE PUT INTO JAIL UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING.

ACTS 4:5-12 RECORDS THE TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN. THE SANHEDRIN WAS THE SUPREME COURT OF THE JEWS. THE SANHEDRIN HAS THE RIGHT TO ARREST, BUT ROME HAS FORBIDDEN THEM TO PASS THE DEATH SENTENCE, EXCEPT IN THE SINGLE CASE OF A GENTILE WHO TRESPASSES AND GOES INTO THE INNER COURTS OF THE TEMPLE. EVEN WITH THIS EXCEPTION IT IS DANGEROUS FOR THEM TO PASS THE DEATH PENALTY IF THE PERSON IS A ROMAN CITIZEN.

THE SANHEDRIN IS COMPOSED OF SEVENTY PRIESTS, SCRIBES AND RULERS, PLUS THE HIGH PRIEST, THE LEADER,

WHICH MAKES SEVENTY ONE MEMBERS. THE SANHEDRIN IS ARRANGED IN A SEMICIRCLE. THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND LEARNED MEN SIT IN THE FIRST THREE ROWS.

THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ORIGINALLY HELD THIS OFFICE FOR LIFE. HOWEVER, WHEN ROME CONQUERED PALESTINE THE OFFICE BECAME AN APPOINTED POSITION. THAT MEANT THAT THE HIGH PRIEST DID NOT HOLD THE OFFICE FOR LIFE. THE SADDUCEES DID HOWEVER CONTINUE TO CONTROL THIS OFFICE UNDER ROMAN RULE. MOST OF THE HIGH PRIESTS CAME FROM FOUR OR FIVE FAMILIES. THOSE MEN WHO HAD SERVED THEIR TIME AS THE HIGH PRIEST AND WERE OUT OF OFFICE ARE CALLED CHIEF PRIESTS.

PETER AND JOHN ARE BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN AND STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE SEMICIRCLE. THE LAME MAN IS ALSO BROUGHT IN WITH THEM. SINCE THIS IS AN INQUIRY THERE ARE NO SPECIFIC CHARGES. THE SANHEDRIN DEMANDS TO KNOW, "BY WHAT POWER OR NAME WAS THE ACT DONE?" THE APOSTLES ANSWER, "IN THE NAME OF JESUS." PETER WHO AT JESUS' TRIAL HAD BEEN AFRAID TO BE IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE DISCIPLES NOW SPEAKS BOLDLY. PETER TELLS THEM THAT JESUS IS THE HEAD OR THE CORNER STONE. THE JEWS OFTEN SPOKE OF THEMSELVES AS BEING THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. THE IDEA PETER DRIVES HOME IS THAT ALTHOUGH THE RULERS THOUGHT OF THEMSELVES AS THE BUILDERS OF THE TEMPLE, GOD INTENDED FOR CHRIST TO BE THE FOUNDATION STONE OF HIS TEMPLE AND THE JEWISH RULERS HAD REJECTED THAT STONE. THE TYPE OF REASONING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE JEWISH SCRIPTURE THAT PETER AND JOHN USED AMAZED THE LEADERS.

IN ACTS 4:13-22, PETER AND JOHN ARE COMMANDED BY THE SANHEDRIN NOT TO TEACH IN THE NAME OF JESUS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMMAND IS TO SILENCE THEM. FOR THE DISCIPLES THIS IS ABOUT AS EASY AS SWALLOWING A CHICKEN BONE. REMEMBER THEY ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. PETER, BURNING WITH FIRE IN HIS SOUL ANSWERS THAT HE AND JOHN WILL OBEY GOD RATHER THAN THE SANHEDRIN.

THE SANHEDRIN REGARDS THE APOSTLES WITH CONTEMPT AND INTELLECTUAL SNOBBERY, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT MET THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE RABBINICAL SCHOOL. AT THE SAME TIME THEY ARE AMAZED AT THEIR UNDERSTANDING. THE WORD TRANSLATED "IGNORANT" MEANS NOT TO KNOW. OUR ENGLISH WORD IDIOT COMES FROM THIS GREEK WORD. THE JEWISH LEADERS ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE APOSTLES UNDERSTANDING. THEIR ONLY EXPLANATION IS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS. BEFORE THIS THEY HAD PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO JESUS' FOLLOWERS. THEY, NO DOUBT, THOUGHT THAT ONCE JESUS WAS PUT OUT OF THE WAY HIS FOLLOWERS WOULD SOON DIMINISH INTO NOTHINGNESS.

THE SANHEDRIN ATTEMPTING TO TIGHTEN THE VICE OF FEAR THREATENS THEM WITH ARREST AND EXCOMMUNICATION FROM THE SYNAGOGUE. EXCOMMUNICATION HAS TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES. THIS IS ORDINARILY ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO SILENCE PEOPLE. PETER AND JOHN, HOWEVER, SINCE BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE THE CONSTANT COMPANIONS OF COURAGE AND BOLDNESS. THEY PRESENT A DEFENSE TO THE COURT. THEIR FIRST DEFENSE IS THE FACT OF

THE CURED MAN. THE GREATEST DEFENSE FOR CHRISTIANITY IS ALWAYS A BORN AGAIN PERSON. PUBLIC LECTURES WERE ONCE VERY POPULAR IN THIS COUNTRY. THIS WAS BEFORE RADIO OR T.V. A PERSON TRAVELED FROM TOWN TO TOWN GIVING LECTURES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS. A SPEAKER DELIVERING LECTURES AGAINST CHRISTIANITY SAID IN ONE TOWN THAT HE COULD EXPLAIN AWAY EVERYTHING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY. IN RESPONSE, ONE MAN STOOD UP AND SAID, "EXPLAIN ME AWAY. A FEW YEARS AGO I WAS BEATEN DOWN BY ALCOHOL. MY WIFE AND CHILDREN LIVED IN A SHACK. THEY HARDLY HAD CLOTHES TO WEAR. NOW I HAVE A GOOD JOB. WE HAVE A HOME IN A NICE HOUSE. MY FAMILY HAS CLOTHES THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE, AND ALL THIS CAME ABOUT BECAUSE OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE DIFFERENCE THAT CHRIST HAS MADE IN MY LIFE."

THEIR SECOND DEFENSE IS LOYALTY TO GOD. THAT DAY THE RUBBER OF TRUTH HIT THE ROAD OF REALITY. THEY WILL NOT BE SILENCED. THEY WILL SPEAK FOR JESUS. THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THEY ARE NOT AFRAID OF THE SANHEDRIN. SOMEONE SAID, "THE TROUBLE WITH SO MANY PEOPLE IS THAT THE VOICE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS SOUNDS LOUDER IN THEIR EARS THAN THE VOICE OF GOD." A TRIBUTE PAID TO JOHN KNOX IS "HE FEARED GOD SO MUCH THAT HE NEVER FEARED THE FACE OF ANY MAN." JOHN BUNYAN, THE ENGLISH PREACHER, SAID THAT HE WOULD LAY IN BEDFORD JAIL UNTIL MOSS GREW ON HIS EYEBROWS BEFORE HE WOULD BE SILENCED FROM PREACHING THE MESSAGE CHRIST HAD GIVEN HIM TO PREACH. THE SANHEDRIN DECLARE IT ILLEGAL TO PREACH IN CHRIST'S NAME.

IN ACTS 4:23-31, THE APOSTLES AND SOME OF THE OTHER DISCIPLES MEET AND CHOOSE THEIR COURSE OF ACTION. THEY PRAY FOR BOLDNESS TO SPEAK GOD'S WORD, FOR POWER TO HEAL AND DO SIGNS AND WONDERS. THEY BELIEVE IN PRAYER AND THE POWER OF GOD. PRAYER IS NOT SOME SORT OF MAGIC. IT DOES OPEN AVENUES WHERE GOD CAN WORK. THEY ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPEAK GOD'S WORD WITH BOLDNESS.

IN ACTS 4:32-37, THE EMPHASIS SUDDEN CHANGES TO PRACTICAL MATTERS. THEIR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD AND FOR EACH OTHER CAUSES THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CREATE IN THEM STRONG UNITY. THEY ARE ONE IN THE BLESSING OF GOD, ONE IN SPIRIT, ONE IN FELLOWSHIP, AND ONE IN CONCERN FOR EACH OTHER. THEY KNOW BOTH HOW TO SHARE AND HOW TO RECEIVE VOLUNTARILY FROM THEIR HEARTS.

VERSES 36-37 RECORD THE ACTIONS OF A MAN NAMED BARNABAS, ONE OF THE BEST MEN IN ALL SCRIPTURE. IT SEEMS THAT HE IS UNMARRIED, 1 COR 9:4-6. HE IS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI, AND HIS HOME IS THE ISLAND OF CYPRESS. THIS MEANS HE IS A CHRISTIAN JEW. EVIDENTIARY HE IS RATHER WELL TO DO, BECAUSE HE OWNS PROPERTY, BUT HIS GREATEST WEALTH IS HIS SPIRITUAL GIFTS. SUCH OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS CAUSE THE APOSTLES TO GIVE HIM A SURNAME. THE IMPORTANCE OF A NAME IS SIGNIFICANT ALL THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES. A NAME SIGNIFIES THE PERSON'S NATURE AND CHARACTER. HERE IT SEEMS TO SIGNIFY HIS CHARACTER AND PERHAPS HIS ADMISSION TO AN OFFICE. WE DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HIS NAME MEANS. "BAR" MEANS SON,

“HABAS” MAY MEAN SEVERAL THINGS. IT MAY BE CONNECTED WITH THE HEBREW NEBI MEANING PROPHET. (C. S. C. WILLIAMS, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HARPER’S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES [NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 1957] P. 87 AND R. B. RACKHAM, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES [LONDON: METHUEN & CO] P. 63.)

LUKE SAYS BARNABAS MEANS, “SON OF CONSOLATION.” THE GREEK WORD USED HERE IS παρακλησεως. THE MEANING OF THE WORD IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLED THE “PARACLETE”. THE “PARACLETE” IS ONE WHO IS CALLED TO ANOTHERS SIDE FOR COMFORT, ENCOURAGEMENT AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPRESENTING ANOTHER. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., P. 63.) BARNABAS FITS THIS DESCRIPTION EXTREMELY WELL. HE IS THE MAN WHO ORIGINALLY REPRESENTED PAUL BEFORE THE CHURCH. HE SHOWS CONCERN FOR JOHN MARK AND GIVES HIM A SECOND CHANCE WHEN PAUL REFUSES TO TAKE HIM ON THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

OUTLINE FOR ACTS 4

OBEDIENCE IN JESUS' NAME

I. SAYING

A. THE POWER OF HEALING IN HIS NAME, VERSE 10
(THE POWER OF HIS NAME)

1. HEALING

2. WHOLENESS

B. THE POWER OF SALVATION IN HIS NAME, VERSE
12 (THE PURPOSE OF HIS NAME)

1. THE ONLY NAME

2. THE NAME GIVEN BY GOD

II. OBEYING

A. CONFRONTATION OF OBEDIENCE, VERSE 18

1. SILENCE COMMANDED

2. SPEECH DEMANDED, VERSE 20

B. CONVICTION OF OBEDIENCE

1. EMERGES OUT OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

2. CONVERGES TOWARD THE PRIORITY OF BY
GOD RATHER THAT MEN. (THEY COULD OBEY
BECAUSE THEY PRAYED.)

III. PRAYING

A. VISION WITH GOD

1. FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, VERSE 31

2. LIVED IN HOLY BOLDNESS, VERSE 31

B. COMMUNION WITH EACH OTHER

1. THEY CARED

2. THEY SHARED

3. THEY COULD PRAY BECAUSE THEY OBEYED

ACTS 5

THE APOSTLES OBEY GOD

- I. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA LIE TO GOD 5:1 - 11
- II. THE APOSTLES DO SIGNS AND WONDERS 5:12 - 16
- III. THE APOSTLES ARE ARRESTED 5:17 - 18
- IV. AN ANGEL SET THE DISCIPLES FREE 5:19 - 20
- V. THE APOSTLES PREACH 5:21 - 32
- VI. THE SADDUCEES ARE CONFOUNDED AND LISTEN TO GAMALIEL 5:33 - 42

ACTS 5:1 - 11 REVEALS THAT NOT ALL IS WELL WITHIN THE CHURCH. IT IS THE RECORD OF SIN IN THE CHURCH. THE RECORDING OF THE EVENT SHOWS THE HONESTY OF THE BIBLE. THE EVENT STANDS FOREVER AS A WARNING THAT GOD HOLDS PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

IN THE EVENT SOME PEOPLE VOLUNTARILY SELL THEIR PROPERTY AND PLACE THE MONEY IN A COMMON POOL. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA ATTEMPT TO BUY A CHRISTIAN REPUTATION BY LYING. THE SIN IS NOT SO MUCH THE LIE AS IT IS THE STATE OF THE HEART. THE NAMES ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA MEANS "THE LORD IS GRACIOUS" AND "BEAUTIFUL." THEIR CHARACTERS CONTRADICT THEIR NAMES. THE DESIRE FOR PRAISE CAUGHT THEM ON THE UNEVEN GROUND OF COMPROMISE. THIS DESIRE FOR OTHERS TO THINK THAT HE/SHE GIVES MORE THAN THE OTHER PERSON DOES BESIEGES THE SOUL OF MANY.

PETER INSISTS THAT THEY HAVE LIED TO GOD. ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE ALL WORK IS DONE TO THE GLORY OF GOD. ALL LIFE, EVERY TALENT BELONGS TO GOD. THEREFORE, THE ABUSE OF LIFE IN ANY WAY IS A SIN AGAINST GOD.

IN ACTS 5:11, THE WORD εκκλησια IS TRANSLATED “CHURCH.” THIS WORD HAS A BOTH A GREEK AND HEBREW BACKGROUND.

THE GREEK BACKGROUND MANIFESTS ITSELF IN THE CITY STATES OF ANCIENT GREECE. IN ATHENS THE CONVENED ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE IS THE EKKLESIA. IT CONSISTED OF ALL THE CITIZENS WHO HAD NOT LOST THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS. THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET CALLED THE PEOPLE TO ASSEMBLE. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., P. 78). AT THIS MEETING THE VOTE OF THE CITIZENS DECIDED THE POLICIES OF THE CITY. IN GREEK CULTURE THE MEETINGS STARTED WITH PRAYER AND SACRIFICES, GIVING IT A RELIGIOUS NATURE.

THE HEBREW BACKGROUND REVEALS ITSELF IN THE SEPTUAGINT, THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. EKKLESIA IS USED IN THE SEPTUAGINT TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW WORD “KAHAL.” KAHAL COMES FROM A ROOT MEANING “TO SUMMONS.” THE WORD IS USED ABOUT THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL.

THE EKKLESIA OR CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANS “THE CALLED OUT ONES” OR THE BODY OF PEOPLE WHOM GOD HAS CALLED TOGETHER TO MEET WITH HIM. EKKLESIA IN

THE NEW TESTAMENT IS USED IN THREE DIFFERENT WAYS:

- 1. IT MEANS THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, I COR 10:32;
12:28; PHIL. 3:6**
- 2. IT MEANS A PARTICULAR LOCAL CHURCH, ROM 16:1;
COR 1:2; GAL 1:2, AND**
- 3. IT MEANS BELIEVERS WHO HAVE FOLLOWED CHRIST.**

OUTLINE OF ACTS 5:1 - 11, THE PRETENSE OF HYPOCRISY

I. THE PRETENSE

A. HYPOCRISY PRETENDS (TO BE MORE COMMITTED THAN IT IS)

B. HYPOCRISY CONTENTS FOR PRAISE.

II. THE CONTENT OF THE PRETENSE

A. HYPOCRISY IS IMPRESSIVE IN APPEARANCE

B. HYPOCRISY IS PERFORMANCE

III. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS PRETENSE

A. HYPOCRISY BRINGS DIVINE EXPOSURE

B. HYPOCRISY BRINGS DIVINE DISPLEASURE

IV. THE PREVENTION OF THE PRETENSE

A. HYPOCRISY DOES NOT LIVE WHEN SIN IS DETHRONED

B. HYPOCRISY DOES NOT LIVE WHERE THE SAVIOR IS ENTHRONED.

IN ACTS 5:12 - 16, THE CHURCH CONTINUES MEETING IN SPITE OF THE WARNINGS FROM THE SANHEDRIN. THE APOSTLES HAVE COMPASSION ON THE SICK AND MANY HEALINGS OCCUR, VERSE 15. THE CHURCH THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAS PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE UPON TREATING PEOPLE'S SICK BODIES AND MINDS AS WELL

AS THEIR SOULS.

ACTS 5:17-18 RECORDS THE SECOND ARREST. IT IS INEVITABLE, FOR THEY HAVE VIOLATED THE ORDERS OF THE SANHEDRIN. VERSE 17 SAYS THE MEN OF THE SANHEDRIN FILLED WITH JEALOUSY ARRESTED THE APOSTLES AND PLACED THEM IN JAIL.

VERSES 19 AND 20 RECORD THAT AN ANGEL OF THE LORD OPENS THE PRISON DOORS, RELEASES THE APOSTLES AND TELLS THEM TO GO SPEAK IN THE TEMPLE. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARS FIVE TIMES IN ACTS:

- 1. IN THIS EVENT,**
- 2. STEPHEN SPEAKS OF HIM,**
- 3. HE GUIDES PHILIP,**
- 4. HE LETS PETER OUT OF PRISON, AND**
- 5. HE STRIKES HEROD.**

THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “ANGEL” IS THE SAME WORD AS “MESSENGER.” THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARS QUITE OFTEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

- 1. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE ANGEL IN SOME CASES SEEMS TO BE A MANIFESTATION OF THE CHRIST OR GOD HIMSELF. WHEN SODOM WAS DESTROYED THREE MESSENGERS APPEARED TO ABRAHAM. ONE OF THESE WAS THE ANGEL OF THE LORD AND LATER IN THE SAME STORY IT SEEMS THAT THIS IS GOD.**

- 2. THE ANGEL APPEARS IN LATER OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS AND IS CALLED BY THE NAME GABRIEL IN DANIEL. HE APPEARS ALSO IN EZEKIEL AND ZECHARIAH.**
- 3. THE ANGEL DESCRIBES DIVINE PROVIDENCE OR ACTS OF GOD. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., P. 72)**
- 4. GOD'S MESSENGER ALSO COMES TO DESTROY SENNACHERIB'S ARMY AND TO SHUT THE MOUTHS OF THE LIONS IN DANIEL'S DEN.**

IN ACTS 5:21 - 32, THE APOSTLES GO TO THE TEMPLE TO PREACH. THE SANHEDRIN ASSEMBLES AS A GROUP, SEND FOR THE PRISONERS, FIND THAT THEY WERE RELEASED, AND ARE TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE. THE APOSTLES ARE ARRESTED AGAIN. THEY HAVE DISOBEYED THE SANHEDRIN, ESCAPED FROM JAIL AND ACCORDING TO THE SANHEDRIN ARE DISTURBING THE PEACE. THEY ARE CHARGED WITH FILLING JERUSALEM WITH THEIR TEACHING. THAT IS REAL EVANGELISM.

IN ACTS 5:33 - 42, THE SANHEDRIN IS EXTREMELY UPSET AND PLAN TO GET RID OF THE TROUBLE MAKERS ONCE AND FOR ALL. ONE LEADER, GAMALIEL, IS MORE CAUTIOUS THAN THE OTHERS. GAMALIEL, A PHARISEE AND AN OUTSTANDING LEADER, APPEARS ON THE TRADITIONAL LIST OF THE HEADS OF THE SCHOOLS. GAMALIEL'S ADVICE IS LEAVE THE MOVEMENT ALONE. HE HAS A STUDENT, HOWEVER, WHO WAS OF A MORE RADICAL NATURE. HIS NAME IS SAUL.

THE PHARISEES ARE GENERALLY TRUE TO THE LITERAL MEANING OF THEIR NAME WHICH MEANS "THE SEPARATED ONES". THIS MEANS THEY SEPARATED THEMSELVES FOR THE

LEARNING AND KEEPING OF THE LAW. THEY ELIMINATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE GREEK CUSTOMS AND CULTURE. THE SADDUCEES, ON THE OTHER HAND, ADOPTED GREEK AND ROMAN WAYS AS MUCH AS IS ACCEPTABLE TO THEM, BECAUSE THEY RECEIVED THEIR POSITIONS BY APPOINTMENT FROM ROME.

GAMALIEL IS MORE THAN A GREAT TEACHER; HE IS ALSO HIGHLY RESPECTED. HE IS FAR MORE LIBERAL THAN MOST PHARISEES, THEREFORE, HIS OPINION CAN MORE EASILY BE ACCEPTED BY THE SADDUCEES THAN SOME OF THE OTHER PHARISEES. EVIDENTLY HE IS NOT COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO THE GREEK CULTURE. GAMALIEL ADVICE IS SIMPLY: "WHETHER THIS MOVEMENT IS FROM GOD OR MEN, LEAVE IT ALONE." HE USES AS HIS EXAMPLE THE CASES OF THEUDAS AND JUDAS. THERE WAS A THEUDAS WHO PROMISED A GREAT MULTITUDE OF HIS FOLLOWERS THAT HE WOULD LEAD THEM TO THE JORDAN AND DIVIDE THE RIVER. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT THE ROMAN PROCURATOR SENT A SQUADRON AFTER HIM, KILLED MANY OF HIS FOLLOWERS, CAPTURED MANY OTHERS AND BEHEADED HIM. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., P 74.) JOSEPHUS AND LUKE DISAGREE ON THE DATES; SO, THIS MAY HAVE BEEN ANOTHER PERSON. WE KNOW JUDAS OF GAMALO WAS A FANATIC WHO THOUGHT THAT THE JEWS SHOULD NOT PAY TRIBUTE TO ROME. HE TRIED TO RAISE A REVOLT AGAINST ROME, BUT IT WAS CRUSHED.

GAMALIEL SAYS, "IF IT IS OF MEN IT WILL EASILY DIE; BUT IF IT IS OF GOD LET US NOT OPPOSE IT." THE SANHEDRIN ACCEPT THE ADVICE, BEAT THE APOSTLES WITH 39 STRIPES AND RELEASE THEM. THE APOSTLES FIND JOY EVEN IN THEIR SUFFERING, BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN COUNTED WORTHY TO SUFFER SHAME FOR JESUS.

ACTS 6 AND 7

STEPHEN PREACHES AND IS STONED

- I. THE APOSTLES SET THEIR PRIORITIES 6:1 - 4**
- II. MEN FULL OF FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT
SELECTED TO SERVE 6:5 - 7**
- III. STEPHEN PREACHES IN THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT 6:8 - 7:54**
- IV. STEPHEN STONED BY THE JEWISH LEADERS
7:54 - 60**

OUTLINE FOR ACTS 6:1 - 7

A PROBLEM CLARIFIES PRIORITIES

- I. THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES**
 - A. PRAYER**
 - B. PREACHING THE WORD. STUDY OF THE WORD.**
- II. THE WORK OF THE DEACONS**
 - A. FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**
 - B. FULL OF WISDOM**

ACTS 6:1 - 4 GIVES EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH'S RAPID GROWTH, 3,000 BELIEVERS IN 2:4, 5,000 MEN 5:14 AND GREATLY MULTIPLIED 6:7. THIS RAPID GROWTH CREATES MORE WORK THAN THE APOSTLES CAN DO; SO, THE REMEDY IS THE INSTITUTING OF A NEW OFFICE.

THERE IS PROBABLY A TIME LAPSE BETWEEN CHAPTER FIVE AND SIX. IT SEEMS THAT IN CHAPTER 6 THE HELLENISTS JEWS FORM A LARGE AND IMPORTANT PART OF THE CHURCH.

AT THIS TIME THE CHURCH ASSUMES THE CARE FOR THEIR PEOPLE WHO CAN NOT CARE FOR THEMSELVES. THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF JEWS IN THE CHURCH. FIRST, THE JEWS FROM JERUSALEM AND PALESTINE WHO SPOKE ARAMAIC, A NORTH-WEST SEMITIC DIALECT. SECOND, THE JEWS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE COME TO JERUSALEM FOR PENTECOST, WERE CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANS AND HAD REMAINED IN JERUSALEM. THESE JEWS GENERALLY SPOKE ONLY GREEK. THE PROBLEM THAT DEVELOPED WAS REALLY RATHER RIDICULOUS. THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AN ELEMENT OF SNOBBISHNESS AMONG THE ARAMAIC - SPEAKING JEWS TOWARD THE GREEK - SPEAKING JEWS. THIS LEAD TO THE NEGLECT OF THE HELLENISTIC JEWS. THE CHURCH PROBABLY FOLLOWED THE CUSTOM OF THE SYNAGOGUE. THE PRACTICE WAS FOR THE OFFICIALS OF THE SYNAGOGUE KNOWN AS "RECEIVERS OF ALMS" TO GO TO THE PRIVATE HOMES AND TO THE MARKET PLACE EACH FRIDAY MORNING TO COLLECT MONEY AND FOOD FOR THE NEEDY. THIS WAS CALLED "THE BASKET". LATER IN THE DAY THIS FOOD WAS DISTRIBUTED. THOSE WHO NEEDED ONLY TEMPORARY HELP WERE GIVEN IT. THOSE WHO NEEDED PERMANENT HELP RECEIVED ENOUGH FOR THE FOURTEEN MEALS OR TWO MEALS A DAY FOR SEVEN DAYS.

THERE WAS ALSO A HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION WHICH WAS MADE EACH DAY FOR THOSE WITH PRESSING NEEDS. THIS WAS CALLED "THE TRAY." THE CHURCH EVIDENTLY FOLLOWS

THIS CUSTOM, AND THE DISPUTE COMES OVER “THE TRAY.” THE APOSTLES DISCERN THAT THE “TRAY” WILL TAKE A GREAT DEAL OF THEIR TIME BECAUSE OF THE NUMBERS OF WIDOWS; SO, THEY SET THEIR PRIORITIES IN ORDER AND CHOSE MEN TO HELP.

THE CREATION OF THE NEW OFFICE IS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION. LATER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THIS POSITION HAS OTHER SPIRITUAL TASKS ATTACHED TO IT. IT IS NOT AN HONORARY POSITION. THREE CONDITIONS ARE STIPULATED FOR THIS OFFICE:

- 1. THE MAN MUST BE OF GOOD CHARACTER AND RESPECTED BY THE PEOPLE.**
- 2. THE NUMBER OF THE MEN IS TO BE SEVEN. THE NUMBER SEVEN IN SCRIPTURE IS SYMBOLIC OF COMPLETION. OR THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A PRACTICAL REASON FOR CHOOSING THE SEVEN.**
- 3. THESE MEN MUST HAVE A SPECIAL CAPACITY FOR THE WORK, MEANING THEY ARE TO BE FULL OF WISDOM AND FULL OF THE SPIRIT. AS CHRYSOSTOM PUT IT, “IT NEEDED GREAT PHILOSOPHY TO BEAR THE COMPLAINTS OF THE WIDOWS.” (RACHAMS, OP. CIT., P. 83.)**

ALTHOUGH THE SEVEN MEN WHO ARE SELECTED ALL HAVE GREEK NAMES THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THEY ARE GREEKS, FOR MANY PALESTINIAN JEWS HAVE GREEK NAMES. THE SEVENTH MAN, LISTED IS A PROSELYTE. A PROSELYTE IS ONE WHO IS NOT A JEW BY BIRTH BUT WHO JOINED THE JEWISH RELIGION BY BEING CIRCUMCISED, GOING THROUGH THE

CEREMONIAL RITUAL AND FOLLOWING THE LAW. THIS PROSELYTE HAD BECOME A CHRISTIAN. STEPHEN AND PHILIP ALSO BECOME WELL KNOWN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT; HOWEVER, ABOUT THE REST OF THE MEN WE KNOW NOTHING. THESE SEVEN MEN ARE DEACONS.

THE PROCESS OF SELECTING THEM IS TWOFOLD. FIRST THERE IS THE ORDINATION. THE ORDINATION MAY HAVE HAD SEVERAL PARTS. WE KNOW THAT PRAYER AND THE SYMBOLIC ACTION OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS IS A PART OF IT. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS GOES FAR BACK INTO ANCIENT DAYS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT WAS A FORM OF BLESSING. WHEN THE LEVITES WERE CONSECRATED TO THEIR SERVICE IN THE TEMPLE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL LAID HANDS UPON THEM. MOSES LAID HIS HANDS ON JOSHUA WHEN HE APPOINTED HIM HIS SUCCESSOR.

THE IMPORTANT MEANINGS IN THE LAYING ON OF HANDS ARE:

- 1. THAT GOD HAS GIVEN THEM THE ABILITIES TO DO THE TASK.**
- 2. THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE CHOSEN AND APPROVED THEM.**
- 3. THAT THIS IS AN OFFICIAL WITNESS TO THE WORLD THAT THIS COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIANS HAVE SELECTED THEM AS LEADERS, AND**
- 4. THAT IT PLACES RESPONSIBILITY UPON THEM TO DO THE TASK.**

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS IS A SYMBOLIC ACTION. SYMBOLS IN THE SCRIPTURE ARE EXTREMELY MEANINGFUL.

THE REASON IS THAT:

- 1. A SYMBOL POINTS BEYOND ITSELF TO SOMETHING ELSE.**
- 2. A SYMBOL PARTICIPATES IN THAT TO WHICH IT POINTS.**
- 3. A SYMBOL OPENS UP LEVELS OF REALITY WHICH OTHERWISE ARE CLOSED FOR US.**
- 4. A SYMBOL UNLOCKS ELEMENTS OF OUR SOULS WHICH CORRESPOND TO THE DIMENSIONS OF REALITY.**
- 5. A SYMBOL HAS DEEP SIGNIFICANCE IN THAT IT GROWS OUT OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS. (SOME WOULD SAY A SYMBOL COMES THROUGH REVELATION.)**
- 6. A SYMBOL DIES WHEN IT NO LONGER PRODUCES RESPONSE IN THE GROUP WHERE IT ORIGINALLY FOUND EXPRESSION. THE FAULT IS NOT IN THE SYMBOL; RATHER, IT IS IN THE PERSON AND THE GROUP. (PAUL TILlich, DYNAMICS OF FAITH, [NEW YORK: HARPER & ROW, 1957] PP. 41-43.)**

WHAT OFFICE AND TITLE DID THESE MEN WE CALL DEACONS HOLD? THEIR OFFICIAL TITLE SEEMS TO BE “THE SEVEN.” WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT WHAT THEY DID EXCEPT THAT STEPHEN AND PHILIP WERE POWERFUL SPOKESMAN FOR THE MOVEMENT.

ACTS 6:8-15 BRINGS US TO ONE OF THE TURNING POINTS IN THE CHURCH. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE NATION ISRAEL REJECTED GOD THE FATHER. WHEN JESUS CAME THEY

REJECTED GOD THE SON. IN THIS SECTION THEY REJECT GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT. STEPHEN'S IS USUALLY REMEMBERED IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY AS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH. STEPHEN IS CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE SEVEN, BECAUSE HE IS A HELLENIST JEW; THAT IS A GREEK SPEAKING JEW FROM ABROAD. SINCE GREEK IS THE LANGUAGE SPOKEN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND SINCE HE HAS A BROADER KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD THAN MOST JEWISH CHRISTIANS GOD CAUSES HIM TO BE THE FIRST TO SEE THE WORLD WIDE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT STEPHEN EXCEPT THAT HE IS A HELLENISTIC JEW AND HIS NAME MEANS CROWN. FROM HIS USE OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE WE CONCLUDE THAT HE IS EVIDENTLY VERY WELL EDUCATED. THE WORD WISDOM OCCURS FOUR TIMES IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS AND NO WHERE ELSE IN ACTS. STEPHEN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE WISDOM OF THE RABBIS AS WELL AS IN THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL. STEPHEN DEBATES IN THE SYNAGOGUES. THE SYNAGOGUES ARE PLACES WHERE THE PEOPLE MEET FOR THE READING AND TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES, FOR INSTRUCTION AND EXHORTATION, AND FOR PRAYER. THE SYNAGOGUE IS OPEN TO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK. STEPHEN PROBABLY BELONGS TO ONE OF THE HELLENISTIC SYNAGOGUES OR TO THE LIBERTINE SYNAGOGUE WHICH IS CHIEFLY COMPOSED OF JEWS FROM ROME. JUST AS STEPHEN, A HELLENISTIC CHRISTIAN, SEES THE DEEPER MEANINGS OF THE FAITH THE HELLENISTIC JEWS ARE THE FIRST TO SEE THE LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STEPHEN'S THOUGHT.

WHEN THE JEWISH LEADERS CAN NOT DEFEAT HIM IN

DEBATE THEY TURN TO DECEPTION. THEY SPREAD THE WORD THAT STEPHEN BLASPHEMIES AGAINST MOSES AND GOD. THE DISCIPLES HAVE BEEN POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE, BUT THE TIDE IMMEDIATELY CHANGES WHEN STEPHEN IS CHARGED WITH UNORTHODOXY.

THE SANHEDRIN CHARGES HIM WITH BLASPHEMY. THIS SIN INCLUDES WORSHIP OF IDOLS, CURSING GOD'S NAME, ETC. AND THE PENALTY IS DEATH BY STONING. THE CHARGE HAS TO BE BROUGHT WITH TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. SO FALSE WITNESSES ARE ARRANGED. THEY TAKE STEPHEN'S WORDS OUT OF CONTEXT AND GAVE THEM FALSE MEANINGS. A HALF TRUTH IS WORSE THAN A LIE, BECAUSE IT CANNOT COMPLETELY BE DENIED. TO THE JEWS TWO THINGS STAND ABOVE ALL ELSE, THE TEMPLE AND THE LAW. SACRIFICE ALONE COULD BE MADE AT THE TEMPLE. GOD CAN ONLY TRULY BE WORSHIPED AT THE TEMPLE. THE LAW CAN NEVER BE ALTERED OR CHANGED. THE WITNESSES TESTIFIED THAT STEPHEN HAS SAID THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH WILL DESTROY THE TEMPLE, AND CHANGE THE CUSTOMS WHICH MOSES HAD DELIVERED, VERSE 14. STEPHEN HAS SAID THESE WORDS BUT IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CONTEXT. THEY MAKE THEM MEAN SOMETHING WHICH HE DID NOT SAY. HE, NO DOUBT, HAS SAID THAT THE TEMPLE IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO WORSHIP GOD. CHRIST HAS DESTROYED THE TEMPLE FOR HE HAS MADE THE BELIEVER THE TEMPLE OF GOD. THE CHARGE THAT THE LAW WOULD BE CHANGED SHOULD HAVE BEEN THAT THE LAW IS FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST.

STEPHEN'S MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIANITY

IS THAT HE IS THE FIRST TO SEE THAT JESUS' ATONEMENT ON THE CROSS IS NOT THE PRIVILEGE OF THE JEWS ONLY, BUT GOD'S OFFER TO ALL THE WORLD.

ACTS 7:1 - 60 DIVIDES INTO TWO PARTS:

- 1. THE DEFENSE OF STEPHEN 7:1 - 53 AND**
- 2. THE DEATH OF STEPHEN 7:54 - 60**

STEPHEN GIVES HIS DEFENSE IN ACTS 7:1 - 7. TO SOME PEOPLE IT SEEMS THAT STEPHEN IS NOT ANSWERING THE ARGUMENT, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT MENTION THE NAME OF JESUS. BUT THEY MISS STEPHEN'S ARGUMENT. STEPHEN NEVER MENTIONS THE NAME OF CHRIST, BUT HE IS PREACHING CHRIST ALL THE TIME. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., P. 93.)

STEPHEN'S ARGUMENT IS CALLED TYPOLOGY. TODAY LOGICIANS AND DEBATERS HOLD ARGUMENT BY TYPE AND ALLEGORY IN VERY HIGH REGARD. BUT IN STEPHEN'S DAY THESE TYPES OF ARGUMENTS WERE VERY POPULAR, AND STEPHEN HAD MASTERED IT. TYPOLOGY TODAY HELPS THE BELIEVER SEE HOW GOD FULFILLS MANY PROMISES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

STEPHEN GIVES A PANORAMIC VIEW OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY. HE USES EACH HISTORICAL PERSON AS A TYPE TO SYMBOLIZE MAN'S REACTIONS TO THE COMMAND OF GOD. THE SPEECH IS DESIGNED TO SHOW THAT CHRIST HAS PASSED THROUGH THE SAME EXPERIENCES AS THESE PEOPLE, BUT THAT HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PERFECTLY OBEDIENT TO GOD. EACH PERSON

HE SPEAKS ABOUT SYMBOLIZES AN IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL VIRTUE.

ABRAHAM SYMBOLIZES THREE THINGS:

- 1. A MAN OF FAITH WHO OBEYED GOD'S SUMMONS.**
- 2. A MAN OF FAITH WHO BELIEVED GOD'S WORD. HE BELIEVED THAT GOD'S DIRECTIONS WERE BETTER THAN HIS OWN.**
- 3. A MAN OF HOPE. (EVEN AT THE END OF HIS LIFE HE HAD NOT SEEN THE PROMISE FULFILLED, BUT HE HELD ON TO HOPE THAT ONE DAY IT WOULD BE BROUGHT TO PASS. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT THIS IS A TYPE OF OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.)**

IN ACTS 7:8 - 16, STEPHEN PAINTS A VERBAL PICTURE OF JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SELLING HIM INTO SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND GOD RAISING HIM TO GREAT POWER. JOSEPH'S ANSWER TO HIS BROTHERS IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE, "AS FOR YOU, YOU THOUGHT EVIL AGAINST ME, BUT GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD." THIS IS AN OLD TESTAMENT TYPE ILLUSTRATING THAT GOD CAN TURN HUMAN EVIL INTO GOOD. THE TYPE ILLUSTRATES THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE CROSS WHICH MEN MEAN FOR EVIL BUT WHICH GOD TURNED INTO VICTORY. TWO WORDS ARE USED TO DESCRIBE JOSEPH, FAVOR AND WISDOM. THESE WORDS SHOW JOSEPH'S REACTION TO HIS CIRCUMSTANCES. WISDOM IS A VERY DIFFICULT WORD TO EXPLAIN, BUT HERE IT MEANS ONE WHO HAS THE ABILITY TO SEE THE LONG VIEW. JOSEPH SEES GOD'S HAND AT WORK EVEN IN THE

WORST SITUATIONS.

IN ACTS 7:17 - 36 STEPHEN FOCUSES ON MOSES WHO IS CONSIDERED THE GREATEST PERSON IN JEWISH HISTORY. STEPHEN WEAVES HIS ARGUMENT AROUND MOSES' LIFE. MOSES' LIFE AS AN INFANT IS THREATENED WHEN ALL THE MALE CHILDREN OF THE HEBREWS ARE ORDERED TO BE KILLED. JESUS' LIFE AS AN INFANT IN BETHLEHEM IS THREATENED AND OTHER MALE CHILDREN ARE KILLED. BOTH JESUS AND MOSES PRESENT THEMSELVES TO THEIR PEOPLE AND ARE REJECTED. MOSES APPEALS TO THEM, AND AT FIRST THEY REFUSED HIS LEADERSHIP. JESUS PRESENTS HIMSELF AT NAZARETH AND THEY TAKE UP STONES TO KILL HIM. MOSES OFFERS DELIVERANCE FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT. JESUS OFFERS DELIVERANCE FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN.

STEPHEN, IN ACTS 7:37 - 53, REMINDS THEM THAT MOSES HIMSELF SAID HE WAS ONLY A TYPE OF THE GREAT PROPHET WHICH WOULD COME AFTER HIM. STEPHEN REVIEWS THE REOCCURRING DISOBEDIENCE THAT HAS CHARACTERIZED THE JEWISH PEOPLE. IN THEIR HEARTS THEY REBELLED AGAINST GOD, AND MOSES AND WISHED FOR THE FLESH POTS OF EGYPT. THIS REBELLION ASSERTED ITSELF AGAIN IN THEIR WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF. LATER IN THE TIME OF AMOS THEY SACRIFICED THEIR CHILDREN TO MOLECH.

STEPHEN INSISTS THAT ISRAEL IS A MOST PRIVILEGED PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE PROPHETS, THE TABERNACLE AND THE LAW. ANCIENT ISRAEL REJECTED GOD'S REVELATION AND WAS DISOBEDIENT. THE TYPOLOGY IS THAT ISRAEL RE-

JECTS CHRIST AND IS DISOBEDIENT IN STEPHEN'S DAY. STEPHEN ACCUSES ISRAEL OF WORSHIPPING THE TEMPLE RATHER THAN GOD. THEN IN VERSES 51 AND 52 COMES THE GREAT CHARGE: "YE STIFFNECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART . . ." THEY CANNOT RECEIVE THE TRUTH. PEOPLE TODAY ARE THE SAME. MOST PEOPLE WANT THE PREACHER TO PREACH TO SOMEONE ELSE. WHEN THE "WORD" COMES CLOSE TO US WE USUALLY HAVE SIMILAR BUT NOT QUITE SO DRASTIC A RESPONSE.

STEPHEN CHARGES THEM WITH MURDERING GOD'S SON. HE DOES NOT SAY IT IS THROUGH IGNORANCE AS PETER HAS SAID EARLIER. SORROW AND GODLY WRATH CHARACTERIZE STEPHEN'S FINAL WORDS, GODLY WRATH THAT THEY ARE SO BLIND, SORROW THAT THEY HAVE MISSED THE DESTINY THAT GOD OFFERED THEM. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES [PHILADELPHIA: THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, 1955] P. 61)

ACTS 7:54 - 60 REVEALS THE UNCONTROLLED ANGER OF THE SANHEDRIN. THE REFERENCE TO THE OPENING OF THE HEAVENS IN VERSE 55 IS A JEWISH METAPHOR FOR INSIGHT INTO DIVINE THINGS. (RACKHAM, OP. CIT., PP 107 - 108) STEPHEN SAYS THAT HE SEES "JESUS STANDING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." OTHER SCRIPTURES SAY THAT JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT IT WAS LIKE A SPORTS EVENT WHEN A VERY IMPORTANT PLAY IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE THE EXCITED PEOPLE STAND TO WATCH. CHRIST STANDS IN ORDER TO WATCH THIS EXCITING EVENT WHICH WAS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. THERE IS NO TRIAL. THE SANHEDRIN BECOMES A MOB. THEY STONE STEPHEN. OFFICIALLY, THEY HAVE NO POLITICAL

AUTHORITY TO DO THIS DEED, FOR ROME HAD TAKEN AWAY THEIR POWER TO ENACT THE DEATH PENALTY. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS AUTHORITY. STONING IS A HIDEOUS EXPERIENCE. THE CRIMINAL IS TAKEN TO A RAVINE, THROWN INTO IT AND THE WITNESSES CAST THE FIRST STONES, DEUTERONOMY 16. THE STONES ARE HURLED UNTIL THE PERSON DIES.

ACTS STATES THAT THEY PLACED THEIR GARMENTS AT THE FEET OF SAUL. SAUL MAY HAVE DISPUTED WITH STEPHEN IN THE SYNAGOGUE. HE MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE SANHEDRIN; WE DO NOT KNOW. AS STEPHEN DIES HE ASKS GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR THOSE WHO ARE STONING HIM. AUGUSTINE SAID: " THE CHURCH OWES PAUL TO THE PRAYER OF STEPHEN."

OUTLINE OF ACTS 7:51 - 60: LOYALTY TO CHRIST

I. LOYALTY INCITES VIOLENCE

A. IT REVEALS THE SINFULNESS MEN HIDE

B. IT REPROVES THE SIGHTLESSNESS OF MEN'S PRIDE

1. THEY DIDN'T SEE GOD'S GLORY

2. THEY DIDN'T SEE JESUS STANDING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

II. LOYALTY INSTILLS A VISION

A. A VISION OF CHRIST'S PERSON

B. A VISION OF CHRIST'S POSITION

1. JESUS WITNESSES STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM

2. JESUS WELCOMES HIM TO GLORY

III. LOYALTY INSPIRES VICTORY

A. FAITH FOR ETERNAL LIFE, 7:59

B. FORGIVENESS FOR HIS ENEMIES, 7:60

ACTS 8

PREACHING AND WITNESSING

- I. SAUL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH 8:1 - 3**
- II. PHILIP PREACHES CHRIST IN SAMARIA WITH GREAT POWER 8:4 - 8**
- III. PETER AND JOHN PRAY FOR AND LAY HANDS ON SAMARITANS 8:9 - 19**
- IV. THE SORCERER SEEKS TO PURCHASE THE POWER OF GOD 8:9 - 25**
- V. PHILIP WITNESSES TO THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH 8:26 - 40**

CHAPTERS 8 - 12 IS A PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND CHANGE. SOME OF THE CHANGES WHICH OCCURRED DURING THIS TIME ARE:

- 1. THE BASE OF OUTREACH MOVES FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH.**
- 2. THE GOSPEL GOES TO THE SAMARITANS AND THEN TO THE GENTILES.**
- 3. THE FOCUS MOVES FROM PETER TO PAUL.**

SOME SCHOLARS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE THREE CONVERSIONS, THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH, SAUL AND CORNELIUS PARALLEL THE THREE SONS OF NOAH WHOSE DESCENDANTS POPULATED THE EARTH. THE ETHIOPIAN FROM HAM, PAUL A JEW FROM SHEM AND CORNELIUS A GENTILE FROM JAPHETH. THUS, DEMONSTRATING THAT THE GOSPEL IS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

ACTS 8:1 - 4 INTRODUCES THE FIRST PERSECUTIONS AGAINST CHRISTIANS. MANY CHRISTIANS FLEE FROM JERUSALEM; THE APOSTLES, HOWEVER, STAY IN JERUSALEM. AS CHRISTIANS FLEE FROM JERUSALEM THEY SPREAD THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE THEY GO. THIS PERSECUTION LASTED OFF AND ON FOR THE NEXT 300 YEARS. DURING THIS TIME THE CHURCH GREW IN NUMBERS AND GREAT STRENGTH.

ACTS 8:5- 13 RECORDS SOME OF PHILIP'S ACTIVITIES. PHILIP FIRST PREACHES IN SAMARIA. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN WORLD EVANGELISM, FOR THE JEWS AND THE SAMARITANS HATE EACH OTHER. THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE JEWS AND THE SAMARITANS CAN BE TRACED IN ANCIENT HISTORY. IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C. FOLLOWING THE ASSYRIAN CUSTOM OF MILITARY WARFARE THE ASSYRIANS CAPTURED THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, TRANSPORTED MOST OF THE PEOPLE TO FOREIGN LANDS AND BROUGHT FOREIGN PEOPLE WITH FOREIGN GODS INTO ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD LATER BE KNOWN AS SAMARIA. THE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN LEFT INTERMARRIED WITH THE NEW PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO THEIR LAND.

THEN IN THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C. SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES HAPPENED TO THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM. BABYLON CAPTURED THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDEA AND TRANSPORTED THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE TO BABYLON. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO KINGDOMS WAS THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM REFUSED TO INTERMARRY WITH PEOPLE IN THIS NEW LAND. THEY RETAINED THEIR IDENTITY; WHEREAS, THOSE WHO WERE LEFT IN SAMARIA

INTERMARRIED WITH THE FOREIGNERS WHO WERE BROUGHT INTO THEIR LAND. THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM WHO WERE TAKEN AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY NEVER RETURNED TO REESTABLISH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM. SOME OF THOSE OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM CAME BACK TO JUDEA WHEN THEY WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN, IN THE FIFTH CENTURY. THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE JEWS AND THE SAMARITANS CAME ABOUT BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA HAD INTERMARRIED AND HAD NOT KEPT THEIR WORSHIP PURE. WHEN JERUSALEM WAS REBUILT THE SAMARITANS CLAIMED THAT SAMARIA WAS THE TRUE PLACE OF WORSHIP, AND THE JEWS CLAIMED THAT JERUSALEM WAS THE TRUE PLACE. JESUS HAD PREACHED IN SAMARIA AT SYCHAR AFTER HE MET THE WOMAN AT THE WELL. HE DECLARED TO HER THAT GOD WAS TO BE WORSHIPPED IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.

PHILIP PRESENTS CHRIST TO THE SAMARITANS. THEY RESPOND WITH GREAT JOY AND RECEIVE THE GOSPEL. WHEN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM HEARS ABOUT THIS THEY SEND PETER AND JOHN TO SAMARIA TO APPROVE THIS WORK, VERSES 14-25.

IN SAMARIA PHILIP MEETS SIMON MAGUS. MAGUS' TEACHINGS ARE OF A GNOSTIC FLAVOR. HE CLAIMS TO HAVE GREAT POWER FROM GOD. HE IS AMAZED AT THE THINGS THAT PHILIP DOES; SO, HE BECOMES A FOLLOWER OF PHILIP. SIMON MAGUS SEES THE POWER THAT COMES THROUGH THE APOSTLES AND HE COVETS IT. HE OFFERS TO BUY THAT WHICH COULD NOT BE SOLD. SIMON MAGUS IS NOT INTERESTED IN BRINGING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OTHERS. HE IS INTERESTED IN THE POWER

AND PRESTIGE IT WILL BRING HIM. PETER STRIKES AT THE HEART OF THE ISSUE AND SAYS THAT SIMON'S HEART IS NOT RIGHT; HE NEEDS HEART REPENTANCE. NOW, SIMON HAS BEEN BAPTIZED AND HAS MADE AN OUTWARD SHOW, BUT HIS HEART IS NOT RIGHT WITH GOD. IT SEEMS THAT SIMON RESPONDS FROM FEAR RATHER THAN FROM REPENTANCE, FOR HE ASKS PETER TO PRAY THAT NONE OF THE THINGS OF WHICH PETER SAYS SHOULD COME TO PASS. FROM THIS INCIDENT COMES THE WORD "SIMONY" WHICH MEANS THE BUYING AND SELLING OF SPIRITUAL OFFICES.

ACTS 8:26 - 40 RECORDS CHRIST COMING TO AN ETHIOPIAN. WE USUALLY THINK OF THIS AS A DESERTED PLACE, ON A NARROW DUSTY BACK ROAD. ACTUALLY THIS IS A GREAT HIGHWAY. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IS A SINGLE CHARIOT OR A CARAVAN. THE MAN IS EVIDENTLY AN IMPORTANT OFFICIAL OF ETHIOPIA. ETHIOPIA IS GOVERNED BY A QUEEN AND THE EUNUCH SERVES UNDER HER. THE EUNUCH MAY HAVE BEEN TO JERUSALEM ON BUSINESS OR TO WORSHIP. THE EUNUCH IS EITHER A PROSELYTE OR A GOD-FEARER. AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY MANY PEOPLE NO LONGER ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF MANY GODS AND THE LOOSE MORAL STANDARDS THAT PREVAILED IN THE WORLD CAUSED THEM TO SEEK SPIRITUAL REALITY. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED BY THE MONOTHEISM OF THE JEWISH RELIGION, THE SELF-DISCIPLINE IT DEMANDED AND THE STABILITY OF THE JEWISH HOME. SO MANY GENTILES BECAME JEWISH PROSELYTES. THESE WERE PEOPLE WHO ACCEPTED ALL OF JUDAISM, WERE CIRCUMCISED AND WERE OBEDIENT TO THE WHOLE LAW. THOSE WHO DID NOT GO QUITE THIS FAR BUT ATTENDED THE SYNAGOGUE AND

STUDIED THE SCRIPTURE WERE CALLED GOD-FEARERS.

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH IS READING FROM THE 53RD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH WHEN PHILIP MEETS HIM. PHILIP EXPLAINS TO HIM THAT THIS PASSAGE SPOKE ABOUT JESUS. THE EUNUCH BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED.



ACTS 9

SAUL MEETS CHRIST

- I. SAUL IS STRUCK BLIND AND COMES TO CHRIST
9:1 - 9**
- II. SAUL RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS
SIGHT 9:10 - 19**
- III. SAUL PREACHES JESUS IN DAMASCUS 9:20 - 22**
- IV. BARNABAS BELIEVES IN SAUL 9:23 - 30**
- V. PETER RAISES DORCAS 9:31 - 43**

IN ACTS 9:1 - 18, THE SCENE MOVES QUICKLY BACK TO SAUL. SAUL WAS BORN AT TARSUS, THE CAPITAL OF CILICIA AND THE HOME OF ONE OF THE FOREMOST UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD. SAUL WAS BORN A ROMAN CITIZEN IN A GREEK CULTURE. HE WAS ALSO BORN A JEW OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN. HE WAS ALSO PRIVILEGED TO BE A STUDENT OF GAMALIEL, THE GREATEST RABBI OF HIS TIME. THIS MAY ACCOUNT TO SOME DEGREE FOR HIS TRAINING AND ABILITY AS A THEOLOGIAN.

SAUL WAS ALSO A TENT MAKER BY TRADE. EVERY JEWISH FAMILY TAUGHT THEIR SONS A TRADE WHICH THEY COULD USE TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES.

THE MOST PROFOUND TURNING POINT IN SAUL'S LIFE OCCURS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. HE CANNOT SPRINT FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE THE HAND OF THE LORD. GOD STOPS HIM DEAD IN HIS TRACKS. THE STORY IS RECOUNTED THREE TIMES IN ACTS, WHICH SIGNIFIES ITS IMPORTANCE. SAUL COMES FACE

TO FACE WITH CHRIST. HIS EYES CANNOT ENDURE THE INTENSITY OF THE GAZE, AND HE IS BLIND FOR THREE DAYS. HIS JOURNEY WITH JESUS BEGINS WITH A QUESTION, "LORD WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME TO DO?" IN HIS PHYSICAL BLINDNESS HE SEES MORE SPIRITUAL TRUTH THAN HE HAS SEEN IN HIS LIFETIME WITH HIS PHYSICAL EYES. HELEN KELLER EXPRESSED THIS TRUTH WHEN SHE SAID SHE FELT VERY SORRY FOR THOSE WITH EYES WHO COULD NOT SEE.

HE WHO GOES WITH CLENCHED FISTS TO DAMASCUS TO PUT CHAINS ON THE WRISTS OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE CHRIST IS LEAD INTO DAMASCUS BY THE WRIST LIKE A CAPTIVE, BLIND AND HELPLESS. AND THUS, SAUL BECOMES PAUL.

PAUL IS NOT THE LAST MAN TO HAVE HIS LIFE CHANGED BY CHRIST. CHARLES G. FINNEY, THE LAWYER, SAYS ABOUT HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE, "MY HEART WAS SO FULL THAT, FOR MORE THAN A WEEK, I DID NOT FEEL AT ALL INCLINED TO SLEEP OR EAT. I SEEMED LITERALLY TO HAVE MEAT TO EAT THAT THE WORLD KNEW NOTHING OF. I DID NOT FEEL THE NEED OF FOOD OR SLEEP. MY MIND WAS FULL OF THE LOVE OF GOD TO OVERFLOWING . . . THE WORD OF GOD HAD WONDERFUL POWER; AND I WAS EVERY DAY SURPRISED TO FIND THAT A FEW WORDS SPOKEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL WOULD STICK IN HIS HEART LIKE AN ARROW." C. S. LEWIS, THE FAMOUS AND BRILLIANT PROFESSOR AT CAMBRIDGE SAYS IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT INTO THE KINGDOM KICKING AND SCREAMING.

SAUL IS CAPTURED FOR LIFE. R. G. LEE SAYS, "NO VIC-

TORY IS FINALLY EFFECTIVE WHICH DOES NOT CAPTURE THE RAMPARTS OF THE SOUL. WE NEVER WIN A MAN UNTIL THE HEART IS WON. IF THE HEART BE MISSED, THE MAN ESCAPES. THIS IS TAUGHT ON EVERY PAGE OF HISTORY. WIN THE HEART AND YOU CAPTURE THE LIFE.”

FROM THE MOMENT OF HIS CONVERSION SAUL THE PHARISEE IS PAUL THE CHRISTIAN. THE CHRISTIAN IS A PERSON WHO DOES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WANTS HIM TO DO. THIS IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SINGLE MOST RELEVANT SUBJECT TODAY AND THE SOLUTION TO THE HARDENED HEART AND THE TROUBLED WORLD.

WE SEE THIS SAME LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST AT WORK IN THE LIFE OF ANANIAS. TWO MEN BEAR THE NAME ANANIAS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. HOW DIFFERENT THEY ARE. ONE IS A LIAR AND A THIEF. THE OTHER IS A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD. ANANIAS GOES TO THE GREAT ENEMY OF THE CHURCH AND SAYS TO HIM, “BROTHER SAUL.” WHAT A WELCOME. AT THE COMMAND OF THE LORD, ANANIAS IS READY TO FORGIVE AN ENEMY AND RECEIVE HIM AS A BROTHER. ANANIAS LAYS HIS HANDS ON HIM AND PAUL RECEIVES HIS SIGHT. PAUL REMAINS IN DAMASCUS WITH THE BELIEVERS FOR A SHORT TIME. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS PAUL GOES INTO ARABIA AND STAYS ALMOST THREE YEARS, GALATIANS CHAPTER ONE. HE GOES THERE TO LISTEN TO THE LORD AND TO RETHINK THE SCRIPTURES. AFTER THIS HE RETURNS TO DAMASCUS.

AFTER HIS RETURN FROM ARABIA PAUL BEGINS TO PREACH IN

THE SYNAGOGUES OF DAMASCUS. THIS HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY SOME TO MEAN THAT THE MOMENT A PERSON IS CONVERTED HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PREACH WITHOUT ANY PREPARATION OR TRAINING. PAUL, HOWEVER, IS ALREADY EXTREMELY WELL EDUCATED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE. IN ORDER TO DEBATE THE CHRISTIANS IN THE SYNAGOGUES HE, NO DOUBT, HAS STUDIED THEIR ARGUMENTS. HE HAS STUDIED UNDER GAMALIEL AND IS A BRILLIANT RABBI IN HIS OWN RIGHT. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL AFTER THREE YEARS WITH THE LORD IN ARABIA HE IS PREPARED. LUKE DOES NOT MENTION THE ARABIAN TRIP, BECAUSE HE IS WRITING A HISTORY OF THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY NOT A BIOGRAPHY OF PAUL.

PAUL BEGINS TO PREACH IN THE SYNAGOGUES OF DAMASCUS. THESE ARE THE VERY SYNAGOGUES THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN LETTERS TO AS AN OFFICIAL AGENT OF THE SANHEDRIN. AT DAMASCUS HE FACES GREAT DIFFICULTIES. THE JEWS PLAN TO KILL HIM. THEY SET A GUARD AT THE CITY GATE TO WATCH FOR HIM. IN THOSE DAY THE WALLS AROUND THE CITY WERE WIDE ENOUGH FOR A CHARIOT AND HORSES TO RUN ON THE TOP OF THEM. HOUSES WERE ALSO BUILT ON THE WALLS. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT THE DISCIPLES PUT HIM INTO A BASKET AND LET HIM DOWN OUTSIDE THE WALL. LATER PAUL MAY HAVE CONSIDERED THIS A WEAKNESS, II COR 11:31-33.

PERSECUTION AND OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS ENCOURAGING, BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT THE PERSECUTOR REGARDS THE FAITH AS A THREAT AND CONSIDERS THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE DANGEROUS. THE DANGER IS THAT EVERYONE THINKS THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE IS WEAK AND HARMLESS.

PAUL GOES FROM DAMASCUS TO JERUSALEM. AT FIRST THE CHRISTIANS DO NOT TRUST HIM. THEN BARNABAS WHO HAS THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT BELIEVES PAUL AND INTRODUCES HIM TO THE APOSTLES.

PAUL IS SOON IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AGAIN. HE GOES TO THE SAME SYNAGOGUES WHERE STEPHEN HAD DEBATED THE JEWS. THESE ARE THE HELLENISTIC OR GREEK SPEAKING SYNAGOGUES.

LUKE IN THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER NINE RETURNS TO THE MINISTRY OF PETER. LUKE OBVIOUSLY IS RELATING PAUL TO THE FIRST DISCIPLES AND INTENDS TO SHOW: 1. THAT PAUL'S GOSPEL IS NOT OPPOSED TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THE APOSTLES AND 2. THAT PAUL IS BEING USED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PETER GOES TO LYDDA AND MEETS AENEAS WHO IS PARALYZED. THE LORD WORKED THROUGH PETER AND HEALS AENEAS. AT THIS TIME CHRISTIANS FROM JOPPA COME TO GET PETER, BECAUSE ONE OF THEIR NUMBER, TABITHA OR AS SHE USUALLY IS KNOWN HER DORCAS, HAS DIED. PETER GOES WITH THEM, SEES THEIR GREAT LOVE FOR THIS WOMAN AND RAISES HER UP. REMAINING IN JOPPA PETER STAYS WITH A TANNER NAMED SIMON.

ACTS 10

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO GENTILES

- I. CORNELIUS HAS A VISION FROM GOD 10:1 - 8
- II. PETER SEES THE VISION OF THE UNCLEAN ANIMALS 10:9-23
- III. PETER PREACHES TO CORNELIUS AND THE GENTILES 10:24-43
- IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES UPON THE GENTILES 10:44-48

CHAPTER 10 IS A TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT SECTION, BECAUSE IT IS THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE GENTILES COMING TO CHRIST. CORNELIUS IS PROBABLY A GOD-FEARER RATHER THAN A PROSELYTE TO JUDAISM. HE HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE WHOLE LAW, BECAUSE HE IS A ROMAN SOLDIER AND THAT REQUIRED HIM TO MARCH ON THE SABBATH. THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS THREATENED TO SPLIT THE CHURCH. CORNELIUS IS A CENTURION, A GENTILE, A ROMAN FROM ITALY, A BELIEVER IN GOD, A MAN SEEKING GOD IN PRAYER AND A MAN GENEROUS IN SPIRIT. HE IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD MAN. HIS PLACE IN THE ROMAN ARMY SPEAKS OF ABILITY AND DEPENDABILITY. THE ROMAN ARMY WAS COMPOSED OF LEGIONS. A STANDARD LEGION HAD 6,000 MEN IN IT. A LEGION WAS COMPOSED OF 10 COHORTS. A COHORT WAS DIVIDED INTO SIX CENTURIES OR 100 MEN IN EACH CENTURY. A CENTURION WAS OVER A CENTURY. THE CENTURIONS, THE BACKBONE OF THE ARMY CAME UP THROUGH THE RANKS AND RECEIVED THEIR POSITIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR EXPERIENCE AND ABILITIES.

CORNELIUS IS A GOOD MAN WHO HAS DONE ALL HE CAN TO REACH GOD. BUT HE NEEDS THE FULL LIGHT. THE ANGEL INSTRUCTS HIM TO SEND FOR SIMON PETER, AND HE WOULD TELL HIM WHAT TO DO.

SOME SCHOLARS HAVE SAID THAT THE KEYS WHICH JESUS GAVE PETER WERE FOR OPENING THE DOOR OF FAITH: 1. TO THE JEWS IN ACTS 2, 2. TO THE SAMARITANS IN ACTS 8 AND 3. TO THE GENTILES IN ACTS 15.

ACTS 10:1 - 48, WHILE PETER IS AT JOPPA GOD SPEAKS TO CORNELIUS AT CAESAREA. CAESAREA WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED "STRATO'S TOWER." THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS GAVE IT TO HEROD THE GREAT WHO BUILT IT INTO A GREAT THRIVING CITY WHICH HE NAMED CAESAREA AUGUSTA. HEROD BUILT AN AMAZING HARBOR FOR SHIPS AT CAESAREA. THIS WAS ONE OF THE GREAT FEATS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. HEROD DESIGNATED THE CITY AS A CENTER FOR THE WORSHIP OF ROME AND THE EMPEROR. THE WORSHIP OF THE EMPEROR AS A GOD HAD JUST BEGUN TO DEVELOP. IT WOULD BE SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE EMPEROR WORSHIP BY BURNING A PINCH OF INCENSE TO THE EMPEROR WOULD BECOME A TEST OF ROMAN LOYALTY.

IT IS HERE IN THE SHADOW OF THE EMPEROR'S TEMPLE IN A TOWN DEDICATED TO HIS WORSHIP THAT ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS FINDS CHRIST AS HIS LORD. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. AND SO IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE THAT IN THE SHADOW OF EVIL GOD'S KINGDOM MARCHES ON.

AT THE TIME OF PRAYER CORNELIUS FEELS THE DIRECTION OF GOD TO SEND TO JOPPA FOR ONE NAMED PETER. AT THE SAME TIME PETER IS LEARNING AN IMPORTANT LESSON. THE JEWS CONSIDER THE GENTILES UNCLEAN. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL REGARD THEMSELVES HOLY OR SEPARATE PEOPLE FROM THE GENTILES WHOM THEY BELIEVE ARE COMMON OR UNCLEAN. MANY BARRIERS SEPARATE THE JEWS AND GENTILES. ONE BARRIER IS CEREMONIAL UNCLEANNESS. ANOTHER IS REGULATION ABOUT EATING CERTAIN FOODS, AND IN TURN THE GENTILES RIDICULED THE JEWS FOR ABSTAINING FROM PORK. CONSEQUENTLY THERE WAS NO EATING TOGETHER; AND WHEN THERE IS NO EATING TOGETHER THERE IS NO SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

PETER HAD LEARNED FROM JESUS THAT THE LAWS WERE GIVEN TO HELP PEOPLE FIND GOD. PETER IS ONE OF THE DISCIPLES WHO HAD PICKED GRAIN AND ATE IT ON THE SABBATH DAY WHEN THEY WERE ACCOSTED BY THE PHARISEES. HE HAD SEEN JESUS HEAL ON THE SABBATH; SO, TO SOME DEGREE HE HAD BEEN PREPARED. BUT IT IS NOT EASY TO REJECT CULTURE. AND PETER IS NOT QUITE READY TO GO ALL THE WAY. THE BARRIERS ARE BEGINNING TO COME DOWN, BECAUSE PETER IS STAYING WITH A TANNER WHO HANDLES THE SKINS OF DEAD ANIMALS. THIS MAKES HIM UNCLEAN BY JEWISH STANDARDS.

PETER GOES UP ON THE ROOF FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER. THE HOUSES ARE BUILT FLAT SO THE ROOF COULD BE USED AS A TYPE OF SUN PORCH. PETER FALLS INTO A TRANCE. THE DICTIONARY DEFINES A TRANCE AS A SLEEPLIKE STATE IN WHICH CONSCIOUSNESS REMAINS. IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS A

STATE WHERE THE DEEPER THOUGHTS OF THE MIND COME FORTH. IN THIS VISION PETER SEES A GREAT SHEET LET DOWN FROM THE SKY. THE GREEK WORD USED FOR THE SHEET IS THE SAME WORD USED FOR SAIL. A PIECE OF CANVAS OR SAIL LIKE AFFAIR WAS THE STANDARD MEANS OF LOADING ANIMALS ONTO A SHIP. THE ANIMALS WERE PUT ON THE CANVAS AND THE FOUR CORNERS GATHERED UP AND THE WHOLE THING LIFTED FROM THE DOCK INTO THE HULL OF THE SHIP. PETER LOOKS INTO THE SHEET AND SEES ALL KINDS OF ANIMALS BOTH CLEAN AND UNCLEAN. THE LORD SAYS, "RISE, PETER AND EAT." PETER REFUSES SAYING THAT THEY ARE UNCLEAN. GOD ANSWERS THAT WHAT HE HAS CLEANSSED IS NOT TO BE CALLED COMMON OR UNCLEAN. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS THE MEN FROM CORNELIUS COME TO THE HOUSE WHERE PETER HAS SEEN THE VISION. THE NEXT DAY THEY TRAVEL THE THIRTY MILES OR SO TO CAESAREA. CORNELIUS HAS INVITED SOME OF HIS FRIEND TO COME AND MEET PETER. PETER REALIZES THAT THE SHEET IN HIS VISION SYMBOLIZES THE CHURCH AND THAT IT CONTAINS ALL RACES AND CLASSES.

WHEN THEY GET THERE CORNELIUS FALLS DOWN AND WORSHIPS PETER. PETER TELLS HIM THAT HE IS ALSO A MAN. PETER THEN SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE THERE GIVING A SUMMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL. WE PROBABLY HAVE ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF PETER'S SERMON. WHILE PETER IS SPEAKING GOD FILLS THEM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY WANT TO BE INSTRUCTED IN THE FAITH AND INVITE HIM TO STAY THERE FOR AWHILE.

ACTS 11

GOD SAVES GENTILES

- I. PETER TESTIFIES TO THE CHURCH HOW GOD SAVED GENTILES 11:1 - 18
- II. THE CHURCH SENDS BARNABAS TO ANTIOCH 11:19 - 24
- III. BARNABAS BRINGS PAUL TO ANTIOCH 11:24 - 30

THE WRITTEN SPACE LUKE DEVOTES TO THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND GENTILES SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO IT. IN ANCIENT TIMES A WRITER HAD TO WATCH HIS WRITTEN SPACE, FOR POPYRUS WAS NOT PRODUCED IN THE QUANTITIES THAT PAPER IS TODAY. POPYRUS WAS MADE OF SHEETS OF PRESSED REEDS WHICH WERE SEWED TOGETHER. THE LONGEST ROLL WAS ONLY ABOUT 35 FEET LONG. THIS MEANT THAT LUKE SELECTED WITH GREATEST CARE THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS WHICH HE WISHED TO RECORD.

UP TO THIS TIME CHRISTIANITY FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT AND BASICALLY IS ANOTHER SECT OF JUDAISM. WHEN PETER GETS BACK TO JERUSALEM HE IS CRITICIZED FOR HAVING BROKEN THE TRADITIONS OF HIS PEOPLE. IT IS ALMOST AS IF PETER IS ON TRIAL. PETER'S DEFENSE IS THAT GOD'S SPIRIT CAME TO THESE PEOPLE. PETER SAYS THAT HE TOOK SEVEN OF THE BROTHERS WITH HIM. IN EGYPTIAN LAW, WHICH THE JEWS KNEW WELL, SEVEN WITNESSES WERE NECESSARY TO PROVE A CASE COMPLETELY. IN ROMAN LAW, SEVEN SEALS WERE NECESSARY TO AUTHENTICATE A VERY IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

LIKE THE WILL TO A MAN'S ESTATE. PETER SAYS THE PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY IS IN DEEDS, AND SEVEN MEN HAVE SEEN THE DEEDS. THE PASSAGE SHOWS HOW PREJUDICE IS OVERCOME. CHRIST UNITES PEOPLE. PETER'S DEFENSE IS THAT GOD SPOKE TO HIM AND TO CORNELIUS, AND WHEN HE SPOKE THE GOSPEL TO THEM GOD SAVED THEM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON THEM. THEY RESPONDED JUST AS THE FIRST JEWISH BELIEVERS HAD. PETER SAYS HE COULD NOT STOP GOD. THE JEWISH BELIEVERS REJOICED AT THIS EVENT.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE FIRST CHRISTIANS BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES ARE AMAZING. J. B. PHILLIPS IN HIS BOOK PLAIN CHRISTIANITY, P. 12, SAYS THE THING THAT CONVINCES HIM MOST OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY "IS THE LIVES OF PLAIN CHRISTIANS." HE POINTS OUT THAT WE WOULD NOT JUDGE THE WHOLE CLASS OF MUSIC BY A POOR PIECE PLAYED BY A BEGINNER, NEITHER IS THIS THE WAY TO JUDGE CHRISTIANITY. PHILLIPS SAYS THAT WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS AS THE REALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH HE MEANS THOSE WHO HAVE SERIOUSLY LIVED BY THE FAITH. HE SAYS THAT THREE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS HE HAS OBSERVED AMONG THESE WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR FAITH ARE:

- 1. AN INWARD PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY AT THE CENTER OF THEIR PERSONALITIES EVEN THOUGHT MOST OF THEM CARRY HEAVY LOADS OF RESPONSIBILITIES,**
- 2. A SPIRIT OF JOY, WHICH IS DEEPER THAN THE HUMOR**

OF THE WORLD, EVEN THOUGH MANY OF THEM HAVE TROUBLES AND DIFFICULTIES, AND

- 3. A TYPE OF LOVE WHICH IS MORE THAN KINDNESS OR CHARITY, J. B. PHILLIPS, OP. CIT., PP. 13-14.**

IN VERSES 19-27, LUKE DESCRIBES PERSECUTION AND THE SCATTERING OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES AFTER THE STONING OF STEPHEN.

SOME OF THE MILESTONES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH RECORDED IN ACTS ARE:

- 1. PHILIP PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE SAMARITANS. (THE SAMARITANS WERE HALF-BREEDS WHICH MAKES THEM A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE JEWS AND THE GENTILE WORLD.)**
- 2. PETER PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO CORNELIUS AND THE GENTILES.**
- 3. THE DISCIPLES PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO GENTILES AT ANTIOCH AND LAUNCHING CHRISTIANITY AS A WORLD WIDE FAITH.**

ANTIOCH BECOMES THE NEW CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN OUTREACH. IT IS THE CAPITAL OF THE EAST, AND AFTER ROME AND ALEXANDRIA IT RANKS THIRD IN POPULATION IN THE EMPIRE. ANTIOCH IS PRIMARILY FAMOUS FOR ITS PLEASURE SEEKING. IT COULD BE COMPARED TO LAS VEGAS; IT IS A CITY GONE WILD AFTER PLEASURE. CHARIOT-RACING, GAMBLING, AND THE HOT SPOTS MAKE ANTIOCH FAMOUS. THE CITY IS MOST FAMOUS FOR THE WORSHIP OF DAPHNE. THE TEMPLE OF

DAPHNE STANDS FIVE MILES FROM THE CITY AND IS KNOWN THE WORLD OVER FOR ITS IMMORAL ACTIVITIES. THE TEMPLE GREW UP FROM THE LEGEND CENTERED AROUND APOLLO AND DAPHNE. APOLLO WAS A GREEK GOD AND DAPHNE WAS A MORTAL MAID. APOLLO FELL IN LOVE WITH HER AND PURSUED HER. THE GODS CHANGED THE MORTAL DAPHNE INTO A LAUREL BUSH. LAUREL GROVES SURROUNDED THE TEMPLE AND NIGHTLY THE SACRED PROSTITUTES AND WORSHIPERS REENACT THE LEGEND.

IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE THAT THE MESSAGE ABOUT CHRIST WOULD GET A HEARING IN THIS CITY. HOWEVER, THE THIRD MILESTONE IS REACHED AS THE UNNAMED DISCIPLES OFFER THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION TO THE GENTILES WHO HAVE TAKEN NO INITIATIVE TO SEEK IT. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK AND MANY GENTILES BELIEVED AND BECAME FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. IN THE JEWISH CIRCLES THERE ARE THREE DIVISIONS OF JEWS:

- 1. THE JEWS PROPER; WE MIGHT CALL THEM HEBREWS,**
- 2. THE GREEK SPEAKING JEWS OR HELLENISTS JEWS,**
AND
- 3. THE PROSELYTES OR CIRCUMCISED GENTILES WHO WERE CONSIDERED JEWS.**

THE JEWS CLASSIFIED THE GENTILES (THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "GENTILES" LITERALLY MEANS NATIONS) UNDER TWO CATEGORIES:

- 1. THE GOD-FEARING GENTILES WHO ATTENDED THE**

**SYNAGOGUE SEEKING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD.
THEY ACCEPTED THE JEWISH BELIEF THAT THERE
WAS ONLY ONE GOD, AND**

**2. THE MASS OF HEATHEN WHO WERE NOT SEEKING
GOD.**

VERSES 22-26 RECORD THAT THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM RECEIVED NEWS OF THE EVENTS AT ANTIOCH; SO, THEY SENT BARNABAS TO MONITOR THE SITUATION. THEY HAVE ENOUGH DISCERNMENT TO SEND THE MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS THE GOSPEL AND ALSO HAS THE BIGGEST HEART IN THE CHURCH. THEY COULD HAVE SENT SOMEONE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND GRACE AND WHO COULD NOT SEE BEYOND HIS OWN INTERPRETATION OF RULES. BARNABAS RECOGNIZES THE AUTHENTICITY, BUT HE ALSO KNOWS THAT THESE PEOPLE NEEDED A GREAT DEAL OF TRAINING. THEY DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AND VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. BARNABAS COULD NOT JUST GIVE THEM A BIBLE AND SAY, "HERE IT IS; NOW WORK IT OUT FOR YOURSELVES," BECAUSE THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS BEING WRITTEN AT THIS TIME.

BARNABAS AGAIN HAS THE DISCERNMENT TO GET A MAN WITH A DOUBLE BACKGROUND, WHO KNOWS BOTH OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND THE CULTURE OF THE GENTILES. THIS MAN IS PAUL. ABOUT NINE YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE PAUL'S CONVERSION. GOD HAS BEEN PREPARING HIM FOR THIS TASK. TOGETHER PAUL AND BARNABAS WORK IN ANTIOCH. UP UNTIL THIS TIME THE DISCIPLES HAVE BEEN KNOWN BY SEVERAL DIFFERENT NAMES. THE FIRST NAME THEY ARE

KNOWN AS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS “THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY.” AT ANTIOCH THEY ARE GIVEN A NAME BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY. THE EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL HAVE BEEN GREAT ENOUGH FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY TO TAKE NOTICE OF THEM. ANTIOCH IS KNOWN FOR THE NICKNAMES THAT IT GIVES TO PEOPLE AND GROUPS. THE NAME THAT THIS NEW RELIGION KEEPS TALKING ABOUT IS CHRIST, IN GREEK CHRISTOS. THEY PUT AN ENDING MEANING, “THE PARTY OF” ON THE WORD CHRISTOS. A CHRISTIAN THEN IS A PERSON WHO BELONGED TO THE PARTY OF CHRIST. THE NAME IS USED WITH CONTEMPT WHICH GREW AS PERSECUTION WAS DIRECTED TOWARD THE CHRISTIANS.

RACKHAM SAYS THAT JUST AS THE INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE CROSS WAS WRITTEN IN THREE LANGUAGES SHOWS THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST. SO DOES THE WORD CHRISTIAN. THE WORD IS GREEK, THE IDEA BEHIND IT IS HEBREW AND THE FORM OR ENDING IS LATIN AS WELL AS GREEK.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS WORD “CHRISTIAN?” A CHRISTIAN IS A PERSON WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS’ DEATH ON THE CROSS AS AN ATONEMENT FOR HIS SIN, WHO HAS BEEN DECLARED RIGHTEOUS BY GOD AND WHO HAS THE LIFE OF GOD IN HIM, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN MADE SPIRITUALLY ALIVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS 12

GOD PROTECTS HIS CHURCH

I. AN ANGEL RELEASES PETER FROM PRISON

12:1 - 11

II. A PRAYING CHURCH DOES NOT BELIEVE GOD ANSWERS THEIR PRAYERS 12:12 - 17

III. A KING STEALS GOD'S GLORY AND SEALS HIS DESTINY 12:18 - 25

CHAPTER 12 IS A VERY DELIGHTFUL AND INSIGHTFUL TEACHING ON PRAYER. LUKE USES HEROD AGRIPPA I, THE GRANDSON OF HEROD THE GREAT AND THE NEPHEW OF HEROD ANTIPAS TO SET THE STAGE FOR HIS TEACHING. AGRIPPA HAD LIVED IN ROME FOR 30 YEARS AND WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE EMPEROR'S SON. IN ROME HE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING.

HEROD AGRIPPA I MOTIVATED BY A SINISTER DESIRE TO PLEASE THE JEWS BEHEADS JAMES, ARRESTS PETER, PUTS HIM IN PRISON AND INTENDS TO MURDER HIM AFTER THE PASSOVER. IT IS EVIDENT FROM THESE EVENTS THAT THE CHURCH HAS BECOME A GREAT PROBLEM TO THE JEWISH LEADERS. THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS FOR CHRISTIANS. HEROD HAS ASSIGNED FOUR SETS OF FOUR SOLDIERS TO GUARD PETER. HEROD THINKS HE CAN DEFEAT GOD WITH 16 SOLDIERS. THE CHURCH IS PRAYING FERVENTLY FOR PETER. IT IS THE NIGHT BEFORE PETER WILL BE BROUGHT FORTH PROBABLY FOR EXECUTION. PETER IS SOUND ASLEEP, CHAINED TO TWO SOLDIERS. THE EVENTS

BECOME HUMOROUS. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD COMES TO PETER IN THE INNER CELL OF THE PRISON AND STRIKES HIM ON THE SIDE TO AWAKEN HIM. PETER IS SO SOUND ASLEEP HE THINKS HE IS SEEING A VISION. THE CHAINS FALL OFF PETER'S WRISTS WITHOUT AWAKENING THE GUARDS. DOORS BEGIN TO OPEN, AND THEY PASS THROUGH THE IRON GATES INTO THE STREET. PETER SUDDENLY REALIZES THIS IS NO VISION; SO HE HURRIES TO THE HOUSE OF JOHN MARK'S MOTHER WHERE THE DISCIPLES ARE PRAYING FOR HIM.

HE KNOCKS ON THE GATE. A YOUNG GIRL HEARS THE KNOCKS, RECOGNIZES PETER'S VOICE AND GETS SO EXCITED SHE FORGETS TO OPEN THE GATE. PETER CAN GET OUT OF PRISON THROUGH ITS GATES, BUT HE CAN'T GET INTO THE PRAYER MEETING THROUGH ITS GATES. THE GIRL, RHODA, TELLS THE DISCIPLES PETER IS AT THE GATE AND THEY WON'T BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS ANSWERED THEIR PRAYER.

THE NEXT MORNING HEROD IS SO UNNERVED WHEN THE GUARDS CANNOT PRODUCE PETER THAT HE TAKES A LITTLE VACATION AND GOES TO CAESAREA. AT CAESAREA HE GIVES AN ORATION TO LEADERS FROM TYRE AND SIDON WHO NEED A FAVOR FROM HIM. THEY LISTEN, AND THEN DUPE HIM INTO CONFUSING HIMSELF WITH GOD. IN HELL HE LEARNS THAT WORMS CHEW ON MEN, NOT ON GOD. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS GOD STRUCK HIM, BECAUSE HE DID NOT GIVE GOD THE GLORY. AS A RULER HE WAS RESPONSIBLE TO GOD FOR HIS DECISIONS AND APPROPRIATION OF POWER. HEROD FAILED. NOT ONLY THAT, HE TRIED TO STOP GOD'S GLORY IN THE WORLD.

ACTS 13

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLED THEM AT ANTIOCH

13:1 - 3

II. SATAN FOUGHT THEM AT PAPHOS 13:4 - 12

III. MARK DESERTED THEM AT PERGA 13

IV. THE GENTILES BELIEVED THEM AT ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA 13:14 - 52

CHAPTER 13 RECORDS THE BEGINNING OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. IN THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH THERE ARE PROPHETS AND TEACHERS. PROPHETS ARE THOSE WHO SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD BOLDLY OR THOSE WHO SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD BEFORE IT HAPPENS. AS THEY ARE MINISTERING THE HOLY SPIRIT INSTRUCTS THEM TO SEPARATE BARNABAS, "SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT," AND SAUL, LATER KNOWN AS PAUL, FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD. THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS THEM, THE CHURCH VERIFIES THE CALL AND SENDS THEM FORTH TO DO THIS MINISTRY.

IN THIS CHAPTER THE LEADERSHIP IS TRANSFERRED FROM BARNABAS TO PAUL. IN VERSE 9, SAUL'S ROMAN NAME "PAUL" IS MENTIONED. IN VERSE 13, IT IS "PAUL AND THOSE AROUND HIM." IN VERSE 43 AND AFTER IT IS "PAUL AND BARNABAS."

PAUL AND BARNABAS TAKE A SHIP TO THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS. THEY PREACH AT SALAMIS AND THEN AT PAPHOS. THE PROCONSUL SERGIUS PAULUS INVITES THEM TO COME AND BRING THE WORD OF GOD TO HIM. EVIDENTLY A JEWISH MAGI,

BARJESUS CALLED ELYMAS A FALSE PROPHET, IS ON SERGIUS PAULUS' STAFF AND ATTEMPTS TO KEEP HIM FROM RESPONDING TO THE GOSPEL. ELYMAS IS TEMPORARILY STRUCK BY PHYSICAL BLINDNESS, AND SERGIUS PAULUS BECOMES A BELIEVER.

PAUL AND BARNABAS THEN SAIL TO PERGA IN ASIA MINOR IN THE PROVINCE OF PAMPHYLIA, WHERE JOHN MARK, BARNABAS' NEPHEW WHO HAS ACCOMPANIED THEM, LEAVES AND RETURNS TO JERUSALEM. PAUL AND BARNABAS HAD ORIGINALLY BROUGHT JOHN MARK FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH. NO REASON IS GIVEN WHY JOHN MARK RETURNS HOME.

PAUL AND BARNABAS JOURNEY FURTHER NORTH INTO PSIDIA, THE NEXT ROMAN PROVINCE. IN PSIDIA THEY VISIT ANOTHER CITY NAMED ANTIOCH, NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH ANTIOCH IN SYRIA. IN ANTIOCH THEY GO INTO THE SYNAGOGUE ON THE SABBATH DAY. THE RULERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE INVITE THEM TO SPEAK. PAUL'S SERMON IS VERY MUCH LIKE STEPHENS IN ACTS 7. HE TRACES GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL THROUGH HISTORY. PAUL PROVIDES PROOF THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST, VERSES 17-22. HE OUTLINES THE LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND SHOWS THAT THE NATION ISRAEL AND THEIR RULERS REJECTED THEIR MESSIAH, VERSES 23-37. PAUL CONCLUDES THE MESSAGE WITH AN APPEAL THAT JUSTIFICATION (RIGHTEOUSNESS, SALVATION) IS THROUGH CHRIST AND NOT THROUGH THE LAW, VERSES 38-40.

THE RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE. MANY JEWS AND GENTILES BELIEVE. THE NEWS SPREAD QUICKLY, AND THE NEXT WEEK ALMOST THE WHOLE TOWN COMES TO HEAR THE GOSPEL. WHEN THE JEWISH LEADERS SEE THE GREAT NUMBER OF GENTILES WHO HAVE COME THEY ARE ENVIOUS AND CONTRADICT THE THINGS PAUL SAYS, VERSE 45. PAUL AND BARNABAS TURN TO THE GENTILES AND TREMENDOUS RESULTS OCCUR AS THE GENTILES BELIEVED. VERSE 48 IS MOST INTERESTING. IT EMPHASIZES THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. THE WONDERFUL DOCTRINE IS THE BASIS OF ALL SCRIPTURE AND RUNS THROUGH THE BIBLE LIKE A GREAT RIVER THAT REFRESHES THE LAND. THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE SAYS, “. . . AS MANY AS WERE APPOINTED TO LIFE ETERNAL.”

PERSECUTION FOLLOWS; THEY THROW PAUL AND BARNABAS OUT OF THIS TERRITORY, BUT THE NEW DISCIPLES THERE ARE FILLED WITH JOY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS 14

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED

- I. THEY ARE PLOTTED AGAINST AT ICONIUM 14:1 - 7
- II. THEY ARE WORSHIPPED AS GODS AND STONED
AS DECEIVERS AT LYSTRA 14:8 - 20
- III. THEY WIN A LARGE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES AT
DERBE 14:21A
- IV. THEY STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE THE
NEW DISCIPLES AND APPOINT ELDERS
14:21 - 26
- V. THEY REPORT TO THEIR HOME CHURCH 14:27 - 28

PAUL AND BARNABAS GO FROM ANTIOCH OF PSIDIA EAST ABOUT SEVENTY-FIVE MILES TO ICONIUM. AGAIN THEY FOLLOW THEIR PRACTICE OF PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS FIRST; SO THEY GO INTO THE SYNAGOGUE. AGAIN A GREAT NUMBER OF JEWS AND HELLENISTS BELIEVE. THEY HAVE INVADDED SATAN'S KINGDOM AND AGAIN THE HOSTILE JEWS STIR UP THE PEOPLE. THE GREEK SAYS, "... AND MADE EVIL AFFECT THE SOULS OF THE GENTILES AGAINST THE BRETHREN." NEVERTHELESS, PAUL AND BARNABAS STAY IN THE CITY A LONG TIME AND PREACH. FINALLY THE CITY IS DIVIDED AND THEY FLEE TO LYCAONIA, LYSTRA AND DERBE.

IN LYSTRA THEY PREACH THE GOSPEL AND GOD HEALS A LAME MAN. THE GREEK SAYS THE MAN HAS FAITH TO BE SAVED OR MADE WHOLE. THE MAN EVIDENTLY RESPONDS TO SALVATION AND IS MADE WHOLE. THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY SEE THE HEALING AND IN A FRENZY DECLARE THAT BARNABAS IS ZEUS (JUPITER) AND PAUL IS HERMES (MERCURY), THE MESSENGER OF ZEUS. PAUL AND BARNABAS STOP THE MOB BEFORE THEY MAKE SACRIFICES TO THEM AS GODS.

IN THE MEAN TIME, THE HOSTILE JEWS OF ANTIOCH AND ICONIUM COME TO LYSTRA AND TURN THE PEOPLE AGAINST PAUL AND BARNABAS. THE VERY SAME PEOPLE WHO ATTEMPTED TO SACRIFICE TO THEM NOW STONE PAUL AND LEAVE HIM FOR DEAD. THE DISCIPLES GATHER AROUND HIM, AND PAUL GETS UP. THE NEXT DAY THEY GO TO DERBE.

THIS CHAPTER CONCLUDES WITH PAUL AND BARNABAS PRAYING, FASTING AND CHOOSING ELDERS FOR EACH CHURCH. THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY ENDS WITH PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURNING TO ANTIOCH.

ACTS 15

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL AND THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- I. THE DEBATE OVER HOW TO BE SAVED 15:1 - 5
- II. THE COUNCIL OF APOSTLES AND ELDERS
DECLARE THAT A PERSON IS SAVED BY
GRACE 15:6 - 18
- III. THE COUNCIL OF APOSTLES AND ELDERS
DICTATE A LETTER TO GENTILE CHRISTIANS
15:19 - 41
- IV. THE DISPUTE BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS
15:36 - 41

AFTER PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH FROM THEIR FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY SOME PEOPLE COME FROM JUDEA TEACHING THAT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED A PERSON HAS TO BE CIRCUMCISED AND FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF MOSES. PAUL AND BARNABAS DISPUTE AND DEBATE WITH THEM. THE ISSUE IS SO SERIOUS THAT THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH DECIDES TO SEND PAUL, BARNABAS, AND SOME OF THE OTHER LEADING PEOPLE TO JERUSALEM TO SETTLE THIS MATTER WITH THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES. PAUL KNOWS THAT THE FATE OF CHRISTIANITY RESTS ON THIS QUESTION.

AT THIS TIME THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM HAS SEEN ONLY A FEW GENTILES SAVED THROUGH THE PREACHING OF PETER. AS PAUL AND HIS GROUP TRAVEL TO JERUSALEM THEY SHARE WITH BELIEVERS ALONG THE WAY ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE

AMONG THE NATIONS. THE RESULT OF THIS NEWS IS GREAT REJOICING.

WE LEARN FROM ACTS AND GALATIANS THE DECISION OF THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL. IN VERSE 5, A SECT OF THE PHARISEES SAY THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR GENTILE CHRISTIANS TO BE CIRCUMCISED AND OBEY THE LAW OF MOSES. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “SECT” IN THIS VERSE IS αἵρεσεως FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD HERESY.

PROBABLY SEVERAL MEETINGS OCCUR AT THIS COUNCIL. AT THE FORMAL MEETING PETER IS THE KEY TO THE PROGRESS. PETER REMINDS THE COUNCIL THAT GOD USES HIM AS THE SPOKESMAN AT THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND THE GENTILES. HE SAYS THE GENTILES WERE GIVEN THE SAME SPIRIT THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN THE JEWS AT PENTECOST. PETER SAYS THAT, “. . . WE BELIEVE TO BE SAVED, IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY ALSO.” PETER DID NOT SAY GENTILES ARE SAVED LIKE JEWS, BUT RATHER JEWS ARE SAVED LIKE GENTILES.

NEXT PAUL AND BARNABAS TELL ABOUT THE SIGNS AND WONDERS THAT GOD HAS DONE AMONG THE NATIONS (GENTILES). PAUL’S TESTIMONY SILENCES THE OPPOSITION. NEXT JAMES, THE HALF - BROTHER OF JESUS NOT THE APOSTLE, PROBABLY THE LEADING ELDER IN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM, PRESENTS THE CONCLUSION. THE QUESTION THEY ADDRESS IS: DOES ANYTHING NEED TO BE ADDED TO CHRIST’S WORK ON THE CROSS. THEIR CONCLUSION IS THAT JESUS CHRIST ALONE SAVES AND THAT JEWS AND GENTILES BOTH ARE SAVED BY GRACE AND NOT BY LAW. JAMES OFFERS SOME COMMON

SENSE SUGGESTIONS THAT WILL HELP THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JEWS AND GENTILES. THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM THEN SENDS A LETTER AND TWO WITNESS, JUDAS AND SILAS, TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE LETTER AND ORALLY COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH. THE LETTER STATES THAT THE LAW OF MOSES IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SALVATION. FURTHER, THAT SALVATION COMES FROM GOD AND GIVES FREEDOM, BUT THIS FREEDOM DOES NOT GRANT LICENSE TO BE IMMORAL, AND THEY ASK THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS TO RESPECT THEIR JEWISH BROTHERS BY ABSTAINING FROM BLOOD.

F. F. BRUCE AND OTHER GREAT SCHOLARS THINK THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENT FORMS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY. THIS RESULTED WHEN JEWS COMING TO JERUSALEM, BECAME BELIEVERS, RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES WITHOUT A COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY AND DEVELOPED THEIR OWN THEOLOGY WITHOUT VERIFYING IT WITH THE EARLY APOSTLES. PAUL THROUGH HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND ESTABLISHING OF CHURCHES “BROUGHT DEVIATE FORMS OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY INTO LINE WITH THE JERUSALEM WAY.” (F. F. BRUCE, THE BOOK OF ACTS [THE INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1988] P. 360.)

THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH A SHARP CONTENTION BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS WHETHER THEY WILL TAKE JOHN MARK WITH THEM ON A SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

JOHN MARK HAD LEFT THEM AND RETURNED HOME PART WAY THROUGH THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. VERSE 40 SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE CHURCH SUPPORTS PAUL. HOWEVER, LATER JOHN MARK BECOMES ONE OF PAUL'S HELPERS, COL. 4:10. PAUL'S APPRECIATION OF JOHN MARK ALSO APPEARS IN II TIM. 4:11. BARNABAS TAKES JOHN MARK AND GOES TO CYPRUS, AND PAUL TAKES SILAS AND GOES TO SYRIA AND CILICIA.



ACTS 16

THE MACEDONIAN CALL

I. PAUL AND SILAS STRENGTHEN THE CHURCHES

16:1 - 5

II. PAUL AND SILAS OBEY THE MACEDONIAN CALL

16:6 - 11

III. PAUL AND SILAS AT PHILIPPI 16:12 - 40

PAUL AND SILAS REVISIT THE CHURCHES ESTABLISHED ON THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. SILAS IS A VERY IMPORTANT LEADER IN THE CHURCH AND A PROPHET, 15:22, 32. THEIR PURPOSE IS TO STRENGTHEN THE CHURCHES AND TO INFORM THEM OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONCLUSIONS DECIDED UPON BY THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS AT THE COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM. THE WORD TRANSLATED "DECREES" IN VERSE 4 IS THE GREEK WORD *δογματα*, AND MEANS CONCLUSIONS OR RESOLUTIONS ARRIVED AT AFTER THINKING ABOUT THE MATTER. IT IS THE ACCUSATIVE PLURAL OF *δογμα* WHICH IS FROM THE VERB *δοκεω* MEANING TO THINK OR TO CONSIDER. THE WORD TRANSLATED "DECIDED ON" IN VERSE 4 IS THE WORD *κεκριμενα*. IT IS A PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE FROM THE VERB *κρινω* WHICH MEANS TO SEPARATE OR TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN.

WHEN PAUL AND SILAS COME TO LYSTRA THEY ADD A YOUNG MAN BY THE NAME OF TIMOTHY TO THEIR TEAM. TIMOTHY'S MOTHER IS JEWISH, AND HIS FATHER GREEK. TIMOTHY HAS NOT BEEN CIRCUMCISED. THIS MEANS IN JEWISH EYES THAT HE IS A JEWISH APOSTATE. THEY WILL BE GOING INTO

SYNAGOGUES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, AND TIMOTHY WILL BE REGARDED AS A JEW. SO PAUL HAS TIMOTHY CIRCUMCISED WHICH WILL MAKE THEM MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE JEWS.

THE THREE MEN HEAD NORTH AND GO THROUGH PHRYGIA AND THE EDGE OF GALATIA. THE HOLY SPIRIT KEEPS THEM FROM GOING INTO THE PROVINCE OF ASIA. THIS IS NOT THE CONTINENT OF ASIA, BUT RATHER THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA. THEY CONTINUE ON NORTH TO THE EDGE OF BITHYNIA. THERE THEY AGAIN SEEK THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS THEM WESTWARD. AT THIS POINT IF THEY HAD GONE EAST THEY WOULD HAVE GONE IN TO THE CONTINENT OF ASIA. BUT BY GOING WEST THEY GO INTO EUROPE. IF THEY HAD GONE EAST THE WHOLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. THEY PROCEED ON THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF MYSIA AND COME TO TROAS. AT TROAS PAUL RECEIVES THE GREAT "MACEDONIAN CALL." IN PAUL'S VISION IN VERSE 9, THERE ARE THREE IMPERFECT PARTICIPLES, MEANING THE MAN KEPT ON STANDING, KEPT ON CALLING AND KEPT ON SAYING, "COME HELP US." PAUL IMMEDIATELY RESPONDS. AT THIS POINT THE FIRST "WE" PASSAGES BEGIN IN ACTS. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER LUKE IS THE MAN OF MACEDONIA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT LUKE IS LUCIUS THE CYRENIAN IN CHAPTER 13:1. IF THIS IS TRUE, THEN LUKE MUST HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH PAUL, SILAS AND TIMOTHY SOMEWHERE NEAR TROAS. IT SEEMS THAT LUKE JOINS THE GROUP HERE AT TROAS. THE "WE" PASSAGES IN ACTS SHOW THAT LUKE MUST HAVE LEFT THE GROUP SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE JOURNEYS TO DO MISSIONARY WORK IN THE SURROUNDING AREAS.

THE FOUR MEN LAND AT NEAPOLIS AND GO OVER THE MOUNTAINS TEN MILES TO PHILIPPI. PHILIPPI IS A ROMAN COLONY. IT WAS NAMED AFTER PHILIP OF MACEDON, THE FATHER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT. EVEN THOUGH THEIR STAY IN PHILIPPI IS SHORT THREE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OCCUR: THE CONVERSIONS OF 1. LYDIA, 2. THE SLAVE GIRL AND 3. THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.

THE JEWISH POPULATION IS SO SMALL THERE IS NO SYNAGOGUE IN THE CITY. HOWEVER, ON THE SABBATH DAY THEY FIND A GROUP OF JEWISH WOMEN MEETING BY THE RIVER FOR PRAYER. ONE OF THE WOMEN, LYDIA IS THEIR FIRST EUROPEAN CONVERT. LYDIA IS A SELLER OF PURPLE. SHE EITHER SELLS THE PURPLE (RED - VIOLET) DYE WHICH COMES FROM THE MARINE SNAIL MUREX THAT LIVED IN THE MEDITER - RANEAN SEA OR CLOTH THAT WAS DYED WITH THIS PURPLE. THE PURPLE CLOTH SOLD FOR \$10,000 TO \$12,000 A POUND. (PAUL ZAHL, "THE MAGIC OF SEA SHELLS," NATIONAL GEO - GRAPHIC [WASHINGTON, D.C.: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGA - ZINE] MARCH 1969, P. 401.)

NEXT LUKE RECORDS THE CONVERSION OF THE DEMON POSSESSED SLAVE GIRL WHO TOLD FORTUNES TO EARN MONEY FOR HER OWNERS. PAUL CASTS THE DEMONIC SPIRIT OUT OF HER, AND SHE CAN NO LONGER TELL FORTUNES. THE GREEK DESCRIBES HER AS, "HAVING A SPIRIT OF PYTHON." THIS EVENT CAUSES THE OWNERS OF THE SLAVE GIRL TO GRAB PAUL AND SILAS BY FORCE AND TO DRAG THEM BEFORE THE CITY MAGIS - TRATES AND FALSELY ACCUSE THEM. PAUL AND SILAS ARE THEN BEATEN WITH RODS AND THROWN INTO THE INNER

DUNGEON OF THE PRISON. IN THE NIGHT AN EARTHQUAKE SHAKES THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PRISON, THE DOORS OPEN AND THE STOCKS ARE LOOSED. THE GUARD IN CHARGE OF THE JAIL ASSUMES THE PRISONERS HAVE ESCAPED AND KNOWING THAT HE WILL RECEIVE THE DEATH PENALTY FOR LETTING THEM ESCAPE HE IS GOING TO KILL HIMSELF. PAUL AND SILAS PREVENT HIM FROM KILLING HIMSELF. HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES AND ASKS WHAT HE MUST DO TO BE SAVED.

LUKE SELECTS THESE THREE CONVERSIONS TO SHOW THAT THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL RACES AND CLASSES OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. LYDIA IS AN ASIAN, THE SLAVE GIRL IS A GREEK AND THE JAILER IS A ROMAN. LYDIA, A SELLER OF PURPLE, IS EVIDENTLY WEALTHY. THE SLAVE GIRL IS POVERTY STRICKEN. THE JAILER IS FROM THE AVERAGE STRATA OF SOCIETY.

THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI WAS ALWAYS ONE OF PAUL'S FAVORITE CHURCHES.

ACTS 17

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED

I. PAUL AND SILAS AT THESSALONICA 17:1 - 9

II. PAUL AND SILAS AT BEREIA 17:10 - 15

III. PAUL AT ATHENS 17:16 - 34

PAUL, SILAS AND TIMOTHY LEAVE PHILIPPI, TAKE THE EGNATIAN WAY AND TRAVEL SOUTHWEST SOME SIXTY TO SEVENTY-FIVE MILES TO THESSALONICA, THE CHIEF CITY OF MACEDONIA AND ONE OF THE MAJOR TRADING CITIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.

AS PAUL ALWAYS DOES HE GOES TO THE SYNAGOGUE FIRST. FOR THREE SABBATHS HE PRESENTS EVIDENCE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH. THE GREEK WORD παρατιθεμενος MEANING "TO PLACE BESIDE" EVIDENTLY MEANS THAT PAUL PLACES THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES BESIDE THE EVENTS OF JESUS' LIFE TO SHOW THAT JESUS FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT. SOME JEWS BELIEVE; HOWEVER, MOST OF THE CONVERTS ARE GENTILES. IT IS CLEAR THAT HIS PREACHING CONTENT IS JESUS CHRIST AS THE PROMISED MESSIAH, SAVIOR AND COMING KING.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE PAUL AND THE GOSPEL GATHER A MOB AND LOOK FOR PAUL. THEY CANNOT FIND HIM. SO THEY DRAG JASON, PAUL'S HOST BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES OF THE CITY AND CHARGE HIM WITH HARBORING A MAN WHO IS TEACHING THAT THERE IS ANOTHER KING ABOVE CAESAR. BECAUSE

OF THIS CHARGE PAUL, SILAS AND TIMOTHY LEAVE THE CITY AND GO TO BEREA. THE JEWS FROM THESSALONICA FOLLOW THEM TO BEREA AND STIR UP TROUBLE. BECAUSE OF THE TROUBLE PAUL LEAVES BEREA AND GOES TO ATHENS.

ATHENS IS A UNIVERSITY CITY. AT THIS TIME ATHENS PROBABLY HAS THE BEST UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD AND HAS BEEN FOR MANY YEARS THE INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF THE WORLD. PAUL TRAVELS THROUGH THE CITY AND IS APPALLED BY THE NUMBER OF IDOLS HE SEES. THESE IDOLS REPRESENT THE IGNORANCE, SUPERSTITIONS AND FALSE PHILOSOPHIES WHICH PREVAIL IN THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE. PAUL GOES INTO THE SYNAGOGUE AND REASONS WITH THE JEWS. HE ALSO GOES TO THE AGORA (MARKET PLACE) AND PRESENTS THE GOSPEL THERE. THIS IS A COMMON PLACE FOR PHILOSOPHERS TO PRESENT THEIR IDEAS. IN THE MARKET PLACE PAUL IS CONFRONTED BY THE STOICS AND THE EPICUREANS. SOME OF THEM CALL HIM A SEED PICKER. THEY ARE REFERRING TO A LITTLE BIRD THAT PICKS UP A SEED HERE AND THERE. THEY THINK HE HAS PICKED UP A FEW IDEA FROM DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES AND PUT THEM TOGETHER INTO A LOOSE SYSTEM. THE EPICUREANS AT THIS TIME ARE PROBABLY NOT "HEDONIST" IN THE SENSE WE USUALLY THINK OF THEM. THEY SEEK TO AVOID PAIN RATHER THAN GAIN PLEASURE. THEY, HOWEVER, DO NOT BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH. THE STOICS BELIEVE THAT THE LOGOS CREATED THE UNIVERSE AND SUSTAINS IT. THEY ARE BASICALLY PANTHEISTS, AND BELIEVE THAT AT DEATH THE INDIVIDUAL IS ABSORBED INTO THE DIVINE SPIRIT.

PAUL IS INVITED TO EXPLAIN HIS NEW PHILOSOPHY BEFORE THE AREOPAGUS. THE ACROPOLIS IS ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AWAY WITH ITS MAGNIFICENT ARCHITECTURE AND MARBLE STATUES CREATED BY THE MOST SKILLFUL SCULPTORS IN THE WORLD. PAUL FACES THE MOST BRILLIANT MINDS OF HIS DAY, PEOPLE WHO ARE TOPS IN PHILOSOPHY, ART AND EDUCATION. BUT WITH ALL THEIR EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEY DO NOT KNOW THE TRUE GOD. LUKE, NO DOUBT, CHOOSES THE MAIN PARTS OF PAUL'S SERMON AND RECORDS IT IN ACTS. PAUL BEGINS IN A VERY COURTEOUS MANNER. HE QUOTES FROM SEVERAL OF THEIR POETS TO SHOW THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HONOR IDOLS. HE DESCRIBES THE NATURE OF GOD, HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY, THE JUDGMENT AND REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND CHRIST AS THE WAY OF SALVATION. WHEN HE PRESENTS THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST SOME MOCK, SOME PUT HIM OFF UNTIL ANOTHER TIME, BUT SOME BELIEVE. LATER HISTORY REVEALS A STRONG CHURCH IN ATHENS. THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THIS DAY USES PAUL TO PLANT A CHURCH.

ACTS 18

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY COMPLETED THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

- I. PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA AT
CORINTH 18:1 - 2
- II. PAUL WORKS AS A TENTMAKER OR LEATHER
WORKER 18:3
- III. PAUL REASONS AS A THEOLOGIAN WITH THE
JEWS 18:4 - 6A
- IV. PAUL TAKES THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES IN
CORINTH 18:6
- V. PAUL BROUGHT BEFORE GALLIO 18:12 - 17
- VI. PAUL ENDS HIS SECOND MISSIONARY
JOURNEY 18:18 - 22
- VII. PAUL STARTS THE THIRD MISSIONARY
JOURNEY 18:23
- VIII. PRISCILLA AND AQUILA INSTRUCTS APOLLOS
18:24 - 28

AFTER PAUL LEAVES ATHENS HE TRAVELS SOME FIFTY MILES SOUTHWEST TO CORINTH, THE POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL CENTER OF ACHAIA. CORINTH, THE CAPITAL OF ACHAIA IS A GREAT SEAPORT CITY. LOOK AT YOUR MAP AND YOU WILL SEE THAT CORINTH IS LOCATED ON A NARROW PASSAGE OF LAND WHICH CONNECTS SEA ROUTES EAST AND WEST AND LAND HIGHWAYS NORTH AND SOUTH. THIS MAKES IT A THRIVING WEALTHY CITY OF COMMERCE AND TRADE.

THE CITY WAS DESTROYED BY THE ROMAN GENERAL MUMMIUS IN 146 B.C., AND LAY DESOLATE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS. IN 44 B.C. JULIUS CAESAR REBUILT THE CITY, AND MADE IT A ROMAN COLONY; AND THUS ASSURED ITS COMMERCIAL DESTINY. IT ALSO WAS KNOWN AS A VERY WICKED CITY.

AT CORINTH PAUL MEETS AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, A JEWISH HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM. THEY HAVE COME TO CORINTH BECAUSE CAESAR CLAUDIUS EXPELLED THE JEWS FROM ROME IN 49 A.D. DUE TO DISTURBANCES IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CAUSED BY OR REGARDING ONE NAMED CHRESTUS. THIS PROBABLY REFERS TO CHRISTIAN JEWS BRINGING CHRISTIANITY INTO THE SYNAGOGUES IN ROME. CHRESTUS, $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$, AND CHRISTOS, $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$, ARE PRONOUNCED ALIKE IN GREEK AND HAVE ONLY ONE LETTER DIFFERENT IN THEIR SPELLING. SO, IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW THE CONFUSION RESULTED. AQUILA, PRISCILLA AND PAUL ARE TENTMAKERS OR LEATHER WORKERS BY TRADE. THEIR TRADE MAY HAVE ALSO BEEN CONNECTED WITH WEAVING A CLOTH OF GOAT'S HAIR CALLED CILICIUM WHICH WAS WATER REPELLANT AND WHICH WAS USED IN MAKING TENTS. EVERY RABBI HAD A TRADE WITH WHICH TO SUPPORT HIMSELF AND PAUL IS NO EXCEPTION.

AT FIRST PAUL REASONS WITH THE JEWS IN THE SYNAGOGUE EVERY SABBATH. MOST OF THE JEW RESIST HIS TEACHINGS; SO, HE GOES NEXT DOOR TO THE HOUSE OF TITUS JUSTUS TO TEACH. PAUL STAYS IN CORINTH 18 MONTHS, VERSE 11.

VERSE 12 GIVES US AN ANCHOR POINT ON WHICH TO DATE

PAUL'S MINISTRY. GALLIO, THE BROTHER OF SENECA THE STOIC PHILOSOPHER, IS THE PROCONSUL OF ACHAIA. AN INSCRIPTION AT DELPHI, GREECE DATED IN THE FIRST HALF OF 52 A.D. BY CLAUDIUS REFERS TO GALLIO PROCONSUL OF ACHAIA. THE BEST EVIDENCE PLACES THE LATEST DATE THAT GALLIO COULD HAVE COME TO THIS OFFICE IS THE SUMMER OF 51 A.D. AND LEFT IT WITHIN THE YEAR BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH.

IT IS DURING GALLIO'S RULE THAT THE JEWS BROUGHT CHARGES AGAINST PAUL. GALLIO SEES THAT THIS IS A DISPUTE BETWEEN JEWS; SO HE DISMISSES THE CHARGES. IF GALLIO AS A ROMAN GOVERNOR HAD MADE A DECISION AGAINST PAUL THIS WOULD HAVE INFLUENCED OTHER ROMAN GOVERNORS AND WOULD HAVE HURT THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

PAUL STAYS IN CORINTH SOME TIME AFTER THIS AND THEN HEADS FOR HOME. HE SAILS WITH AQUILA AND PRISCILLA TO EPHEBUS AND LEAVES THEM THERE. PAUL GOES ON TO CAESAREA AND ANTIOCH.

VERSE 23 RECORDS THE START OF PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY. VERSE 24 INSERTS AN EVENT WHICH OCCURS BETWEEN PAUL'S DEPARTURE FROM EPHEBUS AND HIS RETURN TO THIS CITY. APOLLOS, A WELL EDUCATED JEW FROM ALEXANDRIA WHO PRESENTS THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTS OF THE MESSIAH WITH GREAT SKILL AND POWER, COMES TO EPHEBUS. HE KNOWS ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. AQUILA AND PRISCILLA INSTRUCT HIM MORE ACCURATELY IN THE BASICS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. APOLLOS PROBABLY A

DISCIPLE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMING OF THE CHRIST AND DOES NOT KNOW ABOUT THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST OR THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST. OTHER SCHOLARS THINK HE IS A CHRISTIAN BELIEVER OF A PRIMITIVE FORM. PROBABLY LUKE RECORDS THIS EVENT TO PREPARE HIS READERS FOR PAUL'S ENCOUNTER AT EPHESUS IN THE NEXT SECTION WITH THE TWELVE DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.



ACTS 19

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED

- I. PAUL TEACHES DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN EPHESUS 19:1 - 7
- II. PAUL TEACHES FOR TWO YEARS IN THE HALL OF TYRANNUS 19:8 - 12
- III. SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA PLAY AT DELIVERANCE 19:13 - 20
- IV. DEMETRIUS AND THE SILVERSMITH'S RIOT AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY 19:21 - 41

PAUL CONTINUES ON HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEY AND COMES TO EPHESUS. EPHESUS WILL BECOME HIS NEW CENTER OF OUTREACH FOR THE GOSPEL. APOLLOS BY THIS TIME HAS GONE TO CORINTH.

PAUL MEETS SOME MEN WHO ARE EVIDENTLY DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. VERSES 3 - 5 ARE ESSENTIAL TO THIS SECTION. THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS (RECEIVED TEXT) AND THE WESTCOTT AND HORT TEXTS VARY ONLY SLIGHTLY AND ARE EXACTLY THE SAME IN MEANING. THE GREEK TEXT SAYS, "AND HE SAID TO THEM, INTO WHAT WERE YOU BAPTIZED? AND THEY SAID, INTO THE BAPTISM OF JOHN. AND PAUL SAID, JOHN BAPTIZED A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE, SAYING TO THE PEOPLE THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE ON HIM COMING AFTER HIM, THAT IS ON JESUS. AND HAVING HEARD THEY WERE BAPTIZED INTO THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS." THE QUESTIONS ARE: 1. WHAT HAVE THEY HEARD BEFORE? AND 2. WHAT DO THEY HEAR FROM

PAUL? THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION: THEY HAVE HEARD THAT JESUS IS COMING AND JOHN'S BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE IS PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING. THE ANSWER TO THE SECOND QUESTION: THEY HEAR FROM PAUL THAT JESUS HAS COME. IF THEY ARE CHRISTIANS, WHY DID PAUL HAVE TO TELL THEM ABOUT JESUS? THEY DO NOT KNOW ABOUT PENTECOST AND THE EMPOWERING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. ROMANS 8:9 ALSO ADDS IMPACT, FOR IT SAYS, "BUT IF ANYONE HAS NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST HE IS NOT OF HIM." IF THEY DO NOT KNOW ABOUT PENTECOST WHY WOULD WE ASSUME THEY KNOW ABOUT THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION. THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THESE MEN ARE CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS USE AS THEIR SUPPORT THE WORD DISCIPLES IN VERSE 1. A DISCIPLE MEANS A FOLLOWER OR LEARNER. OF WHOM ARE THEY FOLLOWERS OR LEARNERS. CERTAINLY NOT JESUS AS THE OTHER VERSES SHOW. ONE OF THE MAJOR POINTS THAT LUKE WANTS TO COMMUNICATE IN THIS PASSAGE IS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY TELL PAUL THAT THEY HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY ARE THEN BAPTIZED AS BELIEVERS IN CHRIST; PAUL LAYS HIS HANDS ON THEM, AND THEY SPEAK IN TONGUES OR LANGUAGES. IT IS INTERESTING THAT IN CHAPTER 10 CORNELIUS BELIEVES THE GOSPEL, RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THEN IS BAPTIZED. IN THIS CHAPTER (19) THEY BELIEVE, ARE BAPTIZED, HANDS ARE LAID ON THEM AND RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PAUL BEGINS HIS MINISTRY IN EPHESUS BY GOING INTO THE SYNAGOGUE AND PRESENTING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, VERSE 8. HE MET SERIOUS OPPOSITION AND MOVES TO THE HALL OF TYRANNUS. VERSE 9 RECORDS THAT SOME OF THE JEWS

SPOKE EVIL OF THE “WAY. “THE “WAY” IS THE FIRST NAME USED TO DESCRIBE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.

PAUL’S REPUTATION SPREADS RAPIDLY, BECAUSE THE LORD HEALS PEOPLE THROUGH HIM. THE SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA, ITINERANT JEWISH EXORCISTS, ATTEMPT TO CASH IN ON THE GLORY BY USING THE NAME OF JESUS TO EXPEL AN EVIL SPIRIT. THE EVIL SPIRIT SAYS, “JESUS I KNOW, AND PAUL I KNOW, BUT WHO ARE YOU?” THE MAN IN WHOM THE EVIL SPIRIT DWELLS ATTACKS, OVERPOWERS AND INJURES THEM. THIS CAUSES THE NAME OF JESUS TO BE HELD IN AWE. THIS EVENT TEACHES THAT THE NAME OF JESUS IS VERY POWERFUL, BUT NOT A MAGIC FORMULA.

THE CHAPTER CLOSSES WITH THE EVENT OF DEMETRIUS THE SILVERSMITH INCITING A RIOT AGAINST PAUL.

ONE WAG SAYS ACTS 19:32 DESCRIBED A TYPICAL BAPTIST BUSINESS MEETING.

ACTS 20

PAUL BEGINS HIS JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

- I. PAUL ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE OF MACEDONIA AND GREECE 20:1 - 6
- II. PAUL RAISES EUTYCHUS FROM THE DEAD 20:7 - 12
- III. PAUL WALKS A JOURNEY BY HIMSELF 20:13 - 16
- IV. PAUL REVEALS HIS HEART TO THE ELDERS AT EPHESUS 20:17 - 28

CHAPTER 19 ENDS WITH THE RIOT IN EPHESUS, WHICH CAUSES PAUL TO LEAVE EPHESUS AND GO TO MACEDONIA. WE KNOW FROM II COR. 2:12 - 13 THAT HE HOPES TO MEET TITUS AT TROAS AND LEARN HOW THINGS ARE AT CORINTH. PAUL HAD SENT TITUS TO CORINTH TO CHECK ON THINGS THERE. HE MISSES TITUS IN TROAS, BUT MEETS HIM IN ONE OF THE CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA.

WHILE PAUL IS IN EPHESUS HE HAS WRITTEN I CORINTHIANS TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. HE MAY HAVE WRITTEN MORE THAN ONE LETTER FROM HERE. PAUL PROBABLY WROTE OUR II CORINTHIANS WHILE HE IS ON HIS WAY TO CORINTH. HE SPENDS 2 OR 3 MONTHS IN CORINTH. IT IS WHILE HE IS IN CORINTH AT THIS TIME THAT HE WRITES THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT ROME. THE LETTER IS ROMANS IN OUR NEW TESTAMENT.

AT CORINTH PAUL FACES OPPOSITION FROM THE JEWS; SO, HE RETRACES HIS JOURNEY BACK THROUGH THE CITIES IN MACEDONIA. THERE IS A LIST OF PEOPLE WHO TRAVEL WITH HIM. THESE ARE THE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE VARIOUS CHURCHES THAT HAVE GIVEN MONEY FOR THE FAMINE RELIEF IN JERUSALEM. LUKE JOINS THE PARTY AT PHILIPPI, VERSE 6.

PAUL SENDS FOR THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS TO MEET HIM AT MILETUS, ABOUT 35 MILES FROM EPHEBUS. AS THEY MEET PAUL OPENS HIS HEART TO THEM AS HE BIDS THEM FAREWELL. THESE PEOPLE ARE VERY DEAR TO HIM. IN HIS PARTING HE REVIEWS THE PAST AND LOOKS WITH HOPE TOWARD THE FUTURE. IN REVIEWING THE PAST, HE SAYS THAT HE HAS SERVED WITH HUMILITY, SINCERITY AND EARNESTNESS, VERSE 19. THEY HAVE ALSO PREACHED AND TAUGHT WITH COURAGE, VERSE 20. THEIR PREACHING AND TEACHING IS REPENTANCE AND FAITH TOWARD JESUS, VERSE 21. THEY HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO PREACH THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, 27. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE PAUL SAYS THAT THE FUTURE IS UNCERTAIN, VERSE 22, SUFFERING IS CERTAIN, VERSE 23, BUT HE HAS THE DETERMINATION TO MOVE FORWARD, VERSE 23. WITH REGARD FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCHES HE SAYS TO THE ELDERS THAT THEY ARE TO FEED THE FLOCK, VERSE 28, RESIST FALSE TEACHERS, VERSE 29, AND HELP THE WEAK, VERSE 35. THEY PRAY TOGETHER AS THEY FACE THE FUTURE.

ACTS 21

PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM AND IS ARRESTED

- I. PAUL WITH THE CHURCH AT TYRE 21:1 - 6**
- II. PAUL AT PHILIP'S HOUSE HEARS AGABUS THE PROPHET 21:7 - 15**
- III. PAUL MEETS WITH THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM 21:16 - 25**
- IV. PAUL GOES INTO THE TEMPLE 21:26**
- V. PAUL IS ATTACK BY THE MOB 21:27 - 30**
- VI. PAUL IS RESCUED BY ROMAN SOLDIERS 21:31 - 40**

THE PACE SHIFTS INTO HIGH GEAR AS PAUL LEAVES MILETUS AND MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD JERUSALEM. AT CAESAREA PAUL IS WARNED NOT TO GO TO JERUSALEM BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME DANGER. AT CAESAREA PAUL STAYS AT PHILIP THE EVANGELIST'S HOUSE. THERE A PROPHET FROM JUDEA, AGABUS, TAKES PAUL'S BELT BINDS HIS OWN HANDS AND FEET AND WARNS PAUL THAT THE JEWISH LEADERS IN JERUSALEM WILL IN LIKE MANNER BIND PAUL AND TURN HIM OVER TO THE GENTILES. A SIMILAR WARNING HAD COME AT TYRE. PAUL ACCEPTS THE WARNINGS AS CHALLENGES NOT TO BE SURPRISED BY PERSECUTION, TO TAKE COURAGE AND FOLLOW THE WILL OF THE LORD. THE DISCIPLES AGREE AND PRAY FOR HIM.

AS SOON AS PAUL ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM HE GOES IMMEDIATELY TO THE CHURCH AND MEETS WITH THE ELDERS. THEY INFORM HIM THAT A RUMOR IS MAKING ITS ROUNDS AMONG

THE CHRISTIAN JEWS IN JERUSALEM THAT HE TEACHES JEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO ABANDON THE LAWS OF MOSES AND NOT TO CIRCUMCISE THEIR CHILDREN. PAUL HAS NEVER TAUGHT JEWS EITHER OF THESE. HE DOES TEACH THAT ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH AND NOT THE LAW AND IN LIKE MANNER JEWS ARE ALSO JUSTIFIED BY FAITH NOT BY THE LAW. THE ELDERS SUGGEST A PLAN TO PROVE THAT PAUL IS LOYAL TO THE CUSTOMS OF THEIR FOREFATHERS. FOUR MEN HAVE TAKEN A VOW, AND THE ELDERS SUGGEST THAT PAUL GO INTO THE TEMPLE WITH THEM AND PAY THE EXPENSES NECESSARY FOR THESE MEN TO COMPLETE THEIR VOWS. PAUL DOES THIS, BUT WHILE HE IS IN THE TEMPLE SOME JEWS FROM ASIA RECOGNIZE HIM, GRAB HIM AND CRY OUT TO THE CROWD THAT PAUL HAS BROUGHT GENTILES INTO THE TEMPLE. THESE CHARGES ARE FALSE. NEVERTHELESS THE PEOPLE START TO BEAT PAUL, AND HE HAS TO BE RESCUED BY ROMAN SOLDIERS.

THE ROMAN OFFICER IN CHARGE MISUNDERSTANDS AND THINKS THAT PAUL IS AN INFAMOUS EGYPTIAN OUTLAW. HE IS AMAZED WHEN PAUL SPEAKS TO HIM IN GREEK. PAUL ASKS IF HE CAN SPEAK TO THE CROWD. HE IS GRANTED PERMISSION.

ACTS 22

PAUL PRESENTS HIS CASE AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE RESPOND

- I. PAUL PRESENTS HIS DEFENCE TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE 22:1 - 21**
- II. THE JEWISH MOB CRIES FOR BLOOD 22:22 - 23**
- III. PAUL APPEALS TO HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP 22:24 - 30**

IN HIS DEFENSE PAUL TELLS HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE. HE SAYS THAT GOD HAS DIVINELY APPOINTED HIM. THE LOGIC OF HIS ARGUMENT IS THAT SINCE THEY ARE OPPOSING PAUL THEY ARE OPPOSING GOD. THEY FOLLOW HIS LOGIC AND TESTIMONY UNTIL HE SAYS THAT HIS MINISTRY IS TO THE GENTILES OR NATIONS. THEIR REACTION IS LIKE A PERSON WHO TOUCHES A RED HOT STOVE. THE ROMAN OFFICER REMOVES PAUL QUICKLY INTO THE FORTRESS. SINCE HE CANNOT SEEM TO COMPREHEND ANYTHING THAT IS HAPPENING HE ORDERS PAUL TO BE SCOURGED. PAUL TELLS THEM HE IS A ROMAN CITIZEN. THIS TERRIFIES THEM, BECAUSE LEGALLY A ROMAN CITIZEN CAN NOT BE BOUND MUCH LESS SCOURGED WITHOUT A LAWFUL TRIAL. THE ROMAN OFFICER IS AMAZED WHEN HE DISCOVERS THAT PAUL IS A NATURAL BORN ROMAN CITIZEN. THE ROMAN OFFICER STILL DOES NOT KNOW WHY THE JEWS ARE SO ENRAGED AT PAUL; SO, HE DECIDES TO PLACE HIM BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN, THE JEWISH SUPREME COURT.

ACTS 23

PAUL APPEARS BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL AND IS SENT TO CAESAREA FOR SAFETY

I. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL 23:1 - 10

II. PAUL IS ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD 23:11

III. THE JEWISH PLOT FAILED 23:12 - 35

ANANIAS, A WICKED UNSCRUPULOUS MAN, IS THE HIGH PRIEST. HE HAS HELD THIS OFFICE FROM 47 A.D. HE IS A DISGRACE TO THIS OFFICE. AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE HEARING HE ORDERS PAUL TO BE STRUCK ACROSS THE MOUTH. IN JEWISH LAW A MAN IS INNOCENT UNTIL PROVED GUILTY. THE HIGH PRIEST WHO IS TO UPHOLD THE LAW BREAKS IT. PAUL RESPONDS BY CALLING HIM A WHITWASHED WALL. THE IDEA SEEMS TO BE A WEAK DECAYING WALL THAT IS WHITWASHED TO MAKE IT LOOK SOLID. PAUL'S RESPONSE THAT HE DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE HIGH PRIEST SEEMS TO BE A SARCASTIC REMARK THAT A REAL HIGH PRIEST APPOINTED BY GOD WOULD NOT BREAK THE LAW. PAUL KNOWS THAT THEY WILL NOT GIVE HIM A FAIR TRIAL, BUT ARE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO CONDEMN HIM. PAUL HITS THE TARGET DEAD CENTER. HE KNOWS THAT HE IS NOT ON TRIAL BECAUSE HE IS DISLOYAL TO THE JEWISH LAWS AND TRADITIONS, BUT BECAUSE HE PREACHES THAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS PROVES THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH. PAUL TELLS THEM HE IS ON TRIAL FOR TEACHING THE RESURRECTION. THIS IMMEDIATELY CAUSES A TREMENDOUS ARGUMENT BETWEEN THE SADDUCEES AND THE

PHARISEES, BECAUSE THE SADDUCEES DO NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION. THE ROMAN OFFICER AGAIN HAS TO RESCUE PAUL.

A PLOT AGAINST PAUL'S LIFE IS FOILED BY PAUL'S NEPHEW. THE PLOT IS BETWEEN THE MEN WHO HAVE TAKEN THE VOW TO KILL PAUL AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS, WHICH SHOWS THE COMPLETE APOSTASY OF THE JEWISH NATION. THESE CHIEF PRIESTS ARE CERTAINLY NOT THE TYPE OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AS YOUR NEIGHBORS. THE FORTY MEN WHO BOUND THEMSELVES TOGETHER UNDER A CURSE NOT TO EAT OR DRINK UNTIL THEY KILLED PAUL MUST SURELY HAVE DIED FROM STARVATION OR THEY DID NOT TAKE THEIR VOWS VERY SERIOUSLY. YOU CAN BE SURE THAT YEARS LATER THEY DID NOT BRAG ABOUT THESE VOWS. WHEN THE ROMAN CAPTAIN HEARS OF THE PLOT AGAINST A ROMAN CITIZEN HE TOOK PAUL THAT NIGHT UNDER HEAVY GUARD TO CAESAREA TO GET HIM OUT OF JERUSALEM AND TO PUT HIM UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE ROMAN GOVERNOR. THE LETTER THE ROMAN CAPTAIN WRITES TO FELIX THE GOVERNOR IS FILLED WITH LIES TO MAKE THE CAPTAIN LOOK AS IF HIS CHIEF CONCERN WAS TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A ROMAN CITIZEN.

ACTS 24

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

- I. PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND THE JEWISH COUNCIL OF ELDERS 24:1 - 23**
- II. THE CHARGE AGAINST PAUL 24:5 - 9**
- III. PAUL'S DEFENSE 24:10 - 23**
- IV. PAUL SPEAKS PRIVATELY TO FELIX AND DRUSILLA 24:24 - 27**

FIVE DAYS AFTER PAUL HAS BEEN TAKEN TO CAESAREA THE HIGH PRIEST ANANIAS, SOME CHIEF PRIESTS AND AN ORATOR NAMED TERTULLUS COME TO CAESAREA TO PROVE TO FELIX THAT PAUL IS A CRIMINAL. AFTER PRAISING FELIX FOR HIS GREAT VIRTUES, WHICH IS A LIE, TERTULLUS PORTRAYS PAUL AS AN EXTREMELY EVIL MAN, AN EVEN GREATER LIE. THREE FALSE CHARGES ARE BROUGHT AGAINST PAUL: 1. SEDITION, 2. HERESY AND 3. SACRILEGE. PAUL ANSWERS THESE CHARGES. FELIX DOES NOT WANT TO OFFEND THE JEWISH LEADERS; SO, HE PRETENDS TO BE WAITING FOR THE LYSIAS, THE ROMAN CAPTAIN IN JERUSALEM, TO GIVE HIM MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY. THE TRUTH HE HAS ALREADY RECEIVED LYSIAS POSITIVE REPORT FOR PAUL WHEN PAUL WAS ORIGINALLY BROUGHT TO CAESAREA.

LATER FELIX AND DRUSILLA, HIS WIFE, SEND FOR PAUL TO HEAR ABOUT FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. PAUL SPEAKS TO THEM ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, SELF-CONTROL AND JUDGMENT. FELIX IS TERRIFIED BY THE MESSAGE, BUT DOES NOT REPENT.

HE SENDS PAUL AWAY AND SAYS HE WILL HEAR HIM LATER. TWO YEARS PASS AND PAUL IS STILL A PRISONER.

FELIX IS A MOST INTERESTING PAGAN. HE IS THE FIRST FORMER SLAVE IN ROMAN HISTORY TO BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF A ROMAN PROVINCE. HIS BROTHER PALLAS IS THE HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN ROME. PROBABLY HE HAS BEEN FREED BY THE MOTHER OF CLAUDIUS OR MAYBE CLAUDIUS. HE MARRIES THREE PRINCESSES. HIS FIRST WIFE IS THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA (F. F. BRUCE, OP.CIT., P. 437.) HIS THIRD WIFE IS THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF HEROD AGRIPPA I. SHE HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY MARRIED TO AZIZUS, KING OF EMESA (BARCLAY, OP.CIT., P. 187.)

THERE IS A DEBATE OVER WHETHER CAESAREA IS A JEWISH OR A GREEK CITY. MOB VIOLENCE OCCURS. FELIX SUPPORTS THE GREEKS WITH SOLDIERS. THE SOLDIERS LOOT THE HOUSES OF THE WEALTHY JEWS. THE JEWS IN TURN REPORT FELIX TO THE ROMAN EMPEROR, AND FELIX IS WITHDRAWN AS GOVERNOR.

ACTS 25

PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA II

- I. PLOT AGAINST PAUL FOILED 25:1 - 5**
- II. PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND THE JEWISH COUNCIL 25:6-9**
- III. PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR 25:10- 12**
- IV. PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA 25:13-27**

PORCIUS FESTUS BECOMES THE ROMAN GOVERNOR AFTER FELIX. HE INHERITS A TOUGH SITUATION TO SAY THE LEAST. HE HAS BEEN IN OFFICE ONLY THREE DAYS WHEN HE GOES TO JERUSALEM TO MEET THE JEWISH LEADERS AND CULTIVATE THEIR SUPPORT. THE HATRED OF THE JEWISH LEADERS FOR PAUL HAS NOT DIMINISHED. THEY KNOW THAT FESTUS WANTS TO GET ON GOOD TERMS WITH THEM AND THAT HE IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SITUATION. SO THEY ASK THAT PAUL BE BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM FOR TRIAL. THEY INTEND TO HAVE HIM KILLED ON THE WAY. FESTUS HAS TO BE CAREFUL, BECAUSE PAUL IS A ROMAN CITIZEN, BUT HE DOES NOT WANT TO UPSET THE JEWISH LEADERS. HE ASKS PAUL IF HE WILL GO TO JERUSALEM. PAUL SUSPECTS THE JEWISH LEADER'S PLANS; SO, AS A ROMAN CITIZEN HE APPEALS TO CAESAR. FESTUS BY TRYING TO PLEASE THE JEWISH LEADERS HAS PUT HIMSELF IN AN AWKWARD SITUATION. HE ALSO KNOWS THAT NONE OF THE CHARGES AGAINST PAUL WILL STAND UP IN THE ROMAN COURT. HE ALSO KNOWS THAT PAUL IS INNOCENT.

SOON AFTER THIS FESTUS IS VISITED BY HEROD AGRIPPA II AND AGRIPPA'S SISTER BERNICE. BERNICE IS THE SISTER OF DRUCILLA (BARCLAY, OP. CIT., P. 190.) AND AGRIPPA II. BERNICE IS A HIGH ROLLER; SHE HAS BEEN MARRIED SEVERAL TIMES, AND AFTER THE JEWISH REVOLT IN 66 - 70 A.D. SHE WILL HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH TITUS, AND GO LIVE WITH HIM IN ROME. AGRIPPA II IS THE KING OF CHALCIS. FESTUS KNOWS THAT AGRIPPA II HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THE JEWISH RELIGION, AND HE HOPES HE CAN HELP HIM FIND SOME CHARGES AGAINST PAUL THAT WILL STAND UP IN A ROMAN COURT.

ACTS 26

PAUL'S WITNESS TO AGRIPPA II

I. PAUL'S WITNESS TO AGRIPPA 26:1 - 23

II. PAUL APPEALS TO AGRIPPA TO BELIEVE 26:24 - 32

PAUL DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA II IS AN APPEAL FOR AGRIPPA II TO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. PAUL'S SERMON IS A STATEMENT OF THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. PAUL STATES THAT FAITH IN THE RISEN CHRIST IS THE HEART OF HIS TEACHING. HE SAYS THAT CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS PROPHESED IN SCRIPTURE, WITNESSED BY RELIABLE WITNESSES AND IS FOR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE. FESTUS PROBABLY COMPREHENDS LITTLE OF WHAT HE HEARD. AGRIPPA II ON THE OTHER HAND UNDERSTANDS. HE SIMPLY DOES NOT BELIEVE. HIS ANSWER TO PAUL IS, "WITH A LITTLE PERSUASION (OR IN A LITTLE TIME) YOU WOULD MAKE ME A CHRISTIAN." PAUL'S ANSWER IS THAT HE HOPES WITH HOWEVER MUCH TIME OR HOWEVER MANY WORDS IT TAKES HE HOPES THAT ALL WHO HEAR HIM WILL BELIEVE.

THE DISTINGUISHED AUDIENCE LEAVES THE HALL. THEY ALL AGREE THAT PAUL IS INNOCENT. AGRIPPA SAYS, "THIS MAN COULD HAVE BEEN SET FREE IF HE HAD NOT APPEALED TO CAESAR."

ACTS 27

SAILING FOR ROME AND SHIPWRECKED ON THE WAY

I. SAILING FOR ROME 27:1 - 8

II. A WARNING AND A BAD DECISION 27:9 - 14

III. RIDING THE STORM 27:15 - 26

IV. SURVIVING THE SHIPWRECK 27:27 - 44

ONCE PAUL HAD APPEALED TO CAESAR THE GOVERNOR HAD TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAUL TO BE TAKEN TO ROME. PAUL IS ENTRUSTED TO A CENTURION NAMED JULIUS OF THE AUGUSTAN COHORT. THIS COHORT WAS SOME KIND OF SPECIAL CORPS OF MEN UNDER THE EMPEROR. JULIUS AND PAUL HAD AN EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIP, AND PAUL WAS TREATED WITH KINDNESS.

THE “WE” NARRATIVE PICKS UP AGAIN AT 27:1. IT SEEMS THAT LUKE AND ARISTARCHUS FROM THESSALONICA ACCOMPANY PAUL TO ROME. CHAPTER 27 IS A VIVID DETAILED EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE SHIPWRECK THAT PAUL AND HIS PARTY EXPERIENCE ON THEIR JOURNEY TO ROME. THE TECHNICAL ACCURACY AND GRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE EVENTS AND THE JOURNEY ROUTE IN THIS CHAPTER, AS VERIFIED BY RECENT AUTHORITIES, SHOULD INCREASE THE CONFIDENCE OF EVEN THE MOST SKEPTICAL PERSON ABOUT LUKE AS A HISTORIAN AND WRITER.

THE SHIP SETS SAIL AND HUGS THE COAST OF ASIA MINOR, BECAUSE THE WEST WINDS DURING THIS TIME OF YEAR ARE VERY STRONG AND THE SHIP HAS ONE LARGE SQUARE SAIL.

THEY LAND AT SIDON AND THEN SAIL ON TO MYRA. AT MYRA THEY TAKE A GRAIN SHIP HEADED FOR ITALY. THE WINDS PREVENT THEIR PROGRESS, AND THEY MANAGE TO GET TO THE ISLAND OF CRETE AND STOP AT FAIR HAVENS. PAUL ADVISES THEM TO WINTER AT FAIR HAVENS, BUT THE CAPTAIN AND OWNER OF THE SHIP VOTE FOR PHOENIX, FORTY MILES AWAY. THEY HAVE JUST PUT OUT TO SEA WHEN THE SHIP IS CAUGHT BY A FIERCE STORM AND DRIVEN OUT TO OPEN SEA. THEY STRENGTHEN THE SHIP AS BEST THEY CAN WITH CABLES AND LIGHTEN THE LOAD BY THROWING OVERBOARD THE EXCESS. THEY ARE IN THIS STORM FOR FOURTEEN DAYS AND NIGHTS. THEY ARE LOST AT SEA. PAUL ASSURES THEM THAT GOD HAD SENT HIM A MESSAGE THAT ALL ON BOARD SHIP WOULD BE SAVED BUT THAT THE SHIP WOULD BE WRECKED ON AN ISLAND. IN THE NIGHT SOUNDINGS REVEAL THAT THEY ARE BEING DRIVEN TOWARD LAND. THE SAILORS ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE SHIP'S BOAT AND ESCAPE. PAUL WARNS THE CENTURION THAT THE SAFETY OF EVERYONE DEPENDS ON THE SKILL OF THE SAILORS, AND SO THE SOLDIERS CUT THE BOAT LOOSE, PREVENTING THE ESCAPE. THE SAILORS SPOT A BEACH AND INTEND TO RUN THE SHIP AGROUND. THE SHIP, HOWEVER, RUNS INTO MUD AND IS TORN APART BY THE WAVES. THE PASSENGERS BY SWIMMING AND CLINGING TO BOARDS GET TO SHORE SAFELY.

ACTS 28

AT ROME AT LAST

I. SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA 28:1 - 10

**II. ARRIVAL AT ROME AND UNDER HOUSE ARREST
28:11 - 16**

**III. PAUL WITNESSES TO THE JEWS IN ROME
28:17 - 30**

THEY DISCOVER THEY ARE ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA. THEY ARE TREATED VERY KINDLY BY THE PEOPLE OF THE ISLAND. IT IS COLD AND HAS STARTED TO RAIN SO THE NATIVES BUILD A FIRE TO KEEP THE PEOPLE WARM. PAUL GATHERS A BUNDLE OF STICKS TO PUT ON THE FIRE. A VIPER COMES OUT OF THE STICKS AND FASTENS ITSELF ONTO HIS HAND. IT PROBABLY MEANS THAT THE VIPER BITES HIM, AND HE SHAKES IT OFF. THE PEOPLE WATCH AND ASSUME THAT PAUL IS A MURDERER, AND THAT EVEN THOUGH HE HAS ESCAPED THE SEA, DIVINE JUSTICE IS ABOUT TO OVERTAKE HIM. THEY OBSERVE HIM CLOSELY. NO HARM COMES TO HIM SO THEY ASSUME HE IS A GOD.

THE CHIEF OF THE ISLAND, PUBLIUS, EXTENDS WARM HOSPITALITY TO THEM, AND PAUL IS THE INSTRUMENT GOD USES TO HEAL HIS FATHER. MANY OTHER PEOPLE WITH DISEASES ARE ALSO HEALED. AFTER THREE MONTHS THEY SET SAIL ON A SHIP THAT HAD WINTERED ON THE ISLAND. THE SHIP IS NAMED THE TWIN BROTHERS AFTER THE TWO GREEK GODS CASTOR AND POLLUX. THEY SAIL TO SYRACUSE, STAY THERE THREE DAYS, SAIL TO RHEGIUM, STAY ONE DAY, SAIL TO PUTEOLI AND

STAYED THERE SEVEN DAYS VISITING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS. THEY THEN TRAVEL BY LAND TO ROME. SOME OF THE CHRISTIANS HEAR THAT THEY ARE COMING AND MEET THEM AT THE FORUM OF APPIUS, SOME 40 MILES FROM ROME. OTHER CHRISTIANS COME TO MEET THEM AT THREE TAVERNS AND ACCOMPANY THEM TO ROME. EARLY IN THE VOYAGE FROM CAESAREA TO ROME THE CENTURION HAS LEARNED THAT HE CAN TRUST PAUL. HE ALLOWS HIM GREAT FREEDOM, AND IN FACT EVEN SAVES HIS LIFE WHEN THE SOLDIERS PLAN TO KILL THE PRISONERS.

WHEN PAUL IS GREETED BY THE CHRISTIANS FROM ROME HE IS GREATLY ENCOURAGED AND REJOICES.

PAUL IS UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN ROME. THIS PERMITS HIM THE FREEDOM TO HAVE VISITORS AND WRITE LETTERS. AFTER BEING IN ROME ONLY THREE DAYS HE SENDS FOR THE LEADING JEWS OF ROME TO MEET WITH HIM. PAUL EXPLAINS TO THEM WHY HE IS IN ROME UNDER ARREST. THEY SET A DATE TO HEAR HIM SPEAK ABOUT THIS NEW SECT. WHEN THE DAY ARRIVES GREAT NUMBERS OF JEWS COME TO HEAR PAUL EXPRESS HIS VIEWS. FROM MORNING TO EVENING HE EXPOUNDS TO THEM FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH. THE CONCLUSION IS AS ALWAYS, SOME BELIEVE AND SOME DO NOT BELIEVE. THEY DISPUTED AMONG THEMSELVES, AND LEFT AFTER PAUL QUOTED FROM ISA. 6:9 - 10. PROBABLY THE MAJORITY OF THE JEWS REJECTED THE GOSPEL.

LUKE CONCLUDES ACTS SAYING THAT PAUL LIVED IN ROME TWO YEARS AT HIS OWN EXPENSE, PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND TEACHING ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE LAST FOUR WORDS OF ACTS IN THE GREEK TEXT, μετα πασης παρρησιας ακωλυτως, CAN LITERALLY BE TRANSLATED "WITH ALL FREEDOM UNHINDEREDLY." THIS IS A NOTE OF TRIUMPHANT THAT PAUL IS ABLE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME.

WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL? WAS HE RELEASED FROM PRISON? WAS HE EXECUTED? HOW DOES II TIMOTHY FIT INTO THE HISTORICAL SCHEME OF ACTS? THESE AND MANY OTHER QUESTIONS ARE ASKED BY STUDENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT ACTS HAS AN ABRUPT ENDING. THERE IS, THEREFORE, MUCH SPECULATION ABOUT WHY ACTS ENDS AS IT DOES. ONE SUGGESTION IS THAT THE ENDING OF ACTS HAS BEEN LOST. ANOTHER IS THAT LUKE DIED AND COULD NOT FINISH THE BOOK. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT LUKE REALLY INTENDS TO END THE BOOK AS HE DOES. THE BEST EXPLANATION IS THAT AN IMPERIAL EDICT, PROBABLY FROM THE TIME OF NERO, SPECIFIES THAT CAPITAL CASES BROUGHT TO ROME FROM DISTANT PROVINCES HAD TO APPEAR IN COURT WITHIN 18 MONTHS OR THE CASE WAS DROPPED. LUKE BY SAYING THAT PAUL STAYED IN ROME TWO YEARS AT HIS OWN EXPENSE MEANS THAT PAUL'S CASE WAS DROPPED BY DEFAULT WHICH WAS EQUAL TO AN ACQUITTAL. (CADBURY, THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY, V, 333. QUOTED IN T. C. SMITH, ACTS, VOL. 10, THE BROADMAN BIBLE COMMENTARY [NASHVILLE, TN: BROADMAN PRESS, 1970] P. 152.)

THIS IMPRISONMENT WAS PROBABLY FOR TWO YEARS

FROM 60-62 A.D. OR FROM 61-63 A.D. HE WAS PROBABLY ACQUITTED, AND FREE FOR ONE TO THREE YEARS. DURING THIS TIME HE PROBABLY WROTE I TIMOTHY AND TITUS, VISITED PHILIPPI, COLOSSE, SOME OTHER CITIES AND MAYBE EVEN SPAIN. PAUL WAS PROBABLY ARRESTED AGAIN, WROTE II TIMOTHY, TRIED AND EXECUTED. THIS ARREST WOULD HAVE BEEN BETWEEN 63 A.D. AND 67 A.D. HIS EXECUTION WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 64 A.D. AND 67 A.D.



THE EPISTLES

INTRODUCTION

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONTAINS TWENTY - ONE EPISTLES OR LETTERS, WRITTEN BY FIVE OR SIX PEOPLE. THIS NUMBER BECOMES TWENTY-TWO IF WE INCLUDE REVELATION. THIRTEEN OF THESE WERE WRITTEN BY PAUL, AND FOURTEEN IF HE WROTE HEBREWS.

THE EPISTLES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO VARIOUS CATEGORIES. A COMMON METHOD IS TO DIVIDE PAUL'S EPISTLES INTO FOUR GROUPS. GROUP 1: I AND II THESSALONIANS. GROUP 2: I AND II CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS, AND ROMANS. GROUP 3: COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON, EPHESIANS AND PHILIPPIANS. GROUP 4: I AND II TIMOTHY AND TITUS. SOME SCHOLARS WOULD PLACE GALATIANS IN GROUP 1.

PERHAPS A BETTER METHOD OF DIVIDING PAUL'S EPISTLES IS TO PLACE THEM IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FIRST IMPRISONMENT IN ROME. THIS METHOD CLASSIFIES PAUL'S EPISTLES INTO THREE GROUPS: 1. BEFORE, 2. DURING AND 3. AFTER HIS IMPRISONMENT. THE EPISTLES WRITTEN BEFORE THE FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT ARE I AND II THESSALONIANS, I AND II CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS AND ROMANS. THOSE WRITTEN DURING HIS FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT ARE COLOSSIANS,

PHILEMON, EPHESIANS AND PHILIPPIANS. THE EPISTLES WRITTEN AFTER HIS FIRST IMPRISONMENT ARE I AND II TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

HEBREWS PRESENTS SOME DIFFICULTIES IN PLACEMENT. SOME SCHOLARS PLACE HEBREWS IN THE 4TH GROUP OF PAULINE EPISTLES WHILE OTHERS PLACE IT WITH THE "GENERAL EPISTLES." IT IS PERHAPS BEST TO PLACE HEBREWS IN A CATEGORY BY ITSELF.

THE "GENERAL EPISTLES" CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS. GROUP 1: JAMES AND JUDE. GROUP 2: "THE PETRINE" EPISTLES, I AND II PETER. GROUP 3: "THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES," I, II AND III JOHN AND REVELATION. REVELATION IS OFTEN PLACED IN A CATEGORY BY ITSELF, BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN IN A TYPE OF LITERATURE KNOWN AS "APOCALYPTIC."

J. SIDLOW BAXTER HAS A UNIQUE WAY OF DIVIDING THE EPISTLES. HE CLASSIFIES THEM AS FOLLOWS: NINE "CHRISTIAN CHURCH EPISTLES," ROMANS THROUGH 2 THESSALONIANS; FOUR "PASTORAL EPISTLES," I TIMOTHY THROUGH PHILEMON; NINE "HEBREW CHRISTIAN EPISTLES," HEBREWS THROUGH REVELATION. (J. SIDLOW BAXTER, EXPLORE THE BOOK [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1976] VOL. 6, P. 55.)

ANOTHER EXCELLENT WAY TO VIEW THE EPISTLES IS TO SEE THEM AS A HARMONIOUS PICTURE OF UNITY THAT EXISTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH AS THE VARIOUS DIVERGENT POINTS-OF-VIEW COME TOGETHER. THE EARLY CHURCH SEES JESUS AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THEIR OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION.

THIS FULFILLMENT IS SEEN IN THESE EPISTLES. PAUL TEACHES THAT THE OLD COVENANT AND THE ORDINANCES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE FULFILLED IN CHRISTIANITY. PETER TEACHES THAT JESUS AND THE CHURCH FULFILL THE KINGSHIP AND PRIESTHOOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. JOHN DEMONSTRATES THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT JUST AS THE BOOK OF HEBREWS DOES. JAMES SHOWS HOW CHRISTIANITY FULFILLS THE LAW THROUGH FAITH. (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1965] PP. 93-94.)

DURING PAUL'S TIME LETTER WRITING WAS FAIRLY COMMON. PAUL FOLLOWED THE USUAL FORM FOR LETTERS EXCEPT THAT HIS LETTERS ARE MUCH LONGER THAN THE ORDINARY LETTER OF HIS TIME AND ARE WRITTEN TO GROUPS AS WELL AS TO INDIVIDUALS. HIS COMMUNICATION WITH CHURCHES IS CONSIDERED BY SOME SCHOLARS AS A NEW LITERARY FORM.

LETTERS WERE WRITTEN ON PAPYRUS SHEETS ABOUT THE SIZE OF OUR NOTEBOOK PAPER. FOR LONGER LETTERS THE PAGES WERE ATTACHED TOGETHER AT THE EDGES AND ROLLED LIKE A SCROLL. IT WAS A COMMON PRACTICE TO DICTATE LETTERS TO A SCRIBE, CALLED AN AMANUENSIS. (ROBERT H. GUNDRY, A SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1981] PP. 245-246.)

ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF ROMANS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

PAUL, THE APOSTLE, PENS THIS MASTERPIECE IN ABOUT 57 A.D. ITS MESSAGE HAS BEEN THE SPEAR HEAD OF ALMOST EVERY MAJOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN HISTORY. ITS LIFE CHANGING MESSAGE HAS BROUGHT CONVERSION AND REVIVAL TO BOTH PEOPLE AND NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES.

AUGUSTINE WAS CONVERTED WHILE READING ROMANS. LUTHER WAS CONVERTED AND SET FREE FROM LEGALISM WHILE STUDYING ROMANS. HE THEN PLACED ITS CONCEPT OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH TO HIS LIPS LIKE A TRUMPET AND BLEW IN THE REFORMATION. JOHN BUNYAN IN JAIL IN BEDFORD, ENGLAND WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE BY ITS GREAT TRUTH AND LATER WROTE "PILGRIMS PROGRESS." JOHN WESLEY WAS CONVERTED WHILE LISTENING TO SOMEONE READ FROM LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON ROMANS AND WENT ON TO BRING THOUSANDS TO GOD'S GRACE.

AUTHORSHIP

SCHOLARS ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY AGREE THAT PAUL, WHOSE HEBREW NAME WAS SAUL, WROTE ROMANS. PAUL IS FIRST MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS AS A PERSECUTOR AND ENEMY OF THE CHURCH. ACTS IS A SELECTED HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH. IT RECORDS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY, THE STONING OF STEPHEN, A DEACON IN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM. PAUL, THEN CALLED SAUL, WAS A WITNESS TO THIS CRIME.

PAUL'S WITNESS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS IS PROGRESSIVE. PAUL IS FIRST A SILENT WITNESS TO THE DEATH OF STEPHEN. THEN HE IS A FIERCE WITNESS AND PERSECUTOR AGAINST THE CHURCH AND FINALLY, HE IS A LOYAL WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST.

ACTS 9 IS THE RECORD OF PAUL'S DRAMATIC HIGH VOLTAGE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE. HE IS ON HIS WAY TO DAMASCUS, THE CAPITAL OF SYRIA, TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS WHEN THE LORD STRIKES HIM WITH BLINDNESS, CALLS HIM TO HIS SERVICE AND COMMISSIONS HIM AS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES. PAUL NEVER DEPARTS FROM THIS HEAVENLY VISION.

FROM HIS BIRTH GOD HAS BEEN PREPARING HIM FOR THIS GREAT TASK. GOD HAS PREPARED HIM RELIGIOUSLY AS A JEW, AND A PHARISEE. HE HAS PREPARED HIM SPIRITUALLY AS A STUDENT OF THE SCRIPTURES. HE HAS PREPARED HIM INTELLECTUALLY AS A STUDENT UNDER THE FAMOUS TEACHER GAMALIEL. HE HAS PREPARED HIM CULTURALLY AND

POLITICALLY IN TARSUS AS A ROMAN CITIZEN, EVIDENTLY OF A FAMILY OF SOME FINANCIAL MEANS.

SOURCES

PAUL'S PRIMARY SOURCES ARE REVELATION FROM GOD AND HISTORICAL FACTS FROM THE APOSTLES. HE IS ALSO PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH CHIEF CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHO KNEW THE LORD FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE FAITH.

DATE OF WRITING

BY THE TIME PAUL WRITES ROMANS HE HAS ALREADY WRITTEN SEVERAL OF HIS OTHER LETTERS. IT IS AROUND 57 A.D., AND HE IS ON HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

JUST HOW THE GOSPEL CAME TO ROME WE DO NOT KNOW. PERHAPS THE FIRST CHRISTIANS AT ROME WERE NEW CONVERTS RETURNING TO ROME AFTER PENTECOST. IT SEEMS VERY LOGICAL THAT BELIEVERS HAD MOVED TO THE CITY SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN.

PLACE OF WRITING

PAUL PROBABLY WRITES THIS EPISTLE FROM CORINTH ON HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY. HE IS ON HIS WAY TO JERUSALEM TO TAKE A RELIEF OFFERING TO THE FAMINE STRICKEN BELIEVERS IN PALESTINE. HE IS HOPING AFTER THIS TO TRAVEL FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME AND MAKE ROME HIS HEADQUARTERS FOR REACHING THE REST OF THE EMPIRE.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

THE REASONS PAUL WRITES THE LETTER TO THE BELIEVERS AT ROME ARE:

- 1. TO ENCOURAGE THE BELIEVERS IN THEIR FAITH,**
- 2. TO EXPLAIN THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE FAITH,**
- 3. TO PREPARE THEM TO FACE FALSE TEACHERS,**
- 4. TO SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH; THUS, KEEPING THE JUDAIZERS FROM DECEIVING THEM,**
- 5. TO PREPARE THE BELIEVERS IN ROME FOR HIS VISIT,**
- 6. TO DISCUSS THEIR PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE STATE, AND**
- 7. TO ANSWER CHARGES THAT THEY MAY HAVE HEARD AGAINST HIM.**

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS IS ONE OF THE CHIEF FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

CENTRAL THEME

THE THEME OF ROMANS IS ROM. 1:16 - 17: "FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST; FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH; TO THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE GREEK. FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH; AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." IN THIS STATEMENT PAUL DEMONSTRATES HIS TREMENDOUS ABILITY AS A COMMUNICATOR OF THE GOSPEL. IN THESE TWO VERSES HE STATES THE GREAT IDEAS AND WORDS WHICH HE IS GOING TO PROCLAIM THROUGHOUT THE EPISTLE.

BRIEF OUTLINE

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT ROME CAN BE OUTLINED IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. A SIMPLE OUTLINE THAT HAS APPEARED IN SEVERAL PLACES IS AS FOLLOWS:

- I. SIN CHAPTERS 1 - 3:20**
- II. SALVATION CHAPTERS 3:21 - 5**
- III. SANCTIFICATION CHAPTERS 6 - 8**
- IV. SOVEREIGNTY CHAPTERS 9 - 11**
- V. SERVICE CHAPTERS 12 - 16**

ANOTHER SIMILAR OUTLINE IS:

- I. CONDEMNATION**
- II. JUSTIFICATION**
- III. SANCTIFICATION**
- IV. GLORIFICATION**
- V. CONSECRATION**

CHAPTERS 1:18 - 3:20
CHAPTERS 3:21 - 5:21
CHAPTERS 6:1 - 8:39
CHAPTERS 9:1 - 11:36
CHAPTERS 12:1 - 15:33

THE OUTLINE MAKES UP THE FIVE MAJOR DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF CONDEMNATION: THE WHOLE WORLD IS IN A STATE OF SIN, NO ONE CAN SAVE HIMSELF, ALL PEOPLE ARE LOST, AND THEREFORE, CONDEMNED.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION: GOD ACCEPTS THE DEATH AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS AS ATONEMENT FOR SIN AND DECLARES THOSE RIGHTEOUS WHO HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST'S DEATH. THE BELIEVER IS UNITED TO CHRIST AND IS VIEWED BY GOD AS RIGHTEOUS IN CHRIST. THEREFORE, THE PERSON IS NO LONGER UNDER CONDEMNATION. SOMEONE GAVE AN EASY WAY TO REMEMBER JUSTIFICATION, "JUST AS IF I NEVER SINNED."

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION: THE JUSTIFIED PERSON IS SET APART FOR GOD, IS BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST, ROMANS 8:29, AND IS BEING EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE THE LIFE OF FAITH AND VICTORY.

THE DOCTRINE OF CONSECRATION: THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE AS HE LIVES

CONSECRATED AND HOLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE DOCTRINE OF GLORIFICATION: GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND WILL CONSUMMATE HIS PLAN FOR BOTH THE NATION ISRAEL, THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

ROMANS CAN BE SUMMED UP IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

IN CHAPTER 1, PAUL GREETES THE BELIEVERS AT ROME. HE ESTABLISHES IDENTIFICATION BY TELLING THEM WHAT JESUS CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL MEAN TO HIM, AND THEN STATING THE THEME OF THE LETTER.

IN CHAPTERS 2:1 - 3:20, PAUL REVEALS THE RUIN OF THE HUMAN RACE. HE DEMONSTRATES THAT BOTH GENTILES AND JEWS ARE WITHOUT RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD AND, THEREFORE, CONDEMNED.

IN CHAPTER 4, PAUL SAYS THAT RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD IS IMPUTED TO THE BELIEVER BY FAITH IN CHRIST'S REDEEMING DEATH ON THE CROSS. HE PROVES THAT SALVATION BY FAITH IS NOT SOMETHING NEW, BUT IS THE WAY OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN CHAPTER 5, PAUL PROCLAIMS THE JOYOUS RESULTS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

IN CHAPTERS 6-8, PAUL PRESENTS THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER. BY ANSWERING THREE OBJECTIONS TO JUSTIFICA -

TION BY FAITH HE SHOWS THAT JUSTIFICATION LOGICALLY LEADS TO A LIFE SANCTIFIED TO GOD.

IN CHAPTERS 9 - 11, PAUL TURNS TO THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS, THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS AS A NATION AND HOW GOD WILL FULFILL HIS OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES AND PROPHECIES. HE EXPLAINS THAT THE TRUE JEW IS ONE WHO HAD FAITH, THAT THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS A NATION IS NOT FINAL, ONLY TEMPORARY, AND THAT A TIME WILL COME WHEN ISRAEL WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST.

IN CHAPTERS 12 - 15, PAUL SHOWS HOW FAITH IS LIVED DAILY. HE DEALS WITH THEIR DUTIES IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS AND IN THE COMMUNITY AS CITIZENS.

IN CHAPTERS 15 AND 16, PAUL CONCLUDES WITH PERSONAL COMMENTS AND A DOXOLOGY.

ROMANS REDUCED TO ONE PHRASE: "SIN IS MANKIND'S COMPLETE RUIN, BUT CHRIST IS GOD'S PERFECT REMEDY."

BASIC TERMS

SOME OF THE BASIC TERMS USED BY PAUL ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS, δικαιοσύνη. PAUL USUALLY MEANS A PERSON BEING IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS CONCERNED WITH THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD. PAUL SEES GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

IMPUTED TO MAN AS THE RESULT OF TRUST AND FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS IN HIS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS SEES RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE BASIC CONCEPT OF THE EPISTLE. THOMAS OUTLINED ROMANS AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) RIGHTEOUSNESS NEEDED BY SINFUL MEN, 1:17 - 3:20**
- (2) RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVIDED BY GOD, 3:21 - 26**
- (3) RIGHTEOUSNESS RECEIVED THROUGH FAITH, 3:27 - 4:25**
- (4) RIGHTEOUSNESS EXPERIENCED IN THE SOUL, 5:1 - 8:17**
- (5) RIGHTEOUSNESS GUARANTEED AS A PERMANENT BLESSING, 8:18 - 39**
- (6) RIGHTEOUSNESS REJECTED BY THE JEWISH NATION, 9 - 11**
- (7) RIGHTEOUSNESS MANIFESTED IN PRACTICAL LIFE, 12 - 16.**

(W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS, 1974] P. 37.)

2. FLESH, σαρκίς. SOMETIMES IT MEANS HUMAN EXISTENCE, SOMETIMES HUMAN FRAILTY, BUT USUALLY NATURAL MAN OR HUMAN NATURE WITHOUT GOD, 7:18; 7:25; 8:3 - 13.

3. FAITH, πίστις. FAITH IN ROMANS MEANS A PERSONAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD AND RELIANCE UPON GOD'S PROMISES AND PROVISIONS IN JESUS CHRIST'S REDEEMING WORK ON THE CROSS.

4. JUSTIFICATION, δικαιοσύνη. THIS IS THE ACT WHEN GOD COUNTS A PERSON IN RIGHT STANDING BEFORE HIM. GOD PROCLAIMS A PERSON IN CHRIST AS RIGHTEOUS AND ACCEPTABLE

TO HIM. ROMANS 3:22-24 STATES THAT ONE IS JUSTIFIED FREELY BY GOD'S GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

5. BODY, σωμα. IT MEANS BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL, 6:12; 8:11.

6. MIND, νοϋς. IT IS THE RATIONAL ELEMENT OR MAN'S INNER-SELF.

7. RECONCILIATION, καταλλαγή. IT IS THE ACT OF RESTORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. THE WORD MEANS A CHANGE ON THE PART OF A PERSON CAUSED BY THE ACTION ON THE PART OF ANOTHER.

8. SIN, αμαρτια. THIS PARTICULAR WORD FOR SIN MEANS MISSING THE MARK. THE WORD IS AN ARCHER'S WORD. IT MEANS THE ARROW FALLS SHORT OF THE TARGET. SIN IN ROMANS IS DISOBEDIENCE, REBELLION AND HATRED AGAINST GOD.

9. SPIRIT, πνευμα. IT USUALLY MEANS GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER.

10. LAW, νομος. THIS USUALLY REFERS TO THE MOSAIC LAW AS UNDERSTOOD AS A MEANS OF SALVATION. SOMETIMES IT MEANS LAW IN GENERAL.

11. WRATH, οργη. IT IS GOD'S HOLINESS AGAINST SIN. IT IS NOT AN EMOTIONAL OUTBURST OF ANGER. IT IS A PLANNED, PERSISTENT, RESISTANCE AGAINST EVIL.

12. HEART, καρδια. IT MEANS THE SEAT OF DEEP THOUGHT AND WILL, OF THE WHOLE PERSON, 1:21; 9:2; 10:16.

ROMANS 1

GOD'S POWER IN THE GOSPEL

I. PAUL'S GREETING 1:1 - 7

**II. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE BELIEVERS IN ROME
1:8 - 15**

**III. PAUL'S THEME: THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S POWER
TO IMPUTE RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH 1:16 - 17**

IV. THE NATIONS ARE CONDEMNED 1:18 - 32

I. PAUL'S GREETING 1:1 - 7

IN THESE VERSES PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF, PRESENTS HIS CREDENTIALS AND ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE IS WRITING.

PAUL WAS BORN IN TARSUS, THE MAJOR CITY OF CILICIA, TO STRICT JEWISH PARENTS OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN. PAUL'S JEWISH NAME, SAUL, WAS GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS PARENTS WHEN HE WAS EIGHT DAYS OLD AT THE TIME OF HIS CIRCUMCISION. HE WAS EITHER GIVEN THIS NAME BECAUSE IT MEANT "ASKED FOR" OR HE WAS NAMED AFTER THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL, WHO WAS ALSO FROM THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN. KING SAUL STOOD HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE HIS PEOPLE. IN CONTRAST THE NAME PAUL MEANS "LITTLE ONE."

PAUL WAS JEWISH; BUT HE WAS ALSO A ROMAN CITIZEN, BECAUSE HE WAS BORN IN TARSUS, A ROMAN CITY.

AS A STUDENT OF THE FAMOUS TEACHER GAMALIEL HE WAS PROBABLY HEADED FOR FAME AS A RABBI. AS A YOUNG RABBI HE VIOLENTLY OPPOSED AND PERSECUTED THE NEW CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT. HE BELIEVED IT TO BE A BLASPHEMOUS PERVERSION OF THE JEWISH FAITH. HIS HOSTILITY WAS SHORT-CIRCUITED BY HIS HIGH VOLTAGE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. THE ENCOUNTER REDIRECTED HIS LIFE AND DESTINY.

PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS A SERVANT OR A SLAVE OF CHRIST. HE USES THE GREEK WORD $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, FOR SLAVE, MEANING HE BELONGS TO CHRIST AND IS IN COMPLETE SUBMISSION TO HIM. PERHAPS HE IS DRAWING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT EITHER WHERE MOSES IS CALLED THE SERVANT OR SLAVE OF GOD OR WHERE THE PROPHETS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES SERVANTS OR SLAVES OF GOD. HE MIGHT ALSO HAVE BEEN THINKING OF THE MANNER IN WHICH A HEBREW BECAME A SLAVE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

PAUL ALSO IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS AN APOSTLE, $\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. THE GREEK WORD IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS: $\alpha\pi\omicron$, MEANING FORTH, FROM, DEPARTURE AND $\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$, MEANING TO DISPATCH, TO EQUIP, TO SET IN ORDER. AN APOSTLE IS A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED AND GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR THE PERSON SENDING HIM. ALAN RICHARDSON SAYS THAT THE EARLIEST RECORDED USE OF THIS WORD IN GREEK LITERATURE IS OF A HERALD SENT TO ARRANGE FOR A TRUCE. (ALAN RICHARDSON, A THEOLOGICAL WORD BOOK OF THE BIBLE [NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1960] P.20.) AN APOSTLE IS COMMISSIONED TO SPEAK FOR

THE PERSON HE REPRESENTS. HIS AUTHORITY IS NOT IN HIMSELF; IT IS IN THE ONE WHO SENDS HIM. THEREFORE, AN APOSTLE IS AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE, ENTRUSTED WITH A MESSAGE, AND IS RESPONSIBLE TO SPEAK ACCURATELY FOR THE ONE HE REPRESENTS.

THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “SEPARATED” IN VERSE 1 IS ἀφορισμενος (APHORISMENOS). THE ENGLISH WORD HORIZON IS RELATED TO THIS WORD. IT IS AS IF PAUL SAYS, “GOD PUT ME IN A NEW PLACE, AND NOW I HAVE A NEW HORIZON.”

PAUL SAYS HE WAS CALLED BY GOD TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL, THE εὐαγγέλιον. AFTER HIS CALL FROM GOD HE WAS APPROVED BY THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES. PAUL SAW THE DESPERATE NEED OF PEOPLE, THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF GOD’S GRACE TO MEET PEOPLE’S NEEDS, AND HIMSELF AS A MEANS OF BRINGING THE TWO TOGETHER. THE “GOSPEL” COMES FROM THE HEART OF GOD, FOR HE PROMISES AND PREDICTS IT THROUGH THE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. ORIGINALLY THE WORD εὐαγγέλιον TRANSLATED “GOSPEL” OR “GOOD NEWS” MEANT A REWARD FOR BRINGING GOOD NEWS. A STUDY OF THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD REVEALS IT CAME TO MEAN THE GOOD NEWS ITSELF. THIS WORD “GOSPEL” OR “GOOD NEWS” IS THE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY. ESSENTIALLY THE GOOD NEWS IS THE LIFE OF GOD WHICH JESUS BROUGHT TO US. THE GOSPEL STARTS WITH GOD WHO TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO REVEAL HIMSELF. GOD IS LOVE, BUT GOD IS ALSO HOLY AND JESUS HAS COME TO BRING GOD’S SALVATION TO PEOPLE SO THEY CAN RESPOND TO GOD’S LOVE. THE GOSPEL IS THE INCARNATION,

THE ATONEMENT ON THE CROSS, THE RESURRECTION AND THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OF CHRIST OVER EVIL.

IN ROMANS 1:3, PAUL SHOWS WHO JESUS CHRIST IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE.

IN VERSE 4, THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “DECLARED” IS ορισθεντος (HORISTHENTOS) MEANING “MARKED OUT.” THIS WORD IS TRANSLATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IN THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX) AS “BOUNDARIES” OR “BORDERS” WITH THE IDEA OF MARKED OUT. (JOHN MURRAY, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.] VOL. 1, P. 9.) THE IDEA IS THAT JESUS WAS DECLARED OR MARKED OUT BY HIS RESURRECTION. THE GREEK WORD αναστασις, TRANSLATED “RESURRECTION,” IS COMPOSED OF ανα, “AGAIN” AND ιστημι, “TO STAND.” THE WORD MEANS “TO STAND UP AGAIN.”

IN VERSE 4, PAUL USES THE WORD “LORD” FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ROMANS. LORD, κυριος, MEANS RULER OR ONE HAVING AUTHORITY. SOMETIMES IT MEANS OWNER. IN HISTORY IT IS USED OF KINGS AND OF GOD. “JESUS IS LORD,” IS PROBABLY THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CONFESSION. THE REFUSAL TO GIVE THE TITLE LORD TO ANY OTHER PERSON EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST EVENTUALLY GOT THE CHRISTIANS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE WITH THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT. THE GREEK VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, IS THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX). THE WORD LORD WAS SUBSTITUTED FOR THE PERSONAL NAME OF GOD.

IN THESE FIRST FOUR VERSES PAUL PRESENTS THE ONE GOD AS REVEALED IN THREE PERSONS, GOD THE FATHER, HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS.

IN VERSE 5, PAUL SAYS GRACE COMES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. GRACE IS THE WORD (CHARIN) FROM $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$. IT MEANS GRACIOUSNESS, GOODWILL AND LOVING KINDNESS WHICH COMES FROM THE GIVER. THE OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW WORD "CHESED" MEANING LOVING KINDNESS IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF GRACE. "CHESED" MANIFESTS THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF GOD. GOD CONTINUES TO LOVE ISRAEL EVEN WHEN THEY VIOLATES THEIR COVENANT WITH HIM. THEY COULD NOT KEEP THIS COVENANT SO GOD IN HIS GRACE ESTABLISHES A NEW COVENANT OF JUSTIFICATION AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN BASED UPON WHAT JESUS DID ON THE CROSS. THUS, GRACE IS GOD'S REDEMPTIVE LOVE ACTED OUT BY CHRIST'S SACRIFICIAL DEATH ON THE CROSS.

IN VERSE 7, PAUL SENDS HIS GREETING OF GRACE TO THE ROMAN BELIEVERS AND ADDS PEACE FROM GOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED "PEACE" IS $\epsilon\iota\rho\eta\nu\eta$. IN CLASSICAL GREEK THE WORD GENERALLY MEANT THE ABSENCE OF WAR. BY NEW TESTAMENT TIMES PEACE MEANS HARMONY BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT REFERRING TO A PERSON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND MAN. IN PAUL'S LETTERS HE MEANS A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BASED ON THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

IN THIS VERSE HE CALLS THE BELIEVERS AT ROME SAINTS. A SAINT IS A LIVING PERSON SET APART BY GOD WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS CHRIST AS HIS LORD AND SAVIOR. THE LATIN ROOT IS "SANCTUS" AND MEANS A HOLY ONE. THE BELIEVER HAS NO HOLINESS IN HIMSELF. HIS HOLINESS COMES FROM JESUS CHRIST WHO DWELLS IN HIM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT IS IMPUTED HOLINESS. ONE LITTLE BOY GIVES HIS DEFINITION OF A SAINT: "A SAINT IS SOMEONE WHO LETS THE LIGHT SHINE THROUGH." HE WAS THINKING OF A STAINED GLASS WINDOW WITH THE PICTURE OF MOSES ON IT.

A SAINT IS ONE WHO HAS BEEN REDEEMED AND SET APART TO SERVE CHRIST. SAINTS ARE SINNERS WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED BY GODS GRACE.

PAUL HAS ALREADY SPOKEN OF JESUS FOUR TIMES IN SIX VERSES. IN THE SEVENTH VERSE, HE SAYS, "LORD JESUS CHRIST." THE WORD TRANSLATED "LORD" IS κυριος. THE WORD "LORD" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS SUBSTITUTED FOR, YAHWEH, THE PERSONAL NAME OF GOD. THEY DID NOT PRONOUNCE THE NAME YAHWEH BECAUSE OF GREAT REVERENCE FOR GOD. THE NAME JESUS IS Ιησου, WHICH COMES FROM THE HEBREW, YOSHUA AND MEANS SAVIOR. CHRIST IS THE GREEK χριστου, WHICH IN HEBREW MEANS ANOINTED ONE.

II. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE BELIEVERS IN ROME 1:8- 15

IN VERSE 8, PAUL SAYS THEY WERE FAMOUS FOR THEIR FAITH. FAITH IS BELIEVING, TRUSTING IN AND RELYING ON GOD'S WORD. AN ACROSTIC FOR FAITH COULD READ: FORSAKING ALL I TAKE HIM (JESUS CHRIST).

PAUL STATES HIS CONCERN FOR THE BELIEVERS IN ROME AND TELLS THEM HIS BASIC REASON FOR WRITING . HE BELIEVED THAT THEY WILL BLESS HIM, AND HE WILL STABILIZE THEM IN THEIR FAITH AND HELP THEM REACH PEOPLE IN ROME WITH THE GOSPEL. IN THIS STATEMENT PAUL SHOWS HIS ABILITY TO LEARN AS WELL AS TO TEACH. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALIFICATIONS FOR A MATURE SPIRITUAL LEADER.

IN VERSE 11, HE WANTS TO GIVE THEM A SPIRITUAL GIFT. WHAT THIS GIFT IS WE DO NOT KNOW, BUT WE KNOW HE WANTED THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BLESS THEM THROUGH HIM TO BUILD THEM UP IN THE FAITH. THE IDEA OF SPIRITUALITY ALWAYS CONNOTES THE IDEA OF INVISIBILITY AND POWER. IT IS CONNECTED WITH THE IDEA OF THINGS THAT HAVE THEIR ORIGIN IN GOD AND ARE IN HARMONY WITH HIS WILL AND CHARACTER.

IN VERSES 14 AND 15, PAUL SAYS HE IS A DEBTOR. HE HAS A COMPULSION TO SHARE THE GOSPEL. PAUL IS WRITING TO THE ROMANS, BUT HE SAYS HE IS A DEBTOR ALSO TO THE GREEKS. THE WORD GREEKS HERE MEANS THOSE WHO SPOKE THE GREEK LANGUAGE. THE GREEK CULTURE, FROM THE TIME

OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT UNTIL LONG PAST PAUL'S LIFETIME, DOMINATED THE WORLD. WHEN THE ROMANS CAPTURED THE GREEKS THEY ADOPTED GREEK WAYS, BECAUSE THE GREEKS WERE THE EDUCATED AND CULTURED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. THE ROMANS TOOK THE EDUCATED GREEKS AS SLAVES TO TUTOR THEIR CHILDREN. THIS BROUGHT THE ROMANS UNDER THE POWER OF GREEK CULTURE.

III. PAUL'S THEME: GOD'S POWER IN THE GOSPEL IMPUTES RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH 1:16 - 17

IN HIS THEME PAUL USES THREE GREAT WORDS: SALVATION, FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IMPUTED AND IMPARTED BY THE POWER OF GOD TO THE BELIEVER. SEVERAL GREEK WORDS ARE TRANSLATED "POWER." THE WORD USED HERE IS *δυναμις* (DUNAMIS). OUR WORDS DYNAMITE AND DYNAMO COME FROM THIS WORD. THE ROMANS WERE IMPRESSED WITH POWER, JUST AS WE ARE. GOD'S POWER IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE POWER OF CREATION. HOWEVER, GOD'S GREATEST POWER IS THE POWER OF THE CROSS.

SALVATION, *σωτηρια*, MEANS GOD'S DELIVERANCE. SALVATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN IS BEING FORGIVEN OF HIS SINS, KNOWING GOD AND HAVING GOD'S LIFE IN HIM THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS COMES BY THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH ON THE CROSS AND THE PERSON PLACING HIS TRUST IN CHRIST'S REDEEMING WORK ON THE CROSS.

BEING JUSTIFIED OR SAVED IS:

1. BEING FREE, PARDONED, FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN. THIS IS CALLED JUSTIFICATION. THIS IS ONE OF THE CHIEF REASONS JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS.

2. BEING FREE FROM THE POWER OF SIN. JESUS ROSE FROM THE GRAVE, ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO INDWELL US AND TO DELIVER US FROM THE POWER OF SIN. THIS IS PART OF THE PROCESS CALLED SANCTIFICATION.

3. BEING FREE FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN. THIS COMES WHEN A PERSON IS PRESENT WITH THE LORD IN ETERNITY. THIS IS CALLED GLORIFICATION. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN TO TAKE US TO BE WITH HIM, THUS TO DELIVER US FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN. BIBLICAL SALVATION IS THUS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

AT THIS TIME PERIOD IN HISTORY THE WHOLE WORLD HAD A SENSE OF GREAT SPIRITUAL NEED. SENECA, WHO LIVED AT THE SAME TIME AS PAUL, SAID THAT ALL MEN WERE LOOKING TOWARD SALVATION.

FAITH, πίστις, MEANS FIRM PERSUASION, RELIANCE UPON, BELIEF, TRUST, AND COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST. FAITH IN THE BIBLICAL SENSE MEANS EXPERIENCE AS WELL AS MENTAL ACCEPTANCE OF DOCTRINAL TRUTH. FAITH BEGINS IN THE MIND AND HEART AND IS MANIFESTED THROUGH ACTIONS. THE GREEK WORD FAITH IS ΠΙΣΤΙΣ. THE GREEK WORD BELIEVE IS ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ. AS YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR, THE TWO WORDS ARE ALIKE, EXCEPT FOR THE ENDINGS. FAITH IS A NOUN AND

BELIEVE IS A VERB. THE GREEKS COULD EASILY SEE THAT THEY BASICALLY HAVE THE SAME MEANING. TO BELIEVE IS TO HAVE FAITH. SOME PEOPLE MENTALLY BELIEVE, BUT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THE DEMONS BELIEVE AND TREMBLE. THEY HAVE KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY DO NOT HAVE SAVING FAITH. JAMES IN HIS EPISTLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIBES THE QUALITY OF SAVING FAITH.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, δικαιοσυνη, IS BASICALLY THE CHARACTER AND HOLINESS OF GOD. THE GREEK WORDS RIGHTEOUS, JUST AND JUSTIFY ARE FROM THE SAME ROOT. WHEN GOD ACTS IN SALVATION HE GIVES MAN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH CHRIST. THIS IS IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT MEANS WHEN GOD LOOKS AT A BELIEVER HE SEES HIM IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. A GOOD COMPARISON IS REAL MONEY AND MONOPOLY MONEY. MONOPOLY MONEY WILL BUY THINGS IN THE GAME, BUT MONOPOLY MONEY IS WORTHLESS IN THE REAL WORLD. SO IS MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN GOD'S SPIRITUAL WORLD.

WE WILL SEE THAT IN THE FIRST ELEVEN CHAPTERS OF ROMANS PAUL PRESENTS DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTION. AND IN THE FIRST FIVE CHAPTERS PAUL DEALS WITH JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. THIS IS GOD IMPUTING HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO MAN THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST.

IV. THE NATIONS ARE CONDEMNED 1:18-32

IN THESE VERSES PAUL SHOWS THAT THE GENTILES AND THE JEWS ARE BOTH UNDER CONDEMNATION. THE GENTILES ARE CONDEMNED, BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THROUGH NATURE AND CONSCIENCE, THEY REJECTED THE LIGHT GIVEN TO THEM. THE JEWS HAVE THE LAW OF MOSES, BUT THEY FALL SHORT AND CANNOT KEEP IT. ALL THE WORLD SINS AND IS UNDER CONDEMNATION.

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF ROMANS IS TO GRASP THE TRUTH THAT A PERSON CAN DO NOTHING TO GAIN OR EARN HIS/HER SALVATION. IT IS THE ACT AND GIFT OF GOD ALONE. ALL PEOPLE ARE WITHOUT HOPE APART FROM THE GRACE OF GOD.

IN THIS SECTION PAUL PRESENTS THE FAILURE OF THE GENTILES. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED GENTILES IS REALLY THE WORD MEANING NATIONS. GENTILES INCLUDE EVERYONE WHO IS NOT A JEW. PAUL LISTS THE SINS THAT ARE SO COMMON AMONG GENTILES, THEN AND NOW. HE SAYS THESE SINS ARE AGAINST THE MORAL LAW OF GOD, AND THAT NO ONE CAN CLAIM IGNORANCE OF GOD FOR EVERY PERSON HAS ENOUGH LIGHT TO CONDEMN HIM. THE GENTILES DO NOT EVEN FOLLOW THE LAW OF THE CONSCIENCE. RATHER, THE NATURAL MAN REBELS AGAINST IT. THE CONSEQUENCE IS THE WRATH OF GOD. THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED IN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. THERE ARE TWO WORDS TRANSLATED "WRATH" OR "ANGER" IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT. THE WORD HERE IS *οργη* (ORGA). THUMAS IS THE OTHER WORD. ORGA

IS A MORE PERMANENT, LASTING, PLANNED RESPONSE; WHEREAS, THUMAS IS AN OUTBURST OF INNER FEELING OR RESPONSE. THE WRATH OF GOD IS THAT HE FINALLY LETS PEOPLE HAVE WHAT THEY WANT. "GOD GAVE THEM UP." THIS EXPRESSION IS USED THREE TIMES TO GIVE IT IMPACT.

THE EVIDENCE THROUGHOUT HISTORY EVEN FROM THE PAGAN WRITERS REVEALS THAT MANKIND HAS ALWAYS HAD A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. FOR EXAMPLE CICERO WROTE IN DE NATURA DEORUM ALMOST A HALF CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST, "NATURE HERSELF HAS IMPRINTED ON THE MINDS OF ALL THE IDEAS OF GOD." PAUL SAYS THEY KNOW ABOUT GOD; AND THEREFORE, ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE. THE WORD IN 1:20 TRANSLATED "WITHOUT EXCUSE," αναπολογητους, HAS OUR WORD LOGIC IN IT. THE IDEA IS THAT THEY ARE GOING AGAINST LOGICAL THINKING AND ACTING. PAUL SAYS THEY DO NOT GLORIFY GOD, NOR ARE THEY THANKFUL TO HIM. THE WORD TRANSLATED "GLORIFY" IS εδοξασαν. OUR WORD DOXOLOGY COMES FROM THIS WORD. TO GLORIFY MEANS TO PRAISE OR PLACE VALUE ON SOMETHING. IT MEANS THEY DID NOT PLACE VALUE ON GOD. THEY ALSO DID NOT THANK HIM. AT THE HEART OF OUR SIN NATURE, AND ALL SINS, IS UNGRATEFULNESS. UNGRATEFULNESS ALWAYS LEADS TO BITTERNESS, SELF DECEPTION AND SELF INDULGENCE.

THE LAST VERSES IN THIS CHAPTER ARE DEVASTATING. THEY REVEAL THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING ABANDONED BY GOD.

IN VERSES 24 - 25, PAUL PAINTS A PICTURE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE PLEASURE MAD. THE KEY WORD IN THESE VERSES IS "DESIRES," επιθυμιας. THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE WORD IS "UPON HEAT." THE STOICS DEFINED THE WORD AS A REACHING OUT AFTER PLEASURE DEFYING ALL REASON.

IN VERSES 26 - 32, PAUL POINTS OUT THAT GOD MAY ALLOW PEOPLE TO SHUT ALL DOORS THAT LEAD TO HIM. IT SEEMS THAT GOD MAY EVEN ALLOW PEOPLE TO THROW AWAY THE KEY TO THE DOORS THAT LEADS TO HIM. PAUL FOCUSES ON THE MOST EXTREME SINS OF THE GENTILES. THE GENTILE LEADERS OF PAUL'S AGE ALSO FOCUSED ON THESE:

- 1. IT IS AN AGE WHEN THINGS SEEMED COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL.**
- 2. IT IS AN AGE THAT HAD LOST CONTROL OF ITS DESTINY.**
- 3. IT IS AN AGE OF UNPARALLELED IMMORALITY.**

DURING THIS AGE, THE LEADERS OF ROME HAVE ABANDONED ALL THEIR GODS AS SUPERSTITIONS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE. THE PASSAGE CLEARLY SHOWS WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO LEAVES GOD OUT OF HIS RECKONING. THOSE WHO ABANDON GOD USUALLY DEVELOP A TYPE OF CYNICISM THAT LEADS TO HOPELESSNESS.

ONE OF OUR PROFESSORS OF SCIENCE WRITES, "MAN BELONGS TO NO PLAN AND FULFILLS NO SUPERNATURAL PURPOSE. HE STANDS ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE, A UNIQUE PRODUCT OF A LONG UNCONSCIOUS, IMPERSONAL, MATERIAL PROCESS, WITH UNIQUE UNDERSTANDING AND POTENTIALITIES.

THESE HE OWES TO NO ONE BUT HIMSELF AND IT IS TO HIMSELF THAT HE IS RESPONSIBLE.”

ANOTHER PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ONE OF THE LEADING UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S. SAYS,

FOR MY PART, I BELIEVE IN NO RELIGION AT ALL. SINCE THE WORLD IS NOT RULED BY A SPIRITUAL BEING, BUT RATHER BY BLIND FORCES, THERE CANNOT BE ANY IDEALS, MORAL OR OTHERWISE, IN THE UNIVERSE OUTSIDE US. OUR IDEALS, THEREFORE, MUST PROCEED FROM OUR OWN MINDS, THEY ARE OUR OWN INVENTIONS. THUS, THE WORLD THAT SURROUNDS US IS NOTHING BUT AN IMMENSE SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS, IT IS A DEAD UNIVERSE . . . PURPOSELESS, SENSELESS MEANINGLESS. NATURE IS NOTHING BUT MATTER IN MOTION.

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE THAT THESE MEN HAVE PERCEIVED REALITY INCORRECTLY? FIRST, WE HAVE THE WORD OF GOD. WE HAVE THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO TEACHES AND LEADS US INTO TRUTH. WE HAVE OUR OWN EXPERIENCE PLUS THAT OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE ARE OF EQUAL OR GREATER INTELLIGENCE, CHARACTER AND FAME THAN THE MEN I JUST QUOTED.

THE PERSON WHO BANISHES GOD AND GODLINESS LOOSES PERSONHOOD AS WELL. HITLER SAID, “LEAVE THE SKY TO THE SPARROWS.” SHORTLY THEREAFTER HIS VULTURES OF DEATH TOOK TO THE SKIES.

IN VERSE 28 IS THE IDEA THAT MANKIND DOES NOT THINK GOD IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO RETAIN IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE. THEIR MINDS BECOME MESSED UP. THEY HAVE SUCH DESIRE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT TO DO THAT THEY CUT GOD OUT OF THEIR SYSTEM BECAUSE HE WOULD OPPOSE THEIR WAYS.

IN VERSE 29, WE SEE THE THINGS THAT ARE AT THE HEART OF HUMANITY. IN THE ANCIENT TEXT THERE ARE 21 THINGS LISTED. THIS IS $7 \times 3 = 21$. SEVEN IN SCRIPTURE IS THE NUMBER OF COMPLETENESS AND THREE IS GOD'S NUMBER. FROM BIBLICAL NUMEROLOGY WE MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THIS VERSE TELLS US THAT MANKIND'S SIN IS COMPLETE AND THAT GOD HAS A COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF MANKIND AND ALL SIN IS KNOWN TO HIM.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" IS *αδικια* (ADIKIA). IT IS THE OPPOSITE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT MEANS THE UNRIGHTEOUS PERSON WORSHIPS HIMSELF INSTEAD OF GOD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "FORNICATION" IS *πορνεια* (PORNEIA). IT IS THE PERSON WHO LETS HIS PASSIONS LOOSE. OUR WORD PORNOGRAPHY COMES FROM THIS WORD PLUS THE WORD GRAPH, FROM *γραφω*, "TO WRITE". PORNOGRAPHY IS TO WRITE WITH FORNICATION.

THE WORD TRANSLATED WICKEDNESS IS *πονηρια* (PONARIA). THE GREEKS DEFINED THIS AS THE DESIRE TO DO HARM, THE DELIBERATE ACT OF WILL TO CORRUPT AND INJURE.

THE WORD DESCRIBES ONE WHO IS EVIL AND ALSO WISHES TO MAKE OTHERS EVIL.

THE WORD TRANSLATED COVETOUSNESS IS πλεονεξία (PLEOVEXIA). IT IS GRASPING AT THINGS WHICH ARE FORBIDDEN OR WHICH ONE HAS NO RIGHT TO TAKE. IT IS AMBITION WHICH TRAMPLES OTHERS TO GET WHAT IT WANTS. DANTE IN THE DIVINE COMEDY PICTURES THE EYES OF THE ENVIOUS IN PURGATORY AS BEING SEWED CLOSED. OF COURSE, THE PROBLEM IS IN THE MIND AND HEART. THOMAS FULLER SAID “AN ENVIOUS MAN IS A SQUINT-EYED FOOL.” FRANCIS BACON SAID, “ENVY HAS NO HOLIDAY.”

THE WORD TRANSLATED MALICIOUSNESS IS κακία (KAKIA). IT IS THE MAJOR WORD FOR BAD. IT MEANS THE ABSENCE OF GOOD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED ENVY IS φθονου (PHTHONOO). IT IS THE BEGRUDGING KIND OF EMOTION.

THE WORD TRANSLATED MURDER IS φονου (PHONOO). THE GREEK WORDS FOR ENVY AND MURDER ARE CLOSELY RELATED. JESUS GAVE NEW MEANING TO THIS WORD. HE SAID THAT MURDER PROCEEDS FROM ANGER AND THAT GOD ALWAYS LOOKS AT THE INTENT OF THE HEART.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “STRIFE” IS εριδος (EPIDOS). IT COMES FROM A HEART OF JEALOUSY OR SICKNESS. THE PERSON WHO CAUSES STRIFE IS USUALLY JEALOUS, EVIL OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY SICK.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “GUILE” IS δολου (DOLOO). IT MEANS DECEIT IN UNDERHANDED WAYS. IT IS STABBING IN THE BACK.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “EVIL DISPOSITION” IS κακοηθειας (KAKOATHIAS). ARISTOTLE DEFINED THE WORD “THE SPIRIT WHICH ALWAYS SUPPOSES THE WORST ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.” (WILLIAM BARCLAY, THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS [PHILADELPHIA, PA: THE WESTMINSTER PRESS] 1957, P. 28)

THE WORD TRANSLATED “WHISPERERS” IS ψιθυριστας (SPITHURISTAS) AND “SLANDERS” OR BACKBITERS IS καταλαλους (KATALOLOOS). WHISPERERS REFER TO TEARING SOMEONE APART WITH GOSSIP. BACKBITERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE MORE OF A FACE TO FACE SLANDEROUS ATTACK.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “HATER OF GOD” IS θεοστυγεις (THEOSTUGLIS) MEANING THOSE WHO DENY AND DEFY GOD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “DESPITEFUL” IS υβριστας (HUBRISTAS). THIS WORD DESCRIBES THE PRIDEFUL PERSON WHO DEFIES GOD. PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL, THE SCRIPTURE SAYS. IT ALSO DESCRIBES A PERSON WHO HURTS SOMEONE FOR THE SHEER PLEASURE OF INFLECTING PAIN. THE KING JAMES TRANSLATES THIS WORD AS “DESPITEFUL.” THIS GREEK WORD DESCRIBES THE PERSON WHO FORGETS THE CREATOR AND MAKES HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD. BY ACCEPTING THIS PRINCIPLE FOR HIS LIFE THE PERSON IS RULED BY HIS PASSIONS RATHER THAN BY HIS REASON. IN ORDER TO SATISFY HIS PASSIONS HE

DEFIES GOD AND USES PEOPLE. THUS, HE PUSHES GOD'S LAW ASIDE AND BECOMES HIS OWN LAW.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "PROUD" IS υπερηθανους (UPERAPHANOOS). IT IS AN ATTITUDE OF CONTEMPT FOR EVERYONE EXCEPT ONESELF.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "BOASTERS" OR "VAUNTING" IS αλαζονας (ALAZONAS). IT IS THE PERSON WHO PRETENDS TO HAVE THAT WHICH HE DOES NOT HAVE. IN CLASSICAL GREEK THE WORD WAS USED OF MEN WHO TRAVELED AROUND SELLING MEDICINE, PROMISING THAT IT WOULD CURE ANY AND ALL ILLNESSES. IT WAS ALSO USED OF THE SOPHISTS. THESE WERE MEN SKILLED IN SYSTEMS OF MEMORY, CLEVER PHRASES AND PERSUASIVE SPEECH. THE SOPHISTS COULD SPEAK CONVINCINGLY ABOUT ALMOST ANY SUBJECT EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD NO REAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "INVENTORS OF EVIL THINGS" IS εφευρετας (EPHURETOS). IT DESCRIBES THE PERSON WHO GROWS TIRED OF OLD SINS AND INVENTS NEW WAYS TO SIN.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS" IS απειθεις (APITHIS). THE JEWS AND ROMANS BOTH HAD VERY HIGH REGARD FOR THEIR PARENTS. DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS WAS CONSIDERED A TERRIBLE SIN.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING" IS ασυνετους (ASUNETOOS). IT DESCRIBES THE PERSON WHO IS UNTEACHABLE. THE PERSON IS LIKE THE MAN WHO HAS ONE

YEAR OF EXPERIENCE TWENTY TIMES. IN OTHER WORDS HE HAS NEVER LEARNED, EVEN BY HIS OWN MISTAKES.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “COVENANTBREAKERS” OR “PERFIDIOUS,” OR “ONE OF TREACHERY” IS ασυνθετους (ASUNTHETOOS). AT THE BEGINNING OF ROMAN CIVILIZATION A ROMAN’S WORD WAS HIS BOND, BUT GREEK CULTURE LATER DOMINATED THEIR CULTURE AND THE GREEKS WERE NOTED EMBEZZLERS. PAUL IN THIS SECTION IS CALLING THEM TO THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION” IS αστοργους (ASTORGOOS). STORGE IS THE WORD USED TO DESCRIBE FAMILY LOVE. THE PREFIX “α” IN FRONT OF THIS WORD MEANS “NOT.” MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN GREEK AND ROMAN SOCIETY CONSIDERED CHILDREN INCONVENIENT. WHEN A BABY WAS BORN IT WAS PLACED AT THE FATHER’S FEET. IF THE FATHER PICKED THE CHILD UP, IT WAS KEPT. IF HE TURNED HIS BACK, THE CHILD WAS THROWN OUT. CHILDREN WERE LEFT EACH NIGHT IN THE CITY SQUARES.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “IMPLACABLE” IS ασπονδους (ASPONDIOUS) AND “UNMERCIFUL” IS ανελεημονας (ANELEAMONAS). SLAVES HAD NO RIGHTS. THEY COULD BE TORTURED OR KILLED. RECORDS REVEAL THAT ONE MASTER HAD A SLAVE KILLED SO THAT ONE OF HIS GUESTS MIGHT SEE A MAN DIE, FOR SHE SAID SHE HAD NEVER SEEN A MAN DIE.

IN VERSE 26 AND FOLLOWING, PAUL DEALS WITH THE SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY. HE SAYS THAT THIS SIN CARRIES ITS OWN PENALTY AND PUNISHMENT. HE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE PERSON PRACTICING THIS SIN WILL SUFFER TERRIBLE INTERNAL CONSEQUENCES. IN VERSE 32, PAUL CONCLUDES THAT APPLAUSE TO SUCH SINS EVEN BY ONE WHO DOES NOT COMMIT THE SIN HIMSELF IS SIN.



ROMANS 2

GOD'S STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT AND THE JEWS CONDEMNED

- I. GOD'S STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT 2:1 - 16
- II. THE JEWS ARE CONDEMNED 2:17 - 29

I. GOD'S STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT 2:1 - 16

PAUL GIVES SEVEN STANDARDS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT:

1. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS ACCORDING TO HIS STANDARD OF TRUTH, VERSE 3.
2. GOD'S JUDGMENT EXAMINES THE TREASURE OF THE HEART, VERSE 5.
3. GOD'S JUDGMENT EXAMINES MAN'S WORKS, VERSE 6.
4. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS; IT IS NOT BY PRIVILEGE OR RELIGION; NO FAVORITES, VERSE 11.
5. GOD'S JUDGMENT LOOKS AT OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAW, VERSE 13.
6. GOD'S JUDGMENT LOOKS AT MAN'S MOTIVES, VERSE 16.
7. GOD'S JUDGMENT EXAMINES THE RESPONSE OF MEN TO THE LIGHT THEY HAVE RECEIVED, VERSES 17-20.

IN CHAPTER 1, PAUL DEMONSTRATES THAT THE GENTILES ARE CONDEMNED. THE JEW CERTAINLY CONCUR WITH HIS CONCLUSIONS. IN THIS SECTION, HE TURNS THE SPOTLIGHT UPON THE JEWS. HE REVEALS THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART AS HE POINTS OUT THE DISCREPANCIES IN THE

STANDARDS WHICH THE JEWS APPLIED TO OTHERS AND THOSE WHICH THEY APPLIED TO THEMSELVES. THE JEWS BELIEVED THEY HAD SPECIAL REVELATION FROM GOD AND WERE, THEREFORE, EXEMPT FROM GOD'S JUDGMENT WHILE EVERYONE ELSE WAS DESTINED FOR GOD'S JUDGMENT.

PAUL AGREES AT THE END OF CHAPTER 2 THAT THE JEWS DID HAVE SPECIAL REVELATION, BUT THAT THEY HAD NOT OBEYED THIS REVELATION. IN ORDER TO SEE THE LOGIC AND DESIGN OF PAUL'S ARGUMENT, CHAPTER 2 NEEDS TO BE READ AND STUDIED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMPLETE BOOK OF ROMANS. WITHOUT THIS CONTEXT ONE MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT PAUL IS TEACHING SALVATION BY WORKS, WHICH HE IS NOT.

THE ARGUMENT HERE IS THAT GOD WILL JUDGE ACCORDING TO THE PERSON'S RESPONSE TO THE LIGHT WHICH HE HAS BEEN GIVEN. THE RESPONSE OR CONDUCT PROCEEDS FROM THE LIGHT OR GOES AGAINST THE LIGHT. THUS, GOD'S JUDGMENT OR CONDEMNATION COMES NOT AS RESULT OF A PERSON'S KNOWLEDGE OR IGNORANCE, BUT AS THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE, EITHER TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW OR GOING AGAINST THE LIGHT WHICH HE HAS.

LATER, IN CHAPTER 3, PAUL GIVES THE CONCLUSION OF THIS LOGIC THAT ALL PEOPLE, BOTH GENTILE AND JEW, ARE CONDEMNED BEFORE GOD. THE REASON IS ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE TRUTH OF GOD WRITTEN IN THEIR INNER BEINGS, BUT THEY REJECT GOD'S TRUTH.

IN VERSE 1 OF CHAPTER 2, TWO WORDS ARE USED FOR JUDG -

ING. ONE WORD HAS THE IDEA OF EVALUATING. THE OTHER WORD HAS THE SUFFIX $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$, (KATA) MAKING IT STRONGER AND MEANING “TO CONDEMN.” PAUL SAYS THE STANDARD WE USE WILL BE USED AGAINST US.

IN CHAPTER 2, THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD’S JUDGMENT ARE THAT GOD EXAMINES BOTH THE MOTIVES OF THE HEART AND THE DEEDS OF THE PERSON. THESE ARE JUDGED BY THE LIGHT THE PERSON HAS BEEN GIVEN AND HIS RESPONSE TO THAT LIGHT. PAUL ALSO SAYS THAT EVERY PERSON IS BLIND TO HIS OWN SINS. A COMMON DECEPTION IS FOR A PERSON TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ON THE SEAT OF JUDGMENT INSTEAD OF GOD.

VERSE 2 STATES THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF GOD’S JUDGMENT: THAT JUDGMENT IS BY GOD’S STANDARD OF TRUTH AND NOT BY MAN’S.

IN VERSE 3, THE WORD TRANSLATED “THINKETH” IS THE WORD $\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\zeta\eta$, (LOGIZA) FROM LOGIZOMAI. IT IS A MATHEMATICAL WORD AND MEANS TO COUNT OR COMPUTE. IT IS OFTEN TRANSLATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS “RECKON.” PAUL SAYS, “DON’T COUNT ON ESCAPING GOD’S JUDGMENT.”

IN VERSE 4, THE WORD TRANSLATED “TO DESPISE” MEANS EXTREME HATRED. PAUL SAYS THAT PEOPLE DESPISE GOD’S ACTS OF GOODNESS AND PATIENCE. YET GOD’S PATIENCE GIVES TIME TO COME TO REALITY AND REPENTANCE. THE GREEK WORD “REPENTANCE” MEANS TO CHANGE THE MIND. REPENTANCE IS FAR MORE THAN REGRET OR REMORSE. TRUE REPENTANCE IS GODLY SORROW, NOT ONLY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF

ACTIONS, BUT A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT THE MOTIVES AS WELL. IT IS NOT SELF-BEATING BUT RATHER TURNING DISOBEDIENCE INTO OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

VERSE 5 LAYS DOWN THE SECOND PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: THAT GOD JUDGES BY EXAMINING THE HEART. PAUL INDICATES THAT THE HARD UNRESTRAINED HEART BUILDS UP EVIDENCE AGAINST THE PERSON. THE WORD TRANSLATED "IMPENITENT" IN VERSE FIVE, IS μετανοητων (AMETANOATON). THE PREFIX "α" MEANS NOT; "META" MEANS WITH, AND "NOMAS" MEANS LAW. THE MEANING IS CLEAR. IT MEANS A HEART WITHOUT GOD'S LAW IN IT.

VERSE 6 STATES THE THIRD PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: THAT GOD EXAMINES THE PERSON'S WORKS. IN JOHN 6:28-29, THE PEOPLE ASK JESUS, "WHAT SHALL WE DO, THAT WE MIGHT WORK THE WORKS OF GOD?" JESUS ANSWERED, "THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD, THAT YE BELIEVE ON HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT." THE WORD "WORK" IS SINGULAR NOT PLURAL IN JESUS' ANSWER.

ONE OF THE CHIEF THEMES OF ROMANS IS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. IT IS CRYSTAL CLEAR IN ROMANS THAT JUSTIFICATION COMES ONLY BY FAITH. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THIS FAITH PRODUCES HOLINESS AND A LIFE OF CHRISTIAN ACTIONS. GOD JUDGES FAITH BY WHAT IT PRODUCES. THE ONLY WORKS THAT WILL STAND ARE THE WORKS WHICH GOD PRODUCES THROUGH A PERSON; THUS, GOD'S WORKS ARE THE EVIDENCE OF THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE PERSON.

IN VERSE 8, PAUL USES THE WORD *εριθειας* (ERITHIAS) TRANSLATED AS “CONTENTIOUS,” TO DESCRIBE THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT TO GOD. THIS WORD HAS A VERY INTERESTING ETYMOLOGY. IT STARTED OUT MEANING LABOR OR SERVICE FOR WHICH ONE WAS PAID. THE WORD IS PROBABLY FROM THE GREEK WORD “WOOL” AND MAY REFER TO THOSE WHO WERE PAID FOR SPINNING WOOL. AS TIME PASSED, THE WORD CAME TO MEAN WORKING ONLY FOR PAY. FINALLY THE WORD CAME TO MEAN SELFISH AMBITION. IN THIS VERSE IT MEANS THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT TO GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR SELFISH AMBITION. THIS VERSE IS CONTRASTED WITH THE VERSE BEFORE IT. IN VERSE 7, PAUL POINTS TO GOOD WORKS WHICH CAME FROM RIGHT MOTIVATION. IN VERSE 8, HE POINTS TO WORKS THAT COME FROM WRONG MOTIVATION.

THE IDEA OF JUDGMENT IS GENERALLY GREATLY MISUNDERSTOOD. WE SHALL SEE LATER IN THIS NEW TESTAMENT STUDY THAT IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT FOR UNBELIEVERS AND THE “BEMA” SEAT OF CHRIST JUDGMENT FOR BELIEVERS, II COR. 5:10. THE WORD “THRONOS” IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT.

VERSE 11 GIVES THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE OF GOD’S JUDGMENT: THAT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS WHEN HE JUDGES. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “RESPECT OF PERSONS” IS *προσωποληψια* (PROSOPOLAMPSIA). THIS IS A COMPOUND COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS “FACE” AND “TO RECEIVE.” THE IDEA IS THAT GOD DOES NOT LOOK IN THE FACE OF A PERSON TO MAKE A JUDGMENT; RATHER, HE LOOKS AT THE INNER

PERSON.

REMEMBER, PAUL WAS WRITING TO A PEOPLE WHOSE GOVERNMENT PRIDED ITSELF ON JUSTICE. THEY WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE GREEK GODDESS OF JUSTICE, THE WOMAN WITH A BLINDFOLD OVER HER EYES AND A SET OF SCALES IN HER HANDS. THE BLINDFOLD SO SHE DOES NOT SEE THE PERSON IN FRONT OF HER AND THE SET OF SCALES SYMBOLIZE THAT EQUALITY IS IN HER JUDGMENT.

AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS IN I SAM. 16:7, THE RECORD OF SAMUEL GOING TO THE HOUSE OF JESSE TO ANOINT A KING FOR ISRAEL. SAMUEL SEES THE ELDEST SON. HE LOOKS LIKE A KING TO SAMUEL, BUT GOD SAYS, "LOOK NOT ON HIS COUNTENANCE, OR ON THE HEIGHT OF HIS STATURE; BECAUSE I HAVE REFUSED HIM; FOR THE LORD SEES NOT AS MAN SEES; FOR MAN LOOKS ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKS ON THE HEART."

VERSE 13 INDICATES THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT EXAMINES OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAW. THE GREEK WORD IN THIS VERSE TRANSLATED "HEARERS" IS A WORD WHICH MEANS NOT JUST THE ACT OF HEARING BUT ALSO THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDYING THE LAW. THE BOOK OF ROMANS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE PERSON WITHOUT THE LIFE OF GOD IN HIM, THE UNSAVED PERSON, CAN NEVER FULFILL THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW.

IN VERSES 14-15, PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS WRITTEN HIS LAW ON THE FLESHLY TABLETS OF THE GENTILE'S HEART, AND THAT EVEN THE MOST UNCIVILIZED HAVE SOME AWARENESS

OF GOD'S MORAL LAW. VERSE 16 SHOWS THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT LOOKS AT THE PERSON'S MOTIVES. IN ORDER FOR THIS SECTION TO MAKE THE MOST SENSE FIRST READ IT AS A UNIT. THEN PUT VERSES 13- 15 IN PARENTHESES. NOW READ THE SECTION AGAIN CONNECTING VERSE 12 AND VERSE 16. VERSE 16 TELLS ABOUT GOD'S JUDGMENT:

- 1. THAT THERE IS A DAY OF JUDGMENT,**
- 2. THAT GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF PEOPLE,**
- 3. THAT JUDGMENT WILL COME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST,
AND**
- 4. THAT JUDGMENT WILL BE ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL.**

PAUL ADVOCATES THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS LEADS TO LIFE, AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS LEADS TO DEATH. THESE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES ARE NECESSARY TO SHOW THAT MAN IS CONDEMNED, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT HAVE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. AND FURTHER THAT GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

THE FIRST SIXTEEN VERSES OF THIS SECOND CHAPTER DEAL WITH ALL PEOPLE WHO THINK THAT THE FIRST CHAPTER OF ROMANS DOES NOT APPLY TO THEM. THIS SECTION DESCRIBES THE MORAL CONDITION AND CHARACTER OF ALL MANKIND IN ALL AGES. IT STATES THE UNIVERSAL SINFULNESS OF MEN AND LAYS DOWN THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S JUDGMENT.

II. THE JEWS ARE CONDEMNED 2:17 - 29.

IN THIS SECTION GOD'S JUDGMENT EXAMINES THE RESPONSE OF PEOPLE TO THE LIGHT THEY HAVE RECEIVED. PAUL SHOWS THAT THE JEWS HAD RECEIVED THE LAW OF GOD, THAT THEY HAD PERVERTED IT AND ARE, THEREFORE, CONDEMNED. THEIR RELIGION HAD BECOME EXTERNAL ACTS INSTEAD OF INTERNAL DESIRES OF THE HEART TO LOVE AND OBEY GOD. IT HAD BECOME OUTWARD CEREMONY WITHOUT INWARD REALITY.

CIRCUMCISION WAS THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT, BUT AN OUTWARD SIGN ONLY. WITHOUT CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART IT WAS VOID AND OF NO INFLUENCE BEFORE GOD. THE TRUE JEW, PAUL SAYS, IS ONE WHO IS CIRCUMCISED IN HIS HEART. THUS, TO BE A COVENANT PERSON OF GOD IS NOT A MATTER OF PEDIGREE. IT IS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE.

GOD CALLED THE JEWS TO BE A NATION OF PRIESTS TO BRING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO HIM. INSTEAD, THEY DECEIVED THEMSELVES INTO BELIEVING THEY WERE THE ONLY CHOSEN, PRIVILEGED PEOPLE OF GOD. THEY DID NOT ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND MISSED THEIR MISSION. THEY CLOSED THE DOORS OF THEIR HEARTS TO BOTH GOD AND THE NATIONS. IN ROMANS 2:24, PAUL ACCUSES THE JEWS OF CAUSING GOD'S NAME TO BE BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES. THE WORD "NAME" SIGNIFIES FOR CHARACTER AND NATURE. SO PAUL IS SAYING THEY CAUSED THE GENTILES TO MISUNDERSTAND THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD.

THIS SECTION MAY BE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

I. THE JEWISH NAME, VERSE 17

- A. THEIR CLAIM WAS FIRST TO A NAME. THEY WERE PROUD THEY WERE JEWS.**
- B. THEIR CLAIM WAS THAT GOD HAD CALLED THEM AS HIS NATION.**

II. THE JEWISH PRIVILEGES, VERSES 17 - 18

- A. THEY BUILT UPON THE LAW, VERSE 17. (THE GREEK WORD MEANS TO LEAN UPON. THEY BELIEVED THEY BUILT THEIR LIVES AND SOCIETY UPON GOD'S LAW.)**
- B. THEY HAD CONFIDENCE IN GOD, VERSE 17. (THEY BELIEVED THAT GOD HAD CHOSEN THEM AND WOULD SUSTAIN THEM.)**
- C. THEY KNEW GOD'S WILL, VERSE 18. (THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE KEEPING GOD'S LAW. CERTAINLY NO ONE IN THE GENTILE WORLD WAS KEEPING GOD'S LAW.)**
- D. THEY HELD THE HIGHEST VALUES, VERSE 18. (THEY FOLLOWED WAYS THAT WERE MORAL AND RIGHT.)**
- E. THEY WERE TAUGHT THE LAW, VERSE 18. (THEIR TEXT BOOK WAS THE LAW. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT IN SCHOOL BOYS MEMORIZED THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH ARE CALLED THE TORAH OR BOOKS OF LAW. THESE WERE PRIVILEGES WHICH THE JEWS ENJOYED.)**

III. THE JEWISH RESPONSIBILITIES, VERSES 19 - 20

- A. THEY WERE TO BE “A GUIDE TO THE BLIND,”
VERSE 19. (THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED
“GUIDE” IS ὁδηγόν (HODAGON). THIS WORD IS
RELATED TO THE WORDS “ROAD” AND “TO
LEAD.” SO IT MEANS TO LEAD ALONG A ROAD.
THE JEWS HAD THE TRUTH OF GOD;
SO THEY COULD GUIDE MEN TO THE ONE TRUE GOD**
- B. “A LIGHT TO THEM IN DARKNESS,” VERSE 19.
(THE JEWS WERE SUPPOSE TO BE LIGHT TO
THE GENTILES.)**
- C. “AN INSTRUCTOR OF THE FOOLISH,” VERSE 20.**
- D. “A TEACHER OF INFANTS,” VERSE 20. (INFANTS
IS THE GREEK WORD “NAPION,” AN INFANT
THAT CAN NOT TALK.)**
- E. “HAVING THE FORM OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH,”
VERSE 20. (THE JEWS WERE PRIVILEGED
PEOPLE. GOD HAD LED THEM FROM EGYPT,
MADE THEM A GREAT NATION, GIVEN THEM HIS
COVENANT AND BLESSED THEM WITH HIS LAW
AND PROPHETS. THESE PRIVILEGES BROUGHT
WITH THEM RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT PRIDE AND
BLINDNESS TO THEIR OWN SINS BLURRED
THEIR VISION AS GOD’S PEOPLE.)**

IV. THE JEWISH SUPERIORITY DISCREDITED, VERSES 21 - 24.

**IN THIS SECTION PAUL SHOWS THAT THE
JEWS DID NOT KEEP THE LAW; THEY WERE
UNGODLY, INTEMPERATE AND UNRIGHTEOUS.**

IN ROMANS 2:25-29, PAUL SHOWS THAT SIGNS AND SYMBOLS ARE NOT THE REAL THING, ONLY THE OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF THE INNER REALITY. IF THE INNER REALITY IS NOT PRESENT THE OUTWARD SIGN IS VOID AND MEANINGLESS. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE JEWS IN THIS SECTION IS VERY STRONG. THEY HAD DECEIVED THEMSELVES ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

IN THE WORD OF GOD THERE ARE ALWAYS PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH WHICH GOD INTENDS FOR US TO APPLY TO OURSELVES AS WELL AS TO THOSE FOR WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN. THIS SECTION WAS WRITTEN TO THE JEWS CONCERNING THEIR HEARTS AND THE OUTWARD SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION, BUT THE PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO ALL PEOPLE WITH RELIGIOUS PRIDE.

LOOK AT THE DEEP TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE. SUBSTITUTE BAPTISM AND/OR THE LORD'S SUPPER FOR CIRCUMCISION AND PEOPLE CALLED CHRISTIANS FOR JEWS. SEE THE PROFOUND MEANING OF THE APPLICATION? THE MISTAKE OF IDENTIFYING THE OUTWARD SIGN WITH THE INNER SPIRITUAL REALITY WILL HAVE DEVASTATING ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES. YET MANY GROUPS OF PEOPLE HAVE DONE THAT VERY THING.

ROMANS 3

ALL ARE CONDEMNED BUT ALL CAN BE JUSTIFIED

- I. THE ADVANTAGES AND THE CONDEMNATION OF THE JEWS 3:1 - 8**
- II. ALL PEOPLE ARE CONDEMNED 3:9 - 20**
- III. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST 3:21 - 31**

CHAPTER THREE IS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE TWO FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, CONDEMNATION AND JUSTIFICATION. WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF BOTH A PERSON CANNOT KNOW HIMSELF OR GOD.

IN THE FIRST PART OF CHAPTER 3 PAUL LOGICALLY CONCLUDES FROM CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS CONDEMNED. IN THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER 3 HE SHOWS THAT A PERSON'S ONLY HOPE IS FOR GOD TO JUSTIFY HIM THROUGH THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS, AND THAT THIS JUSTIFICATION IS APPROPRIATED BY FAITH.

CHAPTER 3 ALSO INTRODUCES THE REST OF THE EPISTLE. VERSES 24-30 INTRODUCE JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH WHICH IS THE TOPIC OF CHAPTERS 4 AND 5. VERSE 9 INTRODUCES THE POWER OF SIN AND LIVING UNDER ITS DOMAIN WHICH IS THE TOPIC OF CHAPTERS 6-8. VERSES 2-4, REFER TO ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF WHICH IS THE TOPIC OF CHAPTERS 9-11. VERSE 31 INTRODUCES A STATEMENT ABOUT HOW THE LAW IS LIVED OUT WHICH IS DISCUSSED IN CHAPTERS 12-16.

I. THE ADVANTAGES AND THE CONDEMNATION OF THE JEWS 3:1 - 8

AT THIS POINT PAUL BEGINS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS WHICH ARE IN THE MINDS OF HIS READERS.

THE FIRST QUESTION: IS THERE ANY ADVANTAGE OF BEING A JEW OR HAVING THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT, IF THE JEWS ARE CONDEMNED?, VERSE 1. PAUL ANSWERS A DEFINITE, "YES." LATER IN THE EPISTLE HE WILL RETURN TO THIS QUESTION AND GIVE MANY ADVANTAGES OF BEING A JEW. NOW, HOWEVER, IN VERSE 2 HE GIVES THE CHIEF ADVANTAGE, THAT THE JEWS WERE ENTRUSTED WITH THE ORACLES OF GOD. THESE ORACLES INCLUDED GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, DAVID AND ISRAEL AS WELL AS HIS LAW TO MOSES.

THE SECOND QUESTION: IS THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD DEPENDENT UPON THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE JEWS? OR HAS JEWISH UNFAITHFULNESS CANCELED GOD'S WORD?, VERSES 3 AND 4 PAUL ANSWERS "NO." IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, UNFAITHFULNESS CAN BE SEEN EVEN IN THE FATHER OF THE NATION, ABRAHAM, WHO TRIED TO BRING THE CHILD OF PROMISE INTO THE WORLD BY HIS OWN EFFORT INSTEAD OF DEPENDING UPON GOD. THE CHIEF ILLUSTRATION USED HERE IS FROM THE LIFE OF KING DAVID AND HIS UNFAITHFULNESS.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES IS A RHYTHMIC REPETITION OF THE SIN CYCLE THROUGHOUT ISRAEL BEFORE THE MONARCH. THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM BEFORE AND AFTER THE DIVISION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH WAS ALSO A RECORD OF UNFAITHFULNESS. YET GOD WAS FAITHFUL IN SPITE OF THE FAITHLESSNESS OF ISRAEL.

EVEN THE CORRECTION HE BROUGHT UPON THEM PROVED IT. GOD IS GOING TO FULFILL HIS PROMISES AND PROPHECIES. HE IS FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD.

THE NEXT QUESTION IS MORE COMPLICATED. IF SIN AND UN-FAITHFULNESS SHOW THE GLORY OF GOD, IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS WHEN HE CONDEMNS SIN? PAUL ANSWERS WITH ONE QUICK BLOW THAT GOD IS THE JUDGE, AND HE IS RIGHTEOUS. THE PHRASE TRANSLATED “GOD FORBID” VERSE 6, IN THE GREEK DOES NOT HAVE THE WORD GOD IN IT. IT IS μη γενουτο, (MA GENOITO) AND IT LITERALLY MEANS “MAY IT NOT COME TO PASS” OR IN OUR TERMS TODAY, “NO WAY.” THIS SAME PHRASE IS USED IN VERSE 4 TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, DOES A PERSON’S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AFFECT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD? PAUL GIVES THE KNOCK OUT BLOW TO THE FALSE HOPE THAT A SINFUL PERSON ALWAYS HAS, THAT SOMEHOW HE MAY ESCAPE GOD’S JUDGMENT. IMPLIED IN THIS AND EVIDENT IN ALL THE SCRIPTURE IS THAT EVERY PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE. THERE IS NEVER EVEN THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION ANYWHERE IN GOD’S WORD THAT A PERSON IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS MOTIVES, CHOICES, AND ACTIONS.

PAUL ANSWERS THE NEXT QUESTION AND USES HIMSELF AS AN EXAMPLE TO PERSONALIZE THE ARGUMENT. EVIDENTLY HE HAD FACED THIS QUESTION MANY TIMES. THE QUESTION: IF A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED BY GRACE WITHOUT WORKS, DOES THIS NOT GIVE THE PERSON FREEDOM TO SIN AND IN FACT DOES IT NOT ENCOURAGE SIN? THIS ACCUSATION IS SO SLANDEROUS AND CONTRARY TO ALL REASON AND SCRIPTURE THAT PAUL SAYS THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS DESERVE CONDEMNATION.

II. ALL PEOPLE ARE CONDEMNED 3:9 - 20

PAUL HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE GENTILES HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LIGHT OF NATURE AND CONSCIENCE AND THAT THE JEWS HAVE DISOBEYED AND REBELLED AGAINST THE REVEALED LAW OF GOD. THEREFORE, EVEN THOUGH THE JEWS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF THE GUIDANCE AND PROMISES OF GOD THEY HAVE NO SUPERIORITY WHEN IT COMES TO ESCAPING SIN AND JUDGMENT. THERE IS, THEREFORE, NO DIFFERENCE IN CONDEMNATION OR IN SALVATION.

THE WORDS IN VERSE 9 “UNDER SIN” MEAN UNDER THE POWER OR DOMINION. IT MEANS TO BE IN BONDAGE TO SIN. PAUL IS BEGINNING TO REVEAL THE “SIN NATURE” IN EVERY PERSON. IT IS FROM THIS SIN NATURE WHICH SINS, PLURAL, PROCEED. THE TOTAL SINFULNESS OF EVERY PERSON IS IN THE PERSON’S NATURE. THUS, WE ARE SINNERS BOTH BY NATURE AND BY CHOICE.

THE WORD “SIN” IS USED FORTY - NINE TIMES IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS. IN THE OTHER BOOKS OF THE BIBLE THERE ARE AT LEAST A DOZEN HEBREW AND GREEK WORDS WHICH ARE TRANSLATED BY THE ENGLISH WORD SIN.

THE GREEK WORD PAUL USES HERE FOR SIN IS THE PICTURE OF AN ARCHER SHOOTING HIS ARROWS AND THE ARROWS FALLING SHORT OF THE TARGET. EVERY PERSON FALLS SHORT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. PAUL ASCRIBES TO MANKIND THE FULL RANGE OF SIN. THE BIBLICAL WORDS TRANSLATED “SIN” ALSO DESCRIBE THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ITS EVIL.

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT ONE WORD TRANSLATED “SIN” MEANS TO MISS THE MARK. ANOTHER WORD TRANSLATED SIN MEANS OVERSTEPPING A LINE OR BOUNDARY. THIS WORD HAS IN IT THE IDEA OF DEFIANCE AND DETERMINATION TO DO ONE’S OWN WILL. ANOTHER WORD MEANS FAILING TO MEASURE UP TO GOD’S STANDARD. IT MEANS FALLING INSTEAD OF STANDING. ANOTHER WORD MEANS GIVING LESS THAN IS REQUIRED. IT IS SEEN IN JESUS’ STATEMENT OF THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS. ALL PEOPLE KNOW BY EXPERIENCE THEIR INABILITY TO DO THIS IN THE STRENGTH OF THE FLESH. STILL ANOTHER WORD MEANS TO DISOBEY A COMMAND. ANOTHER WORD MEANS TO SLIP OR SLIDE ACROSS A LINE OR BOUNDARY.

THE MEANINGS BEHIND THE VARIOUS WORDS TRANSLATED “SIN,” GIVE US A TELESCOPIC GLIMPSE OF ITS MAGNITUDE. PAUL’S QUOTES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT GIVE A SURVEY OF MANKIND’S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. THIS IS LOOKING AT MANKIND THROUGH GOD’S EYES.

IN VERSE 10, THE PHRASE “IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN,” IS THE TRANSLATION OF A GREEK VERB IN THE PERFECT TENSE. THE PERFECT TENSE MEANS THAT THE ACTION HAPPENED IN PAST TIME, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACTION CONTINUE. THE EMPHASIS OF THE PERFECT TENSE IS ON THE RESULT OF THE COMPLETED ACTION. THIS COULD BE TRANSLATED “IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND STANDS WRITTEN.”

IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES PAUL FLASHES THE SPOTLIGHT UPON THE COMPLETE SINFULNESS OF ALL PEOPLE. THESE ARE GOD’S INDICTMENTS AGAINST SIN. HE IS SHOWING THAT THE

SEEDS OF ALL SINS ARE IN ALL PEOPLE. VERSES 10 THROUGH 18 ARE DRAWN FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. VERSES 10-12 ARE FROM PSALMS 14:1-3.

THE FIRST INDICTMENT IS IN VERSE 10: "THERE IS NOT A RIGHTEOUS ONE NOT EVEN ONE." IT MEANS THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ONE SINGLE PERSON WHO COULD STAND BEFORE GOD. ADAM'S STANDING BEFORE GOD WAS IN HIS INNOCENCE. ONCE HIS INNOCENCE WAS GONE HE HAD NO STANDING BEFORE GOD. THIS WAS THE REASON HE WAS DRIVEN FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE GARDEN.

THE SECOND INDICTMENT IS IN VERSE 11: "THERE IS NOT ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS." IN II COR. PAUL SAYS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD WITHOUT SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT. IT LEAVES THE NATURAL PERSON WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING.

THE THIRD INDICTMENT IS IN VERSE 12: "THERE IS NOT ONE WHO SEEKS AFTER GOD."

THE FOURTH INDICTMENT IS THAT THEY "ALL DID GO OUT OF THE WAY." IT MEANS MANKIND ABANDONED THE WAY OF GOD. THE GREEK WORD HERE HAS THE FORCE OF INTENTIONAL MOVING AWAY FROM GOD'S WAY.

THE FIFTH INDICTMENT IS IN VERSE 12: "THEY HAVE BECOME UNPROFITABLE." THE KING JAMES VERSION AND MOST OTHER TRANSLATIONS UNDERSTATE THE REALITY AND SHARPNESS OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE. UNPROFITABLE IS A POOR

RENDERING OF THE IDEA FROM THE GREEK. THE GREEK WORD MEANS “GONE BAD, GOOD FOR NOTHING, DEADLY,” AND SIMILAR MEANINGS. THE WORD IS ALSO USED OF MILK THAT HAS GONE BAD. PUTRID OR SPOILED IS A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF THE WORD. IT IS ALMOST THE OPPOSITE OF THE IDEA BEHIND THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “PERFECT.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “PERFECT” MEANS MATURE OR ACHIEVING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH SOMETHING WAS CREATED. FOR EXAMPLE, A PUMP THAT PUMPS WATER IS A PERFECT PUMP, BECAUSE IT FUNCTIONS CORRECTLY. IT DOES WHAT IT WAS CREATED TO DO. A PERSON IS CREATED TO WORSHIP GOD AND WALK WITH HIM. SO THE MATURE PERSON DOES WHAT HE IS CREATED TO DO. THE UNPROFITABLE PERSON GOES AGAINST THE REASON FOR WHICH HE WAS CREATED.

THE SIXTH INDICTMENT IS: “THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD; NO NOT SO MUCH AS ONE.” THE WORD “GOOD” HERE CAN BE TRANSLATED KINDNESS. SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY, “WAIT A MINUTE PAUL, YOU MEAN THAT WE DON’T DO KINDNESS TOWARD OUR CHILDREN?” THE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS PASSAGE LIES IN RECOGNIZING THAT THERE ARE TWO STANDARDS OF GOODNESS. ONE IS GOD’S STANDARD AND THE OTHER IS MANKIND’S STANDARD, AND THERE IS A VERY WIDE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE TWO. JESUS POINTS OUT THE DIFFERENCE WHEN HE SAYS, “IF YOU BEING EVIL KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO YOUR CHILDREN HOW MUCH MORE WILL GOD GIVE HIS HOLY SPIRIT TO YOU.”

THE SEVENTH INDICTMENT IS AGAINST MANKIND’S COMMUNI-

CATION. “THEIR THROAT IS AS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE.” THE THROAT IS COMPARED TO AN OPEN GRAVE. PHYSICIANS HAVE LONG UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TONGUE, MOUTH AND THROAT GIVE EVIDENCE OF SICKNESS OR HEALTH. IN SCRIPTURE WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH IS CONSIDERED TO BE FROM THE HEART. PAUL IS SAYING THAT THE VERY WORDS THAT COME OUT OF A PERSON’S MOUTH REVEAL THE DEATH THAT IS IN HIS HEART.

THE EIGHTH INDICTMENT: “WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE USED DECEIT.” THE GREEK VERB IN THIS PHRASE IS IN THE IMPERFECT TENSE, MEANING THAT IT IS A CONTINUAL HABIT. THEY KEEP ON DOING IT OVER AND OVER. PEOPLE USE WORDS BOTH TO REVEAL, CONCEAL, AND DECEIVE. IN THE MODERN WORLD GOVERNMENTS OF LARGE NATIONS DECEIVE THEIR PEOPLE CONTINUOUSLY. WE ALSO SEE NEWS REPORTS THAT MANY HUGE CORPORATIONS OPERATE EXCLUSIVELY BY DECEPTION. IT MIGHT ANGER US, BUT IT SHOULD NOT SURPRISE US.

THE NINTH INDICTMENT IS: “THE VENOM OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.” PAUL IS REFERRING TO THE COBRA OF EGYPT. IT’S DEADLY POISON IS CONTAINED IN A SACK HIDDEN UNDER THE LIPS. PEOPLE HAVE A SIMILAR ABILITY, THEY CAN KILL WITH HIS WORDS.

THE NEXT INDICTMENT IS PROBABLY FROM Ps 10:7: “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.” EVERY EMPLOYEE IN ANY FACTORY OR BUSINESS KNOWS THIS TRUTH BY DAILY EXPERIENCE. BITTERNESS USUALLY COMES FROM DEEP SEATED ANGER OR HOSTILITY WHEN NO FORGIVENESS

IS GIVEN FROM THE HEART. CURSING COMES FROM A HEART WHERE SELF RULES. IT IS A SLAP AT GOD EVERY TIME IT OCCURS. JAMES IN HIS EPISTLE TELLS US THAT THE TONGUE MUST BE GOD CONTROLLED.

THE INDICTMENT CONTINUES WITH: "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD." THE NEXT PHRASES ARE FROM ISAIAH 59:7-8. JUST COLLECT THE DAILY NEWSPAPER FROM ANY LARGE CITY AND YOU WILL SEE THE EVIDENCE CLEARLY. JESUS IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SHOWS THAT THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMANDMENT, "THOU SHALL NOT KILL," (DO MURDER) APPLIES TO THE MOTIVES OF THE HEART WHERE HATRED AND ANGER ARE PRESENT.

THE NEXT PHRASE "DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAY," DESCRIBES THE JOURNEY THE HUMAN RACE HAS TRAVELED. THE SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENTS THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAVE BEEN SO CORRUPT THAT MILLIONS HAVE DIED FROM THE MISERY THEY HAVE CREATED.

ANOTHER INDICTMENT IS: "AND THE WAY OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME PEACE BETWEEN NATIONS, MUCH LESS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, HAS NOT BEEN KNOWN.

THE LAST INDICTMENT OF THIS LIST IS VERSE 18. IT IS PROBABLY THE CAUSE OF ALL OTHERS. "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." THE STATEMENT IS FROM PS 36:1. IT IS ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE THAT A PERSON CAN SEE THE

UNIVERSE, LOOK INTO HIS OWN MIND, HEART AND CONSCIENCE, BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD AND STILL HAVE NO AWE OR FEAR THAT HE/SHE WILL HAVE TO STAND BEFORE GOD IN JUDGMENT.

PEOPLE THINK THEY SEE SO CLEARLY. THE TRUTH IS THEY ARE BLIND TO SPIRITUAL THINGS. IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, SATAN CAME TO EVE, GEN 3:5 AND SAID, "YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPEN AND YOU SHALL BE AS GODS, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL." INSTEAD THEIR EYES WERE CLOSED TO DISCERN SPIRITUAL THINGS. THEY ARE LIKE ELISHA'S SERVANT IN II KINGS WHEN THE KING OF SYRIA SENT SOLDIERS TO CAPTURE ELISHA. THE SERVANT OF ELISHA WAS SPIRITUALLY BLIND AND COULD NOT SEE THE ARMIES OF GOD UNTIL ELISHA PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD OPEN HIS EYES.

CHAPTER 3 VERSES 10- 12 FOCUS UPON MAN'S NATURE AND CHARACTER. VERSES 13- 18 FOCUS UPON THE CONDUCT THAT PROCEEDS FROM CHARACTER.

PAUL SAYS THAT THE ONLY HOPE IS IN THE GOSPEL, BECAUSE IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION. PAUL THEN PROCEEDS TO SHOW WHY THE GOSPEL IS NECESSARY. THE GOSPEL IS NECESSARY BECAUSE GOD'S WRATH IS REVEALED AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN. PAUL HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT BOTH GENTILE AND JEW ARE CONDEMNED, BECAUSE THEY HAVE REJECTED THE LIGHT WHICH WAS GIVEN TO THEM. THE LAW IS IN THE HEARTS OF ALL MEN AND WRITTEN ON STONE FOR THE JEW.

VERSES 19 AND 20 GIVE THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER.

THE CONCLUSION IS THAT THE LAW ITSELF SHUTS EVERY MOUTH AND BRINGS ALL THE WORLD UNDER THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. WHY DOES GOD HAVE TO SHUT MEN'S MOUTHS? BECAUSE THEY TRY TO JUSTIFY THEMSELVES AND SET UP THEIR OWN STANDARDS OF GOODNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. IN ORDER TO SHUT MEN'S MOUTHS PAUL BEGAN IN CHAPTER 1 TO TRACE THE STEPS OF MANKIND AWAY FROM GOD. IN CHAPTER 2 HE EXPLAINS THE PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS WHICH GOD USES TO JUDGE. IN THE FIRST PART OF CHAPTER 3 HE EXAMINES THE ROOTS OF SIN THAT ARE IN ALL MEN AND SHOWS THAT EVEN RELIGIOUS PROFESSION IS EMPTY BEFORE GOD. MEN'S MOUTHS HAVE TO BE SHUT BEFORE THEY CAN HEAR GOD. THE GREEK WORK FOR STOPPED MEANS TO FOCUS IN, TO CLOSE UP, TO BLOCK UP. THE IDEA IN THIS VERSE IS THAT ALL THE EVIDENCE IS SO OVERWHELMING NO ONE CAN ANSWER.

PHILLIPS GIVES A CLEAR MEANING TO VERSE 19. HE PARAPHRASES IT: "WE KNOW WHAT THE MESSAGE OF THE LAW IS, FOR THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER IT – THAT EVERY EXCUSE MAY DIE ON THE LIPS OF HIM WHO MAKES IT AND NO LIVING MAN MAY THINK HIMSELF BEYOND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD."

VERSE 20 SLAMS US AGAINST THE WALL HELPLESS AND HOPELESS: "THEREFORE BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW THERE SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT; FOR BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN." PEOPLE NEVER WANT TO ADMIT THAT THEY CANNOT DEVISE SOME STANDARD THAT WILL SHOW THEM RIGHTEOUS.

PAUL BEGINS TO SHOW THE PURPOSE FOR THE LAW. THE

PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO REVEAL THE NATURE OF SIN AND TO BRING PEOPLE TO CHRIST. NO PERSON HAS EVER BEEN MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THE LAW. IF A PERSON OFFENDS IN ONE - TENTH OF ONE PERCENT OF THE LAW THAT PERSON HAS BROKEN THE LAW. JAMES 2:10 SAYS: "WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL."

THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO AWAKEN KNOWLEDGE OF SIN AND TO REVEAL THE NEED FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN. THE LAW HAD NO POWER OF DELIVERANCE IN IT.

III. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST 3:21 - 31

THIS SECTION HAS THREE PICTURES TO HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW GOD JUSTIFIES. THE FIRST PICTURE IS THE LAW COURT, THE SECOND THE SLAVE MARKET AND THE THIRD THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. VERSES 21 - 25 SHOW HOW GOD PUTS A PERSON IN RIGHT STANDING WITH HIM. PAUL LEAVES NO HOPE FOR MANKIND. HE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE SINFUL, SEPARATED FROM GOD AND CONDEMNED. NEXT PAUL SHOWS HOW GOD CHANGES A PERSON'S STANDING BEFORE HIM FROM CONDEMNATION TO JUSTIFICATION. HE ALSO SHOWS HOW THE WRATH OF GOD IS TURNED AWAY. IN VERSES 25 - 31, PAUL SHOWS THAT THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

PAUL BEGINS HERE TO SHOW HOW A PERSON CAN BE IN RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD. PAUL HAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT NO PERSON HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF, THAT IS TO DECLARE HIMSELF NOT GUILTY BEFORE GOD BY HIS OWN EFFORTS. THE WORDS AT THE BEGINNING OF

THIS SECTION, “BUT NOW” POINT BOTH TO THE NEXT STEP IN HIS LOGIC AND TO A TURNING POINT IN SALVATION HISTORY. NOW HE IS GOING TO SHOW THAT THERE IS A WAY OF SALVATION. THE WORDS “BUT NOW” POINT TO THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

IF THE “NOW” POINTS TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST, SOME ONE WILL ASK, HOW WERE PEOPLE SAVED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT? HOW ARE WE SAVED? READ EPHESIANS 2:8-9. WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE. HOW WERE THE PEOPLE SAVED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT? THE SAME WAY WE ARE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

THE PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE SAVED BY BELIEVING GOD’S WORD ABOUT THE SACRIFICE WHICH THEY BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST TO BECOME THEIR SUBSTITUTES. IT WAS A TYPE AND PICTURE OF THE PERFECT LAMB OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST, WHICH WAS SLAIN ON THE CROSS. THEY LOOKED FORWARD IN FAITH TO THE CROSS. WE LOOK BACK IN FAITH TO THE CROSS. THE WORD OF GOD SAYS THERE IS NO REMISSION OF SINS EXCEPT BY THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD.

PAUL HAS SPOKEN OF THE LAW WRITTEN ON GENTILE HEARTS AND THE MOSAIC LAW WRITTEN ON TABLETS OF STONE AND GIVEN TO THE JEWS. NEITHER LIVE UP TO THEIR REQUIREMENTS; SO, BOTH GENTILE AND JEW ARE CONDEMNED. THERE IS NO DEFINITE ARTICLE BEFORE THE WORD LAW IN VERSES 21, 28, AND 31. WHICH SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT PAUL HAS A WIDER SCOPE FOR THE MEANING OF THE LAW THAN JUST THE LAW OF MOSES. PAUL PUTS “APART FROM LAW” TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE SENTENCE TO EMPHASIZE GOD’S RIGHTEOUS-

NESS AS OPPOSED TO MEN'S WORKS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE WORDS "BUT NOW" POINT TO GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH HE HAS PROVIDED AND NOW REVEALS. THE LAW AND PROPHETS POINTED TO IT, BUT IT HAS NOW BEEN FULLY DISCLOSED.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ONE OF THE MAJOR THEMES OF ROMANS. IN VERSE 21 THERE IS NO DEFINITE ARTICLE BEFORE THE WORD RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT SHOWS THAT IT IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS PROVIDED. DONALD BARNHOUSE SAYS THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN THREE STATEMENTS: "GOD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, GOD DEMANDS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GOD PROVIDES RIGHTEOUSNESS." (DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE, ROMANS [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1954] "GOD'S REMEDY," VOL. II, P.8.) THE FIRST TIME THE WORD RIGHTEOUSNESS IS USED IN THE BIBLE IS IN GEN 15:6. EVEN HERE IT MEANS THAT GOD RECKONED IT AS SO. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ALL THE PRIEST COULD DO WAS DECLARE SIN COVERED OR ATONED FOR. HE COULD NOT DECLARE THE PERSON RIGHTEOUS. NOW, HOWEVER, GOD HAS PROVIDED THAT HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL COME THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST TO ALL WHO HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST'S REDEEMING WORK ON THE CROSS.

THE TRUTH OF ROMANS IS THAT GOD CAN TAKE AN UNRIGHTEOUS MAN, MAKE HIM RIGHTEOUS, PUT HIM IN AN UNRIGHTEOUS WORLD AND KEEP HIM RIGHTEOUS.

PAUL SHOWS IN THIS SECTION THAT JUSTIFICATION IS MORE

THAN FORGIVENESS OF SINS. IT IS THE VERY RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD UPON THEM THAT BELIEVE. IN MATTHEW 22, JESUS TELLS THE PARABLE OF THE MAN WHO CAME TO THE WEDDING WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT. THE CUSTOM AT THAT TIME WAS FOR THE HOST, IN THIS CASE A KING, TO PROVIDE THE GARMENTS FOR ALL WHO CAME TO THE WEDDING FEAST. THE GUEST MAY HAVE HAD ON A VERY FINE GARMENT, BUT IT WAS NOT THE ONE PROVIDED BY THE KING, AND IT WAS, THEREFORE, AN INSULT TO THE KING. THE PARABLE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT JESUS IS REFERRING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS. FROM ROMANS WE SEE THAT GOD MUST PROVIDE THE GARMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE WE CAN COME BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF THE KING.

THE QUESTION IS HOW DOES A PERSON COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD? HOW DOES HE ENTER INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? IT IS MORE THAN JUST HAVING HIS SINS FORGIVEN. IT IS BEING CLOTHED WITH GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IN THIS PASSAGE, 3:21 - 31, PAUL DESCRIBES HOW A PERSON CAN BE RIGHT WITH GOD. THE PASSAGE IS AN EXPLANATION OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID, PAUL USES THREE PICTURES TO ILLUSTRATE SALVATION. THE FIRST PICTURE IS FROM THE LAW COURT, THE SECOND FROM THE SLAVE MARKET AND THE THIRD FROM THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE PICTURE FROM THE LAW COURT ILLUSTRATES JUSTIFICATION. THE VERB JUSTIFY IN GREEK IS δικαιωω. VERBS ENDING IN "OW" MEAN TO TREAT OR RECKON SOMEONE AS SOMETHING. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A PERSON APPEARS IN COURT, AND THE JUDGE KNOWS THE MAN IS INNOCENT, HE ACQUITS

HIM. IF A MAN IS GUILTY BEFORE GOD'S COURT, AND GOD PAYS HIS PENALTY THEN GOD RELEASES HIM, DECLARING HIM JUSTIFIED, PENALTY PAID. GOD HAS PAID THE PENALTY; SO, GOD IS JUST IN DECLARING THE JUSTIFICATION. IN THIS WE SEE THAT GOD IS RIGHTEOUS. HE PAYS THE PENALTY. EVERYONE, IN THE ANCIENT WORLD AND IN OUR WORLD TODAY, IS FAMILIAR WITH THE LAW COURT SYSTEM. THEREFORE, WE CAN UNDERSTAND JUSTIFICATION.

THE PICTURE FROM THE GENTILE SLAVE MARKET ILLUSTRATES REDEMPTION, ἀπολυτρωσεως. WE ARE NOT AS FAMILIAR WITH THE SLAVE MARKET AS THE PEOPLE OF PAUL'S DAY WHEN HALF THE PEOPLE WERE SLAVES. HOWEVER, A SLAVE COULD BE BOUGHT AND SET FREE FROM SLAVERY. THIS PROCESS WAS CALLED REDEMPTION. THE CONCEPT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THAT ONLY JESUS CHRIST CAN FREE PEOPLE FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE NATION ISRAEL WAS CREATED WHEN GOD REDEEMED THE HEBREW SLAVES OUT OF EGYPT.

THE PICTURE FROM THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATES THE WORD TRANSLATED "PROPITIATION." THE WORD MEANS MERCY SEAT. WHEN A PERSON SINNED HE BROKE GOD'S LAW AND HAD TO MAKE A SACRIFICE TO ATONE FOR IT. WHEN A PERSON SINNED, HE WAS IN WRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND WAS TO BRING A SACRIFICE, A SIN OFFERING SIGNIFYING THAT HE HAD REPENTED OF THE SIN AND WANTED TO BE IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE MERCY SEAT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. THE HIGH PRIEST WENT INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES ONCE A YEAR

ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND SPRINKLED THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB ON THE MERCY SEAT FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE. THIS WAS EXPIATION.

IN THIS SECTION WE SEE THAT GOD HIMSELF MADE THE ATONEMENT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. VERSE 25 IS A KEY LINK IN THE LOGIC OF ROMANS. THE WORD PROPITIATE HAS IN IT THE IDEA OF TURNING AWAY THE WRATH OF GOD. FROM ROMANS 1:18 TO THIS POINT PAUL HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT GOD IS UPSET OVER SIN, THAT ALL ARE CONDEMNED, AND THAT THEY HAVE INCURRED THE WRATH OF GOD. HERE HE SHOWS THAT THE CROSS TURNS AWAY GOD'S WRATH. IN VERSE 27, PAUL SHOWS THAT PRIDE HAS NO PART IN MAN'S STANDING BEFORE GOD. VERSE 28 AGAIN EMPHASIZES THAT FAITH IS THE WAY JUSTIFICATION IS APPROPRIATED.

II CORINTHIANS 5:21, ONE OF THE GREATEST VERSES IN ALL OF THE BIBLE, SAYS, "FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US WHO KNEW NO SIN THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM." THE WORD IN GREEK TRANSLATED "ΥΠΙΣΤΡ" IS UPER. IT MEANS ON BEHALF OF. IT MEANS THAT JESUS WAS MADE SIN IN OUR BEHALF THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUS OF GOD IN HIM. IN SCRIPTURE RIGHTEOUSNESS USUALLY MEANS RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS DIFFERENT FROM HUMAN RIGHTEOUSNESS. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT IS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL IS DESCRIBED AS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. IT DOES NOT MEAN AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD. IT MEANS RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT GOD BESTOWS UPON MAN. IT IS THE STATE OF BEING RIGHT

BEFORE GOD. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH THE GOSPEL OFFERS THE SINNER OR THE UNGODLY IS GOD'S OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. WITH THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS THE PERSON WILL BE ABLE TO STAND IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD FOREVER. GUILT IS TAKEN AWAY BY THE CROSS AND GRACE IS GIVEN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

IN THE TABERNACLE, THE WHITE LINEN CURTAINS THAT SEPARATED THE HOLY OF HOLIES, WHERE THE PRESENCES OF GOD WAS FROM THE REST OF THE TABERNACLE SYMBOLIZE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THAT IS DEMANDED OF THOSE WHO COME INTO HIS PRESENCE. PAUL SAYS THAT GOD BESTOWS THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A RESULT OF FAITH IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

ROMANS PRESENTS TWO TRUTHS THAT THE SCRIPTURE HOLDS IN BALANCE. ONE IS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE OTHER IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PEOPLE. ROMANS TEACHES THAT BOTH OF THESE ARE TRUE. WHEN YOU COME TO A TEXT THAT PRESENTS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, PRESENT IT WITH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEN WHEN YOU COME TO A TEXT THAT PRESENTS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PEOPLE PRESENT IT WITH THE SAME FERVOR AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IS THE BASIS OF RESPONSIBILITY, BECAUSE GOD HOLDS A PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS/HER CHOICES AND DECISIONS. THROUGHOUT THE GOD'S WORD, EACH PERSON IS SHOWN TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS/HER DECISIONS AND ACTIONS.

A PERSON'S CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ADMIT THAT HE/SHE IS A SINNER AND THAT HE/SHE CAN DO ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF/HERSELF BEFORE GOD.

WHEN ADAM SINNED, HE TRIED TO COVER HIMSELF WITH FIG LEAVES. THE LEAVES SYMBOLIZE THAT A PERSON TRIES TO MAKE HIMSELF RIGHTEOUS BY COVERING HIMSELF. IN GENESIS GOD PROVIDES THE COVERING WITH THE SACRIFICE AND ANIMAL SKINS. IN THE NEW COVENANT GOD DOES IT IN CHRIST.

IN 3:22, THE PHRASE "NO DIFFERENCE" MEANS THAT ALL ARE CONDEMNED AND THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY GOD BRINGS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO ALL PEOPLE. VERSES 23 AND 24 SUPPORT THIS TRUTH. VERSE 23 SPEAKS OF GOD'S STANDARD OF HOLINESS. PEOPLE ALWAYS FALL SHORT, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. THE GREEK SECOND AORIST VERB TENSES IN THESE VERSES MAKE IT READ LITERALLY "FOR ALL SINNED." "ARE FALLING SHORT" IS A PRESENT INDICATIVE VERB. THEY ARE FALLING SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD; SO, THE IDEA IS WE SINNED IN ADAM, AND WE ARE CONTINUING TO SIN AND FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GLORY.

THE WORD GLORY USES HERE HAS THE IDEA OF VALUE, WORTH, HONOR, BRILLIANCE OR PRAISE. AT THE BEGINNING GOD INTENDED FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE IN HIS GLORY, BUT SIN ENTERED AND MANKIND LOST THAT POSSIBILITY. THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS IN THE TEMPLE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES OVER THE MERCY SEAT, BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM. THE PEOPLE COULD NEVER ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES. ONLY THE HIGH PRIEST COULD ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND HE

COULD ENTER IT ONLY ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

GLORY IS THE WHOLE OF WHO GOD IS. THE GLORY OF GOD WHICH ADAM LOST COULD NOT BE REGAINED BY HUMAN EFFORT. JESUS CHRIST ALONE BRINGS US THE GLORY OF GOD, AS THE GOSPEL OF JOHN TELLS US IN 1:14, "WE HELD HIS GLORY AS OF THE GLORY OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH."

VERSE 24 HAS THE PHRASE "TO JUSTIFY." JUSTIFY MEANS FAR MORE THAN FORGIVING AND TAKING AWAY GUILT. IT MEANS GOD DECLARES THE SINNER TO BE IN RIGHT STANDING BEFORE HIM. IT IS NOT JUST RESTORING THE PERSON TO THE POSITION OF ADAM, FOR CHRIST TAKES US FAR BEYOND THAT. OUR JUSTIFICATION DOES NOT HAVE ANY BASIS IN US, AS EPHESIANS 2:8-9 TELLS US, "FOR BY GRACE ARE YOU SAVED THROUGH FAITH, THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD." THIS CLEARLY SAYS THAT WE DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING WITHIN US NOR CAN WE DO ANYTHING TO JUSTIFY OURSELVES BEFORE GOD. JUSTIFICATION MEANS TO REGARD AS IF THE SINNER HAD NEVER SINNED. PARDON DEALS WITH THE PAST, BUT IT CANNOT DEAL WITH THE FUTURE. JUSTIFICATION DEALS WITH PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

THE BASIS OF JUSTIFICATION IS REDEMPTION. REDEMPTION MEANS TO UNLOOSE OR TO UNTIE. THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION IS SO GREAT THAT WE CANNOT COMPREHEND IT. 1 PETER 1:18-19 SAYS, "FORASMUCH AS YOU KNOW THAT YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, AS SILVER AND GOLD, FROM YOUR VAIN CONVERSATION RECEIVED BY TRANSITION

FROM YOUR FATHER, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB, WITHOUT BLEMISH, AND WITHOUT SPOT.”

VERSE 24 SAYS THAT WE ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE. GRACE IS DEFINED AS GOD’S UNMERITED FAVOR. GRACE BEFORE THE NEW TESTAMENT BASICALLY MEANT A FAVOR TO A FRIEND, NOT TO AN ENEMY. PAUL USED THE WORD GRACE TO MEAN GOD’S LOVE, MERCY, KINDNESS AND ALL SUCH QUALITIES TURNED TOWARD MANKIND. PEOPLE ARE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD IN BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. GOD’S GRACE BRINGS REDEMPTION. REDEMPTION AS PAUL USES IT IS REFLECTED IN THE SLAVE MARKET. IT MEANS TO BUY OUT OF THE SLAVE MARKET.

THE WORD JUSTIFICATION, IS VERY INTERESTING. BARNHOUSE POINTS OUT THAT A MAN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NAMED THOMAS BRADBURY PUT TOGETHER EIGHT VERSES FROM THE BIBLE WHICH SHOW VARIOUS PHASES OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION:

1. THE BELIEVER IS JUSTIFIED BY THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, WHOLLY OF GOD’S WILL, ROMANS 8:33, “WHO SHALL LAY ANYTHING TO THE CHARGE OF GOD’S ELECT? IT IS GOD THAT JUSTIFIES.”

2. JUSTIFICATION IS WITHOUT A CAUSE IN US, BUT IT’S BY THE GRACE OF GOD, ROMANS 3:24. IN THIS VERSE BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY, BY HIS GRACE, MEANS WITHOUT ANY CAUSE.

3. JUSTIFICATION IS BY THE MERITORIOUS VIRTUE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, ROMANS 5:9, “MUCH MORE THAN BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM

WRATH THROUGH HIM.”

4. JUSTIFICATION IS BY THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OR THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST, ROMANS 5:19, “SO BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.”

5. JUSTIFICATION COMES AUTHORITATIVELY BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, ROMANS 4:25 “WHO WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.” THAT VERSE IS SPEAKING OF JESUS.

6. JUSTIFICATION IS BY THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ACCORDING TO THE WORD, I CORINTHIANS 6:11, “JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD.”

7. JUSTIFICATION COMES EXPERIENTIALLY BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, GALATIANS 2:16, “KNOWING MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF HE LAW, BUT BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST.”

8. THE EVIDENCE OF OUR JUSTIFICATION IS FOUND IN OUR WORKS, WHICH THE BOOK OF JAMES DECLARES, JAMES 2:24, “YOU SEE, THEN, HOW THAT BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY.” (DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE, ROMANS [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1954] “GOD’S REMEDY,” VOL. 2, P. 212.)

THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN KNOW A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED IS TO LOOK AT THE FRUITS THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES THROUGH HIM/HER. AND EVEN THEN, WE DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, FOR ONLY GOD SEES THE HEART AND ONLY GOD KNOWS WHETHER A PERSON HAS FAITH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

PAUL FOLLOWS HIS TEACHING ON JUSTIFICATION BY

SANCTIFICATION. THE TWO ARE ETERNALLY BOUND TOGETHER, BECAUSE WHEN GOD JUSTIFIES A PERSON HE SET THAT PERSON ASIDE FOR HIS SERVICE. GOD ALSO COMPLETES WHAT HE BEGINS, PHIL. 1:6. IF A PERSON DOES NOT PRODUCE ANY FRUITS THEN THAT PERSON HAS TO QUESTION, DID GOD PUT HIS LIFE IN ME? WAS IT JUST AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE, OR WAS IT GOD GIVEN FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE?

THE PHRASE “IN CHRIST JESUS” OCCURS IN VERSE 24. “IN CHRIST” REFERS TO A PERSON’S POSITION IN CHRIST. IT MEANS THE STATE OF JUSTIFICATION COMPARED TO THE FORMER STATE OF CONDEMNATION.

VERSE 25 SAYS, “WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION, THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD.” THE WORD TRANSLATED PROPITIATION IS ἱλαστήριον. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID EARLIER IT IS THE WORD MERCY SEAT. THE WORD “HILESTERION” WAS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GREEK TRANSLATION, CALLED THE SEPTUAGINT, IN THE SENSE OF ATONEMENT OR RECONCILIATION. THE MERCY SEAT WAS THE COVER OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT WHICH WAS IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE TABERNACLE. THE PRESENCE OF GOD WAS JUST ABOVE THE ARK. ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT THE HIGH PRIEST SPRINKLED THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE ON THE MERCY SEAT. PAUL IN THIS PASSAGE MEANS THAT JESUS IS THE TRUE MERCY SEAT. IT REFERS TO THE ACT OF GETTING RID OF SIN, THE BARRIER BETWEEN GOD AND US. PROPITIATION MEANS THE REMOVAL OR THE TURNING AWAY OF GOD’S WRATH. IT IS A KEY VERSE

FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LOGIC OF ROMANS. THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF ROMANS SHOW THE RESULTS OF GOD'S WRATH TOWARD SIN, AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS SHOWS THE TURNING AWAY OF GOD'S WRATH. THIS CONCEPT IS LIKE MOST MAJOR KEY CONCEPTS IN SCRIPTURE, FOR EXAMPLE THE DIVINITY AND THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN. HERE IS THE CONCEPT OF THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE WRATH OF GOD. THIS PARTICULAR GREEK WORD REVEALS THAT GOD'S WRATH IS NOT EXPLOSIVE LIKE HUMAN ANGER.

THE TABLETS OF STONE ON WHICH THE LAW, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, HAD BEEN WRITTEN WERE IN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. ISRAEL HAD VIOLATED GOD'S LAW, SO, THE HIGH PRIEST CAME AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND SPRINKLED THE SACRIFICIAL BLOOD ON THE MERCY SEAT. THE MERCY SEAT WAS THE PLACE WHERE GOD SAID HE WOULD MEET THEM. THE BLOOD OF JESUS SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOD'S HOLY LAW, BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE. THEREFORE, THIS MADE HIM THE PERFECT SACRIFICE TO PAY THE PENALTY FOR MANKIND AND TO REMOVE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN HOLY GOD AND SINFUL MAN. THIS WORD, "HILESTERION" IS A WORD WHICH HAS A SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP TO BOTH THE SACRIFICE AND THE MERCY SEAT. JESUS IS BOTH THE MERCY SEAT AND THE SACRIFICE. IN THE WORD OF GOD IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE BENEFITS OF THE SACRIFICE WERE ONLY AVAILABLE TO A PERSON WHO PLACES HIS FAITH IN THE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. IT IS HOW GOD SAVES BELIEVING SINNERS.

THE CROSS IS THE RECKONING POINT. THE BLOOD COVERS

SINS BOTH BEFORE THE CROSS AND SINS AFTER THE CROSS. THE OLD TESTAMENT PATRIARCHS LOOKED FORWARD TO THE TIME WHEN JESUS WOULD COME AND DIE ON THE CROSS AS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE. WE LOOK BACK TO JESUS' PERFECT SACRIFICE WHICH WAS PAID FOR OUR SINS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD SAID ABOUT THE MERCY SEAT, "THIS IS WHERE I WILL MEET YOU," AND JESUS CHRIST IS THE PLACE WHERE GOD MEETS US.

VERSE 25 IS THE FIRST TIME IN ROMANS THAT BLOOD IS MENTIONED. THE FIRST TIME BLOOD IS MENTIONED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS WHEN GOD HIMSELF SHED BLOOD TO PROVIDE COVERINGS FOR ADAM AND EVE. WHEN CAIN AND ABEL MAKE A SACRIFICE GOD ACCEPTS ABEL'S SACRIFICE BUT DOES NOT ACCEPT CAIN'S. IT SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THEY BOTH KNEW THE KIND OF SACRIFICE WHICH GOD REQUIRED.

THE LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD. GOD SPOKE TO MOSES IN LEVITICUS 17:11, "FOR THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD, AND I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU UPON THE ALTAR TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS; FOR IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKES ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL." THE IDEA IS BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION. BUT WE DO COMPREHEND ENOUGH TO HAVE FAITH AND COME INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WHEN PAUL IS GIVING HIS ADMONITION TO THE ELDERS OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH, IN ACTS 20:28, HE SAYS "TAKE HEED THEREFORE UNTO YOURSELF AND UNTO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS TO SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE PURCHASED WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS OWN."

VERSE 26 OF THE CHAPTER THREE SAYS, "...IN THE FORBEARANCE

OF GOD; FOR (THE) SHOWING FORTH OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE PRESENT TIME FOR HIS BEING JUST AND JUSTIFYING HIM THAT (IS) OF (THE) FAITH OF JESUS.” THE WORDS IN PARENTHESES ARE NOT IN THE GREEK. THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS AS THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD SATISFIES THE HOLINESS OF GOD. THIS VERSE TELLS US THAT GOD IS THE JUSTIFIER.

VERSE 27 DEMONSTRATES THE POVERTY OF HUMAN PRIDE AND HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT. JUSTIFICATION COMES BY BELIEVING INSTEAD OF ACHIEVING. IT IS MORE THAN MENTAL ASSENT. IT IS “FAITHING,” TO CREATE A WORD. IN GREEK THE WORDS BELIEVE AND FAITH LOOK ALIKE AND SOUND ALIKE EXCEPT FOR THE ENDINGS. THEY COME FROM THE SAME ROOT. THIS GIVES THE WORD BELIEVE A MEANING MORE THAN MENTAL ASSENT. IT HAS THE IDEA OF ACTION, THE TOTAL PERSONALITY BEING INVOLVED IN FAITH.

THE IDEA OF HUMAN WORKS AND HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT PENETRATES EVERY CULTURE AND EVERY AREA OF LIFE. THE VERY FACT THAT HUMANS CONCEIVES THIS SHOWS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DECEIVED. PAUL HAS PROVED THE FAILURE OF THE GENTILES AND THE JEWS AND HAS DEMONSTRATED HOW THE LAW HAS BEEN MISAPPLIED BY THE JEWS. PAUL IN THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF ROMANS PRESENTED THE DOCTRINE OF CONDEMNATION AND NOW HE HAS PRESENTED THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. HE SHOWS THAT LAW WAS TO BRING TO LIFE THE REALITY OF SIN, BUT THAT THE JEWS EXTERNALIZED THE KEEPING OF THE LAW SO THEY COULD KEEP IT BY THEIR OWN STANDARDS. THE RESULT WAS PRIDE AND BLINDNESS TO THE SIN OF THE HUMAN HEART. SATAN HAS

DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO GET PEOPLE'S EYES OFF JESUS AND HIS WORK ON THE CROSS. HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT AND HUMAN WORKS DOES JUST THAT, IT TAKES THE EYES OFF THE CROSS. GRACE, FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FOCUS ON JESUS. PEOPLE ALWAYS SET UP THEIR OWN STANDARDS TO MEASURE THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS. BUT THEY ALWAYS SET THE STANDARDS SO THEY CAN ACHIEVE THEM. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE PHARISEES DID WITH GOD'S LAWS. THEY REDUCED THE LAWS BY MULTIPLYING AND EXTERNALIZING THEM.

VERSE 31 RELATES THE LAW TO THE GOSPEL. THE LAW SHOWS THE HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE SINFULNESS OF MANKIND. THE DEATH OF HUMANS ESTABLISHED THE LAW BECAUSE IT ADMITTED THAT THE LAW BROUGHT DEATH WHEN IT WAS BROKEN. SALVATION DOES NOT CANCEL THE LAW. LAW STILL DEMANDS DEATH FOR SIN. CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS AND SINCE HE KEPT THE LAW, THIS MADE HIM WORTHY TO DIE. WILLIAM NEWELL IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THIS CHAPTER, HAS A TREMENDOUS STATEMENT:

IF GOD ANNOUNCES THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS APART FROM WORKS, WHY DO YOU KEEP MOURNING OVER YOUR BAD WORKS, YOUR FAILURES? DO YOU NOT SEE THAT IT IS BECAUSE YOU STILL HAVE HOPES IN THESE WORKS OF YOURS, THAT YOU ARE DEPRESSED AND DISCOURAGED BY THEIR FAILURE? IF YOU TRULY SAW AND BELIEVED THAT GOD IS RECKONING RIGHTEOUS THE UNGODLY WHO BELIEVE ON HIM, YOU WOULD FAIRLY HATE YOUR STRUGGLES TO BE 'BETTER'; FOR YOU WOULD SEE THAT YOUR DREAMS OF GOOD WORKS HAVE NOT AT ALL COMMENDED YOU TO

GOD, AND THAT YOUR BAD WORKS DO NOT AT ALL HINDER YOU FROM BELIEVING ON HIM, BUT THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY!

THEREFORE, ON SEEING YOUR FAILURES, YOU SHOULD SAY, I AM NOTHING BUT A FAILURE; BUT GOD IS DEALING WITH ME ON ANOTHER PRINCIPLE ALTOGETHER THAN MY WORDS, GOOD OR BAD, A PRINCIPLE NOT INVOLVING MY WORKS, BUT BASED ONLY ON THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR ME... GOD, IN JUSTIFYING ME, ACTED WHOLLY AND ONLY ON CHRIST'S BLOOD SHEDDING ON MY BEHALF.

.. FIRST, I KNOW THAT CHRIST IS IN HEAVEN BEFORE GOD FOR ME, AND THAT I STAND IN THE VALUE BEFORE GOD OF HIS FINISHED WORK; THAT GOD SEES ME NOWHERE ELSE BUT IN HIS DEAD, BURIED, AND RISEN CHRIST, AND THAT HIS FAVOR IS TOWARD ME IN CHRIST, AND IS LIMITLESS AND ETERNAL.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ME, MY ATTITUDE IS A DESIRE TO BE GUIDED INTO TRUTH, TO BE OBEDIENT THERETO, AND TO BE CHASTENED BY GOD MY FATHER IF DISOBEDIENT; TO LEARN TO PRAY IN THE SPIRIT, TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT, AND TO BE FILLED WITH A LOVE FOR THE SCRIPTURES AND FOR THE SAINTS AND FOR ALL MEN.

NONE OF THESE THINGS JUSTIFY ME! I HAD JUSTIFICATION FROM GOD AS A SINNER, NOT AS A SAINT! MY SAINTLINESS DOES NOT INCREASE IT, NOR PRAISE GOD, DO MY FAILURES DECREASE IT! (WILLIAM R. NEWELL, ROMANS [CHICAGO: GRACE PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1938] PP.129)

ROMANS 4

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH BRING GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- I. GOD COUNTED ABRAHAM'S FAITH AS RIGHTEOUSNESS 4:1 - 8
- II. GOD GAVE THE COVENANT SIGN AS AUTHENTICATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH 4:9 - 15
- III. THOSE WHO HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH ARE THE TRUE DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM 4:16 - 25

PAUL PRESENTS FIRST THE DOCTRINE OF CONDEMNATION, THEN THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. HE EXPLAINS THAT GOD JUSTIFIES UNGODLY PEOPLE THROUGH THE DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. IN CHAPTER 4, HE CONTINUES THIS EXPLANATION BY USING ILLUSTRATIONS. PAUL HAD SAID THAT A PERSON IS RIGHT WITH GOD NOT BY WORKING TO GAIN GOD'S APPROVAL, BUT RATHER BY BELIEVING GOD AND BY FAITH RECEIVING GOD'S GRACE.

I. GOD COUNTED ABRAHAM'S FAITH AS RIGHTEOUSNESS 4:1 - 8

PAUL KNOWS THE MAJOR OBJECTION TO JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS THAT THIS IS A NEW THEOLOGY AND THAT HE IS SETTING ASIDE THE LAW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT. PAUL ANSWERS THAT THIS IS NOT A NEW THEOLOGY, AND HE IS NOT SETTING ASIDE THE OLD TESTAMENT. PAUL ANSWERS THIS OBJECTION BY EXAMINING THE TWO MEN WHOM THE JEWS

ESPECIALLY GLORIFIED AND THOUGHT WERE SUPERIOR MEN. HE SELECTS ABRAHAM FIRST AND SHOWS THAT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, NOT BY WORKS WAS THE VERY BASIS OF ABRAHAM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. ABRAHAM WAS THE FATHER OF THE JEWISH NATION. IF ANYONE HAD RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD, IT WAS ABRAHAM. JESUS' PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS, MAKES THE POINT THAT IN REALITY LAZARUS WAS THE RICH MAN, FOR HE WAS IN THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM. WHEN THE JEWISH PEOPLE DESCRIBED HEAVEN, ETERNAL BLISS, THEY REFERRED TO IT AS THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM. THE QUESTION IS, HOW WAS ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED? PAUL REFERS BACK TO GENESIS 15:6. IT CLEARLY SAYS THAT ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND GOD COUNTED HIM OR RECKONED HIM RIGHTEOUSNESS. PAUL APPEALS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TO SHOW THAT ABRAHAM, THE FATHER AND THE HEAD OF THE JEWISH RACE WAS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH AND NOT BY WORKS. THE IDEA WAS DIFFICULT FOR JEWS TO COMPREHEND, AND IT STILL IS. WHEN PEOPLE DISCOVER THAT THE GREATEST SAINTS HAVE NO DIFFERENT STANDING BEFORE GOD THAN THOSE WHO ARE THE WEAKEST, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO ACCEPT. THERE WAS NO MERIT IN ABRAHAM. GOD MADE THE PROMISE, AND GOD FULFILLED IT. ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD. THERE WAS NO EFFORT ON ABRAHAM'S PART. HE SIMPLY HAD FAITH AND BELIEVED THAT GOD WOULD ACCOMPLISH WHAT HE HAD PROMISED.

PAUL IS VERY CLEAR THAT THE ONLY BASIS IN WHICH GOD DEALS WITH SINNERS IS BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

THE WORDS RECKON AND RECKONED OCCUR SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER. RECKON MEANS TO REGARD, TO IMPUTE, TO ACCOUNT. THUS JUSTIFICATION IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCREDITED TO THE BELIEVER'S ACCOUNT WHICH GIVES HIM RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD. THE IMPUTING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT A REWARD FOR FAITH. FAITH ALSO COMES FROM GOD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "RECKON," OR "IMPUTE," OR "CREDIT" IS THE WORD *οιδοσμαι*. THE WORD IS USED SOME 41 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. PAUL USES IT ABOUT 35 TIMES. THE WORD OCCURS ABOUT 19 TIMES IN THIS EPISTLE AND ABOUT 10 OR 11 TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER ALONE. SINCE THE WORD MEANS TO COMPUTE OR TO CALCULATE IT MEANS THAT GOD HAS MADE A SPIRITUAL CALCULATION AND HAS CREDITED THE PERSON WHO TRUSTS IN THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ARE BOUND TOGETHER IN OUR SALVATION, BECAUSE THE RESURRECTION AUTHENTICATES WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE. THESE LAST VERSES STATE THAT CHRIST DIED TO ATONE FOR OUR SINS AND THAT HE WAS RESURRECTED TO GAIN OUR JUSTIFICATION.

II. GOD GAVE THE COVENANT SIGN AS AUTHENTICATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH 4:9 - 15

VERSES 9- 12 DEMONSTRATE THAT RITES AND RITUALS OF MEN HAVE NO SAVING POWER. PAUL HAS SHOWN THAT ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH SOME 14 YEARS BEFORE HE WAS CIRCUMCISED. JEWISH CHRONOLOGY GIVES THIS AS 29 YEARS BEFORE HE WAS CIRCUMCISED. (LEON MORRIS, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WILLIAM B. EERDMANS, 1988] P. 202.) IT PROVES THAT IT WAS NOT THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION WHICH GAVE HIM HIS STANDING BEFORE GOD. ABRAHAM IS REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE. VERSE 11 GIVES THE MEANING OF CIRCUMCISION. GOD GAVE CIRCUMCISION AS A SIGN. A SIGN POINTS BEYOND ITSELF TO SOMETHING ELSE FAR MORE IMPORTANT. THE WORD SEAL IS ALSO USED HERE. A SEAL GIVE'S AUTHENTICATION TO SOMETHING AND IS A CERTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP. PAUL IS SAYING THAT CIRCUMCISION WAS A SIGN THAT POINTED TO WHAT ABRAHAM POSSESSED BEFORE HE WAS CIRCUMCISED. IT WAS GOD'S SEAL ON THE RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPARTED TO ABRAHAM BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH.

PAUL IN VERSES 13- 15 TURNS TO LAW AND LEGALISM. HE SAYS THAT ABRAHAM WAS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW. HE IMPLIES THAT THE LAW CAME FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AFTER ABRAHAM, DURING THE TIME OF MOSES. HE SHOWS THAT GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM WAS BASED ON GRACE NOT ON LAW. PAUL GOES ON TO SHOW THAT LAW AND GRACE ARE INCONGRUENT. LAW LEADS TO A KNOWLEDGE OF SIN, BUT IT CANNOT SAVE ANYONE FROM SIN. GRACE LEADS TO SALVATION WHICH COMES BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

III. THOSE WHO HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH ARE THE TRUE DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM 4:16-25

CHAPTER 4 FOCUSES ON THE TRUTH OF JUSTIFICATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. GRIFFIN THOMAS, IN HIS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS, GIVES AN EXCELLENT SUMMATION OF THIS CHAPTER BY GIVING SEVEN ASPECTS OF FAITH. HE SAYS WE ARE JUSTIFIED:

- 1. BY GOD AS A SOURCE, 8:33.**
- 2. BY GRACE AS THE SPRING, 3:24.**
- 3. BY THE BLOOD, AS THE GROUND, 4:7.**
- 4. BY THE RESURRECTION AS THE PROOF, 4:25,**
- 5. BY FAITH AS THE MEANS, 5:1,**
- 6. BY WORDS OF EVIDENCE, MATTHEW 12:37, AND**
- 7. BY WORKS AS THE FRUIT, JAMES 2:21. (THOMAS, OP. CIT., P.144.)**

IT IS THE COMBINATION OF ALL THESE ELEMENTS THAT GIVES THE COMPLETE BIBLICAL TRUTH OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THOMAS ALSO GIVES SEVEN ASPECTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

- 1. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH RECKONING, 11 TIMES, FOR EXAMPLE, VERSES 3-6, 8-11, AND 22-24. GOD PUTS OUR LORD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO OUR ACCOUNT.**
- 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH FAITH, 9 TIMES, VERSES 3, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 20, 22, AND 24. TRUST IS A CHANNEL BY WHICH GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST BECOMES OURS.**
- 3. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS APART FROM WORKS, 3 TIMES, VERSES 2, 5 AND 6. NOTHING MAN DOES PROVIDES**

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- 4. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SAID TO EXIST APART FROM CIRCUMCISION, 2 TIMES, VERSES 10 AND 11. SO NO OUTWARD ORDINANCE OR ECCLESIASTICAL RITE CAN POSSIBLY GUARANTEE RIGHTEOUSNESS. AT MOST, IT CAN ONLY PROVE OR SEAL WHAT ALREADY EXISTS, WHICH IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WHICH IS ALREADY THERE.**
- 5. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS APART FROM LAW, THREE TIMES. LAW COMMANDS RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT IT CANNOT COMPEL IT. LAW REQUIRES RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT CANNOT PROVIDE IT.**
- 6. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ACCORDING TO GRACE, VERSE 16. IT IS THE DIVINE STANDARD WHICH GOD PROVIDES THROUGH CHRIST.**
- 7. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PERSON OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, VERSE 25. IN HIM GOD HAS PROVIDED AND BESTOWS TO EVERY BELIEVER A PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS. (THOMAS, OP. CIT., PP. 144 - 145.) THESE POINTS SUMMARIZE THIS CHAPTER WELL.**

ROMANS 5

JUSTIFICATION COMES BY JESUS CHRIST

I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

5:1 - 11

II. CONDEMNATION COMES BY THE FALL, JUSTIFICATION COMES BY FAITH IN THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST 5:12 - 21

I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH 5:1 - 11

THE CHAPTER CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS. IN THE FIRST SECTION, VERSES 1 - 11, PAUL SHOWS THE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. PAUL HAS DEMONSTRATED IN CHAPTERS 1 - 2 THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE CONDEMNED, BOTH JEW AND GENTILE, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. IN CHAPTERS 3 AND 4, HE PROCLAIMED THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES THROUGH GOD'S GRACE BY FAITH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS, THAT JESUS WAS THE MERCY SEAT AND THAT JESUS WAS RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION. PAUL LOOKS IN HIS LITERARY REARVIEW MIRROR AND REACHES BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW RACE TO ABRAHAM TO ILLUSTRATE THIS TRUTH. PAUL SHOWS THAT GOD'S GRACE ALONE CALLED ABRAHAM AND THAT ABRAHAM'S FAITH, APART FROM CIRCUMCISION AND WORKS OF LAW, WAS COUNTED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. PAUL TEACHES THAT NOTHING CAN ALTER OR CHANGE JUSTIFICATION, THAT IT DEALS WITH THE FUTURE AS WELL AS THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

IN CHAPTER 5, PAUL SAYS THAT WE HAVE PEACE WITH

GOD THROUGH CHRIST. THE WORD TRANSLATED “THEREFORE” IN VERSE 1, MEANS THAT HE IS GOING TO SHOW THE RESULTS OR CONSEQUENCES OF ALL THAT HE HAS BEEN PRESENTING. THIS WORD “THEREFORE” IS A DIVISION MARKER AND HIGHLIGHTS CHAPTER FIVE. IN THE REMAINING PART OF ROMANS, PAUL IS GOING TO PRESENT THE LIFE OF HOLINESS THAT NATURALLY PROCEEDS FROM JUSTIFICATION. THE CERTAINTY OF JUSTIFICATION IS THE BASIC TRUTH OF THE FIRST PART OF CHAPTER 5. IN THIS SECTION HE AFFIRMS THAT TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE WILL NOT CAUSE JUSTIFICATION TO FAIL, FOR JUSTIFICATION DEPENDS ON THE GRACE OF GOD. THE FIRST WORD IN THIS VERSE IN GREEK IS δικαιωθεντες, AN AORIST PARTICIPLE MEANING “HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED” OR “HAVING BEEN DECLARED RIGHTEOUS,” MEANING THAT ONE HAS BEEN PUT IN THE STATE OF JUSTIFICATION OR THE STATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IN VERSE 1 THE PHRASE, “PEACE WE HAVE,” IN THE VARIOUS ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS HAS ONE LETTER DIFFERENT IN THE VERB TRANSLATED “HAVE.” IT MEANS THE TRANSLATION CAN BE EITHER, “WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD” OR “LET US HAVE PEACE WITH GOD,” DEPENDING ON WHICH MANUSCRIPT IS ACCEPTED. THE CONTEXT SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT IT SHOULD BE “WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.” IT INDICATES A POSITION DECLARED BY GOD. PAUL IS PRESENTING THE TRUTH THAT SINCE GOD LOVES US AND JUSTIFIED US WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, HE WILL DO EVEN MORE FOR US AS FRIENDS. PAUL’S STATEMENT ABOUT TRIBULATION SUGGESTS THAT PAUL HAD IN MIND NOT ONLY THE PEACE “FROM GOD,” BUT ALSO THE INNER TRANQUILITY THAT IS THE PEACE “OF GOD” WHICH COMES TO A

PERSON WHEN HE HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED. THIS PEACE COMES FROM JUSTIFICATION AND THE PERSON THEN MOVES MORE FULLY INTO SANCTIFICATION. THE CONNECTION OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION IS THE BELIEVER BEING SET APART TO GOD. THIS MAKES SANCTIFICATION FIRST OF ALL A POSITIONAL TRUTH.

IN THESE VERSES, 1 - 11, PAUL TELLS US:

1. THAT IN CHRIST THE BELIEVER HAS PEACE WITH GOD. PAUL MEANS BY PEACE A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BASED ON THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. THERE IS NO LONGER ENMITY WITH GOD, BECAUSE GOD HAS DEFEATED SIN AND DEATH. PEACE IS EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVING, ABIDING PRESENCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

2. THAT IN CHRIST, THE BELIEVER HAS ACCESS TO GOD'S GRACE. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "ACCESS" WAS USED OF BRINGING ANOTHER PERSON INTO THE PRESENCE OF ROYALTY. THE WORD WAS ALSO USED IN LATER TIMES ABOUT A SHIP THAT CAME INTO HARBOR TO ANCHOR. GOD'S GRACE IS THE HARBOR. WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE BLOW AND WE ARE CAUGHT IN THE GALE, GOD'S GRACE TAKES US INTO THE HARBOR.

3. THAT IN CHRIST WE REJOICE IN HOPE. THIS HOPE COMES FROM GOD'S VICTORY IN CHRIST. HOPE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "TRIBULATION" IN THIS SECTION MEANS PRESSURE OR "TO BE IN A TIGHT PLACE." PAUL SAYS THAT TROUBLES PRODUCE PATIENCE. HIS IDEA OF PATIENCE IS

NOT PASSIVE. THE WORD WAS USED OF AN ATHLETIC CONTESTS WHEN A MAN'S ENDURANCE GAVE HIM VICTORY. PATIENCE PRODUCES PROOF. OUR WORD DOCUMENT OR DOCUMENTED COMES FROM THIS WORD.

VERSE 5 SAYS WE HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD POURED OUT IN OUR HEARTS. FIRST, GOD EXPRESSED HIS LOVE WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS; CHRIST DIED FOR US. THIS EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE CAME BY THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CHRIST. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO MAN COMETH TO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." SECOND, THIS LOVE CAUSES US TO REJOICE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD. A JEWISH RABBI WAS SPEAKING TO A CLASS IN A PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL. THE RABBI MADE THIS DISTINCTION BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. HE SAID, "OUR RELIGION IS ONE OF THE HAND, WHILE YOURS IS ONE OF THE HEART. WE BELIEVE THAT WE CAN WORK WITH OUR HANDS TO COME INTO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD; WHEREAS, YOU BELIEVE THAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF." HE IS EXACTLY RIGHT. HE UNDERSTOOD THE TRUTH. HE JUST COULD NOT ACCEPT IT. WHY? BECAUSE HE COULD NOT ACCEPT JESUS AS THE CHRIST.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND ROMANS 5 IN ORDER TO COMPREHEND THE TRUTH OF ROMANS. SCHOLARS AND BIBLICAL STUDENTS HAVE TRIED TO DIVIDE THE BOOK OF ROMANS INTO VERY NEAT, CLEAR CUT SECTIONS. ROMANS IS A LETTER. PAUL WORKED IT OUT LOGICALLY IN HIS MIND, BUT IT IS NOT AS CLEAR CUT AS SIMPLE DIVISIONS IMPLY. ROMANS IS OFTEN DIVIDED DOCTRINALLY INTO CHAPTERS: CHAPTERS 1 - 4 JUSTIFICATION,

CHAPTERS 5-8 SANCTIFICATION, CHAPTERS 9-11 THE PROBLEMS OF THE JEWS AND CHAPTERS 12-16 SIMPLY INSTRUCTION AND EXHORTATIONS. THIS HELPS US UNDERSTAND ROMANS, BUT IT IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION SINCE THE CHAPTERS AND THE DOCTRINES ARE INTERRELATED.

LOOKING AHEAD WE SEE THAT CHAPTERS 6 AND 7 WILL DEAL WITH THE OBJECTIONS AND THE DIFFICULTIES THAT COME FROM BELIEVING IN JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

IN CHAPTER 6, PAUL WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH HAS NATURAL CONSEQUENCES AND DOES NOT CHANGE INTO SOMETHING DIFFERENT. THE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION ARE THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF FAITH. THE APOSTLE PAUL WANTS HIS READERS TO SEE THE CHARACTER, NATURE AND FINALITY OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. CHAPTER 6 BEGINS, "WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY? SHALL WE REMAIN IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY INCREASE? ABSOLUTELY NOT." THIS MUST HAVE BEEN A COMMON OBJECTION TO THE TEACHING OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. PAUL CAN NOT EVEN IMAGINE SUCH A THING. HE ANSWERS BY REFERRING TO BAPTISM AND DEATH. BAPTISM IS UNION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST. THE SAME WORD THAT IS TRANSLATED "BAPTIZE" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS USED OUTSIDE THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DESCRIBE SHIPS BEING SUNK AND PEOPLE BEING DROWNED. (MORRIS, OP. CIT., P. 246.) PAUL RELATES BAPTISM TO CHRIST'S DEATH. HE IS SHOWING THAT THOSE WHO ARE UNDER GRACE ARE NO LONGER AS THEY WERE, BUT ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IN THEIR POSITION BOTH TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD SIN. IN 5:12-21, PAUL DEALS WITH SANCTIFICATION, BUT HE IS STILL

STRESSING THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION. IN THESE VERSES HIS ARGUMENT IS THAT THE GREATEST PROOF OF JUSTIFICATION AND THE GUARANTEE OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST IS THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOW IN CHRIST JUST AS WE WERE IN ADAM. WE ARE INCORPORATED INTO CHRIST AS WE WERE INCORPORATED INTO ADAM. THIS GUARANTEES OUR SALVATION. THE PERSON JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IS THE PERSON WHO IS IN CHRIST AND BEING IN CHRIST HE/SHE HAS WHAT CHRIST OFFERS.

LOOKING AHEAD FURTHER, IN CHAPTER 7 PAUL WILL DEAL WITH ANOTHER OBJECTION TO JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. THIS OBJECTION RELATES TO THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW. HE WILL SHOW THAT THE LAW WAS NEVER MEANT TO BRING SALVATION, NEITHER WAS IT MEANT TO JUSTIFY OR TO SANCTIFY. THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL PEOPLE'S NEED FOR SALVATION AND THEIR INABILITY TO ACHIEVE IT. THEREFORE, CHAPTERS 6 AND 7 ARE SUPPORTING BLOCKS OF THE MAIN ARGUMENT. THESE CHAPTERS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. PAUL WILL RETURN IN CHAPTER 8 TO THE GREAT THEME HE HAD LEFT AT THE END OF CHAPTER 5. HE RESUMES HIS ARGUMENT WITH THE WORDS, "THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS." THIS IS THE THEME OF CHAPTER 5, VERSES 12-21. THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF CHAPTER 8 IS TO STATE IN CLEAR TERMS THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION.

THE END OF GOD'S GREAT PLAN IS GLORIFICATION. PAUL JUMPS FROM JUSTIFICATION TO GLORIFICATION IN CHAPTER 5. AND HE WILL DO IT AGAIN IN CHAPTER 8. THIS IS VERY STRONG PROOF THAT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH WILL PROCEED THROUGH

SANCTIFICATION INTO GLORIFICATION. IN CHAPTER 8, HE SAYS, "BUT WHOM HE PREDESTINATED, THESE HE ALSO CALLED; AND WHOM HE CALLED, THESE HE JUSTIFIED; BUT WHOM HE JUSTIFIED THESE HE ALSO GLORIFIED," 8:30. PAUL MOVES FROM THE FIRST STEP OF SALVATION WHICH IS JUSTIFICATION TO THE LAST STEP WHICH IS GLORIFICATION. THE POINT IS THAT THOSE WHO ARE IN SALVATION, THAT IS IN CHRIST, NATURALLY MOVE FROM JUSTIFICATION INTO THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION AND END IN GLORIFICATION.

II. CONDEMNATION COMES BY THE FALL, JUSTIFICATION COMES BY FAITH IN THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST 5:12-21

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO COMPREHEND THAT FROM ROMANS 1:1 - 5:11 PAUL USES THE PLURAL WORD SINS AND TEACHES ABOUT DELIVERANCE FROM THE PENALTY OF SINS. BUT STARTING IN 5:12 THROUGH 8:39 HE USES THE SINGULAR WORD SIN. IN THESE VERSES HE IS REFERRING TO THE SIN NATURE WHICH PRODUCES SINS.

IN THIS SECTION PAUL BEGINS TO DEAL WITH THE SIN NATURE IN HUMAN BEINGS. WE ARE SINNERS BY NATURE AND BY CHOICE. THIS GOES TO THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE DOCTRINES OF CONDEMNATION AND JUSTIFICATION. ADAM BRINGS SIN, CONDEMNATION AND DEATH. JESUS CHRIST BRINGS GRACE, JUSTIFICATION AND LIFE. A LITERAL WORD FOR WORD TRANSLATION FROM THE GREEK OF VERSE 12 IS, "THROUGH THIS (OR ON THIS ACCOUNT,) AS BY ONE MAN SIN INTO THE WORLD ENTERED, AND BY SIN DEATH, AND SO TO ALL MEN DEATH PASSED, FOR THAT ALL SINNED." THIS IS A CRUCIAL PASSAGE. PAUL IS CONNECTING THE TRUTH HE HAS JUST STATED WITH

THE TRUTH HE IS GOING TO PRESENT. THIS SECTION HAS PERPLEXED MANY SCHOLARS. THEREFORE, THERE ARE MANY INTERPRETATIONS OF THIS PASSAGE. ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT THIS IS AN INTRUSION OR INTERRUPTION OF PAUL'S THOUGHT. THIS SECTION, HOWEVER, IS NOT AN INTERRUPTION OF HIS ARGUMENT.

PAUL IS CONTINUALLY STRENGTHENING HIS ARGUMENT. IN THIS SECTION PAUL COMPARES ADAM AND JESUS AND SHOWS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THEM. IN THE FIRST CHAPTERS PAUL SHOWS THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE SINNED AND ALL ARE CONDEMNED BEFORE GOD. NOW PAUL SHOWS THAT SIN CAME THROUGH ONE MAN AND THAT ADAM WAS THE FEDERAL HEAD OF THE HUMAN RACE, BUT NOW JESUS IS THE HEAD OF A NEW RACE, THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

IN VERSES 12-21, PAUL DOES NOT USE THE PRONOUN WE. HE USES IT OFTEN BEFORE THIS, AND HE WILL USE IT OFTEN IN THE SECTION THAT FOLLOWS. PAUL SAYS IN THIS SECTION THAT ADAM'S SIN HAD DEVASTATING EFFECT ON ALL PEOPLE AND THAT JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS HAS TREMENDOUS EFFECT ON PEOPLE FOR THE GRACE OF GOD.

PAUL IS DEALING WITH THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN. THIS IS ONE OF THE MAIN PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE THAT SPEAKS ABOUT THE SINNER. IT TELLS WHY THE WORLD IS LIKE IT IS, AND WHY WE ARE SINNERS. PAUL GOES BACK TO THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF GENESIS AND BRINGS HISTORICAL REALITY TO THE FALL. MANY PEOPLE TODAY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEED OF SALVATION, BECAUSE THEY DENY THE FIRST THREE

CHAPTERS OF GENESIS. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THERE WAS A FALL, IF THERE IS NO FALL THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE HUMAN RACE IS CONDEMNED AND LOST. THEREFORE, THEY SEE NO NEED FOR JUSTIFICATION OR SALVATION.

THE SECTION TEACHES THAT GOD ALWAYS DEALS WITH HUMANS IN TERMS OF A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. IN CHRIST GOD ESTABLISHED THE BASIS OF THE NEW COVENANT. "IN CHRIST" IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PHRASE PAUL USES. PEOPLE ARE EITHER IN ADAM, OR THEY ARE IN CHRIST. IF YOU ARE IN CHRIST, YOU HAVE SECURITY AND ETERNAL SALVATION, LIFE EVERLASTING. IF YOU'RE IN ADAM, YOU HAVE DEATH EVERLASTING. IN THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF ROMANS WHEN PAUL STATES THAT THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES HAVE SINNED, THESE ARE ACTS OF TRANSGRESSION; THEY ARE SINS, PLURAL. THIS CONCEPT CONTINUES INTO CHAPTER 3. SINS, PLURAL, REFER TO THE THINGS PEOPLE DO. THEN IN CHAPTER 3, VERSES 9-10, BOTH THE JEWS AND GENTILES ARE IN SIN, SINGULAR. PAUL IS REFERRING TO AN INWARD OR INTERNAL CONDITION. FROM CHAPTER 3, VERSES 21 FORWARD, PAUL SHOWS HOW HE IS GOING TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF SINS AND SIN. THE BREAK REALLY OCCURS IN CHAPTER 5, VERSE 11. UP TO THAT POINT PAUL SPEAKS OF SINS, PLURAL; AFTER THAT HE SPEAKS OF SIN, SINGULAR. PAUL DEALS WITH SINS FIRST AND THEN WITH THE SIN NATURE, WHICH PRODUCES THE SINS.

TO SUMMARIZE OUR STUDY WE HAVE SEEN THAT THROUGH CHRIST OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM CONDEMNATION TO JUSTIFICATION. PAUL SAYS THIS IS PROOF

OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD THE FATHER, WAS ANGRY WITH MANKIND AND CHRIST CAME AND DIED ON THE CROSS TO APPEASE THIS ANGRY JUDGE. THIS IS A FALSE CONCEPT. IT WAS GOD THE FATHER WHO LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED. GOD DOES NOT LOVE US BECAUSE CHRIST DIED, CHRIST DIED BECAUSE GOD LOVES US. IN CHAPTERS 1 - 4, PAUL PRESENTED THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE CONDEMNED AND IN NEED OF SALVATION. ALL THROUGH THE SCRIPTURE, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS THIS THEME REOCCURS. PAUL PRESENTS THE RUIN OF MAN AND GOD'S REDEEMING SACRIFICE IN CHRIST. HE SHOWS THAT A PERSON'S ONLY SOLUTION IS GOD'S SOLUTION WHICH IS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

IN ROMANS 5, PAUL TEACHES THAT CHRIST DIED FOR US AS OUR SUBSTITUTE AND AS A PENALTY FOR OUR SINS. THEREFORE, GOD DECLARES US RIGHTEOUS. THIS IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO US. BY FAITH THIS TAKES US OUT OF ADAM AND PUTS US IN CHRIST. "I DIED WITH CHRIST" IS THE IDENTIFICATION. CHRIST DIED AND BROKE SIN'S POWER; THEN SANCTIFICATION CAN OCCUR IN US AND GOD DECLARES US RIGHTEOUS. THIS IS RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPARTED TO US, AND IT BECOMES A PART OF OUR LIVES BY THE SPIRIT.

IN CHAPTER 5, HE SHOWS THAT JUSTIFICATION GIVES US PEACE WITH GOD, ACCESS TO HIS GRACE AND THE HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD. THE ASSURANCE IS THAT WE ARE JOINED WITH CHRIST IN OUR SALVATION. THE APOSTLE'S POINT IS THAT THE MAGNIFICENT ACT OF JUSTIFICATION BRINGS MANY OTHER BLESSINGS.

ROMANS 6

DEATH TO LIFE

I. THE BELIEVER'S UNION WITH CHRIST BRINGS HIM FROM DEATH TO LIFE 6:1 - 14

II. THE BELIEVER IS DEAD TO SIN AND IS A SERVANT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 6:15 - 23

I. THE BELIEVER'S UNION WITH CHRIST BRINGS HIM FROM DEATH TO LIFE 6:1 - 14

THIS CHAPTER ANSWERS THE QUESTION, "HOW CAN I LIVE IN VICTORY OVER SIN?" PAUL'S ANSWER: IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. THE BELIEVER RECKONS THAT HE HAS BEEN SPIRITUALLY IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. SIN NO LONGER REIGNS OVER THE BELIEVER.

PAUL EMPLOYS THE IDEA OF BAPTISM TO SHOW UNION AND IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST. PAUL SAYS THE MOMENT A PERSON BELIEVES, HE IS JUSTIFIED. AND WHEN HE IS JUSTIFIED, HE IS DEAD TO THE REIGN OF SIN IN HIS LIFE. HE IS NO LONGER UNDER THE DOMINATION OF SIN. IMMEDIATELY THE OBJECTION IS RAISED, "BUT WE STILL SIN. WE STILL HAVE TEMPTATION." YES, BUT WE ARE DEAD TO THE RULE AND THE REIGN OF SIN IN OUR LIVES. PAUL IS CONCERNED ABOUT OUR POSITION IN CHRIST. HE SAYS THAT EVERY PERSON IS EITHER UNDER THE REIGN OF SIN OR ELSE HE IS UNDER THE REIGN OF GRACE. PAUL'S POINT IN CHAPTER 6 IS THAT WE ARE TO RECKON OR COUNT OURSELVES DEAD TO

SIN. HE SAID, "YOU ARE DEAD TO SIN." THAT IS A HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FACT. YOU DIED WHEN CHRIST DIED. R.G. LEE WAS IN THE HOLY LAND SEVERAL YEARS AGO. HE SAID TO THE LITTLE ARAB BOY, "TAKE ME UP TO GORDEN'S CALVARY." THE ARAB LAD TOOK HIM THERE. AS DR. LEE STOOD THERE TEARS BEGAN TO RUN DOWN HIS FACE. THE ARAB BOY ASKED, "SIR, HAVE YOU BEEN HERE BEFORE?" AND HE ANSWERED, "YES, I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE." AND THE BOY INQUIRED, "WERE YOU HERE LAST YEAR, SIR?" AND DR. LEE, THROUGH HIS TEARS SAID, "NO, SON, I WAS HERE TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AND I DIED TO SIN TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, ON THE CROSS OF JESUS." THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRUCIFIED WITH HIM. YOU ARE DEAD TO SIN. WHEN BELIEVERS REALLY COMPREHEND THIS IT CHANGES THE WAY THEY THINK, THE WAY THEY LIVE, AND THE WAY THEY READ THE WORD OF GOD.

BEING UNITED WITH CHRIST IN VERSES 5 AND 6 MEAN MUCH MORE THAN SALVATION FROM SIN. THE CROSS MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO REIGN WITH VICTORY AND POWER OVER LIFE. THIS COMES THROUGH THE RESURRECTION POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. THE WORD FLESH OCCURS MANY TIMES IN THIS CHAPTERS. IT DOES NOT MEAN THE SKIN OR THE MEAT THAT IS UNDER THE SKIN. IT MEANS HUMAN NATURE THAT IS SEPARATED FROM GOD'S POWER IN THE PERSON'S LIFE. NO BELIEVER ON EARTH CAN PLEASE GOD IN THE FLESH, NO MATTER HOW HE TRIES. CHRISTIAN LIVING IS TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS FROM THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, NOT FROM THE OLD NATURE.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THERE ARE ELEVEN VERBS IN THE

AORIST TENSE IN THIS SECTION. THE AORIST TENSE IS USED OF PUNCTILIAR ACTION COMPLETED IN THE PAST. THESE VERBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

VERSE 2, WE DIED TO SIN.

VERSE 3, WE WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH. (USED TWICE)

VERSE 4, WE WERE BURIED WITH HIM INTO DEATH.

VERSE 4, WE WERE RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD.

VERSE 6, OUR OLD SELF WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM.

VERSE 7, THE ONE WHO DIED, I.E. CHRIST.

VERSE 8, WE DIED WITH CHRIST.

VERSE 9, CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

VERSE 11, HE DIED, USED OF CHRIST. (USED TWICE)

(W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, SALVATION AND BEHAVIOR [GRAND RAPIDS, MI: KREGEL PUBLICATIONS] P. 33.)

PAUL ASKS, “WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?” HE IS ASKING ABOUT OUR RESPONSE TO THESE GREAT TRUTHS. PAUL IS SHOWING HOW JUSTIFICATION IS TO BE LIVED OUT IN LIFE. THE LIVING OUT OF JUSTIFICATION IS SANCTIFICATION.

VERSES 12 - 14 ARE PICTURES OF A KING AND A SOLDIER EQUIPPED WITH WEAPONS USED IN FIGHTING FOR HIS KING. THE WORD *οπαλ* IS THE WORD FOR WEAPONS.

THE SECOND QUESTION PAUL ADDRESSES IS CONCERNING THE LAW. WHY DID GOD GIVE THE LAW IF IT COULD NOT GIVE A PERSON A RIGHT STANDING BEFORE HIM AND BRING THE PERSON INTO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? THIS QUESTION

IS VERY MUCH ALIVE TODAY EXCEPT WITH A DIFFERENT SLANT. IN OUR SOCIETY AND MUCH OF THE CHURCH THERE IS NOT AS MUCH LEGALISTIC INSISTENCE TO OBEY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS THERE IS FOR A PERSON TO DO GOOD DEEDS. THE ASSUMPTION IS THAT SURELY GOOD DEEDS OR KEEPING THE LAW WILL BRING THE PERSON INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

II. THE BELIEVER IS DEAD TO SIN AND IS A SERVANT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 6:15 - 23

IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL IS DEALING WITH THE HERESY CALLED ANTINOMIANISM. THE LOGIC IN THIS HERESY IS THE MORE YOU SIN THE MORE GRACE IS INCREASED. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION OF THIS CONCEPT IS THAT YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. THE KEY CONCEPT TO REFUTE THIS HERESY IS IN PAUL'S PHRASE "IN CHRIST." IF ONE IS NOT IN CHRIST, THEN HE HAS NEVER BEEN JUSTIFIED, BECAUSE JUSTIFICATION PUTS HIM IN CHRIST. THESE PEOPLE WERE SAYING, JUST LIKE PEOPLE TODAY, GRACE ALLOWS PEOPLE TO GO ON IN GROSS SIN. PAUL IS HORRIFIED THAT SUCH THOUGHTS WOULD EVEN ENTER THEIR MINDS. THIS SHABBY THINKING SHOWS THAT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND UNION WITH CHRIST AND MAY NEVER HAVE EXPERIENCED IT. PAUL SAID, "HOW, IF WE ARE DEAD TO SIN, CAN WE LIVE ANY LONGER IN IT?"

IN THIS CHAPTER AND THE NEXT (CHAPTER 7) PAUL PRESENTS THREE COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. THE FIRST OBJECTION IS THAT DECLARING A PERSON JUSTIFIED ENCOURAGES SIN. PAUL ANSWERS THAT OBJECTION IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS CHAPTER.

THE SECOND OBJECTION IS THAT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALLOWS SIN. HE ANSWERS THAT OBJECTION IN THE LAST PART OF THIS CHAPTER AND IN THE FIRST PART OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. THE THIRD OBJECTION IS THAT IT MAKES THE LAW SINFUL OR EVIL. PAUL ANSWERS THAT OBJECTION AT THE END OF CHAPTER 7. THE COMMON ERROR IN THESE OBJECTIONS AND IN MOST CRITICISMS OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS THE FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PAUL MEANS BY FAITH. IS FAITH JUST MENTAL ASSENT TO THEOLOGICAL PROPOSITIONS? PAUL ANSWERS THAT THE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS UNION WITH CHRIST, BEING IN CHRIST, BEING CRUCIFIED WITH HIM. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH CANNOT ENCOURAGE SIN. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH RESULTS IN SANCTIFICATION. THE TWO MAY BE SEPARATED IN THOUGHT, BUT THEY COME TOGETHER IN EXPERIENCE. IF THEY DO NOT COME TOGETHER IN EXPERIENCE, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG AT THE BEGINNING. WHEN PAUL TALKS ABOUT BAPTISM HE IS NOT EMPHASIZING THE RITE OR THE CEREMONY, RATHER HE IS EMPHASIZING THE INTERNAL REALITY. IT IS WHAT HAPPENS FROM THE INSIDE OUT AND NOT FROM THE OUTSIDE IN.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH HAS ALWAYS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD, MISINTERPRETED AND PERVERTED. PAUL FACED THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF GRACE EVERY DAY OF HIS LIFE.

AFTER A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED HE FACES A DIFFERENT SET OF PROBLEMS THAN HE FACED BEFORE HE WAS JUSTIFIED. ONE PROBLEM IS, HOW TO GAIN VICTORY OVER THE OLD NATURE. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS, HOW TO PLEASE GOD. IT IS NOT

ENOUGH TO KNOW OUR POSITION IN CHRIST, WE HAVE TO APPROPRIATE IT IN OUR LIVES. WE HAVE TO RECKON IT TO BE TRUE. RECKONING IS SIMPLY THE STEP OF FAITH WHEN A PERSON AFFIRMS, "WHAT GOD SAYS IS TRUE IN MY LIFE. I AM GOING TO BELIEVE IT AND DO IT." RECKONING IS FAITH ACTING. IN THE SCRIPTURE, FAITH AND BELIEF ARE ACTION WORDS. IN ENGLISH, BELIEF IS ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL ASSENT. I READ SOMETHING AND SAY, "OH, YES, I BELIEVE THAT." I MENTALLY ACCEPT IT. FAITH, ON THE OTHER HAND MEANS I TRUST IN SOMETHING. BUT TO BELIEVE AND TO HAVE FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANS TO HAVE A LIFE RESPONSE TO, TO RELY UPON, TO TRUST IN, TO PUT CONFIDENCE IN. GOD WANTS US TO LIVE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVES. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW OR EVEN RECKON IT, WE HAVE TO TAKE THE FINAL STEP OF YIELDING THE MEMBERS OF OUR BODY TO CHRIST. THE CHRISTIAN WHO YIELDS HIMSELF TO SIN IS GOING TO COMMIT SIN AND REAP THE SORROWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING LIKE A SLAVE INSTEAD OF LIKE A KING. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT CHRIST HAS DIED FOR ME. I MUST ALSO KNOW THAT I DIED THROUGH CHRIST.

ROMANS 7

LIVING IN ONE'S OWN POWER BRINGS DEFEAT

- I. THE BELIEVER IN UNION WITH CHRIST IS FREE FROM THE LAW 7:1 - 6
- II. THE BELIEVER IN HIS OWN POWER WILL BE DEFEATED BY THE LAW 7:7 - 25

IF YOU READ CHAPTER 7 IN THE KING JAMES VERSION ALSO READ IT IN ANOTHER TRANSLATION, PERHAPS THE THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD. SOME PARAPHRASES ARE ALSO HELPFUL. EVEN BETTER, IF YOU KNOW GREEK, REVIEW IT.

ROMANS 6 COULD BE CALLED OUR NEW POSITION IN CHRIST.

ROMANS 7 COULD BE CALLED OUR NEW PROBLEM IN THE FLESH.

ROMANS 8 COULD BE CALLED OUR NEW POWER IN THE SPIRIT.

IN THESE THREE CHAPTERS PAUL ILLUSTRATES THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO CHRIST WITH MENTAL PICTURES: 1. A KING AND HIS SOLDIER, 6:12 - 14. 2. A MASTER AND THE SERVANT, 6:15 - 23. 3. A MARRIAGE BOND BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND WIFE, 7:1 - 6.

IN CHAPTER 7, PAUL CONTINUES WITH THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND EXPLAINS HOW THE JUSTIFIED BELIEVER RELATES TO THE LAW AND SIN. THE LAW NO LONGER REIGNS OVER THE BELIEVER.

I. THE BELIEVER IN UNION WITH CHRIST IS FREE FROM THE LAW 7:1 - 6

VERSES 1 - 6 PRESENT THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE BOND BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND CHRIST. THE WIFE REPRESENTS THE PERSON OR THE PERMANENT PART OF THE PERSONALITY THAT GIVES IDENTITY. THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE YOU ARE CONTINUALLY CHANGING. YET YOU ARE THE SAME PERSON. YOU HAVE A HISTORY AND A DESTINY.

THE FIRST HUSBAND REPRESENTS THE OLD MAN OR THE SPIRITUAL STATE BEFORE CONVERSION OR REGENERATION. THE DEATH OF THE HUSBAND REPRESENTS THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE OLD NATURE. THE PERSON BECOMES DEAD TO HIS OLD NATURE. THE POINT IS THAT DEATH ENDS THE BOND.

THE NEW MARRIAGE IS THE UNION OF THE NEW NATURE WITH CHRIST. THE LAW DOES NOT DIE. SIN DOES NOT DIE. BUT THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION DIES TO BOTH.

II. THE BELIEVER IN HIS OWN POWER WILL BE DEFEATED BY THE LAW 7:7-25

VERSES 7-25 GIVES AN UNDERSTANDING OF MANKIND. A KEY TO THESE VERSES IS I COR. 2:14 AND 3:1. IN THESE VERSES THERE ARE THREE CLASSIFICATIONS OF PEOPLE:

- 1. THE NATURAL PERSON, ψυχικός. THE NATURAL PERSON IS UNREGENERATE, 7:7-13**
- 2. THE CARNAL PERSON, σαρκικός. THE CARNAL PERSON IS REGENERATE, BUT NOT YIELDED TO GOD, 7:14-25**

3. THE SPIRITUAL PERSON, πνευματικός. THE SPIRITUAL PERSON IS REGENERATE AND JUSTIFIED BY GOD AND YIELDED TO HIM, 8:1 - 17

IN VERSES 7 - 13, PAUL TELLS ABOUT HIMSELF IN THE PAST. SIXTEEN TIMES THE VERB TENSES IN THESE VERSES ARE PAST TENSE. THIS IS A PAST EXPERIENCE NOT A PRESENT EXPERIENCE. IN THESE VERSES HE SAYS THAT WHEN HE WAS A CHILD HE DID NOT KNOW SIN TO BE SIN. THEN HE LEARNED THE LAW, AND IT REVEALED SIN TO HIM. HE BECAME DEAD IN SIN. NO GODLY LIFE WAS IN HIM. THE LAW, HOWEVER, IS JUST AND GOOD BECAUSE IT REVEALS THE HOLINESS GOD WANTS. IT ALSO REVEALS HOW HOPELESS AND POWERLESS A PERSON IS IN HIS OWN POWER TO LIVE HOLY BEFORE GOD.

AN EXCELLENT WAY TO COMPREHEND THIS IS:

- 1. THE LAW REVEALED THE FACT OF SIN, VERSE 7. PAUL SHOWS OR DESCRIBES HIS EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD.**
- 2. THE LAW WAKES UP SIN IN US. IT EXPOSES OUR TRUE NATURE, AND THE DEPTHS OF SIN, VERSE 8.**
- 3. THE LAW REVEALS SIN'S POWER, VERSE 9.**
- 4. THE LAW REVEALS SIN'S DECEPTION, VERSE 11.**
- 5. THE LAW REVEALS SIN'S CONSEQUENCES, VERSE 10-11.**
- 6. THE LAW BROUGHT SIN TO US LOGICALLY, VERSE 12 AND 18. THE LAW WAS TO SHOW THE SINNER HIS HELPLESSNESS AND BRING HIM TO CHRIST.**

IN VERSES 14 - 25, THE VERB TENSES ARE PRESENT NOT PAST AS THEY WERE IN VERSES 1 - 13. THESE VERSES REFER

TO THE CARNAL STATE. I, I, I, IS USED MANY TIME IN THIS SECTION. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT MENTIONED EVEN ONCE IN THIS SECTION. THIS SHOWS THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE BELIEVER IN THE CARNAL STATE TO DO WHAT HE KNOWS IS RIGHT AND POWERLESS TO KEEP FROM DOING WHAT IS WRONG. WHY IS THIS TRUE? 1. THE TRUTH OF ROMANS 6 IS NOT AN EXPERIENCED REALITY, THAT IN CHRIST'S DEATH HE DIED AND IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION HE ROSE TO NEW LIFE WITH HIM, 2. THE OLD NATURE IS NOT RECKONED TO BE DEAD, AND 3. THE BELIEVER IS NOT UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN THIS CHAPTER HE SHOWS THE BELIEVER THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE FLESH TO FULFILL THE LAW. PAUL CONFRONTS THE PROBLEM OF HOW THE BELIEVER CAN DO GOOD WHEN HE HAS A SINFUL NATURE. PAUL DEALS NOT WITH THE SINS WE COMMIT, BUT THE SIN TO WHICH WE ARE COMMITTED. PAUL IS SHOWING THE POWER OF SIN IN THE FLESH. THE FLESH DOES NOT CHANGE. PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN BELIEVERS FOR TWENTY YEARS LOOK INSIDE THEMSELVES AND WONDER WHY THEY ARE NOT GETTING BETTER. THE REASON IS THEY ARE LOOKING AT THAT OLD NATURE. THEY GET DISCOURAGED, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW THAT OLD NATURE WILL NOT CHANGE. GOD SAYS NOTHING GOOD ABOUT IT. IT IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE. GOD DOES NOT REFORM THE OLD NATURE. INSTEAD HE PUTS A NEW NATURE IN MAN. SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL AND LADY ASTOR WERE POLITICAL ENEMIES. ONCE SHE SAW HIM AT A PARTY AND INTENDED TO EMBARRASS HIM. SHE SAW THAT HE HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK. SO FROM ACROSS THE ROOM, SHE CALLED, "SIR WINSTON, YOU ARE DRUNK. WHAT'S MORE YOU ARE VERY DRUNK." ALL THE

PEOPLE PRESENT HEARD HER AND LOOKED AT WINSTON CHURCHILL. HE LOOKED BACK AT HER AND SAID, "LADY ASTOR, YOU ARE UGLY. WHAT'S MORE, YOU ARE VERY UGLY. WHAT'S MORE, I WILL BE SOBER TOMORROW." THAT IS THE WAY IT IS WITH THE OLD NATURE. IT DOES NOT CHANGE TOMORROW. IT NEVER CHANGES. THE FLESH, THE OLD NATURE, DOES NOT CHANGE; IT IS LIKE UGLY. IT CAN NOT IMPROVE. THE LAW CANNOT DELIVER US FROM THE FLESH.

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH THE CONFLICTING FORCES THAT ARE CONTENDING WITHIN THE BELIEVER. THIS CONFLICT BETWEEN THE OLD NATURE AND THE NEW IS NOT JUST A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF RIGHT AND WRONG. IT IS RATHER A BATTLE AGAINST THE OLD DESIRES AND HABITS. IT IS A BATTLE IN WHICH HOPELESS DEFEAT IS TURNED INTO VICTORY BY THE TRIUMPHANT POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. PAUL SHOWS THAT LAW IS GOOD IN ITS OWN SPHERE, FOR IT HAS A PURPOSE. IT IS DESIGNED TO REVEAL SIN. PAUL MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT THE LAW CAN NOT GIVE RELIEF TO THE PERSON SUFFERING UNDER THE CONVICTION OF SIN, NOR CAN IT HELP IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE POWER OF SIN. PAUL STATES THAT THERE IS A DISTRESSING LAW OF HUMAN NATURE. THE HUMAN WANTS TO DO WRONG EVEN WHEN HE HAS A KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHT AND IS COMMANDED TO OBEY. THAT IS NO FAULT OR DEFECT OF THE LAW. IT IS SIMPLY THE EFFECT OF THE FALL. THE LAW REVEALS SIN, BUT IT DOES NOT DELIVER FROM SIN. THE PERSON HAS TO CAST HIMSELF UPON THE SAVING POWER OF CHRIST. THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE WEAKNESS OF HUMAN NATURE AND THE DECEPTION THAT SOMEHOW THE SELF, THE HUMAN NATURE, CAN DO SOMETHING THAT WILL PLEASE GOD. PAUL SUMMARIZES THIS MESSAGE AT

THE END OF THIS SECTION AND SAYS THAT VICTORY IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

WE ALL REALIZE THAT OUR FLESHLY NATURE IS POWERFUL AND EXERTS TREMENDOUS PRESSURE AGAINST US. THE QUESTION THEN IS, HOW CAN I HAVE VICTORY OVER THE FLESH? ROMANS 7 MAKES US REALIZE THAT THE FLESH GENERATES EVIL. MOST BELIEVERS HAVE HIGH STANDARDS AND IDEALS. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE STANDARDS MAKES THEM MORE SPIRITUAL. THEY OBEY RULES RIGOROUSLY, IN THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH. THE FLESH LOVES TO BE DEDICATED AND CONSECRATED; AND, THEREFORE, LOOK SPIRITUAL AND SANCTIFIED. THIS CHAPTER SHOWS THAT THE FLESH ATTEMPTS TO GENERATE GOOD. IT SHOWS THAT WE ARE AT ENMITY WITH GOD. ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT FAIRLY WELL - EDUCATED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD ASK IS, "IS MAN GOOD OR BAD?" I ALWAYS ANSWER WITH THIS QUESTION, "FROM WHOSE POINT OF VIEW? YOUR MOTHER THINKS YOU'RE PERFECT, BUT YOUR WIFE KNOWS BETTER." ONE YOUNG PREACHER WAS TRYING TO MAKE THE POINT THAT NO ONE IS PERFECT AND EVERYONE HAS SINNED. HE ASKED, "IS THERE ANYONE HERE WHO IS PERFECT? IF THERE IS, PLEASE STAND UP." AN OLD MAN STOOD. THINKING THE OLD MAN MISUNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION, HE ASKED, "SIR, DID YOU UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION?" AND THE OLD MAN SAID, "YES, SON, I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION." "DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT YOU'RE PERFECT? THAT YOU'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING WRONG?" "OH, NO, SON. I'M JUST STANDING ON BEHALF OF MY WIFE'S FIRST HUSBAND!"

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FALLEN MAN, HE IS GOOD; BUT

FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE OF INFINITE PERFECTION WITHOUT SIN, THE FLESH IS NO GOOD. THE PROBLEM, IN ROMANS 7, THEN IS HOW CAN I LIVE SO AS TO PLEASE GOD WHEN EVERYTHING I DO, EVEN THE GOOD THINGS ARE TAINTED BY THE OLD MAN, THE FLESH. THIS PASSAGE DESCRIBES BOTH THE UNREGENERATE AND THE REGENERATE PERSON WHO IS TRYING TO GAIN RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD IN HIS OWN POWER. HOW DO I DO GOOD IN SPITE OF MY SINFUL NATURE? THE SOLUTION: KNOWING I DIED TO THE LAW, ADMITTING THAT I CANNOT PLEASE GOD IN THE FLESH AND YIELDING TO THE INDWELLING SPIRIT OF GOD. THAT IS THE ANSWER.

HERE IS WHAT OFTEN HAPPENS OFTEN IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE. HE IS SAVED. THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS IN HIS HEART. HE KNOWS THAT JESUS DIED TO TAKE AWAY HIS SINS. HE BEGINS TO THINK ABOUT WHAT HE CAN DO FOR GOD, BECAUSE GOD HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR HIM. THE LAW SAYS, "I CAN DO SOMETHING FOR GOD." GRACE SAYS, "HE DOES EVERYTHING FOR ME." THE NEW CHRISTIAN IS SO HAPPY. THEN WITHOUT WARNING, HE LOOSES HIS TEMPER. HIS TEMPER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PROBLEM. HE SAYS, "I AM DETERMINED I WILL NOT LOSE MY TEMPER." GUESS WHAT? HE LOSES IT! HIS SIN NATURE, IS THE PROBLEM. PAUL TELLS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE. MANY SCHOLARS THINK PAUL IS WRITING ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE BEFORE HE WAS SAVED. OTHER EQUALLY COMPETENT SCHOLARS BELIEVE THIS IS AFTER HIS CONVERSION. THE QUESTION IS, WHEN AND WHERE DOES PAUL'S LIFE AND THIS SCRIPTURE OCCUR. SOME THINK THIS WAS DURING THE THREE DAYS OF BLINDNESS AFTER THE DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE. SOME THINK IT IS DURING THE THREE YEARS IN ARABIA. THIS IS A

POTENTIAL EXPERIENCE FOR ANY BELIEVER OR UNBELIEVER'S WHEN THE SIN NATURE IS PRESENT, AND THE BELIEVER RELIES ON HIS OWN RESOURCES. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IS THAT THE UNBELIEVER HAS NO CHOICE. HE DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER OF GOD WITHIN HIM.

IN VERSES 14-17, PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT THE INABILITY TO OVERCOME EVIL IN THE FLESH. HE USES THE WORD CARNAL IN VERSE 14. PAUL USES CARNAL WHEN HE SPEAKS OF A BELIEVER LIVING UNDER THE POWER OF THE FLESH. WHEN HE SPEAKS OF AN UNREGENERATE PERSON, HE USES THE WORD NATURAL MAN. VERSE 14 HAS THE PHRASE "SOLD UNDER SIN." IT IS A SLAVE MARKET TERM. IN THIS PASSAGE PAUL IS SAVED, JUSTIFIED, AND THEREFORE, RIGHT BEFORE GOD. BUT HE FINDS THAT HE HAS A NATURE IN HIM THAT IS AGAINST GOD. PAUL IS WRITING ABOUT A STRUGGLE THAT HE HAS AGAINST THE INDWELLING SIN IN HIM.

THE CLUE TO THE MEANING OF THIS CHAPTER IS IN THE USE OF THE PRONOUN, "I." "I" OCCURS THIRTY TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS BARELY SPOKEN OF AT ALL. IN CHAPTER EIGHT, THE WORD "I" IS ABSENT AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS REFERRED TO MANY TIMES. CHAPTER 7 DEPENDS UPON "I," "I," "I." CHAPTER 8 DEPENDS UPON THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN VERSE 17, PAUL DISCLOSES PROFOUND DISCOVERIES THAT HE HAS MADE ABOUT HIMSELF. HE DISCOVERS THE POWER OF THE SIN NATURE DWELLING IN HIM.

THE OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, AND WE ARE FEDERALLY IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST. THE OLD MAN IS COUNTED

AS CRUCIFIED. WHEN THE PERSON WAS ALIVE, HE WAS ON THE CROSS BEING CRUCIFIED. WHEN HE DIED THEY TOOK HIM DOWN FROM THE CROSS. WE ARE TO KEEP THE OLD NATURE ON THE CROSS. IN VERSE 18, HE SAYS NO GOOD DWELLS IN THE FLESH. IN VERSE 19, HE EMPHASIZES HIS INABILITY TO DO GOOD BECAUSE OF THE FLESH. THIS VERSE FOCUSES UPON THE POWERLESSNESS IN US. VERSE 21 TALKS ABOUT THE EVIL THAT IS PRESENT. IN VERSES 22 - 23, HE DESIRES TO DO GOOD, BUT THE LAW OF SIN IN HIS FALLEN NATURE BRINGS DEFEAT.

IN VERSE 24, THE GREEK WORD, *ταλαιπωρος*, TRANSLATED "WRETCHED," INDICATES A MAN EXHAUSTED AFTER A BATTLE. THIS EXHAUSTING STRUGGLE LEAVES HIM DESPERATE. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID, IT IS REPORTED THAT NEAR TARSUS, WHERE PAUL WAS BORN, A TRIBE OF PEOPLE LIVED WHO HAD A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER. THEY FASTENED THE BODY OF THE DEAD VICTIM TO THE MURDERER WITH SINEWS SO THE DEAD BODY WOULD EAT INTO THE LIVING PERSON UNTIL HE DIED. PAUL'S QUESTION: "WHO WILL DELIVER ME FROM THIS BODY OF DEATH?" MAY REFER TO SUCH A PRACTICE. HE HAS TRIED EVERYTHING IN HIS OWN POWER UNTIL HE REACHES COMPLETE HELPLESSNESS AND UTTER FAILURE. THEN GOD CAN HELP. IF ONLY BELIEVERS COULD REACH THE PLACE OF DEFEAT AND CRY, "LORD, I CANNOT PLEASE YOU IN MY FLESH." THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT WORK THROUGH THE FLESH. HE WORKS THROUGH THE REGENERATE NATURE.

VERSE 25 SAYS, "I THANK GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." IN THIS PHRASE IS A DESCRIPTION OF WHO JESUS IS

AND WHAT HIS WORK IS; JESUS MEANS THE SAVIOR, CHRIST MEANS THE SANCTIFIER AND THE ANOINTED OF GOD AND LORD MEANS SOVEREIGN LORD OF ALL.

TO BE UNDER THE LAW MEANS, I MUST DO SOMETHING FOR GOD. TO BE UNDER GRACE MEANS THAT GOD DOES EVERYTHING FOR ME. THE LAW DEALS WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS. THE SPIRIT OF GOD DEALS WITH REALITY WITHIN. THE LAW STARTS WITH OUTWARD THINGS FIRST AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD STARTS WITHIN FIRST.

THE REASON THE BELIEVER CANNOT MAKE HIMSELF HOLY BY OBEYING THE LAW IS BECAUSE THE OLD NATURE CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY THE LAW. THE OLD NATURE HAS NO POWER TO OBEY THE LAW.

CHAPTER SEVEN COULD BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE MARRIAGE BOND.**
 - A. WE DIED TO THE LAW, 7:4.**
 - B. WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE LAW, BECAUSE OUR DEATH WITH CHRIST MEANS THE LAW NO LONGER HAS AUTHORITY OVER US.**
- 2. WHAT THE LAW DOES:**
 - A. IT REVEALS SIN.**
 - B. IT STIRS UP SIN.**
 - C. IT BECOMES AN INSTRUMENT OF SIN.**
 - D. IT SHOWS THE TRUE NATURE OF SIN.**
- 3. WHAT THE LAW CANNOT DO.**

- A. IT CANNOT GIVE POWER TO CHANGE THE PERSON.**
 - B. IT CANNOT GIVE THE POWER TO DO GOOD.**
 - C. IT CANNOT SET FREE FROM SIN.**
- 4. WHAT PAUL LEARNED OF SIN.**
- A. THAT SIN DWELLS IN HIM.**
 - B. THAT HE IS POWERLESS AGAINST SIN.**
 - C. THAT THE SINFUL AND FLESHLY NATURE IS NOT THE REAL SELF. IT IS THE OLD SELF BUT NOT THE NEW SELF.**
 - D. THAT DELIVERANCE COMES THROUGH OUR OLD JESUS CHRIST.**
 - E. THAT GOD DOES NOT WANT TO CHANGE A LIFE BUT RATHER TO GIVE US AN EXCHANGED LIFE. WE MEET PEOPLE EVERY DAY WHO WANT TO LIVE A CHANGED LIFE. GOD WANTS TO GIVE THEM AN EXCHANGED LIFE. GOD WANTS US IN THE OLD NATURE TO GET WEAKER AND WEAKER AND GET STRONGER AND STRONGER IN THE NEW NATURE.**

ROMANS 8

LIVING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS A LIFE OF HOLINESS

- I. THE BELIEVER HAS THE POWER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE A HOLY LIFE 8:1 - 11**
- II. THE BELIEVER HAS ASSURANCE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT HE IS A CHILD OF GOD 8:12- 17**
- III. THE BELIEVER, AS A CHILD OF GOD, HAS A HOPE OF AN INHERITANCE AS A SON OF GOD 8:18- 25**
- IV. GOD IS AT WORK IN ALL THINGS TO CONFORM THE BELIEVER TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST 8:26- 30**

ROMANS 7 ASKS THE QUESTION, “WHO SHALL DELIVER US FROM SIN AND DEATH?” ROMANS 8 ANSWERS THE QUESTION.

CHAPTER 8 COULD ALSO BE TITLED, “LIFE IN THE SPIRIT.” IN THIS CHAPTER TWO WORDS OCCUR VERY FREQUENTLY. ONE IS THE WORD “FLESH”, OR “SARKS” IN GREEK, AND THE OTHER WORD IS “SPIRIT,” “PENUMA.” PAUL USES THE WORD FLESH IN SEVERAL WAYS IN HIS WRITING. SOMETIMES HE LITERALLY MEANS FLESH. SOMETIMES HE MEANS FROM THE HUMAN PERSPECTIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, ABRAHAM IS CALLED THE FORE-FATHER ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. USUALLY PAUL MEANS HUMAN NATURE APART FROM GOD. WHEN HE USES IT THIS WAY HE DOES NOT MEAN THE HUMAN BODY. HE INCLUDES IN THE MEANING THE SIN NATURE AND ALL THE SINS OF MAN. THE

WORD "SPIRIT" IN HEBREW IS THE SAME WORD AS WIND OR BREATH. PAUL HAD BEEN A JEWISH RABBI, AND THOUGHT LIKE A HEBREW. THIS HEBREW WORD HAS THE IDEA THAT THIS IS MORE THAN HUMAN, IT IS FROM GOD.

THIS CHAPTER CENTERS SEVERAL GREAT REALITIES. ONE IS THE POWER GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER TO LIVE HOLY. THE SECOND IS THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL HOPE. THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES HOLINESS POSSIBLE. GOD DEMANDS HOLINESS FROM HIS PEOPLE, AND HE PROVIDES THE POWER TO PRODUCE IT. THE FIRST SENTENCE IN THIS CHAPTER LOOKS BACK TO WHAT PAUL HAS SAID PREVIOUSLY. "THERE IS THEREFORE NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS." WHEN PAUL USES THE WORD "THEREFORE" WE SHOULD LOOK TO SEE WHAT IT IS THERE FOR. IN THIS CASE, "THEREFORE" REFERS BACK TO CHAPTER 5 AND UNITY IN CHRIST. THIS IS THE REASON THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION. THIS IS FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF PAST SINS, THE SINFUL NATURE AND THE ASSURANCE THAT ONE CAN OVERCOME SIN IN THE PRESENT. MANY CHRISTIANS CONSTANTLY BATTLE GUILT, BECAUSE SATAN USES THEIR SINFUL NATURE TO ACCUSE THEM. "THEREFORE, NO CONDEMNATION" MEANS THAT THE BELIEVER IS FREE TO BE WHO GOD WANTS HIM TO BE. THE PHRASE, "WE WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT" IS NOT IN THE BEST MANUSCRIPTS. BUT THE IDEA IS IMPLIED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS. PAUL EXPLAINS WHY THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE. IN CHAPTER 5, PAUL SAID "THEREFORE, BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE TOWARD GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." IN CHAPTER 8, HE SAYS, "THEREFORE THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION." WHY NO CONDEMNATION? BECAUSE THE BELIEVER HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED

BY GOD AND RECEIVED HIS PEACE.

TWO PRINCIPLES OF LIFE ARE IN CONTRAST. FIRST, THERE IS AN EXISTENCE DOMINATED BY THE SINFUL NATURE. AND THEN THERE'S A LIFE DOMINATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. THIS IS A CHRIST CENTERED LIFE. THE SPIRIT-CONTROLLED MAN HAS LIFE. VERSE 9 SAYS, "...IF INDEED THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU. NOW IF ANYONE DOES NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NOT HIS." THE WORD "IF" OCCURS OFTEN IN THIS CHAPTER. VERSES 9,10,11,13,17 AND 31. THE WORD "IF" IS CONNECTED WITH THE CAUSES AND THE EFFECTS. THE IDEA IN THIS CHAPTER IS "IF" CHRIST IS IN YOU, THEN CERTAIN EFFECTS WILL TAKE PLACE.

PAUL HAS SAID REPEATEDLY THAT THE NON-CHRISTIAN IS DOMINATED BY THE FALL. HE IS A PERSON DOMINATED BY THE FLESH. HE THINKS IN TERMS OF THE FLESH, BECAUSE HIS MIND IS GIVEN TO THE FLESH. OUR TENDENCY IS TO REDUCE THE THINGS OF THE FLESH TO THE PHYSICAL; WHEREAS, PAUL INCLUDES IN HIS LISTS OF THE FLESH MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS.

THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT RECEIVE THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS TO HIM, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THEM. MARTIN LLOYD JONES IN HIS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS GIVES A TREMENDOUS ILLUSTRATION ABOUT WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, THE LEADER IN THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY MOVEMENT AND WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER, THE PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND. BOTH WERE VERY INTELLIGENT AND EDUCATED MEN. WILLIAM WILBERFORCE WAS A STRONG BELIEVER,

WHEREAS, WILLIAM PITT WAS JUST A FORMAL CHRISTIAN. WILBERFORCE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT PITT. HE WAS ANXIOUS THAT WILLIAM PITT SHOULD KNOW THE WALK WITH GOD THAT HE KNEW. A FAMOUS PREACHER, RICHARD CECIL, CAME TO LONDON. CECIL WAS A GREAT EVANGELICAL PREACHER AND WILBERFORCE LOVED TO HEAR HIM PREACH. WILBERFORCE PERSUADED PITT TO GO WITH HIM TO HEAR CECIL. WILBERFORCE SANG THE HYMNS WITH GREAT FERVOR. PITT WROTE LATE THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WILBERFORCE WAS SO INSPIRED BY THE SINGING. RICHARD CECIL PREACHED AND WILBERFORCE WAS GREATLY IMPRESSED. BUT AS THEY LEFT, PITT TURNED TO WILBERFORCE AND SAID, "YOU KNOW, WILBERFORCE, I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT THAT MAN HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT." HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND. THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAD NOT REVEALED TO HIM GOD'S TRUTH.

VERSES 5- 17 SPEAKS OF THE TWO DISPOSITIONS, THE SPIRITUAL MAN AND THE NATURAL MAN. THE BELIEVER HAS THE NEW NATURE, BUT IF HE LIVES BY THE OLD NATURE, HE IS CARNAL. THE CARNAL BELIEVER PLEASES HIMSELF NOT GOD.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPARTS THE NEW NATURE TO THE BELIEVER. IF THE BELIEVER IS OBEDIENT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT HE IS SPIRITUAL. IF NOT HE IS CARNAL.

IF A PERSON DOES NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT DWELLING WITHIN HIM, HE IS NOT A BELIEVER, ROMANS 8:9. A PERSON MAY BELIEVE IN GOD AND NOT BE A JUSTIFIED BELIEVER.

PAUL ALSO USES THE WORD ADOPTION TO DESCRIBE THE

BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. ADOPTION IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES WAS VERY SIGNIFICANT. ADOPTION DOES NOT MEAN THE SAME TODAY AS IT DID IN THE ROMAN WORLD. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, IT MEANT MORE THAN TAKING AN ORPHAN CHILD INTO A FAMILY. THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE GREEK WORD IS "SON PLACING." EVERY BELIEVER IS A CHILD OF GOD BY SPIRITUAL BIRTH, AND AN HEIR OF GOD THROUGH ADOPTION OR BY CHILDPLACING. PEOPLE IN PAUL'S DAY WERE VERY FAMILIAR WITH ADOPTION. THE FATHER OF A ROMAN FAMILY HAD ABSOLUTE POWER OVER HIS CHILDREN. HE HAD THE POWER TO GIVE LIFE OR DEATH, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC. SOMETIMES CHILDREN WERE ADOPTED INTO WELL-TO-DO FAMILIES. IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS THE NATURAL FATHER SOLD HIS SON. IN THIS LEGAL PROCEDURE, THE SALE OF THE SON WAS CARRIED OUT THREE TIMES. THREE TIMES THE FATHER SOLD HIS SON, TWICE, THE ADOPTING FATHER BOUGHT HIM, AND TWICE THE NATURAL FATHER BOUGHT HIM BACK. ON THE THIRD TIME, THE NATURAL FATHER DID NOT BUY HIM BACK. THE ADOPTING FATHER THEN WENT TO ONE OF THE MAGISTRATES, PRESENTED A LEGAL CASE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE SON INTO HIS FAMILY. THE BOY WAS THEN IN A NEW FAMILY. HE WAS HEIR TO HIS NEW FATHER'S ESTATE. HIS PAST RECORDS WERE WIPED OUT. THEREFORE, HE HAD LOST HIS RIGHT AS A SON IN THE OLD FAMILY. THE ADOPTION TOOK PLACE BEFORE SEVEN WITNESSES. IF ANY LEGAL DIFFICULTIES DEVELOPED LATER, ONE OF THE WITNESSES COULD BE CALLED TO GIVE WORD OF THE VALIDITY OF THE ADOPTION. PAUL USES THIS WELL KNOWN PICTURE OF ADOPTION TO ILLUSTRATE THE SPIRITUAL REALITY OF THE BELIEVER COMING INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD. IN NOVEMBER OF

1930, HENRIETTA GARRETT FROM PHILADELPHIA DIED. ABOUT A DOZEN PEOPLE ATTENDED HER FUNERAL. SHE WAS EIGHTY - ONE YEARS OLD AND PRETTY MUCH ALONE. ONLY TWO OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE FUNERAL WERE RELATIVES. SHE LEFT SEVENTEEN MILLION DOLLARS. THOUSANDS CLAIMED TO BE RELATIVES. AS THE YEARS PASSED, TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE CLAIMED TO BE HER HEIRS, BUT NO OTHER HEIRS WERE FOUND. JESUS SAID, "SOME WILL SAY, 'LORD, LORD,' AND I WILL SAY 'I NEVER KNEW YOU.'" THEY WILL BE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD.

THE LAST SECTION IN ROMANS 8 SPEAKS OF PATIENCE AND SUFFERING. THREE "GROANINGS" OCCUR IN VERSES 20 - 26. FIRST, THERE IS THE GROANING OF CREATION. SECOND, THERE IS THE GROANING OF THE BELIEVER AS HE AWAITS CHRIST AND THE SECOND COMING. THIRD, THERE IS THE GROANING OF THE INDWELLING SPIRIT AS HE INTERCEDES FOR THE BELIEVER. THIS GROANING IS DEEP WITHIN, HOPING, LONGING AND LOOKING FORWARD TO GOD'S CONSUMMATION OF THE AGES.

PAUL SHOWS US THAT EVEN THE WORLD OF CREATION IS NOT AS GOD ORIGINALLY DESIGNED IT. THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE IS THAT THE UNIVERSE KEEPS SLOWING DOWN AND WILL SOMEDAY STOP. PAUL SAYS THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD FADES AND DECAYS. THE PICTURE HERE SHOWS THE EXTREME CONSEQUENCES OF MEN'S ATTEMPT TO LIVE WITHOUT GOD. SIN HAS EVEN PERMEATED NATURE. PAUL USED LANGUAGE THE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD TO EXPLAIN THIS. THE JEWS BELIEVED THERE WERE TWO AGES, THE PRESENT, EVIL AGE AND THE AGE

TO COME. THE NEW AGE IS USHERED IN BY THE DAY OF THE LORD. THE TERM "THE DAY OF THE LORD" IS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THESE VERSES REFER TO GENESIS WHEN THE EARTH WAS CURSED BECAUSE OF ADAM'S SIN. PAUL PICTURES EVERYTHING WAITING IN EARNEST FOR THE DAY WHEN GOD WILL STEP INTO HISTORY AND BRING EVERYTHING TO A FINAL CONCLUSION. THE WORD TRANSLATED "EARNEST EXPECTATION" MEANS IN THE GREEK, WATCHING WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED HEAD. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE FIRST FRUITS. IT IS LIKE A DOWN PAYMENT IN PROMISE OF THE FULL PAYMENT. IT IS THE FIRST OF WHAT IS TO COME FOR THE BELIEVER.

PAUL SAYS THAT THE BEST OF THE WORLD IS LIKE PHYSICAL PAIN AND SUFFERING COMPARED THE GLORY OF THINGS TO COME. THE WORD "GLORY" IS THE WORD DOXA. OUR WORD DOXOLOGY COMES FROM IT. IT MEANS THE REVELATION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD IN ALL OF HIS PERFECTION. IT REVEALS THE ACTIVE AND THE RADIANT PRESENCE OF GOD. THIS IDEA HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN THE PASSAGE PAUL ALSO SAYS WE ARE SAVED BY HOPE. HOPE IS ONE OF THE THREE GREAT PILLARS OF PAUL, FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE, 1 COR. 13. IT IS THE HOPE OF SALVATION AND THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

IN VERSE 26-30, PAUL WRITES ABOUT PRAYER. HE POINTS OUT THAT WE CANNOT KNOW THE FUTURE; THUS, WE CAN NOT KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR US. THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEREFORE, INTERCEDES FOR US. THIS INTERCESSION IS SO BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION. A GREAT TEACHER ONCE SAID THAT PRAYER IS FIRST OF ALL AN ATTITUDE. PAUL BEARS THIS

OUT IN VERSE 27, WHEN HE SAYS THAT GOD SEARCHES THE HEART AND KNOWS WHAT THE PERSON IS FEELING AND THINKING. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, THE CHRIST LIKE PRAYER IS “FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.” “NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE BE DONE.” THAT IS ALWAYS THE BEST PRAYER.

WE NOW COME TO ROMANS 8:28-30. VERSE 28 IS ONE OF THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD VERSES IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS. ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH CAN QUOTE IT. WHEN SOMEONE EXPERIENCES TRAGEDY THIS VERSE WILL FLASH INTO THE PERSON’S MIND OR IT WILL BE QUOTED AS ASSURANCE THAT THIS EVENT IS REALLY GOOD FOR HIM. THIS IS NOT THE MEANING OF THE VERSE. THIS VERSE CAN BE UNDERSTOOD ONLY IN ITS CONTEXT. VERSE 29 TELLS US THE ULTIMATE GOOD OR PURPOSE GOD HAS FOR THE BELIEVER IS TO CONFORM HIM TO THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST. THESE VERSES TEACH THAT GOD IS WORKING IN ALL THINGS TO BRING ABOUT HIS ULTIMATE GOOD OR PURPOSE. TO LEAVE OUT CONFORMING US TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST IS TO MISS THE POINT AND INTENT OF VERSE 28. THE PERSON DOES NOT SAY, “OH, HOW WONDERFUL THIS TERRIBLE THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME.” INSTEAD HE LOOKS AT HOW GOD USES THE CIRCUMSTANCE TO CONFORM HIM TO THE IMAGE OF HIS DEAR SON.

ROMANS 8:31-39 IS ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL PASSAGES IN ALL SCRIPTURE. THE GREEK TEXT READS, “WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS. IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO AGAINST US. THE ONE WHO SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT GAVE HIM UP FOR US ALL. HOW WILL HE NOT ALSO WITH HIM GIVE US (OR GRACE US) ALL THINGS? WHO SHALL BRING ANY

ACCUSATION AGAINST GOD'S ELECT? GOD IS THE ONE JUSTIFYING? WHO IS HE THAT IT CONDEMNS? CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO DIED. BUT RATHER ALSO IS RISEN AGAIN. WHO ALSO IS AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND, WHO ALSO MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US. WHO SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST? TRIBULATION OR STRAIT OR PERSECUTION OR FAMINE OR NAKEDNESS OR DANGER OR SWORD? ACCORDING AS IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN, 'FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE PUT TO DEATH THE WHOLE DAY.' WE WERE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP OF SLAUGHTER. BUT IN ALL THESE THINGS WE MORE THAN OVERCOME THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US. FOR I AM PERSUADED THAT NEITHER DEATH, NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS, NOR PRINCIPALITIES, NOR POWERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATED THING WILL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FORM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR LORD."

THIS PASSAGE HAS THE WINGS OF VICTORY AND THE ROOTS OF UNION WITH CHRIST. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE. IT TALKS ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, AND THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD INTERCEDING FOR US. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM CHRIST. THE WORST THINGS IN LIFE AND DEATH CAN NOT DO IT. ANGELS, PRINCIPALITIES OR POWERS CAN NOT DO IT. THE RABBIS BELIEVED THAT EVERYTHING HAD AN ANGEL. THEY DIVIDED ANGELS INTO RANKS AND GROUPS. THESE DEMONIC ANGELS WERE CONSIDERED HOSTILE TO PEOPLE. HEIGHT AND DEPTH REFER TO ASTROLOGY. IT WAS A COMMON BELIEF THAT MEN WERE BORN UNDER CERTAIN STARS. THE WORD FOR HEIGHT REFERS TO THE HIGHEST POINT A STAR REACHES IN THE HEAVENS. DEPTH REFERS TO THE

ABYSS OUT OF WHICH IT ARISES. THEN HE SAYS, "NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE OR CREATED THING." THIS MEANS SINCE EVERYTHING IS UNDER GOD'S DOMAIN NOTHING HAS POWER OVER THE BELIEVER. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

ROMANS 6-8 HAVE CONDITIONS FOR LIVING VICTORIOUSLY. THESE CONDITIONS ARE KNOWING, RECKONING, YIELDING AND WALKING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. THESE CHAPTERS ARE THE HEART OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT IS CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTAND THEM.

IN THESE CHAPTERS WE SEE THE TRUTH: JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU; JESUS ROSE FROM THE GRAVE TO GIVE HIS LIFE TO YOU, JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE HIS LIFE THROUGH YOU.

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO SAVE YOU FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN. JESUS ROSE FROM THE GRAVE, ASCENDED, AND SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SAVE YOU FROM THE POWER OF SIN. AND JESUS WILL RETURN AS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS TO SAVE YOU FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN.

ROMANS 9

GOD CHOOSES PEOPLE ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

- I. PAUL'S GREAT CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE 9:1 - 5**
- II. GOD IS ABSOLUTELY SEVERING AND CHOOSES PEOPLE ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE 9:6 - 13**
- III. GOD IS THE CREATOR AND CANNOT BE JUDGED BY MEN 9:14 - 29**
- IV. ISRAEL FAILED BECAUSE SHE TRIED TO GET RIGHTEOUSNESS BY LAW RATHER THAN BY FAITH 9:30 - 33**

PAUL IN CHAPTERS 9, 10, AND 11, BASICALLY DEALS WITH ISRAEL'S SPIRITUAL HISTORY AND DESTINY. HE REVIEWS ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE AND WRESTLES WITH THE PROBLEM OF ISRAEL'S REJECTION. PAUL IS GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE AND HIS ELECT NATION. WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEM? IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT HE WOULD BLESS HIS DESCENDENTS, AND THAT THEY WOULD BLESS ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH. THIS BLESSING CAME WHEN JESUS, THE MESSIAH, THE SAVIOR, WAS BORN. GOD CALLED ISRAEL FOR THIS PURPOSE. ISRAEL, HOWEVER, REJECTED CHRIST, THE MESSIAH, THE SAVIOUR; WHEREAS, THE GENTILES RECEIVED HIM. HOW THEN CAN THE PROMISES OF GOD BE RECONCILED WITH THE UNBELIEF OF ISRAEL? IN THESE THREE CHAPTERS, PAUL ANSWERS THAT QUESTION. FIRST, HE SAYS THAT THE PROMISES OF GOD WERE NEVER INTENDED FOR ALL WHO WERE ISRAELITES BY BIRTH. THESE PROMISES WERE FOR THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD BY

FAITH. PAUL SAYS THAT THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS A NATION WAS DUE TO THEIR SIN. HE SAYS THAT THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL IS ONLY PARTIAL AND ALSO ONLY TEMPORARY. PAUL IS CONVINCED THAT THE TIME WILL COME WHEN ISRAEL AS A NATION WILL REPENT AND ACCEPT CHRIST AS ITS MESSIAH AND BECOME A BLESSING TO ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. THIS SECTION IS NOT JUST AN APPENDAGE TO ROMANS AS SOME HAVE THOUGHT. IT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF PAUL'S ARGUMENT. PAUL HAS STATED THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION BOTH TO THE JEWS AND TO THE GREEKS. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE JEWS ALSO NEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED FROM THE JEWISH SCRIPTURE THAT THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BY FAITH. HE HAS ANSWERED ALL THE OBJECTIONS THE JEWS HAVE MADE AGAINST RIGHTEOUSNESS APART FROM THE LAW. HE HAS GIVEN HIS OWN PERSONAL EXISTENTIAL HISTORY AND SET FORTH THEOLOGICALLY THAT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH HAS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION.

THESE CHAPTERS ARE DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET. THE CHIEF DIFFICULTIES ARE WITH DOCTRINES OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND ELECTION. IN THESE CHAPTERS HE FOCUSES ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN, THE BLESSINGS OF ELECTION AND THE REJECTION AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. HE DOES NOT RECONCILE THE FACTS OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY. NEITHER DOES HE EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WILL OF GOD AND THE WILL OF MAN. THESE ARE THEOLOGICAL REALITIES BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION. PAUL HOLDS BOTH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ISRAEL FOR UNBELIEF.

HE ALSO WARNS THE GENTILES AGAINST THE SINS OF THE JEWS, SUCH AS PRIDE, LOSS OF FAITH, SELF - DEDICATION, SELF GLORIFICATION AND SELF CONFIDENCE. THE JEWS WERE SEEKING SALVATION BY THE LAW. THE GENTILES WERE SEEKING SALVATION BY HUMAN EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT. BOTH WAYS FALL SHORT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

IN THE FIRST FIVE VERSES OF CHAPTER 9, PAUL DESCRIBES THE BLESSINGS GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL. HE BLESSED THEM WITH HIS LOVE, CHOSE THEM AS HIS PEOPLE, MADE COVENANTS WITH ABRAHAM, DAVID, THE NATION, MADE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN IN THE TABERNACLE AND GAVE THEM THE LAW. MANY OF THE PROMISES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE YET TO BE FULFILLED. IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS, JACOB, WHOSE NAME WAS CHANGED TO ISRAEL, GIVES A PREDICTION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EACH OF HIS 12 SONS. HE PROPHESED THAT THE PROMISED MESSIAH WOULD COME THROUGH JUDAH. NO OTHER NATION HAS THE WONDERFUL BLESSINGS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL. YET THEY FAILED TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN FOR THEM. WHEN THEIR MESSIAH CAME THEY CRUCIFIED HIM, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN SCRIPTURE. THEY WANTED A MESSIAH WHO WOULD LEAD THEM TO POLITICAL VICTORY. THEY WOULD NOT BELIEVE IN A CRUCIFIED CHRIST. PAUL'S PURPOSE IN CHAPTER 9 IS TO EXPLAIN ISRAEL'S POSITION IN THE PLAN OF GOD.

PAUL'S TREMENDOUS CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE IS LIKE A HEART BREAK. IN CHAPTER 9, HE VOICES HIS SORROW OVER ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THEIR MESSIAH. THE ESSENCE OF PAUL'S STATEMENT IS THAT GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT MADE

PROMISES TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL, AND GOD WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES EVEN THOUGH ISRAEL HAS REJECTED HIM. SOME ISRAELITES WERE SAVED THEN AND SOME ARE BEING SAVED TODAY. PAUL SAYS ISRAEL'S REJECTION IS NOT COMPLETE, FOR NOT ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL REJECTED GOD'S WAY. PAUL WARNS THE JEWS THAT THEIR BIRTH OR OUTWARD OBEDIENCE TO JEWISH LAW DOES NOT GIVE THEM ANY CLAIM UPON GOD TO SHARE IN THE PROMISES THAT HE MADE TO ISRAEL.

PAUL SHOWS THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES IN SPITE OF THE PRESENT UNBELIEVING MASSES OF THE JEWISH RACE. GOD DOES NOT MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR HIS PEOPLE. HE REQUIRES THEM TO REPENT AND ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IS ABSOLUTE. GOD DOES NOT EXERCISE HIS SOVEREIGNTY IN CONDEMNING PEOPLE WHO OUGHT TO BE SAVED, BUT RATHER HIS SOVEREIGNTY RESULTS IN THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO DESERVE TO BE LOST. THAT IS ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS IN PAUL'S ARGUMENT, THAT ALL PEOPLE DESERVE TO BE CONDEMNED. SINCE THIS IS TRUE, GOD CANNOT BE CONSIDERED UNJUST IF HE REJECTS THE UNBELIEVING ISRAELITE AND SAVES THE GENTILES WHO TURN TO HIM IN REPENTANCE AND FAITH. PAUL QUOTES SEVERAL ISAIAH PASSAGES TO SUPPORT HIS LOGIC.

ROMANS 10

ISRAEL REJECTS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- I. ISRAEL SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH HER OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS RATHER THAN SEEK GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS 10:1 - 3**
- II. FAITH IN CHRIST AND CONFESSION THAT JESUS IS LORD BRINGS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION 10:4 - 14**
- III. ISRAEL REJECTED GOD'S WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 10:15 - 21**

IN CHAPTER 10, PAUL DEALS WITH ISRAEL'S SIN AND REJECTION. THE REASON FOR THE REJECTION LIES IN THE CONCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A KEY CONCEPT IN ROMANS. THE JEWS THOUGHT THEY COULD OBTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY WORKS. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF WORKS IS ALWAYS ACHIEVED BY PEOPLE ESTABLISHING STANDARDS WHICH THEY CAN MEET. THIS IS WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN ISRAEL. THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF WORKS AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH COMES BY GRACE AND IS THE GIFT OF GOD WHICH COMES WHEN THE PERSON TRUSTS IN JESUS CHRIST. THE JEWS DID NOT SUBMIT TO THIS FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS; THEY WANTED TO DEPEND UPON THEIR WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY WERE REJECTED. THEY MISUNDERSTOOD THE LAW. AND THEY DID NOT KEEP THE LAW. NEITHER DID THEY COME BY FAITH TO GOD. THIS TRUTH IS PRESENTED IN THE FIRST 13 VERSES OF THIS CHAPTER.

THE REMEDY FOR THIS REJECTION IS PRESENTED IN VERSES 14-17. THIS FAMOUS PASSAGE FOCUSES ON THE TRUTH THAT FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.

THE RESULTS OF THE JEWISH REJECTION IS THAT GOD TURNED TO THE GENTILES AND IS NOW TAKING OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME. THE BOOK OF ACTS DEMONSTRATES THIS. THE ACTION IS ALSO A GREAT SURPRISE TO THE JEWS. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CLEAR THAT BELIEVERS FROM BOTH RACES WOULD BE ONE IN CHRIST.

CHAPTER 9 ENDS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. CHAPTER 10 DEALS WITH THE SIN OF ISRAEL. CHAPTER 11 RELATES THE CONTENTS OF THESE CHAPTERS TOGETHER. THE SOVEREIGN PROVIDENCE OF GOD EVEN WORKS THROUGH THE SIN OF ISRAEL TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE OF REDEEMING THE GENTILES. IT IS A REDEMPTION WHICH BOTH ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES SHARE.

ROMANS 11

ISRAEL WILL TURN TO GOD

- I. GOD WILL NOT REJECT ISRAEL BECAUSE THERE IS A FAITHFUL REMNANT 1 1:1 - 10**
- II. ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL CAUSED IT TO BE PREACHED TO THE GENTILES 1 1:1 1 - 24**
- III. ISRAEL WILL TURN TO GOD AND BE SAVED 1 1:25 - 32**
- IV. GOD IS THE SOURCE, SUSTAINER AND END OF ALL THINGS 1 1:33 - 36**

CHAPTER 1 1 CAN BE DIVIDED BASICALLY INTO THREE SECTIONS. SECTION ONE, VERSES 1 - 10, PRESENTS A QUESTION FROM CHAPTER 10 DEALING WITH THE UNBELIEF OF ISRAEL AS A WHOLE. IT ADDRESSES THE REJECTION OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.

SECTION TWO, VERSES 1 1 - 24, DEALS WITH THE RESULTS OR CONSEQUENCES OF ISRAEL'S ACTION. THIS SECTION ENLARGES UPON THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM AND ALSO WARNS THE GENTILES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT THINK THAT THEY ARE EXALTED ABOVE THE JEWS.

SECTION THREE, VERSES 25 - 36, TELLS ABOUT THE UNSEARCHABLE WISDOM AND FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH A TREMENDOUS DOXOLOGY.

CHAPTER 1 1 BASICALLY ANSWERS THE QUESTION, "HAS GOD CAST ISRAEL ASIDE FOREVER OR IS THERE A FUTURE FOR

THE NATION OF ISRAEL?" IN THE FIRST VERSE, PAUL USES HIMSELF AS AN EXAMPLE. HE POINTS OUT THAT HIS SALVATION AS AN ISRAELITE PROVES THAT GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ISRAEL. PAUL GIVES HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE THREE TIMES IN ACTS. THE AMOUNT OF SPACE LUKE GIVES TO PAUL'S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE SHOW HOW SIGNIFICANT IT IS.

PAUL USES AN EXAMPLE FROM THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL, I KINGS 19, TO SHOW THAT GOD HAS A FAITHFUL REMNANT EVEN IN TIMES OF GREAT DISASTER, REBELLION AND UNBELIEF. THE FAITHFUL REMNANT IN THE BOOK ACTS IS A BASIC TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. ITS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS CHAPTER IS A DISCUSSION OF THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES AS GROUPS OF PEOPLE, NOT AS INDIVIDUAL SINNERS OR INDIVIDUAL SAINTS. IT REVEALS HOW GOD DEALS WITH THE GENTILES AND HOW HE IS GOING TO DEAL WITH THE NATION ISRAEL. PAUL IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE SALVATION OF INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE. HE USES THE OLIVE TREE AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS THE OLIVE TREE THAT FAILED TO BEAR FRUIT FOR GOD. PAUL USES SEVERAL OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE FROM ISAIAH AND THE PSALMS TO PROVE THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES THAT GOD WILL DELIVER AND RESTORE ISRAEL. FIRST HE WILL OVERCOME THE BLINDNESS OF ISRAEL. THEN HE WILL CREATE THE NEW ISRAEL. AT THE PRESENT, GOD HAS BROUGHT GENTILES AND JEWS TOGETHER IN CHRIST IN THE CHURCH AS INDIVIDUALS. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ISRAEL, AND HE HAS NOT FORGOTTEN THAT PLAN. GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES. TO SPIRITUALIZE THESE PROMISES AND TO MAKE THEM ALL APPLY TO THE CHURCH IS IMPOSSIBLE AND MISINTERPRETS THE SCRIPTURE. NOW IT IS

TRUE THAT THERE ARE MULTI-LEVELS OF MEANING WITHIN SCRIPTURE. MANY OF THE PROMISES EXTEND TO ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE. JESUS INTERPRETED SCRIPTURE IN THIS MANNER AND SO DO THE DISCIPLES. HOWEVER, WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO MISINTERPRET THE SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER 11 IS CLEAR THAT PAUL'S THOUGHTS MOVE IN TWO DIRECTIONS. FIRST, THE PRESENT REJECTIONS OF ISRAEL IS NOT TOTAL; AND SECOND, THAT IT IS TEMPORARY NOT FINAL. THE OLD TESTAMENT CLEARLY PROMISES ISRAEL WORLD LEADERSHIP. MANY IN THE CHURCH BELIEVE THAT THE JEWS HAVE BEEN PERMANENTLY CAST AWAY AND THAT THE GENTILE CHURCH IS THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD PERMANENTLY DISPLACING REJECTED ISRAEL. THIS IS A VERY COMMON MISCONCEPTION. THESE PEOPLE APPROPRIATE TO THEMSELVES ALL THE BLESSINGS PROMISED TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. SOME OF THE PROMISES DO APPLY, SOME OF THEM DO NOT. THE LESSON TO LEARN FROM ROMANS IS THAT THE BRINGING OF THE GENTILES INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD WAS AS UNNATURAL AS THE GRAFTING OF WILD OLIVE BRANCHES INTO TAME OR CULTIVATED OLIVE TREES. SINCE THIS CAN BE DONE IT IS EVIDENT THAT GOD CAN RESTORE HIS ORIGINAL OLIVE PLANT. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE JEWS CAN BE RESTORED AS GOD'S TRUE PEOPLE. RATHER, IT IS AMAZING THAT THE GENTILES CAN BE SAVED FROM THE SIN AND IDOLATRY THAT IS PRESENTED IN ROMANS CHAPTER ONE.

PAUL DISTINCTLY PREDICTS THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL, DESCRIBING IT AS A MYSTERY. IT IS NOT JUST WISHFUL THINKING

ON HIS PART. HE DRAWS PROOF FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT SUPPORT. HE DECLARES THAT THE UNBELIEF OF ISRAEL IS ONLY TEMPORARY AND WILL END WHEN THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES COME IN. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS A TYPE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD WHICH WILL COME TO GOD THROUGH JESUS. EVIDENTLY, PAUL IS SPEAKING IN THIS SECTION OF ISRAEL AS A NATION AND NOT REFERRING TO INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES. HE CONFIRMS HIS PREDICTION BY QUOTING FROM THE PASSAGE IN ISAIAH THAT A DELIVERER WOULD COME OUT OF ZION WHO WOULD TURN UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.

PAUL ENDS CHAPTER 11 WITH ONE OF THE MOST TREMENDOUS PASSAGES OF PRAISE IN SCRIPTURE. HE SAYS, "OH, THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS WAYS PAST FINDING OUT! FOR WHO HATH KNOWN THE MIND OF THEIR LORD? OR WHO HATH BEEN HIS COUNSELLOR? OR WHO HATH FIRST GIVEN TO HIM, AND IT SHALL BE RECOMPENSED UNTO HIM AGAIN? FOR OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM, ARE ALL THINGS: TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN."

ROMANS 12

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

I. CONSECRATE YOUR BODY 12:1 - 2

II. EXERCISE YOUR GIFTS 12:3-8

III. PRACTICE YOUR CHRISTIAN LOVE 12:9 - 21

PAUL NOW MOVES INTO THE PRACTICAL ARENA. PAUL ALWAYS WRITES HIS LETTERS BEGINNING WITH DOCTRINE AND ENDS WITH DUTY. HE ALWAYS FOLLOWS THE PATTERN, BELIEF THEN BEHAVIOR, DOCTRINE THEN DUTY, THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION THEN PRACTICAL IMPLICATION. PAUL NOT ONLY PRESENTS RIGHT DOCTRINES, BUT ALSO RIGHT ACTIONS. IN CHAPTER 12, PAUL PRESENTS SEVERAL PICTURES: IN VERSES 1 AND 2, THE PICTURE OF A SACRIFICE; IN VERSES 3-8, THE PICTURE OF THE BODY FUNCTIONING IN UNITY; IN VERSES 9 - 13, THE PICTURE OF THE BODY PARTS RELATED TOGETHER; AND IN VERSES 14-21, THE PICTURE OF A SOLDIER.

THE FIRST TWO VERSES OF CHAPTER 12 ARE SOME OF THE BEST KNOWN IN SCRIPTURE. THE PICTURE IS AN ALTAR. THE CHRISTIAN IS TO MAKE HIMSELF A LIVING SACRIFICE. THIS SURELY REMINDS US OF ISAAC IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT IS THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF CONSECRATION. IT IS NOT CONSECRATION OF THE FLESH OR THE OLD NATURE. OFTEN THE REDEDICATING OF A PERSON IS THE REDEDICATION OF THE OLD NATURE THAT CANNOT PRODUCE SPIRITUAL FRUIT. IT IS TO BE THE CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION OF THE LIFE THAT GOD HAS PUT INTO THE PERSON. THIS IS ONE OF THE FIVE MAJOR DOCTRINES OF ROMANS AND OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. THESE

FIVE DOCTRINES ARE: CONDEMNATION, JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION, CONSECRATION AND GLORIFICATION.

PAUL DEVELOPS DUTY FROM DOCTRINE. HE EXHORTS BELIEVERS TO LIVE ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED. THE MERCIES OF GOD REFERS TO ALL THE MERCIES PAUL HAS DOCUMENTED IN ROMANS. THE CHIEF MERCIES OF GOD ARE JUSTIFICATION AND THE GRACE OF GOD, UNION WITH CHRIST AND THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT, DIVINE ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION AND THE COMING GLORY. "PRESENT YOUR BODIES" MEANS YOU ARE YIELDED TO GOD. PRESENTING YOUR BODIES IS YIELDING CONTROL OF THE LIFE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT JUST AS A SLAVE YIELDS TO HIS MASTER. THE PERSON IS TO YIELD TO GOD, BECAUSE GOD IS THE ONE WHO HAS REDEEMED HIM. THE JUSTIFIED PERSON BELONGS TO THE LORD.

IN THESE VERSES THERE IS THE DISTINCTION OF DEDICATION OR CONSECRATION. FIRST, IT IS PERSONAL. "LIVING" MEANS THE PERSON DOES IT. THE WORD "PRESENT" IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IDEA OF GIFTS FOR THE TEMPLE. THE SAME WORD IS USED IN LUKE 2:22, WHEN JESUS WAS PRESENTED TO THE LORD. WHO CAN HELP BUT BE REMINDED OF JOSHUA IN JOSHUA 24:15. HE HAD THE PERSONAL COURAGE TO STAND ALONE. IN 1 KINGS 18:21, ELIJAH ASKS THE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE WHETHER THEY WILL SERVE GOD AND CONSECRATE THEMSELVES TO HIM OR SERVE BAAL. THE SACRIFICE IS COMPREHENSIVE IN SCOPE. "PRESENT YOUR BODIES" HAS THE IDEA OF TOTALITY. THE VERB HERE MEANS ONCE FOR ALL. THE CONSECRATION DOES NOT CHANGE EVERY DAY. IT IS TO COVER ALL OF LIFE. PARTIAL DEDICATION IS DECEPTIVE. A SACRIFICE COSTS SOMETHING.

WHEN DAVID IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, NEEDED WOOD TO BUILD A FIRE FOR MAKING A SACRIFICE, THE OWNER SAID HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN IT TO HIM, BUT DAVID WOULD NOT TAKE IT, BECAUSE HE SAID IT COST HIM NOTHING.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF SACRIFICES, ONE FOR SIN AND PEACE AND ANOTHER FOR CONSECRATION. FOR THE BELIEVER, THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN AND PEACE HAS BEEN MADE BY JESUS ON THE CROSS. THE LIVING SACRIFICE THAT THE BELIEVERS IS TO MAKE IS FOR CONSECRATION AND SERVICE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “SERVICE” FIRST MEANT TO WORK OR GIVE STRENGTH TO A JOB. AS TIME PASSED THE WORD CAME TO MEAN GIVING THE WHOLE LIFE. FINALLY, THE WORD CAME TO MEAN SERVICE OR WORSHIP OF GOD. IT MEANS THAT EVERY DAY THAT A BELIEVER GETS UP HE KNOWS THAT HE IS A SACRIFICE TO GOD. EVERYTHING THAT HE DOES IS A SACRIFICE TO GOD. HIS WHOLE LIFE IS WORSHIP TO GOD. WORSHIP IS PRAISE AND THE BEST PRAISE YOU CAN GIVE ANYONE IS TO GIVE YOURSELF TO THEM. WORSHIP IS RATIONAL, INTELLIGENT AND REASONABLE. PAUL SAYS IT IS REASONABLE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “REASONABLE” IS λογικην. LITERALLY IT MEANS LOGICAL. SO OUR SACRIFICE AND OUR SERVICE IS THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OR OUTCOME OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE GREAT DOCTRINES, BUT THEY BELIEVE THEM ONLY IN THEIR MINDS. THEIR ACTIONS REVEAL NO SUCH EVIDENCE. DOCTRINE THAT DOESN'T LOGICALLY PRODUCE SERVICE IS SENSELESS.

IN VERSE 2 THE WORD TRANSLATED “DO NOT BE CONFORMED” IS συσχηματιζεσθε. IT LITERALLY MEANS “NOT

FASHION YOURSELVES.” OUR WORD SCHEMA COMES FROM IT. IT MEANS THE OUTWARD FORM WHICH CHANGES FROM YEAR TO YEAR. PAUL SAYS DO NOT BE LIKE THE LITTLE LIZARD, THE CHAMELEON, THAT CHANGES HIS COLOR ACCORDING TO HIS SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES AND ENVIRONMENT. THE WORD MEANS SOMETHING DEEP WITHIN. PAUL DOES NOT SAY CONFORMED TO THE WORLD. HE SAYS CONFORMED TO THIS “AGE,” FOR THE WORD IN GREEK IS “AGE” RATHER THAN WORLD. SO HE IS SAYING, “DON’T BE CONFORMED TO THE AGE IN WHICH YOU LIVE.” THE DICTIONARY DEFINITION FOR THE WORD SCHEMA DESCRIBES COMPLEX UNITY IN WHICH THE COMPONENT ELEMENTS COOPERATE OR INTERACT ACCORDING TO A DEFINITE PLAN. IT MEANS THE MANNER IN WHICH A SYSTEM IS ORGANIZED. THESE VERSES WARN US NOT TO BE MOLDED BY OUR AGE. EVERY AGE SEEKS TO ACCUMULATE KNOWLEDGE, BUT THIS IS NEVER SPIRITUAL WISDOM. PAUL SAYS, “DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS AGE, BUT BE TRANSFORMED.” THE WORD CONFORMED AND THE WORD TRANSFORMED ARE BOTH PRESENT, IMPERATIVE, ACTIVE VERBS. THE FIRST VERB IS A COMMAND MEANING TO STOP FASHIONING YOURSELF TO THIS AGE. THE SECOND VERB IS ALSO A PRESENT IMPERATIVE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE AND IS A COMMAND TO DO SOMETHING IN THE FUTURE WHICH REQUIRES CONTINUOUS OR REPEATED ACTION. IT COULD BE TRANSLATED, “BE YOU BEING TRANSFORMED.” THE WORD TRANSLATED TRANSFORMED IS μεταμορφουσθε. THIS WORD IS LITERALLY OUR WORD METAMORPHOSIS. THE IDEA IS THAT WE MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE AT THE DEEPEST PART OF OUR INNER BEING. THE UNCHANGING HAS TO BE CHANGED. GOD ALONE CAN DO THAT. THE WORD TRANSFORM IS THE SAME WORD THAT IS USED IN

MATTHEW 17:2 AND LUKE 9:29 TO SPEAK ABOUT JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION. THE INNER BEING OF JESUS CHRIST WAS BROUGHT FORTH SO WE COULD SEE THE REALITY OF THE PURPOSE OF GOD INCARNATE. IF A PERSON CONFORMS TO THE AGE IN WHICH HE LIVES HE WILL NOT KNOW SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION. IF A PERSON IS TRANSFORMED HE WILL HAVE TO SACRIFICE THE SCHEME OF THE AGE. NOT MANY PEOPLE MAKE THAT DECISION. IT IS NOT STICKING A STICK IN A CAMPFIRE SOMEWHERE AND MAKING SOME HALF COMMITMENT TO THE LORD. WHEN A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED HE BEGINS THIS PROCESS. TRANSFORMATION IS THE RESULT OF JUSTIFICATION.

THE RESULTS OR CONSEQUENCES OF JUSTIFICATION ARE THE DELIGHTS OF DEDICATION TO JESUS. THE FIRST DELIGHT IS THE MIND RENEWED. THERE ARE TWO GREEK WORDS FOR NEW. ONE WORD MEANS NEW IN TIME. THE OTHER WORD MEANS NEW IN CHARACTER AND NATURE. THAT IS THE MEANING IN THESE VERSE. IF THE AGE CONTROLS THE PERSON'S MIND HE WILL FALL INTO ITS SCHEME. IF GOD RENEWS THE MIND THE PERSON WILL BE TRANSFORMED. A PERSON KNOWS THINGS WITH HIS MIND. IF THE PERSON'S MIND IS NOT RENEWED THEN HE KNOWS THE OLD SCHEME, BUT IF HE IS RENEWED THEN HE KNOWS GOD'S WAY.

IN VERSES 4-5 OF THIS CHAPTER, PAUL FOR THE FIRST TIME MENTIONS HIS GREAT DOCTRINE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. HE LATER DEVELOPS THIS DOCTRINE IN COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS AND REFERS TO IT NUMEROUS OTHER TIMES. THE HUMAN BODY HAS MANY MEMBERS. THESE MEMBERS CONSTITUTE A UNITY. EACH MEMBER IS A PART OF THE WHOLE. EACH

ONE HAS ITS INDIVIDUAL WORK TO DO. PAUL IS SAYING THAT JUST AS THIS UNITY IS NECESSARY IN THE HUMAN BODY, SO IT IS TRUE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. WILLIAM NEWELL SAYS THE SCRIPTURE NEVER SPEAKS OF CHURCH MEMBERS AS PEOPLE TODAY DO. INSTEAD IT SPEAKS ONLY OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST AS MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. NEWELL SAYS IN LOCAL ASSEMBLIES, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE WE HAVE A FELLOWSHIP THAT ALREADY EXISTS, BECAUSE WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

IN VERSE 6, PAUL SAYS BELIEVERS HAVE DIFFERENT GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN THEM. EACH BELIEVER HAS SOME PARTICULAR GIFT THAT BEEN BESTOWED UPON HIM BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT. THESE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE FOR THE GLORY TO THE LORD AND FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST. I CORINTHIANS TEACHES THAT THESE GIFTS ARE GIFTS OF GRACE. PAUL IS NOT SPEAKING HERE ABOUT THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH IS GIVEN TO THE PERSON WHEN HE BELIEVES. DOCTOR NEWELL POINTS OUT THAT THERE ARE MANY CHRISTIANS TODAY, EVEN BIBLICAL STUDENTS THAT PRACTICALLY FORGET OR IGNORE THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS NECESSARY GIFTS, SAYING THAT THESE BELONG TO THE EARLY DAYS, BUT WE HAVE THE WRITTEN WORD NOW, SO WE DO NOT NEED THE GIFTS AS DID THE EARLY CHURCH. THE TRUTH IS, HOW DOES THE CHURCH DO ITS WORK IF IT DOES NOT HAVE THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN IT? DR. NEWELL'S OPINION IS THAT THE OUTWARD CHURCH TODAY IS LAODICEANS. IF IT IS NOT IN THE LAODICEAN STAGE, IT IS CERTAINLY IN THE PHILADELPHIAN STAGE. A BASIC PROBLEM TODAY IS SUBSTITUTING PROGRAMS FOR THE POWER OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT. WHEN WE THINK WE CAN OPERATE WITHOUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN DEPENDING ON OURSELVES. GOD WITHDRAWS AND LETS US DO IT. IT MAY BE TRUE THAT GOD DOES NOT WORK IN EXACTLY THE SAME MANNER AS HE ONCE DID. BUT GOD CAN WORK HOWEVER HE CHOOSES. HE IS NOT DICTATED TO BY THEOLOGIAN'S OR THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS DEvised BY MEN OR WOMEN. HE SENDS HIS HOLY SPIRIT. HE IS WILLING TO MANIFEST THE GIFTS THROUGH US IF WE WILL LET HIM.

IN VERSES 11 - 12, HE TALKS ABOUT VARIOUS GIFTS, THEIR PURPOSES AND HOW THESE ARE TO BE USED.

IN VERSES 14-21, HE INSTRUCTS BELIEVERS HOW TO REACT TO OTHER PEOPLE. THIS REFLECTS JESUS' TEACHING, "BLESS THEM THAT CURSE YOU, BLESS THEM THAT PERSECUTE YOU." WE ARE NOT TO RETALIATE AGAINST THOSE WHO OPPOSE US OR HURT US. WE ARE TO WAIT FOR GOD TO REPAY THEM. WE ARE TO PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE BELIEVER LIVES IN A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE OBSERVE HIS ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS. WE ARE TO LIVE PEACEFULLY WITH ALL MEN, BUT WE ARE NOT TO COMPROMISE WITH SIN.

ROMANS 13

THE CHRISTIAN AND HUMAN GOVERNMENT

I. CHRISTIANS AS GOOD CITIZENS OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT 13:1 - 7

II. LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW 13:8 - 10

III. PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST 13:11 - 14

IN CHAPTER 12, PAUL HAS POINTED OUT THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO SHOW HUMILITY AND LOVE FOR MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. IN CHAPTER 13 HE TEACHES ABOUT THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN TO THE NATION IN WHICH HE LIVES. THE CHURCH AND THE STATE, OF COURSE, OCCUPY TWO DIFFERENT SPHERES. THE PRINCIPLE THAT PAUL BUILDS ON IS JESUS' SAYING "RENDER UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S. THE IMAGE OF CAESAR WAS STAMPED ON ROMAN COINS. THE IMAGE OF GOD IS STAMPED ON THE BELIEVER. PAUL EXPANDS THIS PRINCIPLE AND SAYS THAT THE DUTY OF THE BELIEVER IS TO GIVE SUBMISSION TO THE AUTHORITIES, BECAUSE CIVIL GOVERNMENT PROVIDES CERTAIN THINGS FOR ITS PEOPLE. GOVERNMENT HAS ITS SOURCE OF AUTHORITY FROM GOD. GOD ORDAINED GOVERNMENT AS A MEANS OF MAINTAINING PEACE AND ORDER. PAUL LISTS SOME OF THE PROTECTIONS AND PRIVILEGES GOVERNMENT PROVIDES. THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP ARE SET FORTH, AND HUMAN GOVERNMENT IS PRESENTED AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION. GOVERNMENT HELPS TO PROTECT THOSE WHO DO RIGHT AND RESTRAINS THOSE WHO DO EVIL. FIRST, PAUL DOES NOT ADVOCATE ANY PARTICULAR FORM OF GOVERNMENT. SECONDLY, LOYALTY TO GOVERNMENT

DOES NOT PRECLUDE THAT THERE CANNOT BE IMPROVEMENT WITHIN A GOVERNMENT. THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT PROVIDED MANY OF THESE THINGS IN SPITE OF SOME OF THE CORRUPT ROMAN OFFICIALS. A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IS THAT THE BELIEVER MUST NOT DISOBEY HIS CONSCIENCE IN SUBMITTING TO THE GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE MANY CASES IN HISTORY WHERE BELIEVERS DISOBEYED THE LAW, BECAUSE THE LAW FORBID THEM TO WORSHIP CHRIST.

NEXT PAUL PROCEEDS TO TEACH THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE WHICH CONTROLS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVER TOWARD HIS FELLOW CITIZEN. THE REASON THAT LOVE IS SO IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY IS BECAUSE IT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW. THE BELIEVER IS TO LOVE HIS NEIGHBOR. IF HE LOVES HIS NEIGHBOR, HE WILL NOT BORROW FROM HIS NEIGHBOR WHAT HE CANNOT REPAY. HE WILL NOT WRONG HIS NEIGHBOR BY ADULTERY, THEFT, MURDER OR COVETOUSNESS. THE PENTACLE FOR CHRISTIAN MOTIVES IS REACHED IN VERSES 11 - 14. THIS MOTIVE IS DEVOTION TO CHRIST. THE MOTIVES ASCEND FROM FEAR TO CONSCIENCE, TO LOVE, TO DEVOTION TO CHRIST. THIS IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL MOTIVATION. PAUL IS APPEALING TO THE HOPE OF COMPLETED SALVATION AND LOOKING FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST. PAUL EMPHASIZES THE RETURN OF CHRIST, BECAUSE HE IS MOTIVATED BY IT; IT KEEPS BELIEVERS FROM SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE. ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE. IS IT BECAUSE FEW PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST? A BASIC TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURE IS THAT WHEN WE ARE NOT LOOKING FOR JESUS' RETURN IS THE TIME HE WILL RETURN.

ROMANS 14

THE SENSITIVITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

- I. LEGALISM SHOULD NOT HARM FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH 14:1 - 12
- II. THE STRONGER BELIEVER SHOULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO CAUSE THE WEAKER BELIEVER TO STUMBLE 14:13-23

IN CHAPTER 14, PAUL DEALS WITH SOME QUESTIONS OF CONSCIENCE. SOME THINGS ARE DEFINITELY RIGHT AND SOME ARE DEFINITELY WRONG. OTHERS ARE VERY VAGUE. THOSE THAT ARE VAGUE GENERALLY HAVE TO DO WITH THE CONSCIENCE. PAUL LAYS DOWN SOME PRINCIPLES OF PERCEPTION. HE SAYS DO NOT JUDGE OTHERS, DO NOT TEMPT OTHERS, AND FOLLOW CHRIST WITH FORBEARANCE AND LOVE.

ROMANS 15

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PAUL

I. CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE UNITED IN CHRIST

15:1 - 13

II. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH HIM 15:14 - 21

III. PAUL SHARES HIS PERSONAL GOALS 15:22 - 29

IV. PAUL ASKS FOR THEIR PRAYERS 15:30 - 33

IN CHAPTER 15, PAUL GIVES A BASIC FOUNDATION STONE FOR CHRISTIAN INTERACTION. HE SAYS THAT EVERYBODY IS RESPONSIBLE TO GOD. DO NOT TEMPT YOUR BROTHER TO DO SOMETHING THAT HE SHOULD NOT DO. DO NOT CAUSE A BROTHER TO STUMBLE. HE IS DEALING WITH MATURE BELIEVERS AND IMMATURE BELIEVERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER. THE MATURE BELIEVER SHOULD NOT CAUSE THE IMMATURE BELIEVER TO FALL. HE LAYS DOWN SOME BASIC ETERNAL PRINCIPLES. IN VERSES 1 - 5 PAUL SAYS THE MATURE BELIEVER IS TO HAVE REGARD FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF HIS BROTHER. HE IS TO REFRAIN FROM CERTAIN PRACTICES THAT WOULD CAUSE HIS BROTHER TO FALL EVEN THOUGH THE PRACTICE MAY NOT BE EVIL. THE BELIEVER IS TO SAY, "I DO THIS UNTO THE LORD, I AM NOT LIVING MY OWN LIFE JUST TO PLEASE MYSELF." IN VERSES 10 - 12, HE SAYS THEY WILL STAND THE TEST AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. THIS IS NOT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT, RATHER IT IS AT THE BEMA SEAT OF CHRIST. THIS JUDGMENT IS THE EVALUATION OF THE WORKS OF BELIEVERS. IN VERSES 13 - 21, HE ASKS IF THEY

ARE CAUSING OTHERS TO STUMBLE.

IN CHAPTER 15, HE ASKS, "AM I DOING THIS TO PLEASE MYSELF OR AM I DOING THIS FOR OTHERS?" THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ALWAYS APPLICABLE. NO CHRISTIAN SHOULD MOVE INTO AREAS THAT ARE VAGUE WITHOUT ASKING THESE QUESTIONS.

IN HIS CONCLUSION PAUL GIVES HIS REASONS FOR WRITING HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. FIRST, HE SAYS IT IS BECAUSE OF HIS SPECIAL INTEREST IN THEM, AND HE EXPRESSES HIS CONCERN FOR THEM. HE LAYS OUT HIS PERSONAL PLAN FOR HIS VISIT TO ROME. HE HOPES TO MAKE ROME HIS BASE FOR A MUCH WIDER MINISTRY, BECAUSE HE DESIRES TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO SPAIN AND THROUGHOUT THE KNOWN WORLD. HOWEVER, BEFORE HE DOES THIS HE MUST GO TO JERUSALEM TO HELP THE NEEDY CHRISTIANS THERE. HE SAYS THAT AFTER HIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM HE WANTS TO COME TO ROME AND THEN GO TO SPAIN. HE ASKS THEM TO UNITE IN PRAYER ON HIS BEHALF. PAUL ALWAYS CONSIDERS PRAYER AS PRIMARY FOR HIMSELF AND OTHER BELIEVERS. PAUL EXPECTS GOD TO RESPOND TO THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE. PAUL DID GET TO ROME, AND HE DID PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL THERE.

ROMANS 16

GREETINGS TO AND FROM BELIEVERS

- I. PAUL COMMENDS PHOEBE TO THE CHURCH AT ROME 16:1 - 2
- II. PAUL GREETES HIS CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AT ROME 16:3 - 16
- III. PAUL WARNS THEM ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS 16:17 - 20
- IV. PAUL SENDS GREETINGS FROM HIS CHRISTIAN COLLEAGUES 16:21 - 24
- V. PAUL'S DOXOLOGY 16:25 - 27

IN CHAPTER 16, PAUL GREETES THE SAINTS WITH WHOM HE IS ACQUAINTED IN ROME. THIS LIST IS VERY PERSONAL AND SHOWS THE DEEP HUMAN INTEREST PAUL HAS IN THESE PEOPLE. HE ALSO GIVES A LIST OF THE SAINTS THAT HE WANTS THEM TO GREET.

HE ALSO TELLS THEM SOME PEOPLE TO AVOID. THESE ARE THE FALSE TEACHERS. IN ALMOST EVERY EPISTLE PAUL TALKS ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS. THROUGH THE CENTURIES THERE HAVE BEEN FALSE TEACHERS THAT MAKE THEIR WAY INTO THE CHURCH. THEY TEACH NON-BIBLICAL DOCTRINES AND CAUSE PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH. MANY TEACHERS TEACH FALSE DOCTRINES BY ACCIDENT, BUT SOME DO IT ON PURPOSE.

NEXT PAUL GIVES HIS GREETINGS FROM THE PEOPLE THAT

ARE WITH HIM. PAUL CONCLUDES WITH THE GREAT DOXOLOGY OF VERSES 25 - 27. THIS IS A GREAT BENEDICTION AS WELL AS A GREAT DOXOLOGY. THERE ARE ALMOST TWO DOXOLOGIES HERE. VERSE 24 SAYS, "THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL, AMEN." "AMEN" MEANS LET IT BE SO. THEN THE FINAL CONCLUSION IN GREEK LITERALLY READS, "NOW TO HIM WHO IS OF POWER YOU TO ESTABLISH ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL AND THE PROCLAMATION OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO A REVELATION OF MYSTERY IN TIMES OF THE AGES HAVING BEEN KEPT SECRET, BUT MADE MANIFEST NOW, AND BY PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES, ACCORDING TO COMMANDMENT OF THE ETERNAL GOD, FOR OBEDIENCE OF FAITH TO ALL THE NATIONS HAVING BEEN KNOWN, ONLY WISE GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE GLORY TO THE AGES. AMEN."

I CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF I CORINTHIANS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

I AND II CORINTHIANS WERE PROBABLY WRITTEN BETWEEN 53 AND 57 A.D. DURING PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN SALVATION AND LIBERTY HAD BEEN SETTLED AT THE GREAT COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM IN PROBABLY 49 A.D. BUT NOT LATER THAN 51 A.D. HOWEVER, THE JUDAIZERS CONTINUED TO PLAGUE PAUL'S MINISTRY, ATTEMPTING TO PERVERT THE GOSPEL AND ADD THE JEWISH LAW TO THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. THIS ISSUE IS PRESENT IN I CORINTHIANS. ROMANS AND GALATIANS ARE CLEAR THAT A PERSON IS SAVED BY GRACE NOT BY THE LAW. I CORINTHIANS, HOWEVER, MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE SAVED ARE EXPECTED TO LIVE OUT THE LAW OF CHRIST, 7:19 AND 9:21.

THIS EPISTLE GIVES VALUABLE INSIGHT INTO CONDITIONS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD AND THE TEMPTATIONS FACING THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONTAINS TWO LETTERS WRITTEN TO THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS ALTHOUGH THE BIBLICAL RECORD SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT PAUL WROTE FOUR LETTERS TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT ANY DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THESE FOUR LETTERS. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT I COR. 4:12 - 20 AND II COR. 6:14 THROUGH CHAPTER 7 ARE FRAGMENTS OF THE FIRST LETTER, AND II COR. 10 THROUGH 13:10 ARE FRAGMENTS OF THE STERN LETTER WHICH PAUL REFERS TO IN II COR. 2:3 AND 7:12. OTHER SCHOLARS THINK THAT OUR FIRST LETTER IS THE SECOND LETTER PAUL WROTE TO CORINTH, AND THAT OUR SECOND LETTER IS THE THIRD LETTER HE WROTE. THERE ARE MANY THEORIES RELATED TO SUCH MATTERS; HOWEVER, THE EPISTLES WE PRESENTLY HAVE ARE LOGICAL AND MAKE GOOD SENSE JUST AS THEY ARE NOW. THIS FACT CASTS DOUBTS UPON SUCH THEORIES.

STATISTICIANS TELL US THERE ARE 236 WORDS IN THIS EPISTLE WHICH DO NOT OCCUR IN ANY OF PAUL'S OTHER WRITINGS AND 100 OF THESE DO NOT OCCUR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CITY OF CORINTH

I CORINTHIANS WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH. CORINTH WAS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN GREECE. IT ALSO WAS THE CAPITAL OF THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ACHAIA. AS A ROMAN COLONY THE CITY WAS POLITICALLY VERY POWERFUL, AND ECONOMICALLY IT HAD NO EQUAL IN GREECE. COMMERCIALY THE CITY'S LOCATION GUARANTEED SUCCESS. LOOK AT A MAP OF GREECE. NOTICE THAT CORINTH WAS SITUATED ON A NARROW PASSAGEWAY ABOUT FOUR AND A HALF MILES WIDE WHICH CONNECTED THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF GREECE. THIS MEANT THAT THE NORTH AND SOUTH LAND ROUTES HAD TO GO THROUGH CORINTH.

THE SEA AROUND THE SOUTHERN TIP OF GREECE WAS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. IT WAS, THEREFORE, ADVANTAGEOUS FOR LARGE SHIPS TO DOCK ON THE EAST OR WEST SIDE OF THIS NARROW PASSAGEWAY, TRANSPORT THEIR CARGOES BY LAND TO THE OPPOSITE DOCKS, LOAD THEIR CARGOES ONTO OTHER SHIPS AND SAIL TO THEIR DESTINATION. THESE TRADE ADVANTAGES MADE CORINTH A WEALTHY CITY.

CORINTH HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN 146 B.C. BY THE ROMAN CONSUL LUCIUS MUMMIUS, BECAUSE GREECE WAS BLOCKING ROME'S WORLD CONQUEST. A CENTURY LATER THE CITY WAS REBUILT AS A ROMAN COLONY BY JULIUS CAESAR. LATIN WAS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF CORINTH LONG AFTER PAUL'S LIFETIME.

THE CITY'S LOCATION CAUSED IT TO GROW VERY RAPIDLY. BY THE TIME OF PAUL IT WAS THE FOURTH LARGEST CITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE. ALMOST ONE HALF ITS POPULATION WERE SLAVES. THE REST OF THE POPULATION WAS DIVIDED AMONG ROMAN FREE PEOPLE, AND A VARIETY OF OTHERS INCLUDING ASIANS, PHOENICIANS AND A LARGE NUMBER OF JEWS.

THE CITY WAS NOT ONLY KNOWN FOR ITS ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND CULTURAL APPRECIATION, BUT ALSO KNOWN FOR ITS EXTREME WICKEDNESS AND MORAL DEGRADATION. IT WAS THE SEAT OF A SECT OF WORSHIPPERS OF VENUS, WHICH HAD CULTS AROUND THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN ASIA AND EGYPT. SO THE TITLE "CORINTHIAN," AT THE TIME OF PAUL, MEANT TO LIVE IN LOOSENESS, LICENTIOUSNESS AND LUXURY. THE WORD "CORINTHIAN" IN SLANG MEANT A PERSON OF HEAVY DRINKING AND IMMORALITY. THE VERY FACT THAT PAUL FOUNDED A CHURCH IN THIS COMMUNITY PROCLAIMS THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. THIS GIFTED CHURCH AT CORINTH BECAME WELL KNOWN AMONG BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. GREAT INSIGHT CAN BE GAINED FOR THE PRESENT FROM THIS CHURCH, BECAUSE OUR CULTURE IS BECOMING MUCH LIKE THE FIRST CENTURY.

PAUL ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY STARTS FROM ANTIOCH AND TRAVELS WESTWARD TO TROAZ, THEN CROSSES OVER TO EUROPE AND ESTABLISHES A CHURCH IN PHILIPPI. NEXT PAUL TRAVELS TO THESSALONICA ESTABLISHING A CHURCH THERE AND THEN TRAVELS TO GREECE. THE RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL IN ATHENS SEEMS TO DISAPPOINT AND DISCOURAGE HIM, SO HE RETURNS TO CORINTH. SHORTLY

AFTER ARRIVING THERE HE MAKES FRIENDS WITH AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, A JEWISH COUPLE WHO ARE CHRISTIANS. SOON HE IS JOINED BY SILAS AND TIMOTHY WHO BRING HIM GOOD NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES WHICH HE HAS STARTED. SILAS AND TIMOTHY HELP HIM ESTABLISH A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE CHURCH IN CORINTH.

FIRST, PAUL GOES TO THE SYNAGOGUE AT CORINTH. THERE HE MEETS BITTER OPPOSITION WHICH CAUSES HIM TO MOVE TO THE NEIGHBORING HOUSE OF JUSTUS WHERE HE ESTABLISHES A CHURCH. AMONG HIS CONVERTS ARE THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE, CHRISPUS, A GROUP OF FREE PEOPLE AND SOME SLAVES. SOME ARE JEWS, BUT MOST ARE GENTILES. SOME ARE PROBABLY WEALTHY, BUT SOME ARE POOR. THERE ARE ALSO THOSE IN HIGH RANKING POSITIONS AND SOME IN LOW POSITION. A VARIETY OF CHARACTERISTICS SEEMS TO STANDOUT IN THIS CONGREGATION.

PAUL TEACHES IN CORINTH FOR APPROXIMATELY A YEAR AND A HALF. HIS PREACHING IS CHIEFLY TO THE GENTILES, AND HIS SUCCESS CAUSES THE JEWS TO BECAME VERY ENVIOUS. THIS CAUSES THE JEWS TO RAISE AN INSURRECTION AGAINST PAUL AND DRAG HIM BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF THE PROCOUNCIL, GALLIO, WHO IS THE BROTHER OF SENECA THE GREAT. TO THEIR DISMAY THEY DISCOVER THAT GALLIO HAS A LOT OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE OR INDIFFERENCE. HE ALLOWS THE GREEKS TO DRAG THE JEWS OUT AND USE PHYSICAL FORCE ON THEM. THERE IS A FIERCE PHYSICAL BATTLE AND THE JEWS LOSE. SO THEY TUCK THEIR TAILS AND RUN HOME. PAUL HAS BEEN TRIUMPHANT. THESE EVENTS FROM ACTS 18 ARE

CRUCIAL TO THE DATING OF PAUL'S TOTAL MINISTRY. THE GALLIO INSCRIPTION PLACES GALLIO IN CORINTH BETWEEN 50 AND 52 A.D. THIS MEANS PAUL WAS ALSO IN CORINTH DURING THIS TIME. PAUL SAILS FOR JERUSALEM LEAVING BEHIND A STRONG CHURCH.

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY TAKES HIM TO EPHEBUS FOR THREE YEARS. DURING THIS TIME HE CONTINUES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND MAY HAVE VISITED THEM. WE CANNOT BE SURE ABOUT THE VISIT, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE. WHILE HE IS IN EPHEBUS THE HOUSEHOLD OF CHLOE BRINGS HIM SOME DISTURBING INFORMATION ABOUT MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH. THE CHURCH IS BEING DIVIDED BY FACTIONS. SOME IN THE CHURCH ARE INTELLECTUALIZING THE GOSPEL AND MAKING IT A PHILOSOPHY OF MAN RATHER THAN A REVELATION FROM GOD. THEY EVIDENTLY ARE REJECTING PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND HIS RIGHT TO DIRECT THEIR THEOLOGY. IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW THESE TWO FACTORS REINFORCE EACH OTHER.

THERE WAS A DUALISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY PAGAN WORLD WHICH WAS FOREIGN TO THE FOUNDATIONAL HEBREW ROOTS OF THE GOSPEL. THE GREEKS BELIEVED THE SPIRIT WAS TRAPPED IN THE HUMAN BODY, AND FREEDOM CAME AS THE SPIRIT WAS RELEASED FROM THE BODY. THIS WAS A SEGMENTING OF BODY AND SPIRIT. SOME IN THE CHURCH THOUGHT THAT THE SPIRIT WAS ALL THAT WAS IMPORTANT; THEY GOT OFF BALANCE, AND THIS SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE MORE SPIRITUAL THAN PAUL OR THE MINISTER THEY PREFERRED WAS MORE SPIRITUAL THAN

PAUL. THEY IDENTIFIED SPIRITUAL WITH ECSTATIC UTTERANCES; WHEREAS, PAUL IDENTIFIED SPIRITUAL WITH LIVING OUT SALVATION IN THE REAL WORLD. PAUL KNOWS THAT THEY ARE HARMING THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST BY FIGHTING AGAINST EACH OTHER IN HEATHEN COURTS AND PRACTICING IMMORALITY. THEY ARE COMPROMISING WITH THE MORAL STANDARDS OF CORINTH. THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MARRIAGE, ABOUT EATING MEAT THAT HAS BEEN SACRIFICED TO IDOLS AND ABOUT USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS. IT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED TO HIM THAT THERE IS GREAT DISORDER IN THEIR OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PAUL ANSWERS THEIR QUESTIONS BY STATING PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN GIVING HARD RULES. FROM THESE PRINCIPLES TIMELESS SOLUTIONS CAN BE CONCLUDED THAT WILL STAND FOREVER. PAUL ARRANGES HIS ANSWERS IN LOGICAL ORDER. FIRST HE DEALS WITH DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH. THEN HE TURNS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT DISCIPLINE AND LITIGATIONS IN THE PAGAN COURTS BETWEEN BELIEVERS. NEXT HE CONDEMNS IMMORALITY IN THEIR ASSEMBLY. PROCEEDING ON HE DEALS WITH MARRIAGE AND THE EATING OF MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS. NEXT HE DEALS WITH THE PROPER CONDUCT OF WOMEN DURING PUBLIC WORSHIP AND THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. THEN HE FOCUSES ON THE EXERCISE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS. FINALLY HE ANSWERS THE QUESTION OF THE RESURRECTION.

IT IS AMAZING HOW PAUL IS ABLE TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN ALL HIS EPISTLES. AN IMPORTANT KEY TO COMPREHENDING THE MESSAGE OF VERSES 1-9 OF CHAPTER 1. IN

THESE VERSES PAUL FOCUSES ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVER TO CHRIST. THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT IN EVERY ONE OF PAUL'S EPISTLES. THIS BASIC CONCEPT IS CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE REST OF I CORINTHIANS AND GIVES UNITY TO THIS EPISTLE. THE THEME IS UNION WITH CHRIST OR "IN CHRIST" AS IT IS SO OFTEN EXPRESSED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IN I CORINTHIANS THE BELIEVER IS SANCTIFIED "IN CHRIST." WHEN WE SEE UNION WITH CHRIST AS THE KEY TO I CORINTHIANS WE SEE THAT:

- I. CHAPTERS 1 - 4 TEACH THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS HARMED BY DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH.**
- II. CHAPTERS 5 - 6 REVEAL THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS DESTROYED BY MORAL IMPURITY.**
- III. CHAPTER 7 DEMONSTRATES THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.**
- IV. CHAPTERS 8 - 10 EXPLAIN THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS DEBASED BY IDOLATRY.**
- V. CHAPTER 11 TEACHES THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS SYMBOLIZED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER.**
- VI. CHAPTERS 12 - 14 TEACH THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS DISGRACED BY CHAOS IN THE CHURCH.**
- VII. CHAPTER 15 CONCLUDES THAT UNION WITH CHRIST IS CONSUMMATED, AND MADE COMPLETE, AT THE RESURRECTION.**

UNION WITH CHRIST IS THE KEY TO AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH. THINK OF YOUR CHURCH. IF THE PEOPLE ARE UNITED WITH CHRIST, THEY ARE IN CHRIST. IF THE CHURCH IS IN CHRIST, THEN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVER TO CHRIST WILL

AFFECT THE RELATIONSHIP OF BELIEVERS TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE WORLD. IT WILL AFFECT THE TOTAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL. THE CORINTHIANS' BASIC PROBLEM LIKE MOST CHURCHES TODAY WAS THAT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST AND THEIR UNION WITH HIM. THIS IS ONE DOCTRINE THAT IS SELDOM UNDERSTOOD AND EXPERIENCED BY BELIEVERS TODAY. PAUL STRONGLY MAKES THIS POINT IN ROMANS AS WELL AS IN HIS OTHER EPISTLES.



PURPOSE

**PAUL HAS SEVERAL REASONS FOR WRITING I CORINTHIANS.
HE WANTS:**

- 1. TO SHOW THEM THAT THEIR BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOR ARE HARMING THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST,**
- 2. TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR,**
- 3. TO MOVE THEM BACK TO THE GOSPEL WHICH THEY FIRST RECEIVED FROM HIM,**
- 4. TO URGE THEM TO DEAL WITH THE PERSON INVOLVED IN SEXUAL IMMORALITY,**
- 5. TO DISCOURAGE THEM FROM TAKING THEIR AFFAIRS TO THE LEGAL COURTS,**
- 6. TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE,**
- 7. TO INFORM THEM ABOUT EATING MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS,**
- 8. TO INSTRUCT THEM IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP,**
- 9. TO INSTRUCT THEM IN THE USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS,**
- 10. TO URGE THEM TO GIVE TO THE OFFERING FOR THE POOR IN JERUSALEM,**
- 11. TO INFORM THEM ABOUT HIS FUTURE, AND**
- 12. TO COMMEND HIS COLLEAGUES TO THEM.**

I CORINTHIANS 1

I. THE GREETING 1:1 - 3

II. THE ENRICHMENT IN CHRIST 1:4 - 9

III. THE UNITY IN CHRIST 1:10 - 17

**IV. THE SALVATION OF GOD IN THE CROSS
1:18 - 25**

**V. THE CALLING OF GOD IS BEYOND HUMAN
EXPLANATION 1:26 - 31**

I. THE GREETING 1:1 - 3

THE FIRST 9 VERSES COMPOSE A UNIT CONTAINING PAUL'S GREETING AND ADMONITION TO THEM ABOUT THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST. THE GREETING FOLLOWS THE CONTEMPORARY FORM OF A LETTER WITH THE STANDARD METHOD OF INTRODUCTION, BUT THERE IS ALSO THE DEEPER THEME OF THANKSGIVING.

IN THIS UNIT HE ESTABLISHES THE BASIS FOR:

- 1. THE UNITY IN THE CHURCH,**
- 2. THE POWER AND ENRICHMENT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS, AND**
- 3. THE HOPE THEY HAVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. THE RESURRECTION WILL COMPLETE THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST.**

THIS LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH. THIS MEANS THAT THE CHURCH IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION, THAT BELONGS TO THE LORD, AND THAT IS HIS INSTRUMENT IN THE WORLD. PAUL SAYS THAT THE CHURCH IS COMPOSED OF THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT ALL CHRISTIANS ARE SAINTS WHICH MEANS THEY ARE SANCTIFIED OR SET APART TO GOD AND CALLED TO HIS SERVICE. THIS CALL COMES OUT OF THE BELIEVING HEART.

IN HIS GREETING, "GRACE TO YOU, PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST," GRACE DESIGNATES THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD. IT POINTS TO GOD AS THE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSING. PEACE IS AN EXPERIENCE OF THE GRACE FILLED HEART.

II. THE ENRICHMENT IN CHRIST 1:4-9

BY FAITH, THE BELIEVER BECOMES A PARTAKER OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST. PAUL PLACES THE NAME OF CHRIST IN ALMOST EVERY SENTENCE. THIS FOCUSES ON THE REALITY THAT IT IS ONLY CHRIST WHICH GIVES UNITY AND MEANING IN THE CHURCH. PAUL ALMOST ALWAYS BEGINS HIS LETTERS BY REMINDING THE BELIEVERS OF THEIR BLESSINGS WHICH THEY HAVE IN CHRIST. HE DOES THIS BEFORE HE POINTS OUT THEIR SINS.

III. THE UNITY IN CHRIST 1:10-17

IN VERSES 10-17, PAUL ADDRESSES THE MOST OBVIOUS DEFECT IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH, FACTIONS AND DIVISIONS. THESE ALWAYS CAUSE CONFLICT. THIS PROBLEM HAS

REMAINED THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES AS ONE OF THE GREATEST DETRIMENTS TO INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE.

PAUL APPEALS TO THEIR UNITY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE KEY TO UNITY IS IN THE MEANING OF THE NAMES. THE TITLE LORD JESUS MEANS "THE LORD IS SALVATION." THE TITLE CHRIST MEANS "THE ANOINTED ONE OF GOD." IF BELIEVERS UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE THESE REALITIES IN THEIR LIVES A LOT OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH ARE AVERTED. THE CORINTHIANS HAD FORGOTTEN THAT JESUS WAS THEIR LORD, AND CONSEQUENTLY BEGAN TO FOCUS ON PERSONALITIES. SOME WERE DECLARING THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO PAUL, SOME TO APOLLOS, SOME TO PETER AND SOME TO CHRIST. THERE WERE FOUR FACTIONS IN THE CHURCH. PAUL LATER DEMONSTRATES HOW RIDICULOUS THESE FACTIONS ARE. CHRIST IS NOT DIVIDED AND NEITHER IS HIS BODY THE CHURCH. THE POINT IS THAT CHRIST DIED FOR US. NO MAN DIED FOR US, BUT CHRIST ALONE. THAT GIVES US UNITY.

PAUL ASKS THEM, "WERE YOU BAPTIZED UNTO PAUL?" BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. IT IS A WITNESS TO THE WORLD OF THE UNION WE HAVE WITH CHRIST AND THE UNITY IN THE CHURCH. THEIR DIVISIONS SHOW THEY WERE NOT UNITED WITH CHRIST.

VERSES 18-31 CUT LIKE A RAZOR, STRAIGHT TO THE REASONS WHY THE DIVISIONS HAD OCCURRED IN THE FIRST PLACE. THEY HAD PERVERTED BOTH THE MEANING OF THE GOSPEL AND THE MOTIVATION OF THOSE WHO MINISTERED THE GOSPEL.

THIS SPIRIT OF DISHARMONY COULD BE ERADICATED IF THEY UNDERSTOOD THE TRUE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY. FIRST, THEY WERE CONFUSING THE GOSPEL WITH THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD. THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD HAS NEVER SAVED ANYONE. IT IS ONLY THE WORK OF THE CROSS THAT SAVES. CHURCHES TODAY CONFUSE THE WISDOM OF RELATIVISM WITH THE ABSOLUTES OF THE GOSPEL. WE HAVE BEEN SO EFFECTIVE AT THIS THAT THE CHURCH HAS BECOME SO WORLDLY AND THE WORLD HAS BECOME SO CHURCHLY THAT IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

THEY WERE ALSO STEALING GOD'S GLORY BY GLORIFYING MEN. THE FACT THAT THEY WERE GLORIFYING MEN MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL MINISTRY. MINISTRY IS TO GLORIFY CHRIST, NOT THE MAN. THIS LESSON HAS TO BE LEARNED BY EVERY GENERATION.

ACCORDING TO PAUL THE MEANING OF THE CROSS COMES ONLY BY DIVINE REVELATION. IT NOT ONLY REVEALS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD, IT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD AND INTERPRETED WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE REVELATION. A PERSON CAN PREACH A VERY FINE SERMON, BUT UNLESS THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKES THAT SERMON AND IMPARTS GOD'S WORD TO PEOPLE THEY WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND IT. THEY WILL NEVER COMPREHEND THE WORD OF GOD APART FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PAUL IS SHOWING THAT ALL HUMAN ENDEAVOR TO ACHIEVE SALVATION WILL FAIL. MAN CANNOT LOGICALLY ARRIVE AT SALVATION. ONLY GOD CAN ASSURE SALVATION.

PAUL EXPLAINS THAT THE GOSPEL HAS MADE THE WORLD'S WISDOM FOOLISHNESS. THE WISE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD HAVE SOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND GOD WITH THEIR MINDS ALONE AND HAVE FAILED, BECAUSE WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT THEY CANNOT KNOW GOD. THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST IS FOOLISHNESS TO THE THOUGHT PATTERNS OF THE WORLD. NEITHER THE JEWS NOR THE GREEKS WERE READY TO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL. THE JEWS BLINDED BY THEIR OWN MISCONCEPTIONS MISSED THE SAVIOR. THE JEWS KEPT ASKING JESUS FOR A SIGN. THEY WANTED SOME STARTLING EVENT THAT WOULD AUTHENTICATE HIM AS THE MESSIAH. EVERYTHING HE DID WAS EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH, BUT THEY REFUSED TO BELIEVE. THEY ALWAYS WANTED ONE MORE SIGN. WHEN THEY SAW ONE SIGN THEY WANTED ANOTHER SIGN. SIGN SEEKERS ARE ALWAYS LIKE THAT. THEY NEVER COME TO TRUE FAITH.

THE GREEKS KEPT SEEKING WISDOM. THEY WANTED IT TO BE LOGICAL. THEY WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW PHILOSOPHIES WHICH THEY COULD CONTEMPLATE, EVALUATE AND REASON OUT, BUT NOT ARRIVE AT ANY DECISION. THIS WAS THE PROBLEM PAUL HAD IN ATHENS. THEY BELIEVED THAT THE HIGHEST WAY OF LIFE WAS THE MENTAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND THAT THEY MUST FOLLOW HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

PAUL PREACHED THAT THE ONLY SAVIOUR IS JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED. THIS WAS A STUMBLING BLOCK, A "SCANDALON," (THE GREEK WORD), TO THE JEWS, FOR THEY WERE EXPECTING A POLITICAL MESSIAH. IT WAS FOOLISHNESS TO THE GENTILES, BECAUSE THEY OVERESTIMATED THEIR OWN

WISDOM. GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION, WHICH WAS FOOLISHNESS IN MEN'S EYES, WAS WISER THAN THEIR WISDOM. WHEN WISE MEN WITH GREAT KNOWLEDGE COME TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IT IS BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THEY HAVE AN ACCUMULATION OF INFORMATION, BUT NOT ETERNAL TRUTH.

AT CORINTH GOD CHOSE THOSE WHOM THE WORLD REGARDED AS WEAK. HE TOOK THE WEAK AND THROUGH THEIR FAITH, EMPOWERED THEM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LIFTED THEM UP, BECAUSE THEY LIFTED HIM UP. MOST OF THE CHRISTIANS AT CORINTH WERE VERY ORDINARY PEOPLE. THEY, HOWEVER, BELIEVED IN THE POWER OF THE CROSS AND POSSESSED THE WISDOM OF GOD THROUGH THEIR SANCTIFICATION IN JESUS CHRIST. IN HIM, THEY FOUND THE PURITY AND HOLINESS OF LIFE, WHICH THE CITY OF CORINTH AND THE WORLD COULD NOT GIVE AND WHICH THEY COULD NOT ACHIEVE BY THEIR OWN POWER.

IF SALVATION IS ENTIRELY FROM GOD, IF IT IS DIVINE, IF IT IS THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD AND IF IT COMES BY GRACE ALONE, THEN THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR DIVISION IN THE CHURCH. IT WAS TRUE THEN, IT IS TRUE NOW AND IT WILL BE TRUE FOREVER.

I CORINTHIANS 2

I. PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED PRODUCES FAITH 2:1 - 5

II. GOD'S WAYS ARE REVEALED ONLY BY GOD'S SPIRIT 2:6 - 13

III. THE UNSPIRITUAL PERSON CANNOT DISCERN SPIRITUAL THINGS 2:14 - 16

I. PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED PRODUCES FAITH 2:1 - 5

CORINTH WAS A LARGE AND SOMEWHAT CULTURED CITY. SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH EVIDENTLY LIKED THE PHILOSOPHIES, WISDOM AND RHETORIC OF MEN. THEY EVIDENTLY THOUGHT THAT THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF CORINTH BY THE WISDOM OF MEN. THEY EVIDENTLY WANTED SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE AND SOPHISTICATION.

THESE PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD WOULD BRING SALVATION RATHER THAN THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS. THEY MAY ALSO HAVE HAD SOME CONNECTIONS WITH THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN. MUCH OF THIS SAME PHILOSOPHY HAS PERMEATED THE CHURCH TODAY. SOME THEOLOGIANs HAVE ATTEMPTED TO MAKE THE GOSPEL COMPATIBLE WITH CERTAIN MODERN PHILOSOPHIES. THIS SEEMS TO BE WHAT THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS DOING. PAUL INSISTS THAT HE HAS GIVEN THEM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION, THAT HE HAD USED NO RHETORICAL TRICKS OR MANIPULATION AND THAT THE RESULTS HAD BEEN PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN THESE VERSES, PAUL DESCRIBES THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE AND HIS METHOD OF PRESENTING IT TO THEM. HE SAYS THAT HE HAD DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG THEM EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. SOME PEOPLE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT HE IS CONFESSING HIS FAILURE AT ATHENS. HE HAD PREACHED THERE JUST BEFORE HE CAME TO CORINTH. SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES THAT AT ATHENS HE HAD USED A WRONG METHOD OF PRESENTING THE GOSPEL. THAT IS NOT WHAT PAUL SAYS. IT IS TRUE HE DID NOT GET AS MUCH IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IN ATHENS AS HE HAD IN OTHER PLACES. HE HAD, HOWEVER, SET FORTH THE CLAIMS OF THE RISEN JESUS CHRIST WITH GREAT POWER. IF THERE WAS ANY FAILURE IT WAS DUE TO THE INTELLECTUAL PRIDE OF THE ATHENIANS WHO WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW. IT SEEMS THAT PAUL'S MESSAGE AT ATHENS FOCUSED ON THE RESURRECTION; WHEREAS, AT CORINTH HE SAID HE FOCUSED ON THE CRUCIFIXION. HISTORY SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH A SMALL GROUP MAY HAVE ORIGINALLY RESPONDED TO THE GOSPEL AT ATHENS, IN THE NEXT CENTURY SEVERAL OUTSTANDING CHRISTIANS CAME FROM THE CHURCH AT ATHENS. AND IN THE THIRD CENTURY THE CHURCH AT ATHENS WAS STRONG AND PURE. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT PAUL'S METHOD WAS EFFECTIVE IN ATHENS.

IN CORINTH HE MAY HAVE CHANGED HIS APPROACH TO MEET THE SITUATION. CORINTH WAS A CITY OF THE FLESH. PAUL IN ANOTHER PLACE SAYS THAT THE FLESH IS TO BE CRUCIFIED. THIS MAY SHED LIGHT ON THE REASON HE FOCUSED ON CHRIST CRUCIFIED. SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS HAD RESPONDED

BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT HAD SPOKE TO THEM. IN THIS SECTION PAUL ALSO SEEMS TO BE DRAWING A CONTRAST BETWEEN HIS METHOD OF PRESENTING THE GOSPEL AND THE METHODS OF OTHERS IN CORINTH.

WHEN PAUL CAME TO CORINTH HE WAS ALONE AND CAME IN WEAKNESS AND SICKNESS. THE CORINTHIANS WERE NOT VERY IMPRESSED BY HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

II. GOD'S WAYS ARE REVEALED ONLY BY GOD'S SPIRIT 2:6-13

THE GOSPEL COMES DIRECTLY FROM THE MIND AND THE HEART OF GOD. IT IS NOT FROM HUMAN REASON, AND IT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY HUMAN REASONING ALONE. IT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO ORIGINATED IT AND WHO REVEALS IT. THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD REJECTS THE GOSPEL. PAUL IS CAREFUL TO MAKE THAT CONTRAST. SCHOLARS HAVE LOOKED AT THIS FROM TWO POINTS OF VIEW. ONE POINT OF VIEW IS THAT WHEN PAUL REFERS TO THE WISDOM AND RULERS OF THIS AGE, HE MEANS THE DEMONIC POWERS BEHIND THE SCENE. THE OTHER POINT OF VIEW IS THAT THIS REFERS TO THE WAY THE PEOPLE OF PAUL'S TIME THOUGHT. EITHER WAY, IT REVEALS THAT THERE ARE DEMONIC POWERS BEHIND THE WAY PEOPLE THINK.

THE WORD $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omega$ IN VERSE 7 IS TRANSLATED "MYSTERY" OR "SECRET." MYSTERY IN GREEK DOES NOT MEAN MYSTERIOUS. MYSTERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANS SOMETHING THAT GOD ALONE REVEALS. THE HUMAN MIND ALONE IS UNABLE TO DISCOVER IT OR DISCERN ITS TRUTH. IT CAN ONLY

BE KNOWN WHEN GOD REVEALS IT. A PERSON CANNOT LOGICALLY ARRIVE AT THIS TRUTH. THIS CONCEPT TAKES ALL THE PRIDE OUT OF BELIEVING. IF A PERSON CANNOT DISCOVER GOD'S TRUTH WITHOUT REVELATION, THEN HE CAN HAVE NO PRIDE WHEN IT IS REVEALED TO HIM. PAUL'S ARGUMENT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE DIVISIONS OF DISUNITY IN THE CHURCH.

PAUL SAYS THAT NO HUMAN MIND, NO HUMAN HEART, NO HUMAN EYE, AND NO HUMAN EAR HAVE THE ABILITY TO DISCOVER WHAT IS IN THE MIND OF GOD. ONLY GOD CAN REVEAL IT. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PART OF THE GODHEAD, THEREFORE, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONE WHO REVEALS IT.

III. THE UNSPIRITUAL PERSON CANNOT DISCERN SPIRITUAL THINGS 2:14-16

IN ORDER FOR THE BELIEVER TO HAVE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL, THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS TO ILLUMINATE HIS MIND. IT IS THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT WHO GAVE THE SCRIPTURE LONG AGO IN REVELATION WHO ILLUMINATES THE SCRIPTURE TODAY. IF THE GOSPEL SEEMS FOOLISHNESS TO PEOPLE, IT IS BECAUSE UNREGENERATE PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE SPIRITUAL ABILITY TO GO BEYOND THE SPHERE OF THE INTELLECT. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SPIRITUAL ABILITY TO GO INTO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD WHERE GOD IS AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S TRUTH. IT IS ONLY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT MAN CAN UNDERSTAND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD AND GOD'S TRUTH.

THIS PASSAGE DESCRIBES TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE, THE NATURAL PERSON AND THE SPIRITUAL PERSON. THE NATURAL PERSON IS UNSAVED, BELONGS TO THE WORLD, HAS NOT BEEN REDEEMED BY JESUS CHRIST, AND DOES NOT HAVE THE LIFE OF GOD IN HIM. THE SPIRITUAL PERSON IS A BELIEVER CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, ABLE TO SPIRITUALLY DISCERN THE THINGS OF GOD AND HAS THE MIND OF CHRIST. THIS MEANS THAT HE CAN UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE GOSPEL. HE CAN SPIRITUALLY COMPREHEND WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR HIM.

PAUL SAYS THAT THE SPIRITUAL PERSON CANNOT BE JUDGED BY THE NATURAL PERSON. THE REASON IS THAT THE NATURAL PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL THINGS. THE SPIRITUAL PERSON HAS THE REVELATION OF GOD. HE DOES NOT HAVE SUPERIOR NATURAL KNOWLEDGE, BUT HE DOES HAVE THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CORINTHIANS 3

I. CARNALITY PRODUCES SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

3:1 - 4

II. GOD ALONE PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH

3:5 - 9

III. ALL FOUNDATIONS NOT BUILT ON CHRIST

PERISH 3:10 - 15

IV. THE SPIRIT OF GOD LIVES IN BELIEVERS

3:16 - 17

V. THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD DECEIVES

3:18 - 23

I. CARNALITY PRODUCES SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY 3:1 - 4

THE CORINTHIANS PRIDE THEMSELVES IN THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS. THEY SNEER AT THE SIMPLE WAY PAUL PRESENTS THE GOSPEL. PAUL REPLIES IN CHAPTER TWO THAT THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE BABES IN CHRIST, BECAUSE THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED LITTLE SPIRITUAL GROWTH. SPIRITUAL GROW IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT. THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED THE NEW BIRTH, BUT THE OLD NATURE IS STILL STRONG IN THEM. BEING BORN AGAIN MEANS TO BECOME A NEW BABY, BUT TO REMAIN AN INFANT IS RETARDATION. THAT IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH, AND THAT IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN MANY CONTEMPORARY CHURCHES. PEOPLE OFTEN THINK THAT THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY MATURE WHEN THEY ARE STILL INFANTS. THEY CONFUSE THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD AND GOD'S WISDOM.

PAUL TELLS THEM THAT HE HAD TO LIMIT HIS PREACHING TO IMMATURE THINGS, BECAUSE IN THEIR IMMATUREITY THEY COULD NOT COMPREHEND SPIRITUALLY MATURE THINGS. THEY WERE IN A STATE OF CARNALITY. THIS MEANS THAT THE OLD NATURE WAS CONTROLLING THEM.

PAUL SAYS THE PROOF OF THEIR IMMATUREITY IS SEEN IN THEIR DIVISIONS AND THEIR DESIRE FOR THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD. HE SAYS THAT THE MATURE CHRISTIANS OR SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANS REJOICE IN THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

II. GOD ALONE PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH 3:5-9

THE WORD USED HERE FOR MINISTER IS THE WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD "DEACON." IT MEANS SERVANT. PAUL SAYS THAT THESE MEN ARE SERVANTS OF GOD, CO-WORKERS AND ARE GOD'S GIFTS TO THE CHURCH.

TODAY IN THE CHURCH WE SEE TWO EXTREMES. FIRST, THERE ARE THOSE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DEIFY, WHICH MEANS TO "MAKE A GOD," OF THEIR MINISTERS. THEY WILL NOT LET HIM BE HUMAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WANT TO DEIFY HIM, AND THEN DESECRATE HIM WHEN THEY DISCOVER HE IS NOT GOD. THESE PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED WHEN WE LISTEN TO THE BIBLICAL ADMONITION ABOUT LEADERSHIP.

THE TRUE PASTOR IS A SERVANT. PAUL, USES THESE THREE PICTURES TO ILLUSTRATE HIS TRUTH;

- 1. A MAN SOWING SEED,**
- 2. A MAN WATERING THE SEED, AND**
- 3. THE GROWTH OF THE SEED INTO A PLANT.**

III. ALL FOUNDATIONS NOT BUILT ON CHRIST PERISH 3:10-15

PAUL NOW CHANGES HIS PICTURE TO THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE. HE TEACHES THAT THEY ARE BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST. PAUL SAYS THAT HE LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND ANYONE NOT BUILDING ON IT IS BUILDING ON THE WRONG FOUNDATION, BECAUSE THE FOUNDATION IS JESUS CHRIST.

THIS PASSAGE ABOUT THE BUILDING MATERIALS IS VERY OFTEN MISINTERPRETED. HE SAYS HERE THAT ONE MINISTER MAY BUILD WITH DURABLE AND RICH MATERIAL, GOLD, SILVER AND PRECIOUS STONE WHILE ANOTHER MAY BUILD WITH WOOD, HAY AND STUBBLE. SOUND DOCTRINE IS BUILT ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION WITH THE RIGHT MATERIALS. FALSE TEACHINGS ARE WRONG MATERIALS AND WILL BE BURNED UP WHEN THE LORD COMES.

IV. THE SPIRIT OF GOD LIVES IN BELIEVERS 3:16-17

THERE IS A TREMENDOUS WARNING IN THIS PASSAGE. IT SAYS THAT IF ANY MAN DESTROYS THE TEMPLE OF GOD, THEN GOD WILL DESTROY HIM, BECAUSE THAT TEMPLE IS HOLY. HOLY MEANS THAT WHICH IS SET APART FOR GOD.

V. THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD DECEIVES 3:18-23

IN THIS SECTION PAUL SAYS DO NOT LET ANYBODY DECEIVE YOU, AND DO NOT DECEIVE YOURSELF.

ANY WISDOM WHICH CLAIMS SALVATION, BUT DOES NOT COME FROM THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS FROM THE WORLD. THIS SECTION IS MAKING THE POINT THAT HUMAN WISDOM CANNOT DISCOVER GOD OR BRING SALVATION TO PEOPLE. IT IS DISCREDITING GODLESS WISDOM NOT OPPOSING THE GREAT GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN MANKIND TO REASON, THINK, GATHER INFORMATION AND PUSH BACK THE PERIPHERY OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE WAY PAUL CONNECTS THE IDEA OF WISDOM IN VERSES 18-21 AND THE NAMES OF THE MEN IN VERSE 22 MAKES IT APPEAR THAT SOME PEOPLE IN THE CONGREGATION WERE TRYING TO PLACE ONE MAN ABOVE THE OTHERS AS WISER THAN THE REST. THEY WERE LIMITING THEMSELVES TO ONE PARTICULAR TEACHER WHEN IN REALITY ALL THESE TEACHERS BELONG TO THE CHURCH. SINCE ALL THESE TEACHERS BELONG TO CHRIST AND WERE GOD'S GIFT TO THE CHURCH, THEY WERE DEPRIVING THEMSELVES OF THE GREATER TREASURES THAT COULD BE THEIRS.

I CORINTHIANS 4

- I. GOD JUDGES THE SECRETS OF THE HEART 4:1 - 5
- II. GREATNESS DOES NOT COME FROM THE STANDARDS OF THE WORLD 4:6 - 13
- III. FOLLOW THE WAYS OF CHRIST 4:14 - 21

IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL CONTINUES HIS DISCUSSION OF THE MINISTRY AND CONCLUDES THE SUBJECT OF DIVISIONS. IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE HIS IDEAS ABOUT THE MINISTRY HE USES FOUR PICTURES: 1. AN UNDER - ROWER, 2. A STEWARD, 3. A THRONE AND 4. A FATHER.

IN THE FIRST PICTURE, IN VERSE 1 PAUL SAYS MINISTERS ARE UNDER - ROWERS, *υπηρετας*. THE WORD IS TRANSLATED "MINISTERS," "SERVANTS," OR "ATTENDANTS." THIS WORD MEANS AN UNDER - ROWER. THIS IS A SLAVE WHO ROWED ON THE LOWER LEVEL OF A GALLEY WITH THREE LEVELS OF ROWING SLAVES.

IN THE SECOND PICTURE HE IS REBUKING THE SPIRIT OF DISSENSION AMONG THEM BY REFERRING TO THE MINISTER AS A STEWARD WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. HE SAYS THAT GOD IS THE MASTER, THE MINISTER IS HIS STEWARD, AND THE MINISTER IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE CRITICISM OF THE CORINTHIANS OR EVEN HIMSELF. HE WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD ALONE. THE WORD STEWARD DESCRIBES A SLAVE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS MASTER'S HOUSE, BELONGINGS AND THE OTHER SLAVES. THE REQUIREMENT OF THE STEWARD IS TO BE

FOUND FAITHFUL AND TRUSTWORTHY. IN VERSE 6, PAUL SAYS THAT HE AND APOLLOS DID NOT TEACH THEM TO GO BEYOND GOD'S WORD. THEY ARE NOT FREE TO ADD TO GOD'S WORD.

IN THE THIRD PICTURE HE SPEAKS OF THRONES AND AN AMPHITHEATER. HE SAYS THAT IT IS AS IF THE CORINTHIANS HAVE ASCENDED THRONES AND ARE PRONOUNCING JUDGMENT ON PAUL, APOLLOS AND THE OTHER TEACHERS. IN VERSES 6-13, HE SAYS THAT THEY ARE LIVING IN A CHILDISH FANTASY. THEY ARE ACTING AS IF THE TEACHERS ARE CONDEMNED CRIMINALS IN THE AMPHITHEATER FIGHTING UNARMED WITH WILD BEASTS. THERE IS NO HOPE OF LIFE. THEY ARE LIKE GLADIATORS IN THE ARENA, HAVING COME TO DIE, THEY SALUTE THEIR FRIENDS, SAY FAREWELL TO EVERYBODY AND PREPARE FOR THE END. IN VERSE 8, PAUL TURNS TO SATIRE TO SHAKE THEM INTO REALITY.

IN THE LAST SECTION OF THIS CHAPTER, VERSES 14-21 PAUL REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A FATHER WHO GAVE THE CHURCH AT CORINTH ITS BIRTH. HE IS THEIR SPIRITUAL FATHER, AND HAS BEEN VERY HARSH WITH THEM. NOW HE CHANGES HIS TONE AND MAKES A VERY TENDER APPEAL THAT HE IS THEIR SPIRITUAL FATHER, THAT HE HAS LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND THROUGH HIM CHRIST HAS IMPARTED A NEW LIFE TO THEM. HE APPEALS TO THEM TO IMITATE HIM. THE WORD "IMITATE" IN GREEK MEANS "TO MIMIC."

PAUL SENDS TIMOTHY TO HELP THEM EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS THAT SOME OF THESE TEACHERS WILL BE PUFFED UP AND SAY, "WELL, HE IS NOT GOING TO COME. HE IS SENDING TIMOTHY."

IN THE FIRST FOUR CHAPTERS, PAUL DOES EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO CHANGE THEIR SPIRIT OF HOSTILITY AND DISSENSION TOWARD HIM, AND TO BRING TOGETHER THE DIVIDING FACTIONS INTO CHRISTIAN UNITY IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

HE DEALS WITH THESE TOPICS FIRST, BECAUSE EVERYTHING THAT HE WRITES IN THE EPISTLE DEPENDS UPON A UNITED CHURCH ACCEPTING HIS APOSTLESHIP AND THE GOSPEL WHICH HE PREACHES.

I CORINTHIANS 5

- I. BROADMINDEDNESS IS NO EXCUSE FOR ALLOWING IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH 5:1 - 8
- II. DO NOT CONDONE SIN IN THE CHURCH 5:9 - 13

CHAPTER 5 DEALS WITH CHURCH DISCIPLINE. THIS IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO PAUL. THERE IS IMMORALITY OF A STRANGE SORT IN THE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH HAS REFUSED TO DEAL WITH THE OFFENDER. IN VERSE 9, “NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH,” IS μη συναναμιγνυσθαι, A PRESENT MIDDLE INFINITIVE. THIS WORD IS STRENGTHENED GREATLY BY ADDING THE PREPOSITIONS συν, “TOGETHER WITH” AND ανα, “UP” WITH THE WORD μιγνυμαι (MIGNUMAI) “TO MIX” OR “TO MINGLE.” THIS IS A STRONG INDIRECT COMMAND NOT TO BE MIXED UP WITH PEOPLE WHO DO EVIL. OBVIOUSLY TO DEAL WITH THE OFFENDER THERE HAS TO BE UNITY IN THE CHURCH. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS “IT IS COMMONLY REPORTED,” MEANING THAT THE INFORMATION HAS BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE IN THE CITY.

IN THIS CHAPTER HE STATES THE REASONS WHY THE CHURCH SHOULD DEAL WITH THIS OFFENDER. THE OFFENDER WAS LIVING IN SOME TYPE OF IMMORAL RELATIONSHIP, PROBABLY WITH HIS STEP-MOTHER. IT SOUNDS VERY SEVERE; SO, IT MAY HAVE BEEN HIS MOTHER. MOST COMMENTATORS THINK THAT IF IT HAD BEEN HIS MOTHER PAUL WOULD SURELY HAVE SAID SO. EVIDENTLY, SHE WAS AN UNBELIEVER AND NOT IN THE CHURCH,

BECAUSE PAUL SAYS NOTHING ABOUT HER. THE MAN WAS IN THE CHURCH; SO, HE HAD TO BE DEALT WITH. THE CHURCH IN CORINTH WAS DIVIDED IN ALLEGIANCE TO DIFFERENT LEADERS, BUT IN THIS MATTER OF IMMORALITY THEY PRIDED THEMSELVES ON BEING VERY OPEN AND BROAD MINDED. THE WORD IS COMPROMISE! IT SOUNDS LIKE SOME TYPE OF SITUATION ETHICS. IN VERSE 2, THE WORD PAUL USES FOR "MOURN" IS A WORD THAT IS USED ABOUT THE DEAD. IN OTHER WORDS THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN DEEP MOURNING. THEY, HOWEVER, WERE NOT UPSET. PAUL TELLS THEM THE FIRST PURPOSE OF THIS DISCIPLINE WAS TO HELP THE OFFENDER, TO BRING THIS PERSON TO THE POINT OF REPENTANCE. SOME PEOPLE HAVE SAID THAT NO ONE IS TO JUDGE. THIS SUPPOSEDLY COMES FROM MATTHEW 7. HOWEVER, JESUS WAS TALKING ABOUT PRONOUNCING FINAL DOOM UPON A PERSON. WE MUST STUDY SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE. THE SCRIPTURE CLEARLY ADMONISHES US TO BE FRUIT INSPECTORS, "FOR BY THEIR FRUITS YOU WILL KNOW THEM." THIS PROBLEM WAS NOT TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE CHURCH LEADERS ALONE. IT WAS TO BE HANDLED BY THE WHOLE CHURCH. IF THE MAN DID NOT REPENT, THEN HE WAS TO BE DELIVERED TO SATAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH. FLESH MEANS THE NATURE APART FROM GOD. THAT MEANS THEY WERE TO CUT HIM OFF FROM CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. THIS FITS WELL IN THE SCHEMATIC DESIGN OF I CORINTHIANS. THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WERE RESISTING PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP, PLAYING FAVORITES BY CHOOSING LEADERS THAT IMPRESSED THEM WITH HUMAN WISDOM, BUT NOT RESISTING SIN IN THE ASSEMBLY. PAUL IS TRYING TO SHOW THEM THAT THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH DID NOT CONSIST IN THE ELOQUENCE OF THE

SPEAKERS OR EVEN THE GIFTS OF THEIR PEOPLE BUT RATHER ON THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH IS UNION WITH CHRIST AND IMMORALITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST HURTS THIS UNION. THE CHURCH IS A LIVING EXAMPLE BEFORE THE WORLD. IF THE CHURCH IS LIKE THE WORLD, THE WORLD IS NOT DRAWN TO IT.

VERSES 6-8, MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH IS TO PROTECT ITS PEOPLE MORALLY. "KNOW YE NOT THAT A LITTLE LEAVEN, LEAVENS THE WHOLE LOAF." LEAVEN IN SOMETHING PUFFS IT UP. SO, THEY WERE TO PURGE OUT THAT LEAVEN OF PRIDE. THIS COMES FROM THE JEWISH BACKGROUND OF THE PASSOVER. THE LESSON IS THAT A LITTLE SIN IN CORINTH HAD BECOME GREAT LEAVEN IN THE CHURCH. IT HAD SO PUFFED UP THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS THAT THEY WERE NOT DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH ARE TO BE SPIES, BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT THEY ARE NOT TO LET SIN GROW IN THE CHURCH. THERE ARE VERY CLEAR WARNINGS IN SCRIPTURE THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT TO LET SIN GROW IN IT, FOR SIN WEAKENS THE CHURCH AND HARMS ITS FELLOWSHIP.

IN THIS SECTION PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH. HE MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIN IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER AND SIN IN THE LIFE OF AN UNBELIEVER. THE WORLD IS DOMINATED AND CONTROLLED BY SATAN. THE CHURCH IS UNITED AND CONTROLLED BY CHRIST. ANYTHING IN THE CHURCH WHICH CAUSES SIN TO GROW MUST GO. SIN IN THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS REPORTED IN THE COMMUNITY. THE MESSAGE IN THIS SECTION IS "NOT TO FELLOWSHIP WITH SIN IN THE CHURCH."

I CORINTHIANS 6

- I. SETTLE DISPUTES IN THE CHURCH
PEACEFULLY 6:1 - 8
- II. JESUS CHRIST CHANGES PEOPLE 6:1 - 8
- III. YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT 6:12 - 20

IN THIS SECTION, PAUL DEALS WITH DISPUTES AND LAWSUITS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH WHICH THEY WERE SETTLING IN THE PAGAN COURTS. THE GREEKS LOVED TO DISPUTE AND DEBATE. THEY LOVED THE LAW COURTS. IN FACT THE GREAT MEN OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC CAME FROM GREECE. THEIR LOVE OF VERBAL BATTLES, DEBATES, AND LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH WAS CAUSING THEM TO BRING EACH OTHER TO COURT. OBVIOUSLY, ONE OF THE REASONS THEY BROUGHT EACH OTHER TO COURT WAS TO SHOW THEIR SUPERIORITY. THIS TRAIT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE OTHERS EXHIBITED IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH. PAUL WARNS THEM THAT CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO DEAL WITH EACH OTHER IN THIS MANNER. THIS HURTS THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST AND CREATES DISUNITY IN THE FELLOWSHIP. THERE ARE SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES HERE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. FIRST, IT IS NOT BECOMING OF CHRISTIANS TO BE CONTENDING WITH EACH OTHER BEFORE THE PAGAN WORLD. ANOTHER PRINCIPLE, EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, WHEN CHRISTIANS BRING EACH OTHER TO THE LAW COURTS IT INDICATES THAT THEY DO NOT LOVE EACH OTHER.

IN VERSES 12 - 20, PAUL FOCUSES ON UNION WITH CHRIST AND HOW IMPURITY AND DEFILEMENT OF THE WORLD HARMS THIS UNION. TO LIVE AS A CORINTHIAN IN PAUL'S DAY WAS TO LIVE A LIFE OF IMMORALITY. THE CHRISTIANS IN CORINTH HAD COME OUT OF THAT TYPE OF WORLD, AND THEIR TEMPTATION WAS TO GO BACK TO IT. PAUL IS URGING THEM TO BE TRUE TO THEIR IDENTITY AS CHRISTIANS. THEY SOMEHOW BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD SIN AT WILL AND STILL BE SPIRITUAL. ONE OF THE GREAT TRUTHS OF I CORINTHIANS IS THAT SALVATION DOES NOT GIVE FREEDOM TO SIN. SOME EVIDENTLY THOUGHT THAT SALVATION GAVE FREEDOM TO SIN. THIS IS A MISUNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION. PAUL CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THEY ARE NOT THEIR OWN; THEY ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE. THE PRICE WAS THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST; THEREFORE, THEY CANNOT USE THEIR BODIES TO DO AS THEY PLEASE, BECAUSE THEIR BODIES DO NOT BELONG TO THEM ANYMORE. THEY BELONG TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE FOR TODAY. PAUL GOES ON TO SAY THAT WHEN WE SIN AGAINST OUR OWN BODY, WE SIN AGAINST CHRIST. WE HARM OUR UNION WITH CHRIST.

WE OUGHT TO GLORIFY CHRIST WITH OUR BODIES BY TAKING CARE OF THEM. WE ARE TO TAKE CARE OF THEM BECAUSE THEY BELONG TO CHRIST. THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORLD IS, "WELL THE BODY IS YOURS, YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH IT. EVERYBODY'S DOING IT. SO WHY BE DIFFERENT? LIVE IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD."

PAUL MAKES HIS ARGUMENT VERY RELEVANT. THE WORSHIP OF APHRODITE, PROSTITUTION WITH THE NAME OF RELIGION, WAS A HUGE ENTERPRISE IN CORINTH. PAUL SAYS TO THEM THAT JUST AS THESE PAGANS HAD THEIR TEMPLE, GOD HAS HIS TEMPLE. HIS TEMPLE IS THEIR BODIES. IT IS A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR THEM NOT TO BE DEFILED BY THE WORLD, NOR TO LIVE IN IMMORALITY.



I CORINTHIANS 7

- I. PRINCIPLES OF MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY 7:1 - 9
- II. PRINCIPLES OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE 7:10-24
- III. PRINCIPLES FOR THE UNMARRIED 7:25 - 38
- IV. PRINCIPLES FOR THE WIDOWED 7:39 - 40

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH HAD PRESENTED TO PAUL IN AN EARLIER LETTER. THIS IS A NEW DIVISION IN THIS EPISTLE. HE ANSWERS PRACTICAL QUESTIONS. IN THIS CHAPTER HE DEALS WITH THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP, THE UNMARRIED AND WITH THE PERSON WHO IS MARRIED TO A PERSON WHO IS NOT A BELIEVER. HE ALSO DEALS WITH THE PARENTS OF YOUNG WOMEN WHO WERE NOT YET MARRIED. WE MUST REMEMBER THEY ARRANGED THE MARRIAGES OF THEIR DAUGHTERS, A CUSTOM QUITE DIFFERENT FROM OURS. THIS CHAPTER, THEREFORE, HAS TO BE STUDIED IN LIGHT OF THE CULTURAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THEN AND NOW.

THIS CHAPTER IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD. PAUL HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD THE WORLD IN WHICH HE LIVED. THE TRUTH IS, PAUL PROBABLY DID MORE TO RAISE THE STATUS OF WOMEN THAN ANY PERSON OF HIS DAY EXCEPT JESUS. THROUGH THE CENTURIES THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL HAS ALWAYS RAISED THE STATUS OF WOMEN. WOMEN BEFORE AND DURING PAUL'S TIME IN MUCH OF THE WORLD WERE REGARDED AS POSSESSIONS. HIS STATEMENT THAT IN CHRIST THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR

FEMALE WAS ALMOST EARTH SHAKING FOR HIS TIME. THERE WERE A LOT OF QUESTIONS IN THE CHURCH ABOUT MARRIAGE. EVIDENTLY, SOME OF THE PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS THE DUTY OF THE BELIEVER TO BE MARRIED. OTHERS THOUGHT THE MARRIAGE STATE WAS INFERIOR AND THAT THE PERSON WHO MARRIED SHOWED THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH. SO PAUL WRITES TO CLARIFY THESE MISUNDERSTANDINGS. PAUL GIVES THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE AND RELATES IT TO THE PARTICULAR TIME IN WHICH THEY WERE LIVING. IN THE FIRST NINE VERSES, PAUL DEALS WITH CELIBACY AND THE UNMARRIED UNBELIEVER. PAUL HAS BEEN REGARDED BY SOME AS A NARROW ESTHETIC WHO DID NOT LIKE WOMEN AND DISCOURAGED MARRIAGE. THAT IS NOT TRUE. IF YOU STUDY ALL THAT PAUL SAID IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHILE ALSO EXAMINING THE CULTURAL STANDARDS OF HIS DAY, PAUL IS THE FRIEND OF WOMEN. PAUL ALSO ADVOCATES THE IDEA THAT A SINGLE LIFE IS AN HONORABLE LIFE. HE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT SAY THAT IT IS SUPERIOR TO THE MARRIED LIFE. HE SAYS THAT MARRIAGE IS ORDAINED AND SANCTIFIED OF GOD FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. CHRIST IS THE COHESIVE FORCE IN MARRIAGE. OTHER SCRIPTURE SUPPORTS THE THESIS.

IN VERSES 10-24, HE DEALS WITH A BELIEVER WHO IS MARRIED TO AN UNBELIEVER. THE QUESTION IS SHOULD THE BELIEVER LEAVE THE UNBELIEVING HUSBAND OR WIFE. PAUL'S COUNCIL IS VERY CLEAR. STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND WITNESS TO THE PERSON BY LIVING AN EXEMPLARY LIFE; WHEREBY, GETTING THE PERSON'S ATTENTION AND CAUSING HIM TO LET THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK IN HIS LIFE SO THAT HE OR SHE WILL BECOME A BELIEVER. IF SEPARATION TAKES PLACE THE

UNBELIEVING PARTNER IS TO INITIATE IT, NOT THE BELIEVING PARTNER. IF THE UNBELIEVER IS CONTENT TO LIVE WITH THE CHRISTIAN, THEN NO SEPARATION IS TO TAKE PLACE. HOWEVER, IF THE UNBELIEVER SEEKS THE SEPARATION, THEN THAT BELIEVER IS TO GO ON LIVING AS HE IS. THIS MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT TO BE BROKEN EASILY. THE UNBELIEVING PARTNER IS THE ONE WHO MUST BREAK THE MARRIAGE. IF THE UNBELIEVER ABANDONS THE PERSON, THEN DOES THE BELIEVER HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMARRY? PAUL TAUGHT THAT UNFAITHFULNESS COULD BREAK THE BONDS OF MARRIAGE AND GIVE PERMISSION FOR THE INNOCENT PARTY TO REMARRY. PAUL IS NOT COMMANDING SEPARATION. HE IS PERMITTING IT IN CERTAIN CASES. THE FACT THAT A PERSON BECOMES A CHRISTIAN DOES NOT CHANGE THAT PERSON'S STATUS IN SOCIETY. PAUL ESTABLISHES SOUND BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.

IN VERSES 25 - 38, PAUL DISCUSSES UNMARRIED WOMEN AND THE PARENTS OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE DAUGHTERS. PAUL SAYS THAT IT IS NOT A MATTER OF RIGHT AND WRONG, BUT RATHER A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE. THIS IS RELATED TO THE TIMES IN WHICH THEY LIVED. THE PARENTS WERE NOT TO SUPPOSE THAT THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR DAUGHTER WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN THE WORLD. VERSE 38 REFERS TO FATHERS GIVING THEIR DAUGHTERS IN MARRIAGE. THIS IS CLEAR FROM USE OF $\epsilon\kappa\gamma\alpha\mu\iota\zeta\omega\nu$. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT "GAMEO" MEANS "TO MARRY" AND "GAMIZO" MEANS "TO GIVE IN MARRIAGE." (BOYCE W. BLACKWELDER, LIGHT FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT [BAKER BOOK HOUSE, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN] P. 54.) PAUL ALSO DECLARES THAT IN TIMES OF DISTRESS WHICH WERE UPON THE CHURCH THEN, THERE IS

GREAT ADVANTAGE TO BEING UNMARRIED. PAUL STATES THE FACT THAT THE ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS OF PARENTS IN REFERENCE TO MARRIAGE IS RELATED TO CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXPEDIENCY. PAUL IS WRITING THIS CHAPTER IN VIEW OF SOME UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH EVIDENTLY WERE OCCURRING. HE SAYS IF DEATH COMES THEN REMARRIAGE IS POSSIBLE. BUT THERE IS NOT TO BE DIVORCE AS LONG AS THE HUSBAND OR WIFE IS ALIVE. PAUL ENCOURAGES BELIEVERS NOT TO MARRY UNBELIEVERS. THIS CHAPTER NEEDS TO BE READ VERY CAREFULLY. PEOPLE SHOULD NOT READ THIS AND SAY, "WELL, THE WORLD WAS QUITE DIFFERENT THEN AND I AM GOING TO DO WHAT I WANT."



I CORINTHIANS 8

- I. LOVE BUILDS UP WHILE ATTITUDES OF SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY PUFF UP 8:1 -3
- II. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM USED UNWISELY CAN CAUSE ANOTHER TO STUMBLE 8:4 - 11
- III. CAUSING ANOTHER BELIEVER TO STUMBLE IS SIN 8:12 - 13

CHAPTER 8, 9 AND 10 EXAMINE GREAT PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. FIRST, CHAPTER 8 DEALS WITH EATING MEAT THAT HAD BEEN SACRIFICED ON ALTARS TO PAGAN GODS. IN CORINTH THE MEAT WAS KILLED AT THE TEMPLE. PART OF THE MEAT WAS KEPT FOR THE PRIESTS AND THE REST WAS FOR PRIVATE FEASTS OR SOLD IN THE MARKETS. THUS, SACRIFICIAL MEAT WAS SOLD IN THE MARKET PLACE. IF A BELIEVER WAS INVITED TO AN UNBELIEVER'S HOUSE FOR A FEAST THE MEAT THAT WAS SERVED PROBABLY HAD BEEN OFFERED OR DEDICATED TO AN IDOL. THE QUESTION WAS, SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN EAT THE MEAT? SOME BELIEVED THAT THE DEMONIC POWERS OF SATAN WERE PRESENT IN MEAT OFFERED TO PAGAN GODS AND THAT IT WOULD INJURE THE BELIEVER. THE CHRISTIAN, THEREFORE, SHOULD NOT EAT THE MEAT. PAUL'S ANSWER IS VERY CLEAR. HE SETS FORTH VERY BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT A CHRISTIAN IS SET FREE FROM THE LAW AND IS NOT AFFECTED BY EATING MEAT. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE.

PAUL THEN PRESENTS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE WEAKER BROTHER. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE TODAY. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT AN INNOCENT PRACTICE MAY HARM OR DIMINISH A PERSON'S INFLUENCE. OUR EXAMPLE IS CHRIST. WE ARE TO BE CONTROLLED BY OUR CHRISTIAN LOVE. THIS LOVE IS THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN CHAPTER 9, PAUL CITES HIMSELF AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS PRINCIPLE. IN CHAPTER 10, HE USES THE EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL TO WARN BELIEVERS ABOUT PRESUMING ON GOD'S GRACE AND HAVING PRESUMPTUOUS SINS. IN THE FIRST PART OF THE EIGHTH CHAPTER THE IDEA IS PRESENTED THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE CLEARLY RIGHT, SOME THINGS ARE CLEARLY WRONG, AND SOME THINGS ARE IN A GRAY AREA. AT CORINTH MANY CHRISTIANS REGARDED IDOLATRY AS SUPERSTITION. THEY KNEW THAT MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS DID NOT HAVE ANY AFFECT ON THEM; SO, THEY SAW NO MORAL PROBLEM WITH EATING IT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO FELT THAT IT WAS WRONG TO EAT MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS. THIS WAS A VERY SERIOUS QUESTION FOR PEOPLE. PAUL MIGHT HAVE APPEALED TO THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM WHERE EATING MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS WAS DISCOURAGED. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A LOCAL PROBLEM FOR THE BELIEVERS. PAUL, HOWEVER, SETS FORTH A PRINCIPLE THAT APPLIES TO TODAY'S CONSCIENCE AS WELL. PAUL STATED THAT EVEN IN CHRISTIAN LIBERTY THE BELIEVER COULD NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BECOME ENSLAVED BY HABIT. THE HABIT MIGHT BE INNOCENT, BUT THE PRINCIPLE HOLDS. PAUL TEACHES ABOUT THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE AND NOT CAUSING A BROTHER TO STUMBLE. THE STRONGER CHRISTIAN IS TO PROTECT THE WEAKER BROTHER. LIBERTY MUST BE LIMITED BY LOVE. HE

INSISTS THAT THEIR DIFFERENCES MUST BE SETTLED ON THE BASIS OF LOVE AND NOT FROM KNOWLEDGE ALONE.

HIS POINT IS THAT KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP, WHEREAS, LOVE BUILDS UP. LATER IN THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER PAUL PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS ON LOVE AS THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS. PAUL TEACHES THAT IDOLS ARE NOT REAL AND THAT THE MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS COULD NOT HARM THE BODY OR THE SPIRIT. THE WEAKER BROTHER, HOWEVER, DOES NOT HAVE THIS SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. THEREFORE, LOVE IS THE GUIDE FOR THE STRONGER BROTHER. CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE CAUSES THE STRONGER BROTHER TO BE CONCERNED FOR THE WEAKER BROTHER. BY WEAKER BROTHER, HE DOES NOT MEAN ONE WHO MIGHT BE EASILY INFLUENCED TO DO WRONG. HE MEANS ONE WEAK IN THE FAITH. PAUL IS ALSO PERSUADING THE WEAKER BROTHER THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN EATING MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS; THEREFORE, THEY SHOULD NOT CONDEMN THEIR STRONGER BROTHERS.

I CORINTHIANS 9

- I. THE CAUSE OF CHRIST HAS PRIORITY OVER PERSONAL RIGHTS 9:1 - 12**
- II. INSISTENCE UPON RIGHTS MAY HARM SPIRITUAL EFFECTIVENESS 9:13 - 15**
- III. THE GOSPEL CONTAINS ITS OWN REWARDS 9:16 - 18**
- IV. MAKE NECESSARY SACRIFICES FOR THE GOSPEL 9:19 - 23**
- V. DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY 9:24 - 27**

IN CHAPTER 8, PAUL HAS SAID THAT HE WILL NOT EAT MEAT IF IT CAUSES HIS CHRISTIAN BROTHER TO STUMBLE. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT HE WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO INFLUENCE AND GUIDE HIS BROTHER TO A LIFE THAT FOLLOWS CHRIST, EVEN THOUGH IT CAUSES INCONVENIENCE TO HIMSELF.

IN CHAPTER 9, HE CONTINUES THIS IDEA. EVEN THOUGH HE IS AN APOSTLE HE REFUSED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE CHURCH AT CORINTH SO THAT HE COULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF SELFISH MOTIVES. AS AN APOSTLE HE HAS A RIGHT TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THEM, BUT HE SAYS HE WAS TRYING TO SHOW A GOOD EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST. HE DEFENDS HIS RIGHT AS AN APOSTLE AND AS THE ONE WHO ORIGINALLY FOUNDED THE CHURCH IN CORINTH TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THEM. PAUL, HOWEVER, RENOUNCED THAT

SUPPORT EVEN THOUGH HE HAD GONE THROUGH ALL KINDS OF HARDSHIPS. THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE UPKEEP OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS. HE GIVES AN EXAMPLE IN VERSES 12 - 14 OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS. HE SHOWS THAT JESUS EVEN TALKED ABOUT THIS PRINCIPLE IN MATTHEW AND LUKE. PAUL SAYS THAT HE DID NOT RECEIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT BECAUSE HE WANTED THEM TO KNOW THAT HIS MOTIVES WERE PURE AND HE DID NOT WANT TO ENDANGER HIS EFFECTIVENESS. HE WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT INDULGENCE MAY NOT BE THE BEST POLICY EVEN IF IT IS NOT WRONG, FOR THE INDULGENCE MAY DESTROY THE INFLUENCE. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE FOR A BROTHER IS THE SUPREME CHRISTIAN MOTIVATION FOR ACTION.

IN VERSES 19 - 23, THE PHRASE, "I AM BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN" EMPHASIZES A PRINCIPLE. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TO OFFEND THE JEWS. HE IS A JEW AND CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THEIR CUSTOMS TO AVOID GIVING NEEDLESS OFFENCE TO THEM.

IN VERSES 24 - 27, HE CHALLENGES THEM TO STRIVE FOR A CROWN. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THE GREEK GAMES WERE EXTREMELY POPULAR. THESE GAMES TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE THE CITY OF CORINTH SO THIS PICTURE WAS ALWAYS IN THEIR MINDS. SELF - CONTROL AND SELF - DENIAL WERE NECESSARY DISCIPLINES IN ORDER TO WIN AT THESE GAMES. PAUL INSISTS THAT ALL WHO SHARE IN SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ALSO HAVE TO DISCIPLINE THEIR LIVES AND LIMIT THEIR LIBERTIES SO THAT THEY WILL BE VICTORIOUS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. SOME THINK THAT PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT THE ISTHMIAN GAMES. THESE OCCURRED EVERY

OTHER YEAR, AND ONLY FREE MEN COULD PARTICIPATE. THE GLORY OF WINNING WAS ITSELF THE REWARD. BEFORE THE GAMES TOOK PLACE, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS HAD TO BE PRESENT AND DISCIPLINE THEMSELVES THROUGH EXERCISES. A MAN CALLED THE NAMES OF THE COUNTRIES AND THE ATHLETES FROM EACH COUNTRY. THE WINNER OF EACH EVENT WAS GIVEN A SIMPLE CROWN OF GARLAND OR SOME OTHER KIND OF LEAVES. THE FAMILY OF THE VICTOR WAS REGARDED WITH GREAT HONOR. WHEN THE WINNER OF AN EVENT RETURNED TO HIS CITY THERE WAS A GREAT CELEBRATION. HEROES WERE IMMORTALIZED AND GIVEN GREAT FAME. PAUL MAKES TWO POINTS RELATED TO THIS: 1. IN THE GREEK CONTEST ONLY ONE PERSON COULD WIN. 2. IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ALL RUN THE RACE AND ALL CAN WIN THE PRIZE. THE PRIZE THE GREEKS WON WAS A CORRUPTIBLE CROWN WHICH SOON WILTED AND DIED. PAUL SAYS WE STRIVE FOR A CROWN WHICH DOES NOT FADE, FOR IT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JOY. THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWN IS ETERNAL. THIS IS FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, BUT VERY RELEVANT TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. PAUL SAYS IN HIS OWN EFFORT OF STRIVING, HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE DISQUALIFIED BY NOT HAVING DONE WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO. THE WORD TRANSLATED "CASTAWAY" MEANS "DISAPPROVED." IT COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED "NOT WELL PLEASED." HE IS SAYING THAT HE HAS TO DISCIPLINE HIMSELF JUST AS THE ATHLETE DOES.

I CORINTHIANS 10

- I. SUBTLE TEMPTATION MAY HAVE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES 10:1-8**
- II. DO NOT TEST GOD'S PATIENCE 9- 11**
- III. ALWAYS BE ON GUARD AGAINST EVIL TEMPTATION 12**
- IV. GOD GIVES POWER TO ENDURE TEMPTATION 13**
- V. DO NOT IDENTIFY YOURSELF WITH THE WORLD 14-22**
- VI. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS LIMITED BY CONCERN FOR OTHERS 23-30**
- VII. DO EVERYTHING TO GLORIFY GOD 31**
- VIII. SEEK THE SALVATION OF UNBELIEVERS 32-33**

IN CHAPTER 10, PAUL PRESENTS SOME ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, ESPECIALLY THE PRINCIPLE THAT WHEN A PERSON PRESUMES UPON THE GRACE OF GOD HE MUST BE CAREFUL OR HE WILL SIN. HE USES THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHO SAW THE GREAT MIRACLES OF GOD; YET DISOBEYED GOD. THEY CONTINUED TO INDULGE IN PRACTICES WHICH THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM FROM EGYPT. THESE SINS EVIDENTLY CAUSED THEIR DOWNFALL. IN SPITE OF THE PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES THAT GOD HAD GIVEN TO THEM THEY FELL INTO GREAT SIN. WE ARE TO LEARN FROM THEIR EXAMPLE. PAUL IDENTIFIES THE GREAT ROCK IN THE WILDERNESS WITH JESUS CHRIST. THEY DRANK FROM THIS ROCK; SO, IN TYPE, JESUS WAS WITH THEM IN THE WILDERNESS. PAUL IS WARNING THEM ABOUT CONTINUALLY PRACTICING THINGS

WHICH ARE QUESTIONABLE. IN OTHER WORDS, HE IS SAYING THAT IF YOU QUESTION SOMETHING AND KEEP DOING IT, BEFORE LONG YOU WILL BE IN TROUBLE. THIS IS A SOUND PRINCIPLE FOR TODAY. PEOPLE WANT TO PLAY AROUND THE EDGES OF SIN. THE PRINCIPLE IS BE CAREFUL NOT TO PLACE ONESELF IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION WHERE ONE IS CONTINUALLY TEMPTED.

IN VERSES 14-22, PAUL SAYS THAT A PERSON SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN IDOL WORSHIP OR IN A FEAST IN A PAGAN TEMPLE. THIS SHOWS HOW IMPORTANT THIS SUBJECT WAS TO THOSE PEOPLE. PAUL STATES ALSO THAT WHENEVER A BELIEVER INDULGES WITH SOMEONE HE IDENTIFIES WITH THAT PERSON AND HIS WORLD. THIS TAKES ALLEGIANCE AWAY FROM JESUS CHRIST. HE ALSO POINTS OUT THAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SYMBOLIZES THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER WITH CHRIST AND ALL THE BENEFITS THAT CHRIST'S ATONING WORK IMPARTS. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT IDOLS ARE NOT REAL, THE POWERS OF SATAN CAN USE THESE TO GET A FOOTHOLD INTO LIVES. WHEN HE SAYS THAT YOU CANNOT DRINK OF THE CUP OF THE LORD AND THE CUP OF THE DEMON, HE IS SHOWING THAT THERE CANNOT BE COMPROMISE.

I CORINTHIANS 11

I. PRINCIPLES OF MODESTY IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

11:1 - 16

II. PRINCIPLES FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER 11:17 - 34

IN CHAPTERS 11 THROUGH 14, PAUL DEALS WITH DISORDER. THEIR PUBLIC WORSHIP WAS CHARACTERIZED BY DISORDERLINESS. CONFUSION GIVES A BAD WITNESS TO THOSE WHO DID NOT KNOW THE LORD. CHAPTER 11 BRINGS TO LIGHT THE CONFUSION THAT TOOK PLACE BEFORE AND DURING THE LORD'S SUPPER. IN CHAPTERS 12 - 14, HE DISCUSSES THE PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN PUBLIC WORSHIP. IN THIS DISCUSSION HE GIVES GUIDANCE FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP SO THEY WILL BE GOOD WITNESSES FOR CHRIST.

CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE MORE TO RAISE THE POSITION OF WOMEN THAN ANY OTHER RELIGION OR INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD. PAUL WAS A GREAT LIBERATOR OF WOMEN. THAT IS NOT GENERALLY RECOGNIZED. PAUL'S TEACHING ABOUT EQUALITY IN CHRIST, NO BONDED OR FREE, NO MALE OR FEMALE, NO JEW OR GREEK, LIFTED THE LEVEL OF WOMEN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. PAUL IS THE FRIEND OF WOMEN. HE GIVES PRINCIPLES TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND HOW THEY CAN BE GOOD WITNESSES TO THE LOST WORLD. PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS HERE MAY BE LOCAL AND TEMPORARY, BUT THE PRINCIPLES ARE ETERNAL. WE HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL, OR WE ARE INCONSISTENT IN OUR TEACHINGS AND LOOSE SIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLES. FOR EXAMPLE, IF WE TAKE THIS LITERALLY WE

MUST INSIST ON WOMEN WEARING HATS OR VEILS TO WORSHIP. HOWEVER, IN THE UNITED STATES WOMEN DO NOT WEAR HATS OR VEILS. DO WE INSIST THAT WOMEN WEAR VEILS OR DO WE LOOK FOR THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLE IN THIS PASSAGE? YOU CAN ALREADY SEE THE HAVOC THAT COULD BE CREATED FOR MANY THEOLOGIES BY APPLYING LITERALISM TO MANY AREAS WHERE WE ARE INCONSISTENT. BE CAREFUL THAT YOU LOOK FOR THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLES WHEN YOU INTERPRET SCRIPTURE PASSAGES. THE PRINCIPLES ARE ALWAYS TRUE.

THE PRINCIPLE HERE IS GIVING A GOOD WITNESS FOR THE LORD BY BEING MODEST. THIS PRINCIPLE WILL STAND FOREVER. WE HAVE THE PROPENSITY TO FOCUS ON THE INSIGNIFICANT, RETAIN THE FORMS, STATE RULES AND DISREGARD ETERNAL PRINCIPLES. THE PHARISEES DID IT, AND IT IS IN THE CHURCH TODAY. IN THIS PASSAGE PAUL IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE INFERIORITY OF WOMEN. HE IS TALKING ABOUT HEADSHIP. HEAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN THE NEW, MEANS IN THE BEGINNING. IN GENESIS, "IN THE BEGINNING," COULD BE TRANSLATED "IN THE HEAD OF," OR "IN THE HEAD OF GOD." HIS ORDER OF HEADSHIP MEANS THAT CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH. MAN IS THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN. THIS PRINCIPLE WAS NEGLECTED THEN AND IS NOW. CORINTH WAS A VERY IMMORAL CITY. PAGAN TEMPLE PROSTITUTES COLLECTED MONEY FOR THE TEMPLE TREASURY. THE MARKS OF A SINFUL WOMAN WERE THAT SHE HAD SHORT HAIR AND WALKED THROUGHOUT THE CITY NOT WEARING A VEIL. HER IMMODESTY WAS A SIGNAL THAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR BUSINESS. PAUL IS TEACHING THAT WHEN CHRISTIAN WOMEN HAD THE SAME BEHAVIOR AS THE TEMPLE PROSTITUTES

IT BROUGHT DISHONOR TO THEIR FAMILIES, HUSBANDS, CHURCH AND LORD. IMMODESTY IN ANY PERSON HARMS THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH. THAT PRINCIPLE HAS NOT CHANGED.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE LORD'S SUPPER WAS PRECEDED BY A LOVE FEAST. DURING THIS LOVE FEAST THE WEALTHY SAT OFF BY THEMSELVES, ATE, DRANK AND GOT DRUNK. ORDER WAS DISREGARDED. THE POOR SAT AT THE SIDE AND ATE WHAT LITTLE THEY HAD. PAUL SAID THEY WERE TO HAVE UNITY AND EAT IN LOVE. PAUL ASKS HOW THEY COULD SERVE THE LORD WHEN SOME OF THEM WERE GLUTTONOUS, GETTING DRUNK AND NEGLECTING THEIR OTHER BROTHERS. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT THE LORD'S TABLE IS FOR UNITY, RELATIONSHIP AND IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS CHRIST. IT IS NOT TO SATISFY THE APPETITE.

I CORINTHIANS 12-14

PRINCIPLES FOR USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I CORINTHIANS 12

- I. THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES LOYALTY TO JESUS AS LORD 12:1-3**
- II. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES A DIVERSITY OF GIFTS TO THE CHURCH 12:3-11**
- III. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT EXERCISED PROPERLY BRINGS UNITY TO THE BODY 2:12-27**
- IV. GOD HAS DESIGNED SPECIFIC GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH 12:28-31**

IT IS WISE TO READ CHAPTERS 12, 13 AND 14 TOGETHER AND COMPREHEND THEM AS A UNIT. CHAPTER 13 IS USUALLY ISOLATED FROM THE OTHER TWO CHAPTERS. THIS CAUSES THE INTENT OF THE CHAPTER TO BE MISSED. PEOPLE USUALLY THINK OF CHAPTER 13 AS THE LOVE CHAPTER. IT IS FAR MORE. THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT LOVE, BUT THAT IS NOT ITS MAIN THEME. THE MAIN THEME IS THAT LOVE IS THE BASIS FOR USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS. IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL TEACHES PRINCIPLES ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

IN CHAPTER 12, PAUL TEACHES THAT THE PURPOSE FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS TO EDIFY THE CHURCH. IN CHAPTER 13, HE TEACHES THAT SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE TO BE EXERCISED IN LOVE. IN CHAPTER 14, HE TEACHES THAT THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS TESTED BY HOW USEFUL THEY ARE IN BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST.

IN CHAPTER 12 PAUL ANSWERS SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THEY HAVE ASKED ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS. IN THE FIRST THREE VERSES PAUL GIVES THE FIRST TEST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S OPERATION WITHIN A PERSON. IT IS ABSOLUTE LOYALTY TO JESUS CHRIST. OBVIOUSLY, A PERSON CAN SAY WITH HIS PHYSICAL WORDS THAT JESUS IS LORD, BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN A PERSON HIS LIFE WILL DECLARE IT. IF JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF A PERSON'S LIFE IT WILL BE AFFIRMED. IT IS ONLY BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT THE PERSON IS ABLE TO PROCLAIM JESUS CHRIST LORD IN HIS LIFE. IT IS POSSIBLE THERE WAS SOME KIND OF PERSECUTION THAT CAUSES PAUL TO FOCUS ON JESUS' LORDSHIP. WE KNOW THAT LATER, THERE WAS EXTREME PERSECUTION IN THIS SAME GENERAL AREA. WE ALSO KNOW FROM HISTORY THAT POLYCARP, THE BISHOP OF SMYRNA, WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE ROMAN PROCONSUL AND REQUIRED TO BLASPHEME AND CURSE CHRIST. HIS ANSWER WAS, "EIGHTY AND SIX YEARS HAVE I SERVED CHRIST, AND HE HAS DONE ME NO WRONG, HOW CAN I BLASPHEME MY KING WHO SAVED ME?" HIS LIFE WAS AN EXHIBITION OF JESUS CHRIST AS LORD.

VERSES 4- 11, POINT TO THE DIVERSITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. THIS WAS A GREAT GIFTED CHURCH, BUT THEY HAD TROUBLE WITH UNITY. ONE OF PAUL'S GREAT THEMES IS THAT THE CHURCH IS A BODY WITH EACH PART FUNCTIONING IN HARMONY WITH THE OTHER PARTS. JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY WHICH DIRECTS THE PARTS TO WORK TOGETHER.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE POWERFUL AND WHEN EXERCISED BIBLICALLY ACHIEVE GREAT UNITY IN THE CHURCH. BUT A MISUNDERSTANDING AND MISAPPROPRIATION OF THEM HAS CAUSED DIVISION AND GREAT HARM IN MANY SECTIONS OF THE CHURCH. ONE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS A SEGMENT OF THE CHURCH THAT DENIES ALL THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR TODAY. THEY SAY THAT ALL OR MOST OF THE GIFTS PASSED AWAY WITH THE APOSTLES. OTHER GROUPS SAY THAT ALL OF THE GIFTS EXIST AT ALL TIMES IN ALL PLACES AND PLACE ONE GIFT AS THE ENTRANCE GIFT TO ALL THE OTHER GIFTS. SCRIPTURES ARE TWISTED TO SUPPORT EACH OF THESE PARTICULAR VIEWS. SCRIPTURE IS RUN THROUGH A THEOLOGICAL GRID, RATHER THAN LETTING THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THE SAD FACT IS IF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS WITHDRAWN FROM MOST CHURCHES THERE WOULD BE NO AWARENESS OF HIS ABSENCE. IS THIS THE CHURCH WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT? WITHOUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE CANNOT PRODUCE EITHER THE FRUITS OR THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND FRUITS, HOW IS IT DONE? IT IS DONE BY THE FLESH. ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, THAT DOES NOT PLEASE GOD, BECAUSE THE FLESH IS HUMAN NATURE APART FROM GOD. HUMAN NATURE WANTS TO DO ALL KINDS OF GOOD DEEDS, CHARITABLE ACTS AND RELIGIOUS RITUALS, BUT IT NEVER PLEASES GOD. PAUL TEACHES ABOUT THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN SEVERAL PLACES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. SPIRITUAL GIFTS COME FROM GOD AND ARE, THEREFORE, SUPERNATURAL.

A LARGE PORTION OF THE CHURCH TODAY DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE SUPERNATURAL. THEREFORE, THEY LIMIT THE HOLY

SPIRIT. WE MUST BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS WHEN WE SAY THAT A GIFT PASSED AWAY LONG AGO, UNLESS WE HAVE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR THE STATEMENT. AND WE MUST BE CAREFUL THAT WE DO CORRECT EXEGESIS. NOTICE THAT PAUL RANKED LOWEST SOME OF THE GIFTS THAT THE CORINTHIANS RANKED HIGHEST. HIS TEST WAS WHETHER THE GIFT BUILT UP THE BODY. THERE WERE THEN, AND STILL ARE, GIFTS IN WHICH PEOPLE TAKE GREAT PRIDE, THINKING THEY ARE SUPERIOR BECAUSE THEY HAVE CERTAIN GIFTS. IN VERSES 25 - 30, PAUL FOCUSES ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE FACT THAT EACH PERSON HAS A GIFT TO OFFER THE WHOLE GROUP. THE EMPHASIS THAT EACH PERSON HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER IS IN VERSE 29 WHERE HE USES THE PARTICLE μή (MA) BEFORE EACH QUESTION. WHEN THE NEGATIVE PARTICLE IS USED IT INDICATES THE KIND OF ANSWER EXPECTED. A QUESTION INTRODUCED BY “MA,” EXPECTS A “NO” ANSWER. SATAN CAN AND DOES COUNTERFEIT GIFTS, AND IF POSSIBLE HE DAMAGES THE AUTHENTIC ONES WITH PRIDE.

THE SCRIPTURE TEACHES WHEN PEOPLE ARE BORN AGAIN THEY ARE BAPTIZED AND SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THERE IS ONE BAPTISM, AND MANY FILLINGS AS PEOPLE YIELD THEMSELVES TO GOD. THERE NEEDS TO BE CONSTANT ANOINTING. THE WORDS BAPTISM, FILLING AND ANOINTING ARE OFTEN USED BY PEOPLE IN WAYS THEY ARE NOT USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. A FORMER PRESIDENT OF A GREAT BIBLICAL SCHOOL AND AUTHOR OF MANY BOOKS SAID THAT HE HAD CONFUSED PEOPLE USING INTERCHANGEABLY THE PHRASES “BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” AND “FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

I CORINTHIANS 13

**I. LOVE IS THE BASIS FOR EXERCISING
SPIRITUAL GIFTS 13:1 - 3**

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE 13:4 - 7

III. THE ENDURING NATURE OF LOVE 13:8 - 13

CHAPTER 13 IS CALLED THE HYMN OF LOVE. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT PAUL IS QUOTING A HYMN. OTHERS THINK THAT HE WROTE THIS HIMSELF. HE WAS CERTAINLY CAPABLE OF WRITING IT. PAUL SAYS HE WILL SHOW THEM A MORE EXCELLENT WAY. IN THIS CHAPTER HE IS TEACHING THEM HOW SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE TO BE USED. THE MOST PRIZED SPIRITUAL GIFT TO THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WAS ECSTATIC UTTERANCES. PAUL, HOWEVER, PUTS ALL GIFTS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THE GREATEST GIFT GOD GIVES IS THE GRACE OF LOVE. THIS IS THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. THE GIFTS SHOULD NEVER BE CONSIDERED APART FROM THE FRUITS, BECAUSE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE OFTEN GIVEN TO SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE PEOPLE; WHEREAS, THE FRUITS ARE PRODUCED BY SPIRITUALLY MATURE PEOPLE. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, WHICH MUST BE THE OPERATING BASIS OF THE GIFTS. WITHOUT THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, THE GIFTS ALWAYS PUFF UP WITH PRIDE, CREATE PROBLEMS AND TEAR DOWN THE BODY OF CHRIST. WHEN THEY ARE EXERCISED IN LOVE THEY BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST. IN LOVE THEY ACHIEVE THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE. LOVE IS INDISPENSABLE FOR THE BELIEVER. IT IS THE GREATEST OF ALL FRUITS OR GIFTS. IT IS TO BE PRIZED ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE. PEOPLE MAY HAVE ALL THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS, BUT IF THEY DO NOT HAVE LOVE, THEY ARE AS A CLANGING GONG, THEIR

WORDS ARE EMPTY AND VAIN. THIS IS A TRUTH THEN AND FOREVER. WITHOUT LOVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS LIKE TRYING TO RING A BELL WITHOUT THE CLAPPER.

I CORINTHIANS 13 CAN BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOW: 1. THE NECESSITY OF LOVE, 1 - 3. 2. THE QUALITY OF LOVE, 4 - 7 AND 3. THE CHARACTER OF LOVE, VERSES 8 - 13. PAUL IN THIS CHAPTER IS BUILDING THE NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THEIR FUNCTION.

THE FACTIONS AND DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH REVEAL THEIR LACK OF LOVE FOR THE LORD AND FOR EACH OTHER. THE CITY OF CORINTH WAS FAMOUS FOR METAL MIRRORS WHICH GAVE A DIM REFLECTION OF THE REAL PERSON. IN THE PHRASE "FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DARKLY; BUT THEN FACE TO FACE" PAUL MEANS THAT WHEN THEIR LOVE IS PERFECTED THEY WILL SEE THINGS FROM A CLEAR PERSPECTIVE. IT IS NOT JUST IN HEAVEN THAT A PERSON SEES REALITY. IT IS WHEN GOD'S LOVE COMES TO THE PERSON.

I CORINTHIANS 14

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN BALANCE

I. PROPHECY EDIFIES THE CHURCH 14:1 - 3

II. TONGUES GIVE PRIVATE EDIFICATION 14:4

**III. UNDERSTANDING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP IS
PARAMOUNT 14:5 - 25**

**IV. PRINCIPLES FOR EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS
IN PUBLIC WORSHIP 14:26 - 40**

IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL ADVANCES THE REASONS WHY LOVE WILL LEAD TO CHOOSING THE GIFT OF PROPHECY OVER THE GIFT OF TONGUES. THE FIRST REASON IS PROPHECY EDIFIES THE WHOLE BODY OF BELIEVERS. THE SECOND REASON IS THE DESIRE OF BELIEVERS FOR THE CONVERSION OF UNBELIEVERS.

SOME TRANSLATIONS GIVE THE WORDING “UNKNOWN TONGUE.” THERE IS NO WORD “UNKNOWN” IN THIS CHAPTER IN THE GREEK TEXT. UNKNOWN IS IMPLIED. PAUL TEACHES THAT PROPHECY IS TO BE PREFERRED OVER TONGUES, BECAUSE PROPHECY SPEAKS TO PEOPLE AND BUILDS UP THOSE WHO HEAR; WHEREAS, THE ONE WHO SPEAKS IN A TONGUE SPEAKS TO GOD. PROPHECY COMFORTS, EDIFIES, ENCOURAGES, AND BUILDS UP THE CHURCH. TONGUES WHICH ARE NOT INTERRUPTED DO NOT BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST. PAUL USES THE EXAMPLE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS TO SHOW THAT IF THEY DO NOT PLAY IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER THE MUSIC WILL

NOT BE RECOGNIZED OR UNDERSTOOD, OR IF A BUGLE GIVES AN UNCERTAIN SOUND THE ARMY WILL NOT KNOW WHEN TO MOVE FORWARD INTO BATTLE. SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE CHURCH ARE LIKE THAT. THE CONTENT MUST HAVE A CLEAR MESSAGE SO THAT IT CAN BE COMPREHENDED. PAUL IS CALLING THEM TO A BALANCE IN THE EXERCISE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS. THEY HAVE OVER VALUED THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND UNDER VALUED THE GIFT OF PROPHECY. PAUL DOES NOT SAY THAT THEY ARE TO DISREGARD TONGUES. HE SAYS HE WISHES THEY ALL SPOKE WITH TONGUES, BUT EVEN MORE HE WISHES THEY ALL HAD THE GIFT OF PROPHECY. PROPHECY IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE. TONGUES ARE FOR PRIVATE EDIFICATION AND PROPHECY IS FOR PUBLIC EDIFICATION.

PAUL'S EMPHASIS IS ON WHAT THE LISTENERS RECEIVE AND COMPREHEND RATHER THAN UPON WHAT THE SPEAKER EXPERIENCES. HE REMINDS THEM THAT IF A PERSON ENTERS THEIR ASSEMBLY, WHO HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND HEARS SOMEONE SPEAKING IN A TONGUE HE DOES NOT KNOW, HE WILL THINK IT FOOLISH. HOWEVER, IF SOMEONE IS PROPHECYING, AND AN UNBELIEVER ENTERS THE MEETING, HE WILL UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE, MAY COMPREHEND ITS MEANING, HAVE HIS HEART CONVICTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BECOME A BELIEVER. THUS, PROPHECY IS SUPERIOR, BECAUSE IT HAS THE ABILITY TO REACH PEOPLE FOR THE LORD.

IN VERSE 12 THERE IS A RATHER UNUSUAL EXPRESSION. PAUL SAYS “επει ζηλωται εστε πνευματων,” “SINCE DESIROUS (EMULOUS) YOU ARE OF SPIRITS.” THE WORD TRANSLATED

DESIROUS IS FROM THE ROOT $\lambda\epsilon\omega$, MEANING TO BOIL, TO BE HOT, FERVENT, GLOWING WITH ZEAL. "OF SPIRITS" IS A RATHER UNUSUAL WAY TO EXPRESS WHAT HE IS SAYING. IT SEEMS TO MEAN THAT THEY DESIRE THE VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT COULD BE TRANSLATED "OF SPIRITUALS."

IN CHAPTER 14, VERSES 26 - 40, HE GIVES THE RULES OR GUIDELINES FOR USING THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN PUBLIC WORSHIP. THE PRINCIPLE: THEY ARE TO BUILD UP THE BODY. FOR THIS REASON HE GIVES INSTRUCTIONS ON THE USE OF THESE SPIRITUAL GIFTS. FIRST HE DEALS WITH TONGUES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP. HE SAYS THAT THEY ARE TO BE CONFINED TO NO MORE THAN THREE PEOPLE SPEAKING IN ONE SERVICE, AND AN INTERPRETER MUST BE PRESENT. THESE INSTRUCTIONS GIVE ORDER TO THE WORSHIP. PEOPLE ARE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING. PAUL SAYS WHEN EVERYBODY IS TALKING AT ONCE DISORDER ROBS COMPREHENSION. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT THEY ARE TO HAVE CONTROL OVER THE EXERCISES OF THIS GIFT.

PROPHECY IS NOT JUST FORETELLING THE FUTURE, IT IS ALSO FORTH TELLING THE GOSPEL AS 14:3 TELLS US. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH I WAS A PROPHET WITH MY CHILDREN WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG. I WOULD TELL THEM, "IF YOU DO THIS, I WILL DO SO AND SO." THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT I HAD PREDICTED THE FUTURE. WHEN A MAN STANDS IN THE PULPIT, HE PROPHESES THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN AND GRACE. WHEN WE EXEGETE THE SCRIPTURE AND SAY TO PEOPLE, "IF YOU SIN AND DO NOT REPENT AND ACCEPT GOD'S SALVATION, JUDGEMENT WILL COME UPON YOU," WE ARE BOTH PROPHESYING THE

FUTURE AND FORETELLING GOD'S GRACE. CERTAINLY, THIS GIFT IS VERY STRONG TODAY IN CERTAIN LOCALITIES.

THE LITERAL GREEK IN VERSES 34 - 38 CLEARS UP A LOT OF MISCONCEPTIONS. VERSES 34 AND 35 READ, "YOUR WOMEN IN THE ASSEMBLIES LET THEM BE SILENT, FOR IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO THEM TO SPEAK (*λαλειν*, PRESENT INFINITIVE); BUT TO BE IN SUBJECTION, ACCORDING AS ALSO THE LAW SAYS (*λεγει*). BUT IF ANYTHING TO LEARN THEY WISH, AT HOME THEIR OWN HUSBANDS LET THEM ASK: FOR A SHAME IT IS FOR WOMEN IN ASSEMBLY TO SPEAK (*λαλειν*).

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT *λεγω* (LALEO) MEANS TO UTTER SOUNDS; WHEREAS, *λαλεω* (LEGO) REFERS TO THE SUBSTANCE AND MEANING OF THE SOUNDS OR WORDS. PAUL, AS WE HAVE SEEN, USES THE PRESENT INFINITIVE OF *λαλεω* "LALEO" WHICH SIGNIFIES CONTINUOUS ACTION. THE WOMEN WERE MAKING NOISE BY ASKING THEIR HUSBANDS QUESTIONS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP AND DISTURBING THE SERVICE. IN VERSE 35 THERE IS A PERMISSION: "ASK YOUR HUSBANDS AT HOME," AND A PROHIBITION IN VERSE 34, "DO NOT ASK THEM IN THE CHURCH SERVICE." (BOYCE W. BLACKWELDER, LIGHT FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER BOOK HOUSE, 1976] PP. 55 - 57.)

I CORINTHIANS 15

- I. THE HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE GOSPEL 15:1 - 11**
- II. THE MEANINGLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY IF CHRIST WAS NOT RESURRECTED 15:12 - 19**
- III. THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION 15:20 - 34**
- IV. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTED BODY 15:35 - 49**
- V. THE RESURRECTION GIVES FINAL VICTORY OVER DEATH 15:50 - 58**

CHAPTER 15 IS ONE OF THE GREATEST PASSAGES IN SCRIPTURE ABOUT THE GOSPEL AND THE RESURRECTION. IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL PRESENTS THE GOSPEL WHICH HE HAD PREACHED TO THEM. THE GOSPEL IS:

- 1. THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, VERSE 3,**
- 2. THAT SCRIPTURES FORETOLD IT, VERSE 3,**
- 3. THAT HE WAS BURIED, VERSE 4,**
- 4. THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY, VERSE 4, AND**
- 5. THAT THERE WERE MANY WITNESSES TO HIS RESURRECTION, VERSES 5 - 8.**

PAUL'S MAIN POINT IS THAT CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE NECESSARY AND THE CRUCIAL FACTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. IF CHRIST WAS NOT RESURRECTED THEN THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS INVALID.

IN VERSE 8, MOST TRANSLATIONS MISS THE IMPACT OF THE GREEK SENTENCE. PAUL SAYS “AND LAST OF ALL AS TO AN ABORTION (OR DEAD FETUS), εκτρωματι, HE APPEARED TO ME.” THE IDEA IS THAT PAUL WAS AS SPIRITUALLY DEAD AS A DEAD FETUS. IT IS GOD’S GRACE THAT GAVE HIM SPIRITUAL LIFE, VERSE 9.

SOME PEOPLE IN CORINTH TAUGHT THAT THERE WAS NO RESURRECTION. THIS, NO DOUBT, CAME FROM GREEK INFLUENCE. IN CORINTH THERE WERE THREE MAIN PHILOSOPHIES, PLATONISM, EPICUREANISM AND STOICISM. NONE OF THEM BELIEVED IN A RESURRECTION. THE PLATONISTS BELIEVED THAT THE SPIRIT LIVED ON AFTER PHYSICAL DEATH, BUT NOT THE BODY. NONE OF THE GREEK PHILOSOPHIES COULD IMAGINE A RESURRECTION OF THE BODY. WHEN PAUL PREACHED AT ATHENS, THE MAJOR RIDICULE AGAINST HIM WAS THAT HE “TAUGHT THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.” PHILOSOPHICALLY THEY THOUGHT IT WAS ABSURD. THE CULTURE WITHIN THE CHURCH WAS SO AFFECTED BY THE SECULAR CULTURE THAT SOME PEOPLE QUESTIONED THE TEACHING OF THE RESURRECTION.

THE GREEKS BELIEVED THAT THE SOUL SURVIVED DEATH, BUT THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION. THEY THOUGHT THE SOUL SEPARATED FROM THE BODY AT DEATH AND WAS ABSORBED INTO THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT. PAUL AS HE WRITES ABOUT DEATH SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE BODY IS SEPARATED FROM THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT GOES TO GOD. BUT IS NOT ABSORBED INTO GOD. AT THE RESURRECTION A NEW BODY IS GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER. JESUS TAUGHT THAT ALL THE DEAD WOULD COME FORTH, THE

RIGHTEOUS TO LIFE AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS TO JUDGMENT. PAUL TEACHES THAT THERE IS BOTH A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST AND OF THE UNJUST. HE IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH THE RESURRECTION OF THOSE WHO WILL BE ALIVE AT CHRIST'S COMING, NOT JUST THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. PAUL IS DESCRIBING AN EVENT THAT WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE COMING OF CHRIST AT THE SECOND ADVENT. BEFORE THIS EVENT WE ARE TOLD THAT IF WE DIE WE ARE ABSENT FROM THE BODY BUT PRESENT WITH THE LORD. AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST, THE SOUL OF THE BELIEVER IS TO BE CLOTHED WITH AN IMMORTAL BODY, LIKE THE GLORIOUS BODY OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST. THIS TEACHING IS DISTINCTLY CHRISTIAN. IT ALSO DIFFERS FROM THE BELIEF THAT THE SOUL SLEEPS FROM THE TIME OF DEATH UNTIL THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION. PAUL ALSO CORRECTED THE CONCEPT THAT AT DEATH THE SOUL EXCHANGES THE MORTAL BODY FOR AN IMMORTAL BODY. AT DEATH THE BELIEVER ENTERS INTO A BLESSED STATE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST WAITING FOR A RESURRECTION BODY.

IN ESTABLISHING THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, PAUL RESTS HIS WHOLE ARGUMENT UPON THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. IF CHRIST IS NOT ALIVE, THEN HIS RESURRECTION IS A LIE.

IN THE SECOND SECTION STARTING WITH VERSE 12, PAUL ESTABLISHES THE FACT THAT CHRIST'S RESURRECTION POINTS TO THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION, AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF BELIEVING THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT RAISED FROM THE DEAD. THE SEQUENCE OF HIS ARGUMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. IF CHRIST HAD NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THEN PREACHING IS VAIN, EMPTY, MEANINGLESS AND WITHOUT CONTENT. THE GOOD NEWS IS NOT GOOD NEWS; IT IS BAD NEWS, HOLLOW, EMPTY, FALSE, VAIN AND MEANINGLESS, VERSES 14 AND 17.

2. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS A DELUSION. IT HAS NO FOUNDATION, VERSE 14.

3. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE FAITH OF THE BELIEVERS IS VAIN, VERSE 14, WHICH MEANS "EMPTY OF CONTENT AND POWER." IF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION WAS NOT TRUE THEN CHRISTIANS ARE NOT SAVED; AND THEREFORE, THEIR FAITH HAS NO BASIS IN HISTORICAL REALITY.

4. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE APOSTLES ARE FALSE WITNESSES AND LIARS. THEY HAD LIED ABOUT THESE FACTS, VERSE 15.

5. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THEY ARE STILL IN THEIR SINS, GUILTY BEFORE GOD, NOT JUSTIFIED, VERSE 17.

6. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE DEAD SAINTS HAVE PERISHED, VERSE 18. THERE WILL NEVER BE A REUNION WITH THEM.

7. IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, ALL THE LIVING CHRISTIANS WHO BASE THEIR HOPE ON CHRIST HAVE NO HOPE. PAUL TEACHES THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS

FOUNDED ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. TODAY, SURVEYS HAVE SHOWN THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. AS WE CAN SEE THIS HERESY IS NOT NEW.

IN VERSE 20, PAUL GIVES THE SURENESS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. IN GREAT TRIUMPH HE STATES THE CONSEQUENCES OF RESURRECTION. CHRIST IS THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEEP. AT PASSOVER TIME WHEN THEY GAVE THE OFFERING OF GRAIN, THE FIRST SHEATH WAS GIVEN TO GOD. IT WAS A SIGN AND PROMISE THAT MUCH MORE WOULD COME. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST WAS A SIGN PROMISE OF THE POWER OF GOD. PAUL SHOWS THAT THIS IS A DIVINE ARRANGED ORDER. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS THE FIRST FRUITS OR THE TYPE OF THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS. IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES PAUL PRESENTS AN ORDERLY SEQUENCE OF WHAT HAPPENS. THE REIGN OF CHRIST IS CONSUMMATED IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. RESURRECTION WILL ABOLISH DEATH. THE DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST WERE IN THE PLAN OF GOD TO REDEEM MANKIND.

VERSE 29 IS VERY DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET. MANY EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN, MOST OF WHICH SEEM INADEQUATE. A KEY TO THE VERSE MAY BE IN THE VERB ENDINGS. THE VERBS ARE THIRD PERSON, PLURAL "THEY." IT IS OBVIOUSLY A REFERENCE TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN PAUL OR THE APOSTLES. IT IS LIKELY THAT "THEY" REFERS TO THOSE WHO DENIED THE RESURRECTION, VERSE 12 AND YET WERE BEING BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THERE WAS ANY PRACTICE OF THIS SORT IN THE DAYS OF THE

APOSTLES. IT HAS ALSO BEEN SUGGESTED THAT IF THE GREEK IN VERSE 29 ACTUALLY REFERRED TO BAPTISM ON BEHALF OF THE DEAD THERE COULD NOT BE A DEFINITE ARTICLE BEFORE THE WORD "DEAD." BUT IT SEEMS THE DEFINITE ARTICLE POINTS MORE TO EMPHASIZE INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY. ONE OF THE BEST EXPLANATION OF THIS VERSE IS TO TRANSLATE THE PREPOSITION "HUPER," υπερ, AS CAUSAL "BECAUSE OF." THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE OF CAUSAL USE OF HUPER IN THE SEPTUAGINT, POPYRI AND THE WORKS OF JOSEPHUS. THIS COULD INDICATE THAT THE VERSE MEANS THAT THE DEATH OF CHRISTIANS LEAD TO THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS. (BLACKWELDER, OP. CIT., P. 98.) IT APPEARS THAT THIS IS ONE OF THOSE VERSES WHICH DEFIES OUR UNDERSTANDING.

IN VERSE 33, PAUL SAYS IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION THEN THE PHILOSOPHY OF CORINTH WAS ACCEPTABLE. IN CORINTH THE EPICUREAN VIEW "EAT AND DRINK BECAUSE TOMORROW YOU DIE" WAS COMMONLY ACCEPTED AND PRACTICED. PAUL IS WARNING THEM ABOUT THIS KIND OF ATTITUDE WHICH DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION.

IN VERSE 35, HE TALKS ABOUT THE NATURE AND MANNER OF THE RESURRECTION. HE PRESENTS SOME LIKELY OBJECTIONS; SUPPOSE SOMEBODY SAYS, "ARE THE DEAD RAISED? WHAT KIND OF BODIES ARE THEY GOING TO HAVE WHEN THEY COME?" THE FIRST QUESTION IMPLIES THAT THE RESURRECTION IS IMPOSSIBLE, AND THE SECOND QUESTION IMPLIES THAT IT CANNOT EVEN BE IMAGINED IN THE MIND. USING THE CONCEPT OF GRAIN HE REMINDS THEM THAT SEED PASSES THROUGH DEATH, DECAYS AND PROCEEDS INTO A HIGHER LIFE FORM. HE SAYS THAT THE

BODY IS LIKE THAT. THE SEED CHANGES ITS FORM AND SO DOES THE BODY. HE PUSHES THIS ANALOGY FURTHER AS HE TALKS ABOUT THE BODY WHEN IT DIES, IT IS BURIED AND RESURRECTED. THE NATURAL BODY IS A DIFFERENT BODY FROM THE PERFECTED BODY. THE RESURRECTION BODY IS SIMILAR TO THE PHYSICAL BODY, BUT IT IS ALSO DIFFERENT.

THIS CONCEPT CAN BE COMPARED TO A PERSON BEING BORN AND MATURING PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. THE BODY'S PHYSICAL PARTS CHANGE, ARE DISPLACED AND ARE DIFFERENT. AT THE SAME TIME THESE CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE THE PERSON REMAINS THE SAME PERSON. THE BODY CHANGES FROM THE BODY OF AN INFANT TO THE BODY OF A MAN WEIGHING 250 POUNDS AND MEASURING SIX AND A HALF FEET TALL. SO IT IS WITH THE RESURRECTION BODY; SPIRITUAL CHANGES TAKE PLACE, BUT IT IS THE SAME PERSON. THE RESURRECTION BODY IS PRODUCED BY THE POWER OF CHRIST. PAUL TEACHES THAT THOSE WHO HAD DIED WOULD BE RESURRECTED. THE NEXT QUESTION IS "WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE STILL ALIVE?" HE SAYS THEIR BODIES WILL UNDERGO A CHANGE, BECAUSE FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THEY WILL HAVE THEIR BODIES TRANSFORMED TO THE SPIRITUAL OR HEAVENLY WORLD. PAUL SAYS THAT NOW HE IS GOING TO TELL THEM A MYSTERY. THE CONCEPT OF MYSTERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT MEAN SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS. RATHER IT IS SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN CONCEALED AND IS NOW REVEALED. A MYSTERY IS SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE DISCOVERED BY THE NATURAL HUMAN MIND. IT HAS TO BE REVEALED BY GOD. PAUL SAID THAT NOT ALL CHRISTIANS ARE GOING TO DIE. SOME WILL BE

ALIVE WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, AND THERE WILL BE A TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR BODIES. I THESSALONIANS GIVES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT. WHEN CHRIST COMES, THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED, THE LIVING TRANSFORMED AND DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.



I CORINTHIANS 16

I. OFFERING FOR THE POOR IN JERUSALEM 16:1 - 4

**II. CONCERNING PAUL, TIMOTHY AND APOLLOS
16:5- 12**

III. FINAL GREETING 16:13- 24

CHAPTER 16 IS THE CONCLUSION OF THIS EPISTLE. PAUL DESIRES TO TAKE AN OFFERING TO HELP THE CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM. HE HOPES TO UNITE THE GENTILE AND JEWISH CHRISTIANS. PERSECUTION FROM THE JEWISH LEADERS HAD PROBABLY BROUGHT POVERTY TO THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM. THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE ESPECIALLY HOSTILE TO THEM, JUST AS THEY HAD BEEN TO PAUL. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT NEED PAUL WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE OFFERING FOR THEM WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL. HE PRESENTS THE PLAN FOR TAKING THE OFFERING. HE SAYS THAT THE OFFERINGS ARE TO BE MADE BY EVERYONE OF THE CONGREGATION, RICH AND POOR, YOUNG AND OLD. THESE OFFERINGS ARE TO BE SYSTEMATIC, WEEK BY WEEK, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. OBVIOUSLY BY THIS TIME, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WAS THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF WORSHIP, CELEBRATING THE LORD'S RESURRECTION DAY.

THIS WAS ALSO PROPORTIONATE GIVING. THEY WERE TO LAY ASIDE AS THEY HAD PROSPERED. THIS COLLECTION IS TO BE HONORABLE AND GIVEN WITH THE HIGHEST MOTIVES, OUT OF LOVE. THIS OFFERING IS THANKSGIVING FOR WHAT GOD HAD DONE FOR THEM. EVIDENTLY PAUL'S MOTIVES HAD BEEN QUESTIONED, SO HE WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS NO

OCCASION FOR SUSPICION. HE WANTS THE MESSENGER FROM THAT CHURCH TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO JERUSALEM IF THE GIFT IS SUBSTANTIAL. THE AMOUNT OF THE GIFT IS TO BE PROPORTIONATE TO THE IDEAS AND ATTITUDE OF HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. HE TELLS THEM HE IS GOING TO STAY IN EPHEBUS A LITTLE LONGER; THEN HE IS GOING TO COME THROUGH MACEDONIA, PROBABLY FOR AN EVANGELISTIC MISSION. THIS WOULD ALSO GIVE SOME TIME FOR THE CHURCH TO REPENT AND MAKE THE CORRECTIONS THEY NEED TO MAKE. PAUL GIVES HIS FINAL EXHORTATION AND GREETINGS FROM THE BELIEVERS IN EPHEBUS. HE CLOSES HIS EPISTLE WITH, "THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU. MY LOVE BE WITH YOU ALL IN CHRIST JESUS. AMEN."

II CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF II CORINTHIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

PAUL ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH AT CORINTH DURING HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. PAUL'S STRATEGY WAS TO USE THE LARGE AND IMPORTANT CITIES AS CENTERS OF OUTREACH FOR THE GOSPEL. SINCE CORINTH WAS THE CAPITAL OF ACHAIA AND THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN GREECE, HE WENT THERE IMMEDIATELY AFTER A VISIT TO ATHENS WHICH IS RECORDED IN ACTS 18:1 - 7.

IN CORINTH PAUL MADE FRIENDS WITH PRISCILLA AND AQUILA, JEWISH CHRISTIANS, WHO WERE TENT MAKERS BY TRADE JUST AS HE WAS. PAUL WORKED IN CORINTH FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF WHICH ENABLED HIM TO ESTABLISH A STRONG CHURCH. THIS WAS AN EXTREMELY GIFTED CHURCH, BUT ALSO A CHURCH WITH MANY PROBLEMS.

FROM CORINTH PAUL WENT TO EPHESUS ACCORDING TO ACTS 9 AND REMAINED THERE ABOUT THREE YEARS. DURING HIS STAY IN EPHESUS PAUL MAY HAVE RETURNED TO CORINTH

FOR A SHORT VISIT AT LEAST ONCE AND PROBABLY MORE THAN ONE TIME. WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF HIS VISITS. WE DO, HOWEVER, KNOW THAT HE HAD CONTACTS WITH THEM ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS; FOR WE KNOW THAT SEVERAL LETTERS, SOME OF WHICH ARE NOW LOST, I COR. 5:9, WERE EXCHANGED BETWEEN PAUL AND THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. WE ALSO KNOW THAT HE SENT TIMOTHY TO CORINTH TO ENCOURAGE THEM, I COR. 4:17. TIMOTHY MAY HAVE TAKEN A LETTER TO THEM, AND IF SO IT COULD BE EITHER A LETTER WE DO NOT HAVE OR OUR LETTER OF I CORINTHIANS. HOWEVER, OUR I CORINTHIANS LETTER COULD HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO THEM BY TITUS. I COR. 4:17 INDICATES THAT PAUL HAD OR WAS SENDING TIMOTHY TO WORK WITH THEM. I COR. 16:10 INDICATES THAT TIMOTHY IS GOING TO COME TO THEM. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS REFERS TO THE SAME TIME AS 4:17 OR IF THIS IS A LATER TIME THAT TIMOTHY WAS GOING TO THEM. IT SEEMS THAT THEY DID NOT HEED PAUL'S COUNCIL AND TIMOTHY BRINGS NEWS TO PAUL ABOUT THE BAD STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE CHURCH. FALSE TEACHERS HAD COME INTO THE CHURCH CLAIMING TO BE TRUE APOSTLES AND TRYING TO DISCREDIT PAUL AS AN APOSTLE.

NEXT PAUL SENT TITUS PROBABLY FROM PHILIPPI (II COR. 13:13) TO CORINTH TO APPLY PRESSURE FOR THEIR COMPLIANCE TO PAUL'S ORDERS, II COR. 7:13-15. TITUS WAS EVIDENTLY MORE FORCEFUL THAN TIMOTHY. IT SEEMS THAT PAUL HAD TO LEAVE EPHESUS BECAUSE OF THE RIOT AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS WHICH IS RECORDED IN ACTS 19:23-41. PAUL PLANNED TO MEET TITUS AT TROAS, BUT THEY MISSED CONNECTIONS AND TITUS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM PROBABLY AT PHILIPPI, II COR. 7:5-6. TITUS BROUGHT GOOD NEWS THAT BASICALLY THE CHURCH

WAS FOLLOWING HIS COUNCIL. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, FALSE APOSTLES WHO WERE TRYING TO DISCREDIT PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP. PAUL THEN WROTE THEM OUR LETTER OF II CORINTHIANS AND SENT IT WITH TITUS BACK TO CORINTH. THIS WAS APPROXIMATELY 57 A.D., ABOUT FIVE YEARS AFTER THE CHURCH IN CORINTH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. AFTER DELIVERING THE LETTER TITUS STAYED IN CORINTH TO HELP ORGANIZE AND GATHER THE RELIEF OFFERING FOR THE POOR JEWISH CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM.

THIS EPISTLE SHOWS HIS GREAT LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THESE PEOPLE. FALSE TEACHERS HAD COME TO CORINTH AND INVADDED THE CHURCH. THEY HAD ATTACKED HIS CHARACTER HOPING TO DISCREDIT HIM. THEY QUESTIONED HIS AUTHORITY, AND ACCUSED HIM OF BEING A FALSE APOSTLE. THIS LETTER IS CHIEFLY A DEFENSE OF HIS CHARACTER AND APOSTLESHIP. FROM THIS LETTER IT IS EVIDENT THAT PAUL BELIEVES THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE SUPPORT HIM. PAUL HAS BEEN ATTACKED FROM THREE DIRECTIONS, HIS PERSON, HIS TEACHINGS AND HIS CHARACTER. HE WAS ACCUSED OF BEING FICKLE, OF BEING FULL OF PRIDE, OF CONFUSING PREACHING, OF A WEAK PERSONALITY, OF IMPOLITE SPEECH, OF A CONTEMPTIBLE ATTITUDE, OF DISHONESTY, OF MENTAL UNSOUNDNESS AND OF FALSE APOSTLESHIP. THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN CHIEFLY TO REFUTE THESE CHARGES. IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING THIS EPISTLE PAUL REVEALS HIS HEART. HE ALSO GIVES MANY IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING

MUCH OF THIS EPISTLE IS DESIGNED TO ESTABLISH PAUL'S INTEGRITY AND SINCERITY AND TO VINDICATE HIS APOSTLESHIP.

THE PURPOSES FOR WRITING THIS BOOK ARE:

- 1. TO AFFIRM HIS PERSONAL INTEGRITY,**
- 2. TO EXPLAIN TO THEM WHY HIS VISIT TO THEM HAD BEEN DELAYED AND WHY HE HAD TO CHANGE HIS PLANS,**
- 3. TO ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH TO FORGIVE AND RECEIVE BACK INTO THEIR FELLOWSHIP THE PERSON THEY HAD DISCIPLINED, I CORINTHIANS 5,**
- 4. TO ANSWER THOSE WHO HAD ACCUSED HIM OF HAVING THE WRONG MOTIVES,**
- 5. TO SHOW HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY WHICH HAD BEEN QUESTIONED,**
- 6. TO EXPOSE THE IMPOSTORS WHO HAD CAME TO THE CHURCH CLAIMING TO BE APOSTLES,**
- 7. TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO SHARE IN THE OFFERING FOR THE POOR IN JERUSALEM, AND**
- 8. TO PREPARE THEM FOR HIS APPROACHING VISIT.**

THE TEXT

II CORINTHIANS 1

- I. TRIALS EQUIP US TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS 1:1 - 7
- II. TRIALS CAUSE US TO DEPEND ON GOD ALONE
1:8-11
- III. TRIALS AFFIRM THAT ALL GOD'S PROMISES
ARE YES IN JESUS CHRIST 1:12-24

THE GREETING IN VERSES 1 AND 2 COMBINES THE GREETINGS OF THE EAST AND THE WEST, GRACE AND PEACE. EVEN THOUGH THIS CHURCH HAS EXPERIENCED GREAT DISUNITY PAUL STILL CALLS THEM THE CHURCH OF GOD AND ADDRESSES THEM AS SAINTS. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS IN CHRIST WERE FIRST CALLED DISCIPLES. LATER THEY CALLED THEMSELVES BRETHREN. THEY WERE ALSO CALLED, "THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY." PAUL PREFERS TO CALL THEM "SAINTS."

VERSES 3-11 PRESENT THE PRINCIPLE THAT THOSE WHOM GOD COMFORTS CAN COMFORT OTHERS.

IN THIS SECTION THE WORD παρακλησεως AND ITS DERIVATIVES OCCURS 10 TIMES AND IS TRANSLATED "COMFORT" OR "ENCOURAGEMENT." THE WORD IS COMPOSED OF παρα, "BESIDE" AND καλεω, "TO CALL." LITERALLY, IT IS TO "CALL BESIDE." "ENCOURAGEMENT" IS PROBABLY A BETTER TRANSLATION OF THIS WORD THAN "COMFORT."

THE WORD θλιψει, TRANSLATED “AFFLICTION” OR “TRIBULATION,” DESCRIBES PHYSICAL PRESSURE UPON A PERSON. IN THESE VERSES PAUL SAYS THAT GOD ENCOURAGES OR COMFORTS AND DELIVERS.

IN VERSE 12, PAUL SAYS THAT HIS CONDUCT IS TRANSPARENT; THAT HE HAS NOTHING TO HIDE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “SINCERITY,” ειλικρινεια, IS A VERY INTERESTING WORD. IN CLASSICAL GREEK, IT MEANT “PURE” OR “WITHOUT ALLOY.” IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD MAY COME FROM TWO WORDS, “THE SUNLIGHT” AND “TO JUDGE,” WHICH MEANS WHEN SOMETHING WAS HELD UP TO THE SUNLIGHT NO FLAW COULD BE SEEN. OR THE WORD MAY COME FROM THE WORD “SIFT” MEANING TO “SHAKE IN A SIEVE UNTIL ALL IMPURITIES WERE SIFTED AWAY.” (WILLIAM BARCLAY, A NEW TESTAMENT WORKBOOK [NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS] PP. 32-33.)

II CORINTHIANS 2

I. PAUL DELAYS HIS VISIT OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS 2:5 - 11

II. PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE 2:5 - 11

III. CHRIST LEADS US IN TRIUMPH 2:12 - 17

IN II COR. 2:1 - 4, PAUL CONTINUES HIS EXPLANATION OF WHY HE HAD NOT VISITED THEM AS QUICKLY AS HE HAD PROMISED. THE CHIEF REASON HE HAS DELAYED HIS VISIT WAS THAT HE WANTED TO GIVE THEM TIME TO REPENT AND CHANGE SO THAT HE COULD COME TO THEM WITH JOY. IN VERSE 5, PAUL INSISTS THAT THEY FORGIVE A MAN WHOM THEY HAD DISCIPLINED AND WHO HAD REPENTED. SOME THINK THIS IS THE SAME MAN THAT PAUL HAD EARLIER, IN I CORINTHIANS, INSTRUCTED THEM TO PUNISH. OTHERS BELIEVE THIS IS A DIFFERENT MAN. PAUL KNEW THIS COULD INCREASE ONE OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM, THAT HE WAS INCONSISTENT AND WISHY - WASHY. PAUL, HOWEVER, ANSWERS ALL THE CHARGES ADEQUATELY. IN VERSE 5, HE SAYS THE OFFENDER DID NOT SIMPLY CAUSE HIM TROUBLE, BUT THAT THE MAN CAUSED THE WHOLE CHURCH GREAT PROBLEMS, AND ALSO BROUGHT GREAT HARM TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST. THE CHURCH HAD DISMISSED THIS MAN. LATER HE REVEALED GODLY REPENTANCE FOR HIS SIN, BUT THEN THE CHURCH WOULD NOT RECEIVE HIM BACK INTO ITS FELLOWSHIP. PAUL SAYS FORGIVE THE MAN, AND RECEIVE HIM AGAIN INTO YOUR FELLOWSHIP. PAUL'S POINT IS THAT SINCE THE MAN HAS REPENTED THEY SHOULD RECEIVE HIM SO THEY WOULD NOT GIVE SATAN AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEAT THE MAN

AGAIN, AND ALSO TO DEFEAT THEM, BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO FORGIVE.

THE PRINCIPLES IN THIS PASSAGE ARE:

- 1. THE CHURCH IS TO DISCIPLINE MEMBERS WHO ARE ENGAGED IN GROSS IMMORALITY AND REFUSE TO REPENT AND DISCONTINUE THEIR CONDUCT.**
- 2. CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION, NOT PUNISHMENT.**
- 3. THE GREATER PART (των πλειονων) OF THE CHURCH IS TO IMPOSE THE DISCIPLINE, NOT ONE PERSON BY HIMSELF. THE CONDUCT MUST DEMAND THE DISCIPLINE. SOMETIMES THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO ADMINISTER DISCIPLINE UPON A PERSON HAVE FAR GREATER SINS IN THEIR OWN LIVES THAN THE PERSON WHOM THEY ARE DISCIPLINING. THE CHURCH IS SO WORLDLY TODAY DISCIPLINE IS VERY DIFFICULT. WORLDLY CONDUCT IS OFTEN ACCEPTED BY CHRISTIANS AS APPROPRIATE CONDUCT FOR CHRISTIANS.**
- 4. WHEN A PERSON IS DISCIPLINED AND REPENTS, HE IS TO BE FORGIVEN AND LOVED. OF COURSE THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN REMORSE, REGRET AND GODLY REPENTANCE.**

IN VERSES 12-13, PAUL REMEMBERS HOW ANXIOUSLY HE WAITED AT TROAS FOR TITUS, WHO WAS TO BRING HIM NEWS FROM CORINTH. HE WAS SO ANXIOUS FOR THIS NEWS THAT HE WENT INTO MACEDONIA. THE NEXT FEW VERSES SEEM TO INDICATE THAT PAUL RECEIVED GOOD NEWS FROM TITUS SOMEWHERE IN MACEDONIA, PERHAPS PHILIPPI.

VERSES 14-17 CONTAIN A BEAUTIFUL PICTURESQUE ACCOUNT OF A VICTORIOUS GENERAL RETURNING HOME FROM BATTLE. WHEN A ROMAN GENERAL RETURNED VICTORIOUS FROM BATTLE THERE WAS ALWAYS A GREAT PARADE FILLED WITH POMP, GLORY AND EXCITEMENT. THIS PARADE MOVED TOWARD THE ROMAN CAPITOL. THE SENATE AND OFFICIALS MARCHED IN FRONT OF THE GENERAL. THE CAPTIVES CHAINED TO HIS CHARIOT WHEELS WERE ALSO A PART OF THE CEREMONY. HUGE AMOUNTS OF INCENSE PERFUMED THE AIR. SO THE GENERAL SMELLED VICTORY IN THE AIR AND HEARD THE THUNDER OF APPLAUSE AND VICTORIOUS SHOUTS IN HIS EARS.

PAUL SPEAKS OF THE GREAT TRIUMPH AS GENERAL CHRIST COMES IN VICTORY. IN VERSE 14, θριαμβευειν MEANS "TO LEAD IN TRIUMPH." PAUL SAYS THE TRIUMPH IS IN CHRIST. SOME THINK THAT PAUL IS PICTURING HIMSELF AS A PART OF THAT GREAT ARMY OF VICTORY. OTHERS THINK THAT HE PICTURES HIMSELF AS A CAPTIVE OF CHRIST.

II CORINTHIANS 3

- I. THE NEW COVENANT WRITTEN ON THE HEART NOT ON STONES 1 - 3**
- II. THE NEW COVENANT GIVES LIFE NOT DEATH 4 - 6**
- III. THE NEW COVENANT HAS ETERNAL GLORY 7 - 13**
- IV. THE NEW COVENANT REMOVES THE VEIL FROM THE MIND AND HEART 14 - 16**
- V. THE NEW COVENANT SETS FREE FROM BONDAGE 17 - 18**

CHAPTER 3 IS A CONTRAST OF COVENANTS, AND IT SHOWS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OLD TESTAMENT LAW AND NEW TESTAMENT GOSPEL. EVIDENTLY JUDAIZERS HAD COME FROM JERUSALEM WITH LETTERS CLAIMING APOSTOLIC ACCREDITATION FOR THEM. THEY WERE TRYING TO DISCREDIT PAUL BY SAYING THAT BECAUSE HE DID NOT HAVE ANY LETTERS OF COMMENDATION FROM THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM HIS APOSTLESHIP WAS INVALID. PAUL ANSWERS THAT THE CORINTHIANS, WHO WERE NEW PEOPLE IN CHRIST, WERE THEMSELVES HIS EPISTLES OF AUTHENTICATION.

IN VERSE 6, THE WORD “LETTER” REFERS TO THE WRITTEN LAW OF MOSES; AND “SPIRIT” REFERS TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WHICH QUICKENS AND GIVES SPIRITUAL LIFE.

IN VERSES 4 - 18, PAUL USES AN ARGUMENT SIMILAR TO THE ONES USED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS. HE COMPARES THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WITH THE LAW OF MOSES AND THAT THE

GOSPEL FAR EXCEEDS THE LAW. HE USES THE VEIL AND THE FADING OF GOD'S GLORY ON MOSES' FACE AS AN EXAMPLE. HE IS REFERRING TO THE EVENT IN EXODUS 34:29-35. WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN AFTER RECEIVING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, HIS FACE SHONE WITH LIGHT FROM BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE TRANSLATES VERSE 33 CORRECTLY, "WHEN MOSES HAD FINISHED SPEAKING WITH THEM HE PUT A VEIL OVER HIS FACE." MOSES PUT THE VEIL OVER HIS FACE, IT SEEMS, SO THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT SEE THE SHINING GLORY FADE. THE CONTRAST IS THAT THE GLORY OF CHRIST DOES NOT FADE.

IN VERSES 13-15, PAUL SAYS THAT THE JEWS NOW HAVE A VEIL OVER THEIR HEARTS, AND THEY CANNOT PERCEIVE THE TRUTH THAT LEADS TO CHRIST. THERE IS NO FADING CHARACTER IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST. IN HIM WE SEE THE GLORY OF GOD. INSTEAD OF REFLECTING THE GLORY OF THE LORD MERELY IN OUR FACES, AS MOSES DID, WE EXPERIENCE AN INNER TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER. THIS NEW NATURE BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD BEGINS TO MAKE CHANGES INTO THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST. THE PRINCIPLE HERE IS THE INDWELLING SPIRIT OF GOD AT WORK. THE PERMANENCE OF THE GOSPEL IS CONTRASTED WITH THE CHANGING AND VANISHING SYSTEM AND RELIGION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

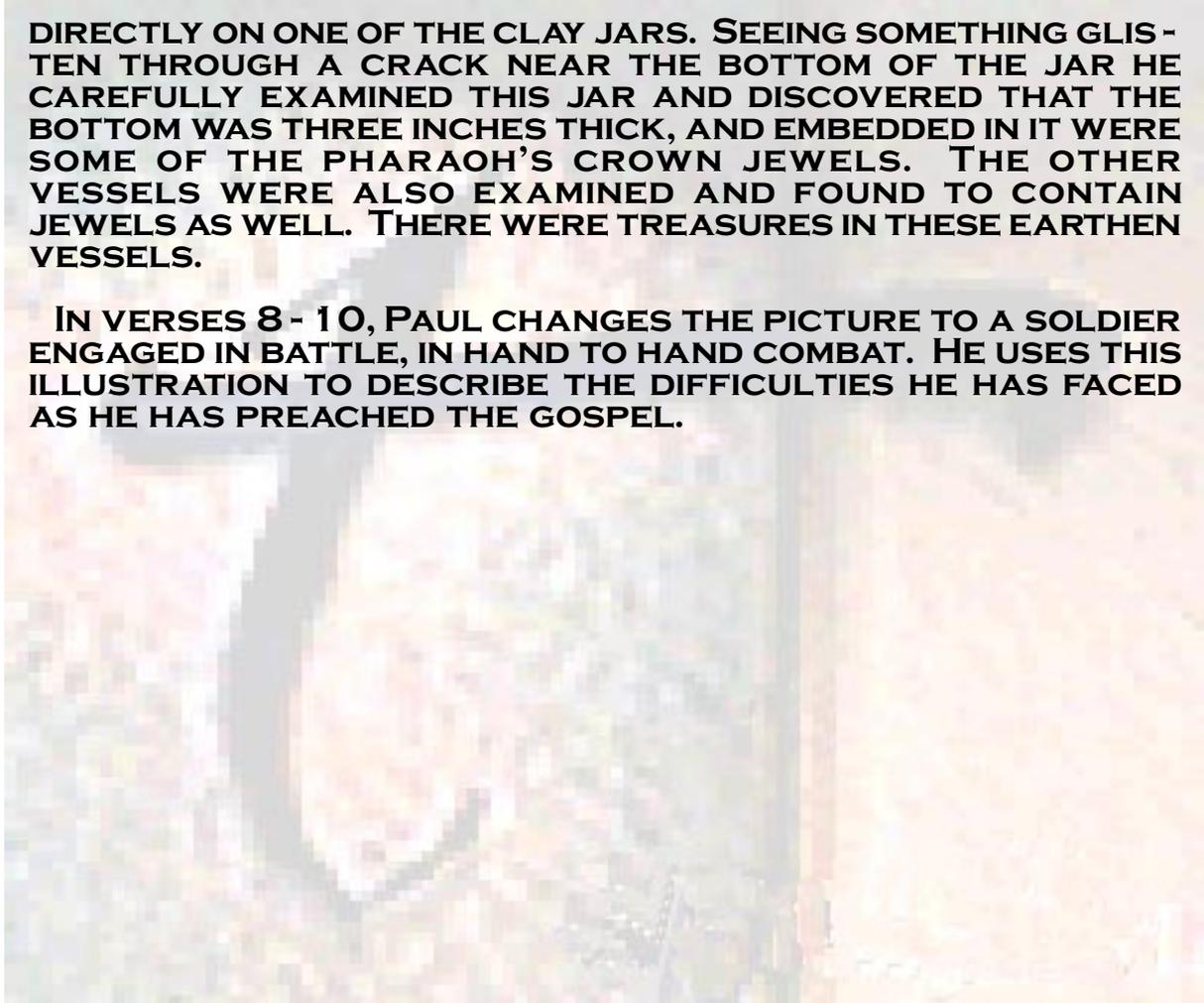
II CORINTHIANS 4

- I. PAUL'S HONEST HANDLING OF GOD'S WORD 1 - 2**
- II. SATAN'S BLINDING OF PEOPLE'S MINDS AND HEARTS 3 - 4**
- III. GOD'S GLORY SHINING THROUGH THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST 5 - 6**
- IV. GOD'S POWER SUSTAINING US THROUGH TRIALS 7 - 18**

IN VERSES 1 - 2, PAUL AGAIN REMINDS THEM THAT HE HAS NOTHING TO HIDE, THAT HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY ARE TRANSPARENT AND THAT HIS HANDLING OF THE WORD OF GOD IS HONEST AND FORTHRIGHT. IN VERSES 3 - 4 HE AGAIN REFERS TO A VEIL THAT KEEPS PEOPLE FROM SEEING. THIS IS THE WORK OF SATAN, WHO BLINDS THE MIND OF THE UNBELIEVING, SO THE LIGHT AND GLORY OF CHRIST WILL NOT DAWN UPON THEM. VERSES 5 - 7 ARE SOME OF THE MAGNIFICENT PICTURES IN THIS EPISTLE. IT IS A PICTURE OF CLAY JARS CONTAINING TREASURES. IN ANCIENT TIMES THIS WAS ONE WAY OF HIDING VALUABLES. IN ONE OF THE GREAT MUSEUMS OF THE WORLD, THERE WAS A ROW OF EARTHEN VESSELS THAT HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM A PHARAOH'S TOMBS. IN THE TOMB, THEY HAD BEEN PLACED AMONG THE GOLDEN VESSELS AND OTHER ARTICLES. THE EXCAVATORS WONDERED WHY THESE CLAY JARS HAD BEEN PLACED WITH THE GOLDEN VESSELS. THEY WERE BROUGHT TO THE MUSEUM AND STORED WITH OTHER VESSELS. ONE DAY, AN EMPLOYEE OF THE MUSEUM STOPPED IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE CLAY JARS. THE SUN WAS SHINING FROM THE BACK SIDE

DIRECTLY ON ONE OF THE CLAY JARS. SEEING SOMETHING GLIS - TEN THROUGH A CRACK NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE JAR HE CAREFULLY EXAMINED THIS JAR AND DISCOVERED THAT THE BOTTOM WAS THREE INCHES THICK, AND EMBEDDED IN IT WERE SOME OF THE PHARAOH'S CROWN JEWELS. THE OTHER VESSELS WERE ALSO EXAMINED AND FOUND TO CONTAIN JEWELS AS WELL. THERE WERE TREASURES IN THESE EARTHEN VESSELS.

IN VERSES 8 - 10, PAUL CHANGES THE PICTURE TO A SOLDIER ENGAGED IN BATTLE, IN HAND TO HAND COMBAT. HE USES THIS ILLUSTRATION TO DESCRIBE THE DIFFICULTIES HE HAS FACED AS HE HAS PREACHED THE GOSPEL.



II CORINTHIANS 5

IN VERSES 1 - 10, PAUL GIVES THE PICTURES OF A TABERNACLE OR A TENT AND A PERMANENT BUILDING. HE USES THESE METAPHORS TO DESCRIBE THE HUMAN EXISTENCE, THE PHYSICAL BODY AND THE HEAVENLY EXISTENCE. THE EARTHLY EXISTENCE WILL BE FOLDED UP LIKE A TENT. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT METAPHOR FOR PAUL, BECAUSE HE WAS A TENT MAKER. PAUL COULD ALSO BE THINKING OF THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE TEMPLE WHICH WAS THE PERMANENT BUILDING.

VERSE 3 IS ONE OF THOSE VERSES WE HAVE TO STRUGGLE WITH. "IF INDEED, ALSO BEING CLOTHED, NOT NAKED WE SHALL BE FOUND." THE WAY THE GREEK READS IT MEANS NAKEDNESS AFTER BEING CLOTHED. SOME OF THE EARLY COPYISTS THOUGHT IT COULD NOT SAY THIS AND CHANGED ενδυσσαμενοι TO εκδυσσαμενοι. THE GREEK WORD ενδυσσαμενοι., IS A FIRST AORIST PARTICIPLE, MIDDLE, MEANING "TO SINK INTO" OR "TO ENTER INTO CLOTHING." THE KEY TO THIS VERSE IS "NAKED." NAKED WAS THE CONDITION OF THOSE CAPTURED IN BATTLE. IT IS ALSO THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO STAND BEFORE GOD IN JUDGMENT AS HE PERCEIVES THE INTENT OF THEIR HEARTS. THIS IDEA IS FURTHER ADVANCED IN VERSE 10, WHEN HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, του βηματος του χριστου. THE βημα WAS THE PLATFORM WHERE THE JUDGE'S CHAIR WAS PLACED WHEN HE PRONOUNCED JUDGMENT. IT WAS ONE STEP HIGHER THAN THE FLOOR. ALL BELIEVERS WILL STAND BEFORE CHRIST TO BE JUDGED.

IN VERSES 11-21, PAUL CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE AUTHENTICITY OF HIS APOSTLESHIP. IN DOING SO HE PRESENTS BOTH THE BASIS OF HIS MOTIVES AND SOME OF THE GREAT THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS ON WHICH HE HAS FOUNDED HIS MINISTRY; CHIEFLY HOW GOD HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH CHRIST.

VERSE 14 IS A BLUNT STATEMENT ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS. WHO THE "ALL" ARE IN THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN DEBATED FIERCELY. PAUL IN THIS PASSAGE DOES NOT DEFINE ALL. IMPLIED IN THE STATEMENT THAT "ONE DIED FOR ALL" IS THE SAME CONCEPT PAUL PRESENTED IN ROMANS THAT JESUS WAS THE SECOND ADAM AND THAT HE IS IDENTIFIED WITH HUMANITY AND IS THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR ALL MANKIND. THE WORD *υπερ* TRANSLATED "FOR" IN VERSE 14 MEANS "ON BEHALF OF" OR "SUBSTITUTION FOR". A.T. ROBERTSON'S GREEK STUDIES OF THE PAPYRI ESTABLISHED FIRMLY THAT THIS IS A PRIMARY MEANING OF THIS PREPOSITION.

THE GREEK CONSTRUCTION OF "THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINS US" IN VERSE 14 ALLOWS THIS TO BE READ EITHER, "THE LOVE WE LEAVE FOR CHRIST" OR "THE LOVE CHRIST HAS FOR US."

IN VERSES 18-19, GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO RECONCILE THE WORLD TO HIMSELF. THE SCRIPTURE IS CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT THE NATURAL MAN IS AT ENMITY WITH

AND HOSTILE TOWARD GOD. THIS IS BUT ONE OF THE MANY PASSAGES WHICH VERIFIES HOW SERIOUSLY GOD TAKES SIN AND THE DEPTH TO WHICH HE IS WILLING TO GO TO DEFEAT IT.

IN VERSE 20, THE GREEK WORD πρεσβευομεν IS TRANSLATED "AMBASSADOR."

VERSE 21 IS ONE OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT VERSES IN SCRIPTURE. THIS VERSE MEANS THAT JESUS BORE THE CURSE OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT ON SIN FOR US; AND WE ARE DECLARED IN RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD.

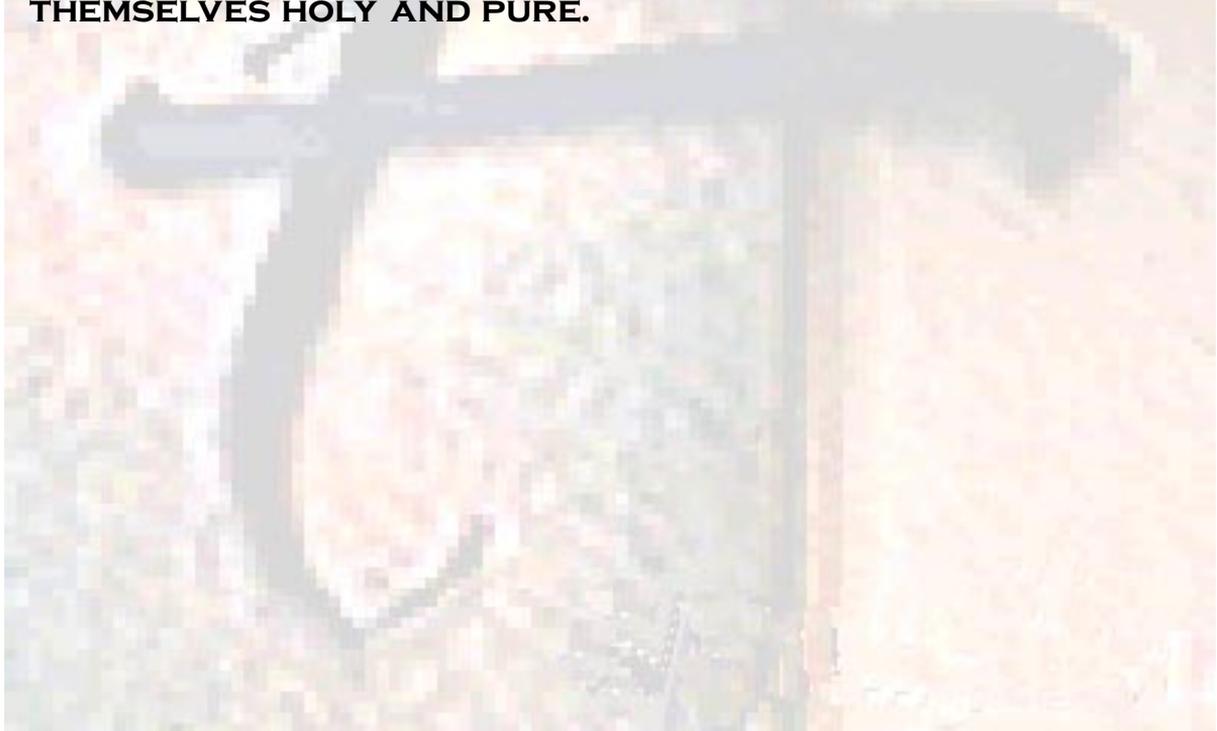
II CORINTHIANS 6

THE FIRST PART OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER IS A CONTINUATION OF THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER 5. PAUL EXPLAINS THAT THEY MAY EXAMINE HIS LIFE, MINISTRY AND MOTIVES. THIS CAUSES THEM TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS TO HIM. IN THE LAST PART OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER AND THE FIRST PART OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER HE WARNS THEM TOO ABOUT BECOMING INVOLVED WITH UNBELIEVERS AND ENCOURAGES THEM TO BE SEPARATE FROM THEM.

IN VERSES 3-10, PAUL SPEAKS OF THE PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES AND PHYSICAL SUFFERING HE HAS RECEIVED AS HE PROCLAIMED THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION. HE SAYS HE HAS ENDURED MUCH. THE WORD TRANSLATED "ENDURED" MEANS BEARING AND LASTING THROUGH THE ORDEAL. THEREFORE HE HAS ENDURED TRIBULATION, HARDSHIPS, NEEDS AND CALAMITIES; HE HAS BEEN BEATEN, IMPRISONED AND RIOTED AGAINST. IN THE MIDST OF ALL THESE TROUBLES HE HAS LABORED, WATCHED, AND ENDURED HUNGER. THE LIST GOES ON REVEALING SOME OF HIS SPIRITUAL GIFTS, THE CRITICISMS HE HAS RECEIVED, AND CONTRASTING EXPERIENCES WHICH CHARACTERIZE HIS LIFE.

VERSES 14-18 SET FORTH THE PRINCIPLE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS. THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WERE NOT LIVING LIKE CHRISTIANS. THEY WERE LIVING LIKE THE WORLD IN WHICH THEY LIVED. THEY WERE YOKING THEMSELVES IN MARRIAGE AND IN

BUSINESS WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT THE BELIEVER LIVES IN THE WORLD, BUT MUST LIVE SEPARATELY FROM THE SIN IN THE WORLD OR ELSE HE CANNOT BE A WITNESS TO THE WORLD. THIS IS A PRINCIPLE FOR TODAY. HOWEVER, THE ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE TODAY IN MANY CHURCHES IS THAT THEY CAN BE LIKE THE WORLD. CONSEQUENTLY THEIR CHURCHES BECOME WORLDLY RELIGIOUS CLUBS. GOD, HOWEVER, HAS PROMISED TO BLESS THOSE WHO KEEP THEMSELVES HOLY AND PURE.



II CORINTHIANS 7

PAUL MAKES AN APPEAL FOR THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS TO HIM. HIS SINCERITY AND PURE MOTIVES ARE MAJOR THEMES THROUGHOUT THE EPISTLE.

IN THIS SECTION PAUL GOES BACK TO 2:13. HE RECALLS HIS MEETING WITH TITUS IN MACEDONIA WHEN TITUS BROUGHT HIM NEWS ABOUT THE CHURCH IN CORINTH. PAUL'S GREAT CONCERN FOR THEM IS EVIDENT IN THIS SECTION. THE FALSE TEACHERS HAD BEEN IN CONTROL OF THE CHURCH, AND THEIR INFLUENCE HAD CAUSED THE CHURCH TO BE OFF BALANCE IN MANY AREAS OF THEIR COOPERATIVE LIFE. TITUS MUST HAVE BEEN A VERY POWERFUL AND PERSUASIVE PERSON.

THE FACT THAT THE CHRISTIANS AT CORINTH HAD EXPRESSED GODLY REPENTANCE IS ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL'S CONTRAST OF TWO GREEK WORDS IN VERSES 8 - 10. THE WORD μεταμελομαι, "METAMELOMAI" BASICALLY MEANS "REGRET" OR "REMORSE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ACTION." IT IS AN EMOTIONAL WORD WHICH SPEAKS ABOUT FEELING. THIS FEELING MAY PRECEDE EITHER REMORSE OR REPENTANCE. WHEN μεταμελομαι IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FORGIVENESS IS NEVER PROMISED. THE NEW TESTAMENT USES THE WORD μετανοεω "METANOEO" FOR "GODLY REPENTANCE, FOR WHICH REMISSION OF SIN IS PROMISED."

PAUL USES "METAMELOMAI" TWO TIMES IN VERSE 8 TO EXPRESS HIS SORROW OR REGRET ABOUT THE TOUGH EPISTLE

HE HAS TO SEND THEM. THEN IN VERSE 9 AND 10 HE USES THE WORD "METANOIA" TO SPEAK OF THEIR GODLY REPENTANCE. (BOYCE W. BLACKWELDER, LIGHT FROM THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT [BAKER BOOK HOUSE, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN] PP. 46-47.)

II CORINTHIANS 8

CHAPTER 8 GIVES US INFORMATION ABOUT THE OFFERING FOR THE POVERTY STRICKEN BELIEVERS IN JERUSALEM. THERE ARE SOME SOUND PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN GIVING IN THIS CHAPTER. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THEY WERE IN POVERTY UNLESS IT WAS BECAUSE OF FAMINE OR PERSECUTION BY JEWISH LEADERS. HE BELIEVES THAT THIS GIFT FROM THE GENTILE CHURCHES WOULD HELP UNITE THE GENTILE AND JEWISH CHRISTIANS.

HE SAYS THAT ALL GIFTS ARE TO COME FROM THE HEART WHICH MEANS JOYFULLY; THAT THEY ARE TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD WHICH IS THE CHURCH. THESE ARE TO BE PROPORTIONATE ACCORDING TO WHAT THE PERSON HAS OR WHAT HE OWNS, NOT JUST A PORTION, BUT PROPORTIONATE TO WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN HIM. PAUL DOES NOT WANT TO BE IN THE POSITION EVER TO ACCUSE ANYONE OF MISHANDLING FUNDS, SO HE LAYS OUT A PLAN THAT THE OFFERINGS WILL BE HANDLED WITH HONESTY AND INTEGRITY. THERE ARE THREE MESSENGERS TO HANDLE THIS MONEY; TITUS, ANOTHER TRUSTED MAN, WHO WAS KNOWN AS GREAT PREACHER, AND A THIRD PERSON OF INTEGRITY.

II CORINTHIANS 9

IN CHAPTER 9, PAUL TALKS ABOUT THE PRINCIPLE OF GENEROSITY AND THE BLESSINGS WHICH IT BRINGS. THE POINT IS THAT THE GENEROSITY OF THE CORINTHIANS WILL BRING BLESSING TO THOSE WHO RECEIVE AND TO THOSE WHO GIVE. HE USES THE ILLUSTRATION OF SOWING AND REAPING. IF ONE SOWS BOUNTIFULLY, HE SHALL REAP BOUNTIFULLY.

II CORINTHIANS 10

THE LAST THREE CHAPTERS ARE A DEFENSE OF HIMSELF AND HIS APOSTLESHIP. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THEY WERE PART OF ANOTHER LETTER WHICH PAUL WROTE TO CORINTH. THIS SECTION, HOWEVER, IS RELATED TO THE FIRST SECTION OF THIS LETTER AND PROBABLY BELONGS IN THIS LETTER. EVEN IF IT IS PART OF ANOTHER LETTER, IT FITS WELL HERE.

THE JUDAIZERS HAD COME AND ATTEMPTED TO COMBINE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JEWISH LAW WITH THE GOSPEL. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF AND ALSO ACCUSES THESE JUDAIZERS. THEY WERE TELLING A LOT OF LIES ABOUT PAUL. THEY ALSO CAME WITH SOME CREDENTIALS FROM JERUSALEM, EITHER REAL OR FALSIFIED LETTERS. THEY SAID SINCE PAUL DID NOT HAVE ANY LETTERS HIS APOSTLESHIP WAS NOT AUTHENTIC. THEY HAVE ACCUSED PAUL OF BEING A COWARD AND NOT HAVING A FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL. HE HAS A LOT OF SARCASM AND IRONY IN THIS LETTER.

II CORINTHIANS 11

IN CHAPTER 11, WE SEE THAT ONE OF THE CHARGES THAT HIS ENEMIES MAKE AGAINST HIM IS THAT HE WAS NOT A TRUE APOSTLE, BECAUSE HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT REMUNERATION FOR HIS SERVICES. PAUL HAD SUPPORTED HIMSELF AT CORINTH AS A TENTMAKER, AND OTHER CHURCHES HAD ALSO HELPED SUPPORT HIM SO THAT HE COULD MINISTER TO THESE CORINTHIANS.

PAUL ACCUSES THE FALSE TEACHERS OF BEING SERVANTS OF THE DEVIL. OF COURSE, THE DEVIL'S MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL IS TO IMITATE GOD, HIS TRUTH AND HIS GIFTS. PAUL WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HIS COMMITMENT PUTS THESE FALSE TEACHERS TO SHAME. HE SAID FIVE TIMES HE HAD RECEIVED 39 STRIPES FROM JEWISH AUTHORITIES. HE WAS BEATEN THREE TIMES WITH RODS, STONED, SHIPWRECKED AND SPENT A NIGHT AND DAY IN THE OCEAN. HE WAS IN CONSTANT DANGER ON JOURNEYS FROM ROBBERS, FROM HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN AND FROM THE GENTILES.

II CORINTHIANS 12

IN VERSES 2 - 4, PAUL TELLS ABOUT THE GREAT RAPTURE THAT HE EXPERIENCED WHEN HE WAS TAKEN UP TO THE HIGHEST HEAVEN. THIS EXPERIENCE WAS SO POWERFUL AND WONDERFUL HE COULD NOT EVEN BEGIN TO TESTIFY TO MEN.

IN VERSES 7-9, HE SPEAKS OF HIS THORN IN THE FLESH WHICH WAS GIVEN TO KEEP HIM HUMBLE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "THORN" IS σκολοψ, "SKOLOPSI". THORN DOES NOT MEAN A LITTLE THORN FROM A ROSE BUSH. IT MEANS A STICK OF WOOD OR A STAKE. IN BARBAROUS TIMES CAPTIVES OR CRIMINALS WERE IMPALED ON STAKES OR THE CAPTORS WOULD DRIVE A STAKE THROUGH THE PERSON AND NAIL THEM TO THE GROUND. THIS WAS A VERY PAINFUL DEATH. PAUL ASKED GOD FOR SUBTRACTION, "TAKE IT AWAY." THE LORD INSTEAD OF SUBTRACTION GIVES HIM ADDITION. GOD SAID, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS." PAUL SHOWS THAT HE HAD THIS GREAT STRENGTH IN HIM THROUGH CHRIST WHEN HE WAS AT HIS WEAKEST POINT.

II CORINTHIANS 13

CHAPTER 13 IS PAUL'S CONCLUSION. HE PREPARES THEM FOR HIS VISIT. HE CHALLENGES THEM TO TEST THEMSELVES TO SEE IF THEY ARE IN THE FAITH, AND HE CLOSSES WITH HIS BENEDICTION.

GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF GALATIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

GALATIANS IS AN EPISTLE WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLE PAUL SOMETIME BEFORE OR DURING 57 A.D. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE DEPENDS UPON WHETHER PAUL WROTE IT TO THE CHURCHES OF NORTHERN OR SOUTHERN GALATIA.

PAUL WROTE THE EPISTLE TO PROCLAIM THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS TO JUSTIFY A PERSON BEFORE GOD AND TO BRING THE PERSON INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. PAUL IS DEFENDING THE PURITY OF THE GOSPEL AGAINST THOSE WHO INSISTED THAT CHRISTIANS HAD TO COME TO CHRIST THROUGH THE LAW OF MOSES OR THAT OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW MADE THEM SUPERIOR CHRISTIANS. THOSE WHO ADVOCATED THIS DOCTRINE WERE CALLED JUDAIZERS. BASICALLY THE JUDAIZERS WANTED TO MAKE JEWS OUT OF THE GENTILES. BY THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY, MOST OF THE CHRISTIANS WERE GENTILES. THIS MEANT THAT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GENTILE BELIEVER TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND JEWISH

RITUALS HAD ALMOST CEASED. HOWEVER, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIRST CENTURY, JUDAIZERS CAME TO GALATIA AND WERE TRYING TO PERSUADE THE BELIEVERS THAT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED THEY HAD TO KEEP THE JEWISH LAW.

PAUL ADDRESSES THE CENTRAL CORE AND ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. HIS POINT IS THAT CHRIST ALONE IS ADEQUATE FOR SALVATION. NOTHING NEEDS TO BE ADDED NOR INDEED CAN BE ADDED. IN FACT, TO ADD ANYTHING DESTROYS THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR SIN. HE ALSO EMPHASIZES THAT KEEPING THE LAW DOES NOT MAKE THE PERSON A SUPERIOR CHRISTIAN.

THIS DOCUMENT BECOMES EXTREMELY IMPORTANT WHEN CHRISTIANITY LOSES ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST AS THE ONE AND ONLY WAY TO GOD. FOR EXAMPLE WHEN A RITUAL IN THE CHURCH IS HELD IN HIGHER ESTEEM THAN THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL THE CHURCH HAS BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE INSIGNIFICANT. WHENEVER SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, RESULTING FROM PRIDE OVER GOOD DEEDS, ECLIPSES THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT ON THE CROSS, IT IS TIME TO APPLY THIS LETTER TO THE CHURCH OR THE INDIVIDUAL.

GOD HAD CHOSEN TO REVEAL HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER THROUGH THE NATION ISRAEL TO THE OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FAILED TO DO THIS. THEY REJECTED THEIR MESSIAH AND CHRISTIANITY CAME INTO BEING AS JESUS' FOLLOWERS ACCEPTED HIM AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE MESSIAH. THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS SAW THAT GOD SAVED THE GENTILES AND

GAVE THEM HIS HOLY SPIRIT JUST AS HE TO THEM. THEREFORE, THEY BELIEVED THAT JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

PAUL WAS TRAINED BY THE GREAT JEWISH RABBI GAMALIEL, BUT PAUL CAME TO REALIZE THAT EVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT MEN WERE SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN GOD. PAUL UNDERSTOOD THAT JESUS CHRIST HAD FULFILLED THE LAW. IT, OF COURSE, WAS THE LAW WHICH HAD SEPARATED JEW AND GENTILE. FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE WAS THE UNIFYING FACTOR OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. IT WAS JESUS CHRIST AND FAITH IN HIM ALONE WHICH BROUGHT FREEDOM AND SALVATION.

PAUL IN GALATIANS ESTABLISHES ONCE AND FOR ALL THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE. HE SHOWS THAT THE BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS NOT A SECT OF JUDAISM, RATHER IT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT HOPES. CHRISTIANITY IS A UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOUR, WHO ARE BORN AGAIN AND WHOSE SINS ARE ATONED FOR BY THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. PAUL WAS A JEW, A HEBREW BY BIRTH AND A MEMBER OF THE SECT OF PHARISEES. HE WAS A PUPIL OF THE FAMOUS RABBI GAMALIEL. HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ROOTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WAS A GOSPEL OF GRACE. GALATIANS IS THE GREAT MAGNA CARTA OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

THE GREAT ISSUES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS DEAL WITH:

- 1. THE CENTRAL PLACE OF CHRIST IN CHRISTIANITY,**
- 2. MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD,**
- 3. THE MEANING OF APOSTLESHIP, AND**
- 4. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH WHICH RESIDES IN ITS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL NOT IN APOSTOLIC SESSION OR LEGALISM OR TRADITION.**

GALATIANS IS, WITHOUT QUESTION, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LETTERS EVER WRITTEN. FIRST, IT HAS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. THIS IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST ACCOUNTS OF THE BASIC HISTORICAL FACTS CONCERNING THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH. IT IS THE FOUNDATIONAL ROCK OF THE EARLY CHURCH. SECOND, IT HAS THEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE. IT IS NECESSARY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL. FROM THE THEOLOGICAL STANDPOINT IT IS THE KEY TO ALL PAUL'S THEOLOGY. SOME HAVE THOUGHT THAT GALATIANS WAS AN ABBREVIATED LETTER SIMILAR TO ROMANS AND THAT IN ROMANS PAUL SIMPLY FILLED IN THE OUTLINE. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH ROMANS AND GALATIANS ARE CLOSELY RELATED THERE IS A DISTINCTION. IN GALATIANS, PAUL IS ANSWERING QUESTIONS VERY BASIC TO THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. THE QUESTIONS COULD BE STATED: WAS CHRIST SUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION? WAS THE ATONEMENT ENOUGH, OR MUST SOMETHING BE ADDED TO CHRIST'S ATONING WORK ON THE CROSS? WHAT MUST ONE DO TO BE SAVED? THIS EPISTLE ANSWERS THOSE QUESTIONS. EVERY PART OF THIS EPISTLE IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THAT GREAT THEME OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM. NO LETTER PAUL EVER WROTE FOCUSED ON ONE

ISSUE AS CLEARLY AS THIS ONE. FIRST HE ESTABLISHES HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY AND DEFENDS HIS DOCTRINE. THEN HE EXHORTS THEM TO MOVE FROM JUSTIFICATION TO SANCTIFICATION. HE BROUGHT THEM LOGICALLY FROM INITIAL SALVATION TO THE IDEA OF HOLY LIVING.

AUTHORSHIP

ALMOST ALL SCHOLARS AGREE THAT PAUL WAS THE AUTHOR OF GALATIANS. EVEN AMONG VERY LIBERAL SCHOLARS THERE IS VERY LITTLE DENIAL OF PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP.

DATE OF WRITING

THE DATE OF THE WRITING OF THIS LETTER IS UNCERTAIN, BECAUSE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCHES OF NORTHERN OR SOUTHERN GALATIA. SOME SCHOLARS TODAY GIVE THIS LETTER AN EARLY DATE, BETWEEN 45 AND 49 A.D., AT THE END OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY AND BEFORE THE RECORD OF ACTS 15. OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE IT WAS WRITTEN AROUND 55 A.D., BEFORE THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY, WHILE PAUL LIVED AT EPHESUS. STILL OTHERS BELIEVE THAT IT WAS AT THE END OF THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 55 AND 57 A.D. WHILE HE WAS AT CORINTH. AS WE HAVE SEEN IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ARRIVE AT A DATE. HOWEVER, THE EARLY DATE SEEMS BEST, BECAUSE THIS LETTER CONTAINS THE SIMPLE GOSPEL AND CONFRONTS THE JUDAIZERS WHO PROBABLY MOVED QUICKLY INTO THE GENTILE CHURCHES.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

SCHOLARS DISAGREE ABOUT THE PEOPLE TO WHOM PAUL WROTE THIS EPISTLE. MOST SCHOLARS TODAY BELIEVE THAT PAUL WROTE THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA, WHICH HE ESTABLISHED ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. THESE CHURCHES WERE IN THE SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL AREA OF THE PROVINCE.

OTHER SCHOLARS THINK PAUL WROTE THIS LETTER TO THE CHURCHES IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF GALATIA, WHICH HE OR SOMEONE ELSE ESTABLISHED LATER. THE NORTHERN AREA WAS AN ETHNIC OR GEOGRAPHIC GALATIA SETTLED BY GAULS WHO CAME FROM FRANCE; WHEREAS, THE SOUTHERN AREA WAS BASICALLY A POLITICAL GALATIA. THESE THEORIES ARE INSIGNIFICANT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CONTENT OF THE EPISTLE.

IF YOU WANT TO EXAMINE THESE THEORIES IN DETAIL YOU WILL FIND THEM PRESENTED IN VARIOUS COMMENTARIES.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

THE OCCASION OF THE WRITING WAS TO COMBAT THE THEOLOGY OF THE JUDAIZERS. THEY BASICALLY TAUGHT THAT TO BE SAVED A PERSON HAD TO PRACTICE JEWISH LAW AS WELL AS ACCEPT JESUS' ATONEMENT FOR THEIR SINS. THEREFORE, ONE MUST HAVE MOSES AND CHRIST, CIRCUMCISION AND FAITH, LAW AND GRACE, AND THEY WERE MAKING THE LAW PERMANENT TO CHRISTIANITY.

PAUL WROTE THIS LETTER FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- 1. TO AUTHENTICATE HIS APOSTLESHIP,**
- 2. TO VINDICATE THE GOSPEL HE PREACHED,**
- 3. TO COMBAT THE VIEW THAT THE LAW WAS NECESSARY FOR GENTILE CHRISTIANS TO BE SAVED,**
- 4. TO SQUELCH A RELIGIOUS REVOLT,**
- 5. TO PREVENT THE GALATIANS FROM ACCEPTING THE VIEWS OF THE JUDAIZERS.**

BRIEF OVERVIEW

GALATIANS FALLS INTO THREE SECTIONS:

- 1. PERSONAL, CHAPTERS 1 - 2**
- 2. DOCTRINAL, CHAPTERS 3 - 4**
- 3. PRACTICAL, CHAPTERS 5 - 6.**

IN SECTION ONE PAUL PRESENTS THE IDEA OF PERSONAL FREEDOM AND LIBERTY IN CHRIST. IN SECTION TWO HE PRESENTS DOCTRINE WHICH APPLIES TO ALL FREEDOM. IN SECTION THREE HE PRESENTS THE PRACTICAL LIFE OF FREEDOM.

ANOTHER WAY TO ANALYZE GALATIANS IS: IN THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS, PAUL STATES THE DOCTRINE; IN THE SECOND TWO CHAPTERS HE DEFENDS THE DOCTRINE; AND IN THE LAST TWO CHAPTERS HE APPLIES THE DOCTRINE.

ANOTHER WAY TO VIEW GALATIANS IS:

1. PAUL DEFENDS HIS AUTHORITY, IN CHAPTERS 1 AND 2. HIS GOSPEL IS A DIRECT REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. HIS CALL TO PREACH THE GOSPEL WAS INDEPENDENT OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE APOSTLES OF JERUSALEM WAS CASUAL RATHER THAN FORMAL. THE APOSTLES APPROVED THE CONTENT OF HIS GOSPEL, THEY DID NOT TEACH HIM. HE LEARNED HIS MESSAGE BY REVELATION FROM JESUS CHRIST. THESE APOSTLES, FROM THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY, RECOGNIZED HIS VALIDITY AS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES. PAUL EVEN REBUKED PETER TO HIS FACE FOR BEING WISHY - WASHY IN HIS ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS AND FOR MOVING AWAY FROM THE STANDARDS OF THE GOSPEL FOR FEAR OF HIS PEERS, RATHER THAN FOLLOWING WHAT HE KNEW WAS CORRECT DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

2. PAUL DEFENDS HIS GOSPEL IN CHAPTERS 3 AND 4. THESE CHAPTERS RECORD THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE GALATIANS THAT AFFIRM THE REALITY OF THE GOSPEL. PAUL SHOWS THAT SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE REVEALS THAT FAITH ANTEDATES SALVATION BY LAW. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE, IT IS ONLY PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL. PAUL ILLUSTRATES THIS CONCEPT BY SHOWING THAT CHILDREN WHO REACH MATURITY ARE FREE TO INHERIT WHAT IS THEIRS. THIS IS IN 4:1 - 20. IN 4:21 - 31 IS THE ALLEGORY BETWEEN THE TWO SONS OF ABRAHAM AND THEIR MOTHERS, ONE A SLAVE AND ONE A FREE WOMAN SHOWING THE SUPERIORITY OF FAITH.

3. PAUL DEFENDS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF LIBERTY, CHAPTERS 5 AND 6. THIS LIFE DEMANDS FORBEARANCE AND GIVING. CHAPTER 6 IS THE CONCLUSION.

PAUL WAS A JEW. HE HAD BELONGED TO THE SECT OF THE PHARISEES. HE WAS WELL EDUCATED, HAVING STUDIED UNDER THE FAMOUS GAMALIEL. HE WAS A RABBI AND UNDERSTOOD THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE USED ALLEGORICAL ARGUMENTS WITH FORCEFUL POWER WHICH WAS A VERY COMMON TYPE OF ARGUMENT AND REASONING, USED BY THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF HIS DAY. PAUL ALSO KNEW THE APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE OF HIS DAY. FURTHERMORE AS A JEW OF THE DISPERSION HE WAS ACQUAINTED WITH THE GENTILE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.

HIS HIGH VOLTAGE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE WITH THE LIVING CHRIST BROUGHT HIM INTO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. THE BASIS OF HIS THEOLOGY WAS THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE LIVING CHRIST.

GALATIANS 1

PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND CHRIST'S GOSPEL

I. PAUL'S GREETING 1:1 - 5

II. GOD'S CONDEMNATION UPON THOSE WHO PERVERT THE GOSPEL 1:6 - 10

III. CHRIST'S REVELATION OF HIS GOSPEL TO PAUL 1:11 - 24

IN VERSES 1 - 5, PAUL REFERS TO HIMSELF AS AN APOSTLE, αποστολος. AN APOSTLE IS "ONE SENT" OR "ONE COMMISSIONED UNDER ORDERS." AN APOSTLE IS ONE WHO SPEAKS FOR THE ONE HE REPRESENTS. PAUL SAYS HE WAS COMMISSIONED BY CHRIST, AND HE INSISTS THAT HE WAS AN APOSTLE LONG BEFORE HE KNEW THE OTHER APOSTLES. HIS CALLING CAME WHEN HE WAS TRAVELING TO DAMASCUS TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS. HE HAD A DIRECT HIGH VOLTAGE ENCOUNTER AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO CALLED HIM TO BE AN APOSTLE. JESUS HAD APPEARED TO HIM ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. THE LIVING CHRIST HAD CERTIFIED HIS GOSPEL, COMMISSIONED HIM, AND INTERPRETED THE HISTORICAL JESUS FOR HIM. II CORINTHIANS 12:12, SHOWS THAT PAUL IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS. HE IS SENT AS AN AMBASSADOR. AN AMBASSADOR IS CONCERNED NOT ABOUT HIMSELF, BUT ABOUT THE ONE WHO HAS AUTHORITY OVER HIM. HE SPEAKS NOT IN HIS OWN NAME, BUT IN THE NAME OF ANOTHER. HIS WORTH IS NOT IMPORTANT, BUT THE WORK OF THE ONE HE

REPRESENTS IS IMPORTANT. APOSTLESHIP ORIGINATES WITH GOD, NOT MEN, FOR AN APOSTLE IS CALLED FROM OUTSIDE THE WORLD TO DO A WORK INSIDE THE WORLD. IN VERSES 4 AND 5, PAUL AFFIRMS THAT THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED CHRIST WAS THE SAME POWER THAT HAD GIVEN HIM HIS APOSTLESHIP, AND HAD RAISED HIM UP FROM THE DEATH OF SIN.

PAULOS, *παυλος*, MEANING “LITTLE ONE” IS HIS GREEK NAME. SAUL IS HIS JEWISH NAME. IT MEANS “ASKED FOR.” PERHAPS HE WAS NAMED AFTER KING SAUL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SINCE THEY WERE BOTH OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

IN VERSE 2, PAUL SENDS GREETINGS TO THEM FROM THE BROTHERS OR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE WITH HIM. JESUS SAID IN MARK 3:35, “DO MY WILL AND YOU ARE MY BROTHERS.” BROTHERS, IN THIS CASE, ARE THOSE WHO HAVE THE SAME SAVIOR AND THE SAME GOD AS THEIR FATHER. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS NOT RELATED TO THE COLOR OF ONES SKIN, NOR IS IT RELATED TO THE COUNTRY FROM WHICH ONE COMES. IT IS RELATED TO THE SAVIOR. THUS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PHYSICAL BIRTH IS SPIRITUAL BIRTH. THIS MAKES PEOPLE RELATED IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS BROTHERHOOD, IN THE FAMILY OF GOD, IS FAITH. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST HAS THUS MADE US BLOOD BROTHERS. VERSES 3 AND 4 GIVE THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS WITHIN THE CHURCH. CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF FOR THEIR SINS. THEY WERE IN CHRIST AND CHRIST IN THEM.

IN THE FIRST FIVE VERSES OF CHAPTER 1, PAUL IS ANNOUNCING HIS AUTHORITY AS AN APOSTLE AND THE GOSPEL HE PREACHED. IN VERSE 4, HE SUMS UP HIS SUPREME MESSAGE WHEN HE SAYS, "...WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS." HERE WE HAVE THE VERY FOUNDATION OF JUSTIFICATION, NOT IN THE WORKS OF THE LAW OR IN OBSERVING RITUAL, BUT IN CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH. JUSTIFICATION COMES ONLY IN JESUS CHRIST AND HIS ATONEMENT.

PAUL GREETED THEM WITH, "GRACE TO YOU, AND PEACE." THE WORD $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ IS TRANSLATED "GRACE." GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS ALMOST ALWAYS RELATED TO GOD CHOOSING ISRAEL TO BE HIS PEOPLE. THE NATION OF ISRAEL HAD NO SPECIAL QUALITIES FOR GOD TO CHOOSE THEM. THE NEW TESTAMENT WORD "GRACE" IN CONCEPT IS RELATED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD "HESED." GOD'S GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS UNDERSTOOD PRIMARILY IN TERMS OF JESUS CHRIST. GRACE CAN BE DEFINED AS GOD'S FAVOR TO UNMERITING PEOPLE. THE BIBLE IS THE STORY OF GOD'S SAVING WORK. GRACE IS GOD'S REDEMPTIVE LOVE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. GRACE IS A GIFT. IT ALWAYS INVOLVES THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND THE RESTORATION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. IT BOTH REDEEMS AND SUSTAINS. THE WORD $\epsilon\iota\rho\eta\nu\eta$, IS TRANSLATED "PEACE" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IS RELATED TO JESUS' WORK ON THE CROSS AND MEANS HARMONY BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY. JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS IS THE BASIS OF BOTH PERSONAL INTERNAL HARMONY AND HARMONY BETWEEN PEOPLE AND GOD. WITHOUT CHRIST THERE IS NO PEACE. THUS FOR PAUL, PEACE MEANS A NEW

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BASED ON THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST. IT BASICALLY MEANS UNION WITH CHRIST. THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT THEMES OF ROMANS 5. IN COLOSSIANS, PEACE MEANS RESTORATION OF ORDER. IN II CORINTHIANS, AND ESPECIALLY IN I CORINTHIANS 13, IT IS ALMOST SYNONYMOUS WITH LOVE.

IN GALATIANS PAUL SAYS THAT PEACE COMES FROM GOD THE FATHER. JESUS SPEAKS OF GOD AS THE FATHER OF THE INDIVIDUAL; WHEREAS THE OLD TESTAMENT SPEAKS OF GOD AS THE FATHER OF ISRAEL, THE NATION, BUT SELDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL. FATHER IS A KEY WORD FOR UNDERSTANDING THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS. PAUL SHOWS BY HIS USE OF THE WORD "FATHER" THAT THE EARLY CHURCH WANTED TO CONTINUE USING THIS WORD FOR GOD BECAUSE BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD BY THE ADOPTION.

IN VERSE 3, Κυριος, TRANSLATES "LORD," AND HAS A SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND. THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX), WHICH IS THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT, IS VERY HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING NEW TESTAMENT WORDS. THE TRANSLATORS OF THE SEPTUAGINT OFTEN USED THE WORD "LORD" TO SPEAK OF GOD. PAUL IN HIS WRITINGS BASICALLY USES THE WORD FROM THE HEBREW BACKGROUND. HOWEVER, HE IS WRITING TO BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES SO BOTH BACKGROUNDS DENOTE THE MEANING OF THE WORD.

IN VERSE 4, PAUL BEGINS HIS ATTACK UPON ANYTHING ADDED TO THE GOSPEL. CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH IS THE TOTAL MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE JEWISH RABBIS SPOKE ABOUT TWO AGES, THE PRESENT EVIL AGE AND A FUTURE AGE RULED BY GOD. VERSE 4 SAYS THAT OUR SINS BIND US TO THE PRESENT EVIL AGE AND THAT JESUS GAVE HIMSELF TO SET US FREE FROM THIS AGE. VERSE 5 SAYS GLORY BELONGS TO GOD FOREVER. GLORY IS THE REVELATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER IN ALL ITS PERFECTION. IT REVEALS THE ACTIVE AND THE RADIANT PRESENCE OF GOD. THIS IS NO DOUBT A REFERENCE BACK TO THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. HERE IT MEANS PRAISE TO GOD FOR CHRIST.

IN VERSES 6-10 PAUL SAYS THAT HE WAS AMAZED AND MARVELED THAT THEY WERE SO QUICKLY TURNED FROM THE GRACE OF CHRIST TO A DIFFERENT, ετερον, "HETERON" GOSPEL WHICH IS "NOT ANOTHER," αλλο. THE KEY TO THE STATEMENT IS THE WORD "PERVERT," μεταστρεψαι. EVIDENTLY, THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE ADDING TO THE GOSPEL AND SAYING THEY WERE MAKING IT SUPERIOR TO THE GOSPEL THE GALATIANS HAD ORIGINALLY RECEIVED. THE WORD "PERVERT" MEANS TO TWIST OR BEND SOMETHING. HERE IT IS USED IN THE SENSE OF TWISTING THE GOSPEL INTO SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINAL GOSPEL.

HE HAS A THREE-FOLD REBUKE HERE. HE REBUKES THE GALATIANS AND THEIR TEACHERS, AND THEN ANSWERS THE CHARGE THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS HAVE MADE AGAINST HIM. HE SAYS THAT THESE TEACHERS WHO ARE TURNING THE GALATIANS FROM THE TRUE GOSPEL ARE CURSED FROM GOD. THE GOSPEL OF THE SALVATION OF JESUS CHRIST CAME FROM

GOD AND TO PERVERT THIS GOSPEL INTO A SYSTEM OF CEREMONIES AND WORKS OF THE FLESH IS TO CONTRADICT GOD. ANYTHING THAT TURNS ONE FROM JESUS CHRIST TO OTHER THINGS AS A WAY OF SALVATION IS CURSED. THEY WERE PUTTING LAW AND GRACE TOGETHER FOR SALVATION, AND PAUL SAYS WHEN LAW IS ADDED TO GRACE IN THE GOSPEL IT IS A PERVERSION.

AFTER THESE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS PAUL TURNS TO THE MAIN BODY OF THIS LETTER. FIRST, HE MAKES A DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY. SECOND, HE GIVES A STATEMENT THAT THE GOSPEL IS CENTERED IN JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND GRACE ALONE, BASED ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. THIRD, HE MAKES THE APPLICATION OF BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR. PAUL PRESENTS DOCTRINE WITH ITS APPLICATION TO THE PRACTICAL THINGS OF LIFE. IN PAUL'S WRITINGS HE USUALLY MAKES A DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND THEN SHOWS HOW THE TEACHING IS LIVED OUT IN LIFE.

PAUL WAS BEING ACCUSED OF PERVERTING JUDAISM. THAT CHARGE IS STILL AGAINST PAUL TODAY. SOME HAVE SAID THE REAL GOSPEL CAME FROM JESUS. THE TRUTH IS, PAUL UNDERSTOOD THE GOSPEL VERY CLEARLY. THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS HE WAS A PERSECUTOR OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. HOWEVER, AS THE TRUTH BEGAN TO DAWN ON HIM AND REVELATION CAME FROM GOD HE BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. THE HOLY SPIRIT SPOKE TO HIM AND OVERPOWERED HIM AND INTERPRETED THE HISTORICAL CHRIST FOR HIM. HIS CALL AND EARLY INFLUENCE WAS INDEPENDENT OF THE EARLY CHURCH. THIS FACT GIVES GREAT AUTHENTICITY TO

THE GOSPEL, BECAUSE THE EARLY APOSTLES KNEW THAT PAUL UNDERSTOOD THE GOSPEL EXACTLY AS THEY DID. THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS CLEARLY REVEALS THIS TRUTH. PAUL DID NOT CHANGE WHAT THE APOSTLES HAD BEEN TAUGHT BY JESUS. JESUS TAUGHT PAUL THE SAME GOSPEL THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN VERSE 2 AND VERSES 22-24, PAUL SPEAKS OF THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA AND JUDEA. THE WORD *ἐκκλησία*, IS TRANSLATED “ASSEMBLY” OR “CHURCH.” THE WORD IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS “OUT OF” AND “TO CALL.” THE WORD MEANS “THE CALLED OUT PEOPLE OF GOD.” THE TRANSLATORS OF THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX), WHICH WAS THE TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT INTO GREEK, USED “ECCLESIA” TO TRANSLATE THE TWO HEBREW WORDS, “EDHAH” AND “QUHAL.” “EDHAH” IS FROM A ROOT WORD MEANING “TO APPOINT.” “QUHAL” IS FROM A ROOT WORD MEANING “TO CALL.” IT WAS USED OF CALLING MEN TO WORK AND TO CALL AN ASSEMBLY TOGETHER. THE TRANSLATORS IN THE PENTATEUCH (THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT) TRANSLATED BOTH HEBREW WORDS USING “ECCLESIA.” HOWEVER, IN THE REST OF THE OLD TESTAMENT THEY USED “SYNAGOGUE” TO TRANSLATE “EDHAH” AND IT SEEMS TO MEAN A LOCAL ASSEMBLY. THEY USED “ECCLESIA” TO TRANSLATE “QUAHAL” WHICH SEEMS TO MEAN ALL GOD’S CALLED OUT PEOPLE. (ALAN RICHARDSON: A THEOLOGICAL WORD BOOK OF THE BIBLE [NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1960] PP. 46-47.)

IN THIS EPISTLE PAUL IS ADDRESSING ALL THE PEOPLE OF

GOD WHO ARE IN GALATIA.

IN VERSES 11-24 OF THIS FIRST CHAPTER, PAUL IS DEFENDING HIS APOSTLESHIP. THIS OPPOSITION IN GALATIA RESULTED IN OUR KNOWING MUCH MORE ABOUT PAUL THAN WE WOULD HAVE IF THIS LETTER HAD NEVER BEEN WRITTEN.

IN THIS CHAPTER WE LEARN THAT PAUL WENT INTO ARABIA SOON AFTER HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE. IN SALVATION HISTORY GOD HAD OFTEN CALLED MEN INTO THE DESERT TO BE TESTED. EVIDENTLY IN ARABIA HE PRAYED, THOUGHT AND LISTENED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS WAS A VERY IMPORTANT PERIOD IN HIS LIFE. IN VERSE 18 PAUL SAYS THAT AFTER THREE YEARS HE WENT TO JERUSALEM TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH PETER. THIS VISIT WAS PROBABLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF REMOVING ANY DISTRUST THE APOSTLES MIGHT HAVE OF HIM. WE SEE HERE THAT PETER AND JAMES, THE LEADERS IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH, AUTHENTICATED PAUL'S PREACHING CONTENT.

THE PERSECUTOR BECAME THE PERSECUTED. INSTEAD OF GETTING TO LAY HIS HAND ON THE PEOPLE OF CHRIST, CHRIST LAID HIS HANDS ON PAUL AND HE TURNED IN A NEW DIRECTION. HE NOW PREACHES THE FAITH WHICH HE ONCE PERSECUTED.

GALATIANS 2

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST NOT BY WORKS OF THE LAW

- I. THE APOSTLES DECLARE THE GOSPEL
PREACHED BY PAUL AS AUTHENTIC 2:1 - 10**
- II. PAUL REBUKES PETER FOR HIS INCONSISTENCY
IN BEHAVIOR 2:11 - 21**

IN CHAPTER 1, PAUL SAYS THAT THREE YEARS AFTER HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE OR THREE YEARS AFTER HIS RETURN FROM ARABIA HE WENT TO JERUSALEM TO VISIT PETER. IN CHAPTER 2, HE SAYS THAT 14 YEARS LATER HE WENT TO JERUSALEM AGAIN. THIS FOURTEEN YEARS MAY REFER TO EITHER HIS CONVERSION OR TO HIS FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM. THE POINTS HE MAKES ARE; THAT THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM ACCEPTED HIM AS THEIR EQUAL, THAT THEY RECOGNIZED HIM AS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES AND THAT THEY REGARDED HIS MESSAGE FROM GOD TO BE THE SAME AS THEIRS.

IN VERSE 2, PAUL SAYS THAT HE AND BARNABAS TOOK TITUS WITH THEM TO JERUSALEM, AND EVEN THOUGH HE WAS A GENTILE OF GREEK BIRTH HE WAS NOT COMPELLED BY THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES TO BE CIRCUMCISED; THUS, SHOWING THAT CIRCUMCISION WAS NOT REQUIRED OF GENTILE CHRISTIANS.

BY THIS TIME, GENTILE CHRISTIANITY WAS GROWING AT A

RAPID RATE. THE CONFERENCE MENTIONED HERE IS PROBABLY THE SAME CONFERENCE RECORDED IN ACTS 15. SOME SCHOLARS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE IT CORRESPONDS TO ACTS 11 WHICH RECORDS THAT PAUL TOOK RELIEF FUNDS TO JERUSALEM. GALATIANS DOES NOT MENTION THAT EVENT; SO, ACTS 15 IS PROBABLY THE EVENT REFERRED TO HERE. PAUL IS PROBABLY RECORDING A PRIVATE MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE LARGE CONFERENCE. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHICH EVENT IT WAS, PAUL'S ARGUMENT IS VALID. IF THIS IS THE ACTS 11 EVENT THEN THE CASE IS EVEN STRONGER, BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT THREE DIFFERENT TIMES THE CHIEF APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM AUTHENTICATED AND APPROVED THE GOSPEL PAUL PREACHED. PAUL SAYS THAT HE DID NOT RECEIVE A SUMMONS FROM JERUSALEM, BUT FROM HEAVEN. THE JUDAIZERS, OF COURSE, WOULD HAVE SAID THAT HE RECEIVED A SUMMONS FROM JERUSALEM.

EXAMINING THE EVENTS AND DATES IN PAUL'S LIFE HELP US TO UNDERSTAND GALATIANS AND THE OTHER EPISTLES. IF WE PLACE HIS CONVERSION AT ABOUT 35 A.D., HIS RETURN FROM ARABIA TO DAMASCUS SOMEWHERE AROUND 37 A.D. AND THE FIRST TRIP TO JERUSALEM SOMEWHERE AROUND 37 - 38 A.D., THIS DATES THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE ABOUT 49 - 51 A.D.

BY THE TIME OF THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, GENTILE CHRISTIANITY HAD BECOME WIDE SPREAD. GENTILE CHRISTIANS WERE NOT REQUIRED TO BELONG TO THE JEWISH NATION. THIS WOULD HAVE MADE CHRISTIANITY A JEWISH SECT. JUDAIZERS WANTED ALL GENTILES WHEN THEY BECAME CHRISTIANS TO BE CIRCUMCISED AND TO OBSERVE THE JEWISH LAWS.

PAUL DID NOT GO TO JERUSALEM TO RECEIVE APOSTLESHIP, BUT RATHER TO AUTHENTICATE THE GOSPEL HE PREACHED. PAUL SAYS THAT SPIRITUAL SLAVERY EXISTS WHERE PEOPLE ARE IN SUBJECTION TO JEWISH LAW; AND THAT FREEDOM IS NOT FOUND IN CREED OR DEED, BUT IS FOUND IN THE LIVING CHRIST. EITHER THE CHRISTIAN FAITH WAS THE END OF THE LAW, OR THE LAW WOULD BE THE END OF CHRISTIANITY. IT WAS NOT JUDAISM PLUS CHRISTIANITY. THE JEWS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW LIMITED THEIR CONCEPT OF WHAT GOD HAD DONE THROUGH CHRIST; THEREFORE, THEY KEPT WANTING TO ADD TO WHAT JESUS HAD DONE ON THE CROSS. IF PAUL HAD NOT BEEN PRESENT AT THIS CONFERENCE THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED THE JUDAIZERS' TEACHINGS. CHRISTIANITY WOULD HAVE EITHER VANISHED AWAY OR IT WOULD HAVE LOST ALL OF ITS POWER, BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE BECOME A JEWISH SECT SIMPLY ADDING CHRIST AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF ITS SYSTEM. THIS WOULD HAVE CUT OUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. BEFORE THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, JUDAIZERS SAID IN ORDER TO BE A CHRISTIAN YOU HAD TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES. IN ORDER TO SETTLE THIS CONTROVERSY, PAUL, BARNABAS AND SOME OTHER DISCIPLES WENT TO JERUSALEM AND CONFRONTED THE ENTIRE CHURCH. PAUL STATED THAT THIS WAS A DIFFERENT GOSPEL FROM THE ONE HE HAD RECEIVED, AND THE APOSTLES AFFIRMED THE TRUTH OF HIS TEACHINGS.

IN GAL. 2:11 - 16 PAUL SPEAKS OF THE CONTROVERSY HE HAD WITH PETER AT ANTIOCH. PETER SHOWS BY HIS ACTION IN ANTIOCH THAT HE DID NOT DISCERN THE FUNDAMENTAL

NECESSITY OF MAKING THE DISTINCTION THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS EITHER A DEVELOPMENT OF JUDAISM OR A FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND, THEREFORE, FREEDOM FROM LEGAL BONDAGE. ONCE PETER UNDERSTOOD THIS HE AGREED WITH PAUL. PAUL SAYS TO THE GALATIANS THAT HIS GOSPEL WAS THE SAME GOSPEL WHICH HE HAD ALWAYS PREACHED. THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE INFERRING THAT THEY HAD THE AUTHORITY OF JERUSALEM, NOT PAUL.

PAUL'S OBJECTION TO THE LAW AS A SYSTEM WAS THAT IT WAS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ATONING OF CHRIST. THE CHIEF IMPORTANCE OF THE JERUSALEM COUNSEL WAS THAT IT CONSIDERED AND AFFIRMED THE UNITY OF PAUL AND THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES IN THEIR TEACHING ABOUT SALVATION. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SOLVED AT THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, THE JUDAIZERS DID NOT GIVE IN, THEY KEPT HOUNDING AND POUNDING TO GET THEIR FALSE AND PERVERTED GOSPEL ACCEPTED. SIMILAR HERESIES CONTINUE TO ARISE IN THE CHURCH

IN 2:11 - 16 THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS FROM EATING WITH THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS IMPLIED THAT JEWISH CHRISTIANITY WAS SPIRITUALLY SUPERIOR TO GENTILE CHRISTIANITY. THE REASONING BEHIND THIS WAS BECAUSE THEY KEPT THE CEREMONIAL LAW AND CUSTOMS OF THE JEWS. PAUL HIMSELF KEPT THESE CUSTOMS, BUT THIS WAS BECAUSE OF HIS HERITAGE NOT BECAUSE OF SALVATION OR SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY OVER THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS.

THIS IS A SEVERE REBUKE WHICH MAY CONTINUE THROUGH

VERSE 21.

IN VERSES 16-21, PAUL GIVES BOTH THE DOCTRINE FOR JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND HOW JUSTIFICATION IS LIVED OUT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, WHICH WE CALL SANCTIFICATION.

GALATIANS 2:20, IS ONE OF THE GREATEST VERSES IN SCRIPTURE. IT SHOWS THE UNION OF THE BELIEVER AND CHRIST. THE BELIEVER'S PERSONALITY IS NOT ABSORBED INTO THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST BUT RATHER IS BY FAITH UNDER THE RULE OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

A CLOSER ANALYSIS OF THIS VERSE IS: $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\omega\mu\alpha\iota$. "CHRIST I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH; BUT I LIVE, NO LONGER I, BUT CHRIST IN ME; BUT THAT NOW I LIVE IN FLESH, IN FAITH I LIVE, THAT OF THE SON OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE UP HIMSELF FOR ME."

THE VERB $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\gamma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\omega\mu\alpha\iota$, "I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED," IS IN THE PERFECT, PASSIVE, INDICATIVE, 1ST PERSON, SINGULAR. THE PERFECT TENSE OF THE VERB REFERS TO AN ACTION WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE PAST, BUT THE CONSEQUENCES AND RESULTS OF THE ACTION HAVE CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT. THE EMPHASIS OF THE PERFECT TENSE IS ON THE COMPLETENESS OF THE ACTION OR THE FINISHED RESULTS AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE ACTION.

THE WORD "CHRIST" HAS NO DEFINITE ARTICLE IN FRONT OF IT AND IS CALLED AN ANARTHROUS. THIS CONSTRUCTION IS USUALLY USED TO EMPHASIZE THE QUALITY OF SOMETHING.

THE VERB ζω, “I LIVE” IS PRESENT, ACTIVE, INDICATIVE. IT MEANS THE REALITY OF PAUL DOING THE LIVING WHILE HE IS SPEAKING.

IN THE PHRASE ζη, δε εν εμοι χριστος, “CHRIST LIVES IN ME,” THE VERB ζη IS PRESENT, ACTIVE, INDICATIVE, THIRD PERSON, SINGULAR. THIS ALSO MEANS THE REALITY OF CHRIST LIVING IN HIM WHILE HE IS SPEAKING. IN THE PHRASE, “I LIVE IN THE FLESH,” THE VERB IS ALSO PRESENT, ACTIVE, INDICATIVE. HE MEANS HE IS LIVING IN HIS PHYSICAL BODY. THE VERB IN THE PHRASE, “IN FAITH I LIVE,” IS ALSO IN THE PRESENT, ACTIVE, INDICATIVE.

THE PHRASE “WHO LOVED ME,” IS AN AORIST, ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. THE PHRASE “GAVE UP HIMSELF” IS ALSO AN AORIST, ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. THESE PHRASES REFER TO THE REALITY OF THE EVENTS. THERE IS ONLY ONE ARTICLE IN THE TWO PHRASES, MEANING THAT THEY ARE A UNIT BELONGING TOGETHER.

IN THIS VERSE IT IS NOT JUST CHRIST BEING CRUCIFIED FOR HIM, BUT CO-CRUCIFIXION. PAUL’S OLD NATURE IS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT CRUCIFIXION HAS MADE HIM DEAD TO THE LAW.

THE PREPOSITION υπερ, “FOR,” MEANS “IN BEHALF OF,” “IN-STEAD OF,” OR “IN THE PLACE OF.” (SPIROS ZODHIATES, THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY, [CHATTANOOGA, TN: AMG PUBLISHERS, 1992] PP. 1411 - 1413.)

IN GALATIANS 2:20, PAUL SAYS THAT THE LAW IS NOT A WAY OF LIFE. IT IS A WAY OF DEATH. A CHRISTIAN IS NOT SOMEONE WHO IS TRYING TO OBEY THE LAW. HE IS ONE WHO HAS THE "SOMEONE" LIVING IN HIM; IT IS CHRIST LIVING IN HIM, AND IT IS BY FAITH. IT IS UNION WITH CHRIST. THE PERSON HAS DIED TO THE LAW AND TO HIS SINS. HE IS CO-CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, AND HE IS CO-RISEN WITH CHRIST, AND BECAUSE HE AROSE WITH HIM, CHRIST IS LIVING HIS LIFE THROUGH HIM. THIS IS THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A SET OF RULES AND REGULATIONS. CHRISTIANITY IS THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS AND SET US FREE. UNION WITH CHRIST DOES NOT DESTROY THE PERSONALITY. PAUL'S PERSONALITY WAS NOT DESTROYED. CHRIST AND PAUL WERE DISTINCT. TWO BEINGS ARE NOT MERGED INTO ONE BEING. THE PERSONALITY IS STILL THERE. THE PERSON STILL HAS HIS UNIQUENESS. PAUL NEVER CEASES TO THINK AND ACT. HE STILL MAKES CHOICES. HIS SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IS NOT LOST, AND HIS MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT SUSPENDED, BECAUSE HE SAYS "...LEST I BE A CAST-AWAY" OR IN OTHER WORDS UNLESS HE INVALIDATES BY HIS LIFE WHAT HE HAS TAUGHT. THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST BRINGS UNION SO THAT CHRIST CAN WORK THROUGH THE BELIEVER. IT IS UNION OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE BELIEVER AND THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST. THIS RELATIONSHIP IS BY OBEDIENCE, FAITH, AND TRUST. PAUL IS STILL LIVING AN ACTUAL LIFE IN FLESH AND BONES, BUT THIS UNION AFFECTS HIS WILL, THINKING, CHOICES, HOPES AND EMOTIONS. IT IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE MOTIVATION OF CHRIST; HE LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME. THIS IS THE EXPLANATION FOR

GALATIANS 3

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

- I. THE SPIRIT COMES BY FAITH 3:1 - 5**
- II. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF PEOPLE OF FAITH 3:6 - 14**
- III. GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM WAS BEFORE THE LAW 3:15 - 22**
- IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO BRING US TO CHRIST 3:23 - 29**

THIS CHAPTER CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR MAJOR DIVISIONS. IN VERSES 1 - 5, PAUL RECOUNTS THE GALATIANS' SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. IN VERSES 6 - 14, HE REMINDS THEM HOW HE CAME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM. IN VERSES 15 - 22, HE SHOWS THAT THE PROMISE GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM WAS FULFILLED IN CHRIST. IN VERSES 23 - 29, HE SHOWS THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO BRING US TO CHRIST.

IN CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 PAUL GOES TO THE HEART OF THE FAITH. THE WORDS FAITH, LAW AND PROMISE OCCUR MANY TIMES IN THESE CHAPTERS. PAUL USES GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM TO SUPPORT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. THIS WAS WISE LOGIC SINCE THE JUDAIZERS CLAIMED ABRAHAM WAS THEIR FATHER. PAUL SHOWS;

- 1. THAT ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD 400 YEARS BEFORE THE LAW,**
- 2. THAT HIS BELIEVING GOD WAS COUNTED OR RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUS, AND**
- 3. THAT THE LAW DID NOT ANNUL THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM.**

PAUL IS SHOWING THAT A THIRD PARTY CANNOT ANNUL AN AGREEMENT. GOD HIMSELF MADE THIS AGREEMENT AND PROVIDES THE PROMISES THAT BRINGS SALVATION. PAUL SAYS THE LAW OF MOSES WAS TEMPORARY, FOR THE JEWS ONLY, NOT FOR THE GENTILES. IT WAS NEVER GIVEN FOR THE GENTILES. THE LAW OF GOD WAS WRITTEN IN THE GENTILES' HEARTS NOT ON THE TABLETS OF STONE. THE LAW OF MOSES WHICH WAS GIVEN TO THE JEWS COULD NEVER SAVE THEM. IT SIMPLY CONVICTED THEM OF SIN. IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY SALVATION IN THE LAW THEN THERE WAS NO REASON FOR JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO THE WORLD TO DIE FOR THE SINS OF PEOPLE. THE LAW REVEALED SIN AND GUIDED THE SINNER TO TRUST IN CHRIST. GOD GAVE THE PROMISES, AND THE PROMISES WERE FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST WHO DIED ON THE CROSS. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST.

THE WORD *διαθηκην*, TRANSLATED "COVENANT" IN VERSE 15 MEANS "SOMETHING THAT IS DETERMINED BY THE EXPRESSED WILL OF A PERSON." IT WAS A VERY COMMON WORD IN GREEK AND HAS A DISTINCT CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE A TESTAMENT OR WILL IS NOT VALIDATED EXCEPT IN DEATH. ALSO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT,

COVENANT MEANT AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PEOPLE. IT IS USED HERE TO MEAN THE DETERMINED PURPOSE OF GOD. THIS IS NOT A HUMAN AGREEMENT. IT IS A DIVINE AGREEMENT. PAUL IS SHOWING THAT GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDENTS IS REALIZED IN CHRIST JESUS. A POINT THAT IS OFTEN MISSED IS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS WHERE PAUL INSISTED THAT THE PROMISES WERE NOT TO ALL THE DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM, BUT TO THE LINE OF TRUE BELIEVERS AND THAT THE PROMISE WAS FOUND IN CHRIST.

IN VERSE 20 IT SAYS, "NOW A MEDIATOR IS NOT A MEDIATOR OF ONE, BUT GOD IS ONE." THE IDEA HERE IS THAT A MEDIATOR IS BETWEEN TWO PARTIES, BUT IN THE GIVING OF A PROMISE THERE IS NO MEDIATOR. THE PROMISE DEPENDS DIRECTLY UPON GOD. PAUL'S POINT IS THAT GOD'S PROMISE WILL NOT BE BROKEN, WHEREAS A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN CAN BE BROKEN BY MAN.

GALATIANS 4

THOSE BORN OF GOD ARE FREE

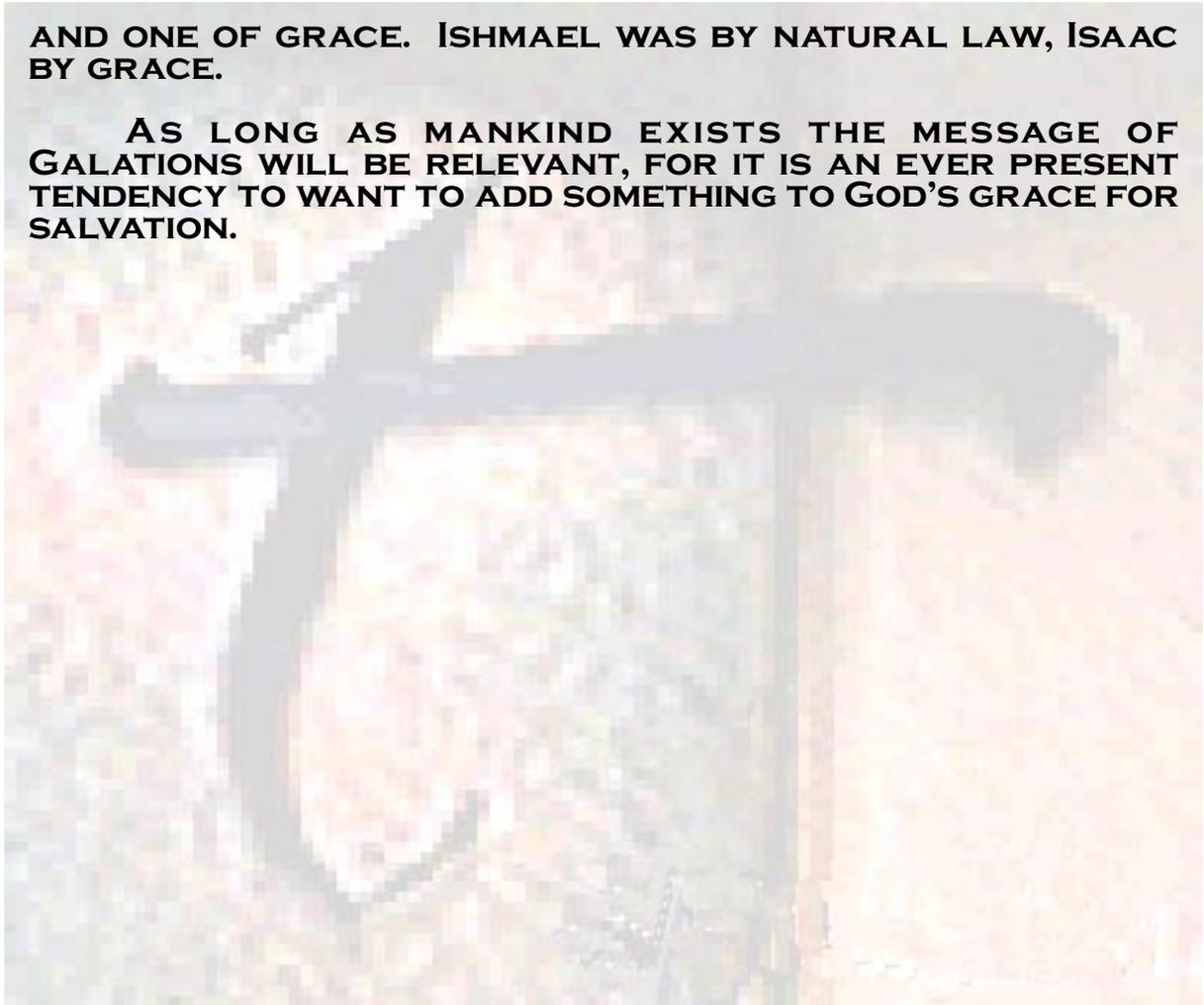
- I. CHRIST COMES TO REDEEM THOSE UNDER LAW
4:1 - 11**
- II. PAUL CAME IN WEAKNESS TO PREACH THE
GOSPEL 4:12 - 20**
- III. GOD'S PROMISE PRODUCES THOSE BORN OF
THE SPIRIT 4:21 - 31**

PAUL TEACHES THAT THOSE UNDER THE LAW WERE LIKE CHILDREN WHO COULD NOT EXERCISE THEIR FULL RIGHTS AS HEIRS OF A FATHER. FAITH IN CHRIST BROUGHT THEM INTO THE POSITION OF FULL GROWN CHILDREN. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO BE A GUIDE TO MATURITY. IN VERSE 24 OF CHAPTER 3, PAUL SAYS THE LAW IS A "TUTOR," παιδαγωγός. THIS IS A WORD WHICH MEANS A TRUSTED SLAVE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING A CHILD TO SCHOOL AND WHO WATCHED OVER HIM TO KEEP HIM OUT OF TROUBLE.

PAUL USES THE STORY OF ABRAHAM, HAGAR AND HER SON ISHMAEL TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BONDAGE OF LAW AND THE LIBERTY OF GRACE. THE SON OF HAGAR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH. ISAAC REPRESENTS THE SON OF PROMISE AND FAITH FROM GOD. THESE TWO WOMEN REPRESENT THE COVENANTS, ONE OF LAW

AND ONE OF GRACE. ISHMAEL WAS BY NATURAL LAW, ISAAC BY GRACE.

AS LONG AS MANKIND EXISTS THE MESSAGE OF GALATIONS WILL BE RELEVANT, FOR IT IS AN EVER PRESENT TENDENCY TO WANT TO ADD SOMETHING TO GOD'S GRACE FOR SALVATION.



GALATIANS 5

THE SPIRIT WARS AGAINST THE FLESH

I. CHRIST BRINGS FREEDOM; LAW BRINGS BONDAGE 5:1 - 12

II. THE SPIRIT WARS AGAINST THE FLESH 5:13-25

IN CHAPTER 5 PAUL REACHES THE CLIMAX OF HIS APPEAL FOR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. IN THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS PAUL ESTABLISHES THE FOUNDATIONS FOR HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY. IN CHAPTER 3 AND 4 HE STATES THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. HE SAYS THAT FAITH IN CHRIST PLUS NOTHING RESULTS IN CHRISTIAN FREEDOM. PAUL PROCEEDS TO ESTABLISH THAT JUSTIFICATION PRODUCES A LIFE OF HOLINESS. AN ANCIENT SCHOLAR SAID THAT CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS IMPAIRED BY LEGALISM, IT IS PERVERTED BY LICENSE BUT IT IS PERFECTED IN LOVE.

THE FALSE TEACHERS ASKED THE GALATIANS TO ADD TO CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CROSS. CHRIST'S CROSS PLUS THE LAW OF MOSES WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE THEM SUPERIOR CHRISTIANS. THE RESULTS WERE THAT THEY HAD TURNED FROM DEPENDING ON GRACE FOR SALVATION AND TURNED TO DEPENDING ON WORKS FOR SALVATION FAITH.

PAUL SAYS THAT CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND FREEDOM COME

BY THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST. THIS FAITH IN CHRIST PRODUCES THE HIGHER LAW OF LOVE. THIS LAW OF LOVE IS MOTIVATED BY CHRIST'S SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS. FAITH MAKES WORKS UNNECESSARY, BUT FAITH PRODUCES LOVE. FAITH IN RESPONSE TO CHRIST PRODUCES CHRISTIAN WORKS. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM DOES NOT GIVE A PERSON LIBERTY TO SIN. PAUL WANTS TO MAKE THAT CLEAR. THEY ARE TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT AND NOT FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH. TO WALK MEANS A WAY TO LIVE LIFE A STEP AT A TIME AND A DAY AT A TIME. THE ENTIRE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER IS TO BE LIVED UNDER THE GUIDANCE, DIRECTION, CONTROL AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE WORD "FLESH" IS NOT NECESSARILY TALKING ABOUT THE APPETITES OF THE BODY, THOUGH THE BODY IS THE INSTRUMENT OF MANY EVIL PASSIONS. THE FLESH INDICATES THE WHOLE BEING. IT INCLUDES BOTH ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS. VICTORY OVER THE FLESH IS POSSIBLE ONLY IF ONE IS CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT. PAUL SAYS THE FLESH STRIVES AGAINST THE SPIRIT TO CONTROL IT AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH TO CONTROL IT. VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING COMES THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. PAUL LISTS BOTH THE RESULTS OF WALKING IN THE SPIRIT AND NOT WALKING IN THE SPIRIT. THIS IS PAUL'S LIST OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. THERE IS ONE FRUIT, YET MANY. THE ONE FROM WHICH THEY ALL ARISE IS LOVE. THIS IS THE CHIEF OF ALL THE GIFTS. THE LIST OF GRACES AND GIFTS ARE: LONG - SUFFERING, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, MEEKNESS AND SELF - CONTROL.

YOU SHOULD CHECK THE MEANING OF EACH OF THESE WORDS. THERE ARE SOME EXCELLENT SOURCES THAT DEFINE

NEW TESTAMENT WORDS AND DESCRIBE HOW THEY WERE USED BY THE PEOPLE DURING THAT PERIOD OF TIME. LEON MORRIS HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS ABOUT THE CROSS, ATONEMENT AND THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING OF THE EARLY CHURCH. IN HIS BOOKS HE GIVES VERY CAREFUL AND SCHOLARLY ACCOUNTS OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, HOW THEY WERE USED AND WHAT THEY MEANT. YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK THESE SOURCES.

GALATIANS 6

I. THE LESSONS OF A SEED: SOWING, MOWING AND GROWING 6:1 - 10

II. THE GLORY OF CHRIST IS THE CROSS 6:11 - 18

CHAPTER 6 APPLIES THE DOCTRINE TO EVERYDAY LIVING. IT GIVES THE FAMOUS PRINCIPLE OF SOWING AND REAPING. IN VERSE 7, PAUL SAYS, "DON'T BE DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED." FOR WHATSOEVER MAN SOWS, THAT WILL HE ALSO REAP." THIS IS THE LAW OF HARVEST. THE WORD TRANSLATED "MOCKED" CONTAINS A BEAUTIFUL WORD PICTURE. THE WORD "MOCKED" COMES FROM THE SAME STEM THAT THE WORD "NOSE" COMES FROM. IT SEEMS TO DESCRIBE THE GESTURE OF A PERSON WHO THUMBS HIS NOSE AT GOD. HE IS SAYING, "YOU CANNOT WRINKLE UP YOUR NOSE AT GOD. GOD IS NOT

DECEIVED. GOD HAS SO CREATED HIS UNIVERSE THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TO STEP ONTO THE STAGE OF LIFE AND WHIP SOMEBODY FOR HIS SIN. THE CONSEQUENCES ARE BUILT INTO HIS SYSTEM. WHENEVER SOMEONE SINS, THE CONSEQUENCES ARE GOING TO COME. GOD DOES NOT GIVE THE LAWS TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM HAVING FUN. HE CREATED THE UNIVERSE. HE IS SAYING IF YOU SOW THE RIGHT SEED YOU WILL REAP THE RIGHT HARVEST. IF YOU SOW THE WRONG SEEDS YOU ARE GOING TO REAP THE WRONG HARVEST. PAUL SAYS DO NOT SOW TO THE FLESH; SOW TO THE SPIRIT AND REAP ETERNAL LIFE. HE SAYS, "LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING, FOR IN DUE SEASON, WE WILL REAP IF WE FAINT NOT."

PAUL COMES TO THE CONCLUSION OF HIS LETTER AND PUTS GREAT EMPHASIS HERE; EVIDENTLY HE PICKS UP THE PEN AND MAKES BOLD STROKES. SOME HAVE THOUGHT THIS INDICATED PAUL WAS NEAR-SIGHTED OR UNABLE TO SEE WELL; SO HE WROTE LARGE. IT MAY MEAN THAT HE WAS TRYING TO STRESS THE APPLICATION.

IN VERSES 11 - 13, HE REBUKES THE FALSE TEACHERS AND CHARGES THEM WITH INSINCERITY AND SELFISH MOTIVES. IN VERSES 14 - 16, HE SHOWS HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE CROSS AND MAKES HIS BOAST IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST. ON THE CROSS THE SINLESS SON OF GOD DIED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION. THAT IS WHY PAUL GLORIED IN THE CROSS.

IN VERSE 17, HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE MARKS ON HIS BODY. IN II CORINTHIAN 11:24, PAUL SAYS THAT HE HAD RECEIVED FIVE TIMES FROM THE JEW ALONE, 39 LASHES. THAT IS 195

LASHES. HIS WHOLE BODY WAS SCARRED. THESE WERE SCARS SUFFERED FROM SCOURGING, STONING, IMPRISONMENT, SHIP WRECK AND THE HARDSHIP OF BEING LOYAL TO CHRIST. THESE SCARS ON HIS BODY INDICATE THAT HE IS THE SOLDIER, THE SLAVE AND THE ONE WHO IS DEVOTED TO HIS MASTER.

THE BENEDICTION IS SHORT, BUT POWERFUL. GRACE IS THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD. LORD MEANS RULER AND MASTER. JESUS MEANS SAVIOR AND CHRIST MEANS THE ANOINTED ONE OF GOD. "BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT, BRETHREN, AMEN." THE FINAL WORD "BRETHREN" MEANS THAT HE STILL COUNTS THEM AS HIS BROTHERS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD.



EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND EPHESIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

MANY SCHOLARS PRAISE EPHESIANS AS THE MOST SUBLIME AND MOST MAJESTIC OF PAUL'S EPISTLES. IT HAS BEEN TITLED, "THE EPISTLE OF THE ASCENSION," BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN AS IF PAUL WERE LOOKING DOWN FROM THE HEIGHTS OF HEAVEN AT THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND.

EPHESIANS BELONGS TO THE GROUP OF PAUL'S WRITINGS KNOWN AS THE "PRISON EPISTLES." THESE EPISTLES, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON, WERE PROBABLY WRITTEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 61 A.D. AND 63 A.D. DURING PAUL'S FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SCHOLARS DISAGREE ABOUT THE ORDER IN WHICH THESE EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

EPHESIANS IS PROBABLY A CIRCULAR EPISTLE, MEANING IT WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN TO A GROUP OF CHURCHES AND CIRCULATED AMONG THEM. THERE ARE SOME VERY EXCELLENT REASONS TO SUPPORT THIS THINKING. ONE REASON IS THAT THIS EPISTLE DOES NOT HAVE ANY PERSONAL GREETINGS IN IT. PAUL HAD SPENT THREE YEARS IN EPHESUS AND HAD DEVELOPED A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS CHURCH. IN HIS EPISTLES HE ALMOST ALWAYS GREET'S FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES. WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED HIM IN AN EPISTLE WRITTEN TO A SPECIFIC CHURCH WHERE HE KNEW SO MANY PEOPLE TO HAVE GREETED SOME OF THE PEOPLE PERSONALLY. SINCE THE PHRASE "AT EPHESUS" WAS ADDED IN THE SECOND CENTURY, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN TO A GROUP OF CHURCHES AND EPHESUS WAS THE CHIEF CHURCH IN THE REGION. IT IS ALMOST FOR CERTAIN THAT DURING PAUL'S STAY IN EPHESUS THE TERRITORY AROUND THE CITY WAS EVANGELIZED AND NEW CHURCHES STARTED. IT IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT THAT THE TWO OLDEST MANUSCRIPTS, VATICANUS AND SINAITICUS, OMIT "AT EPHESUS" IN 1:1.

AUTHORSHIP

IN THIS STUDY WE ASSUME THAT PAUL WROTE THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. ERASMUS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY QUESTIONED WHETHER PAUL WROTE THIS EPISTLE, BECAUSE HE THOUGHT HE DETECTED DIFFERENCES IN STYLE BETWEEN

IT AND THE OTHER EPISTLES. IT WAS NOT, HOWEVER, UNTIL THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THAT PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP WAS SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED. THE OBJECTIONS ARE RATHER WEAK AND HAVE BEEN ANSWERED ADEQUATELY BY COMPETENT SCHOLARS. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE STRONGLY FAVORS PAULINE AUTHORSHIP. THE EPISTLE ITSELF CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY PAUL, AND IT IS HIS THEOLOGY THROUGHOUT, ALTHOUGH IT DOES CONTAIN SOME NEW CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE CHURCH. THE STRUCTURE OF THE EPISTLE IS DEFINITELY PAULINE. A STRONGER CASE CAN BE PRESENTED FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP FROM THE LANGUAGE STANDPOINT THAN CAN BE MADE AGAINST IT. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR PAULINE AUTHORSHIP IS ALSO SUBSTANTIAL. BY THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND CENTURY THE EPISTLE WAS RECOGNIZED AS AUTHENTIC. IT IS LISTED IN THE MURATORIAN CANON, ABOUT 175 A.D., AND IN THE MARCION CANON IN ABOUT 140 A.D. (DONALD GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION [DOWNERS GROVE, IL: INTER-VARSITY PRESS, 1970] PP. 479 - 482.) SCHLEIERMACHER WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST MODERN SCHOLAR TO QUESTION PAULINE AUTHORSHIP. (H. C. THIessen, INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS, 1985] P. 240.) EVERY OBJECTION BROUGHT AGAINST PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP OF EPHESIANS CAN BE ANSWERED ADEQUATELY WITH MINIMAL DIFFICULTY.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EPISTLE FOLLOWS PAUL'S PATTERN. THE LANGUAGE IS ALSO PAUL'S. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE 43 WORDS FOUND ONLY IN EPHESIANS AND NOT IN ANY OF PAUL'S OTHER EPISTLES. THERE ARE ALSO 42 WORDS IN EPHESIANS THAT ARE NOT

FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE ANSWER IS THAT MOST OF HIS EPISTLES HAVE WORDS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THEM. CAREFUL OBSERVATION WILL REVEAL THAT THE SAME SCHOLARS WHO TRY TO DISCREDIT PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF EPHESIANS BY COMPARING ITS WORD USAGE WITH OTHER PAULINE EPISTLES GENERALLY DO NOT ACCEPT THE OTHER PAULINE EPISTLES AS AUTHENTIC EITHER. THEREFORE, WITH THEIR ASSUMPTIONS WHAT ARE THEY COMPARING THAT HAS ANY VALIDITY?

THE INTERNAL INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE IS AT STAKE, BECAUSE PAUL THE APOSTLE CLAIMS TO BE ITS AUTHOR, 3:1.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

EPHESIANS, ONE OF THE FOUR "PRISON EPISTLES," WAS WRITTEN DURING PAUL'S FIRST IMPRISONMENT AT ROME IN ABOUT 61-63 A.D. PAUL WAS AN ENEMY OF THE CHURCH, BUT ON THE WAY TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS AT DAMASCUS HE HAD AN EXTREMELY HIGH VOLTAGE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE. THE LIVING CHRIST MET HIM AND SENT HIM AS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILE WORLD. HE PREACHED IN DAMASCUS, HAD TO FLEE FOR HIS LIFE, EVENTUALLY WENT TO JERUSALEM AND HAD TO LEAVE THERE BECAUSE OF THE HATRED OF THE NON-CHRISTIAN JEWS. LATER BARNABUS AND PAUL WORKED TOGETHER IN ANTIOCH.

FROM ANTIOCH, PAUL WENT ON THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS. ON THE FIRST, HE WENT TO CYPRUS AND ASIA MINOR ESTABLISHING CHURCHES. ON THE SECOND, HE WENT

TO EUROPE AND FOUNDED CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA AND GREECE. IN THE CITY OF EPHESUS HE MET AND WORKED WITH AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, WHO BECAME HIS LIFE - LONG FRIENDS. AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY HE RETURNED TO ANTIOCH. ON HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY HE STAYED IN EPHESUS THREE YEARS BUILDING A STRONG CHURCH. USING EPHESUS AS A CENTER OF OUTREACH HE ESTABLISHED OTHER CHURCHES. DURING THIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY PAUL LEFT EPHESUS, PROBABLY IN 57 A.D., AND WENT TO CORINTH PROBABLY IN THE SPRING OF 58 A.D. HE STAYED THERE THREE MONTHS, ACTS 20:3, WROTE THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS AND PREPARED TO GO TO JERUSALEM. ON HIS WAY TO JERUSALEM HE STOPPED AT MILETUS, ACTS 20:17-38, SENT FOR AND SPOKE WITH THE ELDERS FROM EPHESUS.

“AT JERUSALEM HE HAD A CONFERENCE WITH THE CHURCH, PARTICIPATED IN A JEWISH RITUAL, WAS SEIZED BY THE MOB, WAS RESCUED BY THE ROMAN GARRISON, ADDRESSED THE MULTITUDE, ADDRESSED THE SANHEDRIN, LEARNED OF A CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE HIM, AND WAS SENT TO CAESAREA WHERE HE REMAINED IN CAPTIVITY FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS (ACTS XXI, 23 - XXIII. 35), AFTER HAVING APPEARED BEFORE FELIX, FESTUS, AND AGRIPPA (ACTS XXIV - XXVI). THIS WAS IN THE YEARS 57 - 60 A.D. HAVING APPEALED TO CAESAR, PAUL WAS SENT TO ROME, ARRIVING THERE IN ABOUT 61 A.D., WHERE HE REMAINED A PRISONER UNTIL ABOUT 63 A.D.” (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL, 1965] PART II, P. 181.)

PURPOSE OF WRITING

PAUL'S PURPOSE IN WRITING EPHESIANS IS TO TEACH WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "IN CHRIST," WHAT THE CHURCH'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IS AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND HOW ALL THINGS FIND THEIR UNITY IN CHRIST. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY. SINCE THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY, CHRIST IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT THE CHURCH. THE CHURCH, IS COMPOSED OF GOD'S PEOPLE, WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY JESUS DEATH ON THE CROSS. PAUL WRITES THAT THESE REDEEMED PEOPLE HAVE GREAT SPIRITUAL WEALTH IN CHAPTER 1 - 3. BECAUSE THE REDEEMED PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE THIS WEALTH IN CHRIST PAUL TELLS THEM THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO WALK AND LIVE EQUAL TO THIS WEALTH, CHAPTERS 4 - 6.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER EPISTLES

"THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS" IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS.

THERE IS A VERY STRIKING CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS AND THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. THE GALATIANS HAD TO BE CONFRONTED WITH THE FALSEHOOD CONTROVERSY THAT SURROUNDED THE GOSPEL. IN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS, THERE IS NONE OF THAT. INSTEAD HE IS ABLE TO EXPOUND THE REALM OF WORSHIP AND PRAYER. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EPISTLE IS THE GREATNESS OF THE GRACE OF GOD AND HOW HE WORKED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

TO REDEEM AND BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN UNITY IN THE CHURCH. UNITY OF BELIEVERS IS ONE OF THE GREAT THEMES OF EPHESIANS. PAUL TEACHES THAT UNITY IN THE UNIVERSE, IN NATIONS, AND WITHIN PEOPLE COMES ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. THIS UNITY IS MANIFESTED WITHIN HIS BODY THE CHURCH WHEN IT IS UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP.

COLOSSIANS FOCUSES UPON JESUS CHRIST AS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH; WHEREAS, EPHESIANS BASICALLY FOCUSES UPON THE BODY OF CHRIST, HIS CHURCH. ONE OF THE KEY IDEAS OF THE EPISTLE IS UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT SECTIONS OF THE CHURCH THE GENTILES AND THE JEWS. CHRIST HAS BROKEN DOWN THE WALL THAT HAD DIVIDED THEM.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

THE EPISTLE ITSELF IS DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS, OF THREE CHAPTERS EACH. THE FIRST SECTION IS DOCTRINAL AND THE SECOND IS PRACTICAL. IN THE FIRST, HE DEALS WITH CHRISTIAN TRUTH, BELIEF, AND IN THE SECOND HE DEALS WITH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, BEHAVIOR. IN CHAPTERS 1 - 3, PAUL PRESENTS THE BLESSING THE BELIEVERS HAVE IN CHRIST. IN THE LAST CHAPTERS, 4 - 6, PAUL DEALS WITH THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN THE WORLD. VERSE 1 OF CHAPTER 4 HAS THE PHRASE "TO WALK WORTHY." THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORTHY" IS αξιως. THE ENGLISH WORD "AXIS" COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE DICTIONARY DEFINES AXIS AS "ANY LENGTHWISE CENTRAL LINE AROUND WHICH PARTS OF A BODY ARE SYMMETRICALLY ARRANGED."

THE IDEA IS THE CHRISTIANS BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR ARE TO BE BALANCED. OR IT IS THE CONCEPT OF AN EQUAL SIGN WITH THE EQUATION ON EACH SIDE BALANCED. PAUL IS SAYING LIVE YOUR LIFE EQUAL TO THE BLESSINGS GOD HAS GIVEN YOU. THE BELIEVER IS SEATED ON THE THRONE WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES; THEREFORE, HE CAN WALK IN PURITY AND LOVE IN THE WORLD, BUT SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD. THEREFORE, PAUL CONCLUDES, THERE IS HARMONY AND UNITY WITHIN THE FAMILY BETWEEN THE HUSBAND AND WIFE, BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN AND BETWEEN MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING SEGMENTS OF THIS EPISTLE IS THE SECTION IN CHAPTER 6 WHICH DESCRIBES THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

EPHESIANS 1

- I. THE GREETING 1:1 - 2
- II. THE FATHER ELECTS 1:3 - 6
- III. THE SON REDEEMS 1:7 - 12
- IV. THE SPIRIT SEALS 1:13 - 14
- V. THE PRAYER FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST 1:15 - 23

PAUL IS AN APOSTLE CALLED BY GOD, AND GIVEN AUTHORITY TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL. IN THE LAST PART OF THE FIRST VERSE, PAUL CHANGES THE WORD ORDER TO "CHRIST JESUS" RATHER THAN "JESUS CHRIST." SOME COMMENTATORS SUGGEST THAT WHEN PAUL USES THIS WORD ORDER HE IS SUGGESTING THE GRACE OF GOD.

THE EPISTLE IS ADDRESSED TO THE FAITHFUL "IN CHRIST." THE PHRASE "IN CHRIST" MEANS THOSE WHO ARE IN UNION WITH CHRIST, BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED BY GOD'S GRACE THROUGH JESUS' ATONING DEATH AND RESURRECTION AND HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO A NEW RACE.

VERSE 3 SAYS GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH EVER SPIRITUAL BLESSING. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? THE WORD BLESSED, ευλογητος, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, THE WORD "WELL" AND THE WORD "WORD." LITERALLY IT MEANS GOD HAS GIVEN US A GOOD WORD. IN THE TIME OF PAUL THE WORD "WORD," λογος, WAS SYMBOLIC OF DIVINE EXISTENCE AND REASON. SO GOD IN JESUS CHRIST HAS BLESSED US WITH THE ABILITY TO REASON

AND TO SEE OUR PLACE IN GOD'S UNIVERSE. THE ROOT OF THE WORD BLESSED MEANS TO COUNT. THE CHORUS, "COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS, NAME THEM ONE BY ONE, SEE WHAT THE LORD HATH DONE" IS RIGHT ON TARGET.

GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING. HOW DOES HE BLESS US? FIRST, VERSE 2 SAYS HE BLESSES US BY GIVING US GRACE AND PEACE. GRACE IN THE BIBLE IS GOD'S LOVING KINDNESS. IT MEANS THAT GOD DOES NOT GIVE UP ON US. HE DOES FOR US WHAT WE CANNOT DO FOR OURSELVES; HE LOVES US WHEN WE ARE UNLOVABLE; HE PAYS THE SUPREME PRICE TO POSSESS US AND GIVES US HIS QUALITY OF LIFE. PEACE FOLLOWS GRACE, VERSE 2. PEACE IS MORE THAN THE ABSENCE OF STRIFE. IT IS THE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US AND GOD. IT IS NOT ONLY PEACE "WITH" GOD, IT IS THE PEACE "OF" GOD.

SECOND, GOD HAS BLESSED US NOT ONLY BY GIVING US GRACE AND PEACE, HE HAS ALSO BLESSED US WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, VERSE 3. THE WORD "SPIRITUAL" GIVES US AN ADDED DIMENSION. THE WORD "SPIRITUAL," πνευματικη, COMES FROM A ROOT MEANING "WIND." IT ALMOST ALWAYS CONNECTS THE IDEA OF INVISIBLE AND POWER. SPIRITUAL IS USUALLY CONNECTED WITH THINGS THAT HAVE THEIR ORIGIN FROM GOD AND ARE IN HARMONY WITH HIS WILL AND CHARACTER. THE SPIRITUAL PERSON IS ONE WHO WALKS BY THE SPIRIT, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES IN HIM THE FRUIT OF GALATIANS 5:22 - 26.

THIRD, IN VERSE 4 HE HAS CHOSEN US TO BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME. THE WORD "CHOSEN" ἐξελεξατο, IS IN THE

FIRST AORIST, MIDDLE TENSE, AND MEANS TO CHOOSE FOR ONE'S SELF, WITH THE IDEA OF GIVING LOVE AND FAVOR. PAUL SAYS THAT GOD CHOSE US BEFORE HE THREW DOWN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD. THE WORD "FOUNDATION" IS καταβολης, AND IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, "DOWN" AND "TO THROW." OUR WORD "BALL" COMES FROM βαλλω, TO THROW. THE WORD FOR "WORLD" IS κοσμου, AND PRIMARILY MEANS ORDER OR ARRANGEMENT. THE POINT IS THAT GOD'S BLESSINGS ARE NOT SOME AFTERTHOUGHT. GOD DESIGNED THEM FROM THE BEGINNING. WE HAVE BEEN IN GOD'S DESIGN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. TODAY WE GENERALLY THINK THAT WE CHOOSE GOD, BUT PAUL IS QUITE CLEAR THAT IT IS GOD WHO CHOOSES US. JOHN ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT JESUS TEACHES THIS IDEA. IN JOHN 15:16, JESUS SAYS TO THE DISCIPLES, "YOU HAVE NOT CHOSEN ME, BUT I HAVE CHOSEN YOU." THIS IS A POWERFUL AND WONDERFUL CONCEPT. GOD HAS CHOSEN US TO BE HOLY. EVERY TIME THE SCRIPTURE SPEAKS ABOUT BELIEVERS BEING CALLED IT ALWAYS HAS THE IDEA OF BEING CALLED TO BE HOLY. THE WORD "HOLY" IS CONNECTED WITH THE WORD "SAINT." HOLINESS IS NOT SOMETHING WHICH WE ATTAIN BUT RATHER IS A STATE WHICH GOD CALLS US TO AND PLACES US IN. IT IS BEING SET APART FOR GOD'S PURPOSE. THE BELIEVER IS IN THE WORLD, BUT DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD. THE QUESTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS "HOW COULD UNHOLY MEN APPROACH HOLY GOD?" THE ANSWER FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THAT A PERSON CAN ONLY COME TO HOLY GOD THROUGH THE HOLINESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

PAUL IS WRITING TO THE CHRISTIANS IN THE CITY OF EPHESUS AND THE CITIES IN ITS PROVINCE. WICKEDNESS

PREVAILED IN THESE PLACES. THERE WERE SEVEN WONDERS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. ONE OF THESE, THE TEMPLE OF THE GODDESS DIANA, WAS IN EPHEBUS. SACRED PROSTITUTION WAS PART OF THIS WORSHIP. WHEN PAUL WAS IN EPHEBUS HIS PREACHING HAD INTERFERED WITH THE SALE OF THE IMAGES MADE OF DIANA. PAUL'S POINT IS THAT A PERSON CAN BE A SAINT EVEN IN EPHEBUS. PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN US TO BE BLAMELESS. BLAMELESS MEANS NO DEFECTS AND HAS REFERENCE TO THE CONDITION OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS AND TO HUMAN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT IN PSALMS AND EZEKIEL.

IN VERSE 5, PAUL SAYS GOD HAS DESTINED US TO BE HIS CHILDREN BY ADOPTION, "HAVING PREDESTINATED" US. THE WORD προορισας, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS "BEFORE" AND "TO SET A BOUNDARY." OUR WORD "HORIZON" COMES FROM THE LAST WORD. THE CONNOTATION OF THIS WORD IS TO DESIGN BEFOREHAND. AGAIN PAUL IS SAYING THAT OUR ADOPTION INTO GOD'S FAMILY IS NOT SOME AFTERTHOUGHT. SINCE THE PLURAL IS USED HERE OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE SOME SCHOLARS THINK PAUL MEANS GOD PREDESTINATED THE CHURCH RATHER THAN INDIVIDUALS.

THE WORD "ADOPTION," υιοθεσιαν, IS COMPOSED OF υιος, "SON" AND θεσις, "A PLACING." THE WORD MEANS TO GIVE SONSHIP TO SOMEONE TO WHOM HE DOES NOT NATURALLY BELONG. THE EMPHASIS IS UPON THE RELATIONSHIP. ROMAN ADOPTION, IN PAUL'S TIME WAS EXTREMELY SERIOUS. IN THE ROMAN WORLD THE FATHER HAD ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER

HIS SONS. IN EARLY ROMAN HISTORY HE EVEN HAD THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH OVER THEM. ADOPTION INVOLVED TWO THINGS. FIRST, A SYMBOLIC SALE TOOK PLACE IN WHICH THE ADOPTING FATHER PUT COPPER ON A SET OF SCALES. THIS HAPPENED THREE TIMES. TWICE THE NATURAL FATHER BOUGHT HIS SON BACK, BUT ON THE THIRD TIME HE DID NOT BUY HIM BACK AND THUS BROKE THE BOND OF KINSHIP. THE ADOPTING FATHER THEN WENT TO A ROMAN MAGISTRATE AND FILED A LEGAL CASE FOR THE ADOPTION. WHEN THIS HAPPENED LEGALLY THE OLD LIFE OF THE SON WAS DESTROYED. HE BECAME AN HEIR OF THE NEW FATHER EQUAL WITH ANY NATURAL HEIRS THE FATHER MIGHT HAVE. ALL THIS OCCURRED BEFORE SEVEN WITNESSES. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, THE LETTER TO ROMANS [PHILADELPHIA: THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, 1957] PP. 109-112.)

IN VERSE 6, PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS MADE US ACCEPTABLE TO HIM. HOW DID HE DO IT? IN VERSE 7, PAUL SAYS THAT GOD REDEEMED US BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS. BLOOD IN THE SCRIPTURE IS A SYMBOL OF DEATH. THIS MEANS THAT IT IS THE DEATH OF CHRIST WHICH AVAILS FOR SINNERS. REDEMPTION MEANS "TO LOOSE FROM." PAUL OFTEN WRITES TO PRODUCE MENTAL PICTURES IN THE MINDS OF HIS READERS. USING THE WORD REDEMPTION PLACES IN THEIR MINDS THE PICTURE OF THE SLAVE MARKET. MANY CHRISTIANS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WERE OR HAD BEEN SLAVES, SO THEY IDENTIFIED WITH THIS CONCEPT.

IN VERSE 7, PAUL SAYS THAT GOD REMITS OUR SINS. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FORGIVENESS” HERE IS REALLY THE GREEK WORD “REMISSION,” ἀφεσιν. IT MEANS A DISMISSAL OR A RELEASE, TO SEND AWAY. THE WORD TRANSLATED “SIN” OR “TRESPASS” IS NOT THE USUAL WORD FOR SIN. THIS WORD, παραπτωμάτων, IS COMPOSED OF παρα, “BESIDE” AND πιπτω, “TO FALL,” TO FALL IN RUINS, TO FALL PROSTRATE. THUS, THIS WORD MEANS A STUMBLING, A WRONG STEP, A FALLING DOWN IN RUINS.

VERSE 8 SAYS THAT GOD CAUSED HIS GRACE GIFTS TO ABOUND, ἐπερυσσευσεν, WHICH MEANS SUPPLIED FAR IN EXCESS OF THE NECESSARY AMOUNT. IN VERSE 9 PAUL SAYS THESE CAME TO US IN WISDOM AND PRUDENCE. THE GREEKS HAD THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE MATURE MIND. PAUL USES TWO OF THEM IN VERSE 9. THE FIRST IS WISDOM, σοφία. IT DESCRIBES THE MATURE MIND, AND MEANS WISDOM OF ULTIMATE THINGS. ARISTOTLE DEFINED WISDOM AS THE KNOWLEDGE OF CONCLUSIONS AND CAUSES. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, MORE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS [HARPER & BROTHERS] P. 146.) WISDOM MEANS INSIGHT INTO THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS. ONE OF THE BLESSINGS THE BELIEVER RECEIVES IS THE ABILITY TO SEE ULTIMATE REALITY. MOST OF THE SCRIPTURE FALLS IN THIS CLASSIFICATION. WHEN THE SEVEN DEACONS WERE CHOSEN IN ACTS 6:3, THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THEY WERE MEN FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WISDOM. THESE MEN WERE MEN WITH POWER FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT; THIS INDICATES THAT WISDOM GOES HAND IN HAND WITH POWER. THE SECOND WORD IS PRUDENCE, φρονήσει. PRUDENCE IS THE PRACTICAL ABILITY OF A PERSON TO COME TO WISE DECISIONS ABOUT HIS ACTIONS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THESE ACTIONS. VERSES 8 AND

9 TELL US THAT GOD HAD MADE KNOWN HIS WILL. IN VERSE 10, GOD WILLS TO BRING ALL THINGS TOGETHER IN CHRIST. GOD'S UNIVERSE HAS BEEN DIVIDED SINCE SATAN FELL AND MAN REBELLED. IN CHRIST GOD WILL BRING UNITY TO HIS UNIVERSE. VERSE 9 SAYS THIS IS THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL. THE WORD MYSTERY, μυστηριον, IS ONE OF THE GREAT THEMES THAT PAUL DEALS WITH IN THIS LETTER. MYSTERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANS KNOWLEDGE WHICH COMES ONLY FROM GOD. MAN CANNOT DISCERN IT WITHOUT REVELATION FROM GOD. TO THE WORLD THE CROSS MEANS DEATH AND DEFEAT. TO GOD IT MEANT LIFE AND VICTORY. SO MYSTERY MEANS TRUTH REVEALED FROM GOD, WHICH IS CONCEALED FROM THOSE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

VERSE 10 SAYS, "IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME." THE WORD TRANSLATED DISPENSATION IS οικονομιαν, AND MEANS ADMINISTRATION. IT MEANS TO ARRANGE A HOUSE. GOD DWELLS IN THE UNIVERSE; SO, HE ARRANGES HIS HOUSE. GOD ACTS AT A TIME WHEN CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS ARE PRESENT. WHEN THINGS ARE READY GOD IS GOING TO BRING ALL THINGS TO THEIR CONSUMMATION OR FULL MEANING IN CHRIST. VERSE 10 IS A DIFFICULT SENTENCE TO STATE IN ENGLISH. THE WORD TRANSLATED "GATHER TOGETHER", "TO HEAD UP" OR "TO SUM UP" IS ανακεφαλωσασθαι. IT IS A FIRST AORIST, MIDDLE AND INFINITIVE. IT MEANS TO REDUCE UNDER ONE HEAD.

VERSE 11, SAYS "... IN HIM (CHRIST) IN WHOM ALSO WE WERE MADE AN INHERITANCE...". THE BELIEVERS BY THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST BECOME GOD'S INHERITANCE. ONE MIGHT

ASK, "FOR WHAT REASON?" THE ANSWER IS IN VERSE 12 "...UNTO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY...". WE USUALLY THINK ABOUT PRAISE AS SOMETHING WE SAY, BUT IT IS REALLY WHAT WE ARE. THE WORD PRAISE IN GREEK IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, "NARRATION" AND "UPON." SO TO PRAISE GOD IS TO SHOW OURSELVES A NARRATIVE TO THE WORLD. THE WORD "WORK" IN VERSE 11 MEANS TO BE ACTIVE IN. THE WORD "COUNSEL" MEANS THE RESULTS OF DETERMINATION. SO GOD IS DETERMINED TO BE ACTIVE IN BRINGING THIS ABOUT. GOD WILLS FOR BELIEVERS TO BE HIS INHERITANCE. HE HAS GIVEN US THE DOWN PAYMENT OF HIS WILL; THIS IS THE SEALING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. VERSE 13 TELLS US THAT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THE GOSPEL, WE HAVE SALVATION AS OUR INHERITANCE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "GOSPEL" IS *εὐαγγέλιον*. IN SACRED HISTORY THE EARLY CHRISTIANS USED THE WORD TO SUMMARIZE THE CENTRAL CORE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. JESUS IN HIS MESSAGE AT NAZARETH SAID THAT ISA. 61:1 WAS FULFILLED IN HIM. AFTER THE CROSS, THE RESURRECTION, THE ASCENSION AND THE FILLING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THE APOSTLES UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GOSPEL WAS JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF. THIS VERSE HAS THE IDEA OF BEING SET FREE FROM THE ETERNAL PENALTY OF SIN AND PREPARED FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

GOD HAS SEALED US SO WE MAY OBTAIN THE FULL INHERITANCE THAT WILL BE OURS. SEAL MEANS TO STAMP OR MARK WITH ONE'S OWNERSHIP. THE SEAL GIVES PROTECTION, AUTHENTICATION AND VALIDATION. THE SEAL THAT GOD HAS ON HIS WORD AND ON THE BELIEVER IS THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE WORD EARNEST IN VERSE 14 MEANS A DOWN PAYMENT. IT IS

THE AMOUNT DEPOSITED BY THE PURCHASER UNTIL THE TOTAL AMOUNT IS PAYED.

IN FLORIDA AT THE CLOSE OF A BEAUTIFUL LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE, THE PASTOR ASKED A YOUNG MAN TO DISMISS THE SERVICE IN PRAYER. THIS YOUNG MAN HAD DISCOVERED THE WEEK BEFORE THAT HE HAD TERMINAL CANCER. HE CAME FORWARD WITH HIS GUITAR TO SING THE BENEDICTION. BEFORE HE SANG HE GAVE HIS TESTIMONY. HE HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE STREETS. HE HAD NO FAMILY. HE HAD GOTTEN INTO DRUGS AND USED HEROIN FOR FIVE YEARS. THIS HAD DESTROYED THE SOUNDNESS OF HIS BODY. IN ORDER TO SUPPORT HIS HABIT HE HAD TO SELL HIMSELF TO HOMOSEXUALS. HIS LIFE BECAME MISERABLE, WRETCHED, AND MEANINGLESS. THEN ONE DAY, SOMEONE TOLD HIM ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THAT JESUS WOULD COME INTO HIS LIFE AND DELIVER HIM FROM THE PENALTY AND THE POWER OF SIN. HE SAID THAT JESUS CHRIST HAD SET HIM FREE. HE HAD BECOME A YOUNG LIFE WORKER TO SHARE JESUS WITH HIGH SCHOOL KIDS. THEN HE SANG THE BENEDICTION, "I AM SO GLAD THAT OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN TELLS OF HIS LOVE IN THE BOOK HE HAS GIVEN. WONDERFUL THINGS IN THE BIBLE I SEE. THIS IS THE DEAREST THAT JESUS LOVES ME. THOUGH I FORGET HIM AND WANDER AWAY, STILL HE DOETH LOVE ME WHEREVER I STRAY. BACK TO HIS DEAR LOVING ARMS WILL I FLEE, WHEN I REMEMBER THAT JESUS LOVES ME. OH, IF THERE'S ONLY ONE SONG I CAN SING, WHEN IN HIS BEAUTY I SEE THE KING. THIS SHALL MY SONG IN ETERNITY BE, OH, WHAT A WONDER THAT JESUS LOVES ME."

THAT IS THE “EARNEST,” THAT JESUS LOVES ME AND HAS PUT HIS SEAL ON MY LIFE.

IN VERSES 15- 19, WHEN PAUL PRAYED:

- 1. HE GAVE THANKS TO GOD, BECAUSE HE HAD HEARD OF THEIR FAITH IN JESUS AND THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER.**
- 2. HE ASKED GOD TO GIVE THEM THE GIFT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION TO KNOW GOD BETTER.**
- 3. HE PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD ENLIGHTEN THEIR HEARTS.**
 - A. SO THEY WOULD KNOW THE HOPE TO WHICH THEY HAD BEEN CALLED.**
 - B. SO THEY WOULD SEE THE RICHES GOD HAD IN THEM.**
 - C. SO THEY WOULD COMPREHEND GOD’S POWER IN THEM.**

IN VERSE 16, PAUL PRAYS THAT GOD WOULD GIVE THEM THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. THE WORD TRANSLATED “WISDOM” IS σοφιας. IN VERSE 8 WE EXAMINED THE MEANING OF THE WORD WISDOM. THE WORD “REVELATION” HERE IS αποκαλυψεως. REVELATION IN THE BIBLICAL SENSE IS ALWAYS GOD REVEALING HIMSELF. PEOPLE BY THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT POWER OF MENTAL ENDEAVOR CANNOT GAIN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THE REVELATION OF GOD COMES THROUGH CHRIST. THE PURPOSE OF REVELATION IS TO ESTABLISH A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “KNOWLEDGE” IN VERSE 17 IS επιγνωσει, AND IT MEANS TO KNOW BY EXPERIENCE. THE WORD “ENLIGHTENED” ISτισμενους. IN SCRIPTURE THIS WORD IS USED IN THE SENSE OF SEEING A NEW WAY. JUST AS THE EYES ARE NECESSARY TO RECEIVE LIGHT SO IN THE SPIRITUAL SENSE ONE MUST HAVE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION TO RECEIVE REVELATION. THAT IS WHAT PAUL IS PRAYING FOR BELIEVERS.

VERSES 15-23, COULD BE TITLED, “ENLIGHTENING THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING.” IN THIS SCRIPTURE THERE IS: FIRST, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ENLIGHTENMENT, SECOND, THE REVELATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT, THIRD, THE RESULTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT. THE REQUIREMENTS ARE FAITH AND LOVE, VERSE 15. THE WORD “FAITH” IN THE BIBLE MEANS A LIFE RESPONSE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE GREEK WORD FAITH IS RELATED TO A WORD MEANING TO PERSUADE. FAITH HAPPENS DEEP WITHIN US WHEN WE ARE PERSUADED THAT ULTIMATE REALITY RESIDES IN SOMETHING. WE GRASP THIS SOMETHING WHICH WE ARE PERSUADED IS ULTIMATE REALITY AND HOLD IT TO OUR BREAST. WHATEVER WE WILL NOT LET GO OF TO TAKE HOLD OF JESUS IS WHAT WE HAVE OUR FAITH IN.

THERE IS A PRINCIPLE OF SUCCESS THAT SAYS IF YOU KEEP YOUR MIND ON THE THINGS YOU WANT FROM LIFE, AND OFF THE THINGS YOU DO NOT WANT, YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU WANT. THIS CAN MEAN THAT IF WE TAKE OUR EYES OFF JESUS, WE WILL BE IN TROUBLE. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT FAITH IS THE DEPENDABILITY OF THE OBJECT IN WHICH FAITH IS

PLACED. VERSE 15 SAYS THEIR FAITH WAS IN THE LORD JESUS. THE NAME JESUS SHOWS HIS DEPENDABILITY, FOR THE NAME JESUS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF JOSHUA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, MEANING "YAHWEH IS SALVATION." IF WE SEE FAITH AS OUR RESPONSE TO GOD AND HIS LOVE FOR US, THEN WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHY PAUL SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD OF THESE PEOPLE'S LOVE FOR EACH OTHER. THE SECOND REQUIREMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS LOVE, GOD'S TYPE OF LOVE. THE SCRIPTURE TELLS HOW THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD ARE TO KNOW THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS. JOHN 13:35 AND JOHN 15:9-12 SAYS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD KNOW THAT WE ARE JESUS' DISCIPLES BECAUSE WE LOVE EACH OTHER.

THE REVELATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS IN VERSES 18-19. WE ARE ENLIGHTENED SO THAT WE WILL KNOW THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD HAS CALLED US. THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE PAST, THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. HOPE IS CLEARLY DESCRIBED IN ROMANS 8.

THIS REVELATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS GIVEN THAT WE MAY SEE THE RICHES IN THE SAINTS, THE INHERITANCE OF GOD. THE SAINTS ARE PRECIOUS TO GOD, BECAUSE HE PURCHASED THEM WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS SON. PAUL MEANS THAT WE BELONG TO GOD. HE WANTS US TO SEE GOD'S GREATNESS IN THOSE WHO BELIEVE. WE ARE ENLIGHTENED SO WE MAY EXPERIENCE THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER IN OUR LIVES. THE WORD FOR GREATNESS MEANS THE ULTIMATE IN SIZE OR INTENSITY. OUR WORD "MEGA" AND ALL THE WORDS RELATED TO IT COME FROM THIS WORD. IN VERSE 19-20, PAUL USES FOUR DIFFERENT WORDS WHICH HAVE THEIR BASIC MEANING POWER. THE FIRST WORD, δυναμεως, DENOTES INHERENT POWER TO PERFORM A FEAT. OUR WORDS "DYNAMITE" AND "DYNAMIC" COME FROM THIS WORD. THE SECOND WORD, ενεργειαν, TRANSLATED

“WORKING”, IS POWER IN ACTION. OUR WORD “ENERGY” COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE THIRD WORD, κπατους, TRANSLATED “MIGHT” MEANS TO COMPLETE OR SUSTAIN. THE FOURTH WORD, ισχυος, TRANSLATED “STRENGTH” AND MEANS TO ENDOW WITH POWER. PAUL INTENDS TO SHOW THE POWER THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR THE BELIEVER IN HIS DAILY LIVING. THIS IS THE RESURRECTION AND EXULTED POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED JESUS AND PLACED HIM AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD IS AVAILABLE TO THE BELIEVER. THE RESULT OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS SEEING JESUS EXALTED AT GOD’S RIGHT HAND IN DOMINION OVER THE CREATED ORDER.

IN VERSE 21, THE WORD TRANSLATED “PRINCIPALITY,” αρχης, MEANS A BEGINNING, FIRST PLACE, HEADSHIP, HIGH ESTATE, RULE AND IS SOMETIMES USED OF SPIRITUAL POWERS.

PAUL REVEALS THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS IN THE PHRASE “... ABOVE ... EVERY NAME NAMED NOT ONLY IN THIS AGE BUT IN THE COMING ONE.” THE WORD “NAME” MEANS NOT MERELY THE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION, BUT THE NATURE, CHARACTER, AUTHORITY, RANK OF THE PERSON. TO NAME THE NAME OF A PERSON MEANS TO BELIEVE THAT HE CAN ACHIEVE THE THINGS THAT HIS NAME IMPLIES. PAUL ALSO SAYS THAT CHRIST’S POWER IS NOT LIMITED TO ONE AGE. THE WORD, αιωνι, TRANSLATED “AGE,” MEANS AN ERA OR PERIOD OF TIME USUALLY EMPHASIZES NOT THE LENGTH BUT THE SPIRITUAL OR MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TIME. PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 2 SAYS THAT EVERYONE IS GOING TO ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS AS LORD. JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE, THE SUPPLIER OF OUR STRENGTH, THE ENLIGHTENER OF THE EYES, AND SO WE CONFESS AND OBEY HIM.

EPHESIANS 2

I. OUR PAST: DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS 2:1 - 3

II. OUR PRESENT: ALIVE IN CHRIST 2:4 - 6

III. OUR POSITION: SAVED BY GRACE 2:7 - 10

IV. OUR PAST: NO HOPE 2:11 - 12

**V. OUR PRESENT: BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST WE
ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 2:13 - 22**

**IN THE FIRST CHAPTER PAUL SAYS GOD HAS DEMONSTRATED
HIS POWER IN THREE WAYS:**

- 1. HE RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD,**
- 2. HE SEATED HIM AT THE RIGHT HAND OF
THE FATHER, AND**
- 3. HE MADE HIM LORD OF ALL.**

**IN THE SECOND CHAPTER PAUL SAYS THE SAME POWER
THAT RAISED JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD HAS BEEN AT
WORK IN ALL BELIEVERS TO BRING THEM TO LIFE AND TO PUT
BOTH BELIEVING JEWS AND GENTILES INTO ONE BODY IN
CHRIST. THE KING JAMES VERSION SAYS HE QUICKENED US.
THE WORD QUICKENED IS STILL USED FOR LIFE WITHIN THE
WOMB. THEY NOW HAVE LIFE, BUT IN THE PAST THEY WERE
DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS. DEATH IS THE SPIRITUAL
CONDITION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT GOD. IN VERSE ONE, PAUL SAYS
THAT WE ARE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS. THE WORD
TRANSLATED "TRESPASSES," παραπτωμασιν, IS COMPOSED OF
TWO GREEK WORDS "BESIDE" AND "TO FALL." SO A TRESPASS**

IS A DEVIATION FROM THE TRUE WAY OR TAKING THE WRONG ROAD. THE WORD TRANSLATED “SINS,” *αμαρτιας*, MEANS TO MISS THE MARK. IT IS USED HERE TO DESCRIBE AN ATTITUDE WHICH DOMINATES A PERSON’S LIFE, ALMOST LIKE SHOOTING AT THE WRONG TARGET. PAUL SAYS THAT THIS SPIRITUAL DEADNESS WAS EVIDENT IN THEIR PAST WALK IN THE WAYS OF THE WORLD. ROMANS 12:2 TELLS BELIEVERS BE NOT CONFORMED TO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD. THE WORD “WORLD” IS USED TO MEAN HUMANITY WHICH ACTS WITHOUT REGARD FOR GOD OR OBEDIENCE TO HIM. THE *εξουσιας*, “AUTHORITY” OF THE AIR IS THE DEVIL.

SPIRITUAL DEADNESS IS EVIDENT BY THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND THE WILL OF THE MIND. THE WORD TRANSLATED “DESIRE,” *επιθυμιας*, IS COMPOSED OF “UPON” AND “SOUL.” SO IT IS A DESIRE THAT LAYS HEAVY UPON THE SOUL. ISN’T THAT WHAT THE FLESH, *σαρκος*, DOES? THE WORD FLESH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS USED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS; HOWEVER, IT USUALLY DOES NOT MEAN SKIN OR MEAT, IT USUALLY MEANS THE TOTALITY OF A PERSON APART FROM GOD, AND IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD. IT INCLUDES ALL SINS, SENSUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL.

THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SEPARATED FROM GOD IS EVIDENT IN THE WILL OF OUR THOUGHTS AND MINDS. THE WORD “THOUGHTS” MEANS “THROUGH THE MIND.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “WILL,” *θεληματα*, MEANS “WHAT ONE DESIGNS.” THAT IS THE PREDICAMENT OF MANKIND. MAN HAS A DESIGN FOR EVIL. THIS BASICALLY INVOLVES PSYCHOLOGICAL SINS, AND THUS WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF WRATH. THE WORD TRANSLATED

“WRATH” IS οργης. THIS IS NOT θυμος, WHICH MEANS AN OUTBURST OF ANGER. Οργη IS A MORE PERMANENT CONDITION OF THE MIND. IT IS PLANNED, PERSISTENT AND RESISTANT.

VERSE 4 SAYS GOD LOVED US AND GAVE US HIS MERCY. MERCY, ελεει, IS ACTION BY ONE WHO HAS THE RESOURCES WHICH ANOTHER NEEDS. THIS TYPE OF MERCY IS USED OF GOD THROUGHOUT ALL OF SCRIPTURE. HE LOVED US SO MUCH THAT HE MADE US ALIVE IN CHRIST, VERSE 5. GOD RAISED US UP AND MADE US TO SIT TOGETHER WITH CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES, VERSE 6. THIS IS THE IDEA OF FELLOWSHIP AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST. IN VERSES 8 AND 9, PAUL DECLARES HOW PEOPLE ARE SAVED. THEY ARE SAVED BY GRACE. A PERSON CANNOT EARN SALVATION, NOR CAN HE DESERVE IT. GRACE IS WHAT A PERSON DESPERATELY NEEDS, BUT CANNOT GET FOR HIMSELF. THE WORD TRANSLATED “GRACE,” χαριτι, IS THE DATIVE SINGULAR OF χαρις. GRACE IS ONE OF THE GREAT NEW TESTAMENT WORDS FILLED WITH RICH MEANING. GRACE IS GOD’S FAVOR TO PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH THEY CAN DO NOTHING TO EARN OR DESERVE IT.

BY HIS GRACE GOD HAS MADE US HIS PEOPLE, HIS WORKMANSHIP, VERSE 9. THE WORD TRANSLATED “WORKMANSHIP” IS ποιημα. OUR ENGLISH WORD “POEM” COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE WORD MEANS TO DO OR TO MAKE. IN A SENSE, IT MEANS THAT WE ARE GOD’S POETRY IN THE WORLD. HE HAS CREATED US THROUGH CHRIST. THE WORD “CREATE” MEANS “TO REDUCE FROM DISORDER.” IT MEANS TO CALL INTO BEING. GOD SAVED US AND MADE US HIS WORKMANSHIP FOR US TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS, VERSE 10. JESUS SAYS LET YOUR

LIGHT SO SHINE THAT MEN MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER.

IN VERSES 11 - 22, PAUL TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST BY HIS LIFE AND DEATH ON THE CROSS IS THE MEANS OF BREAKING DOWN ALL THE BARRIERS THAT SEPARATE PEOPLE.

IN VERSE 12 PAUL SAYS IN THE PAST THEY WERE WITHOUT CHRIST. THEIR FORMER SPIRITUAL POVERTY IS EVIDENT IN THE FACT THAT THEY DID NOT BELONG TO A NATION THAT KNEW GOD. THEY WERE ALIEN TO HIM. SECOND, HE SAID THEY WERE STRANGERS TO THE COVENANT OF PROMISE. THIS MEANS THEY DID NOT HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE COVENANTS MADE TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE. THIRD, TO INTENSIFY THE BLACKNESS OF THE PLIGHT, HE SAID THAT THEY EXISTED "HAVING NO HOPE." HOPE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CONFIDENCE BASED ON WHAT GOD WILL DO IN JESUS CHRIST IN THE FUTURE. THE FUTURE IS BASED ON WHAT HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST. CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, BECAUSE WITHOUT THE RESURRECTION THERE IS NO HOPE. FOURTH, HE SAYS YOU WERE WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD. "WITHOUT GOD" IS THE WORD FROM WHICH THE ENGLISH WORD ATHEIST IS DERIVED. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY HAD NO GOD. IT MEANS THEY DID NOT HAVE THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD. HE SAYS THEY WERE STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE. THE GREEK WORD COVENANT IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS. ONE OF THE WORDS MEANS "THROUGH, BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF." THE OTHER WORD MEANS "TO PLACE OR APPOINT." PAUL SAYS THAT THE NEW COVENANT IS SEALED WITH THE BLOOD (DEATH) OF CHRIST.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHEN GOD MADE THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM CUT THE SACRIFICE INTO VARIOUS PARTS, PLACED THEM ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM AND GOD WALKED THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THEM. THE COVENANT WAS SEALED BY THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE. HERE PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT THE ATONEMENT AND THE NEW COVENANT THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS MADE. WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN? IT MEANS THAT CHRIST IS THE SACRIFICE TO BRING US TOGETHER. IT MEANS THAT IN THE CHURCH ALL WHO ARE IN THE COVENANT STAND TOGETHER. THIS MEANS THE RELATIONSHIP OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE CHURCH IS CLOSER THAN PHYSICAL BLOOD RELATIONSHIPS, BECAUSE THIS AN ETERNAL SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP.

CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US TO GOD, THROUGH THE CROSS, VERSE 16. THEN HE GAVE US PEACE, VERSE 17. HE SENT HIS SPIRIT TO US, VERSE 18. THE WORD "ACCESS," προσαγωγήν, IS A GREEK WORD WHICH WAS USED TO BRING MEN INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE KING. SO CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US TO GOD, VERSE 19-22.

IN THIS CHAPTER, PAUL CHANGES HIS MENTAL PICTURES VERY RAPIDLY. THE CHURCH COMPOSED OF JEWS AND GENTILES IS SPOKEN OF AS A NATION, A FAMILY, A BUILDING AND A TEMPLE. IN VERSE 20, JESUS IS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE OR CAPSTONE. OTHERS THINK THIS MEANS THE BEDROCK FOUNDATION. THE WORD TRANSLATED "CORNERSTONE" IS ακρογωνιαιου. IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS. THE FIRST, ακρος, MEANS POINTED OR EXTREME HIGHEST AND IS RELATED TO ακη, WHICH MEANS

A SHARP POINT. THE SECOND WORD IS γωνία, WHICH MEANS AN ANGLE OR PROJECTING CORNER. A CORNERSTONE IS LAID IN ORDER TO GIVE STRENGTH AND STABILITY WHERE TWO WALLS CAME TOGETHER. JESUS IS BOTH THE CAPSTONE AND FOUNDATION STONE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “TEMPLE” HERE IS THE WORD THE JEWS USED TO SPEAK OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE TEMPLE.

THE CHIEF MESSAGE OF CHAPTER 2 IS THAT THE GENTILES WHO ARE REDEEMED BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST BECOME ONE BODY WITH THE JEWISH BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

EPHESIANS 3

- I. GOD REVEALED HIS MYSTERY OF GRACE TO THE APOSTLES 3:1 - 6
- II. PAUL PREACHED THE MYSTERY OF THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST 3:7 - 13
- III. PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT 3:14- 19
- IV. PRAISE TO GOD FOR THE POWER IN US 3:20- 21

CHAPTERS 1 AND 3 ARE BOTH PRAYERS.

IN CH. 1 HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE REVELATION OF GOD.

IN CH. 3 THE REALIZATION OF GOD.

IN CH. 1 SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT.

IN CH. 3 SPIRITUAL ENABLEMENT.

IN CH. 1 THAT YOU MAY KNOW

IN CH. 3 THAT YOU MAY BE THAT WHICH YOU KNOW

IN CH. 1 LIGHT

IN CH. 3 LIFE

IN CH. 1 HOW TO KNOW THE POWER OF GOD

IN CH. 3 HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF GOD

IN CH. 1 THE POWER OF GOD WORKING FOR US

IN CH. 3 THE POWER OF GOD WORKING IN US

**IN CH. 1 YOU IN CHRIST
IN CH. 3 CHRIST IN YOU**

**IN CH. 1 IS KNOWLEDGE AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF
OUR FAITH IN OUR MINDS
IN CH. 3 IS THE FULFILLMENT INTO ACTION OF THIS
IN US AND THROUGH US. (SOURCE UNKNOWN)**

PAUL PICKS UP HIS LOGIC AGAIN IN VERSE 14. PAUL CALLS HIMSELF A PRISONER OF CHRIST. HE SAYS, IN BEHALF OF THE GENTILES, HE HAS BEEN GIVEN KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH THAT THE GENTILES WERE ADMITTED TO THE BLESSING OF SALVATION IN EQUALITY WITH THE JEWS. HE CALLS THIS A MYSTERY. MYSTERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT MEAN MYSTERIOUS. IT IS NOT SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IT MEANS SOMETHING THAT GOD MUST MAKE KNOWN; IT CAN ONLY BE COMPREHENDED AS GOD REVEALS IT. PAUL REMINDS HIS READER THAT THIS TRUTH IN THE PAST WAS ONLY IN SHADY Glimpses, BUT NOW THIS TRUTH HAD BEEN MADE KNOWN. NO PERSON OF FORMER TIMES HAD THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THIS TRUTH, ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FORETOLD THAT SALVATION WAS FOR THE GENTILES. AT THE COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM, RECORDED IN ACTS 15, JAMES HAD SAID THAT THE JEWISH SCRIPTURE WAS CERTAINLY IN ACCORD WITH WHAT PAUL AND PETER PREACHED, NAMELY THAT THE GENTILES WOULD BE SAVED WITHOUT KEEPING THE MOSAIC LAW. JESUS FULFILLED THE LAW. THE GENTILES ARE NOW CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST AND BELONG TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

PAUL PRAYS THAT GOD WILL STRENGTHEN THEM IN THEIR INNER BEING BY HIS SPIRIT. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "POWER" IN VERSE 7 MEANS "INHERENT POWER." OUR WORD DYNAMITE COMES FROM THIS PARTICULAR WORD. IT IS THE POWER OF GOD EXPLODING WITHIN A PERSON. PAUL PRAYS THAT CHRIST WILL DWELL IN THEIR HEARTS. THE WORD "DWELL" IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, "DOWN" AND "INHABIT." IT MEANS A PERMANENT RESIDENCE. HE IS ASKING CHRIST TO BE A PERMANENT RESIDENT IN THEIR HEARTS. HE PRAYS THAT THEY WILL BE ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE. THE GREEK WORD FOR ROOTED IS USED ABOUT PLANTS. IT MEANS TO TAKE ROOT AND DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE ROOT. THE WORD GROUNDED IS DEFINED AS FOUNDED, ESTABLISHED OR TO MAKE FIRM. IT SIGNIFIES THE LAYING OF A FOUNDATION. THE FOUNDATION HOLDS SECURELY THE REST OF THE STRUCTURE. THE FOUNDATION IS LOVE.

PAUL PRAYS THAT THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND THE DIMENSIONS OF CHRIST'S LOVE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "COMPREHEND" IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS, "DOWN UPON" AND "TO TAKE IN THE HAND." IT MEANS TO SEIZE A PIECE OF KNOWLEDGE WITH THE HANDS OF THE MIND. PAUL COMPARES THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO FOUR DIMENSIONS. HE PRAYS THAT THEY WOULD BE FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD. HE ALSO PRAYS THAT THEY WOULD PRAISE GOD FOREVER. FOREVER IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE IS INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES.

EPHESIANS 4

- I. WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING: KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT 4:1 - 6
- II. EXERCISE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS: BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST 4:7 - 12
- III. GROW UP IN THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST 4:13 - 16
- IV. PUT ON THE NEW PERSON THAT GOD HAS CREATED 4:17 - 24
- V. GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT 4:25 - 32

CHAPTER 4 IS THE DIVIDING POINT IN EPHESIANS. PAUL HAS A DISTINCT METHOD OF WRITING HIS EPISTLES. FIRST HE PRESENTS THE FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS AS A BASIS FOR BELIEF. THEN HE PRESENTS THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR LIVING OUT THE THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS. THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF EPHESIANS PRESENT THE DOCTRINES AND THE LAST THREE PRESENT THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. PAUL ALMOST ALWAYS FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF WRITING ABOUT BELIEF THEN BEHAVIOR, DOCTRINE THEN DUTY. HOWEVER, THE CATEGORIES ARE NOT AS CLEARLY DRAWN AS IT MAY FIRST APPEAR.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT WORDS AND CONCEPTS IN EPHESIANS IS RECORDED IN THE FIRST VERSE OF THIS FOURTH CHAPTER. THE VERSE READS, "I THEREFORE, THE PRISONER IN THE LORD EXHORT YOU TO WALK WORTHILY OF THE CALLING WHEREWITH YOU WERE CALLED." THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORTHY" IS ἀξίως. OUR WORD AXIS COMES FROM

THIS WORD. IT HAS THE IDEA OF AN EQUAL SIGN MAKING THE EQUATION ON BOTH SIDES EQUAL. PAUL ADMONISHES THEM TO LIVE THEIR LIVES EQUAL TO THE BLESSING THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED FROM GOD. HE PRESENTS THE BLESSINGS IN THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS AND IN THE LAST THREE HOW TO LIVE THESE BLESSINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "I EXHORT" OR "I BESEECH" IS THE WORD παρακαλω. IT IS A FIRST PERSON, SINGULAR, PRESENT, INDICATIVE OF παρακαλεω, COMPOSED OF παρα, BESIDE AND καλεω TO CALL. THE WORD IS USED TO URGE A FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION.

PAUL APPEALS TO THEM AS A PRISONER, δεσμιος. HE HAD BEEN IN PRISON ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND FOR A CONSIDERABLE LENGTH OF TIME WHEN HE WROTE THIS LETTER. HE HAD BEEN A PRISONER IN JERUSALEM, PROBABLY IN THE FORT ANTONIO; WHEN THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN IN CAESAREA, IN HEROD'S PRAETORIUM, ACTS 23:35; AND IN ROME, UNDER HOUSE ARREST. HIS SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT SOMETIME LATER WAS PROBABLY IN THE TULLIANUM DUNGEON.

PAUL FOCUSES UPON BELIEVERS MAINTAINING UNITY, LIVING IN PURITY, RELEASING LOVE AND PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD.

IN THESE FIRST VERSES PAUL SAYS WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING. HE PRESENTS HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS AS THE MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO KEEP THE UNITY. THE GREEK WORDS HE USES ARE EXTREMELY INTENSE. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "LOWLY," ταπεινοφροσυνης, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS ταπεινος AND φρην. ταπεινος MEANS LOW IN CONDITION, POOR OR HUMBLE. φρην MEANS THE MIND,

INTELLECT OR THE DIAPHRAGM. THE VERB φρονεω MEANS TO THINK OR TO MIND. SO, THE WORD PAUL USES HERE MEANS LOWLINESS OR HUMILITY OF MIND AND ACTION.

NEXT HE FOCUSES UPON THEIR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. HE SAYS BE PATIENT WITH THE OTHER PERSON, “FOREBEAR ONE ANOTHER.”

THE WORD TRANSLATED LONGSUFFERING, μακροθυμιας, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS μακρος MEANING FAR OFF, AT A DISTANCE OR LONG AND θυμος MEANING TEMPER OR A STRONG EMOTION OF THE SOUL. θυμος IS RELATED TO THE VERB θυω MEANING TO RUSH. I THINK WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT BY PUTTING THESE TWO WORDS “FAR” OR “DISTANT” AND “SOUL” TOGETHER PAUL MEANS THAT A PERSON OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY HAS A LARGE SOUL, SO LARGE IN FACT THAT HIS TEMPER HAS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE IT GETS TO THE EDGE OF HIS SOUL AND GETS OUT OF BONDS. NEXT PAUL TEACHES ABOUT KEEPING UNITY AND THE RELATIONSHIPS OF GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER WITHIN THE CHURCH. THE FOUNDATION OR BASIS OF THIS UNITY, VERSES 4-6, IS “ONE LORD.” THIS UNITY IS TO EXIST BOTH IN THE LOCAL CHURCH AND BETWEEN ALL BELIEVERS. IN THIS SECTION PAUL DEALS WITH BASICS. THE CHURCH MUST ALWAYS KEEP RETURNING TO THE BASICS. ONCE I WAS PUTTING TOGETHER A CHRISTMAS TOY FOR ONE OF MY CHILDREN. WHEN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FAILURE HAD SUCCESSFULLY REVEALED MY COMPLETE INABILITY TO ASSEMBLE THIS TOY, IN FRUSTRATION, I PICKED UP A SHEET OF DIAGRAMS. JUST UNDER THE NAME OF THE TOY, WAS THIS PHRASE, “WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS.”

WHEN I FOLLOWED THE DIRECTIONS, ASSEMBLING THE TOY WAS EASY. THE MANUFACTURER KNEW HOW THE TOY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ASSEMBLED. THE WORD FROM THE LORD FOR THE CHURCH IS, "WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS."

VERSE 8 IS THE PICTURE OF A VICTORIOUS KING BRINGING CAPTIVES OF WAR TO HIS CAPITOL. IN THIS QUOTE FROM PS. 68:18 PAUL CHANGES THE VERB "RECEIVED" TO "GAVE." SCHOLARS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT EARLY JEWISH TARGUM READING OF THIS VERSE IN THE PESHILTA, WHICH WAS PROBABLY AN EASTERN ARAMAIC TARGUM GIVEN IN THE FIRST CENTURY FOR THE JEWISH PROSELYTES, TRANSLATE THIS GAVE. (F. F. BRUCE, THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS TO PHILEMON AND TO THE EPHESIANS, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING] PP. 342.)

THE WORD "CAPTIVITY," αιχμαλωσιαν, IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS "SPEAR" AND "TO CAPTURE" AND REFERS TO THE TRIUMPHAL VICTORY PROCESSION. THE CAPTIVES WERE PART OF THE PROCESSION. THE WORD LITERALLY MEANS THOSE TAKEN BY A SWORD.

VERSE 9 HAS BEEN INTERPRETED IN VARIOUS WAYS. ONE EXPLANATION IS THAT THE ASCENDING AND DESCENDING SEQUENCE IS SIMILAR TO THE SAME SEQUENCE FOUND IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, AND THAT AS JOHN CALVIN SAYS, THE COMPARISON IS "NOT BETWEEN ONE PART OF THE EARTH AND ANOTHER, BUT BETWEEN THE WHOLE EARTH AND HEAVEN." (F. F. BRUCE, OP. CIT., P. 343.)

ANOTHER INTERPRETATION IS THAT THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH REFERS TO THE PLACE OF THE DEAD. THE IDEA IS THAT JESUS INVADDED HADES BETWEEN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION AND SET FREE ALL THOSE FROM ADAM TO THE TIME OF JESUS. (F. F. BRUCE, OP. CIT., PP. 343-344.)

FROM THE GREEK TEXT IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL WHICH INTERPRETATION HAS THE WEIGHT ON ITS SIDE. HOWEVER, IT COULD BE POINTED OUT THAT VERSE 10 SPEAKS OF JESUS ASCENDING ABOVE “ALL” THE HEAVENS. THIS SEEMS TO CONTRAST WITH ALL THE EARTH.

PAUL BECOMES SPECIFIC ABOUT THE GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO HIS CHURCH. THE FIRST IS THE GIFT OF APOSTLES. MANY COMMENTARIES SAY THIS GIFT PASSED AWAY WITH THE ERA OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. THERE IS A VALID SENSE IN WHICH THE ONLY APOSTLES WERE THE TWELVE APOSTLES TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND PAUL, THE APOSTLE, TO THE GENTILES. BUT THE BIBLE USES THIS WORD “APOSTLESHIP” ABOUT BARNABUS, SILAS AND OTHER MEN. THESE WERE APOSTLES IN A DIFFERENT SENSE THAN THE TWELVE APOSTLES. THE WORD APOSTLE MEANS “TO SEND.” AN APOSTLE IS A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN SENT AS AN AGENT OR A MESSENGER FROM ANOTHER PERSON. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A SENSE IF A PERSON PROCLAIMS GOD’S MESSAGE AND THAT PERSON RECEIVES THE CALL, THEY HAVE BEEN SENT.

THE NEXT IS THE GIFT OF A PROPHET, προφητης, COMPOSED OF προ, “BEFORE” AND φημι, “TO UTTER, TELL FORTH.” IN THE

OLD TESTAMENT THE SPIRIT OF GOD GAVE GOD'S MESSAGE TO PROPHETS AND THEY GAVE HIS MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD AND THE PROPHET TELLS FORTH GOD'S TRUTH. IT IS NOT SO MUCH THAT HE FORETELL THE FUTURE, ALTHOUGH HE DOES THAT IF HE TELLS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF OBEYING AND DISOBEYING GOD'S WILL. THE WORD OF A PROPHET MEANS THAT HE SPEAKS FOR GOD.

THE NEXT IS THE GIFT OF AN EVANGELIST, ευαγγελιστας. THE GREEK WORD IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, ευ, "WELL" AND αλλελος, "MESSAGE." THE EVANGELIST IS ONE WHO CARRIES GOOD NEWS. THE NOUN "EVANGELIST" IS ALSO USED IN 2 TIM. 4:5. PHILIP IS CALLED AN EVANGELIST WHEN HE SHARES THE GOSPEL WITH THE EUNICH IN THE CHARIOT. ACTS SAYS THAT PHILIP PREACHED TO HIM THE CHRIST. PHILIP, THE EVANGELIST WAS NOT PREACHING IN A PULPIT TO A CONGREGATION, BUT RATHER IN A CHARIOT TO ONE MAN.

THE NEXT GIFT IS PASTORS AND TEACHERS. THESE GIFTS GO TOGETHER. THE WORD FOR PASTOR IS THE WORD FOR SHEPHERD, ποιμενας. A SHEPHERD IS ONE WHO GUIDES AND FEEDS THE SHEEP.

THESE GIFTS WERE GIVEN TO ACCOMPLISH CERTAIN PURPOSES, THE FIRST BEING TO COMPLETE OR PERFECT THE BODY OF CHRIST.

IN VERSE 12, THE WORD TRANSLATED “PERFECTING” IS καταρτισμον, FROM κατα, “DOWN” FROM “UPON” AND αρτιξω, “TO ADAPT OR FIT.” THE IDEA IS TO KNIT TOGETHER, TO UNITE COMPLETELY. THE VERB FORM OF THIS WORD IS USED OF MENDING NETS. IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THEY WERE DAMAGED. IT MEANS RIGHT ORDERING OR ARRANGEMENT. (W. E. VINE, EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS [WESTWOOD, N. J.: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1966] PP. 174- 175.) THESE GIFTS WERE GIVEN TO EQUIP THE BODY OF CHRIST. THE WORD TRANSLATED “TO EDIFY,” οικοδομην, IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS, “HOUSE” (οικος) AND “TO BUILD” (δεμω). THUS, THE GIFTS MOTIVATE SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE BELIEVER AND BUILD UP THE CHURCH. THE WORD EDIFY MEANS “TO BUILD.” THESE GIFTS WERE ALSO GIVEN TO BRING THE CHURCH TOGETHER IN UNITY.

IN VERSE 13 THE WORD TRANSLATED τελειον MEANS “MATURE,” “FULL GROWN,” OR “PERFECT”. IT ALSO MEANS WHEN SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ACHIEVES THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS CREATED. OUR WORD TELESCOPE COMES FROM THIS GREEK WORD. THIS IDEA OF PERFECT DOES NOT MEAN WITHOUT ERROR; IT MEANS THAT SOMETHING DOES WHAT IT WAS CREATED TO DO. PAUL TEACHES IF BELIEVERS ARE NOT GROWING TOWARD MATURITY THEY ARE BABES. THE IDEA IS THAT A BABY DOES NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER WHO PICKS HIM UP AND CARRIES HIM ABOUT. THE SECOND IDEA IS FROM THE GREEK WORD, κλυδωνιζομενοι, MEANING “BEING TOSSED OR CARRIED ABOUT LIKE THE WAVES OF THE SEA.” THE IDEA IS THAT OF A SHIP WHICH ANCHORED, UNSTABLE AND SHIFTING IN THE SEA. IN VERSE 14, THE WORD TRANSLATED “SLIGHT OF MEN” IS THE

GREEK WORD κυβεια FROM κυβος WHICH MEANS “DICE PLAYING.” OUR WORD CUBE COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE IDEA OF TRICKERY IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORD. THE PHRASE IN THE KING JAMES, “LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE” IS LITERALLY “SYSTEMATIZING OF ERROR,” Την μεθοδειαν της πλανης. SYSTEMATIZING μεθοδειαν, MEANS “TO HANDLE METHODICALLY.” OUR WORD “METHOD” COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE WORD “ERROR,” πλανης, IS RELATED TO THE WORD “PLANAO,” A WONDERING, A FORSAKING OF THE RIGHT PATH. OUR WORD “PLANET” COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE IDEA IS THAT PLANETS MOVE ABOUT.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY COMES TO THE BELIEVER AS HE LIVES THE TRUTH IN LOVE, VERSE 15. TRUTH IS THAT WHICH LIES BENEATH THE VENEER OF SOMETHING, THE INNER CORE. PAUL SAYS THAT THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT WERE GIVEN TO BRING US TOGETHER IN LOVE, VERSE 15. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FITTED TOGETHER”, συναρμογουμενον, IS COMPOSED OF THREE WORDS, συν, “TOGETHER WITH,” αρμολογω, (FROM αρμος) “A JOINT,” AND λογος, “WORD” OR “STUDY OF.” SO IT IS A WORD ON OR A STUDY OF A JOINT WHICH FITS TOGETHER. PAUL SAYS LOVE IS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS IN ALL THE UNIVERSE THAT SURVIVES. PAUL PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THE HEALTH AND THE GROWTH OF THE BODY. IF THE CHURCH DOES NOT GROW IN STRENGTH AND POWER IT CANNOT BE WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE.

VERSES 17 - 32 COULD BE TITLED “CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD MAN CONTRASTED WITH THE NEW MAN IN CHRIST.” PAUL PAINTS OUT A MOST DEVASTATING WORD PICTURE OF THE GREEK AND ROMAN WORLD. SURPRISINGLY THE FIRST CENTURY WAS NOT THAT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE TWENTY - FIRST CENTURY.

PAUL DESCRIBES THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD MAN. FIRST, HIS MIND IS SPIRITUALLY BLIND. HE DESCRIBES THIS CONDITION WITH TWO WORDS, "VANITY AND DARKNESS." THE GREEK WORD "VANITY" MEANS "EMPTINESS." IT IS THE RESULT OF AIMLESSNESS. THE MIND, νοος, IS A PLACE OF PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING. THE EMPTY MIND LACKS THIS QUALITY. THE SECOND WORD IS "BEING DARKENED," σκοτισμενοι. THE WORD TRANSLATED "UNDERSTANDING" IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, "THROUGH AND MIND." SO IT MEANS WHAT A PERSON PASSES THROUGH HIS MIND. IT IS A TYPE OF MEDITATION IN A SENSE, IT IS WHAT ONE THINKS ABOUT. HE IS SAYING WHAT PASSES THROUGH THIS DARK MIND WILL GAIN NO LIGHT. SECOND, HIS HEART IS HARD. THE WORD "HEART," καρδιας, MEANS THE TOTALITY OF A PERSON. IT IS THE DEEPEST PART OF A PERSON'S ABILITY TO THINK, TO REASON, TO FEEL, TO WILL. THE GREEK WORD FOR HARDNESS COMES FROM A WORD WHICH ORIGINALLY MEANT A STONE HARDER THAN MARBLE. LATER THE WORD WAS USED IN MEDICINE TO DESCRIBE THE CONDITION THAT TAKES PLACE IN A JOINT WHICH CAUSES THE PERSON TO BE PARALYZED, OR THE SUBSTANCE THAT KNITS BROKEN BONES TOGETHER; SO, THE WORD CAME TO MEAN A LOSS OF FEELING. IT IS THE IDEA OF A HARDENING OR A PETRIFYING EFFECT. AT FIRST, WHEN A PERSON COMMITS SIN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHYSICAL, AND SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES MAY BE VERY TERRIBLE. IT MAY MAKE HIM PHYSICAL ILL. BUT THE LONGER HE CONTINUES THE SIN THE EASIER IT BECOMES. A MAN TOLD ME THAT WHEN HE COMMITTED ADULTERY THE FIRST TIME HE CAME HOME AND THREW UP. THE SECOND TIME, HE WAS JUST A LITTLE UPSET. BY THE THIRD TIME THERE WAS NO PSYCHOLOGICAL PAIN. PAUL

ALSO SAYS THAT THE PERSON GIVES UP TO LICENTIOUSNESS. HE IS NOT ASHAMED BEFORE GOD OR MAN. HE EXERTS HIS ENERGY IN UNCLEANNESS, ακαθαρσιας, WHICH IS ANYTHING THAT DISRUPTS THE PERSONALITY AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE SOUL. THE WORD TRANSLATED, "GIVEN TO GREEDINESS," IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, πλεον, "MORE" AND εχω, "TO HAVE." THE WORD TRANSLATED "GREEDINESS" MEANS "THE MAN WHO DOES NOT CARE WHO HE HURTS, OR WHAT HE DOES JUST AS LONG AS HE GETS WHAT HE WANTS." PAUL SAYS THIS LIFE IS ALIEN TO GOD. ALIEN COMES FROM TWO WORDS, "TO BELONG TO ANOTHER," AND "FROM."

PAUL AFFIRMS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW MAN. HE SAYS THE NEW MAN LEARNS FROM CHRIST. TO LEARN MEANS TO EXPERIENCE OR TO COMPREHEND. A PERSON MAY LEARN ABOUT CHRIST AND NOT EXPERIENCE HIM. SALVATION ALWAYS COMES FROM GOD'S GRACE, AND GRACE IS A GIFT THAT COMES FROM GOD. THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE LIVING CHRIST. PAUL SAYS, THEREFORE, DESERT THE FALSE WAY OF LIFE.

THE WORD TRANSLATED "CONDUCT," αναστροφην, IS COMPOSED OF ανα, "AGAIN" AND στρεφω, "TO TURN" OR "TO CHANGE ONE'S DIRECTION AND CONDUCT." THE PHRASE "TO HAVE PUT OFF" IS ONE WORD MEANING "TO TAKE OFF AND LAY IT DOWN," OR "TO PUT ASIDE."

IN VERSE 23, THE PHRASE "RENEWING THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND" DOES NOT MEAN TO RENEW THE MEMORY. IT MEANS TO MAKE YOUTHFUL AGAIN, OR TO GIVE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

THAT IS YOUNG. THE SPIRIT OF THE MIND MEANS THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. JESUS SAYS THAT A PERSON HAS TO COME LIKE A LITTLE CHILD IN ORDER TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. AGAIN HE SAYS TO PUT ON THE NEW MAN. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME HE SPEAKS OF THE NEW MAN. THIS WORD "NEW" DOES NOT MEAN NEW IN TIME. IT MEANS NEW IN QUALITY AND CHARACTER. THE WORD "CREATED" MEANS TO REDUCE FROM CHAOS TO ORDER. THUS, THE CHAOTIC LIFE BECOMES AN ORDERLY LIFE. GOD HAS CREATED THE NEW MAN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS. RIGHTEOUSNESS MEANS GOD PLACES THE PERSON IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. HOLINESS MEANS GOD HAS SET APART THE PERSON FOR HIMSELF.

IN VERSE 25, THE BELIEVER IS TO SPEAK TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR. THERE ARE MANY PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES DESCRIBING TRUTH. HERE TRUTH MEANS CONSISTENT WITH FACTS, SINCERITY WITHOUT BIAS. VERSE 25 SAYS PUT AWAY FALSEHOOD. THE WORD IS ψενδος. OUR WORD "PSEUDO" COMES FROM THIS WORD. "BE ANGRY BUT SIN NOT." THERE ARE SEVERAL GREEK WORDS FOR ANGER. THIS WORD MEANS A MILD FORM OF ANGER. THE WORD SUGGESTS MORE OF A CONTINUOUS CONDITION OF THE MIND RATHER THAN THE SUDDEN VIOLENT RISE OF THE EMOTION. PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 27, DO NOT GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL. THE WORD DEVIL διαβολω, IS COMPOSED OF δια, "THROUGH" AND βαλλω, "TO THROW." THAT IS WHAT THE DEVIL DOES. HE THROWS THROUGH THE BELIEVER. IN THE SCRIPTURE THE DEVIL IS ALWAYS THROWING ACCUSATIONS AT GOD'S PEOPLE. EVERY TIME THE DEVIL APPEARS IN THE BIBLE HE IS THROWING HIS ACCUSATIONS AT SOMEONE.

PAUL SAYS, "WALK HONESTLY," "COMMUNICATE CONSTRUCTIVELY." IN OTHER WORDS, BUILD UP BY YOUR WORDS. HE ALSO SAYS, "GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT." GRIEVE MEANS TO BRING PAIN. THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO LIFT UP CHRIST; SO, WHEN A BELIEVER DOES NOT LIFT UP CHRIST, HE BRINGS THE HOLY SPIRIT PAIN. THIS PASSAGE SAYS GET RID OF DESTRUCTIVE EMOTIONS: BITTERNESS, WHICH IS SHARP; WRATH, WHICH IS AN OUTBURST OF EMOTION; ANGER, WHICH IS SLOW BURNING; CLAMOR, WHICH IS CONTROVERSY; AND EVIL SPEAKING, WHICH MEANS TO BLASPHEME, WICKED IN QUANTITY. THIS SAYS BE KIND AND TENDERHEARTED AND FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER. PAUL CONTRASTS THE NEW MAN WITH THE OLD MAN.

EPHESIANS 5

- I. IMITATE GOD: WALK IN LOVE 5:1 - 2**
- II. AVOID DARKNESS: WALK IN THE LIGHT 5:3 - 14**
- III. UNDERSTAND THE WILL OF GOD: BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT 5:15 - 21**
- IV. IN THE MARRIAGE RELATION: LOVE AND SUBMISSION 5:22 - 33**

THE FIRST 14 VERSES COULD BE TITLED “LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S LOVE.” PAUL’S CENTRAL IDEA IS IMITATE GOD IN YOUR LIVING. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FOLLOWERS” MEANS “TO IMITATE.” THE ENGLISH WORD “MIMIC” COMES FROM THIS WORD. TO IMITATE GOD IS TO DO WHAT GOD DOES. THE CLASSIC ORATORS TAUGHT THAT THE BEST WAY TO LEARN TO SPEAK WAS TO USE THE OLD MASTERS AS MODELS. ART WAS TAUGHT IN THE SAME WAY. PAUL SAYS THE BEST WAY TO LIVE IS TO USE GOD AS THE MODEL. IT IS AN EXHORTATION TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF GOD WHO ACTS IN HISTORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. HIS STEADFASTNESS, FAITHFULNESS AND LOVE COMES TO US IN CHRIST. TO IMITATE GOD, WE MUST FIRST WALK IN LOVE. THE WORD “WALK” MEANS THE TOTAL REALM OF A PERSON’S ACTIVITY. THUS, A PERSON IS TO LIVE IN LOVE; WE WALK IN LOVE WHEN WE RESPOND TO CHRIST’S LOVE TOWARD US.

IN VERSE 2, CHRIST’S LOVE OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD. THE BELIEVER WALKS IN LOVE BECAUSE HE IS A CHILD OF GOD. LOVE IS GOD’S GIFT. IT IS THE BASIC MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN ACTION. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT GOD

IS LOVE. WE SEE THIS IN THE FATHER OF THE PRODIGAL SON, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, THE WHOLE LIFE OF JESUS AND THE MOTIVATION AND THE ACTIONS OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF LOVE IS SEEN IN THE SECOND VERSE; CHRIST LOVED US AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR US AS A SACRIFICE TO GOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED "GAVE UP," παρεδωκεν, MEANS "TO DELIVER UP," "TO HAND OVER," "TO GIVE OVER." THE WORD υπερ MEANS "FOR" OR "ON BEHALF OF."

VERSES 3-7 TEACHES BELIEVERS TO WALK IN A WAY BECOMING TO CHILDREN OF GOD. FIRST, THE CHRISTIAN WALK IS TOWARD A BEAUTIFUL LIFE AND AWAY FROM DESTRUCTIVE LIFESTYLES. THE CHRISTIAN IS TO BE PURE IN HIS LIVING. PAUL GIVES A LIST OF PRACTICES TO AVOID. THE WORD "FORNICATION" MEANS "OF ILLICIT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE." IT IS ALSO CONNECTED WITH PAGAN IDOLATRY. OUR WORD "PORNOGRAPHY" COMES FROM THIS WORD. PAUL SAYS "DO NOT LET THESE THINGS BE NAMED OR MENTIONED AMONG YOU." HE MEANS DO NOT EVEN GIVE THEM RECOGNITION. HE HITS ON ONE OF THE GREAT SECRETS OF SUCCESS. KEEP YOUR MIND ON THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE AND OFF OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WILL DEFEAT YOUR PURPOSE. HE SAYS, "AWAY WITH THOSE THINGS!" FILTHINESS IS SHAME OR INDECENCY. FOOLISH TALKING IS MORE THAN JUST GOSSIP. THE WORD TRANSLATED "FOOLISH TALKING" IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, μωρος, FROM WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD MORON, AND λογος, MEANING WORD. SO, IT IS THE WORD OF A MORON OR STUPID TALK. THE WORD TRANSLATED "JESTING" IS A WORD USED OF THE QUICK MOVEMENTS OF MEN AND APES. OUR WORD

“TRAPEZE” COMES FROM THIS WORD. IT MEANS “LIGHT OR SHALLOW ACTIONS WHICH DO NOT HAVE ANY DEPTH.” HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT FUN AND HAPPINESS. HE MEANS TO TURN FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER WITHOUT ANY DEPTH.

SOME PEOPLE THINK OF CHRISTIANITY, AS I DID AS A BOY, THAT LONG-SUFFERING MEANT THAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO SUFFER A LONG TIME. SUFFERING DOES NOT NECESSARILY HAVE DEPTH. THE WORD TRANSLATED “THANKSGIVING,” ευχαριστια, MEANS ευ, “GOOD” AND χαρίζομαι, “TO GIVE FREELY.” THE WORD “EUCHARIST” COMES FROM THIS WORD.

VERSE 5 IS A SEVERE WARNING AGAINST THOSE WHO PRACTICE THE DEEDS SUCH AS FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS AND IDOL WORSHIP. THOSE WHO PRACTICE SUCH SINS HAVE NO INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ESAU CHEATS HIMSELF OUT OF HIS BIRTHRIGHT, BECAUSE HE IS DECEIVED BY HIS APPETITE. IN ORDER TO SATISFY HIS APPETITE HE SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT FOR A MESS OF POTTAGE.

PAUL SAYS WHEN WE WALK AS CHILDREN OF GOD OUR ACTIONS WILL DISPLAY OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD, VERSES 6-7. WE ARE TO BE LIKE CHRIST WHO PLEASED GOD BY HIS OBEDIENCE. OUR SPIRITUAL PROBLEM IS USUALLY DISOBEDIENCE. THE WORD “DISOBEDIENCE” IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS THE PREFIX, MEANING “NOT,” AND πειθω, “TO PERSUADE.” THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORD SHOWS THAT THE DISOBEDIENT PERSON IS NOT PERSUADED. HERE IT MEANS PERSUADED TO THE WILL OF GOD. IT IS VERY INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE THAT THE GREEK WORD “FAITH” IS RELATED TO THE WORD πειθω, AND IN FACT FAITH MEANS “FIRM

PERSUASION.”

IN VERSE 8, PAUL SAYS THEY WERE TO WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT. THE WORD “LIGHT” MEANS LIGHT AS IT IS RECEIVED BY THE EYE AND PERCEIVED BY THE MIND. JESUS SAID, “I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.” TO HIS DISCIPLES HE SAID, “YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.” WE REFLECT THE LIGHT OF GOD AS IT COMES THROUGH US. THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT PRODUCE SPIRITUAL PRODUCTS CALLED FRUITS. FRUIT IS PRODUCED BY THE INHERENT ENERGY WITHIN THE LIVING ORGANISM. THE FRUIT IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE CHARACTER AND THE POWER PRODUCING IT. IT IS THE VISIBLE EXPRESSION OF POWER WORKING INWARDLY AND INVISIBLY. THE FRUIT’S CHARACTER REFLECTS THE NATURE OF THE POWER THAT PRODUCES IT. THE VISIBLE EXPRESSIONS OF HIDDEN LUSTS ARE THE WORKS OF THE FLESH. THE INVISIBLE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING IN THE PERSON PRODUCES THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. PAUL REMINDS THEM OF THEIR FORMER LIFE BEFORE CONVERSION AND TELLS THEM THEY ARE NOW CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT AND ARE TO WALK IN THE LIGHT.

IN VERSE 9, HE SAYS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH. IN VERSE 10, “PROVING,” δοκιμαζοντες MEANS “TO PUT THROUGH PRESSURE.” IN VERSE 13 LIGHT REBUKES AND EXPOSES. EVIL CRAWLS FOR DARKNESS WHEN LIGHT AND RIGHT-LIVING REPROVES IT. GOD’S LIGHT ALWAYS REVEALS. IT REVEALS OUR INNER SELVES TO OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. CHRIST’S LIGHT ALSO RAISES THE SPIRITUAL DEAD, VERSE 14.

VERSES 15-21 COULD BE TITLED “WALKING THE CHRISTIAN WAY.” THIS SECTION IS A CHALLENGE TO LIVE IN A MANNER THAT HONORS GOD. THE WORD “WALK” MEANS “THE TOTALITY OF A PERSON’S ACTIVITIES.” THE WORD TRANSLATED CIRCUMSPECTLY, ακριβως, COULD BETTER BE TRANSLATED “ACCURATE OR CAREFULLY.” OUR ENGLISH WORD “ACROBAT” COMES FROM THIS WORD. IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE WHEN WE SEE THE ACCURACY AND EXACTNESS THAT IS DEMANDED OF THE ACROBATIC PERSON. THE WORD “CIRCUMSPECTLY” HAS THE IDEA OF THE ACROBAT SURVEYING THE SITUATION AND BEING ABLE TO KEEP HIS FOOTING. THIS FITS WELL WITH WHAT PAUL SAYS IN CHAPTER 6 ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE. IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, WE HAVE TO WALK CAREFULLY AND ACCURATELY LEST WE LOOSE OUR BALANCE AND FALL INTO MORAL BACKSLIDING AND COLLAPSE. IN ORDER TO WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY PAUL TELLS US TO WALK IN WISDOM. THE WORD “WISE,” σοφοι, IS THE WISDOM OF ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE, THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THE WORD “FOOL” MEANS NO KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THE HEBREW BACKGROUND OF WISDOM MEANS AN ATTITUDE OF LIFE RATHER THAN MERE THEORY. A PERSON WHO IS WALKING IN WISDOM KNOWS GOD AND IS SERVING HIM.

PAUL TELLS US A PERSON WHO WALKS IN WISDOM REDEEMS THE TIME, VERSE 16; KNOWS THE WILL OF GOD, VERSE 17; AND IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, VERSE 18. THE WORD “REDEEMED,” εξαγοραζομενοι IS A MARKET - PLACE WORD MEANING “TO BUY OUT.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “TIME” MEANS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY. IT MEANS USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY WITH PROPER TIMING. IN THE GREEK WORLD, OPPORTUNITY WAS

REPRESENTED BY A YOUTH, WITH WINGS ON HIS FEET AND BACK, HAVING LONG HAIR ON THE FRONT OF HIS HEAD AND NO HAIR ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD. THE PICTURE TAUGHT THAT OPPORTUNITY MUST BE GRASPED. THE MOMENT IT IS PAST, IT IS GONE FOREVER.

VERSE 17 SPEAKS ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD. THE WORD “UNDERSTANDING,” *συνιεντες*, FROM *συν*, “TOGETHER WITH” AND *ιημι*, “TO SEND,” MEANS “TO COMPREHEND THOROUGHLY.” WE SAY “I’VE GOT IT TOGETHER.” THAT IS BASICALLY WHAT PAUL MEANS.

IN ORDER TO WALK ACCURATELY, THE BELIEVER MUST SEEK THE FULLNESS WHICH THE SPIRIT GIVES. PAUL WARNS ABOUT BEING DRUNK WITH WINE. THEN HE SAYS BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. LITERALLY, SEEK THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT, BE FILLED WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. THE IDEA IS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST HAVE CONTROL OF THE BELIEVER AND THE CHURCH.

IN VERSE 17, PAUL ADMONISHES THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE WILL OF GOD. THIS IS THE FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO REVEAL THE WILL OF GOD. ANOTHER FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO POINT PEOPLE TO JESUS CHRIST AS LORD. ANOTHER FUNCTION IS TO EMPOWER FOR WITNESS. IN VERSE 19, THE CHRISTIAN THAT IS WALKING IN THE FULLNESS OF GOD HAS JESUS TO SING ABOUT WHICH IS AN INNER JOY NOT BASED ON OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES.

IN ORDER TO WALK ACCURATELY, PAUL ALSO SAYS WALK IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF WORSHIP. HE HAS ALREADY INTRODUCED WORSHIP WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT SINGING FROM THE HEART. IN A SENSE ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP, WORK AND WITNESS.

VERSES 21 - 33 PRESENT A PROFOUND NEW IDEA. EVEN THOUGH THE JEWISH PEOPLE HAD A VERY HIGH STANDARD FOR MARRIAGE COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD DIVORCE WAS STILL COMMON IN THE JEWISH CULTURE. THE LIBERAL SCHOOL HEADED BY HILLEL SAID IF A WOMAN DISPLEASED HER HUSBAND, HE COULD DIVORCE HER. IN GREEK CULTURE, WIVES WERE TO CARE FOR THE LEGITIMATE HEIRS OF THE FAMILY, BUT THEY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN MUCH ELSE. IN THIS PARTICULAR SECTION, PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND ELEVATING IT TO THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL. HE COMPARES MARRIAGE TO THE RELATIONSHIP THAT CHRIST HAS WITH HIS CHURCH. THE FIRST ASSUMPTION PAUL MAKES IS THAT THE PEOPLE ARE CHRISTIANS AND THAT CHRIST DWELLS IN THEM.

PAUL PLACES THE FAMILY UNIT IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH. IN THE LARGER FAMILY, THE CHURCH, EACH PERSON IS TO RESPECT THE OTHER PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH. HE THEN BRINGS THIS CONCEPT INTO THE SMALLER FAMILY UNIT. PAUL AFFIRMS THE UNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY. HE SAYS, "CHRISTIAN WIVES, DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO YOUR HUSBANDS." THE KING JAMES TRANSLATED IT "SUBMIT YOURSELVES." THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "SUBMIT YOURSELVES," υποτασσεσθε, IS IN A TENSE WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE IN ENGLISH. IT PUTS THE EMPHASIS UPON ONESELF. THUS, IT IS A VOLUNTARY ACTION OF GIVING OF ONESELF. THE SUBMITTING COMES FROM TWO

GREEK WORDS, ὑπο, “UNDER” AND τασσω, “TO ARRANGE OR TO PLACE.” **THUS, IT IS TO ARRANGE OR TO PLACE ONESELF UNDER ANOTHER. IT IS TO BRING ONESELF UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANOTHER. IN THIS ORIGINAL WORD, YOU CAN EVEN SEE THE PHYSICAL UNION IN THE MARRIAGE. SUBMITTING IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS TO RELY UPON, DEPEND UPON, PLACE ONE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF AND TRUST ONESELF TO. PAUL SAYS RESPECT THE HUSBAND, BECAUSE HE IS THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD. HEAD MEANS AUTHORITY. THIS SCRIPTURE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMAND. IT IS THE WOMAN WHO MUST DECIDE TO SUBMIT. WHEN THE GREEK IS PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD THIS PLACES RESPONSIBILITY ON BOTH THE MAN AND WOMAN. THE HUSBAND IS TO BE THE SPIRITUAL LEADER, PROVIDER, GUIDE, COMFORTER, AND PROTECTOR. SPIRITUALLY WEAK MEN DO NOT WANT TO ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. WEAK MEN NEGLECT SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP CAUSING WOMEN TO ASSUME MORE SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY THAN GOD EXPECTS.**

THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE. THIS PASSAGE ENCOURAGES DEVOTION, NOT DOMINATION; LOVE, NOT TYRANNY. LOVE IS DEFINED BY THE CONTEXT AS WELL AS BY THE SPECIFIC WORD THAT IS USED IN THE SCRIPTURE. HOWEVER, THE WORD THAT IS USED HERE IS THE SAME WORD THAT IS USED OF GOD’S LOVE. IT IS NOT ROMANTIC LOVE. IT IS SACRIFICIAL LOVE, αγαπη. IT IS SACRIFICIAL LOVE NOT BASED ON WHAT ONE CAN GET, BUT BASED UPON WHAT ONE CAN GIVE. THIS IS THE LOVE A MAN IS TO HAVE FOR HIS WIFE. THIS LOVE THAT A MAN HAS FOR HIS WIFE IS TO BE AS STRONG AS THE NATURAL INSTINCT OF SELF PRESERVATION, VERSES 28-29.

THE KEY VERSE FOR INTERPRETING THIS CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IS VERSE 21, "SUBMITTING YOURSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD." IN VERSE 32, THE KING JAMES SAYS "A GREAT MYSTERY." THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE DEPTH OF THE MYSTERY. THE WORD MYSTERY DOES NOT MEAN TODAY WHAT IT MEANT IN 1611, WHEN THE KING JAMES WAS TRANSLATED. MYSTERY MEANS SOMETHING THAT CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY REVELATION FROM GOD. AT THE GREAT CONFESSION, WHEN PETER SAID TO JESUS, "YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD;" JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, "FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED IT UP TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

CHRISTIANS MARRYING ONLY CHRISTIANS CAN BE DEFENDED FROM THE GREEK WORD *αγαπη*. WHEN A BELIEVER AND AN UNBELIEVER ARE UNITED IN MARRIAGE, THE BELIEVER HAS AGAPE LOVE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT; WHEREAS, THE UNBELIEVER DOES NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT; SO, HE DOES NOT HAVE THIS TYPE OF LOVE. THE UNBELIEVER HAS PHILIA LOVE, NOT AGAPE LOVE. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES ARE BASED ON AGAPE LOVE NOT ON ROMANTIC LOVE. PAUL SAID, "DO NOT BE UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER." THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IS BASED ON THE UNITY IN THE FAMILY. THE UNITY OF THE NATION IS BASED ON THE UNITY OF THE FAMILY. PAUL SAYS THE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS UNITY RESTS WITH THE MAN. WHEN MEN GIVE UP THEIR GOD GIVEN RESPONSIBILITIES MARRIAGES ARE IN TROUBLE.

