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*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable  
are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

*"For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?"*

*"Or who has given a gift to him  
that he might be repaid?"*

*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.  
Amen. (Rom 11:33-36 ESV)*

Dear John,

Not only did I read it [*The Sovereignty of God in Providence*—I read it until I almost wore it out. I picked up your book at a FIRE conference in Little Rock, AR, in the early part of 2003, along with several other books by different authors. About three months after the conference I began to read it, and then I read it again. A few weeks later I began putting together a series of four messages based on your book because I felt our church really needed to hear what God was saying through you. As I look back, I can see the Providence of God in it all. The Friday before I was to deliver the first message, I received a call telling me that my daughter had been killed in an automobile accident in Colorado Springs, CO. The Sunday that I preached the first message, I left for my daughter's funeral in the afternoon. After the third message, I received a call from my youngest brother telling me he had cancer, and the doctor said it was in the fourth stage, and there was nothing he could do except keep him comfortable. He died in June. In November my youngest son—who was 18 years old—lay down and went to sleep and never woke up. Before the year was out, my wife's father died. Needless to say, 2003 was an awfully tough year on my family. The deaths of my 38 year-old daughter, my 58 year-old brother and my 74 year-old Father-in-law were hard; but the death of our 18 year-old we still have not gotten over and don't expect we ever will. I say all this, John, to tell you that, in God's Sovereign Divine Providence, He used your book about God's Sovereignty and control to get us through the most difficult period of our lives. Knowing that God is in control, that He has ordained both our birth and death and that nothing happens by chance, and that He has a divine purpose in all things, sustained us and kept us in our darkest hours. Since that time I have read several of your articles and books. You will never know the blessing you have been to my wife and me. God bless you and thank you for your obedience to the call of God in your life.

In His love & grace,

J McCarty

# G S O U N D O F G R A C E

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

Issue 116—April 2005

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## Thoughts on the Book of Ecclesiastes—Part Seven

John G. Reisinger

In our last article, we looked at Ecclesiastes 3:1, where the writer announces that we are locked into times and seasons the same way that we were locked into nature in 1:4-7. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." In chapter 1, the teacher describes the monotonous sameness of nature and our inability to change it. Chapter 3 is his presentation of the constant but unpredictable change from one extreme to another in nearly every area of life. Again, the changes are beyond our control or choice in any way. The Teacher uses fourteen couplets (3:1-8) to describe a wide range of human activity and

experience that cover various aspects of our lives. We concluded that this chapter in Ecclesiastes sets forth the sovereignty of God in a personal and extremely practical way. What are some of the useful lessons we can learn from Ecclesiastes 3?

First, contrary to William Henley's poem *Invictus*, it is obvious that we are neither "masters of fate" nor "captains of our souls." Masquerading as a noble attempt to take responsibility for one's own destiny, *Invictus* epitomizes the rebel's cry of defiance against the truth

Reisinger (Continued on page 2)

## The Parable of the Two Trains—Part Two of Four by Mark Webb

In the last issue, I sought to illustrate the differences between Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism by the use of trains and train tracks. Let me quickly review (You might want to reread the previous article in Issue 115 of *Sound of Grace* to get up to speed.)

*Covenant Theology* was described as one train on one track but

with two engineers. Originally, Moses was the engineer as it chugged its way through the Old Testament times. Then, at the juncture of the Old and New ages, Christ replaces Moses as the new engineer. This model seeks to emphasize the continuity of Covenant Theology. There's only one covenant (one track) but two administrators (two engineers)—first, Moses, and, later,

Jesus. The passengers on this train can be called "Israel" or "the Church" interchangeably.

*Dispensationalism*, on the other hand, was depicted as two separate trains on two separate tracks. One train has Moses as its engineer and runs on the Old Covenant track. Its passengers are called "Israel". The

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of Ecclesiastes chapter three.

### Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried

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aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments  
the scroll,

I am the master of my fate; I am the  
captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley (1849-1903)

The second thing we learn is that a person's response to the truth of God's sovereign control as set forth in this chapter will show whether he/she has a heart renewed by grace or a heart committed to being one's own god. The true believer will rejoice that God controls both the events in our lives as well as the timing of each event. He sings with hope and confidence, "What ever my lot/ Thou hast taught me to say/ it is well, it is well, with my soul." In contrast, the rebel cries, "It matters not how straight the gate/ How charged with punishments the scroll/ I am the master of my fate/ I am the captain of my soul."

Fallen humanity, by nature, thinks life would be wonderful if we could order every event of every day of our existence. If that were possible, do you really believe that all your days would be happy and without care? At first, you probably do, but upon reflection, you know better. You realize that you would change five things before noon the first day simply because something unforeseen happened. By mid-afternoon, you would be lamenting that you had not chosen something else at noontime.

This thing we call "happiness" is a monster that we can neither tame nor destroy. It was let loose in the

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Garden of Eden when humankind forsook pleasing God as the chief purpose in life. Man chose to go his own way and make his own rules, believing that therein lay the route to happiness. Did you ever ask yourself, "Exactly what is happiness? What would it take to make

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"In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided!" Throughout the centuries, God's promise rang forth: from the day when that first son of promise bore the burden of the wood for the offering and climbed that mount, until the day of fulfillment, when the ultimate Son of promise bore the cross and ascended that mount.

We see the light shine ever brighter: it glimmered on that dawning day when Abraham, holding the knife of judgment, stretched out his hand, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, "Stop!" It gleamed again on that day during David's reign when the angel of the Lord, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against Jerusalem, and God, looking upon that spot, cried, "Stop!" Finally, it burst into full radiance when history reached that anticipated day: the day when God, holding the sword of judgment, stretched out his hand against his own Son. This time, there was no cry of "Stop!"

In the day of the Lord, on the day of the crucifixion, God did not stay the knife. The sword of judgment was plunged into the bosom of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus, the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), willingly bore his cross to Calvary and became the ultimate peace offering for all the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7-9, 29). God made his Son an offering for sin on the mount of Moriah, according to his determined purpose and foreknowledge. The full atonement of Christ causes the angel of death and judgment to sheath his sword forever.

This is the day that the Lord has made! We now herald that in the Mount, the Lord HAS provided! There is a Savior for sinners.

On this same Mount Moriah,

where the promised seed of David would build God a house, Solomon built the temple that foreshadowed the reality. On that same mountain ridge of Moriah, but outside the gate, the ultimate Seed of David, through the redemption of the cross, would build his Father a spiritual house of living stones (Read 1 Chron. 17:10b-14, 2 Sam. 7:12-13; compare with Acts 2:29-36, Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Pet. 2:4-10). Jesus Christ himself has become the chief cornerstone of God's spiritual house. Is not our sovereign God most glorious in working out his promise? "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

"I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:21-24)

Are you glad that Jesus reigns? I am glad that God has left nothing to chance. I am glad that Christ is Lord.

Comfort yourselves in this truth, saints. Things may appear out of control at times. I feel out of control at times. However, even though we may be muddled in our thoughts and dark clouds may come over us, the Christ who loves us lives forever and is on the job every day and every night—even when we have forgotten what the job is!

He is even now at the right hand of God—he is the chosen, glorious deliverer who shall not fail.

He upholds all things by the Word of his power, and he works all things together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

When you cannot explain the trouble you are experiencing, you

need to understand the providential power of a Sovereign Lord who takes every bit of the diverse data in the entire universe and controls it all for your good and his glory and eternal purpose. And has he not demonstrated his ability to do it? This fact comforts our souls when nothing else can.

I tell you, the Christ of God is Lord! He is enthroned and he is the royal King of all kings. He is the Lord of all lords, and he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to him in repentance and faith. This is the Christ of the Bible!

But be warned, you who do not want this man to reign over you—you who want to be your own lord—there is a day when Christ will be revealed in truth for who he is, and you are no match for the Sovereign Lord. I say to you,

- Go and do battle against the lightning and hold it triumphant in your hand.

- Go and hush the hurricane and flatten the tidal wave.

- Hold the wind in the hollow of your hand.

When you have done this, then lift up your puny hand against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

There is a day appointed in which you will feel his power—though he suffers long with you—you are storing up wrath for the day of judgment—the day of his unveiling. Why would you perish when there is such a great Savior for sinners, and such a good Lord to reign over you?

Praise God, he has not left me to myself! Oh, how I need an advocate like Jesus, the Righteous—who substituted in my place at Mount Moriah—on Calvary—and provided all I needed, that I not only might be forgiven, but also might be received as a son! ☞

TETM (Continued from page 5)

tion to be bringing the Glory of God to all peoples. This is our reason for being. This foundation sits upon four pillars:

Planting churches

Training missionaries

Leading short-term mission trips

Becoming a sending agency for missionaries to the world.

Our current target areas for planting churches are:

Papua New Guinea:

Changriman

Mali

Mile

Yimbi-yimbi

Peliagwe

Mexico:

Port of Mezquital Area

Helping current pastors in Mezquital

Island of Men, Media Luna, La Posa

La Barra de la Cruz, San Isidro Chacalapa, San Miguel Chonga

The Coicoyan Tribe.

I list these areas for two reasons. First, we will be hosting short-term mission trips to the Port of Mezquital area (four locations) for June 10-17, and July 29-August 5. If you would like to participate, please visit our website at [www.toeverytribe.com](http://www.toeverytribe.com), or contact us at the email or regular mail address given below. In the past ten years almost 2,000 people have joined on mission trips. These Mexico trips are limited to 60 people. They fill up rapidly, so you may want to get an early start. Our next mission trip to Papua New Guinea will be in February, 2006.

Second, we need your prayers. We at TETM feel very strongly our need for the “persevering, earnest, faith-filled prayers of God’s people”<sup>1</sup> to meet our goals for glorifying God in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. Therefore we ask you to pray with us and for us. Pray for the people in these villages and tribes and for those who will be taking the gospel message to them. Pray for David Sitton and Steve and Robin Henry that God will enable them to learn Spanish, and that they will be given the ability to speak fluently so that they can better share Christ with the people in Mexico. Pray for viable, vibrant indigenous churches to be planted for the glory of God and the spread of the gospel.

These are our target areas, but we have a lot of work to do to accomplish our goals. The Coicoyan tribe for example is very hardened against the gospel. They have strongly held beliefs that will not easily be shaken. They are animistic in their beliefs. They are a tribe of roughly 25,000 people and only one known believer. Reaching the Coicoyan requires a commitment of some years before a church will be planted among them.

We plan to begin training full-time missionaries in September of this year. To that end we need to identify individuals, couples and families who want to join us and begin their missionary adventure. We need a facility to conduct the training in the Brownsville/Los Fresnos area. Several options present themselves, but please pray for us that we will find the best means to provide housing and training spaces for our full-time missionaries and a staging area for the many people who join our short-term mission trips.

I saw a picture not long ago of two men struggling with a heavily-loaded, two-wheeled cart. They

were pushing it up a steep, almost impossible incline. The cart contained helium bottles. The men were from South Korea. When the winds are from the right direction, they push their cart up a steep mountain and fill balloons with helium to which they attach scripture passages and release them so that they will blow into North Korea. Do we in America know anything of that sense of the preciousness of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

We at TETM yearn to plant the seeds of the love of Jesus Christ into hearts that have never heard the gospel. We believe that there are as yet undiscovered brothers and sisters in Mexico and Papua New Guinea whom the Holy Spirit will awaken at the preaching of Jesus Christ. We believe with Jonathan Edwards that God will be more glorified when more people not only see Him as He is, but rejoice in Him.

We hope that you will prayerfully consider becoming our partners in this endeavor. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, “Prayer the Work of Missions” 1998, see [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org). Online Library

*Wear your learning like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out, and strike it, merely to show that you have one.*

*Lord Chesterfield*

## In the Mount of the Lord, it shall be Provided! Part Two

*Murray McLellan*

This is the continuation of a study of Genesis 22 which began in Issue 115, March 2005. Ed.

In verse 18, God reaffirms the promise he made to Abraham when he called him from Ur, “*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...*” (Gen. 22:18a cf. Gen. 12:3).

On one level, this is a grand story of faith. Abraham demonstrates the kind of faith and trusting obedience we all are to have. Sometimes we must go through difficult circumstances where we cannot see what is ahead and we cannot understand what is happening. Are we willing to give up everything to God? Is he truly our first love? The kind of faith exhibited by Abraham gives glory to God (Rom. 4:16-21). We might not know until we reach heaven why things were the way they were, but we can trust God’s wisdom and goodness.

I believe, however, that God calls us to see something beyond simply an illustration of great faith. As we begin to reflect upon this story with New Testament eyes, we find that this passage leads us to Calvary. God cannot compromise his character. Our sin is so horrendous that it deserves the judgment and wrath of God. There will be a final judgment and in that day, even this offering of Isaac will not be enough. Isaac is a sinner. He cannot die for another. He must die for his own sin. We must all die for our own sins. Oh, if only there could be a substitute that God could accept!

If God is to bless, he must provide an acceptable atoning sacrifice. Another must stand in the place of judgment and pay the price of redemption. The ram can be a substi-

tute for Isaac in this offering only, but nothing beyond that. It is of a temporary nature. The blood of rams or bulls or goats can take away neither sin, nor the death and judgement that result from sin. Knowledge of the complete teaching of the Bible makes it clear that the substituted ram that stayed the knife in this event points forward to the one who is to come and who will be sacrificed as the great and ultimate Lamb of God. Indeed, God’s only begotten Son will provide and pay the redemptive price.

The future tense of the verbs in verse 14 establishes the idea of looking beyond the ram. Though God has already spared Isaac, and Abraham has sacrificed the ram, Abraham calls the place “The-Lord-Will-Provide,” not “The-Lord-Has-Provided” or “The-Lord-Did-Provide.” Abraham looked for another day and another provision in the future. Thus, Jesus could say in John 8:56, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*”

After he chronicles Abraham’s naming of the mountain, the narrator breaks into the account with an editorial comment that clearly links the location of Abraham’s experience to God’s promise, “*In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided*” (Gen. 22:14). God had directed Abraham to go to a particular mountain. Why had God sent him on a three-day journey to this specific mount, when there were many other closer and more secluded mountains?

God, who is faithful to all his promises, stated that he would provide a lamb as a substitute in the

Mount of the Lord. Now we begin to see why God commanded Abraham to go to this particular mountain in the land of Moriah. The Scripture unfolds for us the reason for Abraham to make a three-day journey to a particular spot. Why did God direct Abraham to a specific mountain in Moriah? It is in this mount that the Lord would provide.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read that God has plans for Mount Moriah. Many years later, in response to a rash and unbelieving action of King David, God sends an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it.

*And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. (1 Chron. 21:15)*

Notice that when the angel reaches a particular place, God says, “*Stop!*” In fact, when we read the next verse, the indication is that the angel stopped his sword in mid-swing.

*Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. (1 Chron. 21:16)*

As we continue to read the event in 1 Chronicles 21, we see that in verses 18-19, the Lord commands David to purchase this particular plot of land from Ornan the Jebusite, and to build an altar to the Lord on that threshing floor. David

*McLellan (Continued on page 14)*



Reisinger (Continued from page 2)

me a truly happy person?" We would love to be able to make everything and everybody that does not line up in a way that pleases us to "un-happen." I cannot be happy until everything in my life contributes to my personal well-being. Anything that does not promote my felicity should "un-happen." That means I may have to destroy your happiness and your individuality if they in any way hinder me from getting what I need (meaning my own way) in everything.

Your children really believe that they have both the ability and the right to choose what they are positive will make them happy. They are convinced that the day they move out of your house and go on their own they will experience the first day of true personal happiness. They cannot wait to be free to make their own choices so they can be happy. "Oh," you say, "but they do not know any better. They are young and have not faced the real world." Of course, you are correct, but the question remains for you, "Have you faced the world of reality or do you still have this fantasy about happiness?"

Would a five-year old pick spinach or a candy bar? The candy bar, of course. Would a teenager pick doing homework instead of going to a movie? We all know both the answer and the reason behind the answer. We fail, however, to see the same principle operating in our own adult spiritual lives. Would you ever choose a trial, a disappointment, or a sickness over ease, comfort, and health, even if you knew beforehand the unbelievable grace that you would experience through the trial or sickness? We really are not so different from our five-year olds!

Let us look a little more closely at chapter three in detail. Every-

thing in life revolves around an ordained time. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven* (Eccl. 3:1, KJV). Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures see purposefulness in all of life's events. There is no hint that fate or chance controls human destiny. The biblical message is, "it came to pass," not, "as luck would have it."

God has ordained a time for sending rain and for withholding rain. He supplies it or suppresses it right on schedule. *Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit* (Lev. 26:4, KJV)



**God prepared all those things. He did not take advantage of the conditions; he created the necessary conditions to fulfill his sovereign purposes!**

God has ordained a time for the destruction of his enemies. *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste* (Deut. 32:35, KJV). Other times, God strengthens the hand of the enemies of his people when he purposes to use them as instruments of judgment (see Habakkuk).

There is an ordained time for conception and birth. In Genesis 21:1-2, we read that, *"the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him"* (KJV).

All "times" serve God's eternal unchanging purpose. We saw this in Luke 2:1-5, when God used a universal tax to get Mary to Jerusalem. We often hear preachers say, "The time was ripe. Rome had built roads and expanded communications. There were great expectations for something major to happen" and God "took advantage of these prevailing conditions." NO! God prepared all those things. He did not take advantage of the conditions; he *created* the necessary conditions to fulfill his sovereign purposes!

Chapter 3, verse 1 shows that times (events) and seasons (purposes) go together. The KJV says, "a *time* for every *purpose*," and the NIV says "a *season* for every *activity*." Certain seasons dictate certain activities and make other activities impossible. Spring means it time to get the lawn mower in shape. Why? Spring means growing grass, whether I like it or not. The pessimist says, "Oh no, not already. It is so useless to cut the grass, it just grows back." The optimist says, "Great! Everything will be green and beautiful again. I love working in the fresh air and sunshine and getting the exercise." I never cease to be amazed at how a pessimist and an optimist can look at exactly the same thing and see two opposite situations. I think I mentioned this before but it is worth repeating. Someone scrawled "Apathy rules" on the outside of a university library. Someone else wrote the words, "True, but who cares." It is tough to live with either a consistent optimist or a consistent pessimist.

We swallow a bitter pill when we are forced to admit that we have no control over, nor can we change, the times, the seasons, or the things that go along with each. Sometimes, different circumstances radically change the response to the same

Reisinger (Continued on page 6)

McInnis (Continued from page 13)

*ye any meat?"* They were forced to admit that they did not. *"When he (i.e.; the Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* (John 16:8). We sometimes hear people delighting to have the "ten commandments" as their "rule of life." When the Spirit teaches a man about the holy nature of the law, that law can only convince him of his inability to keep the law rather than it being some kind of guide by which he can order his steps. The law is a schoolmaster (and a hard one I might add) to bring us to Christ. All of our perfection and obedience is in him. As the hymn writer has said, "Thou O Christ art all I want, more than all in thee I find. Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind. Thou of life the fountain art, fully let me drink of thee, spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity."

**The LORD invites his children to eat of those things which his hands have both provided and prepared.** "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace, foul I to the fountain fly, wash me Savoir or I die." The biggest stumbling block of the gospel is that the grace of the gospel is free and cannot be bought, earned, or merited by anything the creature can do or think. He says *"Come and dine"* to hungry souls who know themselves unworthy to stand in his presence. He feeds those who have no food to eat, with bread that the world can know nothing of. The righteous perish while sinners eat from a bountiful table to which they never added one thing. The Lord himself serves them with heavenly manna and living water, and they neither hunger nor thirst.



## The Obedience of Christ

A Response to  
Steve Lehrer and Geoff Volker

Gregory A. Van Court

Seventeenth-century covenant theologians bisected the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, the bedrock of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, into two distinct doctrines: the active obedience of Christ and the passive obedience of Christ. Sinners were required by God's covenant of works made with Adam, man's federal head, to both fulfill God's moral demands and also pay the penalty for transgressions against those moral demands in order to be acceptable in the presence of God. Since the guilty were powerless to do either, reconciliation could be accomplished only by God-

incarnate acting as a substitute. Christ redeemed men both by fulfilling God's moral demands in their stead and by suffering their punishment. The former was termed his active obedience, the latter his passive obedience.

A recent paper [Lehrer, Steve and Volker, Geoff, "Examining the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: A Study in Calvinistic Sacred Cow-ism" [L&V hereafter]] flatly rejects the imputation of Christ's active obedience to the believer while exalting the imputation of Christ's passive obedience to the believer as more than sufficient for justification. In response to this paper, there are two points needing to be made based upon two primary audiences. In a day in which the New Perspective on Paul is advancing a view of forensic justification quite different from the formulation of the Reformers (one which excludes the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer), there will surely be some who will automatically react to L&V's view by denouncing it as heresy. To this audience, it must be made clear that the doctrine set forth by L&V can in no way be so regarded and so condemned. To the second audience, to Steve Lehrer and Geoff Volker themselves and to any other dear brothers in the Lord who are persuaded of their view, the shortcomings of their conclusions must be demonstrated in love.

From the Introduction.

Gregory Van Court is a seminarian enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. This material in this booklet was first presented in 2004 to his home congregation of Dayspring Fellowship, an independent Reformed Baptist church in Austin, Texas, where Gregory teaches weekly Sunday school classes and preaches on occasion.

This booklet may be ordered from New Covenant Media. See page 9.

Paperback, 8 1/2 x 11, 18 pages.

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es the criticism of the Pharisees and Scribes (*i.e. those in our second class, represented in the parable by the elder brother*) being leveled at Christ's attitude of receptiveness towards publicans and sinners (*i.e. those in our third class, represented in the parable by the younger son*). The parable is designed to show that both groups need to come into the fellowship of Christ by faith. Both groups need to move—away from where they are, and come to Christ.

Now what about the first group, those already justified by faith when Christ appears? Are not these already where they need to be? I don't think so! These too must make a transition—not from unbelief to faith, but from shadow to substance. Although these are trusting in God's promised Messiah, until He appears, they are kept under the Law, demonstrating that faith by adhering to its shadowy rituals. Once the fulfillment has come, however, they must lay aside the pictures for the reality. A failure to do so would raise serious doubts about their "faith"!

Notice that all three groups must make a move from where they are to come unto Christ—and this is what I mean by "transition." Spiritually, from wherever they are, they must now enter this Kingdom being revealed in its substance and reality—*e.g. Matt. 5:20; 7:13; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23-24; Mark 10:15; 10:23-25; Luke 11:52; 13:24; 16:16; 18:17; 18:24-25; John 3:5*. In Christ's day, a migration of individuals is underway out of the one system into another. If we are anywhere near the mark in this, the shortcomings of both Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism should be clear! Neither of those systems addresses a transition of individuals from one system to another! Under Covenant Theology,

the only transition seen is that of the engineers, *i.e.* the administrators of the one covenant. There's no movement required of the passengers in going from one age to the next. They simply sit tight. Even less transition is seen in Dispensationalism. The passengers are simply seated on one train in the old age and on a new train in the new age. There's never even a hint that men are to leave one and go to the other. The transition from one age to the next is entirely ignored and obscured!

#### A New Model

Now let's return to our trains. How do we depict the above situation? Well, we'd show this as two tracks, representing two distinct covenants, and two trains, representing the people belonging to each of these covenantal systems. Furthermore, Moses is the engineer of a train containing Israel, whereas Christ is the engineer of a train containing the Church. So far, this sounds much like Dispensationalism. But, rather than the train of Moses bringing men **up** to God, as in Dispensationalism, it brings men **over** to Christ (*This is Paul's point in Gal. 3:19-25*). The tracks are not parallel, but are at right angles, intersecting at the point of Christ's appearance in history. Suppose we are riding on Moses' train through the Old Testament age. The passengers are a mixed lot—some "know the Lord," and some do not. Further, the train looks like one of those sometimes seen in third world countries. There are the first-class seats, reserved for the most worthy. These are very expensive seats, and only Scribes, Pharisees, and a few select others can afford them. Then there are second and third class seats for those less worthy. But, at least these are **inside** the train. I say this, because a number of folks, the riffraff, "sinners," are riding **outside** the train—some on the roof, some hanging on to the sides. Sud-

denly we pull into a station. A conductor named John comes aboard and announces that everyone is to get off the train of Moses and to get on that other train over there called "Jesus." On that train, no ticket price is required, everyone is welcome, and there's first-class accommodations for all—but it's a free-for-all, so you'd better squeeze on board while you can (*see Luke 16:16*)! The Scribes and Pharisees, remaining in their seats and watching publicans and harlots scurry aboard the train "Jesus," are scandalized! "How dare anyone make them the equal of us!" they cry (*see Matt. 20:12*), and they decide they'll just sit tight and remain on the train of Moses—not knowing that this train will soon derail (in 70 AD)! So there you have it. The train of Jesus is not the same train that came up through the Old Testament age, nor does it run on the same track. It's a new train, running on a new track, signifying that this is a "new way" founded upon a "new Covenant." There are certain similarities between these trains, but they are not identical, for this is a "better" train running on "better" track! Further, on board the train "Jesus" are the faithful of Israel from throughout the Old Testament age—including both those who died in faith, having only seen Christ afar off, and those alive at His appearance in history who made the transition described above. We, by faith, have now boarded the train "Jesus" in our day. We, who were never on Moses' train, take our place right alongside the faithful of Israel. We comprise one people saved in only one way—by faith in Christ. Those who fail to make that spiritual transition, like those who remained on the train of Moses, are not heading to Heaven some other way—they are headed for destruction! ☞

# To Every Tribe Ministries

## By David Harrell, Executive Director

*"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:14-15, NKJV).*

Do you hear the insistence by the Apostle Paul that there is a necessary link between hearing the preached Word and salvation in Jesus Christ? We have a mandate to carry the gospel to all nations. That is the passion of the missionaries, board and staff of To Every Tribe Ministries (TETM). We think it should be the passion of every believer and every body of believers.

Does your church, as a body of believers, have a direct relationship with at least one mission endeavor? Do you frequently and purposefully invite missionaries to visit your church? Do the members of your church receive regular updates and information regarding a specific mission or about missions in general? If not, or if you simply wish to expand your efforts, please consider joining with TETM. Rod Conner, a member of our team, is currently traveling around the US and Canada promoting the TETM vision and mission. TETM and his home church have agreed to support him for a year in this endeavor. If you would like a visit from Rod, please contact him at the following email address: rconner@chilitech.net, or at the TETM email address given at the end of this article.

In this issue we want to intro-

duce you to Steve and Robin Henry, a faithful and earnest missionary team from Winona Lake, Indiana. Steve and Robin have served churches over a wide area of the country. In their 25 years in the pastoral ministry, they served churches in Johnson City, TN and Pittsfield, IL. Their last pastoral ministry from 1992 through 2004 was at Christ's Covenant Church (CCC) in Winona Lake. While still in the pastoral ministry Steve and Robin were able to visit and minister to churches in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and Oklahoma. Many of those churches are now part of their support team.

Steve served on the pastoral team at CCC with primary responsibilities in missions and discipleship training. During those years he had opportunity to visit and work with missionaries in Tanzania, Mexico, Thailand, Ireland, and Italy. Over the years of working with missions and missionaries, God redirected their ministry focus toward cross-cultural ministry. Robin had earned her RN degree and became an integral part of medical missions teams as well as working with Steve on other missions endeavors. Having worked in Mexico with TETM on numerous occasions, Steve approached his fellow elders at CCC for their counsel in this ministry redeployment. After receiving the support of the elders and the church, the Henrys were commissioned by CCC as church planters and missionary trainers in June of 2004, and joined the TETM team the following month.

Steve and Robin sold their home (by God's grace) in Indiana and moved into their new home in

Brownsville, Texas. Ten days after moving in, they assisted David and Tommi Sitton in hosting a team of 94 people for a week of ministry in Mexico. So far the Henry's and Sitton's have visited La Barra de la Cruz, the Coicoyan tribe, Media Luna, La Posa, the Island of Men and the Port of Mezquital. In each instance, they made significant strides toward establishing friendship with the people and making the first steps toward the ultimate goal of planting churches.

On August 27, Steve and Robin left their new home in Brownsville, for another new home in Guadalajara, Mexico, where they are enrolled in a Spanish language school. They will complete their language studies in April this year.

The addition of the Henrys to the TETM team has been an exciting time for all of us. We feel blessed that God has provided two hardworking, competent workers in the ripened fields of Mexico and Papua New Guinea.

#### Mission Team Meets in December

The TETM missions team met after Christmas at the Henry's new home in Brownsville. Our purpose in meeting was to get to know each other better and to map out our plans for the coming year. David Sitton and I have begun using a slogan to represent what we want to accomplish in missions: Preach the Gospel! Plant Churches! Prepare indigenous Leaders! Push on to the next unreached location!

The team decided that we really need to develop a model of what all this looks like. We see our founda-

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event. For instance, we usually associate a birth with laughter and joy. Psalm 127:3-5 accompanies many baby shower gifts.

*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.* (KJV)

Suppose the child is born blind and deaf? We would be tempted to say, "Some gift!" As we think of all the hardships that child must endure and all the effort and labor its parents must expend to care for it, we would want to mourn rather than laugh. What good can ever come out of such a tragic situation? Yet, suppose that baby's name was Helen Keller. Although she was born with vision and hearing, she suffered a severe fever when she was just nineteen months old that left her blind, deaf, and mute. How many children with perfect sight and hearing have affected the world as much as Helen Keller did?

Some years ago, my wife took a nurse's aid course. The nurse who taught one of her classes was obviously an evangelical Christian. When she came to the subject of abortion, she asked the following question. "Do you think an abortion would be justified if the unborn child was the pregnant woman's sixth child, the family lived in poverty, the husband had venereal disease, and the wife supported the family by taking in laundry? One child was already born blind, another was born dead, and the doctors knew this new child was going to be born with some severe abnormalities." All but two out of nearly forty said, "Yes, under those circumstances an abortion is justified

if not actually mandated." The teacher said, "You just aborted Johann Sebastian Bach."<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 31:15 expresses David's hope, "My times are in Thy hands." This is the practical application of the theology of sovereignty. It applies the truth of ordained times and seasons to personal life. Think about all the times and circumstances of David's life.

- ◆ There is a time for David to be a shepherd even though he is ordained to be a king.
- ◆ There is a time for him to be misunderstood and hated, which will equip him for later work.
- ◆ There is a time for him to hide in a cave in fear for his life, which teaches him to learn confidence in God.
- ◆ There is a time for David to be anointed as king, but he will have to wait to exercise the rights of king.
- ◆ David will not use the energy of the flesh to achieve or avoid any of these things, even though he knows they ultimately must occur. He will wait for God's time.
- ◆ In the cave, he resisted the flesh and refused to kill Saul. There is never a right time to follow the flesh.
- ◆ David refused to use the sword to defend his throne against his own son. "I did not need a sword to get this throne and I will not use a sword to defend it. God gave it to me in his time and he can take it away if he so chooses."

If you had been David's mother and you had been given the power to control the events surrounding his life, how many of the very unpleasant experiences he endured would you have eliminated from his life? How many children do you know who have been ruined by sin-

cere parents who determined that their children would not have to endure the things that they did? Were not all of David's bad experiences the very things that helped make him such a great king?

We must not view the writer of Ecclesiastes as an emotionless stoic saying, "Well, that's the way the cookie crumbles, so grin and bear it, even if does not make sense." Nor is he an Epicurean saying, "Who can trust a God like that? Eat, drink and be merry and do not think about the problems." He also is not a disappointed romantic asking, "Where is the goodie-giving God I heard about?"

Ecclesiastes chapter three is another way of presenting the truth of Romans 11:36, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Paul records the worship that follows heartfelt submission to God's sovereign ordaining of all things, "To whom be the glory forever." The Teacher echoes Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15, KJV). This worshipful attitude towards God's sovereignty finds expression in the hymn "Whate'er my God Ordains is Right."<sup>2</sup>

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
His holy will abideth;  
I will be still whate'er He doth;  
And follow where He guideth;  
He is my God; though dark my road,  
He holds me that I shall not fall:  
Wherefore to Him I leave it all.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
He never will deceive me;  
He leads me by the proper path:  
I know He will not leave me.  
I take, content, what He hath sent;  
His hand can turn my griefs away,  
And patiently I wait His day.

Whate'er my God ordains is

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other train has Jesus as its engineer and runs on the track of the New Covenant. Its passengers are called "the Church". Only one of these trains is active at a given time. First, Moses' train ran until Israel rejected Christ, but now it's been side-tracked. Then Jesus' train began to operate and will continue to do so until the Church is taken to Heaven. Finally, we are told, the train of Moses will once again begin running and will bring its passengers to Heaven as well. Notice the discontinuity—two completely separate covenants with two completely separate peoples.

#### The Three 'Ts'

At the conclusion of that article, I asked whether or not there was any other alternative. Is there no other model retaining the strengths of Covenant Theology—one people of God saved only one way (by faith) in all ages—yet recognizing the distinctiveness of the new age that dawned with the coming of the Messiah? In other words, is it possible to construct a covenantal model that would reflect the biblical data at hand, rather than constraining that data to fit a model which leaves all sorts of loose ends hanging?

Obviously I do, or I wouldn't have asked the question! But what, exactly, would such a Bible-based, covenantal model look like? I believe any such model, if it's biblical, must exhibit three features lacking in both Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism. Those characteristics are *transition*, *transference*, and *transcendence*. In this issue, I'll deal with the first of these.

#### Transition

Several years ago, Pastor Jim Gables of Birmingham, Alabama remarked to me that any covenantal system must be able to handle the transition of the saints from the Old

Testament age into the New Testament age. That statement stuck in my mind. As time went by, I began to understand the importance of it.

Suppose you were an observer in Israel at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry. Consider the condition of those He would encounter in His walk on this earth. Would they not fall into one of three classes? First, if we believe that there was always a believing "remnant" in Israel (*Rom. 11:5*), then we must believe that such a remnant was already present when Christ appeared. These were Old Testament saints, justified by a faith that looked ahead to the coming Messiah. Simeon and Anna (*Luke 2:25-38*) appear to be a sampling of this believing remnant at the time of Christ's birth, and surely there were others in this class at the beginning of Christ's public ministry. This may explain why it is so difficult to pinpoint the conversion of many who followed Christ in that day. It's difficult to tell in some cases whether we are looking at those already justified by faith during the Old Testament age or at those who are newly justified.

Secondly, the largest body of Jews is those operating within the framework of the Mosaic system. Although these are circumcised, and members of the covenant community of Israel, they remain unbelievers and unjustified (*note that a believing remnant requires a non-believing majority.*) Their hope of salvation lies either in 1) having personally met the moral requirements of the Mosaic Covenant (*e.g. the Rich, Young Ruler in Matt. 19:20, the preconversion Paul in Phil. 3:4-6*); or 2) if they've not met such requirements, they've availed themselves of the remedies available under the law to regain and maintain their covenantal status. These are trusting in the Law itself for salvation instead of in God's promised Messiah, to which the

Law itself pointed—an eternally fatal error to which Paul refers in *Rom. 10:1-4*.

Thirdly, there are the "lost"—not in the *soteriological* sense in which we so frequently employ the word, but in a *covenantal* sense. In Christ's day, these were the publicans, harlots, and "sinners." These weren't ordinary sinners, but sinners to the extent that they had disenfranchised themselves from any hope of blessing under the Mosaic Covenant. To understand this, consider the difference between those in our day who commit a misdemeanor and those who commit a felony. Those in the class described above would admit to having committed sins corresponding to a misdemeanor. These simply pay their fine—*i.e. render the prescribed sacrifice or offering*—and are reinstated back into the privileges of citizenship in Israel. The "lost," on the other hand, have committed sins corresponding to a felony. These have sinned away any hope of reinstatement to covenantal privileges. They are "outside the camp" of Israel. When Christ appears, what should these three groups do? Let's take them in reverse order.

Clearly those in the third class need to come to Christ in repentance and faith. The Law held out no hope whatsoever to such. It cut them off utterly. Yet, Christ is able to save to "the uttermost." He freely receives sinners and offers them blessing and life in Himself that the Law cannot give.

What about those in the second class? They too needed to turn from their hope in legal obedience and put their trust in God's Messiah. All too often this group was scandalized by the free reception that "sinners" received at the hand of Christ. Note both the occasion of and the content of the parable of the Prodigal Son in *Luke 15*. It address-

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it all under control. All of our times are in his hands. It really is beautiful to watch God work. He is always right.

The second part of verse 11 shows the source of the lost man's pathetic situation. "...also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. Humanity can neither escape God nor figure him out. God has put eternity in man's heart. In his heart of hearts, man knows that God is there, but he will do anything and everything possible to avoid any confrontation. Man brags about his freedom while his chains of self and sin drag him into one bad situation after another. Man would rather be the center of total chaos than he would admit he is a creature, a lost creature, desperately in need of grace.

The child of God learns to look at everything that happens as coming from the hand of a heavenly Father. How radically different is the view of time and events for a lost man and a saved man. Imagine a convicted criminal in a prison cell, unable to sleep. At six o'clock in the morning, he faces execution. He can see the stars through his cell window. He wishes the sun would never replace them. The most dreaded words he will ever hear are when the jailer comes and says, "It is time!" What horrible words. Now, imagine a bedroom where a girl is tossing and turning because she cannot sleep. She too will soon hear those same words, "It is time!" However, she cannot wait to hear

them. She is eagerly waiting for her mother to knock on the door and say, "It is time." Tomorrow is her wedding day. They will be some of the sweetest words she ever hears. Does it amaze you that the same words could carry such different connotations? Imagine the lost man and the believer hearing the grim reaper say, "It is time." What will be the reaction of each to the same words?

How do we apply sovereignty theology to our lives? If you are asked, "What all are you going to do today?" just say, "I don't know for sure. My father has a bunch of appointments for me." Whatever you face, you can say, "It is time." You, however, do not say it with stoic resignation. You can also say, "Whatever it is, I am sure it will be beautiful in his time and his purpose."

There is a time for everything. There is a time to be converted and that time is now. "Today is the day of salvation." There is a time to get earnest with God and that time is right now. There is a time to return to our first love and that time is now.

To be continued.

<sup>1</sup> The information in the teacher's story does not seem to be entirely accurate. Web-based biographical data on Johann Sebastian Bach includes no references to poverty, his father's venereal disease, or his mother as a laundress. The point of the story is still valid.

<sup>2</sup> Written in German by Samuel Rodigast (1676) and translated into English by Catherine Winkworth (1863). Rodigast wrote this poem for his friend Gastorius, who was seriously ill at the time. Gastorius recovered and wrote the tune for Rodigast's words.

*The great act of faith is when a man decides he is not God.*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.*

McLellan (Continued from page 3)

purchases this spot, builds an altar, and offers burnt offerings and peace offerings there, and only then does the angel of judgment return his sword to its sheath (1 Chron. 21:25-27).

Where was the location of this threshing floor? Second Chronicles 3:1 provides us with the answer.

*Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. (2 Chron. 3:1)*

The threshing floor was located on Mount Moriah—that mountain ridge that runs through Jerusalem. Mount Moriah is not a single peak, but an elongated ridge that commences to rise at its southern end at the junction of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, at the original City of David—Jerusalem (elevation approximately 600 meters, or 1,968 feet). The ridge then climbs in elevation to a maximum of 777 meters (2,549 feet) just northeast of the present Damascus Gate of the Old City. God had directed Abraham to take his son Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering somewhere along this mountain ridge. It was upon this ridge that God provided a ram to substitute for Isaac.

Here, upon Mount Moriah, Solomon built the temple where the continual sacrifices that foreshadowed our Lord and his once-for-all sacrifice took place. The wall of the city of Jerusalem cut through this mountain ridge of Moriah. Viewed from outside the city, with the cut for the wall and the road, the mountain looks somewhat like a skull. That particular section of Mount Moriah is known as Golgotha.

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right:  
His loving thought attends me;  
No poison can be in the cup  
That my Physician sends me.  
My God is true; each morn anew  
I'll trust His grace unending,  
My life to Him commending.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
He is my Friend and Father;  
He suffers naught to do me harm,  
Though many storms may gather,  
Now I may know both joy and woe,  
Some day I shall see clearly  
That He hath loved me dearly.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
Though now this cup, in drinking,  
May bitter seem to my faint heart,  
I take it, all unshrinking.  
My God is true; each morn anew  
Sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart,  
And pain and sorrow shall depart.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
Here shall my stand be taken;  
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,  
Yet I am not forsaken.  
My Father's care is round me there;  
He holds me that I shall not fall:  
And so to Him I leave it all.

Let me review the main lessons in this great chapter. (1) Everything happens by God's decrees. (2) Everything happens according to God's timetable (3:1), and (3) everything is beautiful in God's time (3:11). This includes death, the ugliest experience of man. Only God can say at a graveyard, "How beautiful in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

The Seeker now begins to apply what he has been saying. Verses 9-15 of chapter 3 record some of the practical implications of this theology in real life.

*What does the worker gain*

from his toil? [Good question! The ungodly answers, "No profit at all – it is meaningless. The child of God says, "Nothing is in vain. Even pain has a purpose."] *I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time.* ["Everything" really does include "all things!"] *He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.* [The Apostle Paul—"I have learned in whatever state I am in, therein to be content."] *I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him. Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.* (NIV)



***(1) Everything happens by God's decrees. (2) Everything happens according to God's timetable, and (3) everything is beautiful in God's time.***

There is an essential and certain cause/effect relationship between theology and life, between what we believe and how we feel and act. One of the most stupid statements ever made is, "It does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." Sincerity has absolutely nothing to do with truth. Sincerity is to truth what the gas peddle is to your car. The gas peddle determines how fast you drive your car, but it has nothing to do with the direction

in which you are going. I used that illustration once when I was speaking at a youth retreat. On the way home, we became lost. One of the youngsters with me said, "Go a little faster Mr. Reisinger and then we will be sure we are going in the right direction." Everyone laughed and a girl said, "Floor the gas peddle and we will be positive we are going the right direction." I am sure everyone can see how ridiculous that is, but it is no more so than saying, "It does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." Your sincerity in what you believe determines how zealous you are in practicing your beliefs, but sincerity has nothing to do with whether what you believe is true or false.

One of the dangers of this idea is that the more sincere you are in what you believe, even when you are wrong, the more zealous you will be in actions that stem from that thinking. Like driving a car, the more assured you are that you are going in the right direction, the further you will go before you turn around. No one is more sincere than the typical cult member is. The terrorists of our day are the most fully convinced people there are, but they are dead wrong. A terrorist may be so sincere that he/she will gladly die for his/her beliefs, but he/she is still wrong in both the beliefs and the actions growing out of those beliefs. He/she will never change until his/her thinking changes.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to say, "All of the world's real problems are theological!" He was correct. For instance, the race problem in the United States involves theology. We can never solve that problem until we all believe in the creatorship of God and that all men and women are brothers and sisters. If you want to solve the race problem, study Acts 17. Do you want to make the race problem worse? Teach people the Darwinian theory

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of evolution and the survival of the fittest. You cannot deny God as creator and still maintain that all human beings are “created equal in the sight of God.”

Whether we like it or not, we will see everything in life from only one of two points of view. If, on the one hand, all we see is a mess of unrelated pieces without any meaning, then we will agree with the writer of Ecclesiastes and say, “Meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless.” If, on the other hand, we see the hand of God ruling all things for his own glory and for our good, then we can always, in all situations, bow and worship.

Our Lord told a parable of a wealthy farmer who hoarded his goods. He kept building bigger and bigger barns.

*And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (KJV)*

The rich fool made three mistakes: (1) He mistook his body for his soul, (2) he mistook time for eternity, and (3) he mistook himself for God. If you who read this are not converted, then you are making those same three mistakes every day of your life! Our Lord will someday say to you, “*Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*”

We simply must see a cause/effect in what a society believes and how it acts. We have said it before; it is not the drugs, unbridled sex, and pills of every description that produced our present society. Our society’s beliefs about the purpose and meaning of life drove it to a place where every form of diversion became necessary even to get out of bed.



***Whether we like it or not, we will see everything in life from only one of two points of view.***

If we dwell on verse 9, we could develop a defeatist attitude that leads to either apathy or cynicism. *What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?* If we know before we start an endeavor that even though we will succeed we will still be bitterly disappointed, then why even start?

In Verse 10, *I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it*, Solomon repeats the question asked in verse 9, but now brings God into the picture. The real burden on man is that he must bear both the travail and its meaningless results without ever understanding either.

Verse 11a is one of those Halleluiahs texts; *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time . . .* When we begin to grasp its truth, we want to shout for joy. Like Romans 8:28, the “everything” here really means everything without exception. God ordains the events and the times and it all serves his purpose. All of our times are really his times for me. The message is, “Relax, brother, he’s got the whole

world in his hands.”

My brother Ernest owned a large construction company. He employed a man who knew more about Caterpillar tractors than the Caterpillar Company. One day when I was visiting with my nephew, we happened to be on a job site when a large Caterpillar tractor broke down. They immediately radioed for the expert mechanic. When he arrived, my nephew smiled and said, “Watch this guy.” When the tractor broke, it meant that four heavy dump trucks, a large scoop shovel, plus a number of workers also were idle.

The mechanic got out of his pick-up truck and walked over to the tractor. He walked around it about three times pushing and pulling wires and other things. He asked the operator some questions. Then he slowly walked back to his pick-up and got a thermos jug, poured himself a cup of coffee, and proceeded to sit down and drink it. I looked at my nephew who was grinning from ear to ear. If my brother Ernest had been there, he would have shot the man. Finally, the mechanic stood up and said, “It is one of three things. If it is ‘A,’ I can have it fixed in an hour. If it is ‘B,’ we will need such-and-such a part, so radio and get one just in case. If it is ‘C,’ we will have to take it back to the shop. Get a flat-bed out here just in case. I will know which it is in twenty minutes.” He was always right. My nephew looked me and said, “It is beautiful to watch him work.”

The man was not goofing off while sitting there drinking his coffee. He was running everything through his brain and was not going to start tearing anything apart until he knew what was wrong. Sometimes, we feel that God is on a coffee break. Rather than fret and worry, we must relax, because God has

Reisinger (Continued on page 14)

## COME AND DINE

### Michael A McInnis

*JESUS saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the LORD. John 21:12*

This is one of my favorite verses of scripture. Each time I read it my mind draws a picture of the Lord standing on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias waiting for his disciples to finish their labor. He has already prepared a fire, broiled some fish, and baked fresh bread in anticipation of their coming to shore. He knew exactly what these men needed. I suspect this was a welcome sight for bone weary men who had fished all night and caught nothing, yet at the very end of their labor they harvested more fish than they had perhaps thought possible. Then remarkably the Lord served them with the bounteous feast he had both supplied and prepared. As we ponder this beautiful setting let us make a few observations.

**He watched over them from afar even though they saw him not.** They fished all night and now as morning breaks the Lord is standing on the shore. The scripture says that when they got to shore they found there a fire of coals. Now anyone who has done any outdoor cooking knows that it takes awhile for a fire to burn down to coals which can be used for cooking. Prior to that, wood has to be gathered and a suitable spot picked for the fire. Then, once the coals are ready, it takes a fair amount of time to cook on them. The likelihood is that the LORD JESUS had been on that shore for quite some time, perhaps even all night, watching his disciples toil and grow weary in their unsuccessful attempts at fishing. No doubt they were a disheartened lot. But even in the midst of our discouragement the Lord never forsakes us; he is only preparing us for something more bountiful and

blessed. The failures we endure (in body, mind, and spirit) are just as much a part of the Lord’s purpose for us as the successes are (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17).

**He knew the exact spot where these men needed to be to reap a great harvest of fish.** I am somewhat amused by those who balk at the doctrine of the absolute predestination of all things when I see the unfolding of events such as those in this account. These fish had to be in the right place at the right time for him to tell his disciples where they would catch them. The God of heaven and earth leaves nothing to blind chance or fate but wisely determines the course of all things. Brother Spurgeon once said, “The grains of sand which are stirred by the crashing of the ocean waves upon the shore move in just as much a prescribed orbit as do the planets of our solar system.” If GOD is not in direct control of all events then all events would be out of control. There are no isolated instances. The flight path of an insect in the rain forest of Brazil must be coordinated with the ramblings of a polar bear at the Arctic circle whether I comprehend it or not. Each event is ordered in the exact way in which GOD sees fit, and all things must come to pass according to his sovereign will and in keeping with his unwavering purpose. Well has Solomon said, “*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart,*

*so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end” (Eccl 3:11) (cf. Psalms 139:1-16).*

**Though Peter had much skill as a fisherman, he had no success until the Lord brought the increase.** Paul said, “*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor 4:7).* Old John Bunyan said that a chicken knows from whom his blessings come as each time he takes a drink of water he looks to the heavens. Oh that the same could be said of men. By and large, we like to take credit for our achievements while shirking the responsibility for our failures. How easy it is to consider that our success in our earthly endeavors can be traced to our own abilities, wisdom, or tenacity. Yet in reality, the accomplishments and subsequent blessings which we enjoy are ours because of the direct action of the Lord.

**The word of the LORD causes us to realize our barrenness.** The Lord said to them, “*Children, have*

McInnis (Continued on page 17)

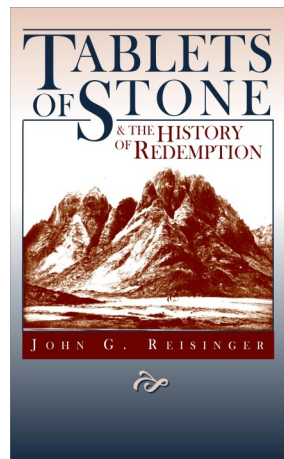
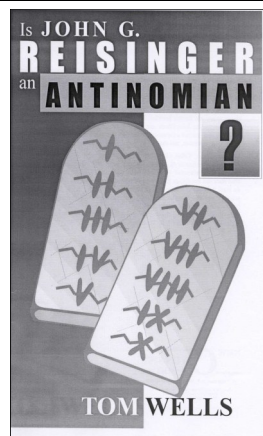
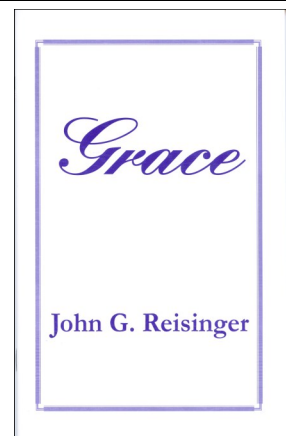
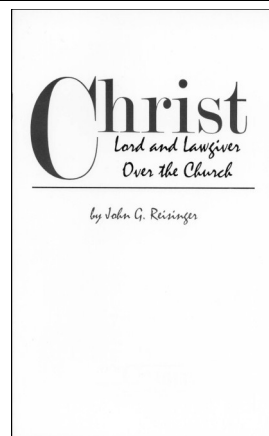
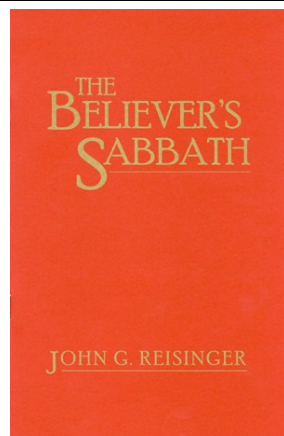
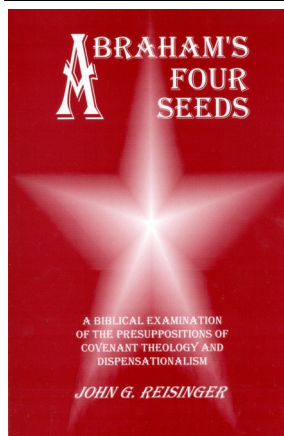




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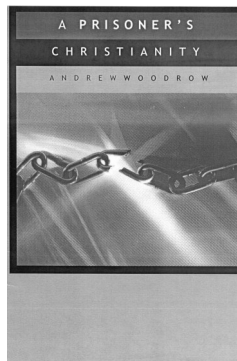
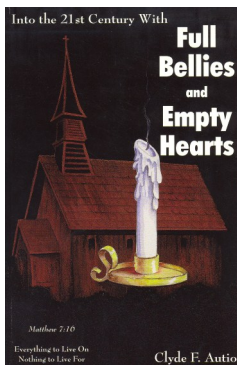
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