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"FREE FOR THE TAKING"

(The Life - Giving Power of Grace)

By: Dr. Joseph R. Cooke

In sharing this personal testimony, I do so with an earnest prayer that God may use what I say to spare some of you from suffering the kind of experiences I went through. I was born in Southwest China of missionary parents. All through the years of my childhood I was exposed thoroughly to Biblical principles and teaching. I spent most of the time between ages 6 and 17 attending a boarding school for missionary children in northeast China. During that time I saw very little of my parents. Yet, I am grateful for the blessings of living in a real Christian environment. All through those years I can't remember ever hearing young people take God's Name in vain. It was a very protected environment, although there was the usual amount of "old nick" we got into. We received some solid instruction in the Scriptures and early I came to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, giving my life to Him for any service He might choose.

Just after the end of my time in boarding school I also experienced living in a Japanese internment camp for several months. In fact, I came to the United States during the war as part of a prisoner exchange program. Can you imagine what it was like being plunged into such a new life? It was very difficult for me to know how to cope with this strange new wicked world. All about me was profanity, lust, and lack of restraint. It was frightening, to say the least.

You can imagine my joy when sometime thereafter I once again found myself in a Christian environment. I had enrolled in Biola. This was in the days when the school was located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. How I enjoyed the excellent Bible teaching and new experiences with God. These all had a very profound effect upon my whole life as I committed myself to God for His service.

After being graduated from Biola, my wife and I were soon on our way to the mission field. We had been accepted for service under the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and were assigned to Thailand. Leaving the United States and setting our faces toward the Orient gave us some of the greatest days I had ever experienced. Both Laura and I had a deep sense of God's unmistakable leading. Although I realized there would be great battles ahead of us, I still felt I had reached the summit of my ambitions for Christ. All my life I had wanted to be a missionary. Here it was: service for the Lord in a full-time ministry. What more could I ask?

Then, something inexplicable happened. I can assure you, it was the last thing I ever expected could occur. After three years on the field in Thailand, years that had seemed to be promising, with real hope for spiritual success, I suffered a complete emotional breakdown. The whole house of cards I had built all the way through my Christian life just came tumbling down. All my plans and hopes were in ruins. I had to sneak home to the United States with my tail between my legs. Even after I got here, things seemed to get progressively worse. I found I couldn't preach, I couldn't teach, I couldn't serve the Lord. I even got to the place where I couldn't pray or read the Bible. Responsibility of any type couldn't be taken without coming apart at the seams. I told myself that I was of no use to anybody in the world. Certainly I

wasn't any help to my wife. Rather, I was a burden on her. And I was no good to God. I hated myself. I don't say this lightly, but I felt I was in hell. It's hard to imagine hell being any worse than what I went through, although I'm sure it is. If hell is worse, then thank God it's a comfort to know I'm never going there!

It was certainly obvious that things were very wrong. No one could be experiencing such doubts and upheavals without drastic difficulties in their emotions. I had to find a new and less self-destructive way of existence. In other words, I had to learn to live all over again. In fact, as I started out from the very bottom, I reverted in some ways to a second childhood. I retreated completely from all responsibilities (I'd even spend hours reading fairy tales). I had to work through the hangups acquired over many years.

It was during those dark days mentally that I came to really discover the meaning of the grace of God. Now, don't misunderstand me. I was certainly a born-again Christian. I'd been saved by grace and fully realized that I couldn't earn my salvation. Yes, I believed in the grace of God and even taught it--rather well, I thought--at times. Once I even memorized the entire book of Galatians. To be sure, I loved the doctrine of the grace of God. Yet, somehow on a deeper level, I hadn't really appropriated it for my daily life. I hadn't been living with this gracious God who loved me unconditionally. I hadn't seen that He accepts me always and forever, just as I am. For some reason I felt I always had to earn His kindness and love. Living with God day-by-day seemed impossible to please Him. I just couldn't be good enough to earn His smile. I read the passage in Scripture where Jesus tells His disciples, "If you love Me, keep my commandments." I tried so hard to prove my love for Him by doing just that. But I always failed. In my thinking I still reacted as though Scripture said, "Earn My love, by keeping My commandments."

I had "a beginning and an end point" of grace. There was grace at the beginning of my Christian life and certainly grace at the end. But, somehow there was non-grace inbetween. I knew I didn't have to fear the final judgment or hell. When the time came for the books to be opened, I knew my name would be inscribed in heaven. Still, in the midst of my Christian life I was experiencing one long deadly "rat race" of trying to be perfect. I was trying to be the perfect missionary; trying to be the ideal Christian so that I could accept myself and avert God's frown. I was desperate in yielding myself completely to Christ. I honestly didn't want any of myself to stand in the way of the Holy Spirit working through me. No matter how much I tried to yield, no matter how hard I tried to keep His commandments, I never succeeded.