EPHESIANS 6

- I. CHILDREN AND PARENTS: HONOR, NURTURE AND DISCIPLINE 6:1 - 4
- II. SERVANTS AND MASTERS BOTH SERVE GOD 6:5-9
- III. THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR 6:10- 11
- IV. THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE 6:12
- V. THE CHRISTIAN WEAPONS 6:13-20
- VI. THE FAREWELL 6:21 - 24

THE SOCIETY THAT DESTROYS THE FAMILY DESTROYS ITSELF. PAUL ASSUMES HE IS SPEAKING TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE CHURCH. HE ASSUMES THE SAME FOR THE CHILDREN, FOR THESE CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE SAYS. THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO MEAN OLDER CHILDREN, FOR THE WORD THAT IS OFTEN USED FOR INFANTS IS NOT USED HERE. THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY IS BASED ON THE TYPE OF MARRIAGE THAT HE HAS JUST DESCRIBED IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MONOGAMY, PERMANENCY, FIDELITY, LOVE AND DEVOTION. THE PASSAGE IS WRITTEN IN A TIME WHEN THE FAMILY IS IN A STATE OF COLLAPSE. PEOPLE ARE MARRIED TO BE DIVORCED AND DIVORCED TO BE MARRIED.

PAUL BEGINS WITH THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN CHILDREN. FIRST, HE SAYS THAT THESE CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY THEIR PARENTS. THE TRANSLATED WORD "OBEY," *υπακουετε*, IS A SECOND PERSON, PLURAL, PRESENT, INDICATIVE AND IMPERATIVE OF *υπακουω*, WHICH IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, *υπο*,

“UNDER,” AND ακουω, “TO HEAR.” THE WORD MEANS TO LISTEN. THE PHRASE, “IN THE LORD” MEANS TO THE GLORY OF GOD. SECOND, CHILDREN ARE TO HONOR THEIR FATHER AND THEIR MOTHER. THE WORD TRANSLATED HONOR, τιμω, MEANS VALUE AND THUS IT MEANS GIVE WEIGHT TO WHAT THEY SAY, TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY. THIS COMMAND HAS A PROMISE ATTACHED TO IT. THE PROMISE IS IF CHILDREN LEARN FROM THEIR PARENTS AND HONOR THEM THEY WILL HAVE STABILITY AND LONG LIFE. THE PROMISE COMES FROM EXODUS 12 AND DEUTERONOMY 5:16.

NEXT, PAUL INSTRUCTS THEM CONCERNING CHRISTIAN PARENTAL DUTIES. HE SAYS PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH. THE WORD TRANSLATED “PROVOKE TO WRATH,” παροργίζετε, MEANS “TO ENRAGE.” IT SEEMS TO HAVE THE IDEA OF LIFELONG ANGER AND RESENTMENT. OBVIOUSLY, CORRECTION SHOULD NOT BE CRUEL AND EXCESSIVE. CORRECTION HAS AS ITS FOUNDATION LOVE AND CARE. CORRECTION OR DISCIPLINE IS FOR THE CHILD’S BENEFIT, NOT TO VENT THE PARENT’S ANGER. PARENTAL AUTHORITY IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT PARENTS ARE SUBJECT TO GOD. THIS SENTENCE COULD BE TRANSLATED, “AND FATHERS, DO NOT ENRAGE YOUR CHILDREN, BUT PROMOTE HEALTH AND STRENGTH IN TRAINING BY ACTION AND TRAINING BY THE WORD.” “NOURISH THEM”, εκτρέφετε, IS A COMPOUND WORD, εκ, “OUT OF” AND, τρέφω, “TO THICKEN, TO NOURISH, TO CHERISH.” IT MEANS TO GIVE HEALTH AND STRENGTH. THE WORD TRANSLATED “DISCIPLINE OR TRAINING,” παιδεία, MEANS “TRAINING BY ACTION.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “ADMONITION OR TRAINING BY THE WORD,” νοουθεσία, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, νοῦς, “MIND” AND τιθημι, “TO PUT.” IT MEANS TO PUT INTO THE MIND. THIS TRAINING IS BY WORD. SO THIS PASSAGE

SAYS THAT CHRISTIAN TRAINING OF A CHILD IS TO BE BOTH BY ACTION AND BY WORD. GREEK WORDS ARE FANTASTIC. THE GREEKS MADE COMPOUND WORDS WITH SUFFIXES AND PREFIXES. THE WORDS THEMSELVES OFTEN GIVE US THE MEANING OF A PASSAGE. HERE THE NEW TESTAMENT IS VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

IN VERSES 5-9, PAUL GIVES UNIQUE INSTRUCTIONS FOR HIS TIME. THIS WAS A VERY RADICAL VIEW. IN FACT, THE ROMAN PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT A SLAVE OWNER HAD NO DUTIES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE 60 MILLION SLAVES IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THE TIME OF PAUL. AN OWNER COULD DO ANYTHING HE WANTED WITH A SLAVE. HOWEVER, IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS THERE WERE BOTH SLAVES AND FREE MEN. THIS IS SEEN IN THE LETTER WHICH PAUL WROTE TO PHILEMON IN DEFENSE OF THE RUNAWAY SLAVE, ONESIMUS. PAUL DID NOT SAY TO THE SLAVES, REVOLT. INSTEAD, HIS TEACHINGS DEALT A DEADLY BLOW TO THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY. THE GOSPEL IS A PROCLAMATION OF EMANCIPATION. PAUL SAYS THAT THE SLAVE AND THE MASTER ARE SPIRITUALLY ON EQUAL GROUND. THEY ARE BROTHERS IN CHRIST, THUS SLAVES ARE NOT ANIMATED TOOLS, AS ARISTOTLE HAD CALLED THEM: THEY ARE PERSONS FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. PAUL TALKS TO THEM ABOUT BEING RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS OF CHRIST IN THEIR PARTICULAR SITUATION. TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF THIS PARTICULAR SCRIPTURE, WE HAVE TO LOOK FOR THE "THEN," THE "FOREVER," AND THE "NOW." THE "THEN" WAS SLAVE AND MASTER. THE "NOW" IS LABOR AND CAPITAL OR THE EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP. THE "FOREVER" PRINCIPLE IS THOSE WHO ARE

UNDER OTHERS ARE TO BE FAITHFUL AND WORK AS IF THEY ARE GIVING SERVICE TO CHRIST, AND THOSE IN CHARGE ARE TO BE FAIR AND UNDERSTANDING, BECAUSE THEY HAVE A MASTER WHO IS OVER THEM.

PAUL FIRST SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO ARE UNDER OTHERS. HE SAYS, "OBEY". THE WORD TRANSLATED OBEY IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, UNDER AND TO HEAR. IT MEANS TO LISTEN CAREFULLY. SECOND, HE SAYS DO IT WITH RESPECT. THE MOTIVATION COMES FROM WITHIN. THIRD, HE SAYS DO IT SINCERELY WITH SINGLENESS OF HEART. DO NOT BE A MAN PLEASER. THE WORD SINCERITY OR SIMPLICITY MEANS SIMPLE IN CONTRAST TO DOUBLE MINDED. PAUL SAYS, "DO IT AS A STEWARD OF GOD," FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

PAUL THEN SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO ARE OVER OTHERS. THE CHRISTIAN MASTERS HAVE DUTIES. THIS WAS UNHEARD OF IN PAUL'S TIME. PAUL TELLS THE MASTERS THE SAME CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES APPLY TO THEM AS TO THEIR SERVANTS. THEY ARE TO HAVE RESPECT AND LISTEN. FURTHER, HE SAYS THEY ARE NOT TO THREATEN. THAT MEANS EXCESSIVE ABUSE WITH WORDS. THIRD, HE SAID YOU HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN. IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, GOD IS THE MASTER WHO REQUIRES RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP. JESUS' WHOLE LIFE WAS ONE OF STEWARDSHIP AND OBEDIENCE. GOD IS NOT IMPRESSED WITH OUTWARD STATUS OR OUTWARD CONDITIONS. HE IS IMPRESSED BY THE MOTIVES OF THE HEART. THE RELATIONSHIP PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE MASTERS AND THOSE WHO ARE SERVANTS WOULD SOLVE A GREAT MANY PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH AND ALSO THE WORLD IF WE WOULD

JUST FOLLOW THESE PRINCIPLES. THE PROBLEM IS, WE WANT THE UNREGENERATE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD TO DO WHAT THEY CANNOT DO. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST IN THEM. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CONVERTED, AND WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO DO AS THE SCRIPTURE COMMANDS.

IN EPHESIANS 6:10 PAUL REVEALS THE WARFARE IN WHICH THE DISCIPLE IS ENGAGED. HE PRESENTS THE WAR, THE WARRIORS, THE WILES OF THE DEVIL, THE WARDROBE OF THE BELIEVERS, THE WEAPON, THE WARFARE AND THE WINNERS.

THE STRENGTH FOR THE WAR COMES FROM THE LORD. IN VERSE 10, THE WORD TRANSLATED “STRENGTH” IN THE KING JAMES VERSION IS THE WORD ενδυναμουσθε, “BE EMPOWERED.” OUR WORD “DYNAMITE” COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE εν AS THE PREFIX GIVES IT AN ADDED DIMENSION. IT HAS THE IDEA OF PUTTING POWER INTO. THE WORD TRANSLATED “POWER,” IN VERSE 10 IS κρατει, AND MEANS “MIGHT, POWER, AND FORCE.” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IT MEANS SUPERNATURAL POWER. IT COMES FROM A ROOT “κρα” MEANING “TO PERFECT OR COMPLETE.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “MIGHT” IN VERSE 10 IS ισχυος. IT HAS THE IDEA OF HOLDING POWER. IT IS CONNECTED WITH A ROOT MEANING THE POWER TO HOLD SOMETHING.

THIS SECTION TELLS US THAT GOD PROVIDES THE POWER TO HOLD THE SPIRITUAL GROUND WHICH CHRIST HAS GAINED. PAUL SAYS THAT THE BELIEVER’S STRENGTH COMES FROM THE LORD. THE ADMONITION IS TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD, VERSE 11. THE REASON FOR PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

IS TO HAVE THE STABILITY TO STAND YOUR GROUND AND HOLD YOUR POSITION AGAINST THE POWER OF THE DEVIL. THE ARMOR OF GOD STABILIZES THE BELIEVER AND STIFLES THE DEVIL. THE ARMOR IS COMPOSED OF ALL DEFENSIVE WEAPONS EXCEPT ONE, THE SWORD.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “WILES,” μεθοδεσις, IS THE WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD METHOD. IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, “AFTER” AND “AWAY.” IT IS A WAY AFTER SOMETHING. IT COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED TO INVESTIGATE. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT SATAN DOES. HE INVESTIGATES TO DISCOVER A WEAK PLACE IN THE BELIEVER, WHERE HE CAN FIND AND DEFEAT HIM. THE WORD TRANSLATED “DEVIL,” διαβολος, IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, δια, MEANING “THROUGH” OR “OVER” AND βαλλω “TO THROW” OR “THRUST.” THUS, THE DEVIL IS ONE WHO THROWS THROUGH THE MIDDLE OR THRUSTS THROUGH. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS HE IS A MURDERER, A LIAR, JOHN 8:44; A THIEF, JOHN 10:10; A DESTROYER, JOHN 14:30; AN ACCUSER, REVELATION 12:9 - 10; A DEVOURER, I PETER 5:8; A DECEIVER AND AN ANGEL OF LIGHT, II COR. 11:13-14.

THE REASON THE BELIEVER NEEDS GOD’S ARMOR IS TO RESIST THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL. PAUL SAYS, “WE WRESTLE.” THE IDEA IS CLOSE AND FIERCE COMBAT. THIS IS NOT AGAINST BLOOD AND FLESH, MEANING SOMETHING WEAK. RATHER WE ARE UP AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES WHICH MEANS POWERFUL GOVERNMENT RULE. IT IS AGAINST THE POWERS AND RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE. THE WORD “DARKNESS” COMES FROM THE SAME ROOT WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD SCANDAL. IT IS RELATED TO A WORD

MEANING A BAITSTICK IN A TRAP WHICH DECEIVES AN ANIMAL. THE BELIEVER FACES A DECEPTIVE FOE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "TO BE ABLE" IN VERSE 13 IS δυναθητε. THE ENGLISH WORD DYNAMITE COMES FROM THIS WORD. "HAVING DONE ALL," IS A WORD MEANING TO WORK OUT A RESULT, OR TO SUBDUCE. THIS IS STANDING THE TEMPTATIONS, TRIALS, TROUBLES, DIFFICULTIES, ADVERSITIES, GRIEFS AND TOUGH THINGS THAT HARM THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORIOUS LIFE. THE TRIUMPH COMES EVEN IN TIMES OF TROUBLE. THE BASIS OF VICTORY IS THE CROSS. THE BELIEVER'S POSITION IS IN THE HEAVENLIES WITH CHRIST. BECAUSE WE ARE SEATED WITH CHRIST WE HAVE VICTORY BECAUSE HE HAS ALREADY WON THE WAR. GOD HAS PROVIDED US WITH THE PROVISIONS FOR VICTORY OVER SATAN. SATAN IS A STRONG ENEMY. THE FLESH IS WEAK, BUT THE POWER OF GOD WITHIN IS STRONGER THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD. SATAN BEGAN AS AN ANGEL OF GOD, BUT, PRIDE CAUSED HIM TO FALL. ISAIAH 14:9 IS A DESCRIPTION OF SATAN. WHEN HE FELL HE TOOK A HOST OF THE ANGELS WITH HIM. THESE BECAME THE PRINCIPALITIES AND THE POWERS. SATAN IS A DECEIVER AND A DESTROYER. REVELATION 9:11 GIVES THE FINAL EPISODE OF SATAN. THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT SPIRITUAL ENEMIES IS WITH SPIRITUAL WEAPONS; THEREFORE, THE WEAPONS ARE NECESSARY.

BEING CONSTANTLY GUARDED BY A ROMAN SOLDIER, PAUL HAD SUFFICIENT TIME TO STUDY EVERY DETAIL OF THE ARMOR. HE SAYS PUT ON THE BELT OF TRUTH. THE WIDE BELT PROTECTED THE PELVIC AREA BETWEEN THE HIP BONES AND ALSO HELD THE CLOTHES IN PLACE FOR FREE MOVEMENT. THE BELT ALSO HAD THE WEAPONS ATTACHED TO IT. THE ANALOGY IS THAT IN

LIFE TRUTH HOLDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER. PHILOSOPHERS HAVE DESCRIBED TRUTH WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY, THE COHERENCE THEORY AND THE PRAGMATIC THEORY. JESUS IS THE TRUTH THAT INCORPORATES ALL THEORIES. JESUS SAYS, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE," JOHN 14.

THE BREASTPLATE WAS WORN FROM THE NECK TO BELOW THE WAIST. IT PROTECTED THE HEART AND LUNGS. RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT USUALLY MEANS A RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD. THIS STANDING PROTECTS THE BELIEVER.

THE SOLDIER WAS ABLE TO HOLD HIS GROUND BY HIS HOBNAILED SANDALS OR BOOTS. THE BOOTS HAD CLEATS ON THE SOLES AND GAVE HIM THE ABILITY TO "STAND FIRM." THE SHOES WERE IN READINESS TO MOVE FORWARD OR HOLD GROUND.

THE ROMAN SOLDIER HAD TWO SHIELDS, A SMALL ONE ATTACHED TO HIS ARM FOR HAND TO HAND COMBAT AND A LARGE ONE WHICH HE COULD STAND BEHIND. THE SHIELD OF FAITH IN VERSE 16 REFERS TO THE LARGE SHIELD ABOUT 4 FEET BY 2 1/2 FEET. THE GREEK WORD USED HERE FIRST MEANT A STONE ROLLED OVER THE OPEN DOORWAY OF A TOMB. THEN IT CAME TO MEAN A DOOR. THE SHIELD WAS MADE OF TWO PIECES OF WOOD LAMINATED TOGETHER WITH LEATHER ON THE FRONT. THE SIDES WERE CONSTRUCTED SO THAT SHIELDS OF OTHER SOLDIERS COULD BE JOINED TOGETHER TO FORM A WALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVANCING AGAINST THE ENEMY. THE SHIELD CAUGHT THE BURNING ARROWS. THE

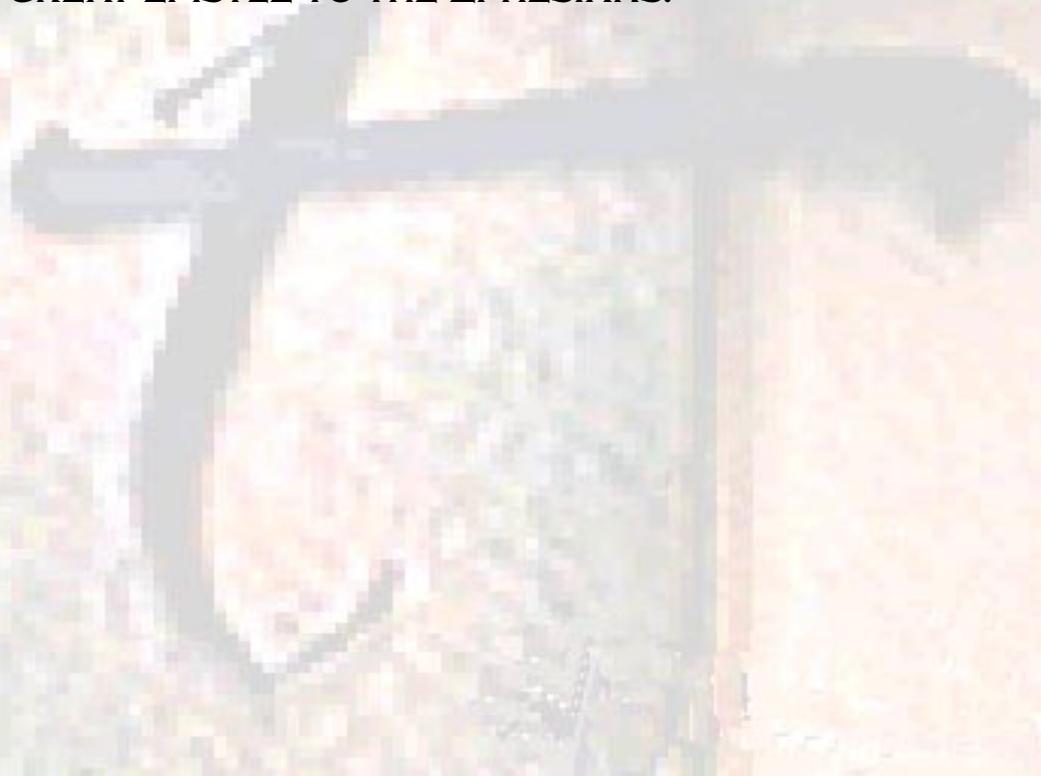
ARROWS ARE DOUBTS, IMAGINATIONS, TEMPTATIONS, AND ANYTHING THAT DISTRACTS FROM DEVOTION TO GOD. FAITH DEALS WITH THE ENEMIES FLAMING ARROWS AND MISSILES. THE WORD TRANSLATED "FAITH," IN VERSE 15, πιστεως, MEANS PRIMARILY "FIRM PERSUASION," "TO HOLD ON TO SOMETHING WITH CONFIDENCE."

THE HELMET PROTECTED MOST OF THE HEAD. SALVATION IS THE PROTECTOR THAT COMES FROM GOD. THE HEAD DIRECTS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BODY. SALVATION DIRECTS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

THE SWORD, μαχαίρα, IN VERSE 17, IS THE SHORT 18 INCH SWORD THAT WAS SHARP AS A RAZOR ON BOTH SIDES. MILITARY STRATEGISTS CONFIRM THAT ONE OF THE CHIEF FACTORS IN THE SUPERIORITY OF THE ROMAN ARMY WAS THIS SWORD. MOST OF THE FIGHTING WAS HAND TO HAND AND THIS SWORD COULD CUT TO THE BONE IN EITHER DIRECTION. THE SWORD IS THE WORD OF GOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORD" IS ρημα. "RHEMA" IS THE INDIVIDUAL SCRIPTURE WHICH THE SPIRIT BRINGS HOME TO THE HEART OF A PERSON. IT MEANS THE USE OF THE RIGHT WORD FROM THE SCRIPTURE AT THE EXACT TIME IN THE PLACE IT IS NEEDED.

PRAYER GIVES POWER TO THE BELIEVER WEARING THE ARMOR AND USING THE SWORD. THE PHRASE "PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT" DEFINES THE CHARACTER OF TRUE PRAYER. IT IS OFFERED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN FELLOWSHIP WITH AND DEPENDENCE UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PAUL COMES TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE ADDING AGAIN, "PEACE TO THE BRETHREN AND LOVE WITH FAITH FROM GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND GRACE BE WITH THEM, THROUGH THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST AND WITH A LOVE INCORRUPTIBLE." THUS, CONCLUDES HIS GREAT EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.



PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE TO HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

PAUL PENNED THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS SOMETIME BETWEEN 60 AND 63 A.D. DURING HIS FIRST IMPRISONMENT IN ROME. THIS LETTER MADE THE CITY OF PHILIPPI FAMOUS FOREVER. THIS SOUNDS STRANGE SINCE THERE WERE ONLY A FEW CHRISTIANS IN PHILIPPI TO RECEIVE THE LETTER, AND MOST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY WERE UNAWARE OF ITS EXISTENCE.

PHILIPPI HAD A GREAT HISTORY. IN ABOUT 356 B.C., PHILIP II OF MACEDON, THE FATHER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, CAPTURED THE CITY, ANNEXED IT WITH THE ADJOINING TERRITORY, INCREASED ITS POWER AND GAVE IT THE NAME PHILIPPI, MEANING PERTAINING TO PHILIP. GOLD AND SILVER SPARKLED IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR BY. HOWEVER, IN LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THEIR DISCOVERY THE EXHAUSTED MINES LAY IDLE. THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE CITY CAME FROM THE GREAT EGNATION WAY THAT CONNECTED ASIA AND EUROPE AND WENT THROUGH THE NEARBY MOUNTAIN PASS. THE TRADE

ROUTES THAT RAN THROUGH THIS PASS MADE THE CITY WEALTHY.

IN 42 B.C. NEAR THE CITY, OCTAVIUS AND MARK ANTHONY DEFEATED THE REBEL FORCES OF BRUTUS AND CASSIUS. EARLIER BRUTUS AND CASSIUS HOPING TO RESTORE THE ROMAN REPUBLIC ASSASSINATED JULIUS CAESAR. LATER, OCTAVIUS DEFEATED MARK ANTHONY, AND EVENTUALLY BECAME THE ROMAN EMPEROR AUGUSTUS. IN HONOR OF HIS VICTORY AT PHILIPPI OCTAVIUS AWARDED THE CITY ROMAN COLONY STATUS, THE "IUS ITALICUM." THIS ASSURED THE PEOPLE OF PHILIPPI ROMAN CITIZENSHIP AND A SUPERIOR POSITION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER OF ACTS PRESERVES THE RECORD OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI BY PAUL ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY.

PAUL ON THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY WENT FROM ANTIOCH IN SYRIA TO CYPRUS, THEN NORTHWARD INTO ASIA MINOR WHERE HE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES. AFTER THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM, PAUL ACCOMPANIED BY SILAS DEPARTED FROM ANTIOCH ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. FIRST HE REVISITED THE CHURCHES THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED ON HIS FIRST JOURNEY. THEN HE JOURNEYED WESTWARD. PAUL DISCERNED THAT THE LORD DID NOT WANT HIM TO GO IN THIS DIRECTION, WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM INTO THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA NOT THE PRESENT CONTINENT OF ASIA. HE THEN STARTED NORTHWARD AND AGAIN THE HOLY SPIRIT LED HIM TO CHANGE HIS PLANS. THE ROAD WOULD HAVE EVENTUALLY TAKEN HIM INTO THE CONTINENT OF ASIA, MEANING THE

GOSPEL WOULD HAVE GONE TO ASIA INSTEAD OF EUROPE. TURNING WESTWARD HE WENT TO TROAS, A SEAPORT ON THE AEGEAN SEA. DURING THE NIGHT AT TROAS, HE SAW A VISION OF A MAN OF MACEDONIA PLEADING WITH HIM, "COME OVER INTO MACEDONIA AND HELP US." PAUL, SILAS, TIMOTHY AND LUKE WHO HAD JOINED HIM SOMEWHERE IN THE VICINITY SET SAIL FROM TROAS, CROSSED THE SEA AND EVENTUALLY ARRIVED AT PHILIPPI. THERE THEY PLANTED THE FIRST CHURCH IN EUROPE.

THREE CONVERTS IN PHILIPPI WERE SELECTED BY LUKE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL. LYDIA, AN ASIAN GOD-FEARING LADY OF FINANCIAL MEANS, WAS THE FIRST CONVERT. THEY MET HER AT A PRAYER MEETING BY THE RIVER. EVIDENTLY THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH JEWS IN PHILIPPI TO HAVE A SYNAGOGUE; SO, PAUL FOUND A SMALL GROUP MEETING BY THE RIVER FOR PRAYER. LYDIA A DEALER IN PURPLE EITHER SOLD PURPLE DYES OR DEALT IN WOOLEN FABRICS THAT HAD BEEN DYED WITH PURPLE. THE SECOND CONVERT WAS A EUROPEAN SLAVE GIRL. SHE WAS A SOOTHSAYER, OR A FORTUNE TELLER WHOSE OWNERS USED HER PSYCHIC ABILITY FOR PROFIT. PAUL CAST THE EVIL SPIRIT OUT OF HER. THIS INTERRUPTED THEIR PROFIT SCHEME. SO, THEY INCITED A RIOT AGAINST PAUL RESULTING IN PAUL AND SILAS BEING ARRESTED, BEATEN AND THROWN INTO JAIL. WHILE THEY WERE IN JAIL AN EARTHQUAKE SHOOK THE JAIL AND THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER, A ROMAN, WAS CONVERTED, ACTS 16:31. THE CITY MAGISTRATES WERE FRIGHTENED WHEN THEY LEARNED THAT PAUL AND SILAS WERE ROMAN CITIZENS, BECAUSE THEY HAD BEATEN THEM. THE MAGISTRATES ENTREATED THEM TO LEAVE THE CITY.

PAUL WROTE THE EPISTLE PRIMARILY TO THANK THE PHILIPPIANS FOR A VERY GENEROUS GIFT. EVIDENTLY THEY WANTED TO SHARE IN HIS MINISTRY AND DID THIS QUITE OFTEN.

SEVERAL YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI. PAUL WAS IN ROME UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD BE THE OUTCOME OF HIS TRIAL, EXECUTION OR RELEASE. THE PHILIPPIANS HAD SENT A GENEROUS GIFT AND A MAN TO HELP HIM WHILE HE WAS AWAITING TRIAL. HE WROTE THE LETTER THANKING THEM FOR THE GIFT AND FOR SENDING THE SERVANT, EPAPHRODITUS. EPAPHRODITUS RETURNED HOME AND DELIVERED THE LETTER.

SCHOLARS DEBATE WHETHER PAUL WROTE THIS LETTER FROM PRISON AT ROME, CAESAREA, EPHESUS OR CORINTH. THE STRONGEST TESTIMONY SEEMS ROME. THE "PRAETORIAN GUARD," 1:13 AND "CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD," 4:22 IMPLY THAT IT WAS AT ROME. HIS MINISTRY WAS DOING WELL AND HE WAS JOYFUL IN EVERYTHING THAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM. HE PENS ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL PASSAGES IN ALL THE BIBLE IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11. IT IS KNOWN AS THE GREAT KENOSIS PASSAGE. THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS ADDS MUCH TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER'S JOY IN HIM IN THE MIDST OF LIFE'S UNFAVORABLE SITUATIONS.

AUTHORSHIP

NO REASONS PREVAIL TO CAST DOUBT ON PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF PHILIPPIANS. THE IRREFUTABLE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCES STAND SOLID.

DATE

PAUL PROBABLY WROTE THE LETTER AROUND 60-63 A.D. DURING HIS FIRST IMPRISONMENT IN ROME. EPAPHRODITUS DELIVERED THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PURPOSES FOR WRITING

THE CHIEF PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE EPISTLE WAS TO THANK THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFT.

EVIDENTLY NOT AS MUCH CONFLICT EXISTED IN THIS CHURCH AS IN OTHER CHURCHES. PERHAPS THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO WOMEN EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE WAS MINOR. HOWEVER, THEY REMAIN AS SYMPTOMS OF AN ALWAYS PRESENT DANGER FOR A CHURCH. ARGUMENT CAUSES DISUNITY AND DISUNITY ALLOWS THE ATTACKS OF THE SPIRITUAL ENEMY TO DEFEAT AND DESTROY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A CHURCH. PAUL WANTED TO PREVENT THIS MINOR CONFLICT FROM GROWING INTO A MAJOR PROBLEM WHICH COULD BE

FATAL TO THE CHURCH. KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IS ONE OF THE MAJOR THEMES OF THIS LETTER.

ANOTHER MAJOR THEME OF THE LETTER IS WARNING THEM AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF VICIOUS FALSE TEACHERS COMING TO DESTROY THE CHURCH WITH THEIR TEACHINGS. HE CALLED THESE FALSE TEACHERS DOGS. PAUL HAD SEEN THEM AT WORK IN OTHER CHURCHES.

ANOTHER MAJOR THEME OF THE LETTER IS THE EXPECTED RETURN OF JESUS, 1:6, 10; 2:9-11, 16; 3:20-21 AND 4:5.

PAUL BUILT PHILIPPIANS AROUND THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, AND SOME OF THE GREATEST PASSAGES IN ALL SCRIPTURE ARE IN THIS LETTER. PAUL PRESENTS JESUS AS THE DIVINE LORD, EQUAL WITH GOD. HE IS LORD OF THE PAST BECAUSE OF HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS WHICH GOD ACCEPTED AS THE SUPREME SACRIFICE. HE IS LORD OVER THE PRESENT, BECAUSE HE IS GIVER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (RIGHT STANDING BEFORE GOD) AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. HE IS ALSO LORD OVER THE FUTURE BECAUSE HE IS THE COMING ONE TO REIGN FOREVER. HE ALSO COMBATS THE NOTION THAT CHRISTIAN MATURITY IS EASY TO GAIN. THE MOOD OF THE LETTER IS JOYFUL, WARM AND PERSONAL. IT SHOWS DEEP LOVE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS CHURCH.

PHILIPPIANS 1

- I. PAUL GREETES THE CHURCH 1:1 - 2**
- II. PAUL REMEMBERS WITH HIS MIND AND HEART 1:3 - 8**
- III. PAUL PRAYS THAT THEY WILL HAVE ABOUNDING LOVE 1:9 - 11**
- IV. PAUL MAGNIFIES CHRIST 1:12 - 27**
- V. PAUL CHALLENGES THEM TO LIVE EQUAL TO THE GOSPEL 1:27 - 30**

PAUL IS VERY GRATEFUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS, AND IN VERSES 1 - 5, HE EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE TO THEM. IN VERSE 2, HE USES THE GENTILE OR WESTERN GREETING, "GRACE," COMBINED WITH THE JEWISH OR EASTERN GREETING, "PEACE." THUS HE UNITES EAST AND WEST IN CHRIST.

PAUL ADDRESSES THEM AS BEING "IN CHRIST JESUS." THIS PHRASE IS PAUL'S UNIQUE WAY OF DESCRIBING THE CONCEPT OF UNION WITH CHRIST AND ALL THE BLESSINGS THAT ACCOMPANY IT. HE USES THIS PHRASE EIGHT TIMES IN PHILIPPIANS.

IN VERSE 1, PAUL ADDRESSES THE BISHOPS AND DEACONS. IT IS THE FIRST TIME THESE OFFICES ARE MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, EXCEPT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. PAUL MAY HAVE ORGANIZED THE CHURCHES HE FOUNDED IN DIFFERENT PATTERNS ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS. THE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS, HOWEVER, SEEM TO BE VERY SIMILAR.

THE JOY AND FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST THAT FILL THE EPISTLE SHOW THAT THE EARLY CHRISTIANS FOUND THEIR REASON FOR BEING IN JESUS CHRIST. IN VERSE 3, PAUL REFERS TO HIM AS "LORD JESUS CHRIST." JESUS WAS THE PERSONAL HUMAN NAME MEANING SAVIOR. CHRIST WAS THE OFFICIAL TITLE OR THE ANOINTED ONE FROM GOD. LORD WAS THE TITLE GIVEN TO THE ROMAN EMPEROR TO DISTINGUISH HIM AS DIVINE. PAUL GIVES THE TITLE TO JESUS, BOTH FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT AND FROM THE ROMAN WORLD TO DESIGNATE HIM AS THE TRUE SOVEREIGN OF THE UNIVERSE.

PAUL'S GREAT LOVE FOR THESE PEOPLE IS EVIDENT. IN VERSE 3, WE SEE THE MEMORIES OF HIS MIND. HE SAYS HE REMEMBERS THEIR FELLOWSHIP WITH JOY AND THEN ADDS IN VERSE 6 THAT HE HAS CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WILL MATURE THEM SPIRITUALLY UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN VERSE 7, WE SEE THE TREASURES OF HIS HEART. PAUL SAYS THAT HE HAS THEM IN HIS HEART. THIS IS A CHURCH OF TRUE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY. IT HAS NO MAJOR PROBLEMS AND PAUL DOES NOT HAVE TO REMIND THEM OF HIS APOSTLESHIP AND AUTHORITY AS HE DOES MOST OF THE OTHER CHURCHES TO WHOM HIS LETTERS ARE WRITTEN.

IN VERSE 9, WE SEE THE PRAYERS OF HIS SOUL. HE PRAYS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A GROWING LOVE WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM KNOWLEDGE AND DISCERNMENT TO CHOOSE THE MOST EXCELLENT THINGS OF GOD.

VERSES 12-14 ARE SOME OF THE GREATEST VERSES IN SCRIPTURE ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD. THE PRINCIPLE IS THE POWER OF PERSECUTION CANNOT PREVENT THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD. THE RESULTS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE ARE: 1. CHRIST IS BEING PREACHED, VERSE 18, AND 2. CHRIST IS BEING MAGNIFIED, VERSE 20.

VERSE 21 GIVES PAUL'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND DEATH. HE WINS EITHER WAY. CHRIST GIVES THE VICTORY. WHAT IS THE GAIN OF HIS DEATH? IT IS TO REACH THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS SALVATION AND THE GLORIFICATION OF HIS BEING WITH CHRIST.

IN VERSE 23 THE WORD TRANSLATED "DEPART" MEANS TO LOOSE OR UNTIE. PAUL'S WONDERFUL PICTURES STRIKE THE MIND WITH SPIRITUAL TRUTH. PAUL MAY BE THINKING OF LOOSING THE PEGS OF A TENT AND MOVING ONWARD, OR OF LOOSING A SHIP FROM THE DOCK FOR A GREAT OCEAN VOYAGE.

IN VERSE 27, THE WORD "WORTHY" IS αξιως. OUR WORD "AXIS" IS RELATED TO THIS WORD. THE IDEA IS AN EQUAL SIGN WITH THE SUMS ON BOTH SIDES BEING EQUAL. HE IS SAYING LIVE EQUAL TO THE GOSPEL.

IN VERSES 27-30, PAUL HINTS THAT THERE MAY BE SOME PERSECUTION, AND THEIR BEST PREPARATION FOR IT IS TO STAND FAST IN UNITY.

PHILIPPIANS 2

- I. UNITY IN THE CHURCH COMES BY LOVE AND HUMILITY 2:1 - 4**
- II. HUMILITY COMES BY CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST AS LORD 2:5- 11**
- III. PAUL EXHORTS THEM TO LET GOD WORK IN THEM 2:12- 18**
- IV. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE EXCELLENCY OF TIMOTHY AS AN EXAMPLE 2:19-24**
- V. PAUL SENDS EPAPHRODITUS TO THEM 2:25- 30**

IN VERSES 1 - 4, PAUL SAYS HIS JOY IS COMPLETED IN THEIR UNITY. THEIR UNITY COMES THROUGH THEIR LIFE IN CHRIST. BECAUSE OF THIS THEY ARE NOT TO LET SELFISH INTERESTS RULE THEIR LIVES. THEY ARE TO HAVE UNITY IN MIND AND HEART: VERSE 2, HAVE NO FACTION OR SEEKERS OF GLORY; VERSE 3, HAVE HUMILITY; VERSE 4, HAVE GENEROSITY. HE ILLUSTRATES THIS TRUTH BY THE LIFE OF CHRIST, VERSES 5 - 11.

VERSES 5 - 11, ONE OF THE GREATEST PASSAGES IN SCRIPTURE, TEACH THAT THE MIND WHO DIRECTED CHRIST IS ALSO IN HIS PEOPLE AND DIRECTS THEM. THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMILITY TAUGHT IN THIS PASSAGE IS: "THE WAY UP IS THE WAY DOWN." JESUS TOOK SIX STEPS DOWN.

1. HE “MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION.”
2. HE “TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT.”
3. HE “WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN.”
4. HE “HUMBLED HIMSELF.”
5. HE “BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH.”
6. HE “BECAME OBEDIENT EVEN TO THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.”

GOD THEN BROUGHT HIM UP TO ULTIMATE GLORY.

1. “WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM.”
2. “GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.”
3. “THAT EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD.”

PAUL IS TEACHING THAT CHRISTIAN UNITY COMES THROUGH HUMILITY AND HAS AS ITS FOUNDATION THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST. HIS POINT IS THAT IF THEY CONFESS JESUS AS LORD THEIR LITTLE AMBITIONS WILL GIVE WAY TO UNITY. EVERYTHING IN CHRISTIANITY STANDS OR FALLS ON THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN VERSE 5, THE VERB TRANSLATED “LET MIND BE” IS φρονεισθω, A PRESENT, IMPERATIVE, ACTIVE VERB. IT IS A COMMAND MEANING STAY CONTINUOUSLY MINDING OR KEEP MINDING.

IN VERSE 11, THE VERB TRANSLATED “SHOULD CONFESS,” εξομολογησεται, IS A THIRD PERSON, SINGULAR, FIRST AORIST, SUBJUNCTIVE. THE MIDDLE TENSE VERB FROM εξομολογω,

MEANS TO AGREE, TO BIND ONE'S SELF, TO PROMISE, TO PROFESS OPENLY, TO PRAISE. (ANALYTICAL GREEK LEXICON [NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS] P. 147.) THE WORD TRANSLATED "SHOULD" IN SOME TRANSLATIONS IS MISLEADING, BECAUSE IN ENGLISH "SHOULD" IMPLIES THAT A PERSON OUGHT TO DO IT. WHEREAS, IN GREEK, THE AORIST TENSE IN THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD REFERS TO THE REALITY OF AN ACTION. THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD HERE MEANS THAT THE ACTION WILL TAKE PLACE, BUT HAS NOT TAKEN PLACE AS YET. THE MIDDLE VOICE MEANS THAT THE PERSON IS ACTING UPON HIMSELF. THIS VERSE SAYS THAT EVERYONE IN THE FUTURE IS GOING TO CONFESS JESUS CHRIST AS LORD.

VERSES 5- 11 REFER TO THE DIVINE CHRIST TAKING ON HUMAN LIKENESS. HE DID NOT CEASE TO BE DIVINE, AND HE DID BECOME HUMAN. WE CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO FATHOM THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DEPTH OF THIS TRUTH. THE EMPTYING MEANS THAT HE EMPTIED HIMSELF OF HIS DIVINE GLORY AND PRIVILEGES NOT HIS DIVINE NATURE. THIS IS THE POINT OF THIS SECTION. PRIDE WANTS GLORY. HUMILITY IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD. PAUL IN HIS FIRST PHRASE SAYS THAT CHRIST SUBSISTING IN THE FORM, μορφη, OF GOD BECAME THE FORM OF A BONDSLAVE. PAUL EMPHASIZES THE EXTREME CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO STATES. THE TERM SLAVE AND DEATH ON A CROSS GO TOGETHER BECAUSE SLAVES WERE EXECUTED BY CRUCIFIXION. FROM DEUT. 21:23, ONE WHO DIED ON A CROSS WAS CURSED OF GOD. THUS, JESUS TOOK OUR CURSE IN HIS DEATH.

IN VERSES 12 - 18, PAUL ENCOURAGES THE PHILIPPIANS

TO WORK OUT IN THEIR LIVES WHAT GOD HAS PUT IN THEM. THEY ARE TO BE LIGHTS IN THE DARK WORLD AND TO HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE.

IN VERSES 19-30, HE TELLS THEM HE WILL SEND TIMOTHY TO HELP THEM AND HE HIMSELF HOPES TO COME SHORTLY. EVIDENTLY, HE THINKS HE WILL BE RELEASED FROM PRISON. IN THESE VERSES HE ALSO PRAISES EPAPHRODITUS WHOM THEY HAD SENT TO HELP HIM.

PHILIPPIANS 3

- I. BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS WHO GLORY IN THE WORKS OF THE FLESH 3:1 - 3**
- II. ALL THINGS ARE WORTHLESS COMPARED TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST 3:4 - 11**
- III. THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IS IN CHRIST 3:12 - 16**
- IV. BEWARE OF THOSE WHOSE MINDS ARE ON EARTHLY THINGS 3:17 - 19**
- V. THE BELIEVER'S CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN 3:20 - 21**

IN CHAPTER 3, PAUL WARNS THEM ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS WHO PERVERT THE GOSPEL. HE HAS THREE PARALLELS: “SEE TO DOGS,” “SEE TO EVIL WORKERS,” AND “SEE TO THE MUTILATORS.” THE DOGS WERE THE JUDAIZERS WHO WENT TO CHURCHES AND TRIED TO PERSUADE THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS TO OBEY THE LAW OF MOSES AND BE CIRCUMCISED. THE WORD IN VERSE 2 TRANSLATED CONCISION, κατατομην, MEANS TO MUTILATE OR TO CUT OFF. CIRCUMCISION WAS A SIGN OF THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM. THE PHYSICAL SIGN DID NOT MAKE THE INWARD REALITY, DEUT. 10:16. THE OUTWARD SIGN SIGNIFIED THE EXISTENCE OF AN INWARD CONDITION. IN VERSES 2 AND 3, PAUL PLAYS ON THE WORDS, CONCISION, κατατομην AND CIRCUMCISION, περιτομη.

IN VERSES 4 - 11, PAUL DECLARES THAT EVERYTHING HE HAS TO BOAST ABOUT IN THE FLESH IS WORTHLESS COMPARED TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

THE DANGERS WHICH THE CHURCH FACED THEN AND FACES TODAY ARE FROM SEVERAL FRONTS. ONE IS LEGALISM, ANOTHER IS LICENSE, VERSES 17 - 21. THE LEGALIST BELIEVES THAT GOOD WORK EITHER SAVE OR ADD TO THE WORK OF CHRIST. THE LIBERTINE BELIEVES THAT GOD’S GRACE ALLOWS THEM TO LIVE IN SIN.

PHILIPPIANS 4

- I. THOSE IN THE CHURCH ARE TO BE OF THE SAME MIND IN THE LORD 4:1 - 3
- II. THE PEACE OF GOD WILL GUARD THOSE WHO REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS 4:4 - 9
- III. CHRIST EMPOWERS PAUL FOR CONTENTMENT AND STRENGTH 4:10 - 13
- IV. THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND A PROMISE OF GOD'S SUPPLY 4:14 - 20

VERSE 1 INDICATES THAT THERE WAS A PROBLEM BETWEEN TWO WOMEN THAT HAD THE POTENTIAL TO IGNITE DISUNITY IN THE FELLOWSHIP.

PAUL HAS WONDERFUL WORD PICTURES IN HIS LETTERS, AND IN THE FIRST VERSE HE HAS ONE IN THE WORD "CROWN." PAUL SAYS THEY ARE HIS CROWN, στεφανος. IN GREEK, THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO WORDS FOR CROWN, "DIADEMA," A CROWN OF A KING; AND "STEPHANOS," THE WORD USED HERE. THIS CROWN WAS GIVEN TO THE WINNERS OF THE GREEK GAMES. THE WORD WAS ALSO USED OF THE CROWNS THAT WERE GIVEN TO GUESTS AT JOYFUL BANQUETS. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, THE LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, AND THESSALONIANS, [PHILADELPHIA: THE WESTMINSTER PRESS,

1050] p.87.) IN THIS VERSE IT MEANS THAT THE CROWN IS A SIGN OF HIS VICTORY AND JOY.

VERSE 4-9 ARE ADMONITIONS TO THEM. "REJOICE IN THE LORD" CONVEYS THE MEANING THAT JOY COMES FROM JESUS. THE WORD TRANSLATED FORBEARANCE OR MODERATION (KJV) HAS THE IDEA OF GRACIOUSNESS OR GENTLENESS THAT COMES OUT OF GENUINE CONCERN. "THE LORD IS AT HAND" MEANS THAT CHRIST'S RETURN IS NEAR, VERSE 5. JESUS IS NOT ONLY THE SAVIOR OF THE PAST, HE IS SAVIOR OF THE FUTURE. THEREFORE, ANXIETY IS NOT TO TEAR THEM APART. THEY ARE TO PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING (VERSE 6) BECAUSE GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBLE PEACE WILL KEEP THEM STABLE.

IN VERSES 10-20, PAUL EXPRESSES HIS THANKFULNESS TO THEM FOR THEIR LOVE AND GENEROSITY TO HIM. HE ALSO TELLS THEM THAT A JOYFUL AND EFFECTIVE LIFE IS THE RESULT OF ABIDING IN CHRIST.

CONCLUSION

EACH CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS A LIFE MESSAGE. IN CHAPTER ONE IT IS: "FOR ME TO LIVE IN CHRIST." IN THE SECOND CHAPTER IT IS: "CONTINUALLY HAVE THIS MIND IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS." IN THE THIRD CHAPTER IT IS: "PRESS TOWARD THE GOALS OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS." IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER IT IS: "I AM STRONG FOR ALL THINGS IN CHRIST WHO EMPOWERS ME."

COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF COLOSSIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

COLOSSIANS WAS WRITTEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 61 - 63 A.D. DURING PAUL'S FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT.

INFLUENCED BY ITS ENVIRONMENT, THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE EXPERIENCED THE SHOCK OF HERETICAL TEACHINGS WHICH DIMINISHED THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST AND THE CHRIST FILLED LIFE. PAUL'S ANSWER TO THEIR PROBLEM PLACES COLOSSIANS FOREVER IN A PROMINENT POSITION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

AUTHORSHIP

WE ACCEPT THE APOSTLE PAUL AS THE AUTHOR OF COLOSSIANS. THERE IS NO SERIOUS REASON TO DOUBT PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE. THREE TIMES IN THE LETTER THE AUTHOR CALLS HIMSELF PAUL. THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON AND

COLOSSIANS ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED ADDING WEIGHT TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF COLOSSIANS. ALL BUT ONE OF THE PEOPLE NAMED IN COL. 4:10- 14 ARE MENTIONED IN PHILEMON 23-24.

THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP IS ALSO STRONG. NOT ONLY IS COLOSSIANS QUOTED BY MANY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS SUCH AS IRENAEUS AND CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, IT WAS ALSO LISTED IN THE MURATORIAN CANNON AND ALSO IN MARCION'S CANNON. (H.C. THIessen, INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, [WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN,] PP. 229 - 230.)

PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP DOES NOT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN QUESTIONED UNTIL MAYERHOFF AROUND 1838. LATER F. C. BAUR QUESTIONED WHETHER PAUL WAS THE AUTHOR. THE ASSAULT AGAINST PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP CAME FROM TWO FRONTS, GRAMMATICAL AND THEOLOGICAL. THE CRITICS ALLEGED THAT COLOSSIANS DID NOT USE SOME OF PAUL'S FAVORITE WORDS AND THAT COLOSSIANS CONTAINED WORDS THAT WERE NOT IN PAUL'S OTHER EPISTLES. IT IS QUITE EASY TO COMPILE A LIST OF THE CRITICS WHO DO NOT ACCEPT PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP FOR THE VARIOUS EPISTLES. WHEN THE LIST IS COMPLETE HARDLY AN EPISTLE IS LEFT. FOLLOWING THIS LINE OF THINKING WHEN ALL THE EPISTLES ARE IN QUESTION THERE WILL BE NO BASIC PAULINE VOCABULARY TO TEST WORDS AGAINST. IN GENERAL, IT IS CONCLUDED THAT THE CRITICS CANCEL OUT EACH OTHERS THEORIES.

THE THEOLOGICAL ATTACK ON COLOSSIANS BASICALLY COMES FROM THOSE WHO ASSUME THAT GNOSTICISM DID NOT ARISE UNTIL THE SECOND CENTURY. SOME CRITICS SAY THAT

SINCE COLOSSIANS WAS WRITTEN AS AN ATTACK UPON A FORM OF GNOSTIC TEACHING THE EPISTLE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN DURING PAUL'S LIFETIME. SOME CRITICS ALSO CLAIM THAT THE CHRISTOLOGY OF COLOSSIANS IS MORE ADVANCED THAN PAUL'S CHRISTOLOGY IN HIS OTHER EPISTLES. (IBID., PP. 230 - 231.) THE TRUTH IS, THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF COLOSSIANS ARE PAUL'S.

WE SHOULD NOTE THAT GNOSTICISM VARIED GREATLY IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD, DRAWING WIDELY FROM RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES AND SYNTHESIZING THEM UNDER ITS UMBRELLA. ALTHOUGH GNOSTICISM WAS NOT FULLY DEVELOPED UNTIL THE SECOND CENTURY ITS ROOTS WERE EVIDENT LONG BEFORE THIS. (DONALD GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION [DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS: INTER-VARSITY PRESS, 1976] PP. 552 - 554.)

THE FACT IS THAT SOME MODERN SCHOLARS HAVE GAINED FAME BY THEIR CLEVER ABILITY TO CREATE ALL KINDS OF IMAGINED QUESTIONS THAT HAVE NO BASIS IN REALITY.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

PAUL PROBABLY WROTE THIS EPISTLE ABOUT 61 - 63 A.D. DURING HIS FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT WHICH WAS PROBABLY BETWEEN 61 - 63 A.D. DURING THIS PERIOD HE ALSO WROTE EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS AND PHILEMON. WE, HOWEVER, DO NOT KNOW THE ORDER IN WHICH HE WROTE THESE EPISTLES.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

COLOSSIANS WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE. COLOSSAE WAS A SMALL TOWN SITUATED ABOUT 120 MILES EAST OF EPHEBUS IN THE LYCUS RIVER VALLEY. THE CITY WAS BUILT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LYCUS RIVER. TWO OTHER LARGER CITIES, LAODICEA AND HIERAPOLIS WERE LOCATED ABOUT 12 MILES WEST OF COLOSSAE. ALL THREE HAD WEALTH FROM SEVERAL SOURCES: THE TRADE ROUTES THAT PASSED THROUGH THEIR VICINITY, THE DYES WHICH THEY MADE FROM THE MINERALS, AND WOOL FROM THEIR GREAT HERDS. COLOSSAE, HOWEVER, HAD DECLINED AND WAS OVERSHADOWED BY THE OTHER CITIES. ALL THREE WERE PROBABLY DESTROYED BY AN EARTHQUAKE DURING THE REIGN OF NERO.

COLOSSAE'S CLAIM TO FAME COMES FROM PAUL'S LETTER WRITTEN TO THIS BAND OF CHRISTIANS IN THEIR CITY. EVEN THOUGH PAUL PROBABLY HAD NEVER BEEN TO COLOSSAE HE HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH THEM THROUGH EPAPHRAS WHO WAS PROBABLY THE FOUNDER OF THIS CHURCH. EVIDENTLY, PAUL HAD SENT EPAPHRAS INTO THIS AREA WITH THE GOSPEL. ACTS 19:10 SAYS, "ALL THEY WHO DWELT IN ASIA HEARD THE WORD OF THE LORD JESUS, BOTH JEWS AND GREEKS."

THE HERESY AT COLOSSAE

THE HERESY AT COLOSSAE IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CLASSIFY OR RECONSTRUCT. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE CLASSIFIED IT EXCLUSIVELY AS A FORM OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY WHILE OTHERS HAVE ASSIGNED IT COMPLETELY TO GNOSTICISM. IT SEEMS TO HAVE AN ELEMENT FROM BOTH OF THESE. THE HERESY WAS OF A SYNCRETISTIC JEWISH-GNOSTICIZING TYPE. (DONALD GUTHRIE, *OP. CIT.*, P. 549.) THIS, HOWEVER SEEMS STRANGE FOR GNOSTICISM OF THE SECOND CENTURY WAS ANTI-JEWISH, AND ORTHODOX JUDAISM SEPARATED ITSELF FROM PAGAN THOUGHT. PERHAPS THE JUDAISM OF COLOSSAE WAS OF A MORE LIBERAL TYPE AND MORE OPEN TO OTHER IDEAS. LIGHTFOOT EVEN ADVOCATED THAT THIS HERESY WAS RELATED TO THE ESSENES, A SECT OF JUDAISM WHICH DID HAVE ELEMENTS IN IT SIMILAR TO GNOSTICISM. HOWEVER, THEY ISOLATED THEMSELVES, AND WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF ESSENE INFLUENCE OUTSIDE OF PALESTINE.

NO MATTER WHAT WE CONCLUDE ABOUT THE HERESY WE CAN BE SURE THAT PAUL UNDERSTOOD IT TO BE AN ATTACK UPON CHRIST AS THE PRE-EMINENT CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY. WHEN THE HERESY IS EXAMINED WE SEE THAT IT ADVANCES:

1. RITUALISM, FOR IT PLACES SPECIAL IMPORTANCE UPON OBSERVANCES, FEAST DAYS, AND SPECIAL RITUALS.
2. ASCETICISM, FOR SUCH RULES AND REGULATIONS WERE CENTRAL TO THEIR SYSTEM.
3. MYSTICISM, FOR THIS IS IN THEIR WORSHIP OF ANGELS.

GNOSTICISM AND THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

THERE WAS A PAGAN GNOSIS EVEN BEFORE CHRIST WHICH ATTEMPTED TO REFORM THE RELIGION OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS. HOW THIS MIGHT HAVE AFFECTED THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA OF COLOSSAE WE DO NOT KNOW. WE DO KNOW THAT EARLY FORMS OF GNOSTICISM COMBINED PHILOSOPHY, VARIOUS RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND MAGIC.

GNOSTICISM HAD A FEW BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS THAT WERE COMMON TO THE VARIOUS TYPE OF GNOSIS. “COMMON TO ALL TYPE OF GNOSIS ...[WAS] THE EFFORT TO TRANSCEND RATIONAL, LOGICAL THOUGHT PROCESSES BY MEANS OF INTUITION.” (DAGOBERT D. RUNES, DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY, [AMES, IOWA: LITTLEFIELD, ADAMS & Co., 1960] P. 117.) THIS WAS CONSIDERED SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE.

PHILO JUDAEUS, 30 B.C. TO 50 A.D., WAS A FORE - RUNNER OF JEWISH GNOSTICISM. HIS FOLLOWERS MAY HAVE INFLUENCED SOME OF THE EARLY JEWISH CHRISTIANS. GNOSTICS WHO CALLED THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS, AND THEY PROBABLY SHOULD NOT BE CALLED CHRISTIAN, SUCH AS MARCION, CERINTHUS, MENANDER AND VALENTINE SAID THAT ONLY THOSE “WHO CULTIVATED THEIR SPIRITUAL POWERS WERE TRULY IMMORTAL”. THEY ALSO ACCEPTED THE PHILOSOPHY OF AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF PSYCHIC INTERMEDIARIES CALLED AEONS BETWEEN GOD AND EARTH. (IBID., P. 117.)

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT GNOSTICISM DEALS WITH WAS HOW A GOOD GOD COULD CREATE AN EVIL WORLD. THEY CONSIDERED MATTER AS EVIL. THEY ARGUED THAT IF GOD HAD CREATED THE UNIVERSE OUT OF NOTHING, THEN HE HIMSELF WAS EVIL AND COULD NOT BE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS. THEY EXPLAINED THIS BY HAVING GOD CREATE OTHER BEINGS OR SPIRITS. THESE CREATED SPIRITS IN TURN CREATE OTHER SPIRITS AND AS THIS PROCESS CONTINUES THE SPIRITS OR AEON DOWN THE LINE FROM GOD BECOME LESS GOOD. FINALLY, IN THIS PROCESS THE EARTH IS CREATED. ACCORDING TO THIS GNOSTIC THEORY GOD DID NOT CREATE THE WORLD. THERE WAS A GREAT GULF BETWEEN GOD, THE ORIGINAL CREATOR, AND THE AGENT WHO CREATED THE WORLD.

EVIDENTLY, THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE TEACHING SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND VARIOUS TYPES OF ASCETICISM, OBEYING RULES AND REGULATIONS. PAUL ANSWERS THIS GNOSTIC PHILOSOPHY WITH THE TRUTH THAT THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD IS IN JESUS CHRIST. HE ALSO ANSWERS THOSE WHO APPEAL TO TRADITION FOR REALITY BY SHOWING THE FINALITY OF THE CROSS. PAUL SIMPLY BEGINS BY LIFTING UP JESUS CHRIST AS THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD AND THE HIGHEST AND BEST MANIFESTATION OF GOD.

THE HERESY IN COLOSSI WAS VERY APPEALING. IT WAS PHILOSOPHICAL, TRADITIONAL, RITUALISTIC AND LEGALISTIC.

THIS HERESY SEEMS TO BE A COMBINATION OF A FORM OF JUDAISM AND A FORM OF A GNOSTIC MYSTERY RELIGION, MANY

OF WHICH EXISTED IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. THIS HERESY MAY HAVE BEEN APPEALING, BUT IT WAS ALSO DEADLY. THE Gnostics basically believed that the spiritual Christ descended in the man Jesus and then departed from him before he was crucified. This was necessary to the structure of their logic since they believed the body was material and evil. Their philosophical system made it impossible to accept the full incarnation, and if there is no incarnation there can be no atonement. If there is no atonement then something else has to atone for people's sins.

Also, for them the spiritual Christ did not die; the physical Jesus died. This not only did away with the full divinity of Jesus; it makes the resurrection a farce. You can easily see why this heresy was so deadly to the Christian faith. For them Jesus Christ is not the center of the faith. Similar types of philosophy have attacked the faith many times in past and present history. Jesus Christ must be supreme. Paul says he is the first born of all creation. First born means he is first in time and also first in importance.

COLOSSIANS 1

- I. PAUL GREETES THE SAINTS AT COLOSSI 1:1 - 2
- II. PAUL THANKS GOD FOR THEIR RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL 1:3
- III. PAUL PRAYS THAT THEY WILL BE FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE WALK WORTHY, BEAR FRUIT AND BE STRENGTHENED 1:9- 14
- IV. CHRIST HAS PRE - EMINENCE IN CREATION, IN THE CHURCH AND IN PAUL'S MINISTRY 1:15- 29

IN PAUL'S GREETING HE CALLS THEM SAINTS, BECAUSE THEY ARE SET APART FOR GOD'S SERVICE AND BELONG TO HIM. HE CALLS THEM BROTHERS, BECAUSE THEY BELONG TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. HE ADDS FAITHFUL PERHAPS TO FOCUS ON THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL TO CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL.

AS HE USUALLY DOES PAUL COMBINES THE GREETING OF THE WEST AND THE EAST, GRACE AND PEACE AND TURNS THE COMMON LETTER GREETING INTO A SPIRITUAL BLESSING. THE GREEK GREETING WAS *χαίρειν*, "REJOICE." PAUL USES A WORD FROM THE SAME ROOT WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING, *χαρις*, "GRACE" WHICH EMPHASIZES FAVOR TO THE UNDESERVING.

IN VERSE 7, HE SPEAKS OF EPAPHRAS WHO ORIGINALLY TOOK THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST TO THEM, AND WHO HAS BROUGHT PAUL NEWS ABOUT THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "MINISTER" IN VERSE 7 IS, *διακονος*, OUR WORD FOR DEACON OR SERVANT.

IN VERSE 9, PAUL PRAYS THAT THEY WILL HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL IN WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. THE WORD TRANSLATED "WISDOM," σοφια, IN VERSE 9 WAS USED BY THE GREEKS TO MEAN WISDOM OF ULTIMATE THINGS, CAUSES AND CONCLUSIONS. IT WAS A WORD USED OF NOBLE THINGS AND WAS CONSIDERED THE CHIEF OF ALL THE VIRTUES. THE WORD TRANSLATED "UNDERSTANDING," συνεσει, IN VERSE 9 LITERALLY MEANS A BRINGING TOGETHER. IT WAS USED BY THE GREEKS TO MEAN THE ABILITY TO BRING FACTS OF LIFE TOGETHER, TEST THEM AND REACH CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE RIGHT COURSE OF ACTION. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, MORE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, [NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS, 1958] PP. 146 - 150). THIS KNOWLEDGE WILL PRODUCE A LIFE (A WALK, περιπατησαι) THAT EQUALS THIS KNOWLEDGE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "WORTHY" IS αξιωσ, WHICH MEANS OF EQUAL VALUE. C.F.D. MOULE SAID OF PRAYER THAT IT ASKS FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF GOD'S WILL AND THEN FOR THE POWER TO DO GOD'S WILL. THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE EVIDENTLY PROMISING SECRET KNOWLEDGE TO GIVE THEM LIGHT. PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 12, WE HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S SON BY REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, VERSE 13.

IN VERSES 15-29, PAUL SETS FORTH THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST. PAUL SAYS JESUS CHRIST IS THE IMAGE, THE PORTRAIT OF GOD. THE WORD HE USES IS "εικων" FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD ICON, VERSE 15.

NEXT HE SAYS IN VERSE 16, THAT CHRIST IS THE AGENT AND THE GOAL OF CREATION. VERSE 17 SAYS CHRIST IS THE CEMENT, THE COHESIVE FORCE, THAT HOLD THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER. THIS MAKES IT A COSMOS RATHER THAN A CHAOS.

THE AFFIRMATION IN VERSE 13 THAT LOVE OPERATES IN REDEMPTION AND CREATION ESTABLISHES THE PRINCIPLE THAT LOVE UNDERLIES THE UNIVERSE.

IN VERSE 18, CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. HE IS THE FIRST BORN, “πρωτοτοκος,” MEANING THE HEAD OF A SPIRITUAL FAMILY. THIS WORD TRANSLATED “PRE-EMINENCE,” πρωτευων, MEANS HOLDING THE FIRST PLACE OR TO BE CHIEF. (ANALYTICAL GREEK LEXICON [NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS] P. 341.)

VERSE 19 MEANS ALL THE POWERS AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ARE IN CHRIST. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST IS DECLARED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, AS THE CREATOR, AND AS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

IN VERSE 20, PAUL PRESENTS THE RECONCILING WORK OF CHRIST. THE MEANS OF RECONCILIATION IS THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. THE RESULTS OF RECONCILIATION IS HOLY LIVING. THE PICTURE FOR THE COLOSSIANS WAS THE BEFORE AND THE NOW. BEFORE THEY WERE ENEMIES OF GOD BOTH IN THE THOUGHTS OF THEIR MINDS AND THE ACTIONS OF THEIR LIVES. BUT NOW THEY ARE RECONCILED TO GOD.

IN VERSE 27, “CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY” IS THE MYSTERY WHICH HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED. THE MYSTERY IS THAT CHRIST DWELLS IN AND AMONG THE BELIEVERS AS GOD DID IN THE TABERNACLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT EXCEPT IN A FAR GREATER WAY.

COLOSSIANS 2

- I. ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE ARE IN CHRIST 2:1 - 7
- II. ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD IS IN CHRIST 2:8 - 12
- III. ALL VICTORY AGAINST TRESPASSES, ORDINANCES AND POWERS ARE IN CHRIST 2:13 - 23

IN VERSE 1, THE WORD TRANSLATED CONFLICT OR STRUGGLE, “αγωνα,” IS OUR WORD AGONY. THIS DESCRIBES PAUL’S CONCERN FOR THEM.

IN VERSES 2 AND 3, PAUL SAYS THAT THEY HAVE ALL THEY NEED IN CHRIST. IN HIM IS ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THEY ARE NOT TO BE DECEIVED BY PERSUASIVE SPEECH, “πιθανολογια” OR WORDS THAT MAKES EVIL LOOK GOOD.

THE SECTION FROM VERSES 8 - 23 PRESENTS CHRIST AS ALL SUFFICIENT. WE DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE FALSE TEACHINGS WERE AT COLOSSAE, BUT WE DO KNOW FROM THIS SECTION THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO ADD TO CHRIST AND THUS WERE REDUCING HIS IMPORTANCE. THIS SECTION IS FOREVER A WARNING TO RESIST ANY TEACHING OR PHILOSOPHY WHICH DENIES CHRIST, HIS POSITION OF ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY OR ADDS TO HIM OR HIS WORK IN ANY WAY.

THE WORD SPOIL IS “συλαγωγων” AND MEANS TO LEAD AWAY A CAPTIVE INTO SLAVERY. THE EMPTY DECEIT WAS THE

SECRET KNOWLEDGE WHICH THE FALSE TEACHERS CLAIMED TO POSSESS.

VERSE 8 SPEAKS OF THE DECEIT BEING ACCORDING TO TRADITION AND THE ELEMENTS (RUDIMENTS) OF THE WORLD. TRADITION IS THE INFORMATION THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS CLAIMED HAD SECRETLY BEEN PASSED DOWN TO THEM. ELEMENTS PROBABLY REFERS TO ASTROLOGY AND THE STARS, WITH THE IDEA THAT THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE THE FATE WHICH THE SPIRITS OF THE STARS IMPOSE ON PEOPLE IS TO HAVE SECRET KNOWLEDGE WHICH CANCELS THE POWER OF THE STARS.

VERSES 11 - 13 SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THIS HERESY WAS RELATED TO JUDAISM IN SOME WAY, BECAUSE PAUL SPEAKS OF CIRCUMCISION, ALTHOUGH IT IS TRUE THAT OTHER PEOPLE PRACTICED CIRCUMCISION AS WELL AS THE JEWS. HE SAYS THEY WERE DEAD, BUT QUICKENED OR GIVEN LIFE WITH CHRIST. THE IDEA SEEMS TO BE THAT GOD RAISED THEM UP WITH CHRIST. THEN PAUL GIVES A PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENED. GOD HAS ERASED THE CHARGES THAT WERE AGAINST THEM. THE PICTURE IS THAT OF A PARCHMENT LISTING THE DEBTS OF A PERSON AND THE PERSON'S SIGNATURE ON IT. GOD THEN ERASES OR WIPES OUT THE DEBTS AND THEN NAILS THE DOCUMENT TO THE CROSS.

FURTHER, CHRIST STRIPPED THE WEAPONS FROM THE ENEMIES AND PARADED THEM. THIS IS A PICTURE OF A ROMAN GENERAL WHO BRINGS HIS CAPTIVES TO THE IMPERIAL CITY AS A SIGN OF HIS VICTORY, VERSE 15.

COLOSSIANS 3

- I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE 3:1 - 4
- II. THE OLD LIFE AND THE NEW LIFE 3:5 - 17
- III. THE HOUSEHOLD IN CHRIST 3:18 - 25

VERSE 1, "IF THEN YOU WERE RAISED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST," IS PARALLEL TO VERSE 20 OF CHAPTER 2, "IF YOU DIED WITH CHRIST." THIS REFERS TO THE CHRISTIANS' FAITH AS IT IS EXPRESSED IN BAPTISM. THE SYMBOLISM AND IDENTIFICATION OF BAPTISM IS THAT THE BELIEVER IS IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST AND IN FACT POSITIONALLY PARTICIPATES IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM IS DEATH, BURIED UNDER THE WATER, AND RESURRECTION, RAISED UP OUT OF THE WATER.

THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH PUTS THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST. PAUL SAYS, "...AND YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN HID WITH THE CHRIST IN GOD." HE USES A PLAY ON WORDS AND GIVES US A SMALL CLUE TO THE HERESY. BARCLAY SAYS THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS CALLED THEIR BOOKS OF HIDDEN WISDOM "APOKRUPHOI." THE WORD TRANSLATED "HAS BEEN HID", κεκρυπται IS RELATED TO THE WORD USED BY THESE EARLY GNOSTICS. (WILLIAM BARCLAY, THE LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS AND THESSALONIANS [PHILADELPHIA: THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, 1959] P.178.)

IN THIS CHAPTER ARE THE CONTRASTS OF THE DEEDS OF THE OLD NATURE, VERSES 5 - 9, AND THE DEEDS OF THE NEW

NATURE, VERSES 12- 16. THE LIVING OUT OF THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW NATURE ALSO PRODUCES RESULTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP IN THE HOUSEHOLD, VERSES 18- 4:1.

COLOSSIANS 4

- I. STAY IN PRAYER, WALK IN WISDOM AND SPEAK WITH GRACE 4:1 - 6**
- II. WORDS OF COMMENDATION FOR PAUL'S MEN 4:7 - 9**
- III. GREETINGS FROM PAUL AND HIS FRIENDS 4:10- 18**

PAUL AGAIN FOCUSES THEIR ATTENTION ON PRAYER. HE ASKS THEM TO PRAY THAT GOD WILL OPEN A DOOR FOR THE WORD TO BE EFFECTIVE. THEN HE TURNS TO TEACHING ABOUT HOW TO RELATE TO UNBELIEVERS SO THE GOSPEL WILL BE ADVANCED. HE CONCLUDES THIS GREAT EPISTLE WITH VARIOUS GREETINGS.

I THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF I THESSALONIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

I THESSALONIANS IS PROBABLY THE FIRST EPISTLE WRITTEN BY PAUL. SOME SCHOLARS, HOWEVER, THINK THAT HE MAY HAVE WRITTEN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS FIRST IF IT WAS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCHES OF SOUTHERN GALATIA. I THESSALONIANS WAS WRITTEN DURING PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, PROBABLY FROM CORINTH SOMEWHERE ABOUT 52 OR 53 A.D., ALTHOUGH IT COULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN 50 OR 51 A.D. THIS DATE CAN BE ARRIVED AT FROM AN INSCRIPTION AT DELPHI REFERRING TO GALLIO AS THE PROCONSUL AND CLAUDIUS IN HIS TWELFTH YEAR AS EMPEROR. IN ACTS 18 PAUL IS BROUGHT BEFORE GALLIO, THE PROCONSUL. WE KNOW FROM HISTORY THAT GALLIO SERVED A VERY SHORT TIME. PAUL WAS ABOUT 46 YEARS OF AGE, AND HAD BEEN A BELIEVER FOR ABOUT 16 YEARS. IT IS PROPHETIC IN THE SENSE THAT IT DEALS WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. IT IS PASTORAL, BECAUSE HE ENCOURAGES THEM IN PERSECUTION.

THE CITY

THE CITY OF THESSALONICA WAS BUILT IN 315 B.C. BY THE MACEDONIAN KING CASSANDRA. HE LOCATED IT EITHER CLOSE TO OR ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF THERMA AND NAMED THE NEW CITY IN HONOR OF HIS WIFE, THE DAUGHTER OF PHILIP II, KING OF MACEDONIA AND THE HALF-SISTER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

IN 168 B.C., THE ROMANS CAPTURED MACEDONIA AND DIVIDED IT IN FOUR PARTS, MAKING THESSALONICA THE CAPITAL OF ONE PART. IN 146 B.C. IT BECAME A ROMAN PROVINCE.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CITY TO CHRISTIANITY CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED, BECAUSE THE OVERLAND MILITARY HIGHWAY OR THE VIA EGNATIA RAN DOWN THE MAIN STREET OF THE CITY. THIS GREAT HIGHWAY CONNECTED ROME WITH THE EAST. BY WAY OF THIS HIGHWAY, TRADERS AND TRAVELERS CONVERGED EVERY DAY ON THIS CITY OF 200,000 PEOPLE.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA IS RECORDED IN ACTS 17. ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, PAUL HAD A VISION OF A MAN FROM MACEDONIA CALLING HIM TO COME OVER AND HELP THEM. PAUL HEADED THE CALL, CROSSED OVER INTO EUROPE AND BROUGHT CHRISTIANITY TO THE WESTERN WORLD. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ALL SCRIPTURE.

ARRIVING IN MACEDONIA, PAUL WENT TO PHILIPPI WHERE HE WAS ABLE TO WIN CONVERTS AND ESTABLISH A CHURCH. AT PHILIPPI, PAUL CAST AN EVIL SPIRIT OUT OF A SLAVE GIRL WHO WAS BEING USED AS A FORTUNE TELLER BY THE MEN WHO OWNED HER. THE EVENT DISRUPTED THEIR FINANCIAL GAIN FROM HER ACTIVITIES SO THEY ATTACKED PAUL AND BROUGHT BOTH PAUL AND SILAS BEFORE THE CITY MAGISTRATES WHO HAD THEM BEATEN AND IMPRISONED. UPON THEIR RELEASE FROM PRISON THEY WENT TO THESSALONICA.

AT THESSALONICA, PAUL WENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE ON THREE SABBATHS AND EXEGETED THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES SHOWING THEM THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH. THE RESULT WAS THE CONVERSION OF SOME JEWS, SOME GENTILE PROSELYTES AND A GREAT NUMBER OF OTHER PEOPLE MOSTLY FROM PAGANISM.

WHILE AT THESSALONICA THEY INSTRUCTED THE NEW BELIEVERS IN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH. A DISTURBANCE ERUPTED BECAUSE THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE JEALOUS OF HIS SUCCESS. PAUL AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE LODGING AT THE HOUSE OF JASON, SO THE MOB WENT TO JASON'S HOUSE. NOT FINDING THEM THERE THEY DRAGGED JASON AND SOME OF THE NEW CONVERTS BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES AND CHARGED THEM WITH PROTECTING MEN WHO ACTED CONTRARY TO CAESAR'S DECREES AND TAUGHT ALLEGIANCE TO ANOTHER KING. PAUL AND SILAS, NOT WANTING TO CAUSE MORE TROUBLE FOR THE NEW CONVERTS, LEFT AND WENT TO BEREIA, THEN INTO ATHENS.

AT ATHENS, PAUL SENT TIMOTHY BACK TO THESSALONICA TO ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH AND CHECK ON THEIR CONDITION. FROM ATHENS, PAUL WENT TO CORINTH AND MADE HIS HOME WITH PRISCILLA AND AQUILA. HE REMAINED IN CORINTH FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF.

TIMOTHY CAUGHT UP WITH PAUL AT CORINTH AND GAVE HIM THE REPORT FROM THESSALONICA.

THE THESSALONIAN CHRISTIANS HAD REMAINED STRONG IN THE FAITH EVEN THOUGH THE UNBELIEVING JEWS HAD SLANDERED PAUL WITH ACCUSATIONS THAT HE WAS A FALSE TEACHER MOTIVATED BY GREED. FURTHER, THEY HAD ENDURED PERSECUTION FROM THOSE AROUND THEM, 2:14.

TIMOTHY ALSO BROUGHT QUESTIONS WHICH THEY HAD CONCERNING THE RETURN OF CHRIST AND WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO DIED BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURN. PAUL THEN WROTE I THESSALONIANS IN RESPONSE TO THIS NEWS.

IN I THESSALONIANS, PAUL REJOICES THAT THEY STOOD FIRM IN THE FAITH, CONFRONTS THE SLANDER AGAINST HIM, ADMONISHES THEM TO LIVE MORALLY, ANSWERS THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST, ENCOURAGES THE LAZY TO WORK AND BIDS THEM GIVE RESPECT TO THEIR LEADERS.

THE FIRST LETTER IS SENT AND IN A FEW MONTHS, PAUL RECEIVES WORD THAT THINGS ARE ABOUT THE SAME EXCEPT THAT FOR SOME REASON THEIR EXPECTANCY OF THE RETURN OF CHRIST HAS INCREASED AND IS AFFECTING THEIR PRODUCTIVITY. TO CORRECT THE PROBLEMS, PAUL WROTE II THESSALONIANS.

AUTHORSHIP

MOST SCHOLARS TODAY ACCEPT THE EPISTLE OF I THESSALONIANS AS GENUINELY PAULINE. HOWEVER, PAULINE AUTHORSHIP WAS ATTACKED BY BOTH THE TUBINGEN AND DUTCH SCHOOLS. F. C. BAUR BASICALLY GAVE THREE REASONS FOR DOUBTING PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP:

- 1. SUPPOSEDLY HE SAW A DIFFERENCE IN STYLE BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND GALATIANS, ROMANS AND I AND II, CORINTHIANS,**
- 2. THERE ARE NO QUOTES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT AND**
- 3. PAUL'S MAJOR DOCTRINES ARE MISSING IN THE EPISTLE.**

THESE OBJECTIONS HAVE BEEN REFUTED TO THE SATISFACTION OF MOST SCHOLARS. (SEE DONALD GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION [DOWNERS GROVE, IL: INTER-VARSITY PRESS, 1970] P. 567, AND HERSCHEL H. HOBBS, "1 - 2 THESSALONIANS," THE BROADMAN BIBLE COMMENTARY, VOL. 11, P. 258.)

BOTH THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP ARE SECURE.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

I THESSALONIANS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO DIVISIONS. CHAPTERS ONE, TWO AND THREE DEAL WITH PERSONAL MATTERS, AND CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE DEAL WITH PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND CONDUCT. THIS IS TYPICAL OF PAUL'S WRITINGS. HE USUALLY DEALS WITH DOCTRINE FIRST, THEN DUTY. OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, HE DEALS WITH BELIEF AND THEN BEHAVIOR.

HE OPENS THE EPISTLE WITH HIS GREETING. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT PAUL INCLUDES SILVANUS AND TIMOTHY IN HIS GREETING, AND IT ALMOST SEEMS AS THOUGH THEY ARE WRITING THE LETTER WITH HIM.

HE REMINDS THEM OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL WHEN IT FIRST CAME TO THEM. HE SAYS IT CAME THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THEIR EAGERNESS TO RECEIVE THE TRUTH. THE RESULT OF THEIR SINCERITY AND RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL RESULTED IN THEM BEING EXAMPLES OF GOD'S GREAT WORK, AND THEIR REPUTATION SPREAD THROUGHOUT MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA. IT WAS REPORTED THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN WORLD THAT THEY HAD TURNED FROM IDOLS TO THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD.

IN THE SECOND CHAPTER PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST CHARGES THAT EVIDENTLY HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST HIM BY HIS ENEMIES. ONE CHARGE IS THAT HE IS NOT SINCERE. HE REMINDS THEM THAT HE HAS WITNESSED WITH BOLDNESS

AND MADE SACRIFICES TO BE ABLE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL. HE ALSO SPEAKS OF THE PURITY OF HIS LIFE AND THE AFFECTION THAT HE HAS FOR THEM.

ANOTHER CHARGE AGAINST HIM IS THAT HE HAS NOT RETURNED TO THEM. HE SAYS THAT TWICE HE HAS TRIED TO RETURN TO THEM, BUT HAS BEEN PREVENTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSTEAD HAS TO SEND TIMOTHY TO STRENGTHEN AND ENCOURAGE THEM IN THEIR FAITH. PAUL ADMONISHES THEM TO LET THEIR LOVE INCREASE AND THEIR HEARTS BE ESTABLISHED IN HOLINESS THAT THEY MAY BE READY FOR THE RETURN OF THE LORD.

IN THE SECOND DIVISION OF I THESSALONIANS, WHICH IS CHAPTERS 4 AND 5, PAUL DEALS WITH PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. THIS IS THE PRIMARY REASON FOR PAUL WRITING THIS LETTER. THE PEOPLE LIVE IN A CULTURE INFESTED WITH IMMORALITY AND IMPURITY. THUS TEMPTATION IS ALL AROUND THEM. HE ENCOURAGES THEM TO BE PURE EVEN IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

HE ALSO ENCOURAGES THEM TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, TO WORK DILIGENTLY AND TO CARE FOR THOSE OF THEIR FELLOWSHIP WHO NEED HELP.

IN THESE CHAPTERS HE ALSO DEALS WITH THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. THEY BELIEVE IT IS COMING SOON, AND SO SOME OF THEM HAVE ABANDONED THEIR VOCATIONS AND ARE LIVING ON THE GOODNESS OF THEIR BROTHERS. PAUL IS MOTIVATING AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO BE DILIGENT IN THEIR PRESENT LIFE. ALSO DURING THIS TIME

SOME OF THE NUMBER HAVE DIED AND THEY ARE WONDERING WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THEM AT THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY MAY NOT SEE THEM AGAIN. PAUL ASSURES THEM THAT THOSE WHO HAVE DIED WILL BE RESURRECTED. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT THE PEOPLE WITH FAITH IN CHRIST WHO DIE GO TO BE WITH THE LORD, AND WHEN THE LORD RETURNS HE WILL BRING THEM WITH HIM.

NOTICE CAREFULLY, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME, FROM THE CHRONOLOGICAL STANDPOINT, THAT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THIS IS ASSUMING, OF COURSE, THAT I THESSALONIANS WAS WRITTEN BEFORE ANY OTHER BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ANOTHER TRUTH HERE IS THAT THE IMMORTAL SOUL WILL BE CLOTHED WITH AN INCORRUPTIBLE BODY.

IN CHAPTER 5, PAUL ENCOURAGES THEM TO HAVE A BALANCED APPROACH TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. FOR SOME OF THEM THIS IS ALL THAT OCCUPIES THEIR MINDS. OTHERS, IT SEEMS, ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT BEING READY FOR THE LORD'S RETURN. PAUL'S WORD IS BE READY, BUT KEEP AT YOUR BUSINESS OF LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. PAUL THEN GIVES THEM SOME FINAL EXHORTATIONS AND CONCLUDES HIS EPISTLE.

II THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF II THESSALONIANS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

II THESSALONIANS WAS WRITTEN BY PAUL, PROBABLY FROM THE CITY OF CORINTH ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY IN ABOUT 52 OR 53 A.D., ALTHOUGH THE DATE COULD BE AS EARLY AS 50 OR 51 A.D. BETWEEN THE WRITINGS OF PAUL'S FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS CONFUSION INTENSIFIED ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE RETURN OF CHRIST. SOME OF THE PEOPLE GOT CAUGHT UP IN THIS CONCEPT WITHOUT KEEPING IT IN BALANCE WITH THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THEIR FAITH. THEY CEASED TO WORK AT THEIR OCCUPATIONS. PAUL TELLS THEM THAT THE SECOND COMING MIGHT NOT COME AS SOON AS THEY THINK AND THAT THEY ARE NOT TO BE DECEIVED BY RUMORS AND FALSE PROPHECIES. HE ALSO TELLS THEM SOME OF THE EVENTS THAT WILL OCCUR BEFORE THE SECOND COMING. THE "MAN OF SIN," THE "SON OF PERDITION," WILL COME BEFORE THE SECOND COMING. HE ALSO SIGNS THE LETTER WITH HIS OWN SIGNATURE SO THEY WILL KNOW HE HAS WRITTEN IT.

II THESSALONIANS WAS ACCEPTED QUICKLY IN THE EARLY CHURCH AS AUTHENTIC. IT WAS INCLUDED IN BOTH THE MURATORIAN CANON AND THE MARCION CANON. IRENAEUS CALLS THE EPISTLE BY NAME, AND SEVERAL OF THE OTHER CHURCH FATHERS SEEM TO KNOW THE EPISTLE.

IN THE FIRST CHAPTER, HE SAYS HE IS THANKFUL TO GOD FOR THEM, BECAUSE THEIR FAITH IS GROWING AND THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER IS INCREASING. HE PRAYS THAT GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED IN AND THROUGH THEM. GOD IS USING THEIR TRIALS TO STRENGTHEN AND DEVELOP THEM.

CHAPTER 2 IS RATHER DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF ITS ESCHATOLOGICAL LANGUAGE. PAUL URGES THEM NOT TO BE THROWN OFF BALANCE BY SPIRIT, WORD OR LETTER. "SPIRIT" PROBABLY MEANS SOMEONE PRESENTING A PROPHECY OR A NEW REVELATION. "WORD" PROBABLY MEANS SOMEONE CLAIMING A WORD OF KNOWLEDGE. AND "LETTER" PROBABLY MEANS A COUNTERFEIT LETTER FROM HIM OR FROM THE APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM. EVEN AT THIS EARLY DATE THEY WERE HAVING TROUBLE WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE MORE INTERESTED IN ATTENTION THAN IN THE TRUTH.

IN VERSE 3, PAUL SAYS THAT "THE APOSTASY COMES FIRST" MEANING BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURN. THE APOSTASY MUST BE AN INCREASE IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD, PROBABLY FROM BOTH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE WORD OF GOD AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT. THE APOSTASY IS FOLLOWED BY THE EMERGING OF THE "MAN OF SIN" OR "THE

SON OF PERDITION” WHO EXALTS HIMSELF ABOVE GOD. THE MAN OF SIN IS YET TO COME. JUST BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN MANY SIMILAR PEOPLE IN HISTORY DOES NOT MEAN THAT PAUL IS MAKING A GENERAL REFERENCE TO EVIL LEADERS. PAUL EXPECTS A PARTICULAR PERSON TO BE MANIFESTED BEFORE CHRIST RETURNS. IN VERSE 7, HE SAYS “THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS” IS ALREADY AT WORK, BUT IS BEING HELD BACK OR RESTRAINED UNTIL THE RESTRAINER IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WORLD. THE RESTRAINER IS UNDERSTOOD BY SCHOLARS AS THE GOVERNMENT, THE CHURCH OR THE HOLY SPIRIT. SATAN OF COURSE IS BEHIND ALL EVIL LAWLESSNESS. FINALLY THE “MAN OF SIN” WILL BE DEFEATED BY THE BREATH OF CHRIST’S MOUTH. BEFORE HIS FINAL DEFEAT, DECEPTION WILL COME UPON THOSE WHO DO EVIL UNTIL THEY CANNOT DISCERN ERROR AND EVIL. PAUL’S CHALLENGE TO THEM IS TO STAND FIRM AND HOLD ON TO THE TRUTH THEY HAVE RECEIVED.

IN CHAPTER 3, PAUL ASKS THEM TO PRAY FOR HIM AND THOSE WITH HIM. HE ASKS THEM TO PRAY THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD “MAY RUN AND MAY BE GLORIFIED.” HE USES A PICTURE OF A RUNNER IN THE GREEK GAMES. THE RUNNER RAN WITH GREAT SPEED AND WON THE RACE. HE CONCLUDES WITH A PRACTICAL COMMAND, “... WITHDRAW FROM EVERY BROTHER WALKING DISORDERLY.” REINFORCING THE IDEA HE SAYS, “BUT IF ANYONE DOES NOT OBEY OUR WORD IN THIS EPISTLE, MARK THAT PERSON AND DO NOT ASSOCIATE WITH HIM THAT HE MAY BE ASHAMED; AND ESTEEM HIM NOT AS AN ENEMY, BUT ADMONISH HIM AS A BROTHER.” THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH IS TO PROTECT THE WHOLE BODY AND TO PRESERVE THE INDIVIDUAL IF POSSIBLE.

I TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF I TIMOTHY IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

I TIMOTHY, II TIMOTHY, AND TITUS ARE CALLED THE PASTORAL EPISTLES, BECAUSE THEY WERE WRITTEN TO PASTORS RATHER THAN TO CHURCHES. I TIMOTHY AND TITUS WERE PROBABLY WRITTEN AFTER PAUL'S FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT. II TIMOTHY WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN DURING PAUL'S SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT. THIS WOULD PLACE THE WRITING OF THESE EPISTLES BETWEEN 65-68 A.D. I TIMOTHY STRESSES THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATION IN THE CHURCH. II TIMOTHY FOCUSES ON TRUE DOCTRINE, AND TITUS ON THE HONORABLE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

AUTHORSHIP

TRADITION NAMES PAUL AS THE AUTHOR OF THESE THREE EPISTLES. HOWEVER, OF ALL PAUL'S EPISTLES THESE ARE THE MOST DISPUTED CONCERNING HIS AUTHORSHIP. SOME MODERN SCHOLARS QUESTION PAULINE AUTHORSHIP AND QUITE A

NUMBER OF SCHOLARS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT PAUL DID NOT WRITE THESE LETTERS. BASICALLY THERE ARE THREE THEORIES ABOUT PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP:

- 1. PAUL WROTE THEM.**
- 2. PAUL DID NOT WRITE THEM; RATHER THEY WERE WRITTEN BY SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE KNOWN HIM, OR THEY WERE WRITTEN BY SOMEBODY WHO USED SOME OF HIS FRAGMENTS.**
- 3. THEY WERE WRITTEN BY SOMEBODY WHO USED SOME OF HIS WORDS AND TERMS.**

THE REASONS USUALLY GIVEN FOR QUESTIONING PAUL'S AUTHORSHIP DEAL WITH:

- 1. PAUL'S TRAVELS IN THESE EPISTLES DO NOT COINCIDE WITH HIS TRAVELS IN ACTS.**
- 2. THE HERESIES IN THESE EPISTLES ARE FROM THE SECOND CENTURY.**
- 3. THE EPISTLES SHOW ADVANCED CHURCH STRUCTURE WHICH DOES NOT EXIST IN THE OTHER EPISTLES. (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE, [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1965] P. 233.)**

SCHOLARS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT SOME OF THE WORDS IN THE VOCABULARY OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES DO NOT APPEAR IN THE OTHER WRITINGS OF PAUL. TODAY WE ARE USING COMPUTERS TO COMPARE WORDS IN VARIOUS DOCUMENTS. THIS HAS HELPED US IN WORD STUDIES. HOWEVER, THIS CAN

ALSO LEAD TO FALSE CONCLUSIONS WHEN NOT HANDLED WITH CARE AND COMPETENCY. EACH OF THE OTHER EPISTLES HAVE WORDS WHICH DO NOT OCCUR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. ROMANS HAS 94, 1 CORINTHIANS HAS 100, AND 2 CORINTHIANS HAS 96. MANY REASONS CAN BE GIVEN WHY THE VOCABULARY VARIES FROM EPISTLE TO EPISTLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CREATIVITY OF THE AUTHOR, THE VARIETY OF SUBJECT MATTER AND THE DICTATION OF THE LETTERS TO VARIOUS SCRIBES ALLOWING THEM TO USE WORDS FROM THEIR OWN VOCABULARIES.

THESE PASTORAL EPISTLES ALSO CONTAIN HISTORY THAT THE OTHER EPISTLES OF PAUL DO NOT CONTAIN. THEY SPEAK ABOUT VISITS TO EPHESUS, MELITUS, TROAS, AND CRETE. IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO HARMONIZE THE ACCOUNT OF PAUL'S JOURNEYS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS WITH THESE EPISTLES. OBVIOUSLY, THE PURPOSE OF LUKE IN WRITING ACTS WAS NOT TO GIVE A LIFE HISTORY OF PAUL.

THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION IN THESE EPISTLES ALSO SEEMS TO BE MORE STRUCTURED THAN IN THE EARLIER EPISTLES. NO DOUBT, GREAT CHANGES HAD OCCURRED IN THE CHURCHES. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT THERE IS TOO MUCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE FOR SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT THESE EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN AFTER PAUL'S DEATH. ALL OF THIS IS CONJECTURE! IT IS VERY LIKELY PAUL WAS RELEASED FROM THE ROMAN IMPRISONMENT DESCRIBED IN ACTS. ACTS ENDS ABRUPTLY AND DOES NOT INCLUDE THE LAST EVENTS IN PAUL'S LIFE. IF PAUL WAS RELEASED FROM THE FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT, THEN HE NO DOUBT

CONDUCTED OTHER MISSIONARY JOURNEYS. A SECOND IMPRISONMENT IS VERY LIKELY AND THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN WHEN HE WROTE I & II TIMOTHY AND TITUS. IT IS CLEAR IN PHILIPPIANS THAT PAUL EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED FROM PRISON. HOWEVER, WHEN HE WROTE II TIMOTHY HE DID NOT EXPECT TO BE RELEASED. THE FIRST CHARGES WERE SO MEAGER THAT FELIX, FESTUS AND AGRIPPA ALL THOUGHT THAT PAUL SHOULD BE RELEASED. ALSO AT THAT TIME CHRISTIANITY WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A SECT OF JUDAISM. PROBABLY NONE OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO BRING THE DEATH PENALTY. HOWEVER, BY THE SECOND IMPRISONMENT, NERO WAS POLITICALLY IN TROUBLE AND BLAMING CHRISTIAN FOR BURNING ROME. CHRISTIANS WERE ALSO HAVING DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE THEY WERE NO LONGER RECOGNIZED BY THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT AS A JEWISH SECT.

TIMOTHY IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE EPISTLES I AND II TIMOTHY. PAUL REACHED AND TRAINED TIMOTHY AS A YOUNG MAN, ACTS 14:6-7. THE NAME TIMOTHY MEANS "HONORING GOD" OR "HONORED BY GOD." TIMOTHY'S FATHER WAS A GENTILE; BUT, HIS MOTHER, EUNICE, AND GRANDMOTHER, LOIS, WERE JEWISH. TIMOTHY ACCOMPANIED PAUL ON THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. AS PAUL WRITES HIS LETTERS HE OFTEN HAS A GREETING FROM TIMOTHY, HIS CONSTANT COMPANION; HOWEVER, TIMOTHY LEFT HIM AT CERTAIN TIMES TO CHECK ON THE VARIOUS MISSIONARY CHURCHES. TIMOTHY ALSO ACCOMPANIED PAUL ON HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY. DURING THIS JOURNEY THEY SPENT MORE THAN TWO YEARS TOGETHER IN EPHEBUS. II TIMOTHY WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE PAUL'S EXECUTION. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER TIMOTHY WAS ABLE TO ARRIVE BEFORE PAUL'S WAS EXECUTION.

PAUL WAS PROBABLY RELEASED FROM THE FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT ABOUT 61 - 63 A.D., ARRESTED AGAIN IN ABOUT 65 - 66 A.D. AND MARTYRED IN 67 - 68 A.D. CHRISTIANITY WAS GROWING VERY RAPIDLY DURING THIS PERIOD. BOTH OF THESE LETTERS WERE SENT TO EPHESUS WHERE PAUL HAD LEFT TIMOTHY TO GUIDE THE CHURCH. ALTHOUGH THESE ARE NOT EXTENSIVE MANUALS THEY DO DEAL WITH THE PASTOR, HIS OFFICE, QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES. THE KEY VERSE FOR I TIMOTHY IS 3:15; WHICH READS LITERALLY, "BUT IF I SHOULD DELAY, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW IT IS PROPER IN THE HOUSE OF GOD TO CONDUCT ONESELF, WHICH IS THE CHURCH (ASSEMBLY) OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND BASE OF THE TRUTH." TIMOTHY HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE MINISTRY AT EPHESUS AND TITUS WITH THE CHURCH AT CRETE. PAUL IS WRITING TO THEM ABOUT CHARACTER, BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR.

I TIMOTHY 1

I. PAUL'S GREETING 1:1 - 2

II. PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY TO GUARD SOUND DOCTRINE 1:3 - 11

III. PAUL'S PRAISE TO GOD FOR SAVING AND CALLING HIM INTO HIS SERVICE 1:12 - 17

IV. PAUL'S CHARGES TO TIMOTHY TO HOLD TO THE FAITH 1:18 - 20

PAUL FOLLOWS THE STANDARD FORM FOR A LETTER. HE STATES WHO THE LETTER IS FROM AND TO WHOM IT IS WRITTEN.

IN THE GREETING, VERSE 1, PAUL STATES HIS CALLING AND COMMISSION. THE WORD APOSTLE MEANS "ONE WHO HAS BEEN SENT TO REPRESENT ANOTHER." THE WORD "COMMAND" *επιταγήν* HAS THE IDEA OF A KING COMMISSIONING A PERSON FOR A TASK.

PAUL INSTRUCTS TIMOTHY FIRST IN SOUND DOCTRINE. IN VERSES 3 - 7, PAUL URGES TIMOTHY TO STAY IN EPHESUS AND PROTECT SOUND DOCTRINE. THE WORD "URGE," *παρακαλεσα*, IS A VERY STRONG WORD, ALMOST LIKE A COMMAND. THE FALSE TEACHINGS WHICH INVADED THE CHURCH ARE MOST LIKELY JUDAISTIC IN NATURE SINCE PAUL REFERS TO THE LAW IN VERSES 8 - 11. HOWEVER, PROBABLY PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE GREEKS LOVED DEBATING THEORIES AND QUESTIONS.

GOOD CHURCH ADMINISTRATION IS NECESSARY TO STAND AGAINST FALSE TEACHING. PAUL SAYS GOD'S ADMINISTRATION OR DESIGN IS FAITH THAT HAS AS ITS BASIS AGAPE-LOVE. THIS LOVE COMES FROM:

- 1. A PURE HEART, MEANING NO DECEITFULNESS IN THE INNER MOST BEING OF A PERSON**
- 2. A GOOD CONSCIENCE, MEANING FREEDOM FROM GUILT BECAUSE OF FORGIVENESS AND RIGHT CONDUCT**
- 3. A SINCERE FAITH, MEANING NO PLAY ACTING, THE REAL THING, NO COVER UP.**

IN VERSES 8 - 11, PAUL PRESENTS BASICALLY THE SAME CONCEPT ABOUT THE LAW THAT HE DOES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. THE LAW REVEALS SIN FOR WHAT IT IS, DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD.

IN VERSES 12 - 17, PAUL GIVES AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PICTURE OF HIS LIFE BEFORE GOD SAVED HIM AND CALLED HIM. IN VERSE 15, PAUL GIVES THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY. THE WORD TRANSLATED "MIGHT SHOW FORTH" OR "DISPLAY" ενδειξῆται MEANS TO GIVE CLEAR EVIDENCE OR PROOF.

NEXT, PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY TO HOLD TO THE FAITH, TO FIGHT THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND NOT FORSAKE CONSCIENCE.

VERSE 20 IS A FORMULA OF EXCOMMUNICATION FROM THE SYNAGOGUE. IT IS ALSO APPLICABLE TO THE CHURCH. THE IDEA IS THAT THE PERSON TEACHING FALSE DOCTRINE IS NO LONGER UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I TIMOTHY 2

- I. PRAY FOR ALL BECAUSE CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN 2:1 - 7
- II. IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, MEN ARE TO PRAY IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER 2:8
- III. WOMEN ARE TO BE MODEST AND SENSIBLE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP 2:9 - 15

PAUL PUTS GREAT STRESS UPON CONDUCT AND ORDER IN PUBLIC WORSHIP. PAUL URGES PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE ESPECIALLY FOR POLITICAL LEADERS, VERSE 1 - 7. HE SAYS THAT GOD DESIRES ALL PEOPLE TO BE SAVED AND COME TO THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST, VERSE 4. A SIMILAR CONCEPT APPEARS IN OTHER PLACES IN PAUL'S EPISTLES. THE IDEA IS THAT CHRIST GAVE HIS LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE. THE MEDIATION OF THE NEW COVENANT WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE RANSOM PRICE PAID FOR THE BELIEVER'S RELEASE FROM SIN.

IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, MEN ARE TO PRAY WITH INTEGRITY AND HANDS SET APART FOR GOD'S SERVICE. THE UNITY OF THE BROTHERS SUPPORT THE PRAYERS. THE PHRASE "LIFTING HOLY HANDS," REFERS TO THE COMMON STANCE OF PRAYER. THE CATACOMB OF ROME WHERE THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WORSHIPPED HAVE DRAWINGS OF CHRISTIANS STANDING, EYES TOWARD HEAVEN AND HANDS EXTENDED WITH PALMS TURNED UP AS IF TO RECEIVE GOD'S BLESSINGS.

VERSES 9- 12 REFLECT THE HISTORICAL PROBLEMS THAT WERE IN THE CHURCH. IN THE SYNAGOGUE, JEWISH WOMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK OR PRAY ALOUD; WHEREAS, CHRISTIANITY HAD ALLOWED WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE. IN FACT, AT PHILIPPI, THE CHURCH AT FIRST WAS PROBABLY COMPOSED MOSTLY OF WOMEN. WOMEN PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. PAUL IS URGING WOMEN TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES ACCORDING TO THE ACCEPTED PATTERNS OF MODESTY, MODERATION AND SENSIBLE BEHAVIOR OF THEIR TIME. PAUL IS APPEALING FOR WISDOM, GOOD DEEDS AND TELLING THEM NOT TO COPY THE STYLE OF PAGAN WOMEN. THESE PRINCIPLES WILL STAND FOREVER.

VERSE 15 PRESENTS SOME DIFFICULTY. IT SEEMS TO BE A SIMPLE STATEMENT ABOUT THE NORMAL ROLE OF WOMEN AND MOTHERS AND THEIR NEED TO CONTINUE IN πιστει (FAITH), αγαπη (LOVE), αγιασμο (SANCTIFICATION) AND σωφροσυνης (DISCRETENESS).

I TIMOTHY 3

- I. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN OVERSEER IN THE CHURCH 3:1-7
- II. QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON 3:8-13
- III. REASONS FOR WRITING 3:14-16

PAUL NEXT INSTRUCTS TIMOTHY IN CHURCH ORGANIZATION. ONE OF THE STRONG ARGUMENTS FOR AN EARLY DATE FOR I TIMOTHY IS THAT PAUL MENTIONS ONLY TWO OFFICES IN THE CHURCH AND NO STRUCTURE ABOVE THAT. PAUL FOCUSES ON QUALIFICATION FOR THESE OFFICES.

THE OVERSEER'S OR BISHOP'S QUALIFICATIONS BEGIN WITH A GOOD REPUTATION. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE PROBABLY MEANS HE HAS ONLY ONE WIFE, AND HE IS FAITHFUL TO HER (MONOGAMOUS.) POLYGAMY AND UNFAITHFULNESS WAS A COMMON PRACTICE IN THE FIRST CENTURY WORLD. THE OVERSEER OR THE BISHOP MUST BE HONORABLE AND HAVE SELF-DISCIPLINE. SOBER MEANS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS. DISCREET MEANS SENSIBLE. ORDERLY, DECOROUS OR DIGNIFIED MEANS HE HAS HIMSELF WELL IN HAND WITH SELF-DISCIPLINE. HOSPITABLE MEANS SHARING AND COURTEOUS ESPECIALLY TO TRAVELERS SINCE THERE WERE FEW PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO STAY AS THEY TRAVELED. APT TO TEACH REFERS TO THE GIFT AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. OTHER REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE; NOT GIVEN TO WINE, NOT VIOLENT, NOT GREEDY, (THE WORD TRANSLATED GREEDY IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS, "DISGRACE" AND "GAIN.")

IT MEANS HE IS NOT TO GAIN DISGRACEFULLY OR BE ENGAGED IN A BUSINESS THAT IS DISGRACEFUL,) GENTLE, NOT CONTENTIOUS, NOT LOVING MONEY, DIRECTING WELL HIS OWN HOUSE, HAVING HIS CHILDREN RESPECTING HIS AUTHORITY, NOT A NOVICE, LEST HIS PRIDE CAUSE HIM TO BE A CRIMINAL OF THE DEVIL IS ALMOST THE LITERAL READING. THE WORK TRANSLATED "CONDEMNATION" IS κριμα, FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD CRIME AND CRIMINAL, AND TO HAVE A GOOD TESTIMONY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

VERSES 8- 13 LIST THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A DEACON:

A GOOD TESTIMONY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, SERIOUS, NOT DOUBLE WORDED, TRUTHFUL, TEMPERATE, NOT GREEDY, NOT A DILUTED CONSCIENCE, TESTED, UNIMPEACHABLE, HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE, CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL, AND BOLDNESS IN FAITH.

THE REASON PAUL GIVES FOR WRITING TO TIMOTHY IS TO INSTRUCT HIM ON HOW A PERSON SHOULD CONDUCT HIMSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. REFERENCES TO THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD ARE IN BOTH LISTS FOR THE OVERSEER AND THE DEACON. THIS SEEMS TO IMPLY THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH AS THE FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH AND IS GLORIFIED IN THE HYMN RECORDED IN VERSE 16.

I TIMOTHY 4

I. WARNING AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE 4:1 - 7

**II. CONTINUE IN TRUE DOCTRINE AND LIVE GODLY
4:8 - 16**

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS, PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY AND PRESENTS THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERS. THE REASON NOW BECOMES OBVIOUS. THEY MUST RESIST FALSE TEACHINGS AND HOLD FAST TO THE TRUTH.

IN THIS CHAPTER, THE HERESY IS STATED MORE CLEARLY. SOME MODERN SCHOLARS THINK THAT THE TEACHINGS OF THE ESSENES MAY HAVE MADE ITS WAY TO EPHESUS AND MAY HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR CAUSE OF THE HERESY. HOWEVER, ESSENE TEACHING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CONFINED TO PALESTINE. IT IS VERY DOUBTFUL IF THE ESSENE TEACHINGS HAD ANY IMPACT ON EPHESUS. THERE WERE PROBABLY MANY FORMS OF PERVERTED JUDAISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND EPHESUS WAS PROBABLY AFFECTED BY ONE OF THESE FORMS.

PAUL SAYS THE SPIRIT HAS PROPHESED THAT SOME WILL DEPART FROM THE FAITH BY GIVING HEED TO DECEIVING SPIRITS AND TEACHINGS OF DEMONS. THE WORD "DEPART" $\sigma\eta\sigma\omicron\nu\nu\alpha\iota$ MEANS "TO STAND OFF FROM." THERE IS A DEFINITE ARTICLE BEFORE THE WORD "FAITH" SO IT MEANS THE BODY OF DOCTRINE WHICH CHRISTIANS BELIEVE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "DECEIVING"

IN VERSE 4 IS *πλανοις*, AND MEANS “TO WANDER.” IT MEANS TO STRAY FROM THE TRUTH. OUR WORD PLANET COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS FILLED WITH WARNING ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS WHO DECEIVE AND PERVERT THE FAITH.

THE TWO HERESIES PAUL FOCUSES ON ARE FORBIDDING TO MARRY AND FORBIDDING EATING OF MEATS. SOME PEOPLE HAVE ACCUSED PAUL OF OPPOSING MARRIAGE. THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT HE CONSIDERED FORBIDDING MARRIAGE AS DEMONIC.

PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY TO HOLD FAST TO TRUE DOCTRINES AND TO PRESENT THEM TO THE CHURCH. THE WORD IN VERSE 6 TRANSLATED “MINISTER” IS THE SAME WORD THAT IS USED IN 3:8 FOR DEACON. PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY TO BE A GODLY MAN. HE USES THE PICTURES OF AN ATHLETE TRAINING FOR THE GREAT GREEK AND ROMAN GAMES. THE GREEK AND ROMAN WORLD AT THIS TIME ALMOST WORSHIPPED THE BODY. THE CARVED STATUES THAT HAVE BEEN PRESERVED SHOW GREAT MUSCLES AND DETAILED PARTS OF THE BODY. EVERY TOWN HAD ITS GYMNASIUM WHERE YOUNG MEN WENT TO EXERCISE AND TRAIN. USING THIS PICTURE, PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY THAT PHYSICAL EXERCISE IS PROFITABLE, BUT EXERCISE IN GODLINESS IS FAR MORE PROFITABLE.

TIMOTHY IS YOUNG, BUT HE IS NO YOUNGSTER. THE WORD TRANSLATED “YOUTH,” *νεοτητος* MEANS ONE WHO IS OF MILITARY AGE, UNDER 40 YEARS OF AGE.

HERESY IS TRYING TO INVAD E THE TRUTH OF EPHESUS. PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY TO CONTINUE THE CORRECT INSTRUCTION WHICH HE HAS BEEN GIVING. THAT IS ALWAYS A GOOD WAY TO COMBAT

HERESY. PAUL PRESENTS TWO WAYS FOR TIMOTHY TO COMBAT HERESY: 1. BY GODLY LIVING; 2. BY TEACHING THE TRUTH WITH AUTHORITY.

TIMOTHY IS TO BE A “PATTERN,” τυπος, OR AN EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER AND REPUTATION. IN VERSE 12, THE WORD CONDUCT AND LOVE MAY REFER TO HIS PUBLIC LIFE, WHEREAS FAITH AND PURITY REFER TO HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

PAUL REMINDS HIM OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY IN WORSHIP. HE IS TO “GIVE HEED TO READING, TO EXHORTATION, TO TEACHING.” THE FIRST IS PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURE, THE SECOND IS PREACHING, AND THE THIRD IS TEACHING.

I TIMOTHY 5

- I. CONDUCT TOWARD YOUNGER AND OLDER PEOPLE 5:1-2**
- II. CONDUCT OF WIDOWS 5:3-16**
- III. ELDERS AND DISCIPLINE 5:17-25**

PAUL INSTRUCTS TIMOTHY THAT HIS CONDUCT TOWARD THE PEOPLE IS TO BE HONORABLE, VERSES 1-2.

WIDOWS WERE A MAJOR CONCERN IN THE EARLY CHURCH. THEIR CARE REQUIRED A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND FINANCES. PAUL GIVES SOME GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING THIS FINANCIAL AID. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, THE PLIGHT OF A WIDOW WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT ACQUIRE JOBS AND AID WAS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT.

I TIMOTHY 6

- I. CONDUCT OF SERVANTS 6:1 - 2**
- II. MOTIVES OF FALSE TEACHERS 6:3 - 10**
- III. MOTIVES OF THE MAN OF GOD 6:11 - 16**
- IV. CONDUCT OF THE RICH 6:17 - 19**
- V. FINAL CHALLENGE 6:20 - 21**

IN THIS CHAPTER PAUL DEALS FIRST WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE SOCIAL ORDER THAT TIMOTHY IS TO TEACH. HE IS TO APPLY THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SOCIAL ORDER. GOD IS TO BE HONORED AND CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS TO BE ESTEEMED IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS.

NEXT PAUL RETURNS TO HIS CHIEF EMPHASIS ON GUARDING SOUND DOCTRINE AND LIVING A HOLY LIFE IN MOTIVE AND DEED.

II TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF II TIMOTHY IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

II TIMOTHY WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN FROM ROME IN ABOUT 68 A.D. DURING WHAT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED BY MOST SCHOLARS TO BE PAUL'S SECOND IMPRISONMENT. IN 64 A.D. THE CITY OF ROME BURNED, AND SOME BELIEVE THAT NERO SET FIRE TO THE CITY IN ORDER TO BUILD A NEW CITY. WHATEVER THE CAUSE THE BLAME WAS PLACED UPON THE CHRISTIANS. THE RESULT WAS THAT MANY CHRISTIANS WERE PUT TO DEATH IN HORRIBLE WAYS.

PAUL MET TIMOTHY ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. EVIDENTLY, HE BEGAN TO TRAVEL WITH PAUL AND ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY. THEY SPENT MORE THAN TWO YEARS IN EPHEBUS. DURING THIS TIME, PAUL SENT TIMOTHY TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. TIMOTHY JOINED PAUL AGAIN AND WAS WITH PAUL WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED IN JERUSALEM. TIMOTHY WAS ALSO IN ROME WITH PAUL DURING THE FIRST IMPRISONMENT. AFTER PAUL'S RELEASE FROM THE FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT, TIMOTHY AND PAUL TRAVELED

TOGETHER STRENGTHENING AND ESTABLISHING CHURCHES. DURING THIS TIME, PAUL LEFT TIMOTHY IN EPHESUS TO WORK WITH THE CHURCH. WHILE TIMOTHY WAS THERE PAUL WROTE HIM THE LETTER I TIMOTHY. LATER, HE WROTE II TIMOTHY TO HIM. IT APPEARS THAT BY THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY PAUL WAS IN PRISON AGAIN AND DID NOT EXPECT TO BE RELEASED; RATHER HE EXPECTED TO BE EXECUTED. IN THE LETTER HE ASKS TIMOTHY TO COME TO HELP HIM. TIMOTHY MAY HAVE BEEN IN EPHESUS, BUT THAT IS QUESTIONABLE BECAUSE IN 4:12 HE SAYS HE HAS SENT TYCHICUS TO EPHESUS.

DURING THE FIRST IMPRISONMENT PAUL WAS FREE TO LIVE IN HIS OWN RENTED HOUSE. NOW HE IS EVIDENTLY IN A DUNGEON. LUKE IS THE ONLY PERSON WITH HIM.

II TIMOTHY IS PAUL'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT. PAUL'S PURPOSES IN WRITING II TIMOTHY ARE:

- 1. TO EXPRESS HIS LOVE AND CONCERN FOR TIMOTHY,**
- 2. TO ENCOURAGE TIMOTHY TO CARRY ON THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL AS PAUL'S SUCCESSOR,**
- 3. TO CHARGE HIM TO BE TRUE TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL, AND**
- 4. TO URGE HIM TO COME TO PAUL'S SIDE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

II TIMOTHY 1

PAUL'S GREETING HAS AN OFFICIAL RING TO IT AS WELL AS A WARMTH OF TENDERNESS TO TIMOTHY, HIS EVER FAITHFUL FOLLOWER AND FRIEND. THEY ARE BOUND BY A SPIRITUAL BOND GREATER THAN ANY PHYSICAL FRIENDSHIP. HIS PHRASE "BY THE WILL OF GOD," PROBABLY REFERS TO HIS HIGH VOLTAGE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. PAUL IS FACING DEATH, BUT HE SEES THE PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT IS IN CHRIST, VERSE 1.

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING IN VERSES 3-5 DIFFERS FROM THE OTHER EPISTLES BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SITUATION AND PERSPECTIVE FROM WHICH HE IS WRITING THIS EPISTLE. PAUL IDENTIFIES HIS FAITH WITH THE FAITH OF HIS FOREFATHERS. CHRISTIANITY FOR PAUL IS ESSENTIALLY THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HOPES WITH THE FURTHER REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH. TIMOTHY'S SINCERE FAITH ALSO HAS ITS ROOTS IN HIS MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER. PAUL'S GREAT LOVE FOR TIMOTHY BURSTS FORTH IN VERSES 3 AND 4.

IN VERSE 6, PAUL TELLS TIMOTHY "TO KINDLE UP," αναζωπυρειν, WITH THE ANALOGY OF STIRRING UP THE FIRE OF THE GIFT GOD GAVE HIM. HE LISTS THREE THINGS THAT TIMOTHY NEEDS WHICH GOD SUPPLIES: POWER, LOVE, AND WISE DISCRETION OR "SELF-CONTROL," σωφρονισμου. THIS WORD HAS IN IT THE IDEA OF A WISE UNDERSTANDING AND CHOOSING THE BEST IN LIFE AND THUS MASTERING ONESELF. THIS MEANS, AS

PAUL SAYS IN VERSES 8 AND 9, THAT HE IS NOT ASHAMED OF JESUS' MANNER OF LIFE AND DEATH AND WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION IF NECESSARY FOR THIS TESTIMONY.

IN VERSES 11 AND 12, PAUL SAYS HE WAS APPOINTED A "HERALD," κηρυσξ, AND APOSTLE AND TEACHER OF NATIONS, AND BECAUSE OF THIS HE HAS SUFFERED GREATLY. THEN THE GREAT PHRASE LITERALLY TRANSLATED FROM GREEK IS, "FOR I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, AND AM PERSUADED THAT ABLE HE IS THE DEPOSIT COMMITTED OF ME TO KEEP FROM THAT THE DAY." THE WORD TRANSLATED "I KNOW" IS AN ANCIENT WORD AND ONE OF THE STRONGEST WORDS FOR TO KNOW. IT MEANS TO PERCEIVE BENEATH THE SURFACE OF SOMETHING OR TO KNOW SOMETHING AT ITS CENTER OF HEART, ITS ESSENTIAL NATURE. THE WORD "BELIEVED" IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE. IN GREEK, THIS TENSE HAS TO DO WITH ACTION THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST, BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ACTION CONTINUE TO THE PRESENT TIME. THE WORD TRANSLATED, "I AM PERSUADED," IS A WORD IMPLYING PERMANENCY OR FIRMLY SECURE. IT IS ALSO IN THE PERFECT TENSE, IMPLYING CONSEQUENCES RESISTING FROM PAST ACTIONS. THE WORD TRANSLATED "TO KEEP" IS A WORD WHICH MEANS "TO MAKE A DEPOSIT." IT SEEMS TO HAVE A DOUBLE MEANING. IT CAN MEAN THAT CHRIST IS ABLE TO KEEP SECURE WHAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO HIM OR THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP SECURE WHAT CHRIST HAS ENTRUSTED TO PAUL. THIS MAY REFER EITHER TO PAUL'S FAITH IN GOD OR TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

IN VERSE 14, PAUL PROBABLY MAKES REFERENCE TO HIS STATE AS A PRISONER BEING GUARDED BY A SOLDIER, AND HE

SAYS TO TIMOTHY, “GUARD THE DEPOSIT,” THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH IS IN US.

II TIMOTHY 2

IN VERSE 2, THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF PAUL’S WORDS ARE “AND THE THINGS WHICH YOU DID HEAR OF ME WITH, δια (WITH THE ATTESTATION OF OR BEFORE) MANY WITNESSES, THESE COMMIT TO FAITHFUL MEN SUCH AS COMPETENT SHALL BE ALSO OTHER TO TEACH.”

IN VERSES 3 - 6, PAUL PAINTS PICTURES OF A SOLDIER, AN ATHLETE AND A FARMER. THE POINT HE IS MAKING IS THE TOTAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE PERSON IN HIS TASK.

IN VERSE 14, HE WARNS AGAINST ARGUING ABOUT EMPTY WORDS AND PHILOSOPHIES. THEY ARE ALSO TO HANDLE THE WORD CORRECTLY, VERSE 15, “STRAIGHTLY CUTTING,” ορθοτομουντα.

IN VERSES 20-26, PAUL WARNS TIMOTHY TO AVOID THINGS THAT DEFILE AND DIVIDE A PERSON FROM THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

II TIMOTHY 3

IN THIS CHAPTER, PAUL IS PROPHETIC AS HE GIVES AN EXPLANATION OF THE FUTURE. HE LISTS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TIME AND THE FALSE TEACHERS.

THE EVIL CHARACTERISTICS THAT PAUL DESCRIBES ARE ABOUT MANKIND IN GENERAL. VERSES 2-7 ARE DEVASTATING. SOME PEOPLE TODAY THINK THAT CHRISTIANITY IS DISAPPEARING AND PEOPLE ARE BECOMING GODLESS. GODLESSNESS DOES NOT MEAN WITHOUT RELIGION. IN FACT, PAUL SAYS IN THE END TIMES THERE WILL BE MUCH RELIGION, BUT IT WILL HAVE DEPARTED FROM GODLINESS. IT WILL HAVE NO LIFE CHANGING POWER.

HE TALKS ABOUT WOMEN WHO WILL BE EASY GAME FOR FALSE TEACHERS. THIS IS PROBABLY HAPPENING THEN. GNOSTICISM IS IN ITS EARLY FORMS. IT TAUGHT THAT THE BODY WAS EVIL; THIS TEACHING EITHER TOOK THE DIRECTION OF ASCETICISM OR LICENSE. LICENSE ADVOCATED THAT THE PERSON COULD LIVE A VILE AND LICENTIOUS LIFE DOING ANYTHING THE PERSON DESIRED. THE FALSE TEACHERS WHO TAUGHT THIS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF WOMEN BY TELLING THEM THAT THE BODY WAS EVIL AND THE SPIRIT WAS GOOD. PAUL REFERS TO THE TWO EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS JANNES AND JAMBRES OF EXODUS, CHAPTER 7, WHO TROUBLED MOSES AND AARON. PAUL USES THEM AS AN EXAMPLE OF SATAN'S WORK. SATAN IN THIS LONG LIST IS BOTH SLAYER AND DECEIVER. HE DECEIVES AND BRINGS FALSE RELIGION. HE ACCUSES GOD'S PEOPLE AND ATTACKS THE CHURCH AND THE WORD OF GOD.

II TIMOTHY 4

THESE ARE THE LAST WORDS WE HAVE FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL. SHORTLY AFTER THIS HE WAS PROBABLY MARTYRED. THE GREEK WORD WITNESS OR TESTIMONY IS μαρτυρια, OUR ENGLISH WORD MARTYR COMES FROM THIS WORD. SO, PAUL BECOMES THE ULTIMATE WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST, GIVING HIS OWN LIFE.

IN THIS FOURTH CHAPTER, HE GIVES HIS FINAL CHARGE TO TIMOTHY. PAUL'S MESSAGE TO TIMOTHY IS FOLLOW CHRIST IN LIFE, FOLLOW CHRIST IN DEATH, AND FOLLOW CHRIST IN VICTORY.

IN VERSE 5, PAUL CONSIDERS THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH, AND HE EXHORTS TIMOTHY TO DO FOUR THINGS. FIRST, WATCH, BE ON GUARD, BE IN A SOBER MOOD, BE ALERT AND ALWAYS WATCHING. SECOND, HE IS TO ENDURE AFFLICTION, HARDSHIPS AND TROUBLES. THE VERB IS IN THE AORIST TENSE. IT HAS THE IDEA OF A COMMAND, ENDURE THOSE THINGS THAT ARE COMING. THIRD, HE IS TO DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST, FROM THE GREEK WORD, ευαγγελιον, "GOOD NEWS." THE WORD IS NOT PRECEDED BY AN ARTICLE SO THE IDEA SEEMS TO BE, LET YOUR WORK AS AN EVANGELIST BE GOOD NEWS, BE READY TO GIVE YOUR TOTAL SELF TO TEACHING AND PREACHING. FOURTH, HE IS TO PROVE HIS MINISTRY. THIS MEANS TO CAUSE A THING TO BE FILLED FULL, TO CARRY IT TO THE END, TO PERFORM FULLY. IN VERSE 5, THE WORD TRANSLATED "MINISTRY" IS FROM THE GREEK WORD διακονιαν, FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD DIACONATE OR DEACON. WHAT HE IS SAYING IS SERVE AND DO NOT BE LAZY, DO NOT NEGLECT THE THINGS THAT HE SHOULD DO.

PAUL DESCRIBES HIS LIFE AND HOW HE WON THE VICTORY. HE PRESENTS THREE PICTURES TO DESCRIBE HIS LIFE. ONE IS THE PICTURE OF A GREEK WRESTLER; ANOTHER, AN OLYMPIC RUNNER; AND THE THIRD, A ROMAN SOLDIER.

HE SAYS HE HAS FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FIGHT” IS THE WORD *αγωνα*, “COMBAT” AND WAS USED IN THE GREEK ATHLETIC GAMES AND CONTESTS. HE SAYS HE HAS FOUGHT LIKE A GREAT WRESTLER, AND HE HAS WON; HE HAS KEPT THE FAITH; HE HAS FINISHED THE COURSE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “COURSE” IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE TRACK ON WHICH THE RUNNER RUNS ON AN ATHLETIC FIELD. THE WORD “FINISH” IS A WORD FROM WHICH OUR WORD “TELESCOPE” COMES. THE WORD “IS” USED HERE, IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE. PAUL COMPARES HIMSELF TO THE GREEK RUNNER WHO HAS CROSSED THE FINISH LINE FIRST, AND WON THE RACE. HE ALSO SAYS HE HAS KEPT THE FAITH. THE IDEA IS THAT HE HAS KEPT THE FAITH WHICH GOD HAD ENTRUSTED TO HIM. AGAIN, THIS VERB IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE. HE SAYS THERE IS LAID UP FOR HIM A CROWN. THE WORD FOR CROWN HERE IS THE “STEPHONOS,” *στεφανος*. PAUL IS NOT SAYING THAT HE IS SAVED BECAUSE OF WHAT HE HAS DONE, THAT IS CLEAR FROM EVERYTHING ELSE HE HAS SAID AND WRITTEN. HE IS SAYING HE WILL BE REWARDED AS A BELIEVER, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN FAITHFUL.

TITUS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF TITUS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN BETWEEN I AND II TIMOTHY IN ABOUT 64 A.D. SOME SCHOLARS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THE FIRST OF THE THREE PASTORAL LETTERS TO BE WRITTEN.

THE MAN TITUS WAS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL MEETING WHICH DEBATED WHETHER A GENTILE BELIEVER MUST FOLLOW JEWISH LAWS OR WHETHER THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS BY THE GRACE OF GOD WAS SUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION. THIS MEANS THAT THE MAGNA CARTA OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH TITUS, FOR HE WAS PAUL'S EXAMPLE OF A GENTILE CHRISTIAN. TITUS WAS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH PAUL FOR SEVERAL YEARS. EVIDENTLY, HE AND TITUS HAD EVEN GONE TO THE ISLAND OF CRETE AND ESTABLISHED CHURCHES THERE. HE HAD LEFT TITUS THERE TO SELECT ELDERS AND BUILD THE CHURCHES. THIS TELLS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF TITUS AS DO SOME OF THE OTHER EPISTLES. HE WAS MORE

DECISIVE, PERSUASIVE AND PERHAPS MORE FORCEFUL THAN TIMOTHY AS WE SEE FROM THE LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS. PAUL HAS SENT TIMOTHY TO PERSUADE THE CHURCH AT CORINTH TO SETTLE THEIR DISPUTES. THE RESULT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL; SO HE SENT TITUS. TITUS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE AND BROUGHT ABOUT SOME RECONCILIATION.

THE LETTER OF TITUS IS ONE OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES. IT IS NOT JUST A PERSONAL EPISTLE, FOR IT WAS PROBABLY INTENDED TO BE READ BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION, ALTHOUGH IT DOES HAVE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS.

IN THE EPISTLE THERE ARE THREE THEMES: FIRST, CHURCH ORGANIZATION; SECOND, SOUND DOCTRINE; AND, THIRD, HOLY LIVING. PAUL NEVER SEPARATED DOCTRINE FROM LIVING OR BELIEF FROM BEHAVIOR. THIS IS IN ALL HIS EPISTLES. YET, HE IS THE STRONGEST ADVOCATE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. PAUL AND JAMES ARE NOT IN DISAGREEMENT. FOR PAUL, WHEN THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IS IN A PERSON'S LIFE, THIS LIFE IN HIM WILL GO FORTH TO DO WHAT GOD HAS CREATED IT TO DO. PAUL NEVER SEPARATES SOUND DOCTRINE AND HOLY LIVING. THEY ARE ALWAYS TOGETHER. THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS BOOK SEEMS TO BE "BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS." THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK FOCUSES UPON ORDER, DOCTRINE AND CORRECT LIVING IN THE CHURCH.

PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF PHILEMON IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE EPISTLES OF PHILEMON AND COLOSSIANS WERE WRITTEN AT THE SAME TIME AND SENT TO THE SAME CITY. PHILEMON WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLOSSIANS TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE. THE YEAR WAS ABOUT 61 - 62 A.D.

IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THIS IS A PRIVATE LETTER. SOME SCHOLARS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THE LETTER WAS ALSO WRITTEN TO A CHURCH.

THERE ARE SOME VERY INTERESTING CONJECTURES ABOUT THE LETTER. ONESIMUS IS GENERALLY ASSUMED TO BE A RUNAWAY SLAVE. THIS SEEMS TO BE A GOOD ASSUMPTION WHICH CAN BE ARRIVED AT FROM VERSES SUCH AS VERSE 16. IF HE WAS A RUNAWAY SLAVE HE HAD PROBABLY STOLEN FROM HIS MASTER AND ESCAPED TO ROME. IN ROME, HE EITHER MET

PAUL OR RENEWED HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM, WE DO NOT KNOW WHICH. THE EPISTLE IS UNIQUE BECAUSE OF ITS REQUEST. PAUL IS ASKING PHILEMON TO WELCOME, RECEIVE, FORGIVE AND RECOGNIZE ONESIMUS, THE SLAVE, AS A BROTHER. SENDING ONESIMUS HOME WAS VERY RISKY BUSINESS. THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS BASED ON SLAVERY. TWENTY - FIVE TO FIFTY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE WERE SLAVES. THIS MEANS THERE WERE SOME 60 MILLION SLAVES IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THAT TIME. THE MASTER HAD ABSOLUTE POWER OVER HIS SLAVES. HE COULD DO ANYTHING HE WANTED WITH THEM INCLUDING BEAT, BRAND, OR CRUCIFY THEM.

ONESIMUS IS A NAME IN GREEK WHICH MEANS PROFITABLE. USING THE MEANING OF ONESIMUS PAUL PLAYS ON WORDS SAYING THAT IN THE PAST ONESIMUS HAD BEEN UNPROFITABLE, BUT NOW HE IS PROFITABLE; HE HAS BEEN PROFITABLE TO PAUL. PAUL IMPLIES THAT BEFORE, HIS NAME MEANT PROFITABLE, NOW HIS NATURE MEANS PROFITABLE. HE HAD BECOME PAUL'S SON IN THE FAITH AND PAUL WANTS PHILEMON TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS JUST AS HE WOULD RECEIVE PAUL HIMSELF. THE FACT THAT THIS LETTER HAS SURVIVED STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT PAUL'S ADMONITION AND REQUEST WERE HEEDED. CHRISTIANITY DEALT A DEATH BLOW TO SLAVERY, BECAUSE IT INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHO WERE BELIEVERS WERE CLOSER THAN THOSE WHO WERE BORN IN THE PHYSICAL BLOODLINE. PAUL DEALT WITH THE DUTIES OF THE SLAVE AND MASTER IN TWO OF HIS LETTERS, COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS. IN THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON, HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE

RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS COME BETWEEN PHILEMON AND GOD, AND BETWEEN ONESIMUS AND GOD. CHRIST DWELLS IN BOTH OF THEM. HE APPEALS TO PHILEMON TO ACCEPT ONESIMUS BACK. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS EPISTLE WENT TO COLOSSI OR LAODICEA; FURTHER, WE DO NOT KNOW IF IT WENT TO JUST PHILEMON OR WHETHER IT WENT TO THE WHOLE CHURCH.

THERE IS AN INTERESTING CONJECTURE ABOUT ONESIMUS THAT COMES FROM HISTORY. IGNATIUS, ONE OF THE GREAT CHRISTIAN MARTYRS, AS HE TRAVELED TO ROME TO BE EXECUTED, WROTE LETTERS TO DIFFERENT CHURCHES. WHEN HE WROTE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS HE SPOKE ABOUT THE BISHOP OF EPHEBUS. HIS NAME IS ONESIMUS. HE MAKES THE SAME COMMENTS THAT PAUL HAD MADE ABOUT THE NAME ONESIMUS. SOME SCHOLARS CONJECTURE THAT THIS COULD BE THE SAME ONESIMUS. HOWEVER, ONESIMUS MAY HAVE BEEN A VERY COMMON NAME. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IS THE SAME MAN OR NOT. WHEN THE FIRST GROUP OF PAUL'S LETTERS WERE PUT TOGETHER ABOUT 100 A.D. OR SLIGHTLY THEREAFTER THIS LETTER WAS COLLECTED AT EPHEBUS. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE LETTER OF PHILEMON GOT THERE. PAUL EVIDENTLY WROTE MANY LETTERS WHICH WERE NOT PRESERVED. HOWEVER, THE HOLY SPIRIT PRESERVED THIS ONE.

TEXT

IN VERSES 1 -7 PAUL GREET'S PHILEMON, APPHIA AND ARCHIPPUS. APPHIA IS GENERALLY ASSUMED TO BE THE WIFE OF PHILEMON, ALTHOUGH THE EPISTLE DOES NOT IDENTIFY HER.

ARCHIPPUS IS A PART OF THE FAITH, AND MAY ALSO BE A PART OF PHILEMON'S FAMILY. HIS NAME IS ALSO MENTIONED IN COL. 4:17. THE TITLE "FELLOW SOLDIER" THAT PAUL GIVES TO HIM IS GIVEN TO ONLY ONE OTHER PERSON IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, EPAPHRODITUS IN PHIL. 2:25.

PAUL REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A "PRISONER," δεσμιος OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN AN EPISTLE'S GREETING THAT PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS A PRISONER. FIVE TIMES IN THIS SHORT EPISTLE HE IS GOING TO REFER TO HIMSELF AS A PRISONER. HE IS IN AN ACTUAL PRISON FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN.

EVEN THOUGH THE LETTER IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS PRIVATE. PAUL ALSO GREETES THE CHURCH THAT MEETS IN PHILEMON'S HOUSE. THIS MAY TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE HOUSE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE CLOSE UNITY THAT EXISTS AMONG IT MEMBERS. PAUL'S GREAT RESPECT FOR PHILEMON IS SEEN IN HIS PRAISE AND THANKFULNESS FOR HIM.

IN VERSES 8 - 20 PAUL REMINDS PHILEMON THAT THROUGH HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY HE COULD COMMAND HIM TO OBEY, BUT THAT HE PREFERRED TO APPEAL TO THEIR CHRISTIAN LOVE FOR EACH OTHER. PAUL GOES ON TO TELL PHILEMON HOW ONESIMUS HAD MINISTERED TO HIM IN PRISON AND THAT PARTING WITH HIM AND SENDING HIM BACK TO PHILEMON WAS LIKE SENDING A PART OF HIS OWN HEART.

IN VERSE 17 PAUL STATES THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE. HE ASKS PHILEMON TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS AS A BROTHER INSTEAD OF AS A SLAVE. PAUL APPEALS TO THE BOND IN

CHRIST THAT UNITES HIMSELF AND PHILEMON. VERSES 18 AND 19 STRONGLY IMPLY THAT ONESIMUS HAD CAUSED PHILEMON SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL LOSS. PAUL STATES THAT PHILEMON MAY HOLD PAUL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL LOSSES SUFFERED BECAUSE OF ONESIMUS. HE STATES THIS IN SUCH A MANNER THAT PHILEMON HAS TO THINK OF HIS INDEBTEDNESS TO PAUL.

THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT WITH THE GREATEST LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CENTURIES IS IN VERSES 16 AND 20 WHERE PAUL CALLS BOTH OF THEM HIS BROTHERS. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION IS THAT IF EACH OF THEM IS HIS BROTHER, THEN THEY MUST BE BROTHERS.

THE EPISTLE CONCLUDES WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT PHILEMON WILL GRANT PAUL'S REQUEST. THE PRESENCE OF THE EPISTLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE EVENTS WAS AS PAUL REQUESTED.

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF HEBREWS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

IN ANALYZING EACH BOOK OR EPISTLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WE SEEK THE ANSWERS TO SUCH QUESTIONS AS:

- 1. WHO IS THE AUTHOR?**
- 2. WHAT WAS THE LOCATION OF ITS WRITING?**
- 3. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK OR EPISTLE WRITTEN?**
- 4. WHAT WAS THE DATE OF THE WRITING?**
- 5. WHAT WAS THE HISTORICAL SITUATION AT THAT TIME WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE CONTENT AND STYLE OF THE WRITING?**
- 6. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE WRITING?**
- 7. WHAT QUESTIONS DID THE AUTHOR PERCEIVE TO BE IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING?**
- 8. WHAT LITERARY STYLE DOES THE AUTHOR USE?**
- 9. WHAT INSIGHT CAN WE GAIN FROM AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE?**

IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS WE ARE TRYING TO GET INSIDE BOTH THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THE DOCUMENT WAS WRITTEN AND THE MIND OF THE WRITER SO THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND BOTH THE CONTENT AND THE MOOD OF THE COMMUNICATION. THE ORIGINAL WRITER MUST HAVE MADE A SIMILAR ANALYSIS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING.

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS MAKES ALL THE ABOVE QUESTIONS VERY CHALLENGING.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER HEBREWS IS A SERMON, A SERIES OF SERMONS, A PAMPHLET, A THEOLOGICAL TREATISE OR AN EPISTLE. MOST TRANSLATIONS OF HEBREWS 13:22 USE THE WORD "LETTER," BUT THE GREEK DOES NOT CONTAIN THE WORD "LETTER," NOR DOES IT IMPLY THAT IT IS AN EPISTLE. THE VERSE SAYS THAT IT IS A "WORD OF EXHORTATION." HEBREWS APPEARS MORE TO BE A TREATISE OR A SERMON, ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE AN EPISTLE.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT HEBREWS IS WRITTEN TO JEWISH CHRISTIANS ENDURING SEVERE PERSECUTION, AND SOME OF THEM ARE TEMPTED TO DRIFT OR TURN BACK TO JUDAISM. IT IS LIKELY THAT THESE BELIEVERS ARE SEPARATED FROM CHRIST BY A GENERATION, FOR 2:3B SAYS "...ATTESTED TO US BY THOSE WHO HEARD HIM." WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE THE AUTHOR WAS WHEN HE WROTE THIS DOCUMENT, NOR DO WE KNOW THE LOCALITY OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THE AUTHOR WROTE. THE DATE OF THE WRITING IS ALSO ELUSIVE. THERE ARE NO REFERENCES IN THE WRITING TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM IN 70 A.D.; THEREFORE, WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT IT WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN BEFORE THAT DATE. THE FACT OF PERSECUTION MAY GIVE SOME CLUES. THE DATE THAT SEEMS MOST LIKELY IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 64 AND 69 A.D.

THE PURPOSE

THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS:

- 1. TO SHOW THAT CHRIST IS THE FINAL WORD OF GOD,**
- 2. TO TEACH THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM AND SACRIFICES WERE BUT SYMBOLS AND TYPES OF THE REALITY WHICH WAS TO COME, AND**
- 3. TO WARN AGAINST APOSTASY FROM THE FAITH.**

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT SHOWS HOW JESUS FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT. W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE POINTS OUT THAT IT IS "...NOT BY THE ABANDONMENT OF THE PREVIOUS REVELATION ESTABLISHED, BUT BY THE FULFILLMENT OF IT. ANGELS, AND MOSES, AND JOSHUA, AND AARON, AND MELCHISEDEC, AND THE OFFERINGS, AND THE COVENANTS ARE ALL IN CHRIST, AND INFINITELY MORE; HE IS AS MUCH GREATER THAN THEY AND THEM AS THE SUBSTANCE IS GREATER THEN THE SHADOW. BUT FOR SUBSTANCE THERE WOULD BE NO SHADOW; AND BUT FOR THE FINAL REVELATION THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO FORMER REVELATION. THIS IS A GREAT CONCEPTION, AND IT IS WORKED OUT IN HEBREWS AS NOWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT." (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE, [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1965] P. 278.)

IN THIS PROCESS IT INTRODUCES SOME CONCEPTS OF CHRIST NOT FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE AUTHOR'S PROPOSITION IS THAT CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT, BECAUSE THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO AND REPLACES THE BLOOD OF ANIMALS. THE AUTHOR PRESENTS IN THE BOOK WHY AND HOW THE NEW COVENANT IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT.

CHARACTERISTICS

HEBREWS CONTAINS THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE AUTHOR IS AN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOLAR, MASTER OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE, SUPERB WRITER AND A GREAT SERVANT OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK 1:1 - 14 CAN BE COMPARED IN THEOLOGICAL CONTENT AND INTENSITY TO JOHN 1:1 - 18.

THE AUTHOR'S LITERARY ABILITY TO PLAY UPON WORDS IS SEEN: IN 1:1 πολυμερως, "IN MANY PARTS" AND πολυτροπως, "IN MANY WAYS", IN 2:5, 8, υπεταξεν "DID HE SUBJECT," υπεταξας "YOU DID SUBJECT," υποταξαι "SUBJECTING," AND ανυποτακτον "UNSUBJECT," AND υποτεταγμενα "SUBJECTED."

AUTHORSHIP

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS AN EXCELLENT OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLAR, A SKILLED THEOLOGIAN, LOGICIAN AND ORATOR.

THROUGH THE CENTURIES THE AUTHORSHIP OF HEBREWS HAS PUZZLED SCHOLARS. THE MOST ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT ASCRIBE IT TO PAUL. IN FACT IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES PAUL'S NAME IS NOT CONNECTED WITH IT. IN 95 A.D., CLEMENT OF ROME WROTE A LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND QUOTED FROM HEBREWS ABOUT THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST OVER ANGELS. HE DOES NOT INDICATE THAT PAUL WAS THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS. (CHARLES A. TRENTHAM, "HEBREWS," THE BROADMAN COMMENTARY, VOL. 12, [NASHVILLE, TN., BROADMAN PRESS, 1972] P. 2.)

THE HEBREWS DOCUMENT DOES HAVE A LOT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S EMOTIONAL INTENSITY, AND THE THEOLOGY DOES NOT DIFFER FROM PAUL'S, BUT THERE ARE SOME THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES WHICH ARE DIFFERENT FROM PAUL'S. THE WRITER KNEW CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY EXTREMELY WELL AND MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY PAUL.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHO WROTE HEBREWS ARE:

BARNABAS, A JEW FROM CYPRUS, A LEVITE, A GREAT LEADER IN THE EARLY CHURCH, A COUSIN OF JOHN MARK, A COMPANION OF PAUL'S ON THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY AND A FRIEND OF TIMOTHY'S COULD HAVE WRITTEN IT. TIMOTHY IS MENTIONED IN HEBREWS. TERTULLIAN STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF HIS AUTHORSHIP. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO WAY TO MAKE AN EVALUATION, BECAUSE WE HAVE NO WRITING FROM HIS HAND TO COMPARE WITH HEBREWS. THERE IS NOT MUCH

SUPPORT FROM SCHOLARS FOR HIM, HOWEVER, HE DOES HAVE THE ABILITY AND TRAINING TO QUALIFY AS THE AUTHOR.

LUKE, A LOYAL COMPANION AND FRIEND OF PAUL, CERTAINLY COULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS DOCUMENT. HE HAD BOTH THE ABILITY AND THE STYLE. HOWEVER, IF HE HAD WRITTEN IT, IT SEEMS THAT EARLY IN THE CHURCH, CREDIT WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO HIM.

SILAS, AN IMPORTANT MAN IN THE CHURCH AND COMPANION OF PAUL, HAD THE TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY, BUT NO WRITING EXISTS FROM HIM WITH WHICH TO COMPARE IT.

APOLLOS IS REFERRED TO IN THE SCRIPTURE AS ELOQUENT. A STRONG CASE COULD BE MADE IN FAVOR OF HIS AUTHORSHIP. HE WAS IN CONTACT WITH TIMOTHY, PAUL AND OTHER EARLY LEADERS AND TEACHERS, AND HE HAD GREAT INFLUENCE IN THE EARLY CHURCH. AGAIN NO WRITING EXISTS FROM HIM WITH WHICH TO MAKE AN EVALUATION.

PRISCILLA, AQUILLA, PHILIP AND CLEMENT HAVE ALL BEEN SUGGESTED, BUT THESE ARE ALL CONJECTURES. NO EVIDENCE EXISTS FOR ANY OF THEM.

THE TRUTH IS, WE DO NOT KNOW WHO WROTE THE DOCUMENT. THE IMPORTANT FACTOR IS THAT ITS MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST IS INSPIRED. THIS MESSAGE IS SO POWERFUL THAT THE DOCUMENT STANDS ON THE CONTENT OF ITS MESSAGE.

TEXT

HEBREWS 1

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS PUTS THE EMPHASIS ON HOW GOD SPOKE IN HISTORY. HE SAYS THAT GOD GAVE HIS TRUTH IN A VARIETY OF WAYS TO DIFFERENT MEN WHOM HE SELECTED TO SPEAK THROUGH. THE CONTEXT AND THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH HEBREWS WAS WRITTEN IS STATED IN THE FIRST VERSES OF THE EPISTLE:

“IN THE PAST GOD SPOKE TO OUR FOREFATHERS THROUGH THE PROPHETS AT MANY TIMES AND IN VARIOUS WAYS, BUT IN THESE LAST DAYS HE HAS SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON, WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, AND THROUGH WHOM HE MADE THE UNIVERSE. THE SON IS THE RADIANCE OF GOD’S GLORY AND THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS BEING, SUSTAINING ALL THINGS BY HIS POWERFUL WORD. AFTER HE HAD PROVIDED PURIFICATION FOR SINS, HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY IN HEAVEN.”

IN THESE FIRST VERSES THE AUTHOR GIVES A THEOLOGICAL LESSON ON:

- 1. GOD’S PAST AND PRESENT DEALINGS WITH MANKIND.**
- 2. THE PERSON OF THE SON IN REGARD TO HIS NATURE, POWER, REDEMPTIVE PROGRAM AND PRESENT POSITION.**
- 3. GOD’S PROGRESSIVE REVELATION IN WHAT HE CALLS “LONG AGO” OR TIME PAST AND PRESENT.**

IN VERSE 1 THE AUTHOR PUTS THE EMPHASIS ON HOW GOD SPOKE. THE FIRST THREE WORDS IN THE GREEK TEXT ARE: 1. Πολυμερως "IN MANY PARTS," 2. και "AND," AND 3. πολυτροπως "IN MANY WAYS." THE IDEA IS THAT THE REVELATION GOD BEGAN TO GIVE TO MAN CAN BE DIVIDED INTO MANY PARTS OR PORTIONS. HE GAVE MOSES ONE PART AND ISAIAH ANOTHER PART. THIS SAYS THAT GOD GAVE HIS TRUTH TO A VARIETY OF MEN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. EPHESIANS 3:4- 11 IS A COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 1:1.

THE NEW TESTAMENT REVEALS GOD'S WILL AND IT REVOLVES AROUND AND FOCUSES UPON JESUS CHRIST. HEBREWS SAYS THAT IN THESE LAST DAYS GOD IS SPEAKING TO US IN HIS SON. VERSE 1 SAYS, "IN MANY PARTS AND IN MANY WAYS OF OLD." IN GREEK THERE ARE TWO WORDS FOR OLD, "ARCHAIOS" AND "PALAI." "ARCHAIOS" MEANS OLD IN TIME. OUR WORD ARCHEOLOGY COMES FROM ITS ROOT. THE WORD USED HERE IN VERSE 1 IS "PALAI," παλαι. IT MEANS OLD IN USE OR PRESENT VALUE, READY TO BE REPLACED BY SOMETHING NEW. THE AUTHOR IS SAYING THAT THE REVELATION OF THE PROPHETS IS REPLACED. HEBREWS TEACHES US THAT THE OLD COVENANT WAS A SYMBOL OR TYPE OF SOMETHING YET TO COME. EVERYTHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS A TYPE THAT LOOKED FORWARD TO CHRIST. IT IS NOT THAT THESE THINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE ABOLISHED, BUT THAT THEY ARE OLD IN POINT OF USE. GOD HAS MADE THE PREPARATION TO SPEAK TO US THROUGH HIS SON. IN THE FIRST VERSE THE WORD GOD IS PRECEDED BY THE DEFINITE ARTICLE "THE," "THE GOD." THIS MEANS IT REFERS TO THE SPECIFIC PERSON OF

GOD THE FATHER. THE AUTHOR WANTS THEM TO KNOW THAT HE IS REFERRING TO THE GOD THEY KNOW.

VERSE 2 LITERALLY READS, "GOD, HAVING SPOKEN, SPOKE." THE IS THE ONGOING CONVERSATION GOD HAS WITH MANKIND. HE NOW SPEAKS THROUGH SON. THERE IS NO HIS IN THE GREEK TEXT. THE MEANING SEEMS TO BE THAT THIS EMPHASIZES THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF HIS COMMUNICATION. HE HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST. IT OBVIOUSLY IS THE REASON AND PURPOSE FOR THE INCARNATION. THE EMPHASIS IS UPON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SON WITH THE FATHER. ALL THROUGH SCRIPTURE THE LOVE OF THE FATHER FOR THE SON SEEMS PARAMOUNT. THE FIRST TIME WE SEE THE WORD "LOVE" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS IN GENESIS 22:2. GOD SAYS TO ABRAHAM, "TAKE NOW YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON ISAAC, WHOM YOU LOVE." IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE FIRST TIME THE WORD LOVE IS USED IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS IS WHEN GOD SAYS, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON."

IT IS CLEAR IN HEBREWS THAT CHRIST HAS FULFILLED THE OLD COVENANT AND IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT. THE NEW TESTAMENT IN JESUS' BLOOD IS SUPERIOR TO AND SUPPLANTS THE FIRST TESTAMENT COVENANT OF ANIMAL BLOOD. THIS IS THE THESIS OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS. THE AUTHOR HAS PRESENTED TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO WHOM IS WRITING A CHOICE BETWEEN THE LEVITICAL SACRIFICES AND THE SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT OF CHRIST. THE WHOLE ARGUMENT OF THIS BOOK AND ITS STATEMENT OR PROPOSITION HAS TO DO WITH THE ELIMINATION OR REPLACEMENT AT THE CROSS OF THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM, THE OLD COVENANT.

ANOTHER WAY TO STATE THE PROPOSITION IS: THE NEW TESTAMENT REPLACES AND SUPERSEDES THE OLD TESTAMENT OF ANIMAL BLOOD SACRIFICES, BECAUSE THE FOUNDER OF IT IS BETTER THAN THE PROPHETS, BETTER THAN ANGELS, BETTER THAN MOSES, BETTER THAN JOSHUA, BETTER THAN AARON. IT WAS PROPHESED TO BE BETTER; IT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TYPE; AND IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY BETTER BLOOD.

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS OFTEN REFERS TO AND QUOTES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT HIS QUOTES IS THAT THEY ALL COME FROM THE SEPTUAGINT, OR GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT INDICATES THAT THE AUTHOR IS WRITING TO PEOPLE FAMILIAR WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT WHO ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE GREEK TRANSLATION THAN WITH THE HEBREW. SINCE THIS WAS TRUE OF JEWS SCATTERED THROUGH THE WORLD, IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN TO A GROUP OF JEWS SOMEWHERE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD, WHO HAD BECOME BELIEVERS IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST. THERE WERE MANY GODLY JEWS PRIOR TO THE TIME OF CHRIST WHO WERE LOOKING FOR THE MESSIAH. THE RECORD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PARENTS ARE PRIME EXAMPLES. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH "... WERE BOTH JUST (RIGHTEOUS) BEFORE GOD, WALKING IN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS," LUKE 1:6. THEY BELIEVED GOD AND WERE FOLLOWING IN THE PATH OF ABRAHAM WHOM THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS COUNTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." WHEN JESUS CAME MANY JEWS BELIEVED ON HIM. HOWEVER, MOST OF THEM

THOUGHT OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEY HAD NOT HAD TIME TO CONSIDER THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT. AT FIRST THE ROMANS CONSIDERED CHRISTIANITY AS A SECT OF JUDAISM. AS TIME PASSED THE JEWS SEPARATED THEMSELVES FROM CHRISTIANITY, AND THE ROMANS BEGAN TO REGARD IT AS AN ILLEGAL RELIGION. THIS BROUGHT PERSECUTION TO CHRISTIANS. UNDER THE INTENSITY OF PERSECUTION SOME OF THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS EVIDENTLY RETURNED TO JUDAISM. SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSE THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. THE AUTHOR PRESENTS IN A VERY SYSTEMATIC MANNER THE FACT THAT THE MESSIAH IS NOT JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE OLD JEWISH SYSTEM. HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT WHICH FILLED, COMPLETED AND DID AWAY WITH THE OLD SYSTEM. THEREFORE, THEY COULD NOT GO BACK TO THE OLD SYSTEM. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS SAYS MANY TIMES, "GO ON." HE DRAWS A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE EVENTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHERE THE PEOPLE WHO WERE HEADED FOR THE PROMISED LAND, DID NOT BELIEVE THE PROMISES AND WANTED TO TURN BACK, AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT GOING ON IN THEIR FAITH IN THE MESSIAH.

THE POSITION OF THE SON AS A PERSON IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE DOCUMENT. THE SON HAS BEEN GIVEN AN ASSORTMENT OF POSITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CENTERING AROUND HIS ROLE AS THE MESSIAH. THESE COME BECAUSE THE SON BECAME INCARNATE, LIVED A PERFECT SINLESS LIFE, SUFFERED AND ROSE AGAIN AND ASCENDED TO THE FATHER.

IN VERSES 1 AND 2 THERE ARE THREE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON. THE FIRST IS RELATED TO CREATION. THE GREEK SAYS, "IN THESE LAST DAYS HE HAS SPOKEN TO HIS SON." THE SON IS THE LANGUAGE OF GOD. THE WORD "LAST" COMES FROM THE GREEK WORD "ESKATOS" FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD "ESCHATOLOGY." IN GREEK, THE WORD ESKATOS MEANS UTTERMOST OR LAST IN TIME OR PLACE. SO GOD SPEAKS LAST THROUGH HIS SON. IN GALATIANS 1:11 PAUL TELLS WHERE HIS REVELATION CAME FROM: "I WANT YOU TO KNOW, BROTHERS, THAT THE GOSPEL I PREACHED IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN MADE UP. I DID NOT RECEIVE IT FROM ANY MAN, NOR WAS I TAUGHT IT; RATHER, I RECEIVED IT BY REVELATION FROM JESUS CHRIST."

THE SECOND FACT ABOUT CHRIST IS IN VERSE 2. HE IS THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS. THIS MEANS THAT ALL THAT ADAM LOST CHRIST HAS REGAINED.

THE THIRD FACT ABOUT CHRIST IN VERSE 2, IS THAT HE IS THE CREATIVE AGENT OF GOD. A VERY INTERESTING WORD IN VERSE 2 IS THE WORD "αιωνας," MEANING WORLD OR UNIVERSE IN MOST TRANSLATIONS. THE USUAL WORD FOR WORLD IS "KOSMOS," AND MEANS THE INHABITED WORLD. "AIONAS" IS RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF THE CONTINUUM OF TIME AND SPACE. THE CONCEPT IS NOT LIMITED TO EXPANSE OF THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE ALONE, BUT ALSO INCLUDES THE IDEA OF TIME AND SPACE AS THEY RELATE TO THE UNFOLDING PURPOSE AND PLAN OF GOD IN THE CREATION AND COHESION OF THE UNIVERSE. CHRIST IS GOD'S AGENT IN THE PROCESS. COLOSSIANS 1:17 SAYS, "HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, AND IN HIM ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER."

VERSE 3 GIVES FIVE MORE FACTS ABOUT THE SON:

FIRST IS THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY. THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORD “RADIANCE” IS *απαυγασμα*. IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT TO STATE ITS MEANING. IT DOES NOT MEAN SOMETHING THAT IS REFLECTED. NEITHER DOES IT MEAN SOMETHING THAT EMITS LIGHT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOMETHING SIMILAR IN IT’S MEANING. IT SEEMS THAT THE WORD REFERS TO LIGHT COMING FROM A LIGHT BODY AND FORMING ANOTHER BODY OF LIGHT EQUAL TO THE ORIGINAL ONE. THIS MEANS THAT IN THEIR NATURE THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE ONE, AND THAT THE SON NOT ONLY EMITS THE FATHER’S LIGHT, BUT EMITS ALSO HIS OWN LIGHT WHICH IS OF THE SAME IDENTICAL SUBSTANCE. ANOTHER IMPORTANT WORD IN THE VERSE IS “GLORY.” THE WORD HAS THE IDEA OF QUALITY OR VALUE SHOWING FORTH.

SECOND, THE VERSE SAYS THAT CHRIST IS THE EXACT EXPRESSION OR IMAGE OF GOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED “EXPRESSION” OR “IMAGE” IS THE WORD THAT GIVES US THE ENGLISH WORD “CHARACTER.” THE GREEK WORD WAS ORIGINALLY USED TO REFER TO AN ENGRAVING TOOL OR THE DIE USED IN ENGRAVING. LATER IT WAS USED FOR THE IMAGE CUT OR FORMED BY THE DIE.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “PERSON” IN THE KJV AND “BEING” IN THE NIV IS THE WORD “SUBSTANCE,” *υποστασεως*. IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS “UNDER” AND “TO STAND.” IT MEANS THE FOUNDATION OR WHAT HOLDS SOMETHING IN IT PLACE.

THIRD, HE UPHOLDS ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER. THE WORD TRANSLATED "UPHOLDS" IS THE GREEK WORD "PHERO," WHICH IS RELATED TO THE IDEA OF MOVEMENT AND SUSTAINING ALL THE CHANGES THAT OCCUR.

FOURTH, HE PURGED OR MADE PURIFICATION FOR OUR SINS. THE MIDDLE VOICE IS USED HERE, WHICH MEANS ACTING UPON ONESELF. ISAIAH 43:25 IS AN EXCELLENT COMMENTARY ON THIS CONCEPT. GOD SAYS, "I EVEN I, AM HE THAT BLOTTETH OUT THY TRANSGRESSIONS FOR MINE OWN SAKE AND WILL NOT REMEMBER THY SINS."

SO FAR WE SEE THAT THE AUTHOR TELLS US THAT CHRIST IS HEIR OF ALL THINGS, CREATOR OF ALL THINGS, BEARER OF ALL THINGS, MAINTAINER AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS AND WHEN SIN ENTERED HE BECAME GOD'S PLAN FOR PURGING SIN.

FIFTH, WHEN CHRIST HAD MADE THIS PURGING HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE WAS NO CHAIR IN THE TEMPLE. THE REASON WAS TO AFFIRM THAT THE PRIESTS' WORK WAS NEVER FINISHED. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS WANTS TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT CHRIST ON THE CROSS FINISHED HIS WORK. IT IS THE REASON HEBREWS SAYS MANY TIMES, "ONE TIME." THE IDEA OF BEING SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER CARRIES WITH IT THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER.

VERSE 4 PRESENTS THE IDEA THAT BECAUSE OF WHO CHRIST WAS HE WAS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS. IT IS

NECESSARY FOR THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS TO SHOW THAT CHRIST WAS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS, FOR AT THIS TIME IN JEWISH THOUGHT THE ANGELS WERE BELIEVED TO BE MEDIATORS OF THE OLD COVENANT. THE AUTHOR SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE HAS INHERITED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME. THE NAME IS "SON."

IN VERSES 5- 14, THE AUTHOR WANTS TO PRESENT FOUR FACTS:

- 1. THAT MATTER WHICH COMPOSES THE UNIVERSE IS NOT ETERNAL, THE SON CREATED IT, HE WILL CHANGE IT,**
- 2. THAT THE SON IS GOD AND, THEREFORE, SUPERIOR TO ANGELS,**
- 3. THAT GOD DOES WITH ANGELS AS HE CHOOSES, THE BELIEF AT THAT TIME WAS THAT ANGELS ARE CHANGEABLE, AND THE AUTHOR IS SHOWING THAT THE SON DOES NOT CHANGE, AND**
- 4. THAT ANGELS ARE SERVANTS, BUT THE SON IS SOVEREIGN.**

HEBREWS 2

IN CHAPTER 2 HE APPLIES THE TEACHING OF THE FIRST CHAPTER. HE TELLS HIS READERS TO GIVE CAREFUL HEED TO WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD LEST THEY SHOULD LET THESE THINGS SLIP BY THEM WITHOUT APPLYING THEM. THE NEXT VERSE EXPLAINS THE MEANING IN THIS VERSE. IF THEY HAD NEGLECTED THE SALVATION MESSAGE AND LET IT SLIP BY WITHOUT ACCEPTING IT THEY COULD NOT ESCAPE. THE VERSE COULD ALSO MEAN THAT THE HEARERS SHOULD NOT LET THESE THINGS DRIFT BY.

VERSE 3 HAS THE RHETORICAL QUESTION, “HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?” THE CONTEXT IMPLIES A NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

VERSE 5 RETURNS TO THE ARGUMENT OF CHRIST BEING SUPERIOR TO ANGELS. ANGELS ARE SERVANTS NOT SOVEREIGNS. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “SUBJECT” IS *υπετάξεν*, MEANING TO ORGANIZE AN ARMY UNDER A GENERAL. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE IS THE SON, BECAUSE HE NEVER CHANGES, BECAUSE HE IS SOVEREIGN AND BECAUSE HE IS A MAN. THE SON IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE BECAME A MAN TO DO AWAY WITH SIN AND BRING GOD’S ORIGINAL PROGRAM TO ITS ULTIMATE CONCLUSION.

IN VERSE 8 THE WORD “SEE” IS THE GREEK WORD *ορωμεν* WHICH MEANS TO LOOK VERY INTENSELY ALL AROUND.

PAUL OR RENEWED HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM, WE DO NOT KNOW WHICH. THE EPISTLE IS UNIQUE BECAUSE OF ITS REQUEST. PAUL IS ASKING PHILEMON TO WELCOME, RECEIVE, FORGIVE AND RECOGNIZE ONESIMUS, THE SLAVE, AS A BROTHER. SENDING ONESIMUS HOME WAS VERY RISKY BUSINESS. THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS BASED ON SLAVERY. TWENTY - FIVE TO FIFTY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE WERE SLAVES. THIS MEANS THERE WERE SOME 60 MILLION SLAVES IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THAT TIME. THE MASTER HAD ABSOLUTE POWER OVER HIS SLAVES. HE COULD DO ANYTHING HE WANTED WITH THEM INCLUDING BEAT, BRAND, OR CRUCIFY THEM.

ONESIMUS IS A NAME IN GREEK WHICH MEANS PROFITABLE. USING THE MEANING OF ONESIMUS PAUL PLAYS ON WORDS SAYING THAT IN THE PAST ONESIMUS HAD BEEN UNPROFITABLE, BUT NOW HE IS PROFITABLE; HE HAS BEEN PROFITABLE TO PAUL. PAUL IMPLIES THAT BEFORE, HIS NAME MEANT PROFITABLE, NOW HIS NATURE MEANS PROFITABLE. HE HAD BECOME PAUL'S SON IN THE FAITH AND PAUL WANTS PHILEMON TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS JUST AS HE WOULD RECEIVE PAUL HIMSELF. THE FACT THAT THIS LETTER HAS SURVIVED STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT PAUL'S ADMONITION AND REQUEST WERE HEEDED. CHRISTIANITY DEALT A DEATH BLOW TO SLAVERY, BECAUSE IT INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHO WERE BELIEVERS WERE CLOSER THAN THOSE WHO WERE BORN IN THE PHYSICAL BLOODLINE. PAUL DEALT WITH THE DUTIES OF THE SLAVE AND MASTER IN TWO OF HIS LETTERS, COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS. IN THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON, HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE

RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS COME BETWEEN PHILEMON AND GOD, AND BETWEEN ONESIMUS AND GOD. CHRIST DWELLS IN BOTH OF THEM. HE APPEALS TO PHILEMON TO ACCEPT ONESIMUS BACK. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS EPISTLE WENT TO COLOSSI OR LAODICEA; FURTHER, WE DO NOT KNOW IF IT WENT TO JUST PHILEMON OR WHETHER IT WENT TO THE WHOLE CHURCH.

THERE IS AN INTERESTING CONJECTURE ABOUT ONESIMUS THAT COMES FROM HISTORY. IGNATIUS, ONE OF THE GREAT CHRISTIAN MARTYRS, AS HE TRAVELED TO ROME TO BE EXECUTED, WROTE LETTERS TO DIFFERENT CHURCHES. WHEN HE WROTE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS HE SPOKE ABOUT THE BISHOP OF EPHESUS. HIS NAME IS ONESIMUS. HE MAKES THE SAME COMMENTS THAT PAUL HAD MADE ABOUT THE NAME ONESIMUS. SOME SCHOLARS CONJECTURE THAT THIS COULD BE THE SAME ONESIMUS. HOWEVER, ONESIMUS MAY HAVE BEEN A VERY COMMON NAME. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IS THE SAME MAN OR NOT. WHEN THE FIRST GROUP OF PAUL'S LETTERS WERE PUT TOGETHER ABOUT 100 A.D. OR SLIGHTLY THEREAFTER THIS LETTER WAS COLLECTED AT EPHESUS. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE LETTER OF PHILEMON GOT THERE. PAUL EVIDENTLY WROTE MANY LETTERS WHICH WERE NOT PRESERVED. HOWEVER, THE HOLY SPIRIT PRESERVED THIS ONE.

TEXT

IN VERSES 1 -7 PAUL GREET'S PHILEMON, APPHIA AND ARCHIPPUS. APPHIA IS GENERALLY ASSUMED TO BE THE WIFE OF PHILEMON, ALTHOUGH THE EPISTLE DOES NOT IDENTIFY HER.

ARCHIPPUS IS A PART OF THE FAITH, AND MAY ALSO BE A PART OF PHILEMON'S FAMILY. HIS NAME IS ALSO MENTIONED IN COL. 4:17. THE TITLE "FELLOW SOLDIER" THAT PAUL GIVES TO HIM IS GIVEN TO ONLY ONE OTHER PERSON IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, EPAPHRODITUS IN PHIL. 2:25.

PAUL REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A "PRISONER," δεσμιος OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN AN EPISTLE'S GREETING THAT PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS A PRISONER. FIVE TIMES IN THIS SHORT EPISTLE HE IS GOING TO REFER TO HIMSELF AS A PRISONER. HE IS IN AN ACTUAL PRISON FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN.

EVEN THOUGH THE LETTER IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS PRIVATE. PAUL ALSO GREETES THE CHURCH THAT MEETS IN PHILEMON'S HOUSE. THIS MAY TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE HOUSE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE CLOSE UNITY THAT EXISTS AMONG IT MEMBERS. PAUL'S GREAT RESPECT FOR PHILEMON IS SEEN IN HIS PRAISE AND THANKFULNESS FOR HIM.

IN VERSES 8 - 20 PAUL REMINDS PHILEMON THAT THROUGH HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY HE COULD COMMAND HIM TO OBEY, BUT THAT HE PREFERRED TO APPEAL TO THEIR CHRISTIAN LOVE FOR EACH OTHER. PAUL GOES ON TO TELL PHILEMON HOW ONESIMUS HAD MINISTERED TO HIM IN PRISON AND THAT PARTING WITH HIM AND SENDING HIM BACK TO PHILEMON WAS LIKE SENDING A PART OF HIS OWN HEART.

IN VERSE 17 PAUL STATES THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE. HE ASKS PHILEMON TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS AS A BROTHER INSTEAD OF AS A SLAVE. PAUL APPEALS TO THE BOND IN

CHRIST THAT UNITES HIMSELF AND PHILEMON. VERSES 18 AND 19 STRONGLY IMPLY THAT ONESIMUS HAD CAUSED PHILEMON SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL LOSS. PAUL STATES THAT PHILEMON MAY HOLD PAUL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL LOSSES SUFFERED BECAUSE OF ONESIMUS. HE STATES THIS IN SUCH A MANNER THAT PHILEMON HAS TO THINK OF HIS INDEBTEDNESS TO PAUL.

THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT WITH THE GREATEST LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CENTURIES IS IN VERSES 16 AND 20 WHERE PAUL CALLS BOTH OF THEM HIS BROTHERS. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION IS THAT IF EACH OF THEM IS HIS BROTHER, THEN THEY MUST BE BROTHERS.

THE EPISTLE CONCLUDES WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT PHILEMON WILL GRANT PAUL'S REQUEST. THE PRESENCE OF THE EPISTLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE EVENTS WAS AS PAUL REQUESTED.

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF HEBREWS IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

IN ANALYZING EACH BOOK OR EPISTLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WE SEEK THE ANSWERS TO SUCH QUESTIONS AS:

- 1. WHO IS THE AUTHOR?**
- 2. WHAT WAS THE LOCATION OF ITS WRITING?**
- 3. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK OR EPISTLE WRITTEN?**
- 4. WHAT WAS THE DATE OF THE WRITING?**
- 5. WHAT WAS THE HISTORICAL SITUATION AT THAT TIME WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE CONTENT AND STYLE OF THE WRITING?**
- 6. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE WRITING?**
- 7. WHAT QUESTIONS DID THE AUTHOR PERCEIVE TO BE IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING?**
- 8. WHAT LITERARY STYLE DOES THE AUTHOR USE?**
- 9. WHAT INSIGHT CAN WE GAIN FROM AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE?**

IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS WE ARE TRYING TO GET INSIDE BOTH THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THE DOCUMENT WAS WRITTEN AND THE MIND OF THE WRITER SO THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND BOTH THE CONTENT AND THE MOOD OF THE COMMUNICATION. THE ORIGINAL WRITER MUST HAVE MADE A SIMILAR ANALYSIS OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING.

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS MAKES ALL THE ABOVE QUESTIONS VERY CHALLENGING.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER HEBREWS IS A SERMON, A SERIES OF SERMONS, A PAMPHLET, A THEOLOGICAL TREATISE OR AN EPISTLE. MOST TRANSLATIONS OF HEBREWS 13:22 USE THE WORD "LETTER," BUT THE GREEK DOES NOT CONTAIN THE WORD "LETTER," NOR DOES IT IMPLY THAT IT IS AN EPISTLE. THE VERSE SAYS THAT IT IS A "WORD OF EXHORTATION." HEBREWS APPEARS MORE TO BE A TREATISE OR A SERMON, ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE AN EPISTLE.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT HEBREWS IS WRITTEN TO JEWISH CHRISTIANS ENDURING SEVERE PERSECUTION, AND SOME OF THEM ARE TEMPTED TO DRIFT OR TURN BACK TO JUDAISM. IT IS LIKELY THAT THESE BELIEVERS ARE SEPARATED FROM CHRIST BY A GENERATION, FOR 2:3B SAYS "...ATTESTED TO US BY THOSE WHO HEARD HIM." WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE THE AUTHOR WAS WHEN HE WROTE THIS DOCUMENT, NOR DO WE KNOW THE LOCALITY OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THE AUTHOR WROTE. THE DATE OF THE WRITING IS ALSO ELUSIVE. THERE ARE NO REFERENCES IN THE WRITING TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM IN 70 A.D.; THEREFORE, WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT IT WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN BEFORE THAT DATE. THE FACT OF PERSECUTION MAY GIVE SOME CLUES. THE DATE THAT SEEMS MOST LIKELY IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 64 AND 69 A.D.

THE PURPOSE

THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS:

- 1. TO SHOW THAT CHRIST IS THE FINAL WORD OF GOD,**
- 2. TO TEACH THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM AND SACRIFICES WERE BUT SYMBOLS AND TYPES OF THE REALITY WHICH WAS TO COME, AND**
- 3. TO WARN AGAINST APOSTASY FROM THE FAITH.**

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT SHOWS HOW JESUS FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT. W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE POINTS OUT THAT IT IS "...NOT BY THE ABANDONMENT OF THE PREVIOUS REVELATION ESTABLISHED, BUT BY THE FULFILLMENT OF IT. ANGELS, AND MOSES, AND JOSHUA, AND AARON, AND MELCHISEDEC, AND THE OFFERINGS, AND THE COVENANTS ARE ALL IN CHRIST, AND INFINITELY MORE; HE IS AS MUCH GREATER THAN THEY AND THEM AS THE SUBSTANCE IS GREATER THEN THE SHADOW. BUT FOR SUBSTANCE THERE WOULD BE NO SHADOW; AND BUT FOR THE FINAL REVELATION THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO FORMER REVELATION. THIS IS A GREAT CONCEPTION, AND IT IS WORKED OUT IN HEBREWS AS NOWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT." (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, KNOW YOUR BIBLE, [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY, 1965] P. 278.)

IN THIS PROCESS IT INTRODUCES SOME CONCEPTS OF CHRIST NOT FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE AUTHOR'S PROPOSITION IS THAT CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT, BECAUSE THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO AND REPLACES THE BLOOD OF ANIMALS. THE AUTHOR PRESENTS IN THE BOOK WHY AND HOW THE NEW COVENANT IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT.

CHARACTERISTICS

HEBREWS CONTAINS THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE AUTHOR IS AN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOLAR, MASTER OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE, SUPERB WRITER AND A GREAT SERVANT OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK 1:1 - 14 CAN BE COMPARED IN THEOLOGICAL CONTENT AND INTENSITY TO JOHN 1:1 - 18.

THE AUTHOR'S LITERARY ABILITY TO PLAY UPON WORDS IS SEEN: IN 1:1 πολυμερως, "IN MANY PARTS" AND πολυτροπως, "IN MANY WAYS", IN 2:5, 8, υπεταξεν "DID HE SUBJECT," υπεταξας "YOU DID SUBJECT," υποταξαι "SUBJECTING," AND ανυποτακτον "UNSUBJECT," AND υποτεταγμενα "SUBJECTED."

AUTHORSHIP

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS IS AN EXCELLENT OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLAR, A SKILLED THEOLOGIAN, LOGICIAN AND ORATOR.

THROUGH THE CENTURIES THE AUTHORSHIP OF HEBREWS HAS PUZZLED SCHOLARS. THE MOST ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT ASCRIBE IT TO PAUL. IN FACT IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES PAUL'S NAME IS NOT CONNECTED WITH IT. IN 95 A.D., CLEMENT OF ROME WROTE A LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND QUOTED FROM HEBREWS ABOUT THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST OVER ANGELS. HE DOES NOT INDICATE THAT PAUL WAS THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS. (CHARLES A. TRENTHAM, "HEBREWS," THE BROADMAN COMMENTARY, VOL. 12, [NASHVILLE, TN., BROADMAN PRESS, 1972] P. 2.)

THE HEBREWS DOCUMENT DOES HAVE A LOT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S EMOTIONAL INTENSITY, AND THE THEOLOGY DOES NOT DIFFER FROM PAUL'S, BUT THERE ARE SOME THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES WHICH ARE DIFFERENT FROM PAUL'S. THE WRITER KNEW CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY EXTREMELY WELL AND MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY PAUL.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHO WROTE HEBREWS ARE:

BARNABAS, A JEW FROM CYPRUS, A LEVITE, A GREAT LEADER IN THE EARLY CHURCH, A COUSIN OF JOHN MARK, A COMPANION OF PAUL'S ON THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY AND A FRIEND OF TIMOTHY'S COULD HAVE WRITTEN IT. TIMOTHY IS MENTIONED IN HEBREWS. TERTULLIAN STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF HIS AUTHORSHIP. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO WAY TO MAKE AN EVALUATION, BECAUSE WE HAVE NO WRITING FROM HIS HAND TO COMPARE WITH HEBREWS. THERE IS NOT MUCH

SUPPORT FROM SCHOLARS FOR HIM, HOWEVER, HE DOES HAVE THE ABILITY AND TRAINING TO QUALIFY AS THE AUTHOR.

LUKE, A LOYAL COMPANION AND FRIEND OF PAUL, CERTAINLY COULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS DOCUMENT. HE HAD BOTH THE ABILITY AND THE STYLE. HOWEVER, IF HE HAD WRITTEN IT, IT SEEMS THAT EARLY IN THE CHURCH, CREDIT WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO HIM.

SILAS, AN IMPORTANT MAN IN THE CHURCH AND COMPANION OF PAUL, HAD THE TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY, BUT NO WRITING EXISTS FROM HIM WITH WHICH TO COMPARE IT.

APOLLOS IS REFERRED TO IN THE SCRIPTURE AS ELOQUENT. A STRONG CASE COULD BE MADE IN FAVOR OF HIS AUTHORSHIP. HE WAS IN CONTACT WITH TIMOTHY, PAUL AND OTHER EARLY LEADERS AND TEACHERS, AND HE HAD GREAT INFLUENCE IN THE EARLY CHURCH. AGAIN NO WRITING EXISTS FROM HIM WITH WHICH TO MAKE AN EVALUATION.

PRISCILLA, AQUILLA, PHILIP AND CLEMENT HAVE ALL BEEN SUGGESTED, BUT THESE ARE ALL CONJECTURES. NO EVIDENCE EXISTS FOR ANY OF THEM.

THE TRUTH IS, WE DO NOT KNOW WHO WROTE THE DOCUMENT. THE IMPORTANT FACTOR IS THAT ITS MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST IS INSPIRED. THIS MESSAGE IS SO POWERFUL THAT THE DOCUMENT STANDS ON THE CONTENT OF ITS MESSAGE.

TEXT

HEBREWS 1

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS PUTS THE EMPHASIS ON HOW GOD SPOKE IN HISTORY. HE SAYS THAT GOD GAVE HIS TRUTH IN A VARIETY OF WAYS TO DIFFERENT MEN WHOM HE SELECTED TO SPEAK THROUGH. THE CONTEXT AND THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH HEBREWS WAS WRITTEN IS STATED IN THE FIRST VERSES OF THE EPISTLE:

“IN THE PAST GOD SPOKE TO OUR FOREFATHERS THROUGH THE PROPHETS AT MANY TIMES AND IN VARIOUS WAYS, BUT IN THESE LAST DAYS HE HAS SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON, WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, AND THROUGH WHOM HE MADE THE UNIVERSE. THE SON IS THE RADIANCE OF GOD’S GLORY AND THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS BEING, SUSTAINING ALL THINGS BY HIS POWERFUL WORD. AFTER HE HAD PROVIDED PURIFICATION FOR SINS, HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY IN HEAVEN.”

IN THESE FIRST VERSES THE AUTHOR GIVES A THEOLOGICAL LESSON ON:

- 1. GOD’S PAST AND PRESENT DEALINGS WITH MANKIND.**
- 2. THE PERSON OF THE SON IN REGARD TO HIS NATURE, POWER, REDEMPTIVE PROGRAM AND PRESENT POSITION.**
- 3. GOD’S PROGRESSIVE REVELATION IN WHAT HE CALLS “LONG AGO” OR TIME PAST AND PRESENT.**

IN VERSE 1 THE AUTHOR PUTS THE EMPHASIS ON HOW GOD SPOKE. THE FIRST THREE WORDS IN THE GREEK TEXT ARE: 1. Πολυμερως "IN MANY PARTS," 2. και "AND," AND 3. πολυτροπως "IN MANY WAYS." THE IDEA IS THAT THE REVELATION GOD BEGAN TO GIVE TO MAN CAN BE DIVIDED INTO MANY PARTS OR PORTIONS. HE GAVE MOSES ONE PART AND ISAIAH ANOTHER PART. THIS SAYS THAT GOD GAVE HIS TRUTH TO A VARIETY OF MEN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. EPHESIANS 3:4- 11 IS A COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 1:1.

THE NEW TESTAMENT REVEALS GOD'S WILL AND IT REVOLVES AROUND AND FOCUSES UPON JESUS CHRIST. HEBREWS SAYS THAT IN THESE LAST DAYS GOD IS SPEAKING TO US IN HIS SON. VERSE 1 SAYS, "IN MANY PARTS AND IN MANY WAYS OF OLD." IN GREEK THERE ARE TWO WORDS FOR OLD, "ARCHAIOS" AND "PALAI." "ARCHAIOS" MEANS OLD IN TIME. OUR WORD ARCHEOLOGY COMES FROM ITS ROOT. THE WORD USED HERE IN VERSE 1 IS "PALAI," παλαι. IT MEANS OLD IN USE OR PRESENT VALUE, READY TO BE REPLACED BY SOMETHING NEW. THE AUTHOR IS SAYING THAT THE REVELATION OF THE PROPHETS IS REPLACED. HEBREWS TEACHES US THAT THE OLD COVENANT WAS A SYMBOL OR TYPE OF SOMETHING YET TO COME. EVERYTHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS A TYPE THAT LOOKED FORWARD TO CHRIST. IT IS NOT THAT THESE THINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE ABOLISHED, BUT THAT THEY ARE OLD IN POINT OF USE. GOD HAS MADE THE PREPARATION TO SPEAK TO US THROUGH HIS SON. IN THE FIRST VERSE THE WORD GOD IS PRECEDED BY THE DEFINITE ARTICLE "THE," "THE GOD." THIS MEANS IT REFERS TO THE SPECIFIC PERSON OF

GOD THE FATHER. THE AUTHOR WANTS THEM TO KNOW THAT HE IS REFERRING TO THE GOD THEY KNOW.

VERSE 2 LITERALLY READS, "GOD, HAVING SPOKEN, SPOKE." THIS IS THE ONGOING CONVERSATION GOD HAS WITH MANKIND. HE NOW SPEAKS THROUGH SON. THERE IS NO HIS IN THE GREEK TEXT. THE MEANING SEEMS TO BE THAT THIS EMPHASIZES THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF HIS COMMUNICATION. HE HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST. IT OBVIOUSLY IS THE REASON AND PURPOSE FOR THE INCARNATION. THE EMPHASIS IS UPON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SON WITH THE FATHER. ALL THROUGH SCRIPTURE THE LOVE OF THE FATHER FOR THE SON SEEMS PARAMOUNT. THE FIRST TIME WE SEE THE WORD "LOVE" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS IN GENESIS 22:2. GOD SAYS TO ABRAHAM, "TAKE NOW YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON ISAAC, WHOM YOU LOVE." IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE FIRST TIME THE WORD LOVE IS USED IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS IS WHEN GOD SAYS, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON."

IT IS CLEAR IN HEBREWS THAT CHRIST HAS FULFILLED THE OLD COVENANT AND IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT. THE NEW TESTAMENT IN JESUS' BLOOD IS SUPERIOR TO AND SUPPLANTS THE FIRST TESTAMENT COVENANT OF ANIMAL BLOOD. THIS IS THE THESIS OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS. THE AUTHOR HAS PRESENTED TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO WHOM IS WRITING A CHOICE BETWEEN THE LEVITICAL SACRIFICES AND THE SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT OF CHRIST. THE WHOLE ARGUMENT OF THIS BOOK AND ITS STATEMENT OR PROPOSITION HAS TO DO WITH THE ELIMINATION OR REPLACEMENT AT THE CROSS OF THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM, THE OLD COVENANT.

ANOTHER WAY TO STATE THE PROPOSITION IS: THE NEW TESTAMENT REPLACES AND SUPERSEDES THE OLD TESTAMENT OF ANIMAL BLOOD SACRIFICES, BECAUSE THE FOUNDER OF IT IS BETTER THAN THE PROPHETS, BETTER THAN ANGELS, BETTER THAN MOSES, BETTER THAN JOSHUA, BETTER THAN AARON. IT WAS PROPHESED TO BE BETTER; IT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TYPE; AND IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY BETTER BLOOD.

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS OFTEN REFERS TO AND QUOTES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT HIS QUOTES IS THAT THEY ALL COME FROM THE SEPTUAGINT, OR GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT INDICATES THAT THE AUTHOR IS WRITING TO PEOPLE FAMILIAR WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT WHO ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE GREEK TRANSLATION THAN WITH THE HEBREW. SINCE THIS WAS TRUE OF JEWS SCATTERED THROUGH THE WORLD, IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN TO A GROUP OF JEWS SOMEWHERE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD, WHO HAD BECOME BELIEVERS IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST. THERE WERE MANY GODLY JEWS PRIOR TO THE TIME OF CHRIST WHO WERE LOOKING FOR THE MESSIAH. THE RECORD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PARENTS ARE PRIME EXAMPLES. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH "... WERE BOTH JUST (RIGHTEOUS) BEFORE GOD, WALKING IN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS," LUKE 1:6. THEY BELIEVED GOD AND WERE FOLLOWING IN THE PATH OF ABRAHAM WHOM THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS COUNTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." WHEN JESUS CAME MANY JEWS BELIEVED ON HIM. HOWEVER, MOST OF THEM

THOUGHT OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEY HAD NOT HAD TIME TO CONSIDER THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT. AT FIRST THE ROMANS CONSIDERED CHRISTIANITY AS A SECT OF JUDAISM. AS TIME PASSED THE JEWS SEPARATED THEMSELVES FROM CHRISTIANITY, AND THE ROMANS BEGAN TO REGARD IT AS AN ILLEGAL RELIGION. THIS BROUGHT PERSECUTION TO CHRISTIANS. UNDER THE INTENSITY OF PERSECUTION SOME OF THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS EVIDENTLY RETURNED TO JUDAISM. SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSE THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. THE AUTHOR PRESENTS IN A VERY SYSTEMATIC MANNER THE FACT THAT THE MESSIAH IS NOT JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE OLD JEWISH SYSTEM. HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT WHICH FILLED, COMPLETED AND DID AWAY WITH THE OLD SYSTEM. THEREFORE, THEY COULD NOT GO BACK TO THE OLD SYSTEM. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS SAYS MANY TIMES, "GO ON." HE DRAWS A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE EVENTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHERE THE PEOPLE WHO WERE HEADED FOR THE PROMISED LAND, DID NOT BELIEVE THE PROMISES AND WANTED TO TURN BACK, AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT GOING ON IN THEIR FAITH IN THE MESSIAH.

THE POSITION OF THE SON AS A PERSON IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE DOCUMENT. THE SON HAS BEEN GIVEN AN ASSORTMENT OF POSITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CENTERING AROUND HIS ROLE AS THE MESSIAH. THESE COME BECAUSE THE SON BECAME INCARNATE, LIVED A PERFECT SINLESS LIFE, SUFFERED AND ROSE AGAIN AND ASCENDED TO THE FATHER.

IN VERSES 1 AND 2 THERE ARE THREE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON. THE FIRST IS RELATED TO CREATION. THE GREEK SAYS, "IN THESE LAST DAYS HE HAS SPOKEN TO HIS SON." THE SON IS THE LANGUAGE OF GOD. THE WORD "LAST" COMES FROM THE GREEK WORD "ESKATOS" FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD "ESCHATOLOGY." IN GREEK, THE WORD ESKATOS MEANS UTTERMOST OR LAST IN TIME OR PLACE. SO GOD SPEAKS LAST THROUGH HIS SON. IN GALATIANS 1:11 PAUL TELLS WHERE HIS REVELATION CAME FROM: "I WANT YOU TO KNOW, BROTHERS, THAT THE GOSPEL I PREACHED IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN MADE UP. I DID NOT RECEIVE IT FROM ANY MAN, NOR WAS I TAUGHT IT; RATHER, I RECEIVED IT BY REVELATION FROM JESUS CHRIST."

THE SECOND FACT ABOUT CHRIST IS IN VERSE 2. HE IS THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS. THIS MEANS THAT ALL THAT ADAM LOST CHRIST HAS REGAINED.

THE THIRD FACT ABOUT CHRIST IN VERSE 2, IS THAT HE IS THE CREATIVE AGENT OF GOD. A VERY INTERESTING WORD IN VERSE 2 IS THE WORD "αιωνας," MEANING WORLD OR UNIVERSE IN MOST TRANSLATIONS. THE USUAL WORD FOR WORLD IS "KOSMOS," AND MEANS THE INHABITED WORLD. "AIONAS" IS RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF THE CONTINUUM OF TIME AND SPACE. THE CONCEPT IS NOT LIMITED TO EXPANSE OF THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE ALONE, BUT ALSO INCLUDES THE IDEA OF TIME AND SPACE AS THEY RELATE TO THE UNFOLDING PURPOSE AND PLAN OF GOD IN THE CREATION AND COHESION OF THE UNIVERSE. CHRIST IS GOD'S AGENT IN THE PROCESS. COLOSSIANS 1:17 SAYS, "HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, AND IN HIM ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER."

VERSE 3 GIVES FIVE MORE FACTS ABOUT THE SON:

FIRST IS THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY. THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORD “RADIANCE” IS *απαυγασμα*. IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT TO STATE ITS MEANING. IT DOES NOT MEAN SOMETHING THAT IS REFLECTED. NEITHER DOES IT MEAN SOMETHING THAT EMITS LIGHT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOMETHING SIMILAR IN IT’S MEANING. IT SEEMS THAT THE WORD REFERS TO LIGHT COMING FROM A LIGHT BODY AND FORMING ANOTHER BODY OF LIGHT EQUAL TO THE ORIGINAL ONE. THIS MEANS THAT IN THEIR NATURE THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE ONE, AND THAT THE SON NOT ONLY EMITS THE FATHER’S LIGHT, BUT EMITS ALSO HIS OWN LIGHT WHICH IS OF THE SAME IDENTICAL SUBSTANCE. ANOTHER IMPORTANT WORD IN THE VERSE IS “GLORY.” THE WORD HAS THE IDEA OF QUALITY OR VALUE SHOWING FORTH.

SECOND, THE VERSE SAYS THAT CHRIST IS THE EXACT EXPRESSION OR IMAGE OF GOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED “EXPRESSION” OR “IMAGE” IS THE WORD THAT GIVES US THE ENGLISH WORD “CHARACTER.” THE GREEK WORD WAS ORIGINALLY USED TO REFER TO AN ENGRAVING TOOL OR THE DIE USED IN ENGRAVING. LATER IT WAS USED FOR THE IMAGE CUT OR FORMED BY THE DIE.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “PERSON” IN THE KJV AND “BEING” IN THE NIV IS THE WORD “SUBSTANCE,” *υποστασεως*. IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS “UNDER” AND “TO STAND.” IT MEANS THE FOUNDATION OR WHAT HOLDS SOMETHING IN IT PLACE.

THIRD, HE UPHOLDS ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER. THE WORD TRANSLATED "UPHOLDS" IS THE GREEK WORD "PHERO," WHICH IS RELATED TO THE IDEA OF MOVEMENT AND SUSTAINING ALL THE CHANGES THAT OCCUR.

FOURTH, HE PURGED OR MADE PURIFICATION FOR OUR SINS. THE MIDDLE VOICE IS USED HERE, WHICH MEANS ACTING UPON ONESELF. ISAIAH 43:25 IS AN EXCELLENT COMMENTARY ON THIS CONCEPT. GOD SAYS, "I EVEN I, AM HE THAT BLOTTETH OUT THY TRANSGRESSIONS FOR MINE OWN SAKE AND WILL NOT REMEMBER THY SINS."

SO FAR WE SEE THAT THE AUTHOR TELLS US THAT CHRIST IS HEIR OF ALL THINGS, CREATOR OF ALL THINGS, BEARER OF ALL THINGS, MAINTAINER AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS AND WHEN SIN ENTERED HE BECAME GOD'S PLAN FOR PURGING SIN.

FIFTH, WHEN CHRIST HAD MADE THIS PURGING HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE WAS NO CHAIR IN THE TEMPLE. THE REASON WAS TO AFFIRM THAT THE PRIESTS' WORK WAS NEVER FINISHED. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS WANTS TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT CHRIST ON THE CROSS FINISHED HIS WORK. IT IS THE REASON HEBREWS SAYS MANY TIMES, "ONE TIME." THE IDEA OF BEING SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER CARRIES WITH IT THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER.

VERSE 4 PRESENTS THE IDEA THAT BECAUSE OF WHO CHRIST WAS HE WAS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS. IT IS

NECESSARY FOR THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS TO SHOW THAT CHRIST WAS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS, FOR AT THIS TIME IN JEWISH THOUGHT THE ANGELS WERE BELIEVED TO BE MEDIATORS OF THE OLD COVENANT. THE AUTHOR SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE HAS INHERITED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME. THE NAME IS "SON."

IN VERSES 5- 14, THE AUTHOR WANTS TO PRESENT FOUR FACTS:

- 1. THAT MATTER WHICH COMPOSES THE UNIVERSE IS NOT ETERNAL, THE SON CREATED IT, HE WILL CHANGE IT,**
- 2. THAT THE SON IS GOD AND, THEREFORE, SUPERIOR TO ANGELS,**
- 3. THAT GOD DOES WITH ANGELS AS HE CHOOSES, THE BELIEF AT THAT TIME WAS THAT ANGELS ARE CHANGEABLE, AND THE AUTHOR IS SHOWING THAT THE SON DOES NOT CHANGE, AND**
- 4. THAT ANGELS ARE SERVANTS, BUT THE SON IS SOVEREIGN.**

HEBREWS 2

IN CHAPTER 2 HE APPLIES THE TEACHING OF THE FIRST CHAPTER. HE TELLS HIS READERS TO GIVE CAREFUL HEED TO WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD LEST THEY SHOULD LET THESE THINGS SLIP BY THEM WITHOUT APPLYING THEM. THE NEXT VERSE EXPLAINS THE MEANING IN THIS VERSE. IF THEY HAD NEGLECTED THE SALVATION MESSAGE AND LET IT SLIP BY WITHOUT ACCEPTING IT THEY COULD NOT ESCAPE. THE VERSE COULD ALSO MEAN THAT THE HEARERS SHOULD NOT LET THESE THINGS DRIFT BY.

VERSE 3 HAS THE RHETORICAL QUESTION, “HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?” THE CONTEXT IMPLIES A NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

VERSE 5 RETURNS TO THE ARGUMENT OF CHRIST BEING SUPERIOR TO ANGELS. ANGELS ARE SERVANTS NOT SOVEREIGNS. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “SUBJECT” IS *υπετάξεν*, MEANING TO ORGANIZE AN ARMY UNDER A GENERAL. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE IS THE SON, BECAUSE HE NEVER CHANGES, BECAUSE HE IS SOVEREIGN AND BECAUSE HE IS A MAN. THE SON IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE BECAME A MAN TO DO AWAY WITH SIN AND BRING GOD’S ORIGINAL PROGRAM TO ITS ULTIMATE CONCLUSION.

IN VERSE 8 THE WORD “SEE” IS THE GREEK WORD *ορωμεν* WHICH MEANS TO LOOK VERY INTENSELY ALL AROUND.

IN VERSE 9 THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “SEE” IS βλεπομεν WHICH MEANS TO GLANCE AROUND. THE IDEA IS THAT A PERSON CAN LOOK AROUND AS INTENTLY AS HE WISHES AND HE WILL SEE THAT NOTHING IS SUBJECTED TO HIM, BUT HE CAN TAKE A GLANCE AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD AND SEE CHRIST CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR. HE SEES HIM SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

IN CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 THE AUTHOR DEVELOPS HIS PROOFS OF CHRIST’S SUPERIORITY AND IN VERSE 9 HE SUMMARIZES THE PURPOSE AND MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

NEXT HE PRESENTS THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION AND DEVELOPS THE THEME THAT CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST.

IN CHAPTER 2 VERSE 14 HE TALKS ABOUT THE SUFFERING MESSIAH. THE CONCEPT HAS ALWAYS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO ACCEPT. WHY DID THE MESSIAH HAVE TO SUFFER? THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS STATES THAT IT IS BECAUSE HE IS OUR REPRESENTATIVE AND THROUGH SUFFERING HE HAS PERFECTED US. ISAIAH 53 SPEAKS ABOUT THE SUFFERING SERVANT. JEWS TODAY WILL INTERPRET THE SUFFERING SERVANT TO BE THE NATION. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT HIS READERS DO NOT CONFUSE THE SUFFERING SERVANT WITH ISRAEL AS A NATION. IN VERSE 9 HE USES THE WORD JESUS. HE SAYS, “THIS PERSON JESUS IS THE ONE ABOUT WHOM I AM SPEAKING.”

VERSE 10 SAYS, “IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, IT WAS FITTING (OR BECOMING) THAT GOD, FOR WHOM AND THROUGH WHOM EVERYTHING EXISTS, SHOULD MAKE THE LEADER (AUTHOR OR CAPTAIN) OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.”

WHY DID HE SUFFER? VERSE 10 SAYS THE SUFFERING WAS NECESSARY:

- 1. BECAUSE OF THE VERY NATURE OF GOD,**
- 2. BECAUSE A RIGHTEOUS GOD MUST DEMAND THAT THE VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW BE SATISFIED, AND**
- 3. BECAUSE A LOVING GOD CANNOT BUT PROVIDE THE VERY PAYMENT WHICH THE PENALTY FOR THE VIOLATION OF HIS LAW DEMANDS.**

IN VERSE 10 GOD WANTS TO BRING MANY SONS TO GLORY. IN CHAPTER 1 VERSE 3 GOD HAS ALREADY BROUGHT HIS SON TO GLORY. NOW HE IS BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY.

THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “PERFECT” IN THIS VERSE HAS THE IDEA OF ACHIEVING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH SOMETHING WAS CREATED OR THE IDEA OF CARRYING SOMETHING TO ITS GOAL OF COMPLETION.

THE WORD TRANSLATED “CAPTAIN” OR “LEADER” IN VERSE 10 MEANS ONE WHO LEADS THE WAY.

IN VERSE 16 WE SEE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS. HE DID NOT COME TO SAVE ANGELS; HE CAME TO SAVE PEOPLE.

HEBREWS 3

IN CHAPTER 3 THE AUTHOR PURSUES A NEW COURSE FOR ADVANCING HIS ARGUMENT. THE JEWS OF THE FIRST CENTURY REGARDED WITH REFERENCE THE GREAT LEADERS OF THE PAST. MOSES WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THEIR ANCESTORS. THE CHAPTER BEGINS WITH THE WORD “οθεν” TRANSLATED “WHEREFORE” OR “THEREFORE.” WHEN THE AUTHOR USES THIS WORD IT IS A LANGUAGE GUIDE TO CAUSE THE READER TO STOP AND CONSIDER WHAT HAS COME BEFORE AND RELATE IT TO WHAT IS ABOUT TO COME. HE SAYS, “CONSIDER CHRIST.” WHY? BECAUSE OF ALL HE HAS WRITTEN IN THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “CONSIDER” MEANS TO FIX YOUR EYES INTENTLY UPON. THE JEWS HAD A TENDENCY TO LOOK BACK AT THE OLD COVENANT. HE SAYS FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION UPON JESUS WHO IS THEIR APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST, FAITHFUL UNTO GOD. THE POINT OF THIS SECTION IS THAT THE ONE WHO BUILDS THE HOUSE HAS GREATER GLORY THAN THE ONE WHO SERVES IN THE HOUSE, VERSES 3-7. THE WORD IN VERSE 5 SPEAKING OF MOSES AS A SERVANT IS THE WORD “θεραπων.” IT MEANS “A NOBLE SERVANT,” AND IS USED OF ANGELS AND PROPHETS. MOSES IS A TYPE OF THE SERVANT WHO IS TO COME, FOR GOD SAID IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, “I WILL RAISE THEM UP A PROPHET . . . LIKE UNTO YOU.” THE IDEA IN VERSE 6 IS THE CONTRAST THAT

MOSES, EVEN THE BEST OF SERVANTS, IS STILL A SERVANT WHEREAS CHRIST IS THE SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; ONE IS SERVING IN THE HOUSE, THE OTHER IS SERVING OVER THE HOUSE.

THE PHRASE IN VERSE 6 “WE SHOULD HOLD FIRM UNTO THE END,” IS A NAUTICAL TERM MEANING “HOLDING TOWARD THE SET COURSE.” THE WORD IN VERSE 6 THAT IS TRANSLATED “CONFIDENCE” OR “BOLDNESS” MEANS “WITH ALL OF OUR WORDS.”

THE GREEK WORD πειρασμοι TRANSLATED “TEMPTED” IN VERSES 8 AND 9 MEANS TO PUT A PERSON TO THE TEST TO SEE WHAT GOOD OR EVIL MAY BE IN HIM. THE WORD IN VERSE 9 TRANSLATED “PROVED” IS THE WORD εδοκιμασαν, MEANING TO PUT TO THE TEST FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE PERSON, IF HE MEETS THE TEST. GOD LED THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT, PARTED THE RED SEA, MADE THE BITTER WATER SWEET AND FED THEM WITH MANNA, THEN WHEN ADVERSITY CAME THEY TESTED GOD TO SEE IF THEY APPROVED HIM. THEY HARDENED THEIR HEARTS IN UNBELIEF. THEREFORE, GOD DID NOT ALLOW THEM TO ENTER HIS REST SAYS VERSES 10 AND 11. VERSE 12 IS A WARNING TO THE PEOPLE READING HEBREWS THAT THERE MAY ALREADY BE AN EVIL AND UNBELIEVING HEART IN THEM. THE WORD TRANSLATED “EVIL” IN VERSE 12 IS πονερος. IT MEANS AN EVIL THAT OPPOSES AND RESISTS GOD’S PURPOSE.

IN VERSE 12 THE WORD TRANSLATED “DEPARTING” OR “TURNING AWAY” IS αποστηναι AND MEANS “TO STAND OFF FROM.” OUR WORD APOSTASY COMES FROM ITS ROOT. APOSTASY IS THE

ACT OF PROFESSING BELIEF IN A SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES, THEN TURNING AWAY FROM THEM AND ACCEPTING A SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE FORMER. THE WORD TRANSLATED “UNBELIEF” IS THE WORD *απιστιας*. THE PREFIX “A” ON A WORD MEANS NO. SO, HERE IT MEANS NO BELIEF OR NO FAITH. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL COULD NOT ENTER GOD’S REST BECAUSE THEY HAD NO FAITH. ALL THE THINGS THEY SAW CAUSED MENTAL ASSENT, BUT IT NEVER GOT TO THEIR HEARTS.

A SUBTHEME THROUGHOUT THE BOOK OF HEBREWS IS EXERCISING FAITH. THE MAJOR THEME IS THE SUPERIORITY OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AS THE MEANS OF THE NEW COVENANT. FOR THIS COVENANT TO BE VALID HOWEVER, IT MUST BE APPROPRIATED BY FAITH. IN THIS SECTION THE READERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO GO ON TO FAITH AND NOT BE LIKE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WHEN THEY CAME OUT OF EGYPT.

THE REST THAT THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SPEAKS ABOUT IS THE REST WHICH MOSES WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO BUT NEVER ACCOMPLISHED. HOWEVER, THE MESSIAH WILL ACCOMPLISH IT.

HEBREWS 4

IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER HE IS STILL DRAWING ON THE ANALOGY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND THE NECESSITY OF EXERCISING FAITH IN HIS OWN GENERATION. VERSE 12 IN THIS CHAPTER FITS INTO THIS CONTEXT. THE WRITER IS NOT REFERRING TO THE BIBLE AS WE KNOW IT. HE IS SAYING THAT

GOD'S WORD AS IT HAS BEEN SPOKEN IS ALIVE AND THAT IT HAS THE POWER TO PIERCE THROUGH THE SOUL AND SPIRIT TO THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART. THE WORD TRANSLATED "SHARP" COMES FROM THE WORD "TO CUT." PIERCING MEANS "TO GO THROUGH." THE WORD TRANSLATED "DISCERN" MEANS "TO SIFT OUT, TO ANALYZE."

VERSE 13 SPEAKS OF THE GREAT POWER OF GOD TO SEE AND DISCERN EVERYTHING. THE WORD TRANSLATED "OPEN" OR "LAID BARE" IS τετραχηλισμενα. THE NOUN MEANS THROAT. OUR ENGLISH WORD TRACHEOTOMY COMES FROM THIS WORD. THE WORD HAS AN INTERESTING HISTORY. ONE WAY THE WORD WAS USED WAS TO SPEAK OF AN ANIMAL TO BE SACRIFICED. ITS HEAD WAS PULLED BACK SO THE NECK OF THE ANIMAL WOULD BE EXPOSED TO THE KNIFE.

CHAPTER 4 VERSE 14 STARTS A NEW THOUGHT. THE WRITER IS NOW GOING TO SHOW THAT CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS SUPERIOR TO AARON. THE WRITER IS GOING BACK TO CHAPTER 3 VERSE 17 AND PICKING UP WITH THE IDEA WHICH HE LEFT IN 3:1. HE WILL FOLLOW THIS IDEA FROM 4:14 TO 8:6. THIS SECTION HAS AS ITS BACKGROUND THE TABERNACLE OF ISRAEL. IN THE TEMPLE ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, YOM KIPPUR, THE HIGH PRIEST PASSED THROUGH THE OUTER COURT, THROUGH THE HOLY PLACE AND WENT INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES WHERE HE MADE AN ATONEMENT FOR HIS SINS AND THE SINS OF HIS FAMILY. AFTER THIS HE MADE AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE. CHRIST, HOWEVER, PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD. CHRIST IS ALSO A HIGH PRIEST NOT LIKE AARON WHO WAS SIN-

FUL. VERSE 15 SAYS HE WAS WITHOUT SIN. IT ALSO SAYS THAT HE IS SYMPATHETIC TO US BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN TEMPTED LIKE US, BUT HE NEVER SINNED.

HEBREWS 5

IN CHAPTER 5:1 - 10 ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD. FIRST, HE MUST BE A MAN. SECOND, HE MUST BE APPOINTED BY GOD. THIS MEANS GOD CHOOSES WHO WILL MINISTER TO HIM. THE PURPOSE OF THE HIGH PRIEST WAS TO BE A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND GOD. THE HIGH PRIESTS WERE TO BE DESCENDENTS OF AARON. THE JEWISH PEOPLE ALSO KNEW THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE A DESCENDENT OF JUDAH. THEREFORE, THEY DID NOT THINK OF THE MESSIAH AS A HIGH PRIEST. HOWEVER, THE WRITER SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK WHO WAS BEFORE AARON AND TO WHOM ABRAHAM GAVE TITHES. MELCHIZEDEK STANDS FOR AN ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD.

IN VERSE 7, OF CHAPTER 5 IT SEEMS THAT JESUS IS PRAYING FOR THE RESURRECTION, FOR IT SAYS HE ENTREATED GOD TO SAVE HIM “εκ” OUT OF DEATH.

CHRIST FULFILLED THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HIGH PRIEST, FOR HE WAS A MAN, HE SUFFERED WITHOUT SIN, HE WAS RESURRECTED, HE PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS, WAS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER AND THE FATHER APPOINTED HIM HIGH PRIEST FOREVER.

THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER 5 CHALLENGES THEM TO GROW UP AND MOVE FORWARD IN THE FAITH. HE MAY BE SAYING THAT THEY ARE STILL AT THE ELEMENTARY TEACHING ABOUT THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORK. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT THE AUTHOR IS WRITING TO JEWS WHO ARE STILL PRACTICING THE OLD TESTAMENT AND HE IS TELLING THEM TO MOVE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT HOUSE WHERE MOSES WAS A SERVANT AND AARON THE HIGH PRIEST INTO THE NEW HOUSE WHERE THE NEW COVENANT WAS MADE BY CHRIST. CHRIST RULES AS THE SON OVER THIS HOUSE. IT CAN BE ENTERED BY MEANS OF JESUS CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST.

HEBREWS 6

IN CHAPTER 6 VERSE 1 THE WORD TRANSLATED “LEAVING” OR “HAVING LEFT” MEANS LEAVING BEHIND OR TO DEPART. IT IS AN AORIST PARTICIPLE MEANING ONCE AND FOR ALL. THE WORD TRANSLATED “WE SHOULD GO ON” OR “GO ON” IS φερωμεθα. THE SAME IN ANOTHER FORM IS USED IN 1:3 AND MEANS “TO CARRY” OR “UPHOLD.” IN 6:1 THE WORD IS IN THE PASSIVE TENSE AND MEANS LEAVE THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED BEFORE AND LET YOURSELF BE CARRIED ALONG BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MATURITY.

CHAPTER 6:1 SHOULD READ “WHEREFORE, HAVING LEFT THE WORD OF THE BEGINNING OF THE MESSIAH (CHRIST), TO THE FULL GROWTH WE SHOULD GO ON; NOT AGAIN A FOUNDATION LAYING OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS, AND FAITH IN GOD, . . .” WHAT ARE THE BEGINNING WORDS ABOUT THE

MESSIAH? PROBABLY IT IS THE THINGS TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE PROPHECIES, TYPES AND SYMBOLS. EVERYTHING IN THE TABERNACLE AND LATER THE TEMPLE WAS A TYPE OR SYMBOL OF THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORK. ALL THE SYMBOLS AND SACRIFICES POINTED TO THE MESSIAH. THE WORD TRANSLATED "CHRIST" IS THE GREEK WORD FOR THE HEBREW "MESSIAH."

THEY ARE TOLD NOT TO BUILD A FOUNDATION OF BELIEF ON GIVING UP DEAD WORKS. THE DEAD WORKS ARE DESCRIBED IN GALATIANS 2:16 "KNOWING THAT A MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, BUT BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, EVEN WE HAVE BELIEVED IN JESUS CHRIST, THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST, AND NOT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW: FOR BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED."

THE NEW TESTAMENT TELLS US TO HAVE REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (ACTS 20:21).

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WASHING WAS A SYMBOL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WASHING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE REFERENCE TO THE LAYING ON OF HANDS IN VERSE 2 SEEMS TO REFER TO THE PERSON PLACING HIS HANDS ON THE SACRIFICE THAT WAS ABOUT TO BE SLAIN FOR THEIR SINS (LEV. 1:4). THE IDEA IS THAT THEY ARE TO MOVE ON TO THE TRUE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

IN 6:4 - 8 THE FIRST WORD IS αδυνατον, TRANSLATED "IM-POSSIBLE." EXACTLY THE SAME WORD IS USED IN 6:18 AND IN

10:4. LOOKING AT THESE VERSES IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE WRITER IS SAYING IT IS AS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO FALL AWAY TO BE RENEWED AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE AS IT IS FOR GOD TO LIE.

THE WORD παραπεσοντας IS TRANSLATED “FELL AWAY” AND MEANS “TO TURN ASIDE” OR “TO WANDER.” THIS IS AN AORIST PARTICIPLE AND COULD BE TRANSLATED “HAVING FALLEN AWAY.” THIS IS THE ONLY TIME THIS GREEK WORD IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. WILLIAM NEWELL SAYS THAT THIS WORD CORRESPONDS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD, MAHAL. THE MEANING OF MAHAL IS “TO ACT COVERTLY, TREACHEROUSLY, FAITHLESSLY, NUM. 5:12, 27 AND “TO DEAL TREACHEROUSLY WITH JEHOVAH,” DEUT.32:51; II CHRON.. 12:2; 29:19; JOB 21:34. THE WORD IS ALSO USED OF ACHAN’S SIN RECORDED IN JOSH. 7:1. THE MEANING OF THIS SECTION IS THAT THERE IS A FALLING AWAY FROM CHRIST. IT IS NOT FALLING INTO SIN AS IS RECORDED IN I JOHN 2:1. I JOHN SAYS, “... AND IF ANYONE SHOULD SIN, A PARACLETE (ADVOCATE) WE HAVE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.” THESE PEOPLE HAVE TURNED AGAINST THE ADVOCATE JESUS CHRIST. VERSE 5 IS CLEAR THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE WONDERFUL THINGS OF THE GOSPEL. (WILLIAM R. NEWELL, HEBREWS, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER BOOK HOUSE, 1987] PP. 191 - 192. SEE ALSO W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, ED. THE EXPOSITOR’S GREEK TESTAMENT, VOL. 4, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS, 1976] PP. 297-298.) THE AUTHOR THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT EMPHASIZES THE PRESEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. THE WAY WE KNOW IF A PERSON IS A SAINT OF GOD IS IF HE PRESERVES.

IN VERSE 6, THE LAST PART OF THE SENTENCE SAYS “. . . CRUCIFYING FOR THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD, AND EXPOSING PUBLICLY.” IT CAN BE TRANSLATED “WHILE THEY ARE CRUCIFYING.” THIS PASSAGE IS SAYING THAT A PERSON CANNOT BE BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE AND CONTINUE IN SIN. THIS VERSE COULD ALSO BE SAYING THAT THE PERSON WHO HAS UNDERSTOOD THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST AND TURNS BACK TO THE ANIMAL SACRIFICIES OF THE OLD SYSTEM IS CRUCIFYING CHRIST BY HIS DECISION JUST AS THE ORIGINAL CRUCIFIERS DID. THIS MEANS THAT THE PERSON WHO DOES THIS IS SAYING THAT ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE OF GREATER VALUE THAN THAT OF CHRIST. WITH OUT DOUBT IT IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. SOME SCHOLARS THINK THAT THIS PASSAGE IS SAYING THAT A PERSON MAY LOOSE HIS SALVATION. I DO NOT THINK THAT IS THE TEACHING OF THE PASSAGE, BUT IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT IF ONE CAN LOOSE HIS SALVATION HE CANNOT REGAIN IT.

IN VERSES 18 THE WORD TRANSLATED “IMMUTABLE” OR “UNCHANGABLE” IS ALSO IN VERSE 17 AND COMES FROM A WORD MEANING TRAITOR WITH THE PREFIX NOT. IT SAYS THAT GOD IS NOT A TRAITOR.

VERSES 18-20 ARE BEAUTIFUL VERSES ABOUT THE STABILITY THAT IS IN JESUS. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ON THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA THERE WERE MANY HARBORS. SOME OF THESE WERE VERY SHALLOW. WHEN THE TIDE WAS OUT IT WAS TOO SHALLOW FOR THE LARGE SHIPS TO ENTER. THE WATER IN THE SEA WOULD BE TOO DEEP FOR AN ANCHOR. SO

THE CAPTAIN WOULD PUT DOWN A LITTLE BOAT KNOWN AS A FORERUNNER, LOWER THE ANCHOR INTO IT, ROW IT ACROSS THE SHALLOW SAND SHOALS AND LET THE ANCHOR DOWN INTO THE HARBOR. THE SHIP WAS OUT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ANCHOR WAS IN THE HARBOR. THE WINDS COULD BLOW, BUT THE SHIP WAS ANCHORED SAFELY. IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, IT IS SAYING THAT WE HAVE AN ANCHOR OF HOPE WHICH GOES THROUGH THE VEIL INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

HEBREWS 7

IN THE FIRST SIX CHAPTERS THE AUTHOR HAS REFERRED TO THE PRIESTHOOD. HE HAS ALSO SHOWED THAT THE SYSTEM WHICH CAME THROUGH ABRAHAM WAS IMPERFECT. NOW IN CHAPTER 7 HE SHOWS THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR GOD TO ESTABLISH A NEW ORDER OF PRIESTHOOD NOT DESCENDED FROM AARON, BUT DESCENDED FROM MELCHISEDEC, A PRIESTHOOD OLDER THAN ABRAHAM, GENESIS 14:18-20 AND PSALMS 110:4.

IN VERSE 3, THE WORD $\alpha\phi\omega\mu\iota\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$, TRANSLATED “MADE LIKE” OR “ASSIMILATED” MEANS “TO MAKE A FACSIMILE.” MELCHIZEDEK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS A FACSIMILE OF CHRIST WHO WAS TO COME. THE FOCUS IN VERSE 3 IS UPON THE FACT THAT MELCHISEDEC HAD NO GENEALOGY. IN THE JEWISH SYSTEM THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR A PRIEST WAS HIS GENEALOGY. A PRIEST HAD TO BE DESCENDED FROM THE PROPER LINE. MELCHIZEDEK’S LINE REMAINS FOREVER.

THE AUTHOR ALSO INTRODUCES ANOTHER WONDERFUL

CONCEPT. IN JEWISH THOUGHT THE PRIEST AND THE KING HAD ALWAYS BEEN SEPARATED. THE PRIEST DESCENDED FROM LEVI THROUGH AARON, WHEREAS, THE KING WAS DESCENDED FROM JUDAH THROUGH DAVID. THE AUTHOR SHOWS THAT MELCHIZEDEK WAS A KING-PRIEST. CHRIST WAS ALSO A KING PRIEST. HE HAS UNITED THESE TWO OFFICES ETERNALLY.

UP TO THIS POINT THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS HAS PROVED THAT:

- 1. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS, BECAUSE EVALUATION IN HIM WAS COMPLETE, WHEREAS BEFORE IT HAD BEEN IN BITS AND PIECES,**
- 2. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS, BECAUSE HE IS THE SOVEREIGN WHO REIGNS FOREVER, WHEREAS THE ANGELS ARE CREATED BEINGS,**
- 3. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO MOSES, BECAUSE THE SON IS OVER THE HOUSE, WHEREAS MOSES WAS A SERVANT IN THE HOUSE, AND**
- 4. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO JOSHUA, BECAUSE HE GIVES THE PEOPLE PEACE, WHEREAS JOSHUA COULD NOT.**

NOW HE COMES TO THE FINAL PHASE OF THE ARGUMENT THAT CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ABRAHAM. THIS ARGUMENT IS BASED ON THE HISTORICAL EVENT REGARDING MELCHIZEDEK. THE AUTHOR SHOWS THAT MELCHIZEDEK WAS SUPERIOR TO ABRAHAM AS A PERSON, AND THEREFORE SUPERIOR TO LEVI WHO CAME FROM ABRAHAM AND SUPERIOR TO AARON WHO

CAME FROM LEVI. HEBREW THOUGHT WAS THAT THE OLDER WAS GREATER THAN THE YOUNGER. THE ARGUMENT IS SINCE CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK IT IS SUPERIOR TO THE PRIESTHOOD DESCENDED FROM AARON. AS WE SAW ABRAHAM VOLUNTARILY OFFERED THE TENTH, AND MELCHIZEDEK TOOK IT AS THE PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. IN THIS ACT BOTH RECOGNIZE THE SPIRITUAL POSITION OF MELCHIZEDEK.

IN 7:4, THE WORD TRANSLATED CONSIDER OR OBSERVE DOES NOT MEAN A CASUAL GLANCE. IT REFERS TO A GENERAL WHO INSPECTS HIS ARMY. THE IDEA IS TO EXAMINE CAREFULLY WHO THIS MAN IS. ABRAHAM DID NOT JUST GIVE A TENTH OF EVERYTHING, HE GAVE A TENTH OF THE CHOICE SPOILS. IN GREEK WARFARE WHEN THEY CAPTURED A CITY THEY TOOK THE MERCHANDISE FROM THE RAID AND PUT IT IN A PILE WITH THE BEST ON TOP. THE THINGS ON TOP WERE GIVEN TO THE GODS.

THE PRIESTS WERE TO BE DESCENDANTS OF LEVI WHO WAS THE GREAT GRANDSON OF ABRAHAM. FOR THE HIGH PRIEST THIS LINE WAS NARROWED DOWN FURTHER. MOSES AND HIS BROTHER AARON WERE BOTH DESCENDENTS OF LEVI, BUT THE PRIESTS CAME THROUGH AARON AND THE HIGH PRIEST CAME THROUGH THE LINE OF HIS ELDEST SON.

IN VERSE 9 THE WORD TRANSLATED "AS I MAY SO SAY," OR "SO TO SPEAK," POINTS TO SOMETHING UNUSUAL THAT IS ABOUT TO BE SAID. ACCORDING TO JEWISH THOUGHT LEVI PAID TITHES THROUGH ABRAHAM, BECAUSE HE WAS IN THE LOINS OF ABRAHAM

AND AARON WAS IN THE LOINS OF LEVI. THEREFORE, EVERY PRIEST WAS IN THE LOINS OF ABRAHAM THROUGH AARON AND LEVI. BY DEFINITION THEN ALL THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM WERE INFERIOR TO MELCHIZEDEK. THIS SAME CONCEPT IS SEEN IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS WHEN PAUL WRITES THAT WE WERE ALL IN ADAM.

IN VERSES 11 THROUGH 22 THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS SHOWS THAT THE MESSIAH (CHRIST) IS THE HIGH PRIEST OF A COVENANT WHICH PUT AWAY SIN RATHER THAN JUST COVERING IT.

IN VERSE 11 THE WORD FOR “ANOTHER” IS THE GREEK WORD FOR “ANOTHER OF A DIFFERENT KIND.” IN VERSE 12 THE WORD TRANSLATED “CHANGED” IS μετατιθεμενης, AND MEANS TO “PUT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IN PLACE OF ANOTHER.” THE IDEA HERE IS THAT THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK WOULD REPLACE THE PRIESTHOOD OF AARON. VERSE 16 SAYS THAT CHRIST’S MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD DID NOT COME ON THE BASIS OF PHYSICAL DESCENT, BUT RATHER ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE.

VERSES 18-22 SHOWS THAT THE OLD COVENANT WAS SET ASIDE BY THE NEW COVENANT. JESUS IS THE GUARANTEE OF THIS BETTER COVENANT.

IN VERSES 23-25 THE POINT IS MADE THAT THE MESSIAH LIVES FOREVER, WHEREAS, OTHER PRIESTS DIE. THIS MEANS, IN HIS CONTEXT, THAT OUR SALVATION WILL BE COMPLETE THROUGH ALL ETERNITY AND NEVER STOPS. OUR HIGH PRIEST LIVES FOREVER.

IN VERSES 26 - 28 THE POINT IS MADE THAT CHRIST IS A SUPERIOR HIGH PRIEST BECAUSE HE IS SINLESS. AS SINNERS WE NEED AN INTERCESSOR WHO IS SINLESS, NOT A SINNER LIKE ALL THE DESCENDENTS OF AARON.

IN VERSE 26 FIVE WAYS ARE LISTED AS TO HOW CHRIST IS FOR US:

- 1. HE IS HOLY. THE WORD THAT IS USUALLY USED FOR HOLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANS SET APART TO GOD. IT IS NOT THE WORD USED HERE. THE WORD USED HERE MEANS PERSONAL HOLINESS.**
- 2. HE IS INNOCENT. NO MALICE OR EVIL IS IN HIM.**
- 3. HE IS UNDEFILED. HE IS FREE OF DEFECTS WHICH WOULD DEFORM THE PERSON.**
- 4. HE IS SEPARATE. THAT MEANS HE IS SEPARATED FROM US TO THE FATHER.**
- 5. HE IS EXALTED.**

CHRIST DID NOT NEED TO OFFER A SACRIFICE FOR HIMSELF AS THE HIGH PRIEST OF AARON'S DESCENT. CHRIST OFFERED HIMSELF ONCE FOR ALL.

HEBREWS 8

CHAPTER 8 BEGINS "NOW A SUMMARY," AND THE AUTHOR GIVE A SUMMARY OF WHAT OUR HIGH PRIEST HAS DONE. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE HIGH PRIEST WAS TO MAKE INTERCESSION

FOR US WITH THE FATHER. THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE OLD TESTAMENT COULD DO THAT ONLY ONCE A YEAR ON THE DAY OF YOM KIPPUR. CHRIST, HOWEVER, IS CONTINUALLY IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

IN 8:2 THE WORD TRANSLATED “MINISTER” IS λειτουργος. IT IS USED IN AN UNUSUAL WAY. THE WORD IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS. LEITOS MEANS “THE LONGING OF THE PEOPLE,” AND ERGON MEANS “WORK.” THE MEANING HERE IS THAT CHRIST HAS ENTERED THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE AND HAS DONE HIS WORK ONCE AND FOR ALL. REMEMBER THE FOUNDATIONAL PROPOSITIONS:

- 1. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE BLOOD OF ANIMALS, BECAUSE HE IS A SUPERIOR PERSON, AND**
- 2. THE NEW COVENANT IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT, BECAUSE IT WAS INITIATED AND BROUGHT INTO EXISTENCE BY A SUPERIOR PERSON.**

CHRIST IS A SUPERIOR PERSON, SUPERIOR TO PROPHETS, ANGELS, JOSHUA, MOSES, AARON AND ABRAHAM. THE SUMMARY IS THAT HE IS MINISTERING IN A SUPERIOR PLACE, THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE.

CHAPTER 8 VERSE 6 COULD BE CALLED THE PIVOTAL POINT OF THE BOOK. AT THIS POINT THE AUTHOR HAS COMPLETED HIS EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST IS SUPERIOR AND BEGINS TO SHOW THE SUPERIORITY OF THE COVENANT WHICH CHRIST CREATED. THIS VERSE SAYS THAT CHRIST HAS: 1. A SUPERIOR MINISTRY,

2. A SUPERIOR COVENANT, AND 3. A SUPERIOR SET OF PROMISES.

HEBREWS 8:17 - 10:39 FOCUSES ON CHRIST BEING THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT. AS THE AUTHOR PRESENTS HIS ARGUMENT HE WILL SHOW THAT: 1. THE NEW COVENANT WAS PROPHESED TO BE BETTER, 8:7 - 13. 2. IT IS THE TRUE COVENANT AND NOT THE SHADOW OR TYPE, 9:1 - 15. 3. IT HAS BEEN MADE EFFECTUAL THROUGH SUPERIOR BLOOD, 9:16 - 10:39.

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS PROVES IN HIS EPISTLE THREE FACTS:

- 1. CHRIST IS A SUPERIOR PERSON,**
- 2. CHRIST MEDIATES A SUPERIOR COVENANT, AND**
- 3. CHRIST OFFERS A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE.**

IN 8:7 THE AUTHOR MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE OLD SYSTEM WAS IMPERFECT, BECAUSE IT COULD NEITHER DRAW PEOPLE CLOSE TO GOD NOR REMOVE SIN. THE PRIEST WAS SUPPOSED TO DRAW PEOPLE CLOSE TO GOD, BUT HE COULD NOT DO IT. THE PEOPLE HAD TO REMAIN OUTSIDE THE VEIL WHILE THE HIGH PRIEST DID HIS WORK OF ATONEMENT IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. WHEN CHRIST DIED THE VEIL WAS TORN IN THE MIDDLE LETTING THE PEOPLE ENTER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD, MATT. 27:51.

IN 8:12 THE AUTHOR QUOTES FROM JEREMIAH 31:31 - 34 WHERE GOD PROMISES THAT HE WILL REPLACE THE OLD COVENANT WITH A NEW COVENANT. THE OLD COVENANT BEGAN IN GENESIS

3:21 AND ENDED AT THE CROSS. THE NEW COVENANT BEGAN AT THE CROSS AND LASTS FOREVER.

HEBREWS 9

IN 9:1 - 15 HE EXPLAINS HOW THE OLD COVENANT WAS A TYPE OF THE NEW COVENANT. IN VERSES 1 - 10 HE SUMMARIZES THE ACTIVITIES THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE TABERNACLE. IN VERSES 11 - 15 HE DESCRIBES THE NEW COVENANT.

ON YOM KIPPUR, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, LEVITICUS 16 RECORDS THAT THE HIGH PRIEST WAS TO TAKE OFF HIS PRIESTLY ROBE AND PUT ON A PLAIN WHITE ROBE. HE THEN WENT TO THE BRAZEN ALTAR AND SACRIFICED A BULL. HE TOOK THE BLOOD OF THE BULL, A CENSOR WITH HOT COALS AND INCENSE. BEFORE HE ENTERED THE HOLY OF HOLIES HE THREW THE INCENSE ON THE HOT COALS IN THE INCENSE BURNER WHICH CAUSED THE HOLY OF HOLIES TO BE FILLED WITH SMOKE. HE THEN ENTERED THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND SPRINKLED THE BLOOD OF THE BULL ON THE MERCY SEAT. THIS WAS FOR HIS SINS AND THE SINS OF HIS FAMILY. AFTER THIS HE TOOK ONE OF THE TWO GOATS THAT HAD BEEN SELECTED BY CASTING LOTS, KILLED IT, TOOK THE BLOOD AND AGAIN WENT INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND SPRINKLED THE BLOOD ON THE MERCY SEAT FOR ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE. NEXT HE WOULD GO OUT AND LAY HIS HANDS ON THE SCAPEGOAT AND CONFESS ALL THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE. THE GOAT WOULD THEN BE DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS. THE HIGH PRIEST WOULD

THEN TAKE OFF HIS BLOOD-SPATTERED CLOTHES AND PUT BACK ON HIS PRIESTLY ROBE. THE PEOPLE WERE WAITING FOR HIM TO COME OUT OF THE TABERNACLE. WHEN HE APPEARED IT MEANT THAT THE ATONEMENT FOR THEIR SINS WAS ACCEPTED.

HEBREWS 10

CHAPTER 10 VERSES 2 AND 4 TELL WHY THE OLD SYSTEM FAILED. VERSE 4 SAYS, "FOR IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS SHOULD TAKE AWAY SINS." THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO SHOW THAT THE OFFERING CHRIST MADE OF HIMSELF IS THE FINAL ONE-TIME TRUE SACRIFICE, IS SUPERIOR AND SUPERSEDES EVERYTHING THAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS USES INDUCTIVE LOGIC. HE SHOWS THAT THE OLD COVENANT WOULD BE REPLACED BY A NEW COVENANT, THEN HE SHOWS THAT THE NEW COVENANT FOCUSES ON THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN VERSE 10 THE WORD TRANSLATED "SANCTIFIED" IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE, "TO SET APART TO GOD," SIGNIFYING THAT THIS IS A ONE TIME EVENT.

HEBREWS 1:1 THROUGH 10:18 IS THE DOCTRINE AND 10:19 THROUGH THE END OF THE EPISTLE IS THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION. IN A SENSE IT MOVES FROM SALVATION TO SANCTIFICATION.

THE EPISTLE IS SUMMED UP IN TWO EXPRESSIONS. THE FIRST IS 10:19, "HAVING THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BOLDNESS TO ENTER." THE SECOND IS 10:22, "LET US DRAW NEAR."

IN 10:22 - 24 THE AUTHOR HAS THREE COMMANDS: 1. "LET US DRAW NEAR." 2. "LET US HOLD FAST," AND 3. "LET US PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE AND TO DO GOOD WORKS."

VERSE 23 SAYS, "LET US HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH WITHOUT WAVERING." "WITHOUT WAVERING" IN GREEK MEANS "WITHOUT LEANING BACK." EVIDENTLY THE ADMONITION NOT TO LEAN BACKWARD AND NOT TO FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLING OF THEMSELVES TOGETHER IS RELATED TO SOME TYPE OF PERSECUTION THEY HAD OR WERE EXPERIENCING.

IN VERSE 26, HE SPEAKS ABOUT WILLFULLY SINNING. IT IS PART OF HIS ARGUMENT. HEBREWS WAS WRITTEN TO PEOPLE WHO HAD COME OUT OF THE OLD SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. THEIR APOSTASY WENT THROUGH THESE STEPS:

- 1. LEAVING THE JEWISH SYSTEM,**
- 2. IDENTIFYING WITH THE CHURCH,**
- 3. PROFESSING THE MESSIAH, AND**
- 4. THEN TURNING BACK TO THE TEMPLE SYSTEM.**

HEBREWS 10:26 IS THE RESULTS OF DRIFTING, HARDENING THE HEART AND RE - CRUCIFYING CHRIST. IT IS AS IF THE PERSON CONCLUDES THAT CHRIST IS AS THOSE WHO CRUCIFIED HIM SAY. THIS IS CRUCIFYING HIM AGAIN AND GOING BACK TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM. THE WORD TRANSLATED "WILLING," OR

“WILLFULLY” IS ΕΚΟΥΣΙΩΣ AND MEANS VOLUNTARILY OF ONES OWN ACCORD, AND NOT FROM IGNORANCE OF NOT KNOWING THE TRUTH, NOR IS IT FROM SOME INNER WEAKNESS WHICH ONE CAN NOT PREVENT. THE WORD TRANSLATED “KNOWLEDGE” IS ΕΠΥΝΩΣΙΝ AND MEANS A REAL GRASPING OF THE TRUTH. THE IDEA IS THAT THE PERSON MAKING THIS DECISION HAS THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

IN VERSE 29 HE REFERS TO DEUTERONOMY 17:2-7 WHERE THOSE WHO APOSTATIZED WERE JUDGED GUILTY AND WERE STONED ON THE WORD OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. THE AUTHOR SAYS THAT IN THE SAME WAY THEY ARE APOSTATIZING BY SETTING ASIDE GOD’S COVENANT. THOSE WHO APOSTATIZE ARE INVOLVED IN A THREEFOLD SIN: 1. THEY HAVE TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD. 2. THEY HAVE COUNTED, THAT IS THEY HAVE MADE A CONSCIOUS JUDGMENT, THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT AS UNHOLY, AND 3. THEY HAVE INSULTED THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

THE REST OF CHAPTER 10 SPEAKS OF THE PERSECUTION WHICH THEY HAVE ENDURED. THEY HAD BEEN PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY. BUT VERSE 36 SHOWS THAT THEY WILL BE REWARDED. THEY MUST HAVE PATIENCE. THE WORD PATIENCE MEANS TO REMAIN UNDER. VERSES 37 AND 38 ARE A QUOTATION FROM HABAKKUK 2:3-4.

HEBREWS 11

CHAPTER 11 IS THE FAMOUS HALL OF FAME SECTION. THIS CHAPTER SHOWS THE RESULTS OF FAITH. IN VERSES 1-3

HE DEFINES FAITH. IN VERSES 4-40 HE GIVES EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO ATTAINED GOD'S PROMISES BY FAITH.

VERSES 4-32 HAVE A BREAKDOWN OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY PERIODS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. THE PRE-FLOOD ERA, VERSES 4-7.**
- 2. THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD (ABOUT 2091 - 1805 B.C.), VERSES 8-22.**
- 3. THE MOSAIC PERIOD, (ABOUT 1526-1406 B.C.) FROM THE BIRTH OF MOSES TO THE INVASION OF JERICO BY JOSHUA, VERSES 23-31.**
- 4. THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES (ABOUT 1385-1050 B.C.), VERSE 32.**
- 5. THE LIFE OF SAMUEL (1100-1040 B.C.), THE LIFE OF DAVID (1040-970 B.C.) AND THE PROPHETS, VERSE 32.**

THE SIGNIFICANT TEACHING IN THIS CHAPTER IS THAT FAITH IS THE BASIS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EACH OF THE PERSONS IN THIS CHAPTER.

IN VERSE ONE OF THIS CHAPTER HE DEFINES FAITH AS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN. THE WORD TRANSLATED "SUBSTANCE" OR "ASSURANCE" IS υποστασις, AND MEANS TO STAND UNDER. IN ITS BACKGROUND IT IS RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF A DOCUMENT THAT AUTHENTICATED OWNERSHIP OF A PERSON'S PROPERTY. THE WORD TRANSLATED "EVIDENCE" OR "CONVICTION" IS ελεγχος, AND MEANS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT FAITH IS THE BASIS OF BELIEF IN THE REALITY OF THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SEEN.

IN VERSE 4 THE AUTHOR USES ABEL AS HIS FIRST EXAMPLE OF FAITH.

- 1. ABEL MADE HIS OFFERING BY FAITH.**
- 2. IT WAS A BETTER SACRIFICE THAN CAIN'S.**
- 3. HIS SACRIFICE, MADE BY FAITH, TESTIFIED THAT HE WAS RIGHTEOUS.**
- 4. GOD ACCEPTED THE GIFTS OF ABEL.**

THE AUTHOR SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME THERE HAVE BEEN TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE, THOSE WHO APPROACH GOD BY FAITH AND THOSE WHO APPROACH HIM BY WORKS.

NEXT THE AUTHOR USES ENOCH AS AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH, VERSE 5. LOOKING AT THE OLD TESTAMENT AND JUDE 14- 15 WE SEE THAT THERE ARE TWO LINES OF DESCENDENTS FROM ADAM, ONE FROM SETH AND ONE FROM CAIN. ENOCH, THE GODLY MAN, IS THE SEVENTH GENERATION FROM ADAM, AS IS LAMECH, THE UNGODLY MAN. ADAM IS STILL ALIVE. IF WE ASSUME YEAR 1 IS THE BEGINNING OF MAN'S HISTORY, AND LOOK AT GENESIS 5:5, ADAM LIVED 930 YEARS. IN THE YEAR 687 ENOCH WAS 65 YEARS OF AGE AND BECAME THE FATHER OF METHUSELAH. GEN. 5:22 SAYS THAT HE WALKED WITH GOD 300 YEARS AFTER METHUSELAH WAS BORN. JUDE TELLS US THIS WAS A WICKED TIME. THE NAME METHUSELAH MEANS "WHEN HE DIES IT COMES." METHUSELAH WAS BORN IN 687. NOAH WAS BORN 1056 YEARS FROM THE BEGINNING OF MAN'S OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY. GEN. 7:6 SAYS NOAH WAS 600

YEARS OLD WHEN THE FLOOD CAME. IF HE WAS BORN IN 1056 THEN THE FLOOD CAME IN 1656. GOD GAVE THE UNRIGHTEOUS PEOPLE 969 YEARS TO REPENT. THIS INDICATES THAT METHUSELAH DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD. ENOCH WAS A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND KNEW JUDGEMENT WAS COMING.

NOAH IS THE AUTHOR'S NEXT MAN OF FAITH. IN GENESIS WE LEARN THAT NOAH WAS WARNED BY GOD OF THINGS TO COME. HE BECAME AN HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH, AND WAS A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. THE ARK OF NOAH WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST. THE WORD TRANSLATED "PITCH" WHICH WAS USED TO SEAL THE ARK IS RELATED TO THE WORD FOR ATONEMENT. THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY INTO THE ARK AND GOD SEALED THE DOOR.

ABRAHAM IS THE FIRST PATRIARCH OF THE HEBREW RACE. IN VERSES 8- 19 THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM. THE NAME ABRAM MEANS "EXALTED FATHER." GOD CALLED ABRAHAM FROM THE UR OF THE CHALDEES, WHEN HE WAS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE. UR WAS A THRIVING POPULATION CENTER. THE PEOPLE BASICALLY WORSHIPPED THE MOON GOD NANNU. ABRAHAM WAS CALLED BY GOD TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY AND BY FAITH HE FOLLOWED GOD'S CALL TO THE LAND OF PROMISE. THE AUTHOR ALSO SAYS THAT SARAH COUNTED GOD FAITHFUL TO KEEP HIS PROMISE. ABRAHAM ALSO HAD FAITH THAT GOD WOULD RAISE ISAAC FROM THE DEAD IF IT WAS NECESSARY TO KEEP HIS PROMISE. WE SEE THAT ISAAC WAS ALSO A TYPE OF CHRIST.

VERSE 20 POINTS TO THE BLESSING THAT ISAAC GAVE TO JACOB AND ESAU.

IN VERSE 21 WE HAVE THE RECORD OF THE PROPHECY WHICH JACOB GAVE CONCERNING THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. HE REQUESTED THAT THEY TAKE HIS BONES WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEFT EGYPT. HE BELIEVED GOD'S PROMISE AND THAT WAS FAITH.

VERSES 23-31 ARE CONCERNING THE LIFE OF MOSES. VERSE 23 TELLS OF THE FAITH OF MOSES' PARENTS. VERSE 24 TELLS OF MOSES COMING OF AGE AND REJECTING THE RICHES AND POWER WHICH WERE HIS BY HIS ADOPTION TO THE PHARAOH'S HOUSEHOLD. VERSE 27 SAYS HE LEFT EGYPT BY FAITH. VERSE 28 SAYS THAT THROUGH FAITH HE KEPT THE PASSOVER. VERSE 29 SAYS THAT BY FAITH THEY PASSED THROUGH THE RED SEA.

IN VERSE 30, BY FAITH THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELL DOWN, BECAUSE THEY DID AS GOD SAID. VERSE 31 IS THE RECORD OF RAHAB WHO HID THE SPIES FROM JOSHUA, AND THEN IMMEDIATELY PUT THE SCARLET CORD IN HER WINDOW.

THIS IS A GREAT CHAPTER OF GOD'S HALL OF FAME, BUT VERSE 39 MAKES IT CLEAR THAT NONE OF THESE PEOPLE OBTAINED THE PROMISE OF GOD'S REST ON EARTH. VERSE 40 INDICATES THAT THIS PEACE COMES BECAUSE OF US, INDICATING THAT THE PROMISE CAME IN CHRIST AND FAITH IN HIM.

HEBREWS 12

CHAPTER 12 BUILDS ON CHAPTER 11. CHAPTER 11 IS AN ILLUSTRATION THAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A SPIRITUAL RACE. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RUNNING OF THIS RACE ARE:

1. LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT. THE WORD TRANSLATED “WEIGHT” IS *ογκον*, AND MEANS A MASS OF FLESH.
2. LAY ASIDE SIN WHICH ENTANGLES OR EASILY SURROUNDS.
3. RUN WITH ENDURANCE.
4. RUN THE CONTEST. THE WORD IS NOT THE USUAL WORD FOR RACE, BUT RATHER THE WORD FOR CONTEST.

VERSE 2 SAYS THAT WE ARE TO FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS WHO ENDURED THE CROSS. THE VERSE DOES NOT MEAN WHAT MANY THINK. WE USUALLY THINK THAT “FOR” THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM HE ENDURED THE CROSS. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FOR” IS *αυτι*. “INSTEAD OF” OR “IN PLACE OF” IS A BETTER TRANSLATION OF THIS WORD. THIS MEANS THE VERSE SAYS, “INSTEAD OF THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM HE ENDURED THE CROSS.”

IN VERSE 12 THE WORD TRANSLATED “LIFT UP” IS FROM AN ANCIENT WORD USED FOR RESETTING BONES THAT WERE OUT OF JOINT. THE MEANING IN THIS CONTEXT IS THAT THE PERSON WHO DOES NOT ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE AND TRAINING OF THE LORD IS LIKE A PERSON WHOSE BONES ARE OUT OF JOINT.

HEBREWS 13

CHAPTER 13 IS A SERIES OF EXHORTATIONS AND CONCLUDING STATEMENTS. THE EXHORTATIONS ARE:

1. LOVE THE BRETHREN, VERSE 1. HE HAD INDICATED EARLIER THAT THERE WAS STRIFE IN THE CHURCH.
2. BE GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY, VERSE 2.
3. REMEMBER THOSE IN PRISON, VERSE 3.
4. HOLD MARRIAGE IN HIGH ESTEEM. THE WORD τιμιος, MEANS “HELD AS IF AT A GREAT PRICE,” VERSE 4.
5. LOVE NOT SILVER, VERSE 5. IT IS A PLAY ON WORDS. αφιλαπγυρος, IS φιλεω, LOVE WITH THE PREFIX A MEANING NO AND αργυρος, SILVER. IT MEANS NO LOVE FOR SILVER.
6. BE CONTENT, VERSE 5. THE WORD TRANSLATED “CONTENT” OR “SATISFIED” IS αρκουμενοι AND MEANS POSSESSING GREAT STRENGTH.

THE LAST PART OF VERSE 5 IS EXTRAORDINARY COMPARED TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. IT HAS FIVE NEGATIVES IN IT. THE AUTHOR HEAPS THEM UP TO ADD EMPHASIS TO HIS STATEMENT. THE PHRASE COULD BE TRANSLATED, “NO, NOT WILL I LEAVE YOU, NO NOT NEVER FORSAKE YOU.” THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED “LEAVE” MEANS “TO LOOSEN ONE’S GRIP” OR “TO LET SINK.” THE PHRASE MEANS “I WILL NEVER, NEVER, LET YOU SINK.” TWO NEGATIVES ARE ATTACHED TO THIS PHRASE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “FORSAKE” MEANS “TO LEAVE IN A STATE OF DEFEAT.” THERE ARE THREE NEGATIVES ATTACHED TO THIS PART OF THE PHRASE.

IN VERSE 7, HE CALLS THEM TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO TAUGHT THEM. IN VERSE 8, HE FOCUSES UPON THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF CHRIST. THEN IN VERSE 9, HE WARNS THEM NOT TO BE CARRIED AWAY BY DIFFERENT TEACHING THAN THEY HAD BEEN TAUGHT. IT SEEMS THAT THIS STRANGE DOCTRINE WAS THAT JESUS IS NOT THE MESSIAH.

IN HIS CONCLUDING STATEMENTS HE URGES THEM TO IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST, PRAISE GOD CONTINUALLY, SUBMIT TO THEIR LEADERS AND TO PRAY FOR HIM, THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE. IT SOUNDS AS IF THE AUTHOR IS IN PRISON FOR HIS FAITH.

THE AUTHOR CONCLUDES WITH A GREAT BENEDICTION.

JAMES

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF JAMES IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES BELONGS TO THE GROUP OF WRITINGS KNOWN AS THE “GENERAL EPISTLES.” THIS GROUP IS COMPOSED OF JAMES, I & II PETER, I, II & III JOHN AND JUDE. THE NAME “GENERAL EPISTLES” WAS GIVEN TO THESE EPISTLES EITHER:

- 1. BECAUSE THEY WERE WRITTEN TO GROUPS OF CHURCHES RATHER THAN TO A SINGLE CHURCH,**
- 2. BECAUSE OF THE CONTENT, OR**
- 3. BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENT AUTHORS OF THE EPISTLES. WE NOTICE IMMEDIATELY THAT EACH EPISTLE IS NAMED AFTER ITS INDIVIDUAL AUTHOR. (ROBERT H. GUNDRY, A SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1981] P. 323.)**

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, PROBABLY THE EARLIEST NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE, EMPHASIZES PRACTICAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FAITH. THE AUTHOR WISHES TO DEMONSTRATE

THAT CHRISTIANITY IS A WAY OF LIFE. IT IS A WARNING TO THOSE WHO ARE INCLINED TO TRY TO TALK THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN INSTEAD OF WALKING THE CHRISTIAN WALK.

THE AUTHOR IS A CHRISTIAN JEW AND ASSUMES THE FAITH ON THE PART OF HIS READERS. THE EPISTLE SAYS IT IS WRITTEN TO CHRISTIANS JEWS, VERSE 1. EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE CHRISTIANS THEY HAVE NOT CEASED TO BE JEWS. THEY STILL PRACTICE ALL THE OBSERVANCES OF JUDAISM. JAMES DEALS WITH SUCH SUBJECTS AS: JOY IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE, PRAYER FOR WISDOM, THE DECEPTION OF WEALTH, TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS, WORKS AS EVIDENCE OF FAITH, CONTROL OF THE TONGUE, CONTROL OF ANGER, THE LAW AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD, PATIENCE, HONESTY, CONFESSION OF SIN, PRAYING FOR THE SICK AND RESTORING THE FALLEN BELIEVER. THE EPISTLE IS PROBABLY COMPOSED OF EARLY CHRISTIAN WISDOM SAYINGS OR SERMONS ADDRESSED TO EARLY JEWISH BELIEVERS. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR ITS LOOSE STRUCTURE.

THE PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS SET FORTH IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES MAKE IT A VERY RELEVANT DOCUMENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY TODAY.

AUTHORSHIP

A CAREFUL READING OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES REVEALS THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE OF AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH. SEVERAL PEOPLE NAMED JAMES ARE MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ALSO IN CHURCH HISTORY. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT THE AUTHOR WAS JAMES, THE BROTHER OF OUR LORD. HE WAS CALLED JAMES THE JUST AND WAS A HIGHLY RESPECTED LEADER OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH. TRADITION SAYS HE WAS A MAN OF PRAYER. JOSEPHUS, A FIRST CENTURY JEWISH HISTORIAN, AND EUSEBIUS A FOURTH CENTURY CHURCH HISTORIAN, BOTH RECORDED THAT HE WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH BY THE SANHEDRIN AND SUFFERED A TERRIBLE DEATH AT THE HANDS OF HIS FELLOW JEWS WHO OPPOSED CHRISTIANITY.

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST JEWISH BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ALTHOUGH REVELATION AND HEBREWS CONTEND WITH IT FOR FIRST PLACE. IT IS RATHER AMAZING THAT TWO OF THE MOST JEWISH BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, HEBREWS AND JAMES, ALSO CONTAIN SOME OF THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. HOW DO WE ACCOUNT FOR THIS SINCE JAMES IS A JEW FROM GALILEE? GALILEE IS ADJACENT TO GENTILE REGIONS, AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA SPOKE AND READ ARAMAIC, GREEK AND HEBREW. (GUNDRY, *OP. CIT.*, P. 325. SEE ALSO HIS FOOTNOTE.) IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT JAMES COULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS EPISTLE HIMSELF. IT WAS ALSO VERY COMMON FOR PEOPLE AT THAT TIME TO DICTATE THEIR LETTERS TO A PERSON WHO WROTE FOR THEM. JAMES MAY HAVE DICTATED THIS EPISTLE TO SOMEONE

WHO HAD EXCELLENT COMMAND OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE. KISTEMAKER THINKS THE EPISTLE IS COMPOSED OF TWO SERMONS. (SIMON J. KISTEMAKER, JAMES AND I-III JOHN, THE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER BOOK HOUSE, 1986] P.) IF THIS IS TRUE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOMEONE RECORDED THESE SERMONS WHICH LATER BECAME THE BASIS OF JAMES' EPISTLE TO THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS. THESE JEWS ARE CALLED THE DISPERSION, MEANING THE JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE OF PALESTINE.

JAMES, THE BROTHER OF THE LORD, SPEAKS 230 WORDS IN ACTS 15:13-29. MAYOR SAYS THAT WHEN THESE WORDS ARE COMPARED WITH THE WORDS IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES IT IS SURPRISING HOW MANY OF THEM REAPPEAR. (JOSEPH B. MAYOR, THE EPISTLE OF St. JAMES, P. III, QUOTED BY SIMON J. KISTEMAKER, IBID., P. 9.)

DATE

MOST OF THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO AN EARLY DATE FOR THE WRITING OF JAMES, PROBABLY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 40 AND 50 A.D. IF JAMES, THE BROTHER OF THE LORD, WROTE THE EPISTLE, IT COULD NOT BE LATER THAN 62 A.D., BECAUSE JOSEPHUS IN ANTIQUITIES AND EUSEBIUS IN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY TELL US THAT IN THAT YEAR NERO SENT ALBINUS TO JUDEA TO SUCCEED FESTUS AS THE GOVERNOR, AND THAT JAMES WAS KILLED BEFORE ALBINUS ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM. WE ALSO KNOW THAT JAMES WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF LEADERS OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM AT AN EARLY DATE.

ANOTHER REASON FOR SUGGESTING AN EARLY DATE IS THAT ABOUT THE ONLY HERESY WHICH JAMES ATTACKS IS THE HERESY OF BELIEF WITHOUT BEHAVIOR.

THE EPISTLE AND THE CANON

THE HISTORY OF CANONIZATION IS VERY INTERESTING AND NOT NEARLY AS SIMPLE AS IS GENERALLY SUPPOSED. MOST OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE ACCEPTED AS SCRIPTURE BY THE TIME OF THE MURATORIAN CANON IN ABOUT 175 A.D. THE 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE ACCEPTED AS SCRIPTURE BY THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE IN 397 A.D. IT IS INTERESTING THAT JAMES IS ONE OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH WAS SLOWLY ACCEPTED INTO THE CANON. YOU MAY WANT TO REFER TO THE SECTION ON CANONIZATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS NEW TESTAMENT STUDY GUIDE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JAMES

- 1. IT USES MANY ACTION VERBS AND IS FAST PACED.**
- 2. IT HAS STRONG IMPERATIVES.**
- 3. IT HAS MANY STRIKING ILLUSTRATIONS.**
- 4. IT USES RHETORICAL QUESTIONS WITH GREAT EFFECTIVENESS.**
- 5. IT IS LIKE A SERIES OF PEARLS ON A STRING.**
- 6. IT STRESSES BEHAVIOR AS PROOF OF BELIEF.**
- 7. IT CONTAINS THE HIGHEST JEWISH THOUGHT.**

TEXT

JAMES 1

IN VERSE 1, THE AUTHOR GIVES HIS NAME AS JAMES. THE NAME JAMES IS DERIVED FROM THE NAME JACOB IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE CALLS HIMSELF A δούλος (DOOLOS), A SLAVE OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS MEANS THAT HE SAW HIS MISSION AS OBEYING THE ONE TO WHOM HE BELONGED. THIS TERMINOLOGY SHOWS HIS LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

HE WRITES TO THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE DIASPORA. THE DIASPORA REFERS TO JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE OF PALESTINE. SOME OF THE HISTORICAL REASONS FOR THIS ARE AS FOLLOWS. MANY JEWS HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR COUNTRY BY ASSYRIA IN 722 - 721 B.C. AND BY THE BABYLONIANS IN 587 - 586 B.C. FEW OF THESE PEOPLE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMELAND.

DURING THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT THE JEWS FOUND FAVOR WITH HIM AND MANY OF THEM MOVED FROM ISRAEL TO ALEXANDRIA. IN 63 B.C. THE ROMAN GENERAL POMPEY CAPTURED JERUSALEM CAUSING MANY OF THE JEWS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY SEEKING A BETTER PLACE TO EARN A LIVING. DURING THESE PERIODS OF TIME JEWS HAD MOVED TO THE MAJOR CITIES, FORMED COLONIES AND BUILT THEIR SYNAGOGUES.

SCHOLARS GENERALLY INTERPRET JAMES' REFERENCES TO THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE DISPERSION AS:

- 1. ALL JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE PALESTINE,**
- 2. ALL OR A PARTICULAR GROUP OF CHRISTIAN JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE PALESTINE, OR**
- 3. THE CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD USED FIGURATIVELY AS THE NEW ISRAEL OF GOD.**

THE BEST INTERPRETATION IS THAT THE EPISTLE IS WRITTEN TO A PARTICULAR GROUP OR TO ALL OF THE CHRISTIAN JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM.

VERSES 2-4 TEACHES THAT TRIALS ARE TO BE APPROACHED WITH JOY KNOWING THAT THEY PRODUCE ENDURANCE AND ENDURANCE PRODUCES MATURITY. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT TRIALS WILL PROVE WHAT IS GENUINE IN THE PERSON'S FAITH OR SHOW THAT THE FAITH IS GENUINE. THE WORD TRANSLATED "TESTING" HERE MEANS "TESTING FOR A PURPOSE." THE WORD TRANSLATED "PATIENCE" OR "ENDURANCE" MEANS "THE ABILITY TO TAKE IT AND TO TURN THINGS INTO GREATNESS." THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "PERFECT" MEANS "THAT SOMETHING ACHIEVES THE END FOR WHICH IT WAS CREATED." FOR EXAMPLE, A WATER PUMP IS A PERFECT PUMP IF IT PUMPS WATER. THE TESTING DEVELOPS IN A PERSON THE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THAT FOR WHICH GOD CREATED THE PERSON. THE WORD "LACKING" MEANS "A DEFICIENCY OF STRENGTH TO WIN A VICTORY." IN VERSE 3 THE WORD TRANSLATED "KNOWLEDGE" MEANS "KNOWLEDGE FROM FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN JUST UNTESTED INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE."

VERSES 5-8 TELL US THAT A PERSON MUST HAVE WISDOM TO KNOW HOW TO DEVELOP STRENGTH IN TRIALS AND FACE THEM WITH THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE. WISDOM IS MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE. A. T. ROBERTSON SAYS "WITH JAMES' WISDOM IS THE RIGHT USE OF ONE'S OPPORTUNITIES IN HOLY LIVING." (A. T. ROBERTSON, STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES [NASHVILLE, TN: BROADMAN PRESS] P. 41.) JAMES RECOGNIZES GOD AS THE GIVER OF WISDOM. GOD GIVES WISDOM TO THE PERSON WHO HAS FAITH AND DOES NOT DOUBT. JAMES COMPARES THE DOUBTING PERSON TO A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN BY THE WIND. THIS DESCRIBES THE UNSTABLE PERSON, WHO IS NOT CONSISTENT AND SEEMS TO HAVE TWO MINDS INSIDE HIM. THE POINT IS THAT THE INCONSISTENT AND UNSTABLE PERSON WITH A DIVIDED MIND IS NOT ABLE TO USE WISDOM.

VERSES 9-11 PLACE THE POOR AND THE WEALTHY BELIEVER ON THE SAME LEVEL BEFORE GOD. THE POOR WERE TO GIVE GOD THE CREDIT FOR THEIR POSITION BEFORE HIM, AND THE WEALTHY WERE TO HOLD THEIR WEALTH IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. ANCIENT JEWISH THOUGHT HAD TWO PERSPECTIVES ABOUT WEALTH: 1. WEALTH WAS A SIGN OF DIVINE FAVOR, 2. WEALTH WAS OPPOSED TO GOD. JESUS PUT THESE TWO VIEWS IN PROPER FOCUS IN HIS PARABLES WHICH DEAL WITH WEALTH AND STEWARDSHIP. JESUS TEACHES THAT A PERSON IS NOT TO SERVE WEALTH, RATHER THE PERSON IS TO SERVE GOD WITH HIS WEALTH.

JAMES IS SHOWING THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF WEALTH, AND REINFORCES HIS ARGUMENT BY POINTING TO THE BREVITY OF LIFE.

THE POINT OF VERSES 12-15 IS THAT WHEN A PERSON IS TEMPTED TO DO EVIL AND COMES THROUGH VICTORIOUSLY THE PERSON IS SPIRITUALLY STRONGER THAN BEFORE THE TEMPTATION. JAMES USES THE WORD μακαριος, WHICH IS THE SAME WORD THAT IS TRANSLATED "BLESSED" OR "HAPPY" IN THE BEATITUDES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN MATTHEW 5. THE WORD MEANS MORE THAN HAPPY OR SOMETHING LIKE INNER JOY. IN VERSE 12 THE WORD TRANSLATED "CROWN" IS στεφανον. THIS WORD "STEPHANOS" IS SIMILAR TO THE NAME STEPHEN. THIS CROWN REFERS TO THE VICTOR'S CROWN WHICH WAS GIVEN AT THE ATHLETIC CONTESTS. THE USUAL WORD FOR CROWN IS "DIADEMA," FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD DIADEM. THIS CROWN WAS A SIGN OF JOY. THE "DIADEMA" CROWN WAS WORN BY THE ROYALTY AND THE "STEPHANOS" CROWN BY THE VICTOR.

IN VERSE 14 JAMES REMINDS HIS READERS THAT TEMPTATION IS MORE SUBJECTIVE THAN OBJECTIVE. IN VERSE 14 THE WORD TRANSLATED "ENTICED" IS δელεαζεται AND MEANS BEING ALLURED. THE WORD IS USED OF A FISHERMAN'S BAIT OR THE BAIT USED IN A HUNTER'S TRAP. THESE VERSES SHOW THAT TEMPTATION LEADS TO LUST, LUST LEADS TO SIN, AND SIN LEADS TO DEATH.

IN VERSES 16-18, JAMES SPEAKS OF THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF GOD. HE USES WORDS THAT MIGHT BE USED BY AN ASTRONOMER. THE FATHER OF LIGHTS REFERS TO GOD AS THE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES. THE SHADOWS SPEAK ABOUT THE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF LIGHT GIVEN BY THE SUN AND THE REFLECTED LIGHT GIVEN BY THE MOON AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE YEAR.

VERSES 19-27 WARNS AGAINST THE HABIT OF NOT LISTENING ENOUGH, SPEAKING TOO QUICKLY AND BECOMING ANGRY TOO EASILY. THIS FAULT OF A FAST FIRE IN A PERSON'S BREAST COOKS MANY A PERSON'S GOOSE. IN THIS SECTION JAMES SHOWS THAT HIS READERS ARE TO ACT ON THE WORD. HE IS USING THIS IN CONTRAST TO THEIR ACTING IN ANGER WITHOUT LISTENING, VERSE 19. IN VERSE 21, THE WORD TRANSLATED "FILTHINESS" COMES FROM A ROOT WORD MEANING EAR WAX. JAMES'S IDEA HERE IS THAT THEY SHOULD GET RID OF EVERYTHING THAT STOPS THEIR EARS FROM HEARING GOD'S MESSAGE. IN VERSES 26 AND 27 JAMES ESTABLISHES PRACTICAL SERVICE AND PURITY OF A PERSON'S LIFE AS TESTS FOR TRUE WORSHIP.

JAMES 2

IN 2:1 - 13, JAMES GIVES A PICTURE OF TWO MEN ENTERING WORSHIP, ONE WEALTHY, WEARING GOLD RINGS AND SPLENDID CLOTHES AND THE OTHER MAN POOR, DRESSED IN SHABBY CLOTHES. THE WARNING HERE IS NOT TO GIVE A WEALTHY PERSON PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. JAMES POINTS TO THE TRUTH THAT THE INNER DRIVE OF AGAPE LOVE IS TO CONTROL THE ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF THE BELIEVER. IN THE FIRST VERSE THE WORD προσωποληψιας IS TRANSLATED "RESPECT OF PERSONS." IT IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS AND MEANS "TO LIFT UP THE FACE" OR "TO ACCEPT THE FACE OF." (A. T. ROBERTSON, WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT [NASHVILLE, TN: BROADMAN PRESS, 1931] VOL. VI, P. 27.)

JAMES 2:14-26 IS A DESCRIPTION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. THIS PASSAGE IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD. THIS MISUNDERSTANDING CAUSES PEOPLE TO BELIEVE JAMES TAUGHT SALVATION BY WORKS AND PAUL TAUGHT SALVATION BY FAITH. THIS MISUNDERSTANDING IS EASILY CORRECTED BY READING THE EVENTS OF THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. JAMES AND PAUL BOTH AGREED ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL. JAMES, IN CHAPTER 2, IS PROBABLY QUALIFYING A PERVERTED FORM OF PAUL'S THEOLOGY.

IN THIS SECTION JAMES IS SHOWING THAT FAITH AND WORKS ARE RELATED. JAMES NEVER SAYS THAT A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED BY WORKS APART FROM FAITH, AND PAUL IN ROMANS DEFINITELY SHOWS THAT JUSTIFICATION NATURALLY MOVES INTO SANCTIFICATION.

JAMES IS ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH WHO DIVORCE BEHAVIOR FROM BELIEF, DEEDS FROM DOCTRINE AND SANCTIFICATION FROM JUSTIFICATION.

PAUL, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF THOSE WHO INSIST THAT A GENTILE MUST BECOME A JEW AND OBSERVE THE LAW IN ORDER TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

VERSES 14-17 SHOW THAT JAMES USES THE WORD "WORKS" TO MEAN THE ACTIONS OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. HE IS DESCRIBING THE QUALITY OF SAVING FAITH, AND IS CONCERNED WITH HOW A CHRISTIAN DEMONSTRATES HIS FAITH. PAUL, ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS USES THE WORD "WORKS" TO MEAN A FALSE METHOD OF EARNING GOD'S

SALVATION. IN ROMANS HE ALSO SHOWS THAT JUSTIFICATION MOVES NATURALLY INTO SANCTIFICATION. HE USES SANCTIFICATION TO DESCRIBE HOW A PERSON DEMONSTRATES THAT HE IS A CHRISTIAN. (HAROLD S. SONGER, JAMES, BROADMAN COMMENTARY [NASHVILLE, TN: BROADMAN PRESS, 1972] P. 119.)

THE SUPPOSED DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN JAMES AND PAUL LOSES MOST OF ITS STING WHEN THE PASSAGES ARE CONSIDERED IN THEIR CONTEXT AND IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT.

JAMES 3

IN CHAPTER 3 JAMES DEALS WITH THE SUBJECTS OF SPEECH (THE TONGUE) AND WISDOM. HE MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THOSE WHO CAN AND THOSE WHO CANNOT CONTROL THEIR TONGUES. HE ALSO DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND THOSE WHO HAVE WISDOM. JAMES USES SEVEN PICTURES TO EXPOSE THE PERILS OF THE TONGUE.

IN VERSE 1, JAMES IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS A TEACHER AND WARNS THOSE IN THIS POSITION OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY. HE SAYS THAT TEACHERS BECAUSE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE JUDGED MORE SEVERELY THAN OTHERS. THE TEACHER EXPRESSES HIS THOUGHTS WITH SPEECH OR HIS TONGUE. SO, IN VERSE 2 HE RELATES THE CONTROL OF THE TONGUE TO THE

MATURE PERSON. HE SAYS THAT THE PERSON WHO CONTROLS HIS TONGUE IS DISCIPLINED ENOUGH TO HAVE VICTORY OVER SIN. HE USES THE BIT IN THE HORSE'S MOUTH AND THE RUDDER OF THE SHIP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CONTROL THESE SMALL ITEMS HAVE OVER HUGE AND POWERFUL THINGS.

VERSES 6-12 STATE IN VERY STRONG TERMS THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF THE TONGUE. BLUNTLY, IN VERSE 6, HE SAYS THAT THE TONGUE CAN BE A FIRE FROM HELL, “. . . και φλογιζομενη υπο της γεεννης,” “. . . AND BEING SET ON FIRE BY GEHENNA.)” GEHENNA REFERS TO THE VALLEY OF HINNOM, WHICH WAS THE CITY DUMP PROBABLY LOCATED AT THAT TIME ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF JERUSALEM. IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE HUMAN CHILD SACRIFICES HAD BEEN MADE TO THE PAGAN GOD MOLECH, II KINGS 16:3. TO ILLUSTRATE THE POWER OF THE TONGUE HE SAYS THAT A FOREST IS SET ON FIRE BY A SMALL SPARK.

IN CHAPTER 4 JAMES CONTINUES WITH HIS PREVIOUS THOUGHT FROM 3:18. EVIDENTLY THERE WAS MUCH STRIFE AMONG THE BELIEVERS. IN VERSES 1-6, JAMES SHOWS THE ROOT CAUSE OF PROBLEMS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND STRIFE IN THE CHURCH. THE CULPRIT IS THE SELFISHNESS OF THE HEART WHICH HE DESCRIBES AS UNRESTRAINED PLEASURES. THIS MOTIVATION HAS EVEN AFFECTED THEIR PRAYER LIVES.

AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID JAMES GIVES SOME VERY AUTHORITATIVE COMMANDS, AND IN VERSES 7-10, HE HAS TEN OF THESE.

VERSE 7 CONTAINS A CHALLENGE AND A PROMISE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE. HE CALLS THEM TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AGAINST THE DEVIL. THIS RESISTIVE ACTION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. HE ADMONISHES THEM TO HUMBLE THEMSELVES, SUBMIT TO GOD AND RESIST THE DEVIL. THIS IS AN ACT OF THE WILL. THE PROMISE IS THAT THE DEVIL WILL FLEE FROM THEM.

JAMES 5

IN CHAPTER 5, VERSES 1 - 6 JAMES CONDEMNS FRAUDULENT GAINING OF WEALTH AND THE IMMORAL USE OF IT. EVIDENTLY THE PEOPLE HE IS WRITING TO WERE SUFFERING OPPRESSION FROM THE WEALTHY. HE URGES THEM, IN VERSES 7 - 11, TO ENDURE WITH PATIENCE THEIR HARDSHIP, BECAUSE THE RETURN OF THE LORD WAS NEAR. THIS HARDSHIP EVIDENTLY WAS PUSHING SOME OF THEM TO THE POINT OF FRUSTRATION AND SWEARING, VERSE 12.

VERSES 13 - 18 POINT TO THE CORRECT RESPONSE TO SUFFERING OF ALL KINDS, ESPECIALLY TO SICKNESS. THE EMPHASIS HERE IS UPON PRAYER. THIS SECTION MUST BE INTERPRETED IN LIGHT OF THE TIME IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN AND WITH INSIGHT INTO THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLE IT CONTAINS. THE PASSAGE SAYS THAT THE SICK PERSON IS TO CALL FOR THE ELDERS, ASK THEM TO PRAY FOR HIM, TAKE HIS MEDICINE, CONFESS HIS SINS AND HAVE FAITH IN GOD AND PRAY. OIL WAS THE COMMON MEDICINE WHEN JAMES WROTE. SO THE

PRINCIPLE IS FOR THE PERSON TO USE THE BEST MEDICAL REMEDIES POSSIBLE. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT ANOINTING WITH OIL IS A SIGN OF SPIRITUAL HOPE, GOD'S BLESSINGS AND EMPOWERMENT. IT WAS AN ANCIENT PRACTICE AND STILL HAS SIGNIFICANCE AS A SYMBOL OF FAITH.

IN THE LAST TWO VERSES, 19 AND 20, JAMES REVEALS THE IMPORTANCE OF TURNING A PERSON FROM ERROR TO THE TRUTH. THE PERSON WHO DOES THIS HAS A GREAT REWARD.



I PETER

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF I PETER IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

I PETER IS AN EPISTLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE. IT IS DESIGNED BY THE APOSTLE TO BUILD UP HIS READERS IN THE FAITH, TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO WITHSTAND HARDSHIPS, TO LIFT THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE AND TO CHALLENGE THEM TO BE FAITHFUL IN THEIR CALLING. THE EPISTLE IS ADDRESSED TO BELIEVERS WHO ARE ENDURING PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING. THEY NEED PATIENCE AND HOLINESS TO COME THROUGH THESE TRIALS WITH GLORY AND JOY. THE MOTIF OF THE EPISTLE IS A JOURNEY OR PILGRIMAGE. THIS PILGRIMAGE IS TRAVELED BY THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SALVATION AND KNOW THAT GOD RESURRECTED JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD AND SET HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN GLORY. PETER DEPENDS HEAVILY UPON HIS JEWISH BACKGROUND AND SHOWS IN HIS EPISTLE THAT JESUS FULFILLED THE PROPHECIES AND HOPES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

AUTHORSHIP

IN THE FIRST VERSE OF THE EPISTLE PETER IDENTIFIES

HIMSELF AS THE AUTHOR. PETRINE AUTHORSHIP OF I PETER WAS ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION FROM THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY. THIS GAVE THE EPISTLE A SECURE PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE EPISTLE, HOWEVER, WAS NOT LISTED IN THE MURATORIAN CANON (@ 170- 190 A.D.) PROBABLY THE EXPLANATION FOR THIS IS THE FRAGMENTARY NATURE OF THE LIST OF BOOKS.

THE CHURCH FATHERS WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE EPISTLE. FOR EXAMPLE, CLEMENT OF ROME IN HIS WRITINGS IN ABOUT 95 A.D. HAS WHAT MANY SCHOLARS THINK IS MORE THAN TWELVE QUOTES OR REFERENCES TO I PETER. POLYCARP, WHO DIED A MARTYRS DEATH AT THE AGE OF 86 AND HAD BEEN A DISCIPLE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN, USED THE LANGUAGE OF I PETER EXTENSIVELY.

EVEN THOUGH THE EPISTLE HAS THE STRONGEST ACCEPTANCE BY THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF ANY EPISTLE THERE ARE THOSE WHO QUESTION PETER'S AUTHORSHIP, JUST AS THERE ARE SCHOLARS WHO QUESTION THE AUTHORSHIP OF EVERY SINGLE BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE OBJECTIONS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF I PETER CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY ANSWERED WITH WISDOM AND EVIDENCE. PETRINE AUTHORSHIP IS GENERALLY QUESTIONED ON THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES:

A GALILEAN FISHERMAN COULD NOT HAVE WRITTEN SOME OF THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THIS IS PERHAPS THE STRONGEST POINT OF THOSE OPPOSED TO PETRINE AUTHORSHIP. IT IS WELL TO REMEMBER THAT MANY PEOPLE OF PALESTINE AT THIS TIME SPOKE TWO OR THREE LANGUAGES. THIS SUGGESTS THAT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE; HOWEVER, 5:12

TELLS US THAT SILVANUS WAS THE SCRIBE FOR PETER. SILAS WAS AN OUTSTANDING GREEK CHRISTIAN WHO WAS AN ASSOCIATE WITH PAUL ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, ACTS 15:40- 18:22. SILAS MAY HAVE ASSISTED PAUL IN THE WRITING OF I AND II THESSALONIANS. HE CERTAINLY HAD THE CAPABILITIES IN LINGUISTICS AND THEOLOGY TO WRITE THE QUALITY OF GREEK CONTAINED IN I PETER. SILAS ALSO HAS BEEN SUGGESTED AS THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS. HEBREWS AND I PETER HAVE THE BEST GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. ALL OF THE FACTORS ABOUT SILAS SHOW US THAT HE WAS AN EXTREMELY CAPABLE MAN.

PETER THE APOSTLE OF THE LORD, THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE IS, WITHOUT QUESTION, THE MOST COLORFUL OF THE APOSTLES. HE IS IN THE INNER CIRCLE OF JESUS' THREE DISCIPLES, AND THE CHIEF SPOKESMAN AND LEADER OF THE TWELVE. THE CONTRADICTIONS IN HIS PERSONALITY MAKE HIM A MOST INTERESTING CHARACTER STUDY. HE BRAVELY FOLLOWS THE SOLDIERS TO JESUS' TRIAL. THERE HE WAITS IN THE COURTYARD WARMING HIMSELF BY THE FIRE WHERE HE COWARDLY DENIES BEING ONE OF JESUS' DISCIPLE. HE HAS ENOUGH SPIRITUAL INSIGHT TO CONFESS JESUS AS THE CHRIST AND YET ENOUGH SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS TO VERBALLY RESIST JESUS WHEN HE SPEAKS OF GOING TO THE CROSS. HE COURAGEOUSLY FACES THE JEWISH LEADERS AT PENTECOST AND YET AT ANTIOCH SUCCEUMBS TO THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN PEER PRESSURE FROM JERUSALEM AND WITHDRAWS FROM EATING WITH GENTILE CHRISTIANS.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

PETER WAS WRITING TO THE διασπορας, TRANSLATED DISPERSION. THIS IS A TERM USED IN THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT TO REFER TO JEWS LIVING OUTSIDE PALESTINE. THIS LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIAN JEWS AND PERHAPS SOME GENTILE CHRISTIANS, SINCE HE SAYS IN 1;14 “. . . NOT FASHIONING (CONFORMING) YOURSELVES TO THE FORMER DESIRES IN YOUR IGNORANCE.” THIS COULD MEAN EITHER THE TEACHINGS PASSED TO THEM BY THEIR JEWISH FATHERS, WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST, OR TO GENTILES AND THEIR FORMER SINFUL MANNER OF LIVING. THE EPISTLE IS ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO LIVED IN THE FIVE PROVINCES LISTED IN VERSE ONE, PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA. THESE AREAS ARE IN ASIA MINOR. HIS READERS WERE SUFFERING FROM DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEM FROM BOTH VICIOUS PAGANS AND HOSTILE JEWS. EVIDENTLY THESE PEOPLE WERE ATTACKING THESE JEWISH CHRISTIANS SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND LEGALLY. PETER WRITES A VERY PRACTICAL EPISTLE TO GIVE THEM HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THEIR DAILY STRUGGLES.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN DURING A PERIOD OF PERSECUTION. THE PROBLEM IS TO EXAMINE THE VARIOUS

PERSECUTIONS AND ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE ONE MOST LIKELY. THE TIME PERIOD THAT SEEMS MOST PROBABLE IS BETWEEN 62-64 A.D. DURING THE REIGN OF NERO. WE DO NOT KNOW ALL THE PERSECUTIONS THAT TOOK PLACE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY. HOWEVER, WE DO KNOW THAT THE JEWS WHO WERE HOSTILE TO THE CHRISTIANS ATTEMPTED TO INCITE PAGANS AGAINST THEM AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. THIS IS EVIDENT FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS. SEVERAL SCHOLARS SUCH AS DANA AND GUTHRIE WORKING INDEPENDENTLY HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THIS PERSECUTION WAS PROBABLY NOT GOVERNMENTALLY INITIATED. (DONALD GUTHRIE, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION, [DOWNERS GROVE, IL: INTER-VERSIY PRESS, 1970] P. 107 AND (H. E. DANA, JEWISH CHRISTIANITY [NEW ORLEANS: BIBLE INSTITUTE MEMORIAL PRESS, 1937] P. 132.) PETER SAYS THAT HE WROTE THE EPISTLE FROM "BABYLON," 5:13. BABYLON IS SURELY THE CITY OF ROME. IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION "BABYLON" IS THE SYMBOLIC CODE NAME FOR ROME.

THE TRADITIONAL DATE GIVEN FOR THE DEATH OF PETER IS 67 A.D. IN ROME UNDER NERO. THAT DATE SEEMS TO BE FAIRLY ACCURATE.

TEXT

IN 1 PETER 1:1 - 2, PETER GREETES HIS READERS AND ALSO SETS FORTH THREE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE EPISTLE. THE FIRST IS THE ELECTION AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THE SECOND IS THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE THIRD IS THE

ATONING BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. THESE ARE THE BASIC FOUNDATIONS OF ANY BIBLICAL THEOLOGY.

IN THESE VERSES HE IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AND CALLS THEM *παρεπιδημοις*, SOJOURNERS WITH THE IDEA OF TRAVELERS IN A FOREIGN LAND. IN VERSE 2 PETER HAS THE SAME IDEA THAT PAUL HAS ABOUT GRACE. IN VERSE 3 HE HAS THE SAME IDEA JOHN HAS ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH.

VERSES 9 - 12 REFER TO THE NEW BIRTH WHICH PRODUCES THE LIVING HOPE IN THEM. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT HOPE IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS HOPE IS ALL THAT GOES WITH ETERNAL LIFE. PETER DESCRIBES THIS HOPE AS AN INHERITANCE THAT WILL NOT DECAY OR BECOME IMPURE OR WILT AS FLOWERS. THE THREE GREEK WORDS THAT HE USES TO DESCRIBE THIS CONDITION ALL BEGIN WITH THE FIRST LETTER OF THE GREEK ALPHABET, "α." THIS GIVES AN ALLITERATION SOUND TO THE EAR AND A PARALLELISM TO THE EYE. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT OUR WORD ALPHABET BEGINS WITH THE GREEK WORD ALPHA WHICH IS THE NAME OF THE FIRST LETTER IN THE GREEK ALPHABET.

THE HEART OF VERSES 13 - 21 IS THE QUOTE FROM LEVITICUS 11:44 WHICH STATES THAT THE PEOPLE OF GOD WERE TO BE HOLY AS GOD IS HOLY. PETER IS CALLING THEM TO HOLY LIVING BECAUSE THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD.

VERSE 22 SAYS THAT THEIR SOULS ARE PURIFIED BY OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE

RESULT IS TRUE BROTHERLY LOVE, NOT FAKED LOVE. THE IDEA HERE SEEMS TO BE THAT SOME OF THEM HAD FAKED THEIR LOVE FOR THE BROTHERS, BUT TRUE LOVE CAME WHEN THEY OBEYED THE WORD OF GOD.

VERSE 23 SAYS THAT THEY WERE BORN AGAIN BY THE LIVING WORD OF GOD. HE USES THE ANALOGY OF SEED TO REFER TO THE WORD OF GOD. THE COMPARISON IS THAT THE SEED OF GOD IS INCORRUPTIBLE; WHEREAS, SEED IS PERISHABLE.

IN CHAPTER 2, PETER USES MANY WORD PICTURES TO MAKE HIS POINTS CLEAR FOR HIS READERS. THE SECOND WORD IN THE GREEK SENTENCE IS TRANSLATED EITHER "THEREFORE" OR "WHEREFORE" AND MEANS THAT HE IS NOW GOING TO GIVE THE RESULTS OF WHAT HE HAS JUST PRESENTED TO THEM. HE IS REFERRING TO VERSE 23 WHEN HE SAID THEY HAD BEEN BORN ANEW. BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN BORN ANEW THEY ARE TO PUT ASIDE SIN. PETER LISTS FIVE SINS. EVIDENTLY THESE ARE SINS IN WHICH HIS LISTENERS WERE INVOLVED. THE WORD TRANSLATED "MALICE," *κακίαν*, MEANS GENERAL BADNESS. THE WORD TRANSLATED "GUILE" MEANS TRICKERY, AND IS RELATED TO A WORD MEANING THE BAIT IN A TRAP. THE WORD TRANSLATED "HYPOCRISIES" IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS "UNDER" AND "TO JUDGE." THE WORD WAS USED OF GREEK ACTORS WHO HID THEIR OWN IDENTITY AND ASSUMED THE IDENTITY OF THE CHARACTERS THEY WERE PORTRAYING. THE WORD TRANSLATED "ENVYINGS" MEANS JEALOUSY. THE WORD TRANSLATED "EVIL SPEAKING" IS COMPOSED OF TWO GREEK WORDS "DOWN" AND "TO SPEAK." THE WORD FOR SPEAK HAS THE SOUND OF LA, LA. THE IDEA IS A PERSON

SLANDERING OF PUTTING ANOTHER DOWN BY SPEAKING AGAINST THE PERSON.

IN VERSE 4, PETER SPEAKS OF CHRIST AS THE LIVING STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED AND IN VERSE 5 HE SPEAKS OF BELIEVERS AS BEING LIVING STONES AND PRIESTS IN A SPIRITUAL TEMPLE. IN VERSES 9 - 10, HE SAYS THEY THAT WERE NO PEOPLE ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD, A CHOSEN RACE, A KINGLY PRIESTHOOD AND A HOLY NATION, AND THEY ARE TO EXHIBIT HIS VIRTUES. PETER IS REACHING BACK INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE ORIGINAL INTENT GOD HAD IN CALLING ISRAEL AS A NATION AND HIS PEOPLE. GOD HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS PROMISES TO THE NATION ISRAEL. PAUL STATES THIS CLEARLY IN ROMANS. HOWEVER, THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH UNDER THE NEW COVENANT THE CHURCH IS TO GOD WHAT ISRAEL WAS TO HIM UNDER THE OLD COVENANT. THE CHURCH IN THIS SENSE IS THE NEW ISRAEL.

IN THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER 2 PETER DISCUSSES THE RELATIONSHIP OF SERVANTS AND MASTERS, THE PROPER RESPONSE TO UNJUST SUFFERING AND THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

IN CHAPTER 3, PETER CONTINUES TO SPEAK ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. FIRST HE DEALS WITH THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP. HE SAYS THAT MEN WILL BE WON BY THE INNER BEAUTY OF THEIR WIVES AND THAT MEN ARE TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR WIVES AND TO TREAT THEM WITH HONOR. PETER SAYS THAT WHEN MEN DO NOT TREAT THEIR WIVES AS HE HAS INSTRUCTED THEIR PRAYERS MAY BE

CUT OFF, εκκοπτεσθαι.

THE BEST TEXTS IN VERSE 15 READ “κυριον δε τον χριστον αγιασατε εν ταις καρδιαις υμων,” “LORD BUT THE CHRIST SANCTIFY IN THE HEARTS OF YOU (PL.),” WHICH IS TRANSLATED “BUT SANCTIFY IN YOUR HEARTS CHRIST AS LORD.” THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS OR THE RECEIVED TEXT HAS GOD INSTEAD OF CHRIST. WHEN CHRIST IS SANCTIFIED IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS THEIR RELATIONS AND CONDUCT BECOME HOLY BEFORE GOD.

IN CHAPTER 4, PETER WARNS HIS READERS ABOUT SEVERE PERSECUTION WHICH IS ABOUT TO COME UPON THEM. HE TELLS THEM TO HAVE THE SAME MIND THAT CHRIST HAD AS HE FACED SUFFERING. THIS REMINDS US OF PHILIPPIANS 2:5 - 11 WHERE PAUL URGED HIS READERS TO HAVE THE SAME MIND AS CHRIST. PETER ALSO REMINDS THEM THAT SUFFERING CAUSES THEM TO CEASE FROM SIN. HE ALSO REMINDS THEM THAT LIFE IS SHORT AND THAT THEY SHOULD LIVE THE REST OF THEIR LIVES IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD. PETER SAYS THAT JUDGEMENT IS COMING TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD FIRST AND IT WILL BE MUCH WORSE FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT HIS.

PETER CLOSES HIS EPISTLE IN CHAPTER 5 WITH EXHORTATIONS TO HIS READERS. HE INSTRUCTS THE LEADERS TO BE FAITHFUL, TEND THE FLOCK AS OVERSEERS AND NOT AS TYRANTS, NOT FOR MONEY, NOT AS DICTATORS, BUT AS EXAMPLES. TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE HE SAYS, BE HUMBLE BEFORE GOD, SERVE ONE ANOTHER, GIVE RESPECT AND OBEDIENCE TO THE LEADERS AND BE ON GUARD AGAINST THE DEVIL.

IN THE CONCLUSION PETER SAYS THAT SILAS AND MARK ARE WITH HIM. SILAS WAS ONE OF PAUL'S FELLOW WORKERS, AND IN II TIMOTHY 4:11, PAUL HAD ASKED TIMOTHY TO COME TO HIM AND BRING MARK WITH HIM. WE ASSUME THAT PAUL WAS IN PRISON WHEN HE WROTE THIS EPISTLE. EVIDENTLY PAUL WAS NOT PRESENT WHEN PETER WROTE THIS LETTER. WE ASSUME THAT HE HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON AND WAS CONTINUING HIS MISSIONARY WORK OR THAT HE HAD BEEN EXECUTED BEFORE THIS. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT PAUL WAS EXECUTED BEFORE PETER, MAYBE EVEN AS MUCH AS ONE TO FOUR YEARS. THE TRADITIONAL DATE FOR THE DEATH OF PETER IS 67 A.D. THIS DATE COULD HAVE BEEN 64 A.D.. PETER ENDS THE EPISTLE WITH "PEACE (BE) WITH YOU ALL WHO (ARE) IN CHRIST JESUS. AMEN."

II PETER

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF II PETER IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE EPISTLE OF II PETER HAS A SUPERB MESSAGE. EVIDENTLY BY THE TIME II PETER WAS WRITTEN FALSE TEACHERS WERE BECOMING A SERIOUS THREAT TO CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE CHURCH. THIS EPISTLE IS A RED FLAG WARNING FOR ITS READERS TO STAND GUARD AGAINST THE ATTACK OF FALSE TEACHERS WHO WOULD SOON COME TO INFEST THE CHURCH. THUS, THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE IS TO SPEAR HERESY BEFORE IT COULD MIX ITS FALSE DOCTRINE WITH THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. THE EPISTLE OF II PETER IS, THEREFORE, A DOCUMENT THAT SEEKS TO PRESERVE THE PURITY OF TRUE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. THE CHIEF DANGER THE CHURCH FACES IS NOT FROM PERSECUTION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH BUT FROM FALSE TEACHERS WITHIN THE CHURCH WHO CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIANS WHILE DENYING THE LORD WITH THEIR TEACHINGS AND THEIR IMPURE LIVING. THEIR MAJOR DENIAL IS THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

THE KEY WORD IN II PETER IS “KNOWLEDGE.” PETER CONTRASTS TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND FALSE KNOWLEDGE. THIS TRUE KNOWLEDGE IS A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST WHICH DEVELOPS CHRISTIAN VIRTUES IN THE BELIEVER. IN CHAPTER 1 HE PRESENTS HIS SUBJECT OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE. IN CHAPTER 2 HE CONTRASTS FALSE KNOWLEDGE AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE. IN CHAPTER 3 HE ANSWERS THE QUESTION OF WHY CHRIST’S RETURN HAS NOT COME AS QUICKLY AS THEY HAD HOPED. HIS ANSWER IS THAT GOD’S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS. HE CONCLUDES THE EPISTLE WITH AN ADMONITION TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN HOLINESS EXPECTING THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

AUTHORSHIP

THE AUTHORSHIP OF II PETER IS PROBABLY THE MOST DEBATED BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AMONG MODERN SCHOLARS. MANY SCHOLARS THINK IT WAS NOT ACCEPTED IN THE EARLY CHURCH AS AUTHENTIC. HOWEVER, J. B. MAYOR WHO REJECTS PETRINE AUTHORSHIP ON INTERNAL GROUNDS SAYS THAT EXTERNAL EVIDENCE WOULD COMPEL ITS ACCEPTANCE SINCE IT WAS USED BY MANY EARLY WRITERS. (J. B. MAYOR, THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE AND THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER, [GRAND RAPIDS; BAKER BOOK HOUSE, 1965] P. CXXIV. QUOTED BY RAY SUMMERS, “2 PETER,” THE BROADMAN BIBLE COMMENTARY [NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE: BROADMAN PRESS, 1972] VOL. 12, P. 173.) HIS STATEMENT SEEMS TO BE CORRECT, FOR THERE ARE SOME EARLY REFERENCES OR THOUGHTS FROM IT IN THE WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

FATHERS SUCH AS CLEMENT, 95 A.D., JUSTIN MARTYR, 165 A.D., IRENAEUS 180 A.D. AND OTHERS. THE EARLY THIRD CENTURY "BODMER PAPYRUS DESIGNATED P72 SHOWS ACCEPTANCE OF 2 PETER AS CANONICAL." (ROBERT H. GUNDRY, A SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ACADEMIC BOOKS, ZONDERVAN, 1981] P. 334.)

EUSEBIUS IN ABOUT 325 A.D. LISTED IT AMONG THE DISPUTED BOOKS ALONG WITH JUDE, JAMES, AND II AND III JOHN. EUSEBIUS STATED, "THESE THEN ARE THE WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO PETER, OF WHICH I HAVE RECOGNIZED ONLY ONE EPISTLE AS AUTHENTIC AND ACCEPTED BY THE EARLY FATHERS" EUSEBIUS HISTORY, 111:1.

MOST MODERN SCHOLARS SAY THAT THE EPISTLE WAS NOT QUICKLY ACCEPTED INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON AS SCRIPTURE. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT IT PASSED THE CRITERIA AND WAS ACCEPTED AS CANONICAL BY THE COUNCILS OF LAODICEA IN 363 A.D. OR 366 A.D., HIPPO IN 393 A.D. AND CARTHAGE IN 397 A.D.

THE BASIC REASON MODERN SCHOLARSHIP QUESTIONS THE AUTHORSHIP OF PETER IS ON INTERNAL GROUNDS. HOWEVER, AS USUAL, THERE ARE CONFLICTING OPINIONS. SCROGGIE THOUGHT THAT THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS EPISTLE WAS STRONG AND THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE WAS WEAK. (W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, "2 PETER," KNOW YOUR BIBLE, [OLD TAPPAN, NEW JERSEY: FLEMING H. REVELL, 1965] P. 322.)

CONSIDERING THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE, WE SEE THAT THE AUTHOR CLAIMS TO BE AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, 1:1. HE SAYS THAT HE SAW THE TRANSFIGURATION, 1:16-18. HE SAYS THAT HE HAS WRITTEN A PREVIOUS EPISTLE, 3:1 TO THEM. WE ASSUME THAT HE IS REFERRING TO THE EPISTLE OF I PETER. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT CAUSES DOUBT AMONG SCHOLARS IS: 1. THE GRAMMAR AND WORD DIFFERENCES IN THE GREEK BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND I PETER ARE OBVIOUS. THE SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN I PETER IS SUPERIOR TO THAT OF II PETER. THE ANSWER IS PROBABLY IN THE SCRIBES THAT PETER USED. IN FACT, HE MAY NOT HAVE USED A SCRIBE FOR II PETER. SILAS IS THE SCRIBE FOR I PETER, BUT NOT FOR THE SECOND EPISTLE. SOME SCHOLARS POINT OUT THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN I PETER AND JUDE AND SUGGEST THAT MANY OF THE IDEAS IN I PETER ARE BORROWED FROM JUDE. IT MAY BE THAT JUDE BORROWED FROM I PETER. THE DATE OF THE WRITING IS UNCERTAIN. HOWEVER, IF PETER WAS PUT TO DEATH IN 67 A.D. AS TRADITION SAYS, THEN THIS EPISTLE HAD TO BE WRITTEN BEFORE THIS AND PROBABLY SOMETIME BETWEEN 64-67 A.D. WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE PETER WAS WHEN HE WROTE THIS EPISTLE. BUT IF HE WAS IN ROME WHEN HE WROTE I PETER, HE WAS PROBABLY THERE WHEN HE WROTE THIS EPISTLE.

TEXT

IN CHAPTER 1 PETER ESTABLISHES THAT GRACE AND PEACE AND ALL THAT THE BELIEVER NEEDS IN HIS SPIRITUAL

LIFE FOR MATURITY IS PROVIDED IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND JESUS OUR LORD. THROUGH THIS KNOWLEDGE THE BELIEVER KNOWS THE PROMISES OF GOD, PARTAKES OF GOD'S NATURE AND ESCAPES FROM THE LUSTS AND DECAY OF THE WORLD.

PETER STRESSES THAT THE BELIEVER SHOULD EXERCISE HIS KNOWLEDGE BY DOING THE VIRTUOUS DEEDS. HE GIVES THE LIST OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES. EACH ONE IS ROOTED IN FAITH, AND EACH ONE DEVELOPS FROM THE PRECEDING ONE. HE LISTS THESE IN VERSES 5 - 7: VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE, SELF - CONTROL, ENDURANCE, PIETY, BROTHERLY AFFECTION AND LOVE. PETER SAYS THAT WHEN THESE VIRTUES ARE DEVELOPED KNOWLEDGE INCREASES. PETER GIVES THE MOTIVATING FORCE FOR LIVING A HOLY LIFE. THIS MOTIVATION IS THE RETURN OF CHRIST. HE RECALLS HIS EXPERIENCE WHEN JESUS WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE HIM, AND THIS WAS BUT A TASTE OF THE SPLENDOR THAT WILL BE EXPERIENCED WHEN CHRIST RETURNS.

IN CHAPTER 2 HE WARNS THEM ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS AND GIVES THEIR CHARACTER, CONDUCT AND INFLUENCE.

IN CHAPTER 3 HE ESTABLISHES THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S RETURN, THE WATCHFULNESS AND EXPECTANCY WITH WHICH THEY ARE TO LOOK FOR CHRIST'S RETURN.

I JOHN

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THIS STUDY OF I JOHN IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

I JOHN IS NOT IN THE FORM OF AN EPISTLE; HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT IT IS A WRITTEN DOCUMENT, FOR JOHN SAYS SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE IS WRITING OR HAS WRITTEN TO THEM, 1:4, 2:1 AND 2:26, 5:13.

JOHN'S SUPREME CONCERN IN WRITING THIS EPISTLE IS PASTORAL. HE WRITES TO ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN HIS READERS IN THEIR FAITH AND TO PROTECT THEM FROM THEIR OWN SIN AND FROM THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF TEACHERS WHO WERE ATTEMPTING TO PERVERT THE FAITH. JOHN BASICALLY HAS THREE PURPOSES FOR WRITING THIS DOCUMENT:

- 1. TO SHOW HIS READERS HOW TO KNOW THEY POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE,**
- 2. TO WARN THEM AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS, AND**
- 3. TO CHALLENGE THEM HOW TO LIVE OUT THE ETERNAL LIFE WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED; THEREBY, KEEPING THEM FROM FALLING INTO SIN BECAUSE OF THE FALSE TEACHERS.**

JOHN GIVES HIS CHIEF PURPOSE FOR WRITING IN 5:13, "THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, EVEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD." HE IS CONCERNED THAT THEY MIGHT POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE IN THE PRESENT AND LIVE ITS CHARACTERISTICS IN THEIR DAILY LIVING. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISTLE HE SAYS HE WRITES THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE FELLOWSHIP (κοινωνιαν) WITH THEIR CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND WITH GOD, 1:3; EXPERIENCE JOY (χαρα), 1:4; BELIEVE (πιστευητε) IN JESUS CHRIST AND KNOW (ιεδητε) THAT THEY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, 5:13. HE WANTS THEM TO KNOW WHO THEY ARE IN CHRIST AND TO HAVE COURAGE TO LIVE THE FAITHFUL CHRIST FILLED LIFE.

JOHN ALSO WRITES TO WARN THEM AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS. HE WANTS TO SECURE FOREVER THE MOST IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL TRUTH THAT JESUS IS THE INCARNATE SON OF CHRIST, COME IN THE FLESH. HE WANTS TO MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND THIS, BECAUSE THE EARLY HERESY OF THE Gnostic type was flourishing among the churches, and John writes to combat its devastating effects. There were two types of Gnostics that flourished in the second century and in fact caused serious damage to the church. The two types of Gnostics were the Docetics and the Cerinthians. The name Docetic or Docetism is derived from the Greek word dokein, meaning to seem. The name Cerinthian is derived from the infamous Cerinthus who lived in Ephesus. The Docetics denied the humanity of Christ; whereas, the Cerinthians

TAUGHT THAT THE AEON CHRIST DESCENDED ON JESUS THE MAN AT HIS BAPTISM AND LEFT HIM ON THE CROSS. (A. T. ROBERTSON, WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, VOL. VI, [NASHVILLE, TN., BROADMAN PRESS] P. 200.) BOTH IRENAEUS AND EUSEBIUS ACCUSE THE CERINTHIANS OF TEACHING AND PRACTICING IMMORALITY. (JOHN R. STOTT, THE LETTERS OF JOHN, TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: WM. B. EERDMANS, 1988] PP. 49 - 52.) SUCH TEACHINGS DESTROY THE ATONEMENT AND PLAY HAVOC WITH THE BASIC DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS EVIDENT IN THE THEOLOGICAL CONTENT AS WELL AS THE GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF VOCABULARY AND SYNTAX. C. H. DODD, HOWEVER, THINKS THAT THE AUTHOR OF I JOHN USES SOME OF THE IMPORTANT WORDS WITH DIFFERENT DEFINITION THAN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

AUTHORSHIP

WE ASSUME THAT JOHN THE APOSTLE OF JESUS WROTE THIS EPISTLE. THE AUTHOR SAYS THAT HE IS AN EYE WITNESS OF CHRIST, 1:1 - 4; 4:14. HE SPEAKS NOT AS IF HE WERE SPEAKING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHURCH, BUT IN THE SENSE THAT HE IS ONE OF THE PERSONAL DISCIPLES OF JESUS. THE FIRST CLEAR REFERENCE TO THIS EPISTLE IS FROM POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA, WHO WAS MARTYRED IN 155 OR 156 A.D. AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY - SIX. POLYCARP QUOTES FROM I JOHN 4:2 - 3 IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS, IN VII. (C.H. DODD, JOHANNINE EPISTLES, THE MOFFATT COMMENTARY,

[NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 1946] P.XI.) IRENAEUS, THE BISHOP OF LYONS, WHO DIED IN 202 A.D. KNEW POLYCARP AND SAYS THAT HE WAS ACQUAINTED WITH JOHN THE APOSTLE. (EUSEBIUS, ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, V. 20. 6.) IRENAEUS ALSO QUOTED FREQUENTLY FROM I AND II JOHN IN HIS WORK, AGAINST HERESIES.

I JOHN WAS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE MURATORIAN CANON FRAGMENT WHICH CAN BE DATED 170- 190 A.D.

THERE HAVE BEEN ARGUMENTS ADVANCED BY MODERN SCHOLARS THAT JOHN THE APOSTLE DID NOT WRITE THIS EPISTLE OR ANY OF THE OTHER JOHANNINE DOCUMENTS. A. H. MCNEILE HAS AN INTERESTING SUMMARY OF I JOHN. HE SAYS, “. . . THAT ONE MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE VERDICT REACHED AFTER CAREFUL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS BY R. H. CHARLES AND A. E. BROOKE THAT THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND ALL THREE JOHANNINE EPISTLES WERE PENNED BY THE SAME PERSON HAS NOT BEEN OVERTHROWN.” (A. H. MCNEILE, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, OXFORD: THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1957] P. 305.)

THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE APOSTLE JOHN AS THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE ARE EXTREMELY STRONG. THE EPISTLE EXUDES AUTHORITY, RATHER THAN DEMANDING IT.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

ALL THE EVIDENCE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THIS EPISTLE WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 75 A.D. AND 98 A.D. IT WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN FROM EPHEBUS.

TEXT

MANY OF THE SAME SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND CONCEPTS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN ARE IN THIS EPISTLE. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE WORDS MAY BE USED IN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WAYS THE BASIC CONTENT, MOOD AND PATTERNS OF THOUGHT ARE SIGNIFICANTLY ALIKE. THE GREEK VERBS IN THIS EPISTLE ARE STRONG, AND THEIR TENSES AID IN INTERPRETING THE MEANING TO THE TEXT.

MY FRIEND SPIROS ZODHIATES, SAYS THAT I JOHN CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR SECTIONS:

- 1. JOHN WARNS BELIEVERS ABOUT BEING INDIFFERENT TO MORALITY AND SIN (I JOHN 1:1 - 2:11),**
- 2. JOHN ADMONISHES BELIEVERS CONCERNING A LOVE FOR THE THINGS OF THE WORLD AS OPPOSED TO A LOVE FOR THE THINGS OF CHRIST (I JOHN 2:12-28),**
- 3. JOHN CHALLENGES BELIEVERS TO EXHIBIT A PURE AND RIGHTEOUS LOVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN RELATING TO ANOTHER BROTHER IN CHRIST (I JOHN 2:29 - 3:22),**

4. JOHN TEACHES BELIEVERS THAT A TRUE FAITH IN CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD IS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH ALL OF CHRISTIANITY IS BASED. (I JOHN 3:23- 4:21) (SPIROS ZODHIATES, THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY NEW TESTAMENT [AMG PUBLISHERS, CHATTANOOGA, TN: 1991] PP. 771-772.)

JOHN 1:1-4 IS THE PROLOGUE. THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PROLOGUES OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THIS EPISTLE ARE OBVIOUS. I JOHN, HOWEVER, FOCUSES UPON THE CONCEPT OF "LIFE;" WHEREAS, THE FOURTH GOSPEL FOCUSES ON THE "WORD." THE POINT I JOHN MAKES IS THAT THE ETERNAL LIFE OF THE FATHER IS IN JESUS CHRIST WHO APPEARED AS A HISTORICAL PERSON. WESTCOTT THINKS THAT I JOHN WAS WRITTEN TO PROVE THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST, AND THE FOURTH GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN TO PROVE THE DEITY OF CHRIST. (A. T. ROBERTSON, OP.CIT.,P. 201.)

THE SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND CONCEPTS IN THE PROLOGUE GIVE THE DIRECTION OF THE EPISTLE. IN THE PROLOGUE AT THE SAME TIME HE ASSERTS HIS INTIMACY WITH CHRIST HE BEGINS HIS DEFENSE OF THE FAITH AGAINST THE Gnostic TEACHINGS WHICH WERE MAKING INROADS INTO THE CHURCH. WITH THE WORDS "HEARD," "SEEN" AND "HANDLED" JOHN DRAWS A PICTURE OF HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH "THE WORD OF LIFE." HE IS PROVING THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST AND ESTABLISHING THAT CHRISTIANITY IS BASED ON HISTORICAL FACTS. THE FELLOWSHIP IN THE BODY OF BELIEVERS COMES BECAUSE OF THIS SHARED EXPERIENCE WITH THE "WORD" OR UNION WITH HIM. "LIFE" IS

A KEYWORD FOR JOHN, MEANING GOD'S LIFE WHICH COMES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

IN VERSE 7, HE SAYS “. . . THE BLOOD OF JESUS HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN.” JOHN SEES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES THE SPIRITUAL TYPE OF JESUS' ATONEMENT. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE LIFE WAS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE BLOOD. LEV. 17:11 SAYS, “FOR THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD: AND I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU UPON THE ALTAR TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS: FOR IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKES AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.” THE POINT OF JESUS BEING THE PERFECT SACRIFICE IS THAT HIS LIFE IS ETERNAL AND THE CLEANSING IS CONTINUOUS. THE VERB CLEANSSE HERE IS IN THE PRESENT TENSE MEANING CONTINUOUS ACTION; IT IS CLEANSING.

FROM VERSES 9 - 10 WE SEE THAT THOSE WHO DENY THEY HAVE SIN CANNOT CONFESS THEIR SIN AND THOSE WHO CONFESS, ADMIT THEIR SIN.

IN 1:5 - 10 JOHN USES THE TERMS LIGHT AND DARKNESS TO DESCRIBE THE CONTRAST OF GOD AND EVIL. THESE WORDS WERE IN CURRENT USE IN HIS DAY. HIS POINT IS THAT PEOPLE CAN WALK IN DARKNESS WHILE CLAIMING TO WALK IN THE LIGHT. HE IS SHOWING THAT FAITH AND PRACTICE, BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR AND DOCTRINE AND DUTY CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

IN CHAPTER 2, JOHN CONCLUDES THAT THE REASON FOR THE CONFESSING AND THE CLEANSING IS THAT THEY MAY NOT FALL INTO SIN. THE VERB IN 2:1, TRANSLATED “MAY NOT SIN”

IS IN THE SUBJUNCTIVE AORIST TENSE. “BUT IF ANYONE DOES SIN” IS ALSO IN THE SUBJECTIVE AORIST TENSE AND MEANS PUNCTILIAR ACTION. THE WORD IN VERSE 1, TRANSLATED “ADVOCATE” MEANS ONE WHO STANDS BESIDE TO PLEAD THE CASE BEFORE THE JUDGE. THE WORD IN VERSE 2, TRANSLATED “PROPITIATION” IS THE GREEK WORD ἱλασμος. THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX) USED THIS WORD TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW WORD “KIPURIM,” MEANING A COVERING. THIS WORD AND DERIVATIVES OF THE ROOT WORD OCCUR IN I JOHN 2:2; 4:10; LUKE 18:13; HEB. 2:17; 9:5 AND ROM.3:25. THIS WORD IS RELATED TO THE WORD FOR MERCY SEAT, ROM. 3:25 AND HEB. 9:5. LEON MORRIS SAYS THAT THE WORD “PROPITIATION” SIGNIFIES THE TURNING AWAY OF WRATH, USUALLY BY AN OFFERING. (LEON MORRIS, NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY, [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE] P. 34.) HE ALSO POINTS OUT THAT MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS AVOID THE WORD ALTHOUGH NO WORD IS A GOOD SUBSTITUTE. (LEON MORRIS, OP. CIT., P.73.)

VERSE 3 IS A TEST FOR A PERSON TO EVALUATE HIMSELF. THE STRONG LANGUAGE OF VERSE 4 INSISTS THAT OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST IS PROOF OF A PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. JOHN SAYS THAT A PERSON WHO SAYS HE KNOWS CHRIST AND WALKS IN DARKNESS IS A LIAR. DARKNESS MEANS NOT TO WALK ACCORDING TO CHRIST’S WILL. THE PERSON IS DECEIVING HIMSELF BY BELIEVING HE CAN DISREGARD GOD’S WORD AND STILL WALK INTIMATELY WITH GOD. JOHN POINTS OUT THAT PEOPLE CAN RATIONALIZE THE CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SIN AWAY, BUT RATIONALIZATION DOES NOT REMOVE THE REALITY.

THE RESULT OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT FOR THE BELIEVER IS THAT HE HAS FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS. VERSE 5 TEACHES THAT OBEDIENCE MATURES THE TRUE BELIEVER.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT DEALS BOTH WITH THE POSITIVE AND THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF LIFE. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE IT ENABLES A PERSON TO RESIST SIN. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE IT MOTIVATES A PERSON TO FILL HIS LIFE WITH THE GREAT COMMANDMENT OF LOVE. JOHN, NO DOUBT, REMEMBERS THAT JESUS GAVE THIS GREAT COMMANDMENT JUST BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION.

IN THE LAST PART OF CHAPTER 2, JOHN DESCRIBES THE ANTICHRISTS. THE WORD IS PLURAL; SO, HE IS IDENTIFYING THE FALSE TEACHERS IN THIS CATEGORY. VERSE 27 OF CHAPTER 2 REFERS TO THE DISCERNMENT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES TO DETECT FALSE TEACHING.

IN CHAPTER 3, JOHN USES THE PHRASE “CHILDREN OF GOD” TO REFER TO BELIEVERS; WHEREAS, PAUL USES THE TERM “SONS OF GOD.” JOHN RESERVES THE CONCEPT OF SON TO REFER TO THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST. SONSHIP IN PAUL’S WRITINGS HAS THE IDEA OF LEGAL HEIR AND POSITION. CHILDREN IN JOHN’S WRITING HAS THE IDEA OF NEW BIRTH AND REGENERATION. BOTH JOHN AND PAUL AGREE IN THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE GOSPEL, BUT EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN THEIR OWN UNIQUE TERMINOLOGY.

JOHN CONCLUDES CHAPTER 2 AND BEGINS CHAPTER 3 SHOWING THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING FOR THE BELIEVER AND THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRIST'S RETURN. THEN IN VERSES 4- 10 HE SHOWS THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST'S FIRST COMING TO THE EARTH. THESE VERSES ARE VERY REVEALING. JOHN DEFINES SIN AS LAWLESSNESS, VERSE 4. HE MEANS THE BREAKING OF GOD'S LAW OR REBELLION AGAINST GOD. VERSE 5 SAYS THAT CHRIST CAME TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS. IT ALSO SAYS THAT CHRIST IS SINLESS. THE FOLLOWING VERSES ARE THE LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS OF ALL THAT HE HAS WRITTEN UP TO THIS POINT. IF CHRIST WAS SINLESS AND HIS PURPOSE FOR COMING TO EARTH WAS TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL WHOSE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC IS TO SIN, THEN THE PERSON WHO IS BORN OF GOD AND HAS GOD'S SEED IN HIM CANNOT GO ON IN SIN CONTINUING TO SIN. AN EXPLANATION OF THE GREEK TENSES OF THESE VERBS MAKE THE MEANING MUCH CLEARER THAN IS SEEN IN MANY TRANSLATIONS. IN 2:1, ". . . I WRITE TO YOU THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN. . ." THE WORD TRANSLATED SIN IS $\alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\eta\tau\epsilon$. THIS IS A SECOND AORIST, ACTIVE, SUBJUNCTIVE, 2ND., PERSON, PL. OF $\alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\alpha\iota\omega$. THIS VERSE CONTINUES, "... AND (BUT) IF ANYONE SHOULD SIN, . ." THE VERB IS $\alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\eta$. IT IS SECOND AORIST, ACTIVE, SUBJUNCTIVE, THIRD PERSON, SINGULAR. THESE TENSES IMPLY SIN LIMITED TO AN ACT OR PERIOD OF TIME. IN CONTRAST THE WORDS TRANSLATED SIN IN VERSES 6 AND 9 ARE IN THE PRESENT TENSE, BEARING THE IDEA OF CONTINUED ACTION. THE VERSES THEMSELVES GIVE THE ANSWER. VERSE 6 SAYS THAT THE ONE WHO LIVES OR ABIDES IN CHRIST CANNOT CONTINUE TO LIVE OR ABIDE IN SIN. THIS MEANS SIN CANNOT BE THE HABIT OF HIS LIFE. THE IDEA IS THAT THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE PER -

SON IS INCONGRUENT WITH THE PERSON LIVING IN SIN. VERSE 9 SAYS THAT THE PERSON BORN OF GOD HAS GOD'S SEED IN HIM AND THIS MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO HAVE THE POWER TO PRACTICE OR CONTINUE IN SIN.

JOHN 4:1 - 6 CONTAINS THE EXPOSURE OF THE FALSE TEACHERS. THE GREAT TEST OF THE TRUE AND FALSE TEACHER IS THE PERSONS BELIEF IN CHRIST. JOHN FOCUSES ON THE SPIRITUAL EVIL OF THE TEACHINGS AND SAYS, "... TEST THE SPIRITS TO SEE WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD; ..."

JOHN 4:7 - 21 FOCUSES ON THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCE OF CORRECT DOCTRINE, LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND LOVE FOR GOD. THIS SECTION IS AS PROFOUND AS I CORINTHIANS 13. BASICALLY THIS SECTION SAYS THAT WE CAN LOVE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD BECAUSE GOD LOVES US. FROM ALL THAT JOHN HAS SAID THE CONCLUSION IS CLEAR THAT THE PERSON WHO IS BORN OF GOD AND HAS THE LIFE OF GOD IN HIM WILL HAVE LOVE.

IN JOHN 5:1 - 5, THE APOSTLE GIVES THE ACID TEST OF THE PERSON LOVING GOD. IT IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. HE ALSO SHOWS HOW VICTORY OVER THE WORLD IS ACHIEVED. IN CHAPTER 5 JOHN CONTINUES HIS LOGIC OF THE HOLY LIFE IF ETERNAL LIFE DWELLS IN A PERSON.

II JOHN

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF II JOHN IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THIS SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN FOLLOWS THE STANDARD METHOD OF CORRESPONDENCE OF HIS DAY EXCEPT THAT IT IS MORE FORMAL THAN MOST OF THE SAMPLES THAT HAVE SINCE BEEN DISCOVERED.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE SEEMS TO SUPPORT THE BELIEF THAT JOHN THE APOSTLE IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS LETTER AS HE IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF THE OTHER JOHANNINE LITERATURE. THE AUTHOR REFERS TO HIMSELF AS THE ELDER. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DISCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THIS ELDER. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CONJECTURES, BUT NONE OF THEM IS SATISFACTORY EXCEPT THAT HE IS JOHN THE APOSTLE.

THE EPISTLE WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN FROM EPHESUS SOMETIME BETWEEN 90 - 98 A.D.

PURPOSE

THE EPISTLE IS WRITTEN TO THE “ELECT LADY.” JUST WHO THIS LADY IS WE HAVE NO IDEA. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THIS IS A CHURCH, AND HER CHILDREN ARE BELIEVERS WHO BELONGED TO THE FELLOWSHIP. MOST SCHOLARS THINK THAT SHE IS A REAL PERSON, BUT THAT SHE CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED.

THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR IS TO PROTECT THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL AND WARN AGAINST THE FALSE TEACHERS WHO DENY THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A Gnostic HERESY. HE URGES THEM NOT TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY TO THE TRAVELING TEACHERS WHO BROUGHT HERESY WITH THEM. HIS EMPHASIS ON TRUTH IS PRESENTED FIVE TIMES IN THE FIRST FOUR VERSES. THE OTHER MAJOR CONCEPT IN THE EPISTLE IS LOVE. HE SPEAKS OF LOVE FOUR TIMES IN THIS EXTREMELY SHORT EPISTLE.

III JOHN

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF III JOHN IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THIS SMALL DOCUMENT WAS WRITTEN BY THE ELDER, PROBABLY THE APOSTLE JOHN SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 90-98 A.D. THIS EPISTLE IS WRITTEN TO A MAN NAMED GAIUS. THERE ARE SEVERAL PEOPLE BY THE NAME OF GAIUS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THIS MAN CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH ANY OF THESE MEN. JOHN WISHED TO COMMEND GAIUS FOR WALKING IN THE TRUTH, FOR BEING A FAITHFUL WORKER, FOR HIS KIND HOSPITALITY TO TRAVELING TEACHERS AND FOR STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH. JOHN CONTRASTS THE FAITHFULNESS OF GAIUS WITH DIOTREPHES AND DEMETRIUS WHOM HE CONDEMNS.

JUDE

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE STUDY OF JUDE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE CALLS HIMSELF JUDE AND SAYS THAT HE IS THE BROTHER OF JAMES. BOTH OF THESE NAMES ARE COMMON IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IN FACT TWO OF JESUS' APOSTLES HAVE THE NAME JUDE OR ITS EQUIVALENT. TWO OF THE APOSTLES ARE ALSO NAMED JAMES. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT JUDE, THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE, IS THE HALF BROTHER OF JESUS.

JUDE IS AN INTENSE LETTER WRITTEN TO DEFEND THE TRUE FAITH AND TO EXPOSE FALSE TEACHERS WHO WERE NOT ONLY TEACHING DANGEROUS DOCTRINES BUT WERE ALSO LIVING IMPURE LIVES. JUDE AND II PETER SHARE SOME OF THE SAME CONCERNS. IN FACT JUDE VERSES 5- 16 AND THE SECOND CHAPTER OF II PETER ARE ALMOST IDENTICAL. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER ONE OF THEM BORROWED FROM THE OTHER OR WHETHER THEY BOTH HAD A COMMON SOURCE. THE POINT IS THEY BOTH ARE SPEAKING THE TRUTH. WE KNOW THAT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE TRUE PROPHETS KNEW WHEN

ANOTHER PROPHET WAS SPEAKING THE TRUTH.

JUDE SAYS THE FALSE TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH SHOULD BE EXPECTED, FOR THIS HAD BEEN FORETOLD AND WAS A SIGN OF THE LAST DAYS, VERSES 17- 19. THEREFORE, THE TRUE BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED. HE SAYS THAT THEY MUST BUILD UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH WHICH WAS "ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS." THIS TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. HE URGES THEM TO PRAY IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS EPISTLE IS SHORT, BUT POWERFUL IN ITS IMPACT.

REVELATION

INTRODUCTION

IN ORDER TO BEST COMPREHEND THE BOOK OF REVELATION IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN AND READ EACH SECTION BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

REVELATION PROCLAIMS, "YOUR GOD REIGNS!" IT EXALTS JESUS CHRIST AS LORD. ITS THEME IS CHRIST'S TRIUMPH OVER SATAN AND EVIL. WITH PROPHETIC VISION, POETIC IMAGINATION AND SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE JOHN EVOKES STRONG EMOTIONAL FAITH THAT GOD IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE WORLD SITUATION. IN A REAL SENSE THE BOOK OF REVELATION FULFILLS JESUS' WORDS, ". . . IN THE WORLD YOU HAVE TRIBULATION; BUT BE OF GOOD COURAGE, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD," JOHN 16:33. REVELATION IS A PROPHETIC LETTER CAST AS AN APOCALYPTIC DRAMA.

A YOUNG MAN ATTENDS A SEMINARY THAT DOES NOT HAVE A GYMNASIUM. IN ORDER TO PRACTICE BASKETBALL THE STUDENTS GO TO A NEARBY HIGH SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL CUSTODIAN VOLUNTEERS TO OPEN THE GYM. WHILE THE STUDENTS PLAYED BALL THE CUSTODIAN, A RATHER OLD AFRO-AMERICAN, SITS AT THE SIDE READING HIS BIBLE. THE YOUNG MAN ASKS HIM, "WHAT ARE YOU READING?" "THE BOOK OF REVELATION," HE

ANSWERS. THE YOUNG MAN INQUIRES FURTHER, "WHAT DOES IT SAY?" THE OLD MAN LOOKS HIM EYEBALL TO EYEBALL AND WITH GREAT GUSTO EXCLAIMS, "WELL SON, IT SAYS GOD IS GOING TO WIN!"

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPREME HERO OF REVELATION. HE DESIGNATES HIM: "THE FIRST AND THE LAST," 1:17; "THE LIVING ONE," 1:18; "THE SON OF GOD," 2:18; "THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH," 5:5; AND "THE LAMB." THE TITLE "LAMB IS USED 28 TIMES IN THE BOOK. THE LAMB MOTIF BEGINS WHEN JOHN IS TOLD THAT "THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH" HAS OPENED THE SEALED SCROLL. JOHN LOOKS FOR THE LION AND INSTEAD SEES THE LAMB. JOHN CONNECTS THE VICTORY OF THE LAMB WITH THE SACRIFICIAL SHEDDING OF BLOOD, 5:6 - 12; 13:8. (LEON MORRIS, NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY [GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: ZONDERVAN, 1990] PP.293-294.) J. P. LOVE SAYS, "THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION. ... WHEN EARTH-BOUND MEN WANT SYMBOLS OF POWER THEY CONJURE UP MIGHTY BEASTS AND BIRDS OF PREY. RUSSIA ELEVATES THE BEAR, BRITAIN THE LION, FRANCE THE TIGER, THE UNITED STATES THE SPREAD EAGLE - ALL OF THEM RAVENOUS. IT IS ONLY THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN THAT WOULD DARE TO USE AS ITS SYMBOL OF MIGHT, NOT THE LION FOR WHICH JOHN WAS LOOKING, BUT THE HELPLESS LAMB, AND AT THAT, A SLAIN LAMB." (J. P. LOVE, JOHN, JUDE, REVELATION [LONDON, 1960] P. 65. QUOTED IN LEON MORRIS, OP. CIT. P. 294.)

REVELATION IS WRITTEN TO SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR. BY CONCEALING HIS MESSAGE IN APOCALYPTIC TERMS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR JOHN TO WRITE IN A CODE LANGUAGE UNDERSTOOD BY THE CHURCH BUT NOT COMPREHENDED BY HER ENEMIES. APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE HAD EXISTED MANY YEARS BEFORE

REVELATION. THE BOOK OF DANIEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS APOCALYPTIC. SINCE JOHN USES MANY OF THE SAME IMAGES TO EXPRESS HIS IDEAS, DANIEL IS A VERY VALUABLE AID IN UNDERSTANDING REVELATION. JOHN EVEN IDENTIFIES HIS WRITING AS APOCALYPTIC, 1:1. APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE IS GENERALLY WRITTEN IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION. ITS PURPOSE IS TO GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO ITS READERS. REVELATION IS WRITTEN AT A TIME IN HISTORY WHEN THE ROMAN EMPEROR CLAIMS TO BE GOD AND DEMANDS WORSHIP FROM HIS SUBJECTS. CHRISTIANS ARE HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE WORSHIP OF CAESAR AND THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE USES NUMBERS, SYMBOLS AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS ITS TRUTHS. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT PICTURE WRITING. IT IS IDEA WRITING. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SKULL AND CROSSBONES ON A BOTTLE OF MEDICINE IS A SYMBOL OF POISON, NOT A PICTURE OF POISON. THE VARIOUS FIGURES DESCRIBED IN REVELATION ARE NOT PICTURES TO BE LOOKED AT BUT RATHER FIGURES TO GIVE IDEAS MEANING. THE MEANING OF THESE SYMBOLS AND NUMBERS WERE KNOWN TO THE READERS, BUT NOT GENERALLY KNOWN TO OTHERS.

IN SCRIPTURE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT NUMBERS HAVE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE. THEY ARE OFTEN USED TO SYMBOLIZE IDEAS. THE COMMON MEANINGS OF VARIOUS NUMBERS IN SCRIPTURE ARE AS FOLLOWS: ONE STANDS FOR UNITY AND PURPOSE. IT MEANS INDEPENDENCE AND UNIQUENESS. TWO MEANS DOUBLE STRENGTH AND COURAGE. TWO MEN ARE STRONGER THAN ONE. THREE IS THE DIVINE NUMBER. IT IS THE NUMBER OF THE TRINITY.

FOUR IS THE NUMBER OF MAN. THERE ARE FOUR DIRECTIONS ON THE EARTH. FOUR IS THE COSMIC NUMBER. FIVE STANDS FOR GRACE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE DIMENSIONS OF THE TABERNACLE ARE MULTIPLES OF FIVE. SIX HAS SINISTER SIGNIFICANCE. IT IS THE NUMBER OF IMPERFECTION AND INCOMPLETENESS, BECAUSE IT FALLS SHORT OF THE PERFECT NUMBER SEVEN. IT IS THE NUMBER OF DEFEAT. SEVEN IS THE SYMBOL OF PERFECTION AND COMPLETENESS. THREE, GOD'S NUMBER, PLUS FOUR, MAN'S NUMBER, EQUALS SEVEN. THE NUMBER SEVEN IS USED 45 TIMES IN REVELATION IN VERY INTERESTING AND SIGNIFICANT WAYS. TEN SIGNIFIES REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETENESS. IT STILL DOES. WE DRAW A CONTINUUM 1 THROUGH 10. THE 10 PLAGUES OF EGYPT MEAN GOD'S COMPLETE JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT. THE 10 COMMANDMENTS MEAN GOD'S COMPLETE SOCIAL GUIDANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO JEWISH NOTION 10 COMPOSED A CONGREGATION. TWELVE IS THE NUMBER OF ORGANIZED RELIGION. THREE, GOD'S NUMBER, MULTIPLIED BY FOUR, MAN'S NUMBER, EQUALS TWELVE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE ARE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THERE ARE 12 APOSTLES. THE WRITER OF REVELATION USES THE NUMBER 12 MORE THAN ANY OTHER NUMBER EXCEPT 7. THE NUMBER 3 1/2 STANDS FOR IMPERFECTION, BECAUSE IT IS HALF THE PERFECT NUMBER 7. MULTIPLIES OF THE VARIOUS NUMBERS ALSO HAVE SYMBOLIC MEANING. NUMBERS DO NOT OCCUR IN SCRIPTURE BY ACCIDENT.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS VERY JEWISH, PERHAPS

EVEN MORE THAN THE EPISTLES OF JAMES, I PETER AND HEBREWS. ALL THROUGH REVELATION JOHN USES IMAGERY FROM THE TEMPLE. HE ALSO HAS SOME 150 REFERENCES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

REVELATION HAS MANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN OTHER JEWISH APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS; HOWEVER, THE DIFFERENCES ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT. THE CHIEF DIFFERENCE IS JOHN'S MARRIAGE OF PROPHECY AND APOCALYPSE. JOHN IS A PROPHET CHOOSING TO GIVE HIS PROPHECY IN APOCALYPTIC TERMS.

REVELATION IS ALSO A GREAT DRAMA. IN THIS DRAMA THE ACTORS PARADE BRIEFLY ACROSS THE STAGE OF TIME TRYING TO DOMINATE HISTORY. THE DRAMA INTENSIFIES AS THE ANTI-CHRIST, THE WORLD RULER AND INCARNATION OF THE DEVIL HIMSELF, ATTEMPTS TO SET UP HIS OWN KINGDOM AND DEIFIES HIMSELF SO MANKIND WILL WORSHIP HIM. THEN THE HERO CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, UTTERLY DEFEATS SATAN AND HIS FORCES. FOLLOWING THIS WE HEAR, "BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!," REV. 21:4-5.

IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION REVELATION BECOMES VERY PRECIOUS. IN TIMES OF EASE, WHEN CHRISTIANITY IS POPULAR, THE EPISTLE OFTEN BECOMES ENTERTAINMENT FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO PLAY WITH LITERARY DEVICES OR PROPHECY.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE BOOK OF REVELATION IT IS NECESSARY TO EXAMINE ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING.

REVELATION WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN BETWEEN 94 AND 96 A.D. DURING THE REIGN OF DOMITIAN, FROM 81 - 96 A.D. ROME'S POWER OVERWHELMED THE WORLD. THEIR EMPIRE STRETCHED FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE EUPHRATES AND FROM THE BRITISH ISLES INTO AFRICA. ITS WEALTH WAS INCOMPREHENSIBLE. THE EMPEROR COLIGULA SPENT A HALF MILLION DOLLARS ON ONE BANQUET. EXTREME POVERTY ALSO HAUNTED THE EMPIRE. AND MORAL DEGRADATION WAS UNBELIEVABLY LOW IN ALL CLASSES.

THE FIRST MARTYRS OF CHRISTIANITY WERE STEPHEN AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN. THESE MEN WERE PUT TO DEATH BY THE JEWISH LEADERS NOT BY THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT. AT FIRST THE ROMAN EMPIRE CONSIDERED CHRISTIANITY A SECT OF JUDAISM, BUT AS TIME MARCHED ON IT BECAME EVIDENT THAT IT WAS LARGELY GENTILE. ROME, THEREFORE, NO LONGER REGARDED IT AS A JEWISH SECT. THIS DEPRIVED CHRISTIANITY OF LEGAL PROTECTION. THE PROBLEMS FOR THE CHURCH REALLY BEGAN WHEN NERO WAS EMPEROR, 54 - 68 A.D. DURING HIS REIGN A TERRIBLE FIRE PARTLY DESTROYED THE CITY OF ROME. THE GOSSIP WAS THAT SINCE NERO WANTED TO REBUILD THE CITY HE MUST HAVE STARTED THE FIRE. NERO TRYING TO DIVERT THE BLAME FROM HIMSELF ACCUSED THE CHRISTIANS OF STARTING THE FIRE. HE HAD MANY CHRISTIANS CONDEMNED AND KILLED IN EXTREMELY VICIOUS WAYS. THERE IS STRONG TRADITION THAT PAUL AND PETER WERE BOTH MARTYRED

DURING NERO'S REIGN.

THE MOST FIERCE PERSECUTION, HOWEVER, PROBABLY CAME DURING THE REIGN OF DOMITIAN, 81-96 A.D. WITH DOMITIAN CAME THE INCREASE DEMAND FOR THE PEOPLE TO WORSHIP THE ROMAN EMPERORS, BOTH LIVING AND DEAD. DOMITIAN CONFUSED HIMSELF WITH GOD AND DEMANDED WORSHIP FROM HIS SUBJECTS, EVEN FROM HIS OWN FAMILY. ROMA, THE GODDESS OF THE CITY OF ROME, WAS ALSO CONSIDERED PART OF THE CULT. THIS WORSHIP HELPED TO UNIFY THE EMPIRE. THE JEWS WERE THE ONLY PEOPLE EXEMPT FROM THE LAW REQUIRING WORSHIP OF THE EMPERORS. SINCE CHRISTIANITY WAS BY THIS TIME LARGELY GENTILE IT WAS NO LONGER CONSIDERED A SECT OF JUDAISM. AS A NEW RELIGION, ITS ADHERENTS WERE REQUIRED TO GIVE ALLEGIANCE TO THE EMPEROR BY WORSHIPPING HIM AS GOD. THE CHRISTIANS REFUSED. THEIR REFUSAL QUICKLY DREW HOSTILITY AND A CONFRONTATION WITH ROME. DURING PERSECUTION IN ASIA MINOR JOHN WAS EXILED. HE WROTE REVELATION TO ENCOURAGE HIS PEOPLE DURING THE TIME OF PERSECUTION AND POSSIBLE MARTYRDOM.

AUTHORSHIP

IN EARLIEST CHRISTIAN HISTORY THE BOOK OF REVELATION WAS CONSIDERED APOSTOLIC AND HAD NO PROBLEM GETTING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, ITS AUTHORSHIP WAS FIRST QUESTIONED BY DIONYSIUS WHO NOTED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, THE

EPISTLES OF JOHN AND THE REVELATION. HE QUESTIONED THE AUTHORSHIP OF THESE DOCUMENTS ON GROUNDS OF DIFFERENT CONCEPTS, SYMBOLISM, GREEK GRAMMAR AND STYLE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES. HOWEVER, R. H. CHARLES, ONE OF THE GREAT AUTHORITIES ON APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE CONSIDERED THE POOR GRAMMAR IN REVELATION AS INTENTIONAL, DESIGNED FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING CLOSER TO A HEBREW STYLE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. (R. H. CHARLES, A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY [EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 1920] VOL. I, PP. CXVII-CLIX.) WHETHER THIS IS TRUE WE DO NOT KNOW. IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT REVELATION IS JOHN'S NATURAL STYLE SINCE HE IS IN EXILE AND CANNOT DICTATE THE BOOK TO ANYONE AS HE PROBABLY DID HIS GOSPEL AND THE OTHER THREE EPISTLES. DICTATING TO AN AMANUENSIS WAS A COMMON PRACTICE AND PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE BETTER GRAMMAR AND STYLE OF THE OTHER JOHANNINE LITERATURE.

IN MORE RECENT TIMES, JOHN'S AUTHORSHIP HAS ALSO BEEN QUESTIONED BECAUSE OF SO CALLED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS AND THE VARIATION IN THE TONE OF THE WRITINGS. THESE OBJECTIONS CAN BE ANSWERED ADEQUATELY. IT IS, HOWEVER, VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE VALIDITY OF THIS BOOK DOES NOT DEPEND ON ITS HUMAN WRITER, BUT RATHER ON ITS DIVINE AUTHOR. THREE TIMES THE WRITER CALLS HIMSELF JOHN, BUT HE DOES NOT SAY THAT HE IS THE APOSTLE. HE KNOWS HIS READERS KNOW HIM. IT IS ALSO STRANGE THAT IN THE GOSPEL AND IN THE EPISTLES THE AUTHOR DOES NOT GIVE HIS NAME; IN FACT, HE SEEMS TO CONCEAL

IT. THE DIFFERENCE IN HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY ACCOUNT FOR THIS. JOHN KNOWS THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR WILL KNOW HIM AND RECEIVE HIS MESSAGE AS FROM GOD. IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE KNOWS THEIR HISTORY AND THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

DATE

THE DATE USUALLY GIVEN FOR THE WRITING OF REVELATION, AND PROBABLY THE BEST DATE, IS SOMETIME BETWEEN 94-96 A.D. DURING THE REIGN OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR DOMITIAN. ANOTHER DATE THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN BY SOME SCHOLARS IS 54-68 A.D. DURING THE REIGN OF NERO. MOST SCHOLARS TODAY PLACE THE DATE AS 94-96 A.D. IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR PERSECUTION AND THE CONDITIONS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES TO DEVELOP. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IS THAT CHAPTER 9 IMPLIES THAT THE TEMPLE WAS STILL IN EXISTENCE OR THAT IT HAD BEEN REBUILT. IF THE TEMPLE WAS STILL IN EXISTENCE THEN IT WOULD PLACE THE WRITING OF REVELATION BEFORE 70 A.D.

PURPOSE

JOHN WRITES TO AFFIRM THAT JESUS CHRIST CONTROLS HISTORY AND ETERNITY. NO PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL PERSON OR POWER CAN DEFEAT HIM. WRITING IN APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE CONCEALS HIS MEANING FROM THOSE WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS AND REVEALS THE MEANING TO THOSE WHO ARE.

METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

THE METHODS USED IN INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF REVELATION CAN GENERALLY BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR CATEGORIES, AND EACH OF THESE CAN BE SUBDIVIDED. THE SUBDIVISIONS UNDER A DIVISION ARE SOMETIMES VERY DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER. THE FOUR METHODS OF INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF REVELATION ARE: THE PRETERISTIC, THE CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL, THE SYMBOLIC AND THE FUTURISTIC.

THE PRETERIST METHOD INTERPRETS THE EVENTS OF REVELATION AS OCCURRING IN HISTORY DURING AND SOON AFTER THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN. ACCORDING TO THIS INTERPRETATION JOHN IS WRITING TO ENCOURAGE THE CHRISTIANS IN ASIA MINOR WHO WERE GOING THROUGH A TERRIBLE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION. THE BOOK IS, THEREFORE, FULFILLED IN THE TIME OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. THIS MEANS THAT ITS MESSAGE WAS ONLY FOR THE PEOPLE OF JOHN'S TIME. THE STRENGTH OF THIS INTERPRETATION IS THAT IT MAKES THE BOOK VERY RELEVANT FOR THOSE TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN. THE WEAKNESS IS THAT IT HAS LITTLE APPLICATION FOR THE CHURCH TODAY.

THE CONTINUOUS - HISTORICAL VIEW PRESENTS REVELATION AS A PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES. THIS METHOD MAKES EACH SECTION OF REVELATION CORRESPOND TO ACTUAL PERIODS OF HISTORY. FOR EXAMPLE, EPHEBUS IS A PICTURE OF THE CHURCH'S CONDITION AT THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY WHEN VITAL CHRISTIANITY DECLINED. SMYRNA

REPRESENTS THE PERIOD OF MARTYRDOM DURING THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES. PERGAMOS IS THE PERIOD WHEN THE CHURCH AND STATE UNITED UNDER CONSTANTINE. THYATIRA IS THE PERIOD OF THE CORRUPT ROMAN CHURCH'S DOMINATION OVER CHRISTIANITY. SARDIS IS THE REFORMATION WHEN THE TRUE MESSAGE WAS AGAIN BROUGHT TO THE WORLD. PHILADELPHIA IS THE PERIOD OF TIME DURING WESLEY AND WHITEFIELD WHEN THE WORLD WAS AN OPEN DOOR FOR THE GOSPEL. LAODICEA IS THE END OF TIME AND THE LAST DAYS FOR THE CHURCH. THIS INTERPRETATION'S STRONGEST POINT IS THAT IT UNDERSTANDS REVELATION AS PICTURING THE DEFEAT OF EVIL. THE WEAKNESS OF THIS METHOD IS THAT IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN RELEVANT FOR THOSE TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN. THERE ARE ALSO CHURCHES LIKE EACH ONE OF THESE PRESENT IN EVERY AGE.

THE SYMBOLIC METHOD THINKS THAT JOHN WROTE TO ENCOURAGE HIS CONTEMPORARIES IN THE FAITH BUT THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD AGAINST SATAN AND GOOD AGAINST EVIL WILL CONTINUE IN EVERY AGE UNTIL THE END OF TIME. SINCE THIS WAS A DANGEROUS TIME TO BE A CHRISTIAN, HE WROTE HIS MESSAGE IN SYMBOLIC TERMS THAT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE IN THE CHURCH AND NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THEIR ENEMIES. THE PROPONENTS OF THIS VIEW THINK THAT THE SYMBOLS PICTURE GOD'S TRIUMPH OVER SATAN IN ALL HISTORY. THE STRENGTH OF THIS INTERPRETATION IS THAT IT GIVES THE BOOK MEANING FOR BOTH THE PAST AND THE PRESENT. ONE WEAKNESS IS THAT IT ASSIGNS THE CHURCH ALL THE PROMISES GOD MADE TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THERE IS NO TIME WHEN GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL WILL BE FULFILLED HISTORICALLY.

THE FUTURIST METHOD BELIEVES THAT MOST OF REVELATION IS AN ESCHATOLOGICAL PROPHECY OF THE WORLD'S HISTORICAL

EVENTS. MOST OF THOSE WHO HOLD THIS VIEW BELIEVE THAT CHAPTERS FOUR THROUGH NINETEEN RECORD THE EVENTS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION WHICH WILL BE AT THE END OF TIME AND WILL LAST SEVEN YEARS. THIS PERIOD CORRESPONDS TO THE SEVENTIETH WEEK RECORDED IN DANIEL 9:24 - 27. MOST FUTURISTS INTERPRET THE BOOK LITERALLY. MOST ARE MILLENNIAL, BUT NOT ALL. THIS METHOD DOES TAKE SERIOUSLY THE PROMISES GOD MADE TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT ALSO TAKES SERIOUSLY THE COVENANTS GOD MADE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND EXPLAINS HOW THEY ARE FULFILLED.

EACH INTERPRETATION HAS HAD THE SUPPORT OF GREAT SCHOLARS AND DEVOUT FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. ALSO STRONG AND WEAK POINTS CAN BE ASSIGNED TO EACH INTERPRETATION.

IN INTERPRETING REVELATION WE MUST ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT JOHN WROTE HIS MESSAGE TO ENCOURAGE HIS FELLOW CHRISTIANS NOT DIVIDE THEM. WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER THAT JOHN CAST HIS MESSAGE IN APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE WHICH CONVEYS ITS MESSAGE IN HIGHLY SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE. THE MOST LITERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF REVELATION MUST ADMIT THAT SOME THINGS IN REVELATION ARE SYMBOLIC, AND THE MOST SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION MUST ADMIT THAT SOME THINGS IN REVELATION ARE LITERAL. WE MUST ALSO BE TRUE TO JOHN'S OWN EMPHASIS THAT HE IS WRITING PROPHECY. AN INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION THAT IS SYMBOLIC AND FUTURISTIC SEEMS BALANCED, APPROPRIATE AND TRUE TO THE SCRIPTURE.

DESIGN OF THE BOOK

JOHN DESIGNS REVELATION IN THE FORM OF A DRAMA. THERE ARE SEVEN VISIONS OR ACTS. EACH VISION HAS SEVEN EVENTS OR SCENES. SINCE THIS IS ALSO A LETTER JOHN HAS A PROLOGUE AND AN EPILOGUE.

PROLOGUE 1:1 - 8

- VISION I VISION OF CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES 1:9 - 3:22
SEVEN MESSAGES: LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**
- VISION II VISION OF GOD IN HEAVEN ON THE THRONE
4:1 - 8:1
SEVEN SEALS: OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS**
- VISION III VISION OF THE SEVEN ANGELS 8:2 - 11:18
SEVEN TRUMPETS: THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS**
- VISION IV VISION OF GOD'S SALVATION 11:19 - 15:2 - 4
SEVEN EVENTS: THE SEVEN SCENES**
- VISION V VISION OF GOD'S WRATH 15:1,4 - 16:21
SEVEN VIALS: POURING OUT THE SEVEN VIALS**

**VISION VI VISION OF GOD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON
17:1 - 20:3
SEVEN JUDGMENTS: SEVEN EVENTS OF
JUDGMENT**

**VISION VII VISION OF THE MILLENNIUM 20:4 - 22:5
SEVEN EVENTS: GOD FULFILLS THE SCROLL**

EPILOGUE 22:6 - 20

IN THE FIRST VISION THERE ARE SEVEN LETTERS TO SEVEN CHURCHES. IN THE SECOND VISION THERE ARE SEVEN SEALS WHICH ONLY THE LAMB CAN OPEN. IN THE THIRD VISION THERE ARE SEVEN ANGELS WHO BLOW SEVEN TRUMPETS. IN THE FOURTH VISION THERE ARE SEVEN EVENTS. JOHN PREFACES EACH EVENT WITH A LITERARY TECHNIQUE: "I SAW," "THERE WAS SEEN" OR "I LOOKED," 12:1, 13:1, 13:11, 14:1, 14:6, 14:14 AND 15:2. IN THE FIFTH VISION THERE ARE SEVEN VIALS POURED OUT BY SEVEN ANGELS. IN THE SIXTH VISION THERE ARE SEVEN JUDGMENTS. EACH DIVISION BEGINS WITH: "I SAW," 17:3, 17:6, 18:1, 19:11, 19:17, 19:19 AND 20:1. IN THE SEVENTH VISION THERE ARE SEVEN EVENTS. EACH EVENT BEGINS WITH: "I SAW," OR "HE SHOWED ME," 20:4, 20:11, 21:1, 21:2, 21:9, 21:22 AND 22:1.

TEXT

VISION I

**VISION OF CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES
1:9-3:22**

SEVEN CHURCHES: LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

REVELATION 1

I. THE PROLOGUE 1:1 - 3

II. THE SALUTATION 1:4 - 6

III. THE SECOND COMING PREDICTED 1:7 - 8

IV. JOHN'S FIRST VISION 1:9 - 20

IN REV. 1:19, JESUS SAYS TO JOHN, "WRITE THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN, AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE, AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE AFTER THESE THINGS." THIS STATEMENT SHOWS THAT THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS RELATED TO TIME IN THREE WAYS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

THE OPENING PHRASE GIVES THE TITLE OF THE BOOK, "A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." THE GREEK WORD αποκαλυψις TRANSLATED "REVELATION" MEANS TO "UNCOVER" OR TO "REVEAL." THE PROLOGUE ALSO STATES THAT THIS IS A BOOK OF PROPHECY. THIS IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT CLAIMS TO BE PROPHECY. IN VERSE 5, JOHN GLORIFIES CHRIST AND GIVE TO HIM TITLES OF HONOR AND PRAISE. BOTH REVELATION AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN HAVE MANY TITLES FOR CHRIST. THESE TITLES SHOW CHRIST'S CHARACTER, NATURE, PURPOSE

AND OFFICE. FOR EXAMPLE: FAITHFUL WITNESS, 1:5; PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, 1:5; ALPHA AND OMEGA, 1:11; THE FIRST AND THE LAST, 1:11; THE LIVING ONE, 1:18; THE AMEN, 3:14; THE TRUE WITNESS 3:14; LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, 5:5; ROOT OF DAVID, 5:5 KING OF NATIONS (KJV, SAINTS), 15:3; OFFSPRING OF DAVID 22:16; BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR, 22:16, THE SON OF MAN, 1:13, 14:14; AND THE TITLE THE LAMB IS USED 28 TIMES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

IN VERSES 4 - 6 JOHN ADDRESSES THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR. THIS IS A LETTER BECAUSE IT HAS A SALUTATION, BLESSING AND PRAYER WHICH WAS THE REGULAR FORMAT OF A STANDARD LETTER IN JOHN'S TIME. A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN JOHN AND THESE CHURCHES. JOHN SAYS, IN THESE VERSES, THAT JESUS LOVES US, WASHES US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS BLOOD AND MAKES US PRIESTS AND KINGS UNTO GOD.

VERSES 7 - 8 PREDICTS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS ONE OF REVELATION'S MAIN THEMES. THIS EVENT IS DESCRIBED IN GREAT DETAIL IN CHAPTER 19. THE MAJOR EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SECOND COMING ARE RECORDED AS THE 7 SEALS, THE 7 TRUMPETS, THE 7 VIALS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT HAPPENINGS. THE WORD TRANSLATED "ALMIGHTY" IN VERSE 8, OCCURS 9 TIMES IN REVELATION. IN THIS VERSE THE WORD MEANS "UNIVERSAL RULER."

THE HISTORICAL SETTING FOR REVELATION TAKES PLACE WHEN JOHN IS BANISHED TO PATMOS, A SMALL ROCKY ISLAND ABOUT 50 MILES SOUTHWEST OF EPHEBUS. IN VERSE 9, JOHN

SAYS ON PATMOS (δία) “BECAUSE OF” THE WORD OF GOD AND (δία) “BECAUSE OF” THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST. δία IS IN THE ACCUSATIVE CASE AND MEANS “BECAUSE OF.” THE PHRASE IN VERSE 9, “ON THE LORD’S DAY” IS USUALLY INTERPRETED AS SUNDAY OR THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH. HOWEVER, JOHN PROBABLY MEANS IT IN THE PROPHETIC SENSE, THE DAY WHEN THE LORD TAKES OVER THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD.

VERSES 9-20 RECORD JOHN’S FIRST VISION. IT IS A VISION OF CHRIST IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS. JOHN USES THE IMAGERY OF THE JEWISH TABERNACLE WHICH WAS LATER THE TEMPLE. THE SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDELABRA STOOD IN THE TABERNACLE. THE LAMPSTANDS ARE SYMBOLIC OF THE CHURCHES, VERSE 20. THE TRUTH PRESENTED HERE IS THAT CHRIST IS PRESENT IN HIS CHURCHES AND THAT THE CHURCHES DEPEND UPON THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN THEIR MIDST. THEY CAN ONLY REFLECT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST. IN VERSE 13, JOHN USES THE TERM “THE SON OF MAN” TO REFER TO CHRIST. THIS TERM IS USED 84 TIMES IN THE GOSPELS, 21 OF WHICH REFER TO CHRIST’S SECOND COMING. THIS TERM ALSO MEANS HIS CAPACITY AS A JUDGE, JOHN 5:22, 27 AND ACTS 17:31. IN THIS SECTION JOHN GIVES TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST:

- 1. HE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS SIGNIFYING INTIMACY WITH THEM,**
- 2. HE IS CLOTHED WITH A GARMENT THAT REACHED DOWN TO HIS FEET PORTRAYING DIGNITY,**
- 3. HE HAS ON A GOLDEN SASH OR GIRDLE FOCUSING UPON HIS STRENGTH,**
- 4. HIS HEAD AND HAIR ARE WHITE LIKE WOOL WHICH**

SPEAK OF HIS ETERNAL PURITY AND WISDOM,

- 5. HIS EYES ARE AS A FLAME OF FIRE MEANING THEY SHOT FIRE WHICH SIGNIFIES HIS ALL SEEING POWER TO SEARCH THE INNER REALITIES OF THE HEART,**
- 6. HIS FEET ARE AS FINE BRASS, CALLING ATTENTION TO HIS STRENGTH AND STABILITY,**
- 7. HIS VOICE IS AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS CONVEYING THE IDEA OF GRANDEUR AND POWER,**
- 8. HE HAS IN HIS RIGHT HAND SEVEN STARS MEANING HE HAS AUTHORITY OVER THEM,**
- 9. HIS MOUTH DELIVERS A SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD VERIFYING THE TRUTH OF THE DIVINE WORD,**
- 10. HIS COUNTENANCE OR EXTERNAL APPEARANCE IS LIKE THE SUN SHINING IN ALL ITS POWER, A SYMBOL OF THE GLORY OF GOD.**

IN VERSE 18, THE WORD “KEYS” IS A SYMBOLIC WORD DENOTING AUTHORITY.

IN VERSE 20, THE WORD μυστηριον OFTEN TRANSLATED “MYSTERY,” DOES NOT MEAN MYSTERIOUS. IT MEANS THAT WHICH IS PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN AND CANNOT BE DISCOVERED BY MERE LOGIC, BUT WHICH CAN BE KNOWN ONLY BY REVELATION FROM GOD. VERSE 20 SAYS, “THE SEVEN STARS ARE ANGELS OF THE SEVEN ASSEMBLIES; AND THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS WHICH YOU SAW ARE SEVEN ASSEMBLIES (CHURCHES).” WHO ARE THESE ANGELS? THERE ARE TWO INTERPRETATIONS. ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT EACH CHURCH HAS A CELESTIAL BEING ASSIGNED TO IT. THE OTHER INTERPRETATION IS THAT THE GREEK WORD FOR ANGEL AND MESSENGER IS THE SAME WORD

AND HERE IT REFERS TO THE PASTOR OR CHIEF ELDER OF THE CHURCH. IN THIS VERSE A CASE COULD BE MADE FOR REAL ANGELS SINCE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION ANGELS HAVE OVERSEEING AND CONTROLLING TASKS.

REVELATION 2

- I. MESSAGE 1: EPHESUS LEFT HER FIRST LOVE 2:1 - 7**
- II. MESSAGE 2: SMYRNA ENDURES SUFFERING 2:8:1 1**
- III. MESSAGE 3: PERGAMOS COMPROMISES DOCTRINE
2:12 - 17**
- IV. MESSAGE 4: THYATIRA TOLERATES A FALSE
TEACHER 2:18 - 29**

SEVEN MESSAGES ARE GIVEN TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. THIS BEGINS WHERE JOHN SAYS, "THE THINGS THAT ARE," 2:1 - 3:22

MESSAGES FROM CHRIST ARE GIVEN TO SEVEN LOCAL CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR. THE NUMBER SEVEN INDICATES THAT THESE CHURCHES ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL CHURCHES. IN FACT THERE IS SOME TRUTH TO THE IDEA THAT THE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN THESE CHURCHES HAVE EXISTED IN CHURCHES IN EVERY PERIOD OF HISTORY. THERE IS ALSO A THEORY THAT THE CONDITIONS THAT EXISTED IN THESE CHURCHES IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARE LISTED ARE SYMBOLIC OF SEVEN PERIODS OF CHURCH HISTORY FROM THE TIME OF JOHN TO THE END OF THE WORLD.

THE FIRST MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

THEIR VIRTUES ARE EXTOLLED FIRST. CHRIST COMMENDS THEM FOR THEIR WORKS, FOR THEIR INTOLERANCE OF EVIL AND THEIR DISCERNMENT OF FALSE DOCTRINE. THE WORD EPHEBUS COMES FROM A WORD MEANING TO “LET GO” OR “ALLOW.” IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE CHARGE AGAINST THEM IS THAT THEY HAVE LET GO OF THEIR FIRST LOVE. THEY HAD PROBABLY SLOWLY MOVED AWAY FROM OR LET GO OF THEIR PRIMARY LOVE. THE CITY OF EPHEBUS WAS FAMOUS FOR THE TEMPLE OF THE GODDESS ARTEMIS (DIANA). THIS TEMPLE WAS ONE OF THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. THE BELIEVERS RESISTED THE EXTERNAL EVIL, BUT LOST THEIR SPIRITUAL FERVOR.

THE SECOND MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA. THE NAME SMYRNA MEANS BITTER. THERE WERE BITTER WATER IN THIS REGION WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ITS NAME. SMYRNA WAS LOCATED ON A HIGH ELEVATION AND WAS KNOWN AS “THE BEAUTY OF ASIA.” THERE WAS A TEMPLE TO THE EMPEROR TIBERIAS IN THE CITY, AND SMYRNA WAS FAMOUS FOR ITS WORSHIP OF CAESAR. THE LORD HELD THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA IN THE HIGHEST REGARD OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES, BECAUSE IT HAD ENDURED INTENSE SUFFERING. NO CONDEMNATION IS PRONOUNCED AGAINST THIS CHURCH.

THE THIRD MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS. THE FIRST PART OF THE WORD IS FROM “PERGOS” MEANING A TOWER, AND THE LAST PART FROM “GAM” MEANING TO UNITE. THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS WAS LOCATED IN A TERRIBLE ENVIRONMENT. THE LORD COMMENDS THE CHURCH BECAUSE IT HELD FIRM THE NAME OF CHRIST AND HAD NOT DENIED THE FAITH. THE CHARGE AGAINST THEM IS THAT SOME OF THEM HOLD

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM. THIS REFERS TO NUMBERS CHAPTERS 22 THROUGH 25 AND 31:15- 16. THIS EVENT IS WHERE BALAAM ADVISED BALAK TO ENTICE MOABITE WOMEN TO SEDUCE THE MEN OF ISRAEL. NICOLAITANS MAY HAVE BEEN A FALSE TEACHER WHO LEAD THEM ASTRAY. THERE WAS A TEMPLE TO AUGUSTUS CAESAR IN THE CITY. IN VERSE 17, A PROMISE IS MADE TO THE OVERCOMERS THAT THEY WILL BE GIVEN A WHITE PEBBLE. THIS MAY ALLUDE TO THE URIM OF HIGH PRIEST, SIGNIFYING LIGHT.

THE FOURTH MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA. THE WORD THYATIRA COMES FROM “THUOS” SACRIFICE AND “ATEIRES” UNWEARY. THYATIRA IS COMMENDED FOR HER WORKS, LOVE AND FAITH. ONE OF THE CHIEF PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH IS THAT THEY HAVE ALLOWED A WOMAN LIKE JEZEBEL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO TEACH AND INFLUENCE THEM.

REVELATION 3

I. MESSAGE 5: SARDIS, THE DYING CHURCH 3:1 - 6

II. MESSAGE 6: PHILADELPHIA, THE CHURCH OF OPPORTUNITY 3:7 - 13

I II. MESSAGE 7: LAODICEA, THE LUKEWARM CHURCH 3:14-22

THE FIFTH MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS, THE CAPITAL OF LYDIA. THE WARNING “WATCH” REFERS TO THE FALL OF SARDIS TO KING CYRUS OF GREECE. SARDIS WAS BUILT ON A SPOT BELIEVED TO BE EASILY DEFENDED. CYRUS TOOK

HIS ARMY UP A PATH ON THE SIDE OF THE CITY THAT WAS CONSIDERED IMPREGNABLE AND CAPTURED THE CITY. CROESUS, KNOWN FOR HIS GREAT WEALTH WAS KING AT THE TIME. THE CHIEF CHARGE AGAINST THEM IS THAT THEY HAVE A REPUTATION OF BEING ALIVE, BUT THEY ARE DEAD. THEY ARE TO LOOK INTO THEIR TRUE CONDITION AND STABLE THE TRUTH THAT IS LEFT.

THE SIXTH MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA. THE WORD PHILADELPHIA MEANS "BROTHERLY LOVE." THE CITY WAS GIVEN THIS NAME IN HONOR OF KING ATTALUS III WHO HAD SHOWED GREAT LOVE FOR HIS BROTHER EUMENES. THE CITY WAS LOCATED IN A REGION OF VOLCANIC ACTIVITY. THE LORD PLACES BEFORE PHILADELPHIA A CHALLENGE. THE WORD "KEY OF DAVID" REFERS TO ISA. 22:22. THE VERSE MEANS THAT JUST AS ELIAKIM HAD AUTHORITY OVER DAVID'S HOUSE, CHRIST NOW HAS AUTHORITY TO OPEN AND CLOSE ALL DOORS. THE WORD TRANSLATED "BEHOLD" OR "SEE" IS USED FOUR TIMES IN THIS MESSAGE TO PHILADELPHIA. THE VERB IS IN THE MIDDLE TENSE AND MEANS, "SEE FOR YOURSELF." EACH TIME IT REFERS TO AN OPPORTUNITY OR TO A VICTORY WHICH THE LORD WILL BRING. NO CONDEMNATION IS PRONOUNCED AGAINST THIS CHURCH.

THE SEVENTH MESSAGE IS TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA. THE WORD IS FROM "LAOS" PEOPLE AND "DIKE" JUDGEMENT. THE CHURCH IS WEALTHY IN MATERIAL RICHES AND POOR IN SPIRITUAL POSSESSIONS. THE CHARGE AGAINST THE CHURCH IS INDIFFERENCE. THE CITY WAS FAMOUS FOR HOT MINERAL BATHS; WHEREAS, IN CONTRAST THE CHURCH WAS LUKEWARM. THE LORD PREFERS HOTNESS OR COLDNESS TO LUKE WARMNESS.

VISION II

VISION OF GOD IN HEAVEN ON THE THRONE 4:1 - 8:1 SEVEN SEALS: OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS

REVELATION 4

- I. THE THRONE 4:1 - 3
- II. THE TWENTY -FOUR ELDERS 4:4- 5, 10- 11
- III. THE LIVING BEINGS AROUND THE THRONE 4:6 - 9

IN THIS VISION JOHN SEES GOD IN HEAVEN SEATED ON HIS THRONE. THIS SIGNIFIES HIS COMPLETE CONTROL OF TIME AND HISTORY. THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE BOOK BEGINS “THE THINGS THAT ARE COMING.” “AFTER THESE THINGS,” μετα ταυτα, MEANS THE PASSING OF TIME FROM THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN TO THE THINGS THAT WILL BE.

WHEN JOHN SAYS “I SAW” AND USES OTHER DERIVATIVES OF THE VERB “TO SEE” IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY OR ALWAYS MEAN THAT THE THINGS HE IS ABOUT TO SEE ARE ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICAL, THAT IS AFTER THE THING WHICH HE HAS JUST SEEN. THE VERB “TO SEE” AND ITS DERIVATIVES ARE OFTEN USED BY JOHN AS A TECHNIQUE FOR INTRODUCING A SUBDIVISION UNDER ONE OF HIS VISIONS.

JOHN IS EVIDENTLY ON THE EARTH WHEN HE RECEIVED THE MESSAGES FOR THE CHURCHES. NOW HE IS COMMANDED TO ENTER HEAVEN TO RECEIVE THIS VISION. HE SEES A DOOR OPEN INTO HEAVEN. HE HEARS A VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET CALLING

HIM TO ENTER AND RECEIVES AN INVITATION TO SEE THE THINGS THAT WILL OCCUR IN THE FUTURE. IMMEDIATELY HE SEES A THRONE AND ONE SITTING ON IT. GOD SITS ON THE THRONE. THE WORD THRONE IS USED 45 TIMES IN REVELATION AND ONLY 15 TIMES IN THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. REVELATION COULD BE CALLED THE THRONE BOOK. THE THRONE IS A SYMBOL OF SOVEREIGNTY, GOVERNMENT AND JUDGEMENT. THE GLORY OF THE ONE SITTING ON THE THRONE IS DESCRIBED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE TWO STONES, THE JASPER AND THE SARDIUS. THE JASPER STONE IS KNOWN FOR ITS BRILLIANCE. "AS CLEAR AS CRYSTAL," SEEMS TO DESCRIBE THE DIAMOND, 21:11. THE SARDIUS STONE IS RED AND NAMED AFTER THE CITY OF SARDIS WHERE THE BEST OF THESE STONES ARE FOUND. THE RED SYMBOLIZES BOTH THE HOLY WRATH AND THE REDEMPTION OF GOD. A RAINBOW ENCIRCLES THE THRONE. THIS SIGNIFIES GOD'S GRACE IN THE MIDST OF JUDGEMENT AND HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES. THE RAINBOW HAS THE APPEARANCE OF AN EMERALD. THE SEVEN FLAMING LAMPS STAND FOR THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S SPIRIT AS DID THE SEVEN LAMPS ON THE BRANCHES OF CANDELABRA IN THE TABERNACLE, SEE ZECH. 4:2 FF. THE SEA IS THE LAYER OF THE TABERNACLE AND SYMBOLIZED THE CLEANSING AND PURITY NECESSARY TO APPROACH GOD. THE LAYER IS CALLED THE SEA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

AROUND THIS THRONE ARE 24 OTHER THRONES WITH ELDERS SITTING ON THEM. THIS ARRANGEMENT SEEMS TO BE PATTERNED AFTER THE SANHEDRIN WHICH WAS IN A SEMI-CIRCLE. THE GREEK WORD IS THRONES, ALTHOUGH SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE THE WORD SEATS. IN VERSE 4, ELDERS IS A TITLE. THESE ELDERS HAVE ON WHITE ROBES SIGNIFYING

PURITY. THEY ALSO HAVE ON CROWNS OF GOLD. THE WORD USED HERE AND TRANSLATED “CROWNS” στεφάνους (STEPHANOUS) IS THE WORD FOR A VICTOR’S CROWN.

AROUND THE CENTER THRONE ARE FOUR ζῶα, TRANSLATED LIVING CREATURES. THE WORD ζῶα IS A DIFFERENT WORD THAN THE ONE TRANSLATED BEAST IN CHAPTER 13. THE DESCRIPTION OF THESE LIVING CREATURES MATCH THE CHERUBIM DESCRIBED IN EZEKIEL 10:20. THE “IM” ENDING ON A HEBREW WORD MAKES IT PLURAL. THE FACES OF THE LIVING CREATURES SHOW THAT THEY REPRESENT GOD’S CREATION. THESE LIVING BEINGS CARRY OUT GOD’S COMMANDS IN CREATION.

REVELATION 5

- I. THE SEALED BOOK 5:1**
- II. THE STRONG ANGEL 5:2 - 4**
- III. THE WORTHY LAMB 5:5 - 14**

GOD IS SITTING ON THE THRONE. IN HIS RIGHT HAND IS A SCROLL OR BOOK SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS. THIS SYMBOL MEANS DIVINE AUTHORITY AND POWER TO ENACT AND BRING TO FULFILLMENT ALL THE PLANS OF GOD CONTAINED IN THE SCROLL. THE SEVEN SEALS REFLECT THE FACT THAT IN ROMAN LAW A WILL HAD ON IT THE SEVEN SEALS OF THE SEVEN WITNESSES. NO ONE IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH IS WORTHY TO BREAK THE SEALS AND BRING INTO ACTION ALL THAT IS RECORDED IN THE SCROLL.

A STRONG ANGEL CRIES WITH A LOUD VOICE, "WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK, AND TO LOOSE THE SEALS OF IT?" THE STRONG ANGEL IS PROBABLY GABRIEL WHO ORDERED THE CLOSING AND SEALING OF THE BOOK IN DANIEL 12:8-9 AND EZEKIEL 2. THE NAME GABRIEL MEANS "STRENGTH OF GOD." WHY IS THE SCROLL SO IMPORTANT? BECAUSE THE SCROLL CONTAINS THE PLANS OF GOD FOR THE EARTH AND TO OPEN IT MEANS TO BRING THEM INTO BEING.

ONE OF THE ELDERS TELLS JOHN THAT THE LION OF JUDEA, THE ROOT OF DAVID HAS OVERCOME AND IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK AND LOOSE THE SEVEN SEALS. ONLY CHRIST THE KING CAN OPEN THE BOOK AND MOVE HISTORY TO ITS CLIMATIC CONCLUSION. JOHN LOOKS AND SEES NOT A LION BUT A LAMB. THE LAMB IS ALIVE, BUT HAS THE MARKS OF SACRIFICE ON IT. THE LAMB HAS FINISHED HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK AND IS NOW WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK. ALL HISTORY IS IN THE HANDS WHICH WERE PIERCED AT CALVARY. THE LAMB IS IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE, THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES, AND THE ELDERS, SYMBOLIZING THAT HE IS THE CENTER OF ALL THINGS. THE LAMB HAS SEVEN HORNS SYMBOLIZING COMPLETE STRENGTH AND PERFECT POWER IN GOVERNMENT. HE HAS SEVEN EYES SYMBOLIZING COMPLETE ALL-KNOWING INTELLIGENCE, INSIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE. THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD SYMBOLIZE THE PRESENCE OF GOD EVERYWHERE AT ALL TIMES.

THE LAMB RECEIVES THE BOOK FROM GOD SIGNIFYING THAT HE IN HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK HAS ANSWERED THE PROBLEMS OF THE REDEEMED. THE DESTINY OF HIS PEOPLE IS IN HIS HANDS.

THIS ACT BRINGS ENORMOUS PRAISE AND WORSHIP OF GOD AND THE LAMB. THE LAMB IS DECLARED WORTHY TO OPEN THE SEALS BECAUSE OF HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK. IN DANIEL 12, THE ANGEL SAYS THAT THE SEALED BOOK CONTAINS THE THINGS WHICH WILL HAPPEN TO DANIEL'S PEOPLE IN THE LAST DAYS. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT THE THINGS THE SPIRIT SAID TO THE CHURCH WAS NOT IN THE SEALED BOOK.

REVELATION 6

- I. THE FIRST SEAL: ANTICHRIST 6:1 - 2**
- II. THE SECOND SEAL: WAR 6:3 - 4**
- III. THE THIRD SEAL: FAMINE 6:5 - 6**
- IV. THE FOURTH SEAL: DEATH 6:7 - 8**
- V. THE FIFTH SEAL: THE MARTYRS 6:9 - 11**
- VI. THE SIXTH SEAL: GREAT DISTRESS 6:12 - 17**

CHAPTERS 6 THROUGH 18 RECORD THREE GREAT SERIES OF JUDGEMENTS UPON THE EARTH: THE 7 SEALS, THE 7 TRUMPETS AND THE 7 VIALS. CHAPTER 6 RECORDS THE OPENING OF THE FIRST 6 SEALS, AND THIS BRINGS THE READER UP TO THE DAY OF THE LORD OR THE DAY OF WRATH. CHAPTER 6 BEGINS THE 7 YEAR PERIOD KNOWN AS "THE GREAT TRIBULATION." THIS PERIOD IS USUALLY CONSIDERED TO CORRESPOND TO DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK. IN THE NEXT CHAPTERS JOHN RECORDS A SERIES OF VISIONS WHICH PORTRAY THE WRATH OF GOD Poured OUT UPON UNREPENTANT MANKIND. THE SEVERITY OF THE JUDGMENTS ARE NOT PARALLELED ANYWHERE IN THE SCRIPTURE. GOD, HOWEVER, ACTS JUSTLY, BECAUSE HIS HOLINESS MUST BE VINDICATED.

THERE IS, THEREFORE, NO INCONSISTENCY WITH HIS NATURE.

THE LAMB OPENS THE FIRST SEAL, AND JOHN SEES A WHITE HORSE AND AN UNNAMED RIDER CARRYING A BOW AND WEARING A CROWN, VERSES 1 - 2. WHITE HORSES ARE MENTIONED IN ONLY TWO PLACES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION, HERE AND IN 19:11. THE TWO RIDERS SEEM TO HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON EXCEPT THE WHITE HORSE. SOME SCHOLARS IDENTIFY THESE TWO AS THE SAME RIDER. SINCE THE LORD IS OPENING THE SEALS IT IS NOT HIM. THE RIDER ON THIS HORSE IS PROBABLY THE ANTICHRIST OR THE SYMBOL OF SOME CONDITION WHICH WILL PREPARE FOR HIS COMING. THIS RIDER SEEMS TO LEAD THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE OTHER RIDERS.

THE SECOND SEAL IS OPENED, VERSES 3 - 4, AND A RED HORSE COMES FORTH CARRYING A RIDER WITH A GREAT SWORD. THIS IS A SYMBOL OF WAR AND BLOODSHED WHICH FOLLOWS THE ANTICHRIST'S VIOLENCE.

THE THIRD SEAL IS OPENED, VERSES 5 - 6, AND A BLACK HORSE COMES FORTH CARRYING A RIDER WITH A PAIR OF BALANCES OR SCALES IN HIS HANDS. THE SEALS SYMBOLIZE FAMINE WHICH FOLLOWS WAR.

THE FOURTH SEAL IS OPENED, VERSES 7 - 8, AND A PALE OR YELLOWISH-GREEN HORSE CARRYING THE RIDER DEATH COMES FORTH. IT SAYS THAT HADES FOLLOWED WITH HIM. IT DOES NOT SAY WHETHER HE IS RIDING ON THE SAME HORSE AS DEATH OR RIDING ON ANOTHER HORSE. ONE FOURTH OF THE EARTH'S POPULATION IS DESTROYED BY FOUR MEANS: WAR,

FAMINE, DEATH (DISEASE) AND WILD BEASTS.

THE FIFTH SEAL IS OPENED, VERSES 9-11, AND JOHN SEES THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO WERE SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HAD GIVEN. THE WORD εσφαγμενων IS TRANSLATED "SLAIN." THIS WORD IS A PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE AND SEEMS TO INDICATE DEATHS BY TERRIBLE MEANS. THESE PEOPLE CRY OUT FOR THE JUSTICE OF GOD TO BE VISITED UPON THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIS PEOPLE. THESE PEOPLE ARE GIVEN WHITE ROBES SYMBOLIZING PURITY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE SIXTH SEAL, VERSES 12-17, IS OPENED AND THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS REVEALED. THE FIRST FIVE SEALS SEEM TO INDICATE THE RESULTS OF A CONQUEROR WHO BRINGS WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. THE SIXTH SEAL, HOWEVER, FOCUSES MORE UPON THE WRATH OF GOD. HIS WRATH PRODUCES COSMIC CATASTROPHE AND GREAT DISTRESS IN THE EARTH. AN EARTHQUAKE COMES AND IS FOLLOWED BY ESCHATOLOGICAL EVENTS. THOSE WHO HAVE IGNORED THE MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD TRY TO HIDE IN DENS AND CAVES BUT CANNOT ESCAPE THE WRATH OF GOD. THE READER WOULD EXPECT FOR THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL TO BE IMMEDIATELY RECORDED; HOWEVER, JOHN IN CHAPTER 7, GIVES AN INTERLUDE OF TWO EVENTS.

REVELATION 7

I. THE SEALING OF THE 144,000 7:1-8

II. THE GREAT MULTITUDE 7:9 - 17

CHAPTER 7 IS AN INTERLUDE BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL. DURING THE TRIBULATION PERIOD, WHICH CHAPTERS 6- 18 COVER, THERE ARE THREE SERIES OF JUDGMENTS: THE 7 SEALS, THE 7 TRUMPETS AND THE 7 VIALS. IN CHAPTER 6, 6 OF THE 7 SEAL ARE OPENED AND THE JUDGMENTS REVEALED. BEFORE THE SEVENTH SEAL IS OPENED AND THE JUDGMENT REVEALED CHAPTER 7 RECORDS 2 EVENTS, THE SEALING OF THE 144,000 OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL AND THE GREAT MULTITUDE WEARING WHITE ROBES.

THE OTHER TWO SERIES OF JUDGMENTS, THE TRUMPETS AND THE VIALS, FOLLOW THIS SAME PATTERN OF AN INTERLUDE AFTER THE SIXTH JUDGMENT IN EACH SERIES.

CHAPTER 7 RECORDS THAT FOUR OF GOD'S ANGELS STAND AT THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH HOLDING BACK THE FOUR WINDS. THE WINDS ARE SYMBOLIC OF THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, WHICH WILL BE RELEASED AFTER THE SEVENTH VIAL IS OPENED. ANOTHER ANGEL COMES "FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN," WITH THE SEAL OF GOD. THIS ANGEL BESTOWS GOD'S BLESSING; WHEREAS, THE FOUR ANGELS HOLDING BACK THE WINDS WILL RELEASE GOD'S JUDGMENT. THE ANGEL SAYS NOTHING IS TO BE HARMED UNTIL GOD'S SERVANTS ARE SEALED. THE NUMBER SEALED IS 144,000 OF THE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. VERSES 4 - 8 RECORD THE NUMBER AND TRIBES THAT ARE SEALED. IN THIS LIST THE TRIBES OF DAN AND EPHRAIM ARE OMITTED. THE TRIBE OF DAN WAS THE FIRST TRIBE TO FALL INTO IDOLATRY, JUDGES 18:30 AND I KINGS

12:28. HOSEA SAID OF EPHRAIM, "EPHRAIM IS JOINED TO IDOLS LET HIM ALONE," HOSEA 4:17. THE WRITER OF REVELATION DOES NOT CALL THE NAME OF EPHRAIM. HE REPLACES IT WITH THE NAME JOSEPH, THE FATHER OF EPHRAIM. THE TRIBE OF LEVI, THE PRIESTS OF ISRAEL, ARE ALSO ON THIS LIST. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT THE CHURCH, FOR THE CHURCH IS ALREADY IN HEAVEN AND THE 144,000 ARE ON THE EARTH. THE SEALING IMPLIES POSSESSION AND PROTECTION. THEY BELONG TO GOD. THEY ARE ALSO SEALED TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE TORTURE THAT IS COMING. IT MAY IMPLY THAT THE CHURCH AGE IS COMING TO AN END. THE ANTICHRIST WILL TRY TO DESTROY THE 144,000. THIS IS CERTAINLY, "THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE," JEREMIAH 30:7.

IN VERSES 9 - 17, JOHN SEES THE GREAT MULTITUDE WHICH COME FROM EVERY NATION, TRIBE, PEOPLE AND TONGUE. THESE GENTILE PEOPLE ARE IN HEAVEN STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND THE LAMB. THEY WEAR WHITE ROBES AND HAVE PALMS IN THEIR HANDS. THESE PEOPLE ARE THOSE WHO COME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE 144,000 JEWS.

VISION III

VISION OF THE SEVEN ANGELS 8:2 - 11:18

SEVEN TRUMPETS: THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

REVELATION 8

I. THE SEVENTH SEAL OPENED 8:1

II. THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPET JUDGMENTS 8:2 - 13

THE THREE SERIES OF JUDGMENTS: THE SEALS, THE TRUMPETS AND THE VIALS START AT DIFFERENT TIMES, BUT THEY PROBABLY ALL END AT THE CLOSE OF THE TRIBULATION. IN OTHER WORDS THEY OVERLAP. THE SEALS START NEAR THE BEGINNING OF THE TRIBULATION. THE TRUMPETS START ABOUT ONE FOURTH OF THE WAY THROUGH THE TRIBULATION. THE VIALS START IN THE LAST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD. SOME STUDENTS OF REVELATION THINK THAT THE SEVENTH SEAL CONTAINS ALL OF THE TRUMPETS AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET CONTAINS ALL OF THE VIALS.

CHAPTER 8 RESUMES THE SEAL JUDGMENTS AND HAS THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL, VERSE 1. AT THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL THERE IS SILENCE IN HEAVEN FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SILENCE IS THAT THE EVENTS FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THIS SEAL ARE GOING TO BE FAR MORE TERRIBLE AND AWESOME THAN ANY THAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

JOHN'S THIRD VISION BEGINS IN VERSE 2 WHEN HE SEES THE SEVEN ANGELS THAT STAND CONTINUOUSLY BEFORE THE THRONE RECEIVE THE SEVEN TRUMPETS. THE SEVEN ANGELS BEFORE THE THRONE ARE EACH GIVEN A TRUMPET. EACH ANGEL

WILL BLOW HIS TRUMPET IN SUCCESSION. THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS ARE RECORDED IN 8:2 - 14:20.

VERSES 3-5 LOOK INTO HEAVEN, AND REMIND US OF THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE AND THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE IN THE TABERNACLE WHICH ARE BUT SHADOWS OF THESE.

AT THE BLOWING OF THE FIRST TRUMPET A SERIES OF JUDGMENTS BEGIN UPON THE EARTH WHICH RESEMBLE THE PLAGUES THAT GOD SENT UPON EGYPT THROUGH MOSES, EXODUS 9:22FF. HAIL AND FIRE MIXED WITH BLOOD ARE CAST UPON THE EARTH.

AT THE BLOWING OF THE SECOND TRUMPET A GREAT CATASTROPHE COMES TO THE SEA. SOMETHING AS OR LIKE A HUGE MOUNTAIN IS CAST INTO IT. THE WORD "AS" INDICATES THAT THIS IS A FIGURE OF SPEECH, AND WE DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS THAT IS CAST INTO THE SEA.

AT THE BLOWING OF THE THIRD TRUMPET A GREAT BURNING STAR FALLS FROM HEAVEN INTO THE RIVERS AND SPRINGS. THE FOURTH TRUMPET SOUNDS AND THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS ARE DARKENED.

AFTER THE FOURTH TRUMPET AN ANGEL, SOME MANUSCRIPTS SAY AN EAGLE, FLIES THROUGH HEAVEN ANNOUNCING THE THREE WOES OF EARTH'S INHABITANTS THAT WILL COME AT THE SOUNDING OF THE FIFTH, SIXTH AND SEVENTH TRUMPETS.

I. THE FIFTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT 9:1 - 12

II. THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT 9:13-21

AT THE BLOWING OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET JOHN SEES THAT A STAR HAD FALLEN FROM HEAVEN UPON THE EARTH. THE WORD IN VERSE 1 SHOULD BE TRANSLATED "HAD FALLEN," BECAUSE THE VERB IS IN THE PERFECT TENSE, COMPLETED ACTION IN PAST TIME. JOHN SAW THE STAR AFTER IT HAD FALLEN. THE WORD STAR DOES NOT MEAN A LITERAL STAR SINCE THE STAR IS GIVEN THE KEY TO THE φρεατος της αβυσσου, "PIT OF THE ABYSS." THE KEY MEANS AUTHORITY, AND STAR MEANS A GREAT ONE. SATAN'S ANGELS ARE REFERRED TO AS STARS IN 12:4-9. THE STAR OF VERSE ONE IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE KING OVER THE LOCUSTS IN VERSE 11. VERSE 11 IDENTIFIES HIM AS THE ANGEL OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT WHOSE HEBREW NAME IS ABADDON AND HIS GREEK NAME IS APOLLYON, MEANING THE DESTROYER. THE PIT IS OPENED, AND OUT OF IT RISES SMOKE THAT GIVES THE AIR A DARK COLOR AND SCREENS THE SUN'S RAYS FROM THE EARTH. OUT OF THE SMOKE COME LOCUSTS WHICH CAUSE INDSCRIBABLE PAIN AND MISERY TO PEOPLE ON THE EARTH. SOME THINK THAT THE ANGEL OF VERSE ONE IS THE SAME ANGEL THAT BINDS SATAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM IN 20:1-3. THIS IS NOT LIKELY BECAUSE THE ANGEL OF VERSE ONE FELL TO THE EARTH.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET SOUNDS AND THE COMMAND IS GIVEN TO RELEASE THE FOUR ANGELS BOUND AT THE EUPHRATES RIVER. THESE ARE FALLEN ANGELS, BECAUSE THEIR PURPOSE IS TO DESTROY PEOPLE. THE SECOND WOE COMES, AND JOHN

SEES AN ARMY OF 200,000,000 CREATURES RESEMBLING HORSES EXCEPT THEIR HEADS ARE LIKE LIONS WHICH BREATHED FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, AND THEIR TAILS ARE LIKE SERPENTS WITH HEADS. THE RIDERS HAVE BREASTPLATES OF FIRE, SMOKE AND BRIMSTONE. THEIR NUMBER IS 200,000,000. A FOURTH OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH HAS BEEN SLAIN, 6:8. NOW THESE HORSEMEN WILL SLAY ONE THIRD OF THOSE REMAINING. AFTER THIS THOSE WHO REMAIN ALIVE STILL DO NOT REPENT.

REVELATION 10

- I. JOHN SEES THE MIGHTY ANGEL 10:1 - 7**
- II. JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK 10:8 - 11**

BETWEEN THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT AN INTERVAL OCCURS. THE EVENTS OF CHAPTER TEN ARE AT THE MIDDLE POINT OF THE TRIBULATION. THE PHRASE "ANOTHER ANGEL," IN VERSE 1, PROBABLY MEANS THAT HE IS NOT ONE OF THE TRUMPET ANGELS. SOME THINK THAT THIS ANGEL IS THE SON OF MAN. THIS CANNOT BE CHRIST, BECAUSE THIS WOULD MAKE CHRIST COME FROM HEAVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TRIBULATION.

IN VERSES 8 - 10, JOHN WAS TOLD TO EAT THE LITTLE BOOK THAT WAS IN THE HAND OF THE ANGEL. EATING THE BOOK HAS THE IDEA OF RECEIVING AND ASSIMILATING KNOWLEDGE. IN VERSE 11, JOHN IS TOLD THAT HE MUST PROPHECY AS TO

REVELATION 11

- I. JOHN MEASURES THE TEMPLE 11:1-2**
- II. THE TWO WITNESSES PROPHECY 11:3-14**
- III. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT 11:15-19**

IN CHAPTER 11, JOHN IS TOLD TO MEASURE THE TEMPLE AND THE ALTAR. THE WORD FOR TEMPLE HERE IS ναός, "NAOS," WHICH MEANS THE TEMPLE PROPER, THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND THE HOLY PLACE. THE ALTAR IS THE ALTAR OF INCENSE IN THE HOLY PLACE NOT THE BRAZEN ALTAR IN THE COURTYARD. HE IS TOLD NOT TO MEASURE THE COURT. THE "NAOS" AND THE COURTS COMPOSED THE "HIERON," AND JESUS CALLED THE HIERON "MY HOUSE." THIS IS NOT HEROD'S TEMPLE, BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN 70 A.D. NEITHER IS IT THE TEMPLE IN EZEKIEL. THIS MUST BE THE TEMPLE BUILT BY THE JEWS BEFORE THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND DESTROYED NEAR THE END OF THE PERIOD. THESE VERSES SAY THAT THE NATIONS WILL TRAMPLE THE HOLY CITY FOR FORTY - TWO MONTHS. THIS MAY MEAN THAT THE JEWISH PART OF THE TEMPLE PASSES UNDER THE ROD OF JUDGMENT.

IN VERSES 3-13, GOD GIVES POWER TO THE TWO WITNESSES. THE WORD POWER IS NOT IN THE GREEK TEXT, BUT THE IDEA IS THAT GOD GIVES THEM POWER TO PROPHECY. THESE TWO MEN PROPHECY FOR 1,260 DAYS. THEY ARE CLOTHED IN SACKCLOTH

WHICH INDICATES THAT THEY PREACH REPENTANCE. THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS THE TWO OLIVE TREES AND THE TWO LAMPSTANDS WHICH STAND BEFORE GOD. THE OLIVE TREE MEANS THAT THEY ARE ANOINTED OF GOD, ZECHARIAH 4:3,14. THE LAMPSTAND MEANS THEY ARE LIGHT BEARERS, ZECHARIAH 4:2. WHEN THEY COMPLETE THEIR MESSAGE, THE BEAST COMES OUT OF THE ABYSS AND MAKES WAR ON THEM. THE BEAST KILLS THEM, AND THEY LAY IN THE STREET THREE AND A HALF DAYS. AFTER THIS GOD'S SPIRIT ENTERS THEM, AND THEY ASCEND INTO HEAVEN. WHEN DO THE TWO WITNESSES PROPHECY AND WHEN ARE THE WITNESSES SLAIN? THE BOOK OF DANIEL CAN BE USED TO THROW LIGHT ON THIS PASSAGE. IT SEEMS THAT THE FIRST HALF OF THE WEEK IS FOR THE PREACHING OF THE PROPHETS AND THE LAST HALF FOR THE ANTICHRIST TO RULE. THE TESTIMONY OF THESE TWO WITNESSES SEEM TO BE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT MANY OF THE EVENTS OF REVELATION ARE EVIDENTLY NOT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

WHO ARE THESE TWO WITNESSES? THE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SAY. SOME THINK THEY ARE ENOCH AND ELIJAH SINCE NEITHER OF THESE MEN DIED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. OTHERS THINK THAT THEY ARE MOSES AND ELIJAH. THE REASONS GIVEN FOR CHOOSING THEM IS BECAUSE IN THE SCRIPTURE MOSES IS THE PERSON WHO TURNED THE WATER INTO BLOOD AND BROUGHT PLAGUES UPON THE EARTH. AND ELIJAH IS THE PERSON WHO COMMANDED FIRE TO CONSUME HIS ENEMIES AND CAUSED IT NOT TO RAIN UPON THE EARTH, VERSE 6.

IN VERSES 14- 19, THE THIRD WOE COMES AND THE SEVENTH

ANGEL SOUNDS HIS TRUMPET. THE TIME PERIOD OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET SEEMS TO GO TO THE END OF GOD'S WRATH AND TO THE COMING OF GOD'S GLORY. THE TIME LENGTH OF THIS PERIOD IS RECORDED IN DIFFERENT TERMINOLOGY IN DIFFERENT PLACES IN REVELATION, 42 MONTHS, 11:2; 13:5 OR 1,260 DAYS 11:3; 12:6 OR THREE AND A HALF YEARS, 12:14. THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COMING CORONATION OF JESUS. THE TRUMPET ANNOUNCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THE KINGDOM IS NOT ESTABLISHED UNTIL CHAPTER 19, BUT THIS IS A PREVIEW, VERSE 15. WHO RULES THE UNIVERSE IS NOW SETTLED.

VISION IV

**VISION OF GOD'S SALVATION 11:19 - 14:20
SEVEN EVENTS: SEVEN SCENES**

REVELATION 12

**THE FIRST EVENT: THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON
12:1 - 18**

THE FOURTH VISION BEGINS IN 11:19 AND GOES THROUGH 14:20. IN 11:19 JOHN SAYS HE SAW INTO THE TEMPLE OF GOD IN HEAVEN. THE TWELFTH CHAPTER BEGINS, "AND A GREAT SIGN WAS SEEN IN HEAVEN." IN JOHN'S WRITINGS THE WORD SIGN MEANS SOMETHING THAT POINTS BEYOND ITSELF. THE SIGN HERE IS THE WOMAN IN HEAVEN. THE WORD SIGN IS USED SEVEN TIMES IN REVELATION, 12:1,3; 13:13,14; 15:1; 16:14;

AND 19:20. THE WOMAN IS A SYMBOL OF ISRAEL. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL IS PICTURED AS A WOMAN AND GOD AS HER HUSBAND. THE WOMAN'S CLOTHING IS DESCRIBED. SHE IS CLOTHED WITH THE SUN; THE MOON IS AT HER FEET; AND SHE HAS A CROWN OF 12 STARS. THIS IS SURELY A REFERENCE TO GEN. 37:9-10, WHICH ARE THE WORDS OF JOSEPH TO HIS BROTHERS. THE WOMAN IS ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH TO A CHILD.

AT THIS POINT ANOTHER SIGN WAS SEEN IN HEAVEN. THIS IS A RED DRAGON WITH SEVEN HEADS, TEN HORNS AND SEVEN CROWNS ON THE BEAST. THE SIGN IS SEEN IN THE COLOR, THE NUMBER OF HEADS, CROWNS AND HORNS. THE SEVEN HEADS AND THE TEN HORNS SYMBOLIZE THE SAME SEVEN WORLD KINGDOMS AS THOSE REFERRED TO ON THE BEAST IN 13:1-4 AND 17:1-18. THE DRAGON IS CAST DOWN TO THE EARTH AND HIS TAIL DRAGS A THIRD OF THE STARS DOWN TO THE EARTH. THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE FALL OF SATAN AND A THIRD OF THE ANGELS WHO FELL WITH HIM, ISA. 14:12-14; EZEKIEL 28:11-17 AND LUKE 1 -:18. IN VERSE 9, THE DRAGON IS NAMED AS THE DEVIL AND SATAN. DEVIL IS THE GREEK NAME, AND SATAN IS THE HEBREW NAME. THE DRAGON SEEKS TO DEVOUR THE BOY CHILD WHEN HE IS BORN. THIS CHILD IS THE CHRIST CHILD, AND THE DRAGON IS SATAN TRYING TO DESTROY HIM THROUGH HEROD. IN VERSE 5, IT SAYS THE CHILD WAS CAUGHT UP INTO HEAVEN. THIS REFERS TO JESUS' ASCENSION. ANOTHER VERY UNLIKELY INTERPRETATION THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THIS IS THAT THE CHILD BORN TO THE WOMAN SYMBOLIZES THE 144,000 JEWS SAVED DURING THE TRIBULATION.

IN VERSES 7-12 THERE IS WAR IN THE HEAVENS. THIS IS THE LAST DESPERATE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SATAN'S ANGELS AND GOD'S ANGELS. HEAVEN IN VERSE 7 DOES NOT NECESSARILY

REFER TO THE PLACE WHERE GOD DWELLS. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE EARTH IS THE FIRST HEAVEN, EPH. 2:2, MATT. 6:26; 8:20. THE STARS ARE THE SECOND HEAVEN, MATT. 24:29; Mk. 13:25. THE THIRD HEAVEN IS WHERE GOD DWELLS, II COR. 12:2. THIS SECTION FULFILLS DAN. 9:20. IN THE PHRASE "NEITHER WAS THEIR PLACE FOUND ANY MORE IN HEAVEN" HAS IN IT THE IDEA THAT THEY ONCE HAD THEIR PLACE ESTABLISHED. THIS PLACE IS REVEALED IN EPH. 2:2. THEY ARE NOW CAST DOWN TO THE EARTH. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE SCRIPTURE WHERE IT ACTUALLY SAYS THAT SATAN WAS CAST FROM HEAVEN DOWN TO THE EARTH. SATAN SEES THAT HIS TIME IS SHORT, AND HE TRIES TO DESTROY THE WOMAN AND THE REMNANT OF HER SEED. THE REMNANT IS ALWAYS USED OF ISRAEL.

REVELATION 13

I. THE SECOND EVENT: THE FIRST BEAST 13:1 - 10

II. THE THIRD EVENT: THE SECOND BEAST 13:11 - 18

JOHN SEES A BEAST RISE OUT OF THE SEA. BEASTS IN SCRIPTURE ARE OFTEN SYMBOLS OF NATIONS OR OF RULERS. THE SEA HERE PROBABLY MEANS THE SEA OF HUMANITY, OUT OF WHICH RISE NATIONS AND RULERS. THE BEAST HAS SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. SOME THINK THE SYMBOLISM OF THE HEADS MEANS THAT THEY CAME ONE AT A TIME IN SUCCESSION. IT SAYS IN 17:9 THAT THE HEADS ARE SEVEN KINGS. FIVE HAVE FALLEN, ONE IS, AND ONE IS YET TO COME. THE "ONE WHO IS" IS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS DOMITIAN, THE ROMAN EMPEROR AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF REVELATION. THE ONE TO COME

IS THE ANTICHRIST, II THESS. 2:7 - 11. WHO THE ANTICHRIST IS BE CANNOT BE KNOWN UNTIL HE COMES, DAN.9:27. THE TEN HORNS ARE TEN KINGS, REV. 17:12 AND DANIEL 7:24.

AT THIS POINT JOHN SAW ANOTHER BEAST COME OUT OF THE EARTH. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "ANOTHER," MEANS ANOTHER OF THE SAME NATURE. THE SECOND BEAST LATER WILL BE CALLED "THE FALSE PROPHET," 16:13; 19:20; AND 20:10. THESE TWO BEASTS ARE TWO MEN WHO RISE TO POWER. THE SECOND BEAST HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A LAMB. THE SYMBOLISM IS THAT HE WILL DECEIVE THE PEOPLE, FOR HE APPEARS TO BE GENTLE AND HARMLESS. HE CAUSES THE PEOPLE TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST. HE DOES GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS THAT DECEIVE MANY. HE WILL CAUSE PEOPLE TO RECEIVE A MARK IN THEIR RIGHT HAND OR ON THEIR FOREHEADS. THIS MARK IS NECESSARY FOR THEM TO BUY OR SELL. THIS IS LIKE BEING BRANDED. AT THE TIME OF JOHN IT SIGNIFIED OWNERSHIP, AND WAS A WAY TO IDENTIFY SLAVES. THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST IS GIVEN AS 666. THE ROMAN NUMERALS I + V + X + L + C + D = 666. "THE RECEIVED TEXT" AND SOME OF THE OTHER TEXTS HAVE IN PLACE OF THE NUMBER 666 THE GREEK LETTERS $\chi\xi\xvarsigma$. THE FIRST AND LAST LETTERS ARE THE LETTERS THAT BEGIN AND END THE NAME CHRIST, $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$. THE MIDDLE LETTER RESEMBLES A SNAKE. THIS MAKES PERFECT SENSE SINCE THE ANTICHRIST IS THE EVIL ONE WHO ATTEMPTS TO RULE AS CHRIST.

REVELATION 14

I. THE FOURTH EVENT: THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 14:1 - 5

- II. THE FIFTH EVENT: THE ANGELS PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL, ANNOUNCING BABYLON'S DOOM AND WORSHIPERS OF THE BEAST 14:6- 13**
- III. THE SIXTH EVENT: THE SON OF MAN 14:14-20**

CHAPTER 14 GIVES A PREVIEW OF THE FUTURE EVENTS THAT WILL OCCUR IN REVELATION.

IN VERSES 1 - 5 JOHN SEES A LAMB STANDING ON MOUNT ZION WITH THE 144,000. THE 144,000 WERE FIRST INTRODUCED IN CHAPTER 7. THERE THEY WERE SEALED BY GOD. THEY ARE NOW SINGING A SONG THAT ONLY THEY CAN LEARN. THIS IS HEAVENLY JERUSALEM RATHER THAN EARTHLY JERUSALEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE BEFORE THE THRONE, THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES, THE ELDERS AND ARE REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH, VERSE 3.

IN VERSES 6-7 AN ANGEL FLIES THROUGH THE MIST OF HEAVEN WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL. IN VERSES 4-8 ANOTHER ANGEL FOLLOWS AND ANNOUNCES THE FALL OF BABYLON. IN VERSES 9-12 ANOTHER ANGEL FOLLOWS AND ANNOUNCES THAT ANYONE WORSHIPING THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE OR RECEIVING THE MARK WILL BE DOOMED. AFTER THE MESSAGE OF THE THREE ANGELS JOHN HEARS A VOICE FROM HEAVEN TELLING HIM THAT HE IS TO WRITE THAT THE BELIEVERS WHO DIED DURING THE TRIBULATION ARE BLESSED.

THE SON OF MAN IS CHRIST. THE CLOUD SIGNIFIES THE SIGN OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. THE WHITE SIGNIFIES THE PURITY OF CHRIST, MATTHEW 24:30. THE GOLDEN CROWN SIGNIFIES DIVINE ROYALTY. THE SHARP SICKLE SIGNIFIES

JUDGEMENT.

THE SEVENTH EVENT JOHN'S THE FOURTH VISION IS IN 15:2-4 WHERE THOSE WHO ARE STANDING ON THE SEA OF GLASS ARE SINGING THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB. IN GREEK BOTH ARE PRECEDED BY THE DEFINITE ARTICLE WHICH PROBABLY MEANS THEY SANG TWO SONGS. THE SONG OF MOSES IS SURELY DEUTERONOMY 31:30-32:43, WHICH HE COMPOSED AND TAUGHT TO HIS PEOPLE. IT IS AMAZING THAT MOSES' SONG PRESENTS A PANORAMIC VIEW OF ISRAEL'S ENTIRE HISTORY FROM ITS BEGINNING TO ITS END. THIS SONG WILL PREPARE ISRAEL TO ACCEPT THEIR MESSIAH WHEN HE RETURNS. THE SONG OF THE LAMB MUST BE A SONG THAT GLORIFIES CHRIST. IT COULD BE PSALM 22 OR A SIMILAR SONG THAT GLORIFIES CHRIST'S CHARACTER AND WORK.

VISION V

VISION OF GOD'S WRATH 15:1,5 - 16:21

SEVEN VIALS: POURING OUT OF THE SEVEN VIALS

REVELATION 15

- I. THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN VIALS 15:1 - 4
- II. THE GLORY OF GOD 15:5 - 8

THIS SECTION IS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES. THESE PLAGUES ARE REFERRED TO AS THE θυμος OF GOD. THE GREEK WORD θυμος MEANS AN OUTBURST OF INNER EMOTION AND IS BEST TRANSLATED “FURY” OR “ANGER” RATHER THAN “WRATH.” THE KJV AND SOME OF THE OTHER TRANSLATIONS DO NOT MAKE THE DISTINCTION THAT SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN THESE TWO WORDS. THE GREEK WORD οργη IS BEST TRANSLATED “WRATH” BECAUSE IT MEANS INNER EMOTION THAT IS PLANNED PERSISTENT RESISTANCE AGAINST SOMETHING. THE JUDGEMENTS OF GOD DURING THE TRIBULATION PERIOD ARE REFERRED TO AS THE ANGER OF GOD WHILE THE FINAL JUDGMENTS ARE REFERRED TO AS THE WRATH OF GOD.

REVELATION 16

- I. THE SEVEN PLAGUES 16:1 - 20
- II. THE RESPONSE OF EVIL MANKIND 16:21

THE POURING OUT OF THE SEVEN VIALS OR BOWLS SEEMS TO COME NEAR THE END OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD AND IN FAIRLY RAPID SUCCESSION SINCE THERE HAS BEEN ENOUGH TIME FOR THE SECOND BEAST TO SET UP THE IMAGE, REQUIRE THE BEAST'S MARK AND BRING ABOUT THE WORSHIP OF THE BEAST BEFORE THE FIRST VIAL IS Poured OUT. THE VIALS ARE Poured OUT IN RAPID SUCCESSION. AS THE VIALS ARE Poured OUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THERE IS A DEFINITE PARALLEL IN SEVERAL WAYS BETWEEN THE SEVEN TRUMPETS AND THE SEVEN VIALS.

THE FIRST VIAL IS Poured OUT UPON THE EARTH, AND THE RESULTS RESEMBLE THE SIXTH PLAGUE OF BOILS THAT CAME UPON THE EGYPTIANS BEFORE ISRAEL'S EXODUS FROM EGYPT.

THE SECOND VIAL IS Poured OUT UPON THE SEA, FROM WHICH THE FIRST BEAST CAME. THIS SYMBOLIZES EVIL GOVERNMENT. THE RESULTS OF THIS VIAL RESEMBLE THE FIRST PLAGUE TO COME UPON EGYPT. THIS SYMBOLIZES GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON EVIL GOVERNMENT.

THE THIRD VIAL IS Poured OUT ON THE RIVERS AND SPRINGS. THEY TURN TO BLOOD. THIS SYMBOLIZES GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON THE SOURCES OF EVIL GOVERNMENT.

THE FOURTH VIAL IS Poured OUT UPON THE SUN. THE RESULTS IS THE HEAT OF THE SUN IS INTENSIFIED SO MUCH THAT PEOPLE ARE SCORCHED BY IT, STILL THEY DO NOT REPENT. THE WORD POWER IN SOME TRANSLATIONS IS NOT IN THE GREEK. THE PHRASE IS, "AND IT WAS GIVEN TO IT TO SCORCH MEN WITH

FIRE.” THE “IT” REFERS TO THE SUN NOT TO THE ANGEL.

THE FIFTH VIAL IS Poured OUT UPON THE THRONE OF THE BEAST, AND HIS KINGDOM IS FULL OF DARKNESS. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO THE SCORCHING OF THE SUN WHICH TAKES PLACE AT THE POURING OUT OF THE FOURTH VIAL. THE DARKNESS IS LIKE THE NINTH PLAGUE THAT CAME UPON EGYPT. THOSE WHO SERVE THE BEAST GNAW THEIR TONGUES FROM THE DISTRESS, BLASPHEM GOD AND STILL DO NOT REPENT.

THE SIXTH VIAL IS Poured OUT UPON THE EUPHRATES RIVER, AND IT DRIES UP; THUS, MAKING WAY FOR THE KINGS “FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN.” THE EUPHRATES RIVER HAS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE SINCE IT FORMS THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE LAND WHICH GOD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM, GEN. 15:18 AND EXODUS 6:8.

THREE DEMONS COME OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET, VERSE 13. THIS INFERNAL UNHOLY TRINITY STANDS IN CONTRAST TO THE ETERNAL HOLY TRINITY. THE DRAGON SYMBOLIZES SATAN, THE BEAST SYMBOLIZES THE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET SYMBOLIZES SOMEONE WHO WORKS WITH SATAN TO DECEIVE THE NATIONS. THE PURPOSE OF THE DEMONS IS TO GO TO THE KINGS OF THE EARTH AND TO BRING THEM TO THE GREAT BATTLE. THE FROGS THUS SYMBOLIZE THE DESCENDENTS OR PRODUCTS OF SATAN, EVIL GOVERNMENT AND FALSE RELIGION. THE FROGS COME FROM THE MOUTH PROBABLY MEANING THAT THEIR CHIEF MEANS OF DECEPTION IS BY SPEECH. THEY GATHER ALL THE EARTH’S NATIONS TO THE BATTLE OF THE GREAT DAY

OF GOD ALMIGHTY. VERSE 16 SAYS THEY ARE GATHERED TO THE PLACE CALLED ARMAGEDDON. THE DEMON SPIRITS AND GOD ARE BOTH SAID TO GATHER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TO THIS PLACE. ARMAGEDDON IS LITERALLY THE MOUNT OF MEGIDDO. THIS IS THE VALLEY OF MEGIDDO AND THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON. THIS VALLEY HAS BEEN THE PLACE OF MANY BATTLES IN HISTORY. THIS WILL BE THE PLACE OF THE LAST GREAT BATTLE.

THE SEVENTH VIAL IS Poured OUT INTO THE AIR. THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A GREAT VOICE FROM HEAVEN, VOICES, THUNDERS, LIGHTNINGS AND A MIGHTY EARTHQUAKE. JERUSALEM IS THE GREAT CITY AND BABYLON SEEMS TO STAND FOR ROME. GREAT HAIL STONES WEIGHING OVER 100 POUNDS FALL UPON THE EARTH. THE HAILSTONES PLAGUE IS SIMILAR TO THE SEVENTH PLAGUE OF EGYPT.

VISION VI

**VISION OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON BABYLON 17:1 - 20:3
SEVEN JUDGMENTS: SEVEN EVENTS OF JUDGMENT**

REVELATION 17

- I. THE FIRST EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE WOMAN ON THE SCARLET BEAST 17:1 - 5
- II. THE SECOND EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE BEAST AT WAR WITH THE WOMAN 17:6 - 19

CHAPTERS 17 AND 18 ARE POWERFUL REMINDERS THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL AND WILL ULTIMATELY, AT THE END OF TIME, DEFEAT AND JUDGE ALL EVIL.

IN CHAPTER 17, THE GREAT WHORE NAMED BABYLON SITS ON MANY WATERS. THIS IS EXPLAINED IN 17:15. IF THESE ARE LITERAL WATERS, IT MEANS THAT THE RULE OF ROME STRETCHES TO VAST TERRITORIES. WATERS MAY BE A METAPHOR FOR VAST NUMBERS OF PEOPLE. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT HER INFLUENCE TO DO EVIL HAS BEEN AS FORNICATION AND DRUNKENNESS.

JOHN IS CARRIED AWAY INTO THE WILDERNESS AND SEES A WOMAN CLOTHED IN PURPLE AND SCARLET AND HAVING ON GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES. WRITTEN ON HER FOREHEAD IS A NAME: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." SHE IS SITTING ON A SCARLET COLORED BEAST WHICH HAS SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. THESE IDENTIFY THIS BEAST AS THE ONE IN CHAPTER 13. THE SEVEN HEADS OF VERSE 3 ARE IDENTIFIED IN VERSE 9 AS SEVEN MOUNTAINS. THE CITY OF ROME WAS BUILT ON SEVEN HILLS, AND AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF REVELATION ROME RULED THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. THE

COLOR OF THE BEAST IDENTIFIES HIM WITH THE DRAGON SATAN. THE BEAST HAS SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. THESE REPRESENT SEVEN MOUNTAINS, VERSE 9 AND SEVEN KINGS VERSE 10. JOHN SAYS OF THE SEVEN KINGS, "FIVE ARE FALLEN, AND THE ONE IS, THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME." THE FIVE THAT ARE FALLEN MAY MEAN THOSE WHO ARE DEAD OR IT MAY MEAN THAT THEY DIED BY VIOLENT DEATHS. THE "ONE IS," IS THE SIXTH AND PROBABLY REFERS TO THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN WHO IS RULING WHEN JOHN IS WRITING. "THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME," IS MODIFIED BY THE PHRASE "AND WHEN HE SHALL COME." THIS IMPLIES THAT THE TIME OF THE SEVENTH IS INDEFINITE AND UNCERTAIN. THIS IS REFERRING TO THE FINAL ANTICHRIST WHO WILL MAKE WAR AGAINST THE LAMB.

THE GREEK OF VERSE 11 READS, "AND THE BEAST WHICH WAS, AND IS NOT, ALSO HE IS AN EIGHTH, AND OF THE SEVENTH IS, AND INTO DESTRUCTION GOES." THE WORD TRANSLATED EIGHTH IS MASCULINE AND SEEMS TO REFER TO A MAN RATHER THAN TO A KINGDOM WHICH IS FEMININE IN GREEK. THE EIGHTH "WAS, AND IS NOT" PROBABLY REFERS TO THE SPIRIT OF NERO WHO MEETS ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ANTICHRIST.

VERSE 14, IS AN ANTICIPATION OF 19:11 FF. WHEN THEY MAKE WAR AGAINST THE LAMB.

REVELATION 18

THIRD EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON 18:1 - 24

JOHN SEES ANOTHER ANGEL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN ANNOUNCING THE FALL OF BABYLON. IN VERSES 4-8, JOHN HEARS A VOICE FROM HEAVEN CALLING HIS PEOPLE OUT OF THE CITY BECAUSE JUDGEMENT IS ABOUT TO FALL. VERSES 9-19 SPEAK OF THE MOURNING THAT WILL COME TO THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH BECAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON. IN CONTRAST VERSE 20 GIVES THE REJOICING OF GOD'S PEOPLE OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON. THE CASTING OF THE MILLSTONE IN THE SEA BY THE GREAT ANGEL IS SYMBOLIC OF THE SUDDENNESS AND THE SWIFTNES OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT ON BABYLON

REVELATION 19

I. PRAISE TO GOD 19:1 - 10

II. FOURTH EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE WHITE HORSE AND HIS RIDER 19:11 - 16

III. FIFTH EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE ANGEL IN THE SUN 19:17 - 18

IV. SIXTH EVENT OF JUDGMENT: THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON 19:19 - 21

CHAPTER 19 BEGINS WITH THE WONDERFUL PRAISE OF THE GREAT MULTITUDE. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE OF 7:9 - 12. THIS GREAT REJOICING AND PRAISE IS GOD'S PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S JUDGMENT OF SIN, TO GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN AND TO CELEBRATE THE MARRIAGE OF GOD'S LAMB. THE THREE GROUPS IN CHAPTER 18 THAT LAMENT THE FALL OF

BABYLON ARE CONTRASTED WITH THE THREE GROUPS THAT PRAISE GOD. THE BRIDE IS CONTRASTED WITH THE GREAT WHORE. THE BRIDE WEARS FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE, SIGNIFYING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SAINTS.

IN VERSE 11, THE HEAVENS OPEN AND CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS RIDES FORTH WITH HIS ARMIES. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. ONE OF THE CHIEF THEMES OF THE BOOK IS THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST COMING TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM. THE CROWN HE WEARS IS THE *διαδηματα* (DIADEMATA), THE CROWN OF THE KING RATHER THAN THE CROWN OF THE VICTOR (STEPHANOUS).

THE ARMIES OF THE WORLD HAVE COME TO FIGHT THE BEAST AND HIS ARMIES. WHEN THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN IN THE HEAVENS THEY UNITE TO FIGHT HIM.

THE THEORIES SURROUNDING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST ARE TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION. SOME HAVE THOUGHT THAT HIS SECOND COMING WAS AT PENTECOST. OTHER HAVE THOUGHT THAT HIS SECOND COMING IS AT THE TIME WHEN A PERSON IS CONVERTED. OTHERS HAVE THOUGHT THAT THIS IDEA IS A SYMBOLIC PICTURE OF THE VICTORY OF CHRIST OVER EVIL. THE SYMBOLS SIMPLY TRY TO PICTURE SOMETHING THAT IS SO GREAT IT DEFIES DESCRIPTION. THE REALITY BEHIND A SYMBOL IS FAR GREATER THAN THE SYMBOL. IN THE CASE OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST ALL DESCRIPTIONS ARE INADEQUATE TO CAPTURE THE REALITY. CHRIST COMES IN PERSON. NO ONE CAN PREDICT THE EXACT TIME OF HIS

COMING, ALTHOUGH MANY THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAVE TRIED.

VERSES 17-21 PROPHECY THAT CHRIST WILL DESTROY THE ARMIES WITH THE SWORD OF HIS MOUTH. THEY ARE KILLED BY THE WORD THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT.

VISION VII

**VISION OF THE MILLENNIUM 20:4 - 22:5
SEVEN EVENTS: SEVEN EVENTS FULFILL GOD'S SCROLL**

REVELATION 20

- I. THE SEVENTH EVENT OF JUDGMENT: SATAN CAST INTO THE ABYSS 20:1 - 3**
- II. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 1: THE 1,000 YEARS REIGN WITH CHRIST 20:4 - 10**
- III. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 2: THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT 20:11 - 15**

THE FIRST 3 VERSES OF CHAPTER 20 REALLY GO INTO THE SIXTH VISION. IN VERSES 1 - 3, AN ANGEL COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN WITH THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT. THE KEY MEANS HE HAS AUTHORITY TO OPEN OR CLOSE THE PIT. THE CHAIN IN HIS HAND MEANS HE HAS AUTHORITY TO BIND. HE SEIZES THE DEVIL (MEANING THE SLANDERER) OR SATAN (HEBREW MEANING ADVERSARY) AND BINDS HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. OTHER BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE NUMBER

1000 ARE PS. 90:4 AND II PETER 3:8. THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED CHAIN HERE IS THE SAME WORD THAT IS USED IN MARK 5:3, ACTS 12:7; 28:20 AND II TIMOTHY 1:16. II PETER 2:4 AND JUDE 6 USE A DIFFERENT GREEK WORD FOR CHAIN. REVELATION 12 RECORDS THE BATTLE IN HEAVEN WHEN MICHAEL CASTS OUT THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. REVELATION RECORDS THE EVIL TRINITY, THE DRAGON, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET (THE SECOND BEAST). REVELATION 19 RECORDS THAT THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THE DEVIL IS LEFT UPON THE EARTH. NOW THE ANGEL SEIZES THE DEVIL, BINDS HIM, CASTS HIM INTO THE PIT, CLOSES AND SEALS IT. HE IS BOUND SO THAT HE CANNOT DECEIVE THE NATIONS.

VERSE 4 TELLS OF THREE GROUPS THAT WILL BE RESURRECTED: THOSE WHO HAD BEEN BEHEADED FOR CHRIST, THOSE SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD (6:9) AND THOSE WHO HAD NOT WORSHIPPED THE BEAST. JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE FIRST GROUP, MATT. 19:28, LUKE 22:29-30. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION. THE REST OF THE DEAD ARE THE WICKED. THEY REMAIN IN HADES DURING THE 1,000 YEARS. AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS THE RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED OCCURS. AFTER THE FIRST RESURRECTION THE REDEEMED STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS THERE IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT.

CHRIST REIGNS FOR 1,000 YEARS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE. AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS SATAN IS LOOSED FOR A SHORT TIME. THIS IS TO SHOW THAT SATAN DOES NOT CHANGE AND THAT HUMAN NATURE DOES NOT CHANGE. A PERFECT SOCIETY CANNOT CHANGE THE HUMAN HEART. ONLY JESUS CAN BRING

SALVATION. SATAN IS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET WERE THROWN INTO IT BEFORE THE 1,000 YEARS. SATAN IS THROWN INTO IT AFTER THE 1,000 YEARS. THE FIRST EARTH AND HEAVEN PASS AWAY.

NEXT JOHN SEES THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT. THE WICKED STAND BEFORE GOD. THE BOOKS ARE OPENED AND JUDGMENT IS MADE FROM THEM. THE GREAT BOOK, THE BOOK OF LIFE, HAS RECORDED IN IT THE NAMES OF THE REDEEMED.

REVELATION 21

I. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 3: THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH 21:1

II. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 4: THE NEW JERUSALEM 21:2-8

III. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 5: THE NEW JERUSALEM MEASURED 21:9-21

IV. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 6: THE LIGHT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM 21:22-27

JOHN SEES THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH. THEY ARE NEW IN TIME AND KIND. IT IS A WORLD WITHOUT SEPARATION FROM LOVED ONES. FOR JOHN "NO MORE SEA" MEANT HE WOULD NOT BE SEPARATED FROM THOSE HE LOVED AS HE WAS ON THE ISLAND OF PATMOS.

JOHN SEES THE NEW JERUSALEM THE HOLY CITY COME DOWN FROM GOD. JERUSALEM IS CALLED THE HOLY CITY IN

MATTHEW 27:53, BUT NOT AGAIN UNTIL REVELATION 1 1:2 AND THEN NOT AGAIN UNTIL 22:2. THE WORD TABERNACLE, VERSE 3 MEANS THE PLACE WHERE GOD DWELLS. THERE IS NO TEARS, NO DEATH, NO SORROW OR PAIN.

THE CITY IS MAGNIFICENT WITH 12 GATES, 12 ANGELS AT THE GATES AND NAMES OF THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL ON THE GATES. AND THE 12 FOUNDATIONS OF THE CITY WITH THE NAMES OF THE 12 APOSTLES ON THEM.

REVELATION 22

I. GOD'S REIGN, EVENT 7: THE LIFE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM 22:1 - 5

II. EPILOGUE 22:6 - 15

THE LIFE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM IS SUPPLIED BY GOD. THE RIVER OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF LIFE ARE HERE. IN THE BEGINNING THE TREE OF LIFE WAS IN THE GARDEN, GEN.2:9- 10. MAN WAS DRIVEN FROM THE GARDEN BECAUSE OF HIS SIN LEST HE SHOULD EAT OF THE TREE AND LIVE FOREVER, GEN. 3:22. NOW BECAUSE OF THE WORK OF THE LAMB ON THE CROSS FREE ACCESS IS PERMITTED TO THE TREE OF LIFE. DEATH ENTERS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS. REVELATION ENDS WITH ETERNAL LIFE.

IN VERSES 6 - 21 JOHN SAYS THAT CHRIST'S RETURN WILL COME QUICKLY (1 COR. 15:52) WITH LIGHTENING SPEED. JESUS OFFERS A GREAT INVITATION TO COME TO HIM AND BE SAVED, VERSE 17. IN VERSE 20 JOHN CALLS JESUS TO COME QUICKLY.

