

G R A C E SOUND OF

... it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace ... Hebrews 13:9

Issue 136 April 2007

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Worldliness—Part 1

Gleanings from Psalm 106

Reid A. Ferguson

Question: What is worldliness? If you grew up in the church as I did—a pew-rat—you know that worldliness is one of those amorphous terms defined by almost anything from reading the newspaper on Sunday, to smoking cigarettes as opposed to cigars as opposed to a pipe, to owning a television, to driving too expensive a car. The possibilities are endless.

About ten years ago, I spent some time preaching in Denmark. The Danes I met thought the Italians were worldly for drinking wine. They said

the Italians thought the French were worldly because the French Christian women wore make-up. And the French thought the Danes were worldly because they drank beer. Maybe you think they ALL are worldly. I don't know. But I do know that the question certainly gets complicated at times.

It seems to me that we ground most attempts to define worldliness in our own personal tastes, convictions, backgrounds, and preferences, rather than on actual biblical data. Hence,

we can label almost anyone or anything we dislike as worldly. Anything at which we glare askance with the Christianized version of the evil eye or anyone who does not fit our version of what a Christian ought to be becomes *worldly*.

The Bible, however, is not as subjective and indefinite on this issue as we tend to be. Its view of what it means to be worldly is easily accessible. And it seems to have far more to do with motives and inner

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among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. [This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. As for those who seemed to be important – whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance – those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor; the very thing I was eager to do. (Gal 2:1-10 NIV)

Notice that Paul's actions set up a confrontation. Confrontation can force dialogue and action in a given situation when some people involved have no desire for either. The issue that is the subject of the confrontation is usually controversial. In the early 1950s, a young pastor was scheduled to preach in a large church in the south. On the way to the church, he picked up two young African-American men and tried to witness to them. He invited them to go along with him

to church and hear him preach. They laughed and said, "Sir, that church does not allow blacks to attend." The young pastor insisted they go with him. He appeared at the church door with his two new friends. An elder of the church said, "I'm sorry, this is a segregated church." The young pastor said, "If they cannot come in to listen to the gospel, then I cannot come in to preach. Which will it be?" That is setting up a confrontation that forces others to take sides.

What was Paul's confrontation? Paul went to the center of Judaism – Jerusalem – and took with him a Gentile named Titus, a baptized member of the Antiochian church, but one who had not been circumcised. By taking Titus with him, Paul initiated a test case concerning circumcision and the Gentiles. Titus served as a classic example of the results of ministry among the Gentiles. The Jerusalem apostles, and the church there (which was made up of nearly all Jewish Christians), were forced to examine the issue of Gentile circumcision and the law of Moses. They had two choices: (1) Extend the right hand of fellowship and accept Titus as a true fellow believer in Christ even though he was not circumcised, and thus endorse Paul's ministry as an apostle. (2) Say, "Titus, you must be circumcised before we will accept you as a true Christian," and thus endorse the message of the Judaizers. What was happening was simple, but momentous. John Stott has caught the seriousness of Paul's action.

Such were the two vital features of his visit. Paul took with him to Jerusalem a Gentile companion and a Gentile gospel. It was a tense and crucial situation, an occasion fraught with great peril and equally great possibility for the subsequent history of the Christian church. What would be the reaction of the apostles in Jerusalem to Paul's Gentile companion and Gentile mission? Would they receive Titus as a brother or repudiate him because he was uncir-

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Sound of Grace is a ministry of Grace Bible Fellowship of Maryland. It is published 10 times a year. The subscription price is \$10.00 per year. This is a paper unashamedly committed to the truth of God's sovereign grace and New Covenant Theology. We invite all who love these same truths to pray for us and help us financially.

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Sound of Grace Board: John G. Reisinger, Moe Bergeron, Ken Keefer, Jacob Moseley, Bud Morrison, and Lloyd Scalyer.

Editor: John G. Reisinger; Phone: (585)396-3385; e-mail:

reisinger24@rochester.rr.com.

Webmaster is Maurice Bergeron:

webmaster@soundofgrace.com

General Manager: Jacob Moseley:
info@newcovenantmedia.com

Send all orders and all subscriptions to: Sound of Grace, 5317 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21703-6938 – Phone 800-376-4146 or 301-473-8781 Fax 240-206-0373. Visit the bookstore: <http://www.newcovenantmedia.com>

Address all editorial material and questions to: John G. Reisinger, Sound of Grace, 3302 West Lake Rd, Canandaigua, NY 14424-2441.

Visit the Sound of Grace Web Page at: <http://www.soundofgrace.com>

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Things of the Day and Things of Night

Studies on the Resurrection of Lazarus—Part 6

Philip W. McMillan, M.D.

The words of our Lord to his disciples are these, spoken as he prepared to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of the world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him," John 11:9, 10.

These words were spoken after the Father's time had come for him to go to the tomb of Lazarus to give our world the object lesson of the great resurrection to come. Lazarus lay in a tomb, sealed in a darkness of death blacker than in the womb from which he came forth in life. Insensible to life and the living, neither his living sisters, nor he himself could do a thing to alter his circumstances.

But one had come into Lazarus' world who is called the *Word*, who was with God and was God. He had made all things, and Lazarus too was the work of his hands. In this one was light and life. This light had shone into the darkness of Lazarus' world and that world had not comprehended the light, John 1:1-5. But this one who is light loved Lazarus. John 11:5 states, "and he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness had shone in Lazarus' heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his own blessed face," 2 Corinthians 4:6. Death had rent that soul of light out of the temple of flesh and the eyes could no longer see the glory, nor the ears hear the wisdom of God. Humanity is a soul within a living body and all else is a specter of the strange and the unnatural to our minds. We have a fear and dread of death. Christ will go to Lazarus and give our faith a resting place in the fact of the great promise that "though we may die, yet shall we live," John 11:25.

How fearful we are and how good our God is to show us in a vivid display, as we will study in another lesson, of the truth of our "adoption even the redemption of our body," Romans 8:23.

Christ will prefigure his own finished work. At Lazarus' tomb we will understand, Hebrews 2:14-18.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed he does not give aid to angels, but he does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things he had to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted."

When he himself steps forth from a tomb, heaven will bear witness that his right to give life to whom he wills is eternally fixed in heaven. Lazarus will be a prefiguring of that right. "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," 1 Corinthians 15:55, 56.

In chapter 10 Christ had fully revealed to the Judeans that he was their Messiah, that he is sovereign in salvation and that he is God. They took up stones to kill him, "but he escaped out of their hand," verse 39.