The tragedy of it all was that I was making such an ogre out of God. My Lord had become almost like a traffic cop. You know, they sit there waiting by the highway, and then, when they see somebody make a mistake they just "zoom" out, "nail" you for the offense, and then throw the book at you. My God, it seemed, was somebody who always nagged. All day long it was nag, nag, nag. It was as though He was saying, "Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you do that? Why aren't you a better Christian? Why don't you pray more? Why don't you read your Bible regularly? Why aren't you a more effective witness?" By this it appeared I looked on the Holy Spirit's main job as being one to make me feel uncomfortable every time I demonstrated that I wasn't perfect. Looking back on it now, I guess I regarded the Holy Spirit as "the accuser of the brethren," the criticizer and condemner. I know my Bible tells me that this is actually Satan's job, and here I had in essence given it to the Holy Spirit, the One who came to reveal the love of Christ so that my life might be transformed.

I saw God as using His love as a weapon against me. It was as if He'd said to me, "Look what I've done for you! Don't you remember Calvary? Why aren't you a better Christian?" Then out would come the whip. So grace, instead of being something that

changed my heart and motivation, was a tool the Lord used to force me to do all kinds of things that seemed unpleasant.

To make a long story short, I began to see that I had been living with what I had made as an ungracious God. Then, as never before, I truly saw what the grace of God fully means. I discovered that He really does accept me, even as a Christian, just as I am. I don't have to earn His love. And there is something else I learned too. I had so many "non-grace" habits. There were numerous ways of doing, thinking and feeling that had to be changed. There were habits of self-hatred and self-condemnation which had to be overhauled. I began, by the goodness of the Lord, to work through some of these things little by little. It was all over a period of a long time, step by step. Sometimes I would leap forward and sometimes I would barely crawl, hanging on and feeling I was hardly getting anywhere.

Over the years God slowly led me into a completely new way of life. I had a new revelation of both Himself as well as myself. I had a new way of seeing other people and new reasons for doing things. There was a completely new understanding of all His ways. Many of the Scriptures I had always known and loved sprang to life in an exciting way, becoming completely transformed for me. Best of all, now He has given me a chance to serve Him in a new way, with an opportunity of sharing His message of grace with others. That's exactly what I'm endeavoring to do these days. I'm so thankful for opportunities to share in preaching, teaching, and even in radio ministry. This is such wonderful news that God is gracious, not only to the unbeliever, but to the Christian, His own child.

Recently the Lord gave me the opportunity to put my discoveries and insights into book form. The publication is entitled, Free for the Taking.^{*} Now it's my prayer that the Lord will keep on using me to help point others away from "squirrel cage Christianity" and toward the glorious liberty of God's sons and daughters. We have to remember that grace isn't just a conversion mechanism. It's not something designed exclusively for getting people into God's family, although, thank the Lord, it most certainly does do that. It's not just a "fire insurance policy" of saving people from hell, glorious though it is that God does so redeem sinners.

Grace is a fact of God's very nature, showing Him for what He is like. When this fact about our heavenly Father sinks way down deep into the bottom of our hearts, I can guarantee you that our lives are going to be changed. When we perceive God and what He really is, that glorious fact keeps on changing us day after day after day. After all, that's what the Holy Spirit's ministry is. He shows us the grace of God so that we can be transformed by it. As Peter reminds us, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." May this be your continuing experience and mine as we keep feeding on His matchless grace.

^{*}Fleming H. Revell (\$5.95)

Dr. Joseph R. Cooke
Biola graduate, 1949

"WHAT IS DEMON POSSESSION?"

By: Dr. Henry W. Holloman

There is a dangerous fascination taking place with demon possession by secular collegians today. Such may generally be defined as the case where a demon, or demons, reside in a person, exercising influence and control over the physical body, the mind, or the emotions, or all of these together. We do not believe that it is possible for a demon to control the personality of a Christian. The Bible reminds us of the greater power of God's Holy Spirit who indwells us (I John 4:4). A very carnal or weak believer may be influenced by Satan so that he could conceivably give appearance of demon possession.

There are those who misunderstand the scope of demons. We know that they can cause emotional, mental and certain physical illnesses. Never in the New Testament, however, do we have such things as a demon of cancer or of some other type of disease. Certainly Satan may tempt a person to lose his temper and fly off in anger but demons aren't apparently given power to bring disease. We should not push the influence of demonology beyond what the Scripture gives us warrant to say. One extreme would hold that all types of illness are caused by demons. The other extreme, and it, too, is unbiblical, holds that no diseases, emotional, mental, or physical, are caused by demons. Neither of these viewpoints will stand up against the actual teaching of Scripture. On several occasions where the Lord was healing, the account divides His healing from a purely physical, mental and emotional standpoint, from those in which He actually cast out demons. We should make this distinction ