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**Authors**

Al Sanders, Charles Swindoll, Lloyd T. Anderson, J. Richard Chase, Charles Lee Feinberg, and Samuel H. Sutherland

# EPHESIANS 1:15

By: Dr. Al Sanders

of the most practical and helpful studies to be found in the Word of God is in  
 words uttered by the apostle Paul. Two outstanding inspirational intercessions are  
 found in the letter to the Ephesian church. The first in chapter one, verses 15 -  
 and the second in chapter three, verses 14 - 21. In the former we find, under  
 inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that Paul wrote, "Wherefore I also, after I heard  
 of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give  
 thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." The thing that this passage of  
 scripture indicates is the fact that there were two foremost distinctives which stood  
 out as representative of this Ephesian church. The two characteristics of the people  
 were faith and love. I suppose, had we authored this portion rather than the Holy  
 Spirit using Paul, we might have said that the things standing out in our thinking  
 relative to the Ephesian church would be such things as their handy location in the  
 center of town (near all the freeways), their beautiful stained glass windows, their  
 comfortable pews, their fine Bible teachers, and outstanding pastor, their beautiful  
 organ and excellent choir. And, of course, we would not want to overlook their  
 spiritual and delicious church suppers! But you see, these things pale into in-  
 significance compared to that for which Paul commended them: faith in the Lord Jesus  
 and love for all the saints. That tells us quite a story.

But of all, think about being commended for faith in the Lord Jesus. When trouble  
 comes to you, do you move ahead in the power of God, or do you become frustrated,  
 unhappy, miserable, and discontented like the people of the world? It really boils  
 down to the fact that to some people the Bible is just a good luck charm to carry  
 with them. It is sort of a means to ward off the evil spirits, to present a degree  
 of respectability, and to make up for the profligate life. That is certainly not  
 the faith about which Paul is talking. He has reference to a faith in Someone,  
 Jesus Christ, who alone is able to deliver us from the trials of life, lifting us  
 above our circumstances no matter how difficult or even impossible they might be.

At the writing of this Epistle, it had been some years since the apostle Paul  
 visited Ephesus. Best estimates are anywhere from four to ten. The Ephesian church  
 was well over a thousand air miles away from Rome. Transportation and communica-  
 tion was not easy. Yet, word had spread to the apostle, now incarcerated in a Roman  
 prison, about the faith of these dear Christians. Here in verse 15 of Ephesians one  
 Paul says, "I heard of your faith." This shows the perfect trust which the Ephesian  
 Christians had placed in Jesus Christ. It had become a conversation piece through-  
 out the known world. They were not ashamed to let it be known for whom they stood.

So, as we use the word faith, we should use the three inseparable and vital words  
 that follow, "in the Lord Jesus." This is because our faith must be directly tied  
 to something which is a living organism. There are people who have faith in  
 things, faith in the teachings of men (and women), faith in this system or that, and

yet none of these things are sufficient. It is only when our faith is resident in the Lord Jesus Christ that we can have victory over sin and assurance of life.

The second thing for which the Ephesian Christians were known is love. In Romans we read, "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Notice that the love is for all saints. This doesn't have reference to saints up in heaven. This means living saints. You see, Scripture points out that when an individual by faith receives Jesus Christ as his Savior he becomes literally a saint of God. He doesn't have to wait 350 years to be canonized or beatified. He is immediately sanctified, set apart, and called a saint.

But again, the one word which stands out here in a pronounced manner is one syllable and three letters: "all." Paul is saying that we should have love for every one of the saints. It reminds me of the old but true couplet,

*"To love the whole world is no real chore,  
My greatest problem is with the fellow next door."*

There are a lot of people who know all the doctrines. They are thoroughly evangelical and completely fundamental. Yet, the dimension of their lives that is sorely missing is that of love with a deep and abiding concern for others. In I John we read this pronouncement, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, that man is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." If a person says he loves God and can't get along with other Christians at church, God says that man is a liar. That is very strong language! Love, you remember, in Galatians 5:22 is the very first of the fruit of the Spirit which the Spirit gives through true Christian character and when we possess the fruit we possess the eight other attributes which naturally follow. Love is the key. It was said of the early Christian church members, "See how they love one another." I wonder if people can say that about our church today?

We may as well get used to it, the fact of the matter is the magnet which draws sinners to Christ also draws them together. As spokes of a wheel approach the center they also approach each other. As Christians from all over the world receive Jesus Christ as Savior and come to Him, they also come together.

How tragic it is that the Christian should be known as a disgruntled individual. I think of a sign standing at the boundary of a northwestern Texas city. It reads in this wise, "Welcome to Stanton, home of 1603 of the friendliest people in all the world (and three or four sore heads)." That sign, with certain modifications, might fit some churches.

The question comes, "Does my life of faith and love cause someone else to give thanks to God and to pray?" It was true of the Ephesians. Does someone in a foreign city know of my faith, as Paul did in Rome of these on the continent of Asia Minor, or, bring it down more localized. Does someone, perhaps in our own neighborhood know of my faith? Is this truth really made preeminently clear to those in our household? Paul says, "I know two things about the Ephesian Christians which commend them to everyone: their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love unto all saints."

By the way, the word "unto" represents not just thinking thoughts of love for others but actually it means acts of love which are bestowed upon them. He could have said "And love to all the saints," but the word unto means that there are things which are being accomplished for the other saints, kindnesses which are rendered, a thoughtfulness which is not afraid of going out of the way to be gracious and filled with the spirit of Christian love.

years ago a preacher decided on some desperate course of action. His people had  
ed to become so disinterested in the things of Christ as well as the needs of  
rs. He dressed up as a besheveled beggar and began going from house to house  
is members asking for help. He was consistently turned down. They couldn't be  
ered. They didn't want to waste their time on such a hopeless wretch. To one  
where he came the woman scolded, "Well, if you'd go to church this would never  
happened to you!" The preacher protested that he really was a religious man  
that hard times had come to him. The woman said, "Well, if you're such a good  
stian, I'll test you out. How many commandments are there?" After a moment of  
sence the disguised man of God responded quietly but confidently, "Eleven!"  
eupon the woman became quite irate. She physically shoved him off her step,  
ily shouting, "I knew right from the start that you were nothing but a fraud. I  
ht you in your own trap. There are only ten commandments. Now go away and don't  
or ever come back again."

next Sunday at church the preacher took as his text a very familiar portion of  
pture, John 13:34 from which he read, "A new commandment I give unto you, that  
love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." He re-  
led the audience that this conclusively proved that there are really eleven  
mandments for the Christian. The audience was horrified to hear how cold and  
loused they had really become.

the Ephesian church was known for its faith in the Lord Jesus and the love its  
Gole had for all the saints. Certainly we could wish that these things might be  
th hallmarks of our lives today. Because they had both faith and a practical love,  
caused the apostle Paul to pray. He said that he didn't cease to give thanks for  
it making mention of these dear ones in his prayers (1:15, 16). Actually, one of  
he first evidences of a trusting heart and soul is prayer.

you remember how the Holy Spirit came to Ananias of Damascus instructing him to go  
minister unto Paul? Of course, at that time it had happened concurrently with his  
vation. Saul had already become Paul, but Ananias didn't know it. Preceding his  
vation Paul continued to breathe out threatenings and slaughter upon the church of  
sus Christ. So naturally when Ananias heard of his commissioning by the Spirit to  
to Paul and preach the Gospel to him, it really was in essence having a death  
rrant signed. Ananias responded by saying, "I have heard many things of this man  
d of how much evil he hath done." It thrills my heart to hear how the Holy Spirit  
l, swered that concern. It was said of Paul, "Behold, he prayeth."

prayer is a sign of a converted heart, so continual ceaseless prayer shows the  
pths of the individual's spiritual life. Sometime test your own prayer life. As  
u get up from your knees or whatever position of prayer you're in, and you have  
t been conscious of any remembrance in this direction, ask yourself, "How many  
mes do I pray for things which directly relate to me, my home, my family, and my  
ved ones? How much time do I spend praying for those who may be unknown to me,  
o have needs, who may be even located in distant areas?" So, it's a fact that  
ayer for others shows the depths of one's spiritual life.

enever Paul prays he always starts with thanksgiving. That is a good pattern for  
to follow. The apostle began I Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians,  
lossians, I and II Thessalonians, II Timothy and Philemon that way. Thanksgiving  
a vital and integral part of intercession. Really, prayer doesn't need proof,  
it it does need practice! We should put these things we know are true into our  
perience. How else can we see the reality of what the Lord wants to do? If there  
something we have said or done, or even thought, that is displeasing to the Lord,  
t us ask God to forgive us, that it might be set aside, thanks to His cleansing  
ood. Then, we need to come in confidence, expecting that God is going to work the

miracle and bring the victory.

Finally, as the last essential prayer, let us come with the attitude and desire  
"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." May it be that we will let th  
have His way rather than our trying to usurp His rightful position.

*Dr. Sanders is Host  
of the Biola Hour.*

# STRESS

By: Reverend Charles Swindoll

time we live in has been known as the "aspirin age." Certainly there has never been a more stress-ridden society than ours. Living in this "pressure cooker" affects us more than we dare to admit. Competition demands a high level of performance. Tempers flare; stomachs turn; ulcers erupt; hearts break; minds blow, and some drop out and others try their best to cope.

A pastor I often come into contact with those undergoing severe stress. The other day I actually kept a record of situations brought to my attention requesting my counsel or advice. A mother and dad had to commit their teenage daughter to a local psychiatric ward. A few moments later I was in touch with a girl who had lost a close relative; he had taken his life. A ten-year marriage suddenly went up in smoke as the wife walked out. She is now living with another man. A young couple in our church had their first baby which was born mongoloid. A woman in her thirties has been plagued with confusion because of an incestuous relationship with her father years ago. She is having a difficult time adjusting to her husband's infidelity. A former minister has become disillusioned and is now questioning the faith he once declared. There was a middle-aged husband and wife who couldn't communicate without screaming. Separation for them is dangerously near. Then that evening I talked with an employer who was embittered because a Christian employee wouldn't be trusted. Amazing as it may seem, that is just one day's journal. There are many other conditions which include financial strain, unemployment, failure in school, obesity, loneliness, rebellious children, alcoholism and drugs, and the loss of loved ones. Block all the avenues of escape and there is a powder keg with a terribly short fuse.

The ancient Greeks had a motto worth remembering, "You will break the bow if you pull it always bent." There must be ways to reduce the tension. Surely there are God-given guidelines that will help us to loosen the strings.

In the book of Hebrews we read a message to people during the first century who were undergoing intense difficulties. Some actually had begun to drift. Others virtually defected from Christianity. The writer of this book desired for them to walk in victory rather than discouragement. He therefore addressed himself directly to the issue, especially in the third and fourth chapters. He told them to call to mind their forefathers, learning to live above their circumstances. He warned, "Take care lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart in sliding away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

An unbelieving heart is lethal. Once it takes over, backsliding is virtually inevitable. How can the Christian keep doubt from entering his mind. God's counsel is beautiful. He offers a plan that is guaranteed to work if we do exactly as He says. First of all, we find "But encourage one another day after day. . . lest any

one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). This is counsel. Mutual encouragement on a daily basis will guard us against the tendency to dissolve amid stress. Encouragement is a give and take proposition. You need close, honest, loving relationships. We need to cultivate friends who will stand by when it is tough sailing. Without mutual encouragement it is easy to come hardened. This can build a bridge to bitterness where misery abounds.

The next two commands describe what we alone must do to stay strong when stress strikes, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall following the same example of disobedience. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Hebrews 3:11, 14). Here are two commands based on historical illustrations. The matter of entering into rest goes back many centuries when the Israelites failed to believe God's promise regarding their moving into the land of Canaan. The Lord assured them He would give that land. The people simply refused to believe His promise. With their eyes fixed on the opposition they became paralyzed with fear. Sheer hard core unbelief won the battle. Rest was available but they failed to appropriate it by faith. Because of this refusal to rest in the promises of God they weren't permitted to enter Canaan. We are told to continue holding firmly our relationship with Christ, calmly confessing He is Lord, even though stress abounds around us. We are able to stay calm because of the Person, the living God, Christ Himself.

In the third place we are told to remember that Christ is in charge. We needn't panic since He is in perfect control. Things really aren't out of hand, they are in hand.

Keep in mind that such calm and restful faith needs to be recharged. This is why God gives us one final command. We read in Hebrews 4:15 and 16, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." Here we are urged to pray with confidence. And we can since the Lord is in sympathy with our weaknesses. Instead of ignoring us, He listens in our struggle. Instead of rebuking us, He understands. I have found that stress takes its back seat when we battle it on our knees. As Jim Elliott, the martyred missionary in Ecuador, once put it, "The saint who advances on his knees never retreats."

To summarize, stress is inevitable. The answer isn't to deny or even to rationalize it. We must counteract it. First, be encouraged. Remember now, others can help you. Strengthen each other with encouragement day after day. Then rest, as you hold on to some of God's great promises. Believe and memorize some of them. Wait upon God with those promises in the forefront of your mind. Refuse to let the situation disturb your rest. Then stand firm and don't run. Reaffirm your commitment and take comfort in the truth that He is in control. He is sovereign; things aren't out of hand. When you pray, be assured that the Savior understands. He is waiting to give more grace as you come before Him confidently with your needs. This isn't to say that your stress will suddenly depart if you do all four of the things. Your situation may not change but that really won't matter. You will change! And, in the final analysis, this is actually all that matters, isn't it?

Probably one of the most familiar verses in the Bible is, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Some might try



"Be sure your child is in Sunday school and church regularly. Make certain  
away in his heart and mind a few memorized verses along with proper prayers.  
to a Christian camp during those summers of his formative years. Certainly,  
all possible, see that he goes to a Christian school. After all, everyone will  
wild oats. He will have his fling, but when he gets old and decrepit, he will  
come back to God." You may be sure that this isn't what the Word of God  
s. We know of those personally who were so reared, but who today have aban-  
their faith. They still haven't returned to the training first experienced.

teaching of Proverbs 22:6 is much more profound than most interpretations. From  
original Hebrew some valuable thoughts are invariably lost in the translation.  
the words "train up" in this verse. You may be surprised to know that the  
first meant the palate, or the roof of the mouth. In verb form it was the term  
the Hebrews for breaking a wild horse, bringing it into submission by using  
in its mouth. This was also used to describe actions of a midwife who  
ed in the birth of a child. After the baby was born, the midwife would dip  
finger into the juice of crushed or chewed dates and would then place her finger  
the mouth of the infant, massaging the palate so as to create a sucking sen-  
She would then take the child, placing it in the mother's arms to begin  
g at her breast. The idea could be paraphrased, "Develop a thirst!" as we  
"train up."

se, when we read the word "child" one invariably thinks of an infant, perhaps  
the ages of four to eight. The biblical phrase isn't limited to that. In  
el 4 the same word is used to refer to a newborn infant, as well as being used  
er to Samuel himself who had been weaned. The same word is used in Genesis 21  
eference to Ishmael in his pre-teen years. In Genesis 37 that word refers to  
when he was 17. Back in Genesis 34 the same word refers to a child of  
geable age. You see, "child" is broadly used in the Hebrew language, cover-  
ery age during the time a youngster or teenager is under the roof of his

le child is more than just a handful of soft, pliable clay. You may feel you  
ne right way for your child to go. You may feel you should adjust your  
s training so that proper guidance may be given. There are many Christian  
s who attempt to apply this type of training to all their children in the very  
ay. This approach denies the idea of individuality. Worse than that, it is  
olitical. The Bible reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go."  
New American Standard Bible this phrase is margined with the literal  
ing, "according to his way." "Train up a child according to his way." This  
be altogether different from your way. The Lord doesn't tell us, "Train up a  
n the way you think he should go." Rather, the Bible teaches us that we  
observe our child, discovering his way, his unique characteristic mode, and  
our training accordingly.

alm 7:12 and Psalm 11:2 use the verb form of the Hebrew word translated  
Proverbs 22:6). This carries the sense of a skillful archer. He has bent  
before letting the arrow fly to the target. You see, a distinctive per-  
y is already established in every child God places in our arms. The parent  
ats to train his child correctly must discover his unique personality. You  
at all children aren't alike. One youngster may be sensitive, while another  
ressive and practical. One may be highly intelligent while the other may be  
dull. Some may be very interested in technical things and yet others of the  
family may be dreamers. The biblical examples of this fact are abundant.  
nd Eve had two sons to begin with, Cain and Abel. Cain was what we would call  
ist, a godless man. Abel, although from the same home and environment, was  
y different. Abel was a believer, interested in and sensitive to spiritual

things.

A better example than that is Jacob and Esau. They weren't only from the same family, but were also born at the same time. With these twins, Jacob was held onto the heel of his brother when the birth took place. They were raised at the same time and in exactly the same environment. Esau was especially hairy and came an expert hunter. Jacob was entirely different throughout his life. They were bent by God in entirely different directions. The wise parent carefully guards these differences.

The parents must weave biblical principles into the life of every child as a unique individual. It is wrong and unfruitful to seek to conform every child the same. Again, the unwise parent frequently uses an identical approach with all his children. Then, too, he tends to compare siblings with each other. "Susie, how come you like Sally?" Susie says, "Daddy, because I'm not Sally." Dad says, "Why not?" Sally is interested in God and His Word. She's sensitive and loves the Lord. She is quick to obey. Why are you so rebellious?" The girl answers, "Because I'm not Susie." The father usually just gets a bigger stick, determining that he is going to make Susie like her sister whether she wants to be or not. This isn't to say that Sally and Susie should be allowed to run their own way. Quite the opposite is true. It is unwise for the parent to compare two different children and try to make them the same.

Think back into your past. Chances are, your rebellion as a child began when you first realized that your parents didn't understand you. They were unwilling to spend time getting to know you personally. You began to resist their training. Sheer force causes the child to turn inward. Communication breaks down. The child develops a hatred for the ones who bore him. Deep bitterness sets in and both parent and child begin to feel that the relationship is hopeless.

We can be thankful for the alternatives suggested in Proverbs 22:6. A wise parent realizes that the sovereign Lord of heaven has given him a unique child whom God planned, arranged, and prescribed to be a certain way. Each person has a certain set of attributes, abilities and traits. The wise parents discover those unique traits by study and observation. They spend time in prayer, trusting their hearts to the Father for wisdom. This isn't just when the child is little but rather all through the time he is at home. The parent should be a student of the child. This may sound strange, but it is still true.

The promise of Proverbs 22:6 becomes meaningful as it closes, "when he is old, he will not depart from it." The Hebrew word for "old" doesn't necessarily mean old age. The translation means "hair on the chin," "beard," "bearded one." A child doesn't begin to grow a beard when he turns ninety. It happens when he approaches physical maturity. The point is this: when a child reaches physical maturity he will not depart from the training. He will keep on going and growing in Christ, being transformed into Christ's image in ever increasing measure. Now that is a promise worth believing in!

*NOTE: Reverend Swindoll will be a featured speaker in Biola's BICENTENNIAL TOUR TO THE EAST COAST, June 28 - July 14. He will be teaching "Biblical Principles of Parent-Child Relationships."*

ing a cure for internal injuries isn't a job for your physician. By that I mean feelings of resentment, bitterness, indignation and displeasure over being treated ly. The mere mention of that malady strikes a cord familiar to all of us. Did ver have a close personal friend, one whom you trusted and with whom you shared secrets of life, including hurts and scars? That person has since turned on breaking your trust. Maybe you have been treated unfairly by your mate, a chive, your boss, teacher, or your own child. Your personal rights have been ou'd on and your goodness taken for granted. With the purest of motives you have t? your best. Out of misunderstandings and short-sightedness you have been mis- d. Now you are undergoing the pain of internal injury. Recovery seems remote ven almost impossible. You have been made the brunt of what appears to be a geal. Resentment is now rearing its ugly head, roaring like a lion within you. sactor can effect a cure that will silence the angry beast in your breast.

are two ways you can view the wrong which has come upon you. The first, while lar, only results in deeper hurts and increased internal injury. The second, ough it is much more difficult to employ, is the more effective plan for it s against your human, natural tendencies. Let me explain.

first approach could be described as horizontal focus. When wrong comes along view it strictly from the natural perspective. This sets into motion a chain tion which begins rather mildly but finally ends at the point of danger, hatred, often includes terrible thoughts of revenge.

second way to view wrong-doing is through the vertical focus. A Christian ld use this supernatural, vertical perspective. After all, everything is in s hands. This leads you to think, "What is God trying to teach me through this rience? Have I completely forgiven the other person?" Ultimately we are able ay, "Thank you, Lord," making sure the offense is cleared up and corrected.

Genesis 45 we read of a man named Joseph. This becomes a vital link in our ights regarding resentment. When he first appears in Scripture he is only 17 s of age. Since he was his father's favorite son, his brothers literally hated They made plans to murder the boy, but finally decided to sell him to a cara- of travelers enroute to Egypt. The brothers lied to their father when they got home, telling him that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. Joseph cer- ly hadn't deserved such treatment. He was the object of his brothers' harsh brutal plot without cause. He was frankly the innocent victim of wrong treat-

passed and Joseph became a slave in Egypt. He was owned by a man named iphar who promoted him to a place of operational responsibility in his own home. iphar's wife was attracted to Joseph and frequently tempted him to lie with her. eph's constant refusals angered her so much that she screamed out on one occa- n and falsely accused him of rape. Remember, Joseph was completely innocent, he was thrown into jail. Once again he was the innocent victim of wrong atment. He languished in prison for years. He had done nothing wrong either to family or to Potiphar's family. Still, he was in a difficult place, for- ten and alone in an Egyptian dungeon.

ough an interesting chain of events, Joseph was later released from that prison was ultimately exalted to the position of Prime Minister of the land. He

became Pharaoh's righthand man while still only 30 years of age. When you see the figure, this meant that he spent 13 years as an Egyptian slave and prisoner because of the ill treatment of his brothers--13 long, forgotten years.

Shortly thereafter, a famine swept across the land. The Egyptians under Joseph were wisely prepared for the drought. They had stored up grain in abundance. Joseph's family back in the land of Canaan was threatened with starvation. They came to Egypt, having heard of the supply of food but knowing nothing of Joseph's whereabouts. They had long since forgotten about him. Here were the brothers who had been responsible for 13 years of suffering, slavery, and hardship, now standing before Joseph asking him for food. He knew who they were but they didn't immediately know who he was.

Listen to several verses of Genesis 45, "Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, 'Have everyone go out from me, for there was no man with me when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And Joseph wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers couldn't answer him. They were dismayed at his presence. Joseph reached out and embraced them, and said, 'Please come closer to me.' He revealed, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you brought into Egypt. And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you brought me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me lord to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. And go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.'"

Think of Joseph's statements regarding God's hand in the mistreatment experienced. There is not a single word of resentment, grudge or anger. His focus was upon the Lord. These eternal lessons had made him the victor over mistreatment, rather than the victim of internal injury. A touching scene followed. Joseph declares, "you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen here; you must hurry and bring my father down here. Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him." What a scene! Arms around necks, kisses, hugs and tears of joy and repentance. There was listening and sharing, laughing and talking. What a fantastic family reunion! Some read this and say, "That's unrealistic. Any fellow who would be like Joseph must have his head in the sand. He refused to face life as it really is!" No, that isn't true.

Listen to Joseph's comment to his brothers. "Joseph gave the brothers wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. And to each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. And to his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey. So Joseph sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, 'Do not quarrel on the journey.' Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob." Joseph cautioned, "Don't quarrel now! Don't get selfish and argue over all this money and food." Joseph was very realistic about his brothers. He could sense the same old competitive spirit in them. He knew that they had refused to hold resentment against them. He refused to live his life in an attitude of unforgiving bitterness. Joseph may have been mistreated but he refused to get sucked into the tormenting undertow of resentment.

When you respond this way, the one who originally mistreated you simply can't

They will need reassurance from you. You must reinforce your total acceptance of the person, for ill treatment normally results in rejection and retaliation as part of the offended rather than love and acceptance. You can't be hostile or harbor resentment. Joseph's brothers were concerned (Genesis 50:15). "What if he should bear a grudge against us and pay us back in full for the wrong which he did him?" Jacob had died and they were bent out of shape with fear. They expected him to bear a grudge against them. The reinforcement from Joseph alleviated their fears and reassured them of the genuineness of his love and forgiveness. As he suggested, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant nothing against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result to preserve many people alive." There wasn't even the slightest shadow of revenge. On the contrary, there was only kindness and comfort. Internal injury healed years earlier.

Next time you are the object of unfair and inappropriate treatment, set these questions into motion. First, accept the reproof as directly from the Lord. Tell yourself this fact. Be reminded that God designs and allows everything for good for your development. Second, seek God's strength immediately. All of us are human. We will become blue and begin to wither within. This is the first sign of internal injury. Think offensively and not defensively. Be encouraged in the Lord. Third, consider the other person's viewpoint. Look at the act from his frame of reference. Try to think what you might have done to create at least part of the problem. Fourth, stay positive and search for God's lesson. A close confidential friend can help you here. Hopefully a friend will be objective with you and not take sides right away. Write down what God shows you; fight against a critical attitude. Remember Joseph's words, "God meant it unto me for good." Finally, discover and implement ways of showing kindness to the one who wronged you. Joseph spoke only to his brothers. He even promised them a new home, providing them with comfort and love.

Close with one of the most exciting yet least experienced verses in all the Bible, Proverbs 16:7, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." Your responsibility is to be pleasing to the Lord, Christian. God will take care of bringing about peace with your enemies. He will do His part if you will do yours. I know of no better cure for internal injury. In fact, I know of no other cure!

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# REVELATION

By: Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson

There is a helpful, brief outline for the closing two chapters of the book of Revelation:

21:1-8 describes the new heaven and new earth  
21:9-22:5 describes the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem  
22:6-21 is the epilogue to this wonderful book

The wisdom and truth of God are absolutely unfathomable. As believers we are divers who go down in the depths of the sea to find beautiful pearls. We can be overwhelmed by the profuse, vast treasures which surround us. The riches in Christ Jesus are absolutely past finding out, much less capable of being exhausted.

The Scripture before us speaks of the re-creation of the universe. There are things made by the hand of God: a new heaven, a new earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem. In God's handiwork the whole universe above us is going to be made in primeval and pristine glory before the Lord. To me now, as with the Psalmist, when I stand and look at the workmanship of God, every piece and part of infinite creation declared His glory. What shall it be when the Lord redeems earth and renovates the universe? Its supernal splendor will be beyond what we possibly imagine.

Then, there is a need for a new earth. This globe is blighted by sin and absolutely cursed. In a coming day it will experience a rejuvenation. No longer will it be torn by hooks and irons in order to yield its increase and fruit. No longer will it be infested with thistles, thorns and briars. No longer will it be cut into gardens and platted into cemeteries. No longer will its soil be moistened by showers of human tears, stained with the crimson of man's blood. No longer will its high places bear the processions of broken-hearted and bereaved people. There is to be a new and redeemed world, a paradise regained.

There will also be a new Jerusalem, the capital city, made by the glorious workmanship of our infinite Lord. This will be the center of God's government and people. It is my conviction that this earth is going to be our privileged locale forever into the ages of the ages to come. Both the heavens above and the earth below will be here after they are swept clean of the curse that has wasted them for these thousands of years.

We recall the parting words of our Savior to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." There are three Greek words translated in our Bible by the English term "world." The word here refers to an era or a dispensation. Christ had in mind the end to a definite period of time (Matt. 28:1

history finally reaches its ultimate consummation, our Savior will be with us to the end of all human history. So the expression "end of the world" used in the Bible doesn't have the idea of the end of this terrestrial globe on which we

is another interesting Greek word found in Revelation 21:1. We read, "For the heaven and the first earth were passed away." The first or primary meaning of the word "passed away" isn't annihilation but rather a change from one place or position to another. For example, a ship might travel through the sea over the horizon and out of view, but it doesn't mean the extinction of the ship. Or, it is a man who passes through a door so that when he goes outside he can't be seen from the inside. He certainly hasn't been annihilated! The apostle likewise means that heaven and earth don't cease to exist but rather that they change from one condition to another. A vast renovation will take place as they are redeemed and regenerated by the hand of Almighty God Himself (II Peter 3:1-10).

The terrible flood the civilized order of man, overflowing with water, perished. Cities were destroyed and the villages were wiped away. Everything that had been built in its nostrils died. The whole fashion of that civilized order and culture ceased to exist. Peter says it "perished." Certainly this planet didn't cease to exist nor undergo annihilation. The "cosmos" or order of civilized mankind was destroyed. In a future day this globe we live on will receive its ultimate judgment. Instead of by flood it will come through cleansing and purging fire. In that day the heaven and the old earth flee away (Rev. 20:11).

In Matthew 19:28 we read, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory." The Savior here refers to this regeneration of the earth. The apostle Paul writes of it in Romans 8:19-23. It is certainly true that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Our human world is filled with disappointment and tears, but in the regeneration there will be a re-creation of the whole creation of God. Everything our heavenly Father created that since the fall has been cursed, the Lord is going to rejuvenate and remake. Someday the lamb will lie down with the wolf; the leopard and the kid will dwell together; a child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den and play by the hole of an asp. No one will hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, not only during the kingdom but also for eternal ages. Yes, it is beyond human imagination what God will do in the re-creation of His great universe.

Without question, God will rejuvenate this present creation. It won't be annihilated but rather re-created as our eternal home, with, of course, constant access into the presence of God (II Corinthians 5:1, 2). There will be continuity between this body we now have and the body which we will have in the resurrection. The power of God, which raised Jesus from the dead, is able to raise us up also from the grave. When Christ was resurrected He was the same Savior. The Lord invited Thomas, "Look at My scars in My hand; put your finger in them and don't be faithless, but believe that I am I Myself" (John 20:27). This was after the resurrection.

Our body that is planted in the heart of the earth may go back to the dust from which it came. But someday, for the believer in Christ, it will be brought forth incorruptible and incorruptible (I Corinthians 15:50-58). This is exactly what God means when He refers to the regeneration of His own creation (Revelation 21). It will be the same earth and the same heaven, but all remade, washed, cleansed, purified, rejuvenated and redeemed. It is a wonderful privilege to know God's total redemption of His creation.

Personally, I wouldn't look forward to God's sentencing me out to some planet a

hundred million miles away. I like a lot about this world. The only things I enjoy are the tears, the separation of bereavement, the grave so ever open, the emptiness, heartache and despair that takes place, and the sin which is seen constantly all around me, as well as in my own heart. Other than this, the globe which I am living is a wonderful place. Just think how it will be when no more funerals will be experienced. Gone the bad news. No more the agonizing pleading the Lord to give us strength for the trials that lie ahead. We will then come to the place of perfection in the new heaven, the new earth and the new Jerusalem. These will be filled with gladness, glory, strength, and health.

I believe our new bodies aren't going to need to eat or drink. Yet the possibility is always there. Jesus Christ did eat after His resurrection (Luke 24:36-43). The promises of God's Word show that believers are to inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11). The "meek shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:11). Christ repeated that in Matthew 5:5. Psalm 37:29, "The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever." I, a minister who has officiated at probably thousands of gravesides, the thought came into my mind every time I have a funeral that God didn't intend it to be that way. He came into the human race and man began to die, not only spiritually but also physically. Yet, there is a blessed coming day when those things will all be wiped away and God will wipe away our tears. What a glorious moment that will be!

Without question, the blessed promises of no more tears, death, sorrow, crying, and unhappiness (Revelation 21:4-7), are some of the most wonderful to contemplate in all of Scripture. This portion is really a benediction to the human heart, let us rejoice that we belong to Jesus Christ. One of the great problems we have is that we don't thank the Lord enough for all that we possess.

Our weakness and death come as a result of the sin into which our human race fell with Adam. Do you know, out of all the subjects in the Bible, the most difficult one to speak on is that of heaven? This isn't because such glory isn't wonderful and a place of reality. It comes from the vast difficulty in adequately describing heaven. The apostle Paul tells of his celestial experience and the only description he gives is the fact that he heard words that are unspeakable and not lawful for man to utter (II Corinthians 12:1-4). No sentence nor syllable could pronounce the words he heard.

There is another illustration of this inability to describe the majesty of the glory. Moses asked of God that he might behold His glory. As a result, God allowed His glory to pass before Moses, but no man could see His face and live. How could a mortal describe the presence of the great Jehovah? We have another statement concerning our inability to portray the other world. Paul testifies, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9). The next verse reminds us that "God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit." There is a language of the soul through the eyes of faith. We can feel and sense these things, experiencing them even though they can't be described in human language.

The apostle John speaks of the "tabernacle" (21:3) which means "dwelling place." The pavilion in the house of the Lord will be visibly with you and me in that future day. Our Savior will wipe away all tears. Can you imagine that? In days past the Lord tabernacled with me. He dwelt with our parents in the Garden of Eden. God tabernacled with the patriarchs. He spoke to Abraham as a man would talk to his friend face to face. The Lord had His tabernacle among the children of Israel. His presence was seen among them as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. In the temple Solomon built, Jehovah dwelt in the darkness of the holy of holies. Finally, in the Gospel of John, we read, "And the Word was made flesh (that is, Christ) and dwelt among us (tabernacled)." This is the same identical word as



in Revelation 21:3.

Lord "tabernacles" today in His Church, living in our hearts by His Holy Spirit. All, how can we ever describe it when God Himself shall live in our midst. Our eyes shall see Him, our ears listen to Him, and we shall behold the glory of His Majesty. This was something Moses wasn't permitted to see in his ancient day. We cannot describe those realities. The assignment is beyond the sensitivity of any teacher. It is an utter, devastating impossibility.

Revelation 21:1 John tells us that there will be "no more sea." A spiritualizing person might say that the passage refers to the tearing down of all political, national and social barriers; a prophecy of the common brotherhood of all nations of the world. A symbolizer would say that the text refers to the fact that in heaven there will be no more separation. Remember that while Revelation has certain symbolic Scriptures, it also has many literal passages which should be taken exactly as they appear. As an example, when we read of the Lamb of God, we know this is a symbol of our blessed Redeemer. "No more sea" really means two things. There is the possibility that this section has in mind the annihilation of the oceans as we know them in great bodies of water. Personally, I don't see it as the total destruction of what God has already done, but rather that there will be a rejuvenation and a cleansing of the earth when Christ comes again. There will be a redeemed earth and a redeemed heaven. This is my feeling, too, about the great sea.

It is a fact that as long as we are in this life, tears will always be in our eyes. Until we come to the gate of heaven itself, God's people will continually know how to weep. Finally, when we enter the new Jerusalem, the Lord will wipe away the tears from our eyes. Suffering is a common denominator in the experience of all believers in Jesus Christ. Our Savior Himself wept. He bowed His head in sorrow, pouring out His soul unto God. Several times Paul speaks of his tears. It is only in glory, beyond the pearly gates and the jasper walls, that our heavenly Father will wipe away all our tears. The apostle testified, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17). Paul is really telling us here that the more we suffer the more heaven is going to mean to us when we get there. Scripture affirms that heaven is a place where there will be no more tears. What would this mean to someone who has never cried? There will also be no more death. What would this tell someone who had never stood by an open grave, watching a loved one laid beneath the sod? The passage also affirms, "There shall be no more sorrow." What would that mean to someone who had never known the weight of care? This is why heaven is going to be so special. As believers we shall find heaven as God's relief from this bondage of tears and death. This is the thing toward which we believers can look forward when we shall be with the Lord Jesus Christ forevermore.

The story of mankind is really one of bereavement and sorrow. Christ wept with Mary and Martha at the tomb of their brother Lazarus. The prophet wept, "Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" (Jeremiah 9:1). Here are despair, agony, and disappointment. God purposes something better for His own people: all our tears shall be wiped away. Listen, loved one, if you are sick, troubled, disappointed and under a great load of care, never forget that the Lord loves you. More than anything else in all the world, He literally weeps on behalf of you. Who could conceive of a world where the heavenly Father doesn't love His own children?

Whenever I am back in the middle west I stop by to visit the grave of my father. He was a great man in my life, having died some 12 years ago. As I stand beside that grave I think of the years gone by as a boy in the home. How he loved and cared for me even though I didn't understand or appreciate it as a lad. Heaven is going to be

the more wonderful because I will most assuredly see him again. You can say anything about loved ones who have gone on to be with the Lord. Death is swallowed in victory in the life of the believer. The last and final enemy, death, is with the false prophet and the devil into the lake of fire forever. Sorrow follows us like a shadow; every heart knows its bitterness. Still, in a coming hour, we shall swim in a tide that shall never ebb, and eat from a tree that shall never wither. We shall drink at a river that shall never run dry. Yes, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Oh, my friend, we ought to be thankful to Him because we know Him as our personal Redeemer and Savior.

John tells us, "The former things shall pass away" (21:4). Heaven wouldn't be heaven if we kept on remembering. God graciously is going to perform a miracle in every believer's life. He will take away all the past. God will see to it that the sorrows, troubles, and even the unspeakable woes of life in the loss of a one who is not saved, all of these things will be wiped away. We ought to praise the Lord forever and forever because of what He is going to accomplish in your life here on mine.

We should ever be encouraged to know that as believers even the physical bodies of Christians are going to be replaced by a fashioned body which is the old and will be the new. Jesus Christ was recognized in a sense by His voice and by the way He broke bread. His disciples and loved ones knew who He was after His resurrection.

Referring to the change of body at the resurrection, Paul declared that this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (I Corinthians 15:53). Remember that these words never represent the soul or spirit biblically; only the body. God has so many wonderful things in store for His children that we can hardly believe it. No wonder the apostle refers to the Sabbath as the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Our Redeemer promises, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Christ consummates and climaxes everything (Revelation 21:1). Time is something that is measurable, while eternity isn't. Thank God we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in glory (Ephesians 1:4). The selection was in eternity past so that we might have fellowship with Jesus in eternity future. Throughout the everlasting eons Christians will be trophies of the grace of God (Ephesians 2:7).

Revelation 21:7 gives a promise for the faithful, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." In this first epistle John declared, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:4, 5).

After this wonderful promise there is a very sobering statement, "But for the fearful, and the unbelieving and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Notice that all liars will have their part in the lake of fire. Who was a liar? The Bible tells us, "He that denieth that Jesus is the Christ" (I John 2:22). Refusing to believe in the Lord is the same as calling God a liar (I John 5:10). Since God cannot lie, this means man himself is a liar. Those who may be the fearful people in all the world, if they don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, will have to take their place with the fearful, abominable, murderers, whoremongers and all liars in the lake of fire. I didn't say that; it is God who makes such a final positive declaration. This is why it is so necessary for you to come to know Jesus Christ. Put aside your sophistication. That is only a facade.

Present yourself in the presence of God. Confess, "Lord, I have sinned. I want to receive your forgiveness in the Name of Jesus Christ. I want to become a child of God and know what it means to have everlasting life." When you do that earnestly and sincerely, He will come into your heart and life, transforming the old into the new. All have to come the same way. It is only the road of faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 14:6).

lake of fire exists forever, and the punishment of the lost will be everlasting. Revelation 21:8 breaks my heart, bringing tears to my eyes. Without Jesus Christ there is absolutely no hope! There will be no third resurrection, no universal resurrection whereby everybody ends up in the bliss of heaven. This isn't what the Bible teaches at all. The decision made for Jesus Christ in this life determines your destiny throughout all the ages to come forever (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Unbeliever, no matter how sophisticated and fine a personality he or she may be, is going to be in an everlasting place of separation from God, according to the teaching of Scripture. This place is called in the Bible, hell. It is true that before salvation, every believer is dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). When one receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior, he is made alive (Ephesians 2:5). Thereby, those who know the Savior will dwell with Him eternally. There will be kept completely out of the new heaven, the new earth and the new Jerusalem. What a stark contrast to what awaits all Christ-rejectors.

Revelation 21:9 and 10 shows us that the new Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, and the Church are absolutely synonymous. The holy city is going to be the eternal home of the Body of Christ. It is a place prepared for us by Christ as He has promised to His believers (John 14:2). Verse 11 describes this city as having the glory of God, "Its light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Who could ever explain in human language the splendor and radiance of this city. God's glory is indescribably beautiful. The holy city doesn't generate its own light. The illumination comes from the Son of God Himself (Rev. 21:23). Christians are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). We are the light holders or light reflectors in this world (Matthew 5:16).

The subject of the new Jerusalem is tremendous. In verse 16 John describes the shape of it as lying foursquare. "The length thereof is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." This would make it 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles long, and 1500 miles high. We can imagine the difficulty the apostle had in describing this particular city. Some Bible teachers believe the city is a square globe, resting in space like one of our planets, over this earth. Others believe it is a sphere, perhaps like a pyramid with Christ as the chief cornerstone at the top where the throne of God is located. It is from here which will issue forth the river of pure water (Revelation 22:1). It was this city for which Abraham looked when he searched for a city "which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Scripture doesn't precisely say that the new Jerusalem will rest on the earth. That it has foundations seems to indicate that it might rest on this globe.

In verses 17 and 18 the walls of the city are described for us as being a hundred and forty-four cubits. The building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was made of gold, like unto pure glass. This would indicate, reduced to figures, that the walls were 216 feet thick, 216 feet high, appearing to John to be of jasper. The city was brilliantly transparent which would let the light radiate to all the earth around it, maybe to even all the universe. We see the foundation as being garnished in all manner of precious stones: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, carbuncle, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoptase, jacinth, amethyst. These twelve

precious stones allow the light of the glory of God to radiate dazzlingly through them. The interesting thing is that in the Old Testament, in the breastplate high priest, there were twelve magnificent stones, each one representing one of the twelve people of Israel. Verse 14 of Revelation 21 tells us the names of the twelve apostles being written on the twelve foundations.

Then we learn that the city had twelve gates, each being guarded by twelve angels. The names written thereon were the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (21:12, 13). The names inscribed remind believers that salvation comes through the Jew. The pearls are a probable reference to the New Testament Church (Matthew 13:45, 46). The new Jerusalem is the home of the Church. The transparency of the city permits light to radiate to the new earth. God Himself will be in the city to be the light of it. Today we pave our streets with asphalt or cement. In the new Jerusalem, roads will be paved with transparent gold. Our finite minds can't comprehend what that will be true of the new Jerusalem because of the glory of God being in it.

Not only will there be a new heaven and a new earth in the future, but also there will be a holy city, the New Jerusalem. The city itself isn't in heaven but rather comes down from God out of heaven. It will be the dwelling place for all eternity of the saints of God. The patriarchs of old looked for this city God has prepared (Hebrews 11:13-16). Our Savior also avowed that it would be ours (John 14:1-3). I beseech you now to make certain of your citizenship through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians of all ages will be in this celestial city. Not only those who are listed: an innumerable company of angels, the Church of Jesus Christ, God Himself, spirits of just men made perfect (which would refer to the Old Testament saints), and the Savior Himself.

After John saw the holy city come down from God out of heaven, he heard a great voice saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them, and He shall be their God." Before the fall, God walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He appeared to the leaders of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. He dwelt in the innermost part of the tabernacle and temple in the holy of holies. He was in Jesus Christ when the Savior was in the flesh on this earth. Still, He dwells in the Church by His Holy Spirit. His actual dwelling with His people on this earth awaits the day when we will be in that eternal condition, together in the celestial city, the new Jerusalem. What the delight of God will be in this new dwelling with men, and what their capacity for knowing God and progressing in that blessed and holy knowledge, can be measured only in the eternal ages to come.

The description of the holy city is given to us in Revelation 21:10 to 22:6. The measurements indicate that the base of it would stretch from the farthest part of Maine to the farthest part of Florida, from the Atlantic Ocean to the state of Colorado. Someone has calculated that if 15 feet were allowed to each floor, there would be 528,000 stories to this city. Everyone of these stories would contain 2,250,000 square miles, and all the stories combined would total 1,188,000,000 square miles. This simply boggles the human imagination. It is utterly impossible to conceive of the immensity of the city. I am not saying that the city is going to be divided into stories at all. These are just ideas to give us some approximate idea. John tells us that each of the walls of the city measures 12,000 furlongs. That is an area of 2,250,000 square miles.

In the description of the eternal city of God's people, there are a number of things which will not be there. The book of Revelation is the book of "no mores." In the 21st chapter there are 10 "no mores." This includes sea, death, sorrow, crying, pain, temple, sun, moon, night, and sin. In the next chapter we learn that there will be no more curse. For those of us who are saved, it is marvelous beyond comprehension to contemplate.

# PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Panel: Dr. Chase, Dr. Feinberg and Dr. Sutherland

"What does the Bible say about the subject of cremation? Also, what about ts?"

There is no verse in either the Old or New Testaments which specifically demands that one must not cremate a body. The only thing which can be suggested is way of inference. In keeping with the Bible's doctrine of the human body, we that the normal method of handling the physical frame at death is burial. Even in there was judgment on Ananias and Sapphira, they were still buried. Scripture as teach the dignity and worth of the human body, even of the unsaved, and especially of the born-again believer. This body which is put into the grave will one be raised incorruptible.

cryptic thing means that which is hidden. This usually suggests a body placed in mausoleum. Some seem to find a sense of satisfaction in this. It doesn't appear be contrary to the Word of God.

"Will you please explain Genesis 3:15?"

The verse reads, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." We can't believe for a moment that this is spoken of merely to a snake. It actually refers to Satan himself. The devil had entered into the serpent causing Eve and then Adam to be tempted and to fall. This word "enmity" comes from our word "enemy." Our Lord is saying to Satan that He would come in the fullness of time as his enemy and final conqueror. The devil did bruise the heel of the Lord because it was wicked men who crucified the Savior, even though that very crucifixion was used as the means of salvation to all who put their trust in Christ. There was a temporary intensely painful operation which took place as Satan bruised the Lord's heel. This wasn't unto eternal death because here the Savior declared the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. That time is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ will pronounce final judgment upon Satan. He will be cast into the lake of fire forever. As life is in the head, so will the Lord snuff out the life of Satan, as far as his influence upon mankind is concerned.

Q. "Please discuss the topic of birth control. Are there any passages in Scripture which would tell us God's will on this subject?"

A. First of all, the words "birth control" are inaccurate. It would be more proper to refer to "conception control" or "family planning." Read the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament and discover the things relative to sanitary living together. Those are marvelous principles which have made the people of Israel one of the most exemplary in the matter of home and familial purity among all the nations of the

earth. The Israelites were to follow the directions of a certain planning of family. There are large segments of Christendom which hold that this is the way to plan a family. This is not wrong at all. First and foremost there must be taken into consideration the health of the wife. There shouldn't be endangering to the marriage bond by continually having children. Of course, planning a family doesn't mean planning it to zero! God intended marriage for reproduction, for the continuation of the race. I Timothy 5:8 is also very clear, "If any provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, it is worse than an infidel." Because even unbelievers take care of their progeny, Christians should set the example.

Q. "Do you feel it's right for a Christian to say, 'May God strike me dead if I am not telling the truth'?"

A. We hear things like this now and again. A Christian doesn't need to make a declaration. He should be as good as his word. If such a person were living on the day of Ananias and Sapphira, he might face some real problems.

Q. "A preacher told me that Christ was never Lord until after His resurrection. He said Acts 2:36 teaches this. Is this true?"

A. This is a new slant and sounds a great deal like "adoption theology." The people claim that Jesus never became Christ or Lord until His baptism. This is exactly opposite to biblical theology. The Second Person of the Trinity was one hundred percent deity. Acts 2:36 is near the end of Peter's address. He has called the people to repent, preaching an incomparable message on the day of Pentecost, using the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. The apostle testifies, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The meaning is that by His resurrection and the completion of His work, it was proved beyond a shadow of doubt that He was Lord and Christ.

Q. "Will you explain the 'gap theory'?"

This is based on the second verse of Genesis one which states, "the earth was out form and void." It is felt that God created a perfect earth in the beginning. Then there was chaos and a return to a new creation. So, the original creation was perfect. This was before sin ever came upon the earth. Then some catastrophe took place. Some believe it was at the time Satan rebelled in heaven. He was the best of all created beings. Because of pride he avowed foolishly, "I will be like the most high, I will ascend upon the throne." As far as we know, this was the only rebellion ever occurring in heaven. It was instantaneously taken care of. Satan was cast out. It may have been at the time he came to this earth that there was great chaos and confusion. After this the Lord began the process of recreation. Of course, the important thing to remember is that in the beginning it was God who did the creating. It was certainly not through any evolutionary process.

Q. "In the Old Testament people lived to be several hundred years old. Were they the same length as ours today of 365 years?"

A. Yes, we believe they were exactly the same. Remember that most of these who lived a longer time were here on earth shortly after the fall of man. Sin had not yet taken its devastating effect upon the human race. Some hold to the "canopy theory" which says that over this earth, prior to the flood of Noah's day, there was a great covering of vapor or even ice which was totally around the earth. The Bible tells us that before the flood it hadn't rained upon the earth, but that there

ist that went up and watered all of the land. Apparently the sun's rays hadn't been able to penetrate the covering until after that canopy of protection had been removed. Life then began to deteriorate far more rapidly because these rays produced decay. Before the flood, Noah had a vineyard which provided unfermented wine over a long period of time. After the deluge, wine was produced from the grape which caused him to become drunk. Some of the archeological and geological discoveries of scientists would give indications that this canopy theory may well be factual. There must have been something of a tremendously catastrophic nature which took place, changing this "hothouse" condition upon the earth approximately the time of the flood. Afterward, people lived for much shorter periods. Remember that once again, during the Millennium, life will again be elongated. The primary cause for death during those ideal 1000 years will be sin which will be judged immediately, issuing in death.

"I heard a preacher say that nowhere in the Bible does it tell us that the 1000 year reign of Christ will be on this earth. He says it will be the 'kingdom of heaven.' Could you please clarify this for me?"

The term "kingdom of heaven" may be misunderstood. We find this more in Matthew than anywhere else in the New Testament. It refers to the mediatorial kingdom of Christ (Matthew 3:2). It is simply the period when the kingdom of heaven rules on earth (Matthew 4:17). Scripture tells us as believers that if we suffer with Christ here on earth, we shall reign with Him in the glory (Rom. 8:17). The apostle John reveals in his prophecy, "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast" (Revelation 20:4). This is all in an earthly context. "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." A period of 365 days, known as a year, isn't the way time is measured in heaven where an eternal span is in view. After the Millennium Satan will be loosed out of his prison for a season. Where will he go if this kingdom is in heaven? Does he go back up to heaven and begin to accuse again? No, he will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. This predicted kingdom of David is actually called the rule of the heavens on earth." It was told to the virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel, "He (Christ) shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of His father David." This throne was never in heaven, it was in Jerusalem. The heavenly people in the Bible are those of the Church, the Bride of Christ. The earthly people are Israel. This doesn't mean that there won't be the possibility of going from one place to another. Even in our human circumscribed bodies today we can go from one part of the world to another, but nevertheless we are residentially here on earth. Amos 9:11 specifically shows where the kingdom is to be. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David and close up the breaches of it, and I will raise up its ruins and I will build it as in the days of old." Yes, we will reign on earth as the Queen of the King. Israel will be the vice-regents on earth under the King and His Bride.

"Of whom is Paul speaking in Philippians 1:14-18?"

This passage tells us of Paul's testimony concerning those two types of individuals who captured his condition in bondage and used the experience with various motives. There were his friends who preached with new zeal, vigor and determination. There were others, not supportive of the apostle, who spoke against him and yet, whatever the case, they all had to refer to the Gospel. In his way he says, "Whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in that I do rejoice, ye also will rejoice." The fact is, we don't know to whom Paul was referring here by

name. There were doubtless those in the church who differed with him in various degrees. Maybe they were jealous and envious, or belonged to some faction which did not adhere to the entire revealed truth. Paul wasn't concerned about his own feelings. His only desire was that others might know the saving power of Jesus Christ. Incidentally, we should certainly have the same attitude Paul expressed in our generation!

Q. "Our pastor believes that God puts sickness on His children. He says if we were responsible then God would heal us. What do you say to this?"

A. Many people have a problem in understanding the origination of illness. In the Scripture we know that "all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28). This doesn't mean any one single thing by itself but rather that all things are designed for our good and the Lord's glory, if we truly love Him. Our heavenly Father is in sovereign control. Nothing is excluded in our experience. His ultimate aim in all ruling is that we might be conformed to the image of His only Son. Since God knows and rules in all things, He can bring illness into the lives of His children if they are disobedient. We have accurate Scriptural evidence for this. Some weren't careful to judge themselves. Their relationship and fellowship with the Lord wasn't what it should be. Paul said, "Some among you are weak and sickly, and some sleep." That means, in the latter case, that they had been taken on to glory. Ananias and Sapphira sinned unto death. The Lord does bring sickness for chastening, purifying and judgmental purposes. A sin unto death means unrepenting, unrelenting, purposeful opposition to the will of God. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira which was not a normal situation, the Lord allowed Satan to have His servant taken to the point of death. In the final analysis, the devil couldn't have done anything without God's approval. We can be thankful that our wonderful Savior does temperate things. Our heavenly Father does all things out of a loving heart. If there is a sheep which keeps going astray, for the benefit of that animal itself, the loving shepherd will sometimes take it into his arms and break one of the legs so that this sheep will not dash itself over the precipice to its own destruction. The book of Hebrews reminds us, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

Q. "Hebrews 13:17 states, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.' Is this referring to the local pastor?"

A. We do believe that this passage refers to the minister of the flock. We are to submit ourselves to the authority of the man whom God has placed in that area of responsibility. He is to watch over the souls of his flock and will have to give an account of his stewardship. We should be able to turn to our pastor in times of trouble for counsel and help. Have you ever wondered to whom the minister can turn when he has problems? He can't ask one of the members of his flock. Some might become jealous, saying that he shows favoritism taking certain ones into confidence. Therefore, God's servant has a very peculiar relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. That alone is the way whereby He can get his strength for the labors. We should be faithful in praying for those who have the oversight on our behalf.

Q. "If a Christian has wronged another believer and refuses to make the thing right, what happens to this injustice? Does the blood of Christ automatically eradicate it, or is there perhaps a reconciliation that has to be made at the judgment seat of Christ?"

A. First of all, no child of God should seek civil rectification, using a lawyer



can be a very poor testimony given to the world if there are factions in the church. What one should do is to practice I John 1:9, confessing the sin to the brother, then making it right with his brother. If this doesn't happen we have the principle of church discipline in Matthew 18:15-18. Tell the person about his sin privately. This in itself should solve about 75 percent of our difficulties. Be sure your own heart is clear, as well as the heart of the one who wronged you. There can be no blockage or obstacle to your fellowship. If you go to the individual and he won't hear you, then take one or two more and go again. This isn't to publicize the problem but to put it in the proper framework of authority which God has constituted. Maybe other witnesses can attack the problem in an altogether more passionate manner. If the person neglects to hear them, tell it to the church. If he neglects to hear the church, then let him be to you as a heathen man, a Gentile or tax collector. If he won't listen to the church, then he is in trouble. The longer he waits, the more he shows the gravity, stubbornness and adamant character of his will against the Word of God.

As far as the blood of Christ automatically eradicating sin, it most certainly does so conditionally for the believer. That occurs the moment we believe in the Savior. If you want to know the blessing of communion, however, you must adhere to I John 1:9. All sin has not only a penalty, but also a pollution. We need forgiveness for both. Everything is going to be set right at the judgment seat of Christ. But why wait that long and miss the blessing of wonderful uninterrupted fellowship, serving the Lord. You can have rewards to cast at His feet!