So in verse 7 of chapter 11, when he proposes going to Lazarus in Judea, going back where they tried to stone him, his disciples are amazed at such a proposal. "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to kill you, and are you going there again?" Verses 9, 10 give his answer to the disciples' fears for his life. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

There are many good applications that can be made of these verses and there have been disagreements about what Christ was teaching here.

I think maybe we can get at the primary teaching by looking at his words in two other places. In John 8, the Pharisees, as was their usual habit, were contending with Christ that his words, his witness of himself, was not true, see verse 13. They were always angry at his declarations of himself as God. Verse 20 tells us that the Lord spoke his words of witness in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. Then we read this: "and no one laid hands on him, for his hour had not yet come." Then in John 9:4, 5 while healing the blind man, Scripture records these words of his: "I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

"Christ was delivered by the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God," Acts 2:23. But in the immutable God, there had been a decree of the year, the month, the day, the hour and the moment when he would "fall into

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cumcised? Would they endorse Paul's gospel or attempt to modify it in some way? These were the questions in everybody's mind. Behind them was the fundamental question: would the liberty with which Christ has made us free be maintained, or would the church be condemned to bondage and sterility? Had the Judaizers any ground for their rumour that there was a rift in the ranks of the apostles?

Paul tells his readers what happened at that epoch-making consultation. His Gentile companion was not compelled to be circumcised (verses 3-5), and his Gentile gospel was not contradicted or even modified in any way (verses 6-10)

...

Of course, it was a daring step of Paul to take Titus with him at all. Thus to introduce a Gentile into the headquarters of the Jerusalem church could have been interpreted as an act of provocation. In a sense, it probably was, although Paul's motive was not provocative. It was not in order to stir up strife that he brought Titus with him to Jerusalem, but in order to establish the truth of the gospel.¹

It is difficult for us to imagine the tremendous implications of that one act on Paul's part. He was risking his ministry. If the Jerusalem apostles had not accepted uncircumcised Titus, but forced circumcision on him, then the church at large would have had grounds to view Paul as a false apostle and his gospel as incomplete. If the Jerusalem church had not received Titus as a true brother in Christ, then today we would have two different churches of Christ – a Jewish church and a Gentile church. There would also be two gospels. One would say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and the other one would say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, **be circumcised, keep the Law, and thou shalt be saved.**" That one act of confrontation and the action it forced settled the issues concerning Jew/Gentile and law/grace. It

established that the gospel of sovereign grace did not need a single thing in addition to faith in Christ.

We need to mention one other point before looking at the individual verses. The Judaizers would later accuse Paul of inconsistency when he had Timothy circumcised. Luke records that incident in Acts 16.

He [Paul] came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area [southern Galatia], for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (Acts 16:1-3)

At first reading, it would be easy to say, "Paul, you are inconsistent. In Jerusalem, you were so bull-headed that you would not even discuss the possibility of circumcising Titus, and here you have Timothy, a half-Jew, circumcised and that 'because of the Jews.' Make up your mind and quit waffling." The key to harmonizing the two passages is the phrase, "Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews." The phrase "take him along" meant taking Timothy on an evangelistic trip through areas whose populations consisted of both Gentiles and Jews. In Jerusalem, with Titus, the issue centered on circumcision and adherence to the Mosaic law as means for Gentile salvation, and the setting was among believers. The circumcision of Timothy had nothing

to do with his acceptance as a Christian by other professing Christians. The setting of Acts 16 does not involve Jews who profess to believe and who are members of the church. In Timothy's case, circumcision had nothing to do with salvation, but with stopping the mouths of unbelieving Jews. Timothy's uncircumcised condition could have been an impediment to his speaking in the synagogues. In the case of Timothy, circumcision was a matter of Christian liberty: "circumcision, un-circumcision, who cares? If it helps in our evangelistic efforts among Jews, then let us be circumcised." In the other setting (Acts 15), with Titus in Jerusalem, the issue is the Judaizers' claim that circumcision was an essential component of the gospel. In that case, to submit to circumcision is to deny the sufficiency of Christ. Paul is acting in two entirely different situations and circumstances.

Sometimes, momentous and decisive events in history shape vital issues for years to come. Such was Paul's confrontation with the Judaizers in Jerusalem. This meeting addressed the content of the gospel message. Will the gospel be "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved," or will it be, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, and you will be saved"? The church at Jerusalem settled the issue conclusively when they decided that the Mosaic law was a yoke that no one could or should bear. Jews and Gentiles alike are saved solely through the grace of the Lord Jesus (Acts 15:10-11).

Let us now look at the individual verses.



¹ John Stott, *Only One Way: The Message of Galatians*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1968), 41, 42.

THE INCREASE OF CHRIST

Mike McInnis

He must increase, but I must decrease. John 3:30

The game of basketball requires that each team be composed of no more than five players. In the sports pages we often read about some players on NBA teams being termed “role players”. That means that their purpose on the team is primarily to fill a position and be useful in setting up plays so that the real stars (the Michael Jordans, Kobe Bryants, Dwayne Wades of our time) might occupy center stage and accomplish great exploits to the wonderment of fans. After all they are the reason people buy the tickets and come to the games. This scripture before us which was spoken by John the Baptizer as he (speaking on a much grander and more permanent subject than basketball) explained his own position as the forerunner of Christ. He intended to convey that his role (in the purpose of God) was limited and passing while that purpose for which Christ came into the world was of eternal consequence hence he was worthy of all glory and was due the undivided attention of men.

In fact Isaiah used the word *increase* to describe the Kingship of CHRIST when he said, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father,*

the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7). The original Greek word that John spoke in the new testament means that he must presently and actively increase in power and glory, so much so that John said he (whom the Lord said was the greatest of all prophets; see

glory (see John 1:14; II Cor.4:6) in the redemptive work of Christ and have been humbled by it. Paul said “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

The mark of true gospel preaching is that it is always centered in Christ and its purpose and subject is simply the magnification and glory of him who died for sinners and ever lives and reigns in his present glory as

the Lord of lords and King of kings. The true preaching of the gospel has no ulterior motive other than that Christ should be lifted up before men, resplendent in all of his glory and redemptive work. There are no hidden agendas, quests for measurable results, moral crusades, nor fundraising pleas which are added on. This is sharply contrasted by that which is being continually served up to the present religious world by the babblers which the religious multitudes call ‘preachers’, with their permanent grins and affable ways. These are they “*which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women (and men too, it seems) laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,*” (2 Tim. 3:6). These clowns and hucksters are continually ‘teaching’ and writing books

which are on every subject but the glory of Christ. They are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Rather than seeking the increase of Christ

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Luke 7:28) was not even worthy to untie the Lord’s shoes. John was given but a glimpse of his glory but those who have been favored to see the truth of the gospel unfolded have beheld his

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Paul specifically notes that he returned and met most of the Jerusalem apostles *fourteen years after* his initial trip to Jerusalem to visit Peter. In verse one, Paul tells the Galatians that he took Titus and Barnabas with him. Barnabas was a logical choice to accompany Paul. He had interceded for Paul on his initial trip to Jerusalem. Later, the Jerusalem church dispatched Barnabas to Antioch; on his way, he fetched Paul from Tarsus to help him. Then, the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to the elders in Judea with famine relief. Upon their return, the Holy Spirit commanded the church at Antioch to set Barnabas and Paul apart for special work (Acts 9:26-30; 11:25-30; 13:1-12). The two men had traveled and worked together for most of the fourteen years Paul mentions in verse one. Barnabas was one of those “loved by all” people who had the gift of “pouring oil on troubled waters.” His presence would have forestalled accusations that Paul’s choice of Titus as a traveling companion was designed simply to make trouble. Scripture indicates that Barnabas was a godly man who loved peace and earnestly sought harmony, but who also contended wholeheartedly for the truth of the gospel of grace. Luke portrays both Paul and Barnabas as responding to the Judaizing teaching in Antioch with “sharp dispute and debate” (Acts 15:2).

Verse 2 is an important part of Paul’s defense of his apostleship and message.

I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. (Gal. 2:2 NIV)

Paul makes it clear that he did not go to Jerusalem to answer a summons and appear before the other apostles

as if he were somehow under their authority or in some way needed their approval or authentication. He was not unsure of his calling or in need of confirmation from the other apostles. He went up because our Lord revealed to him that he was to do so. Paul’s going to Jerusalem was in response to a revelation from Christ and not in response to a summons from the other apostles. Both Paul and Barnabas reported to the entire church at Jerusalem concerning the fact of the conversion of many Gentiles, but Paul met privately with the leaders (the apostles and the elders) to present the content of his gospel message. This was a matter of correct protocol and common sense, not a matter of uncertainty about either his message or his authority. Paul did not intend to circumvent the other apostles. With the Judaizers making false claims and their false teaching corrupting the church at Antioch, Paul wanted everyone to know that he and the church at Jerusalem were in agreement. The place to start was with the top men. Paul’s primary concern was for everyone to agree that the Gentiles were not under the Mosaic law nor did they need circumcision to be saved. The meeting to address that concern, first with the apostles, then with the whole church, cleared the air, and forever settled the circumcision/law and the Jew/Gentile questions.

Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. (Gal. 2:3 NIV)

The key word here is *compelled*. The Judaizers wanted to compel Gen-

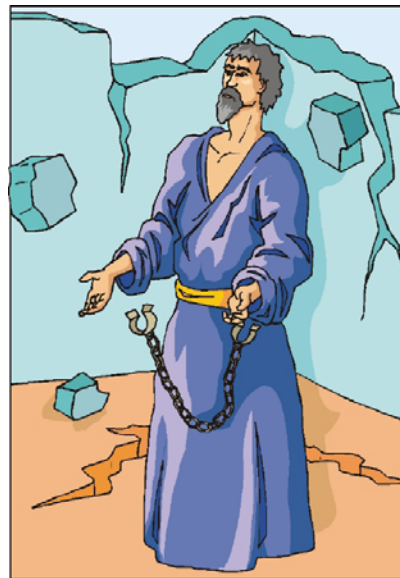
tile believers to be circumcised in order to be saved. They would not have accepted Titus as a true child of God. Paul is not arguing here that believers must not be circumcised (remember Timothy in Acts 16), but refuting any notion that they must be circumcised *to be saved*. The first is a matter of Christian liberty and the second is adding to the gospel. By refusing to press circumcision on Titus, an uncircumcised member of the delegation from Antioch and a member of the church there, the Jerusalem church and the other apostles supported Paul’s ministry and message. Furthermore, by sending members of the Jerusalem church back to Antioch with Paul, Barnabas, and Titus, the Jerusalem church implicitly embraced Titus, and by extension, all Gentile believers, as equals in the church (Acts 15:22-30). Circumcised Jewish believers and uncircumcised Gentile believers traveled together, which would have included eating together, an activity forbidden by the Mosaic law, but demanded by Christ’s gospel.

Verses 4 and 5 are the heart of the Book of Galatians as well as the heart of the gospel of sovereign grace. A misstep at this point will confuse everything that follows. We will return later to do a lengthy study on what Paul means by

the words “liberty and bondage,” and especially by the phrase, “the truth of the gospel” in these texts. Now, however, we will examine five points that will enable us to avoid the misstep that leads to confusion.

[This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated

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wicked hands and be crucified and put to death.’ As we read in John 8:20, “No man laid hands on him, for his hour had not yet come.” In John 9 his own words say that he had to do the works of him who sent him while it was day and that a night came when he or no other man could do those works.

I think then that John 11:9, 10 are an answer to the disciples who feared that the Jews would kill him if he returned to Lazarus in Judea. Those fears were groundless, because what he was about to do was a work of him who sent him and no one could lay hands on him until he finished that work.

The God of providence moves even in the fall of the sparrow in order to accomplish his decrees. There is a century, a year, a month, a day, an hour and a moment on which that particular sparrow will fall. No other sparrow can take its place. “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and time to gather stones; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose, a time to keep, and time to throw away; a time to tear and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace. God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every purpose and for every work,” Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 & 17.

I will take time to give you another bit of Solomon’s wisdom on this constancy of God’s providential times. I take the liberty of capitalizing king in

the passage from Ecclesiastes 8:1-8. “Who is like a wise man? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face is changed. I say, keep the King’s commandment for the sake of your oath to God. Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not make your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him. Where the word of the King is, there is power; and who may say to him, what are you doing? He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; and a wise man’s heart discerns both time and judgment. Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly. For he does not know what will happen; so who can tell him when it will occur? No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.”

Many believe in a blind fate, while others rage against a God who is absolute in all events of time and eternity. But the doctrine of immutability should thrill our hearts.

So let’s go back to our text, John 11:9, 10. Jesus was always the supreme illustrator to give us an understanding of his words.

Verse 9: “Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.’” The Lord directs our eyes to the ordinary, the things familiar to us. In his day, conveyance was by foot, donkey, or in a ship. The God-man accepted the same limitations of his divine power as the sons of Adam labored under. He walked, he rode a donkey, and he traveled in little ships. His travels were over foot paths, mountain trails or rocky, narrow roads. Night travel was unsafe both because of perils of terrain and due to

brigands and thieves who preyed on travelers. Wise men traveled in daylight. Christ is directing our eyes both to the heavens and to the hazards in the trails. It is as if he says, “Look up there, and see the sun by which God separates the night from the day? That is why we can walk here on this trail and not stumble. That light makes it possible.’

Then in verse 10 he says this: “But, if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” We have probably all been out at night and tripped over an object we couldn’t see. We stumbled, why? We were out when the sun did not give light. Our eyes use the light to see, but the light is not in our eyes, they receive, but do not emit light. In darkness our eyes are unable to see the hazard in the trail.

We must remind ourselves again of John 9:4, 5: “I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

These disciples feared that a return to Judea would result in the Jews putting Christ to death. He is teaching them that there is a purpose of God in every life, a time allotted for that purpose, and that as long as that work has not been finished, the light (providential supply of God) will continue. No one can shut the sun off. If it arises at 6:00 AM and sets at 6:00 PM, the traveler can know beyond doubt that during those hours he will see by the light of the day.

This is true also of the “light of providence” both in the life of Christ and in our life. Until we fulfill the purposes of God that have been decreed for us, life will continue. Not man, circumstance, angel or demon can turn God aside from “doing all his good pleasure.” They may tell Christ: “Herod wants to kill you.” His answer

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attitudes than with outward actions. But I'm getting ahead of myself. For the balance of this series, I will look at worldliness as described in Psalm 106. There, by virtue of typology, and by looking back from the resurrection side of the cross, we find numerous signs to indicate when we—the church—Christians—begin to grow worldly. We will unpack them one by one.

This psalm follows a fairly common structure. We can divide it into three major sections. Verses 1-5 form a wonderful introduction: praise to God for his goodness and steadfast love, and prayer that God would look on and restore his people, who seem to have gone astray. Section 2 comprises verses 6-43 and contains the bulk of the indicators of worldliness we will examine in this study. Verses 44-48 proclaim the good news that God has been merciful to his people under these conditions before. This last portion also includes a prayer that in the face of Israel's failures, God might be merciful once again.

Psalm 106 is one of the historical psalms (the last of such psalms by most counts). Spurgeon noted:

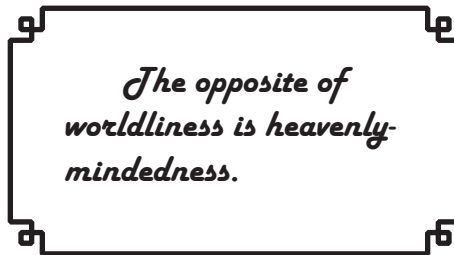
This sacred song is occupied with the historical part of the Old Testament, and is one of many which are thus composed: surely this should be a sufficient rebuke to those who speak slightly of the historical Scriptures; it ill becomes a child of God to think lightly of that which the Holy Spirit so frequently uses for our instruction. What other Scriptures had David beside those very histories which are so depreciated, and yet he esteemed them beyond his necessary food, and made them his songs in the house of his pilgrimage?"¹

Psalm 106 shares two other distinctions in the canon. First, it is the last psalm in the fourth book of the Psalter. It serves as a closing point be-

fore the fifth and last book. Second, it is among the hallelujah psalms (along with 111-113, 135, 146-150). These each begin with a rousing HALLELUJAH! (PRAISE THE LORD!), and repeat the sentiment often. We must not overlook their upbeat character, else, as we detail the heavy nature of Israel's failures (as in Psalm 106), we lose the final glory of seeing God's patience and faithful love.

It was (and is) no new thing for God's people to succumb to the world's ways: to imbibe its thinking, opinions, viewpoints, desires, goals, and techniques to achieve those goals. Nor was it new for them (or for us) to lose the reality that they (and we) are strangers in a strange land. The spiritual ruler of this strange land would love to co-opt us into his system for his own benefit and to our destruction.

It might be useful, before we look at any of the details contained in the psalm itself, to stop and ask ourselves if we REALLY are people of faith. Not in the modern sense of being



mildly religious in some way—but people of faith in fact. Does biblical faith characterize us, as it does those listed in Hebrews 11? Will the generations following ours group our names with those heroes of the faith? Or will they see us as a different class altogether? This link to Hebrews 11 is not random or off-topic. The opposite of worldliness is heavenly-mindedness. Israel's history in a psalm like this one is good for seeing the effects of sin "in the lab;" the roster of those seeing the promises of God from afar and being informed by them forms a clarifying

antithesis. As our brothers and sisters in Hebrews 11 have lived, so too, we must live acknowledging that we are strangers and exiles on the earth. Anything less is worldliness.

What is worldliness? Our starting point looks to understand the concept from God's perspective rather than from our own. The author of Titus tells us, "*the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions*" (Titus 2: 11 & 12 ESV). John, in 1 John 2:15 writes, "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (ESV). But how do we put legs on that? What does it mean to love the world? As mentioned above, Psalm 106 helps by painting the picture against the backdrop of the nation of Israel.

After beseeching God to restore God's people in his own age, the psalmist unfolds an insightful set of indicators that describe what it looks like when the world's thinking has captured the hearts and minds of those who claim to be God's people. The first indicator is in verses 6-8:

Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the Sea, at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. (ESV)

Worldliness begins with a lack of understanding concerning the PURPOSE of salvation—why God saves lost sinners. In other words, when salvation becomes all about us, and we stop thinking about WHY God saved us, we become worldly.

¹ *Treasury of David* – Electronic version in the Online Bible: General Remarks.

McMillin—Cont. from page 7

will be: "Go, tell that fox, behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem," Luke 13:32.

Christ could not die until the "light" illuminating the path he walked had shown up every obstacle in his way and he had ended his journey.

But what of us? To close this message I want just to give you a very comforting message on the design of providence as the light of your life, fixed in the purpose of God. It is found in Psalm 90:13-17: "Return, O Lord! How long? and have compassion on your servants. Oh, satisfy us early with your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days in which you have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil. Let your work appear to your servants, and your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands."

In times of doubt and confusion, the servant goes to the master to have it all made clear again. In his will is safety and comfort. The master corrects the erring servant, but gives an equal blessing for obedience. His work is the work of his servants, his glory that of their children. A servant in his Master's house is clothed by the name (the beauty) of that house and the work of his hand is established in the name in which it is done.

Let the glory all be God's, yet wonder of wonders, we are made sons in the Father's house. Ω

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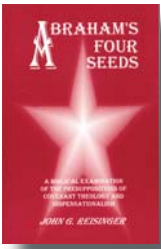
they plot and scheme to increase the crowds which will flock to hear them, cruise with them to this vacation spot or that, and cast in their money into their seemingly ever-needy coffers. Sadly the religious multitudes love to have it so and delight in being made twofold more the children of hell than their masters (see Mat. 23:15). They have indeed heaped to themselves teachers (see II Tim. 4:3) who will stroke their egos and feed their minds with messages affirming their self-worth, free will and ability to accomplish anything through positive thinking, seed faith, spirit babbling, and vain repetitions which they call prayer. But we have not so learned Christ (see Eph. 4:20).

We preach Christ and him crucified. *"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen"* (Gal 1:4-5). Christ crucified is not an important part of the gospel, it is not the beginning of the gospel; it is the very essence of the gospel. There can be no gospel preaching where this is not the sum and substance of all that is said. It matters not how morally upright men may be persuaded to be or how devoted to a cause they may seem, if the glory of Christ's redemptive work is not the heart of their thought and desire they have no knowledge of the gospel. Because men say they are zealous for the souls of men, if they are not preaching Christ crucified alone as the sinner's need then they are but wells without water and clouds carried by the tempest (see II Pet.2:17). We do not preach a cooperative effort whereby men may be saved. Jesus Christ procured the eternal salvation of his elect when he hung on Calvary's cross. Nothing can be added to that redemption and nothing can be taken from it. He purchased everlasting freedom and eternal life for all of

those which were given to him before the foundation of the world. Of those he shall lose none.

We preach Christ reigning as King. *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom"* (Heb 1:8). We are not waiting for the day when he will become King. He is already seated forever on the throne of his kingdom which shall never pass away. All things are put under his feet. He came into this world to manifest his kingdom which stretches from shore to shore, he presently rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and he shall yet manifest the full extent of that kingdom in the ages to come. All things transpire exactly according to his will and he shall accomplish all of his pleasure.

We preach Christ as the Savior of sinners. *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1Tim.1:15). We preach that the Savior came not simply to die for those who were lost but to seek them out and draw them to himself. He came not for the righteous but for those who were by nature the children of wrath even as others. He has not only purchased their redemption by imputing their sins to himself and imputing his righteousness to them but he has sent his Holy Spirit into the world to quicken his elect and call them to himself at the appointed time. He is mighty to save and will leave no stone unturned or abandon any which He has purchased until he has gathered them all unto himself. *"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest"* (Heb 8:10-11). Ω

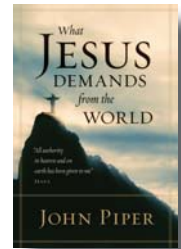


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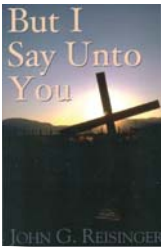
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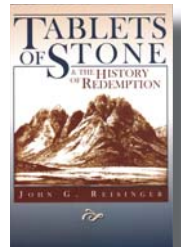
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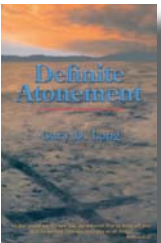
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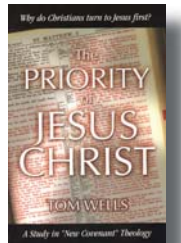
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In verse 8, we can take note of a two-fold answer to the question of why God saved his people: “for his name’s sake,” and “that he might make known his mighty power.”

How often do we think about why God saved us? Do we ever think about it? And are our foremost thoughts in

*Worldliness
begins with a lack of
understanding concern-
ing the PURPOSE
of salvation—why God
saves lost sinners.*

that regard that his name might be glorified, and his power (in redeeming lost sinners) might be displayed to the world? If not, if these ideas never enter the equation, we have begun to slide into worldliness. Worldliness begins with a mindset that sees all that even God does as revolving around us alone, and stops considering that salvation consists of an eternal plan according to God’s purposes. We are meant to be examples, displays of his mercy and grace. We have been claimed from Satan’s grasp, so that God’s sweet wonders may be revealed to all. That the God whom men only imagine might be openly set before them in the way he wants to be most seen—as merciful and full of grace. Worldliness leaves this all behind and sets our eyes chiefly upon ourselves. What a pity, when we revel more in the creature than in the Creator.

What does it mean within the biblical context to glorify God? The idea that God uses people and shapes events for his own glory seldom fails to raise questions in some minds, and so it should. How does God’s doing things for his own glory fit with the

kinds of divine perfections we are taught to attribute to him? And where does love fit into this scheme? These are legitimate questions to ask. Does it sound odd to you that God desires to be glorified? Such statements can tend to make us a bit uncomfortable. What does it mean that he desires to be glorified? Is God on some kind of sanctified ego trip? Is he insecure? Does he need a bunch of adoring sycophants running around telling him how good he is and how great he is all the time? No, no, that is not it at all.

God is not lonely, so he does not need our attention to meet some aching need within himself. Nor does his ego factor into this—he is humble in all things. He does not even have an ego in the sense we do. God desires to be glorified for one reason above all else. The reason goes beyond the fact that it is right to glorify God simply because of who he is—since he IS God. No, God desires to be glorified because he is love. Love seeks the highest good of others, so God—being the very highest good that any and all can possibly obtain—seeks to be known, to be “glorified.”

The simplest definition of what it means to glorify God is to know him. It never means to build him up, to inflate his fame, to boost his reputation by fanfare or exaggeration, or to engage in the exercise of mere external expression. Merely to see him, to apprehend him, to drink him in as he is—this is the greatest joy and good any creature can ever have. Our highest good is to have the favor, company, and love of the immortal, invisible, God only wise who is the infinite, personal, holy, just, true, fathomless, triune, merciful, gracious, loving Creator.

To know him is to love him as he is; this is to glorify him. We hear it in the chorus of praise sung by the angelic host on the night of Christ’s birth. In Christ, we find what it is to know

God so that his glory is revealed in its highest possible way. God is most glorified where he is most revealed, and through the incarnation of his Son he is most revealed. Through Christ, God is merciful to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam’s race. He extended saving grace to them by dying for their sins.

To borrow from the angels—“Glory to God in the HIGHEST!” The advent of Jesus Christ means that peace has arrived on earth and that God the Judge extends good will to his enemies. Oh, glory to God!

The single, highest expression of love God can possibly show to the creature is saving people so that his name might be glorified. And so it is that God redeems people, delivers them “for his name’s sake.” He did this in Christ.

Oddly enough, Sinai gives us an astounding picture of this. Exodus 34

*Merely to see
him, to apprehend him,
to drink him in as he
is—this is the greatest
joy and good any crea-
ture can ever have.*

is remarkable in this regard. Moses had already spent forty days and forty nights atop the mount when he descended with the tablets and disaster struck. When he saw the golden calf Aaron had crafted for the people, Moses’ anger burned hot (Exod. 32.19). Moses threw the tablets out of his hands, smashing them to smithereens. He had his hands full trying to bring the entire debacle under control. In the aftermath of these events, God tells

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Moses that it is too dangerous to have his presence go with Israel. He will send an angel instead (Exod. 33:2, 5). But the people repent, and God promises to go with them, at which pronouncement Moses says to God, "Please show me your glory" (Exod. 33:18).

Imagine, God's glory—and Moses wants to see it! God's reply rivets us here. In response, he says to Moses, "This is how it works when I reveal my glory, at least in such a way as it won't kill you: First, I will make all my goodness pass before you; second, I will proclaim before you my name, 'The Lord'." Then, in Exodus 34, we discover what is included in the fullness of seeing his glory.

The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the

third and the fourth generation." (Exod. 34.5-7 ESV)

In order of priority, what does God reveal about himself in making known his glory? He is merciful. He is gracious. He is slow to anger. He is abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Do you see? Only AFTER he fully discloses his mercy, grace, patience, and abounding and steadfast love does he mention his judgment. Yet is not the order reversed in most of our minds? And we have no excuse, because we have seen God's goodness and name revealed in Christ, revealed in a way that has not killed us.

This then is the first parting place of the worldly mindset and the spiritual mindset. Worldly thinking places the impetus of God's saving grace on the creature, rather than on the Creator.

This then is the first parting place of the worldly mindset and the spiritual mindset ("worldliness begins with a lack of understanding concerning the PURPOSE of salvation"). Worldly thinking places the impetus of God's saving grace on the creature, rather than on the Cre-

ator. It forgets that "Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power." Worldliness ignores that God delights to reveal himself, to make himself known and to be known in the extending of his mighty right arm to save the lost sons and daughters of Adam's race. It seeks to make more of the na-

Dear John,
We praise God for your ministry. We just got a computer so we are on line now. How exciting!!
We love you and are so thankful we can support you!
Love in His Service,
B & R
Butler, PA

ture of human beings as lovable, rather than the nature of God as being freely, amazingly, infinitely, against all odds, loving.

If we would not be worldly, we must begin to make more of God's love than we ever have before. His love, expressed this side of the cross in Jesus Christ, is astounding, incomparable, glorious, inscrutable, overwhelming, and completely inexplicable except that it flows from his very being, independent of any loveliness in the creature at all. No wonder John repeats for us twice, "God is love." The spiritually minded drink at this fountain, long, hard, and often.

To be continued.

Faith always shows itself in the whole personality.
D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

O Lord I Desire to be Humbled

James Meikle, July, 1752.

(From a paper found among his remains)

Under a sense of my sins and unmerited mercies, I desire through grace, in sincerity and humility of soul, to approach to the author of all my mercies, and to lay before you, O merciful Father, all my plans—desiring your divine direction.

And, in the first place, I confess my own sins. I desire to be humbled under my natural proneness to evil and aversion to good; for my many sinful thoughts, which you, O Lord, know; for my wrong conceptions of the great Jehovah, and the smallness of my holy fear when in your presence, calling on you before whom all the earth should tremble.

I also desire to be humbled for my limiting God, as if he were not almighty; for not placing all my faith and hope on him alone, but on appearances and probabilities; for my ingratitude to God for his many matchless mercies to me in feeding and clothing me, and giving me favor in the eyes of men with whom I had to do. Providence has never failed me, but always supplied me; yet in the time of prosperity I sinned, and joined with sinners in their follies, which now I lament, and desire to be humbled for.

O to learn the language of your rod!

O Lord! I desire to be humbled for . . .
 all my prevailing lusts and passions;
 my spiritual pride,
 my ignorance of the things of God,
 my barrenness under the gospel,
 my lukewarmness about the things of Christ;
 my carelessness about pious duties.

Ah that ever I should doubt the good will of him who heard my cry and delivered me out of the hand of my fierce afflictions, manifesting his mighty power. I desire to be humbled for my earthly-mindedness and my desire after temporal things—riches, honor, and glory—which perish and pass away. I desire to be humbled for that great mountain of sins accumulated on me since my last season of prayer.

And now I desire to lay before you my petitions. And first of all, O to be daily getting nearer and nearer you; to be growing more and more acquainted with lovely Jesus, increasing more and more in grace, becoming more and more like you, and daily less conformed to the world; to be delighting more and more in spiritual things, given more and more to meditation on the glory to be revealed, loving him more and more, who loved me!

O to be delighting in God all the day long, living in his fear as before him always, learning more and more submission to his disposals in providence, and more and more persuaded of the rectitude of his will, the equity of his law, the longness of his patience, and his care of his own. O to get some victory over prevailing sin, and that which so easily besets me! O Let never the greed for money get a hold of my heart; keep me from covetousness.

Now, O Lord, in the hope that you will hear, I lay all my petitions before you. Choose what you will, cast away what you will—I will be content. I commit myself to you. I take you as my God and Father, for my savior, for my sanctifier forever. O hear!

I desire in truth, O majestic Jehovah to call these heavens over my head, the hills and mountains around me, the growing grass—to be witnesses, that I this day subscribe with my hand to be yours, wholly yours. Amen, amen! So be it!

Reisinger—Cont. from page 6

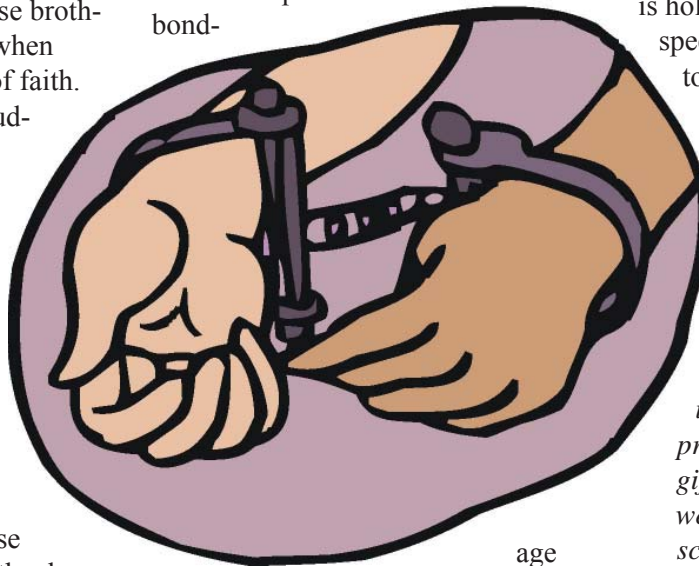
our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. (Gal. 2:4, 5 NIV)

First, note the source of the problem that led to the Jerusalem council. Some people had come to the church at Antioch with a false message. They claimed that the apostles at Jerusalem had sent them. Some in the church at Antioch were beginning to listen to them. Then, some men from the Pharisees promoted the same false message at the Jerusalem council. Luke refers to them as “believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees” (Acts 15:5), but Paul calls them *false* brothers. These false brothers professed to be saved, but in their hearts, they were still wedded to Judaism and the law of Moses. Paul calls these troublemakers “brothers” because they professed faith in Christ and were members of the church. He calls them **false** brothers because they were not convinced that salvation was by grace alone. This same teaching and these same kinds of people had resurfaced in Galatia. Unfortunately, they continue to resurface throughout history to this present day.

Second, these people (false brothers) may have been sincere when they made their confession of faith. There were many Jews, including Pharisees, who believed that Christ had risen from the dead. The evidence for the resurrection of Christ was overwhelming. Some Jews had believed Christ was the Messiah, but they did not bow their hearts to his Lordship. They could not let go of the Old Covenant and move into the New Covenant. Some of these pseudo-Christians would fit the description of the people in Hebrews

who wanted to go back to Judaism. Neither Paul nor Luke indicates the motive behind the Judaizing teaching in Antioch and Jerusalem. However, the particular Judaizers in Galatia appeared to be staying in the church for the deliberate purpose of opposing Paul and his gospel. They were determined to Judaize Christianity. They never denied the necessity of trusting Christ, but insisted that faith alone was not enough. Gentile believers had to undergo circumcision and keep the law of Moses. The Judaizers would have said something like this: “Paul was a great preacher and taught you a lot of truth. However, he neglected to tell you that you must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be a true child of Abraham and go to heaven. We agree with Paul that you must trust Christ as the Messiah. All we are insisting on is that Paul failed to teach you a vital part of the true gospel, namely, that you must also be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.”

Third, Paul insisted that the message of the Judaizers would do two things. One, it would rob the Galatian Christians of the “freedom they have in Christ” that came to them when they believed the gospel that Paul preached, and two, it would bring them into spiritual bond-



age or slavery to the law. That was why he opposed the

Judaizers at Antioch and Jerusalem, and why he is opposing them now at Galatia.

Fourth, Paul sees the freedom believers have in Christ as nothing less than the truth of the gospel. This was not an argument that could be settled by agreeing to disagree. This argument centered on an essential part of the gospel. Paul will show in chapters 3 and 4 that this freedom is freedom of conscience or assurance of salvation. In chapter 5, he will exhort the Galatian believers to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1). As we shall see, the yoke of bondage is not the so-called ceremonial law. If that were the case, then all that Paul was teaching was that Jesus shed his blood so I could eat bacon with my eggs. Our Lord’s blood-shedding allowed the worst of sinners to come boldly to the throne of grace with full assurance of acceptance. That privilege is a freedom that no Old Covenant believer had as long as the veil in the temple was in place. Unrestricted access into the Most Holy Place was not possible until our Lord shed his blood on the cross.

The message of Old Covenant religion was “stay away because God is holy and you are a sinner.” God specifically designed the old system to teach that lesson. Hebrews is explicit.

The Holy Spirit was showing by this [The Old Covenant system of worship just described] that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration of the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are

Miscellaneous Musings—John G. Reisinger

Editor's Note: I have a file folder where I store notes I have jotted down and have called "musings." Every once in a while, I look at them and sometimes use one as the basis for a sermon or a Bible study. From time to time, I will share some of my "musings" in this column.

Musings on the Doctrine of Justification

Faith is not an entity in and of itself. Technically speaking there is no such thing as "saving faith" even though we use that term.

Faith is the expression of a person.

Faith does not lay hold of Christ; a person lays hold of Christ. The phrases, "he believed," or "she trusted Christ," or "she received Christ," or "he has faith in Christ" all say the same thing.

It is not so much that there are different kinds of faith, as it is that there are different kinds of people with different degrees of knowledge and sincerity.

If we grasp two clear facts, we will clear up some fuzzy thinking.

(1) The whole person, in every part of their being — meaning mind, heart (emotions), and will — exercises faith.

Romans 6:17 sets this forth. Note the phrase "... you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine..." (NKJ).

The mind is illuminated with truth — "that form of doctrine."

The heart, or emotions, is penetrated by the truth — "from the heart"

The will is liberated by the truth — "you have obeyed"

Many people have been affected by the gospel in their minds and wills and are intellectual converts only. They have "taken up Christianity" but have never been taken up by Christianity. Others have been moved emotionally with the gospel and have "made a decision," only to wake up the next morning without knowing what the decision was all about. These people are emotional converts only.

The biblical gospel that leads to biblical salvation must touch every part of a person's being.

- It is not "faith" that is illuminated; it is the mind of an individual, a person.
- It is not "faith" that feels the power of the gospel; it is a person.
- It is not "faith" that obeys the gospel; it is a person — "YOU have obeyed."

(2) A whole Christ, meaning Prophet, Priest, and King, is received in true conversion.

Salvation comes when a person trusts, receives, believes, or has faith in Christ as his Prophet, Priest, and King. It is just as biblically correct to say, "I received Christ as my Prophet" as it is to say, "I received Christ as my Lord and Savior."

Just as the whole person must believe, so the person must believe in a whole Christ. We cannot receive Christ in pieces or in stages, nor can we divide our being or personality into separate parts where only a part of us is involved in an action.

Justification is just as much a "once for all act" act as is getting married. The whole person is justified just as the whole person who marries receives another whole person.

Likewise, it must be emphasized that we do not give only our mind in marriage; we give ourselves. Just as earthly marriage is the act of a whole person, so marriage to Christ is an act of a whole person and not an act of the mind alone.

We must remember that in both situations, marriage and conversion, TWO people say "I do." In one case, a man and woman give themselves to each other, and in the other case, the sinner and the Savior give themselves to each other. In neither case can only a part of either individual be involved. In both cases it is the whole person doing the acting.

Reisinger—Cont. from page 16

only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations applying until the time of the new order (Heb. 9:8-10 NIV).

The ministry of Aaron was unable to open the veil and bring sinners into the presence of God. That was the message the Holy Spirit was teaching. As long as the veil in the temple was in place, there was no entrance into the Most Holy Place where the presence of God dwelt. The message was “stay away—don’t even touch.” How different is the message now that Christ has made the once-and-for-all great and sufficient sacrifice. The message now is “come and welcome.” We will look carefully at this later.

Fifth, Paul sees the need to maintain this gospel liberty of access into the presence of God as paramount. It is not negotiable or even discussable. To either deny or in any way corrupt this gospel liberty is to deny the very gospel itself and to come under the under the curse of God. People corrupt this gospel whenever they put anything between a sinner’s conscience and God except the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament Scriptures conclude with God and the sinner separated by a veil that could have posted a sign saying, “No Admittance upon Pain of Death.” The veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place closed God in and shut the sinner out. The cross opened up two things: (1) It allowed God to come out from behind the veil and, in perfect righteousness, freely invite sinners to himself because the blood atonement of Christ forever satisfied his holy character. (2) It allowed the guilty sinner to come boldly to the throne of grace with a conscience void of offense. In other words, the cross brought true and everlasting reconciliation between a holy God and a guilty sinner.

We can easily misunderstand verses 6 and 7. At first reading, it almost sounds as though Paul is being disrespectful. However, when we look at the broader context, it is obvious that he is not. Paul acknowledged in 1:17 that these men were apostles before he was. He viewed them as men of repute (verse 2) and as those “reputed to be pillars” (verse 9). Is he then being sarcastic in saying, “*As for those who seemed to be important – whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance*”? I think he was aiming his remarks at the Judaizers among the Galatian church, and perhaps at those whom the Judaizers had swayed. They were ascribing great authority to the Jerusalem apostles and Paul is saying, “Even these whom you hold in such high regard agree with me.” He is rubbing their noses in their own words and showing that they were unaware of the apostles’ decision and their subsequent letter to the church at Antioch. The authority to which they appeal actually supports Paul. It is always gratifying when someone drops the name of an important person to support his or her argument and you are able to claim, and prove, that the person is an ally in agreement with you.

John Stott points out that Paul’s laying out his gospel to the other apostles had two effects – one negative and the other positive.

The negative aspect is seen in the end of verse 6: they *added nothing to me*. In other words, they did not find Paul’s gospel defective. They made no attempt to add circumcision to it, or to embellish it any other way. They did not say to Paul, “Your gospel is all right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough; you must add circumcision and law-keeping to it.” In fact, they changed nothing. Significantly, Paul describes the gospel that he laid before the apostles as “the gospel which I preach” (present tense). It is as if he wrote: “the gospel which I submitted to the other apostles is the gospel I am still preaching. The gospel which I am preaching today was not altered by

them. It is the same as I preached before I saw them. It is the gospel which I preached unto you and which you received. I have added nothing, subtracted nothing, and changed nothing. It is you Galatians who are deserting the gospel; it is not I.” This then was the negative result. They “added nothing to me.”

The positive outcome of the consultation was that they *gave to me ... the right hand of fellowship* (verse 9). They recognized that they and Paul had been entrusted with the same gospel. The only difference was that they had been allotted different spheres in which to preach it. The Authorized Version rendering of verse 7 is a little misleading. It refers to “the gospel of the uncircumcision” and “the gospel of the circumcision,” as if there were two different gospels, one for the Gentiles and one for the Jews. That is not so. What the apostles realized was that God was at work in his grace through both Peter and Paul (verses 8, 9). So they gave Paul the right hand of fellowship, which means that they “accepted Barnabas and myself as partners, and shook hands upon it” (NEB). They simply recognized that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision” (verse 9).²

The next few verses record one of the most tense and dramatic events in the New Testament Scriptures. Two of the leading apostles, Peter and Paul, are in open conflict with each other over applying the implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is truly an amazing passage.

To be continued.

² Ibid., 46, 47.

SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING

John MacDuff (1818-1895)

From: John Macduff, *The Gates of Prayer* (www.lulu.com/gracetreasures)

Be anxious for nothing—but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

O God, I desire on this new day, in accordance with your own gracious invitation, to make my requests known to you. Blessed Redeemer, you who are the True Aaron, the Great Angel Intercessor, you who are ever pleading in love and never pleading in vain, come forth from the Holiest of all, to the multitudes of your waiting people, assembled this morning at the Gateway of Prayer, and bless them with peace. Breathe upon us and say, "Receive you the Holy Spirit."

The retrospect of the past is a retrospect of love—mercy upon mercy—privilege upon privilege. For all your providential goodness, Lord, I praise you. For health and strength, for friends and home; for powers of body and faculties of mind; for my religious privileges, for all appointed means of grace, for the glorious hope of immortality; for peace amid the manifold changes of life; for comfort in sorrow; for the assurance of victory over death the last enemy Lord, I praise you. I have to acknowledge my many and multiplied offences—that in thought and word and deed I have transgressed against you, O Preserver and Redeemer of men. I have too often sought for happiness in objects and pursuits which fail to satisfy the yearnings of the immortal spirit. I have too often indulged in feelings and tempers inconsistent with my christian profession—unworthy of the love I owe to you my God, and the good-will and generosity and forbearance I owe to my fellow-men. Lord, have mercy upon me! Save me from the sins which do most easily ensnare

me. From the love of the world which alienates my affections from heavenly realities—from the love of self which interferes with the entire consecration of the heart to Christ from the covetousness which hardens—from the impurity which debases and enslaves—from every evil lust and passion and temper good Lord, deliver me! Conscious of my own utter weakness, I would look for the supplies of your promised grace. By it alone I stand. If I am enabled this day to resist temptation, it is all your doing. It is you who uphold me by your right hand.

Under the realized consciousness of your sustaining presence, may I be anxious for nothing—committing the unknown future to your wise and better keeping. Burdened with no perplexing or disquieting thoughts, but rolling every such burden and anxiety on him who cares for me, may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep my heart. With my feet on the unchanging Rock of Ages, I will rejoice, amid all trials and vicissitudes, that nothing is able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Let your good and gracious hand be specially around me today. Strengthen me for the discharge of every duty, whether at home or in the world. Prepare me for the resisting of every temptation and for the endurance of every trial. Whatever be the talent you have committed to me whether position, or intellect, or worldly substance may I feel the sacredness of the trust, and seek thankfully to employ it for the good of others, and for the glory of you, my God. Enable me to aim at that high standard of Christian responsibility, which regards all possessions valuable, only so far as they contribute to

show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Living under the habitual impression that soon—very soon that committed trust may be recalled, oh, give me grace to fulfill the part of a faithful steward.

Pity those who are in trial. Listen to the loud wail of humanity; especially to that rising from the members of the household of faith. Blessed Redeemer, it is our comfort to know, that wide as the family of the afflicted is, you can say regarding every diversity of case and experience, "I know their sorrows." May your suffering people be brought into nearer relationship and fellowship with you. Amid the mystery of present baffling dispensations, may they look forward to that day, when, in the light of eternity, they shall listen to the repetition of your own saying—"Said I not unto you that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?"

Let the cause of truth triumph over the pride and superstition and will-worship of man. Hasten the time when earth shall become one consecrated temple—every heart an altar—every life a sacrifice—every tongue praise. Human power is impotent to break the chains of sin and Satan. But the wisdom of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man. It is not by human might nor by human power, but by your Spirit, Lord God Almighty.

Anew I commend myself to you. May the love of God the Father animate me, may the grace of God the Son sustain me, may the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit quicken and sanctify me. O blessed Three in One! make me fit now and evermore for the inheritance of the saints in light. Amen.

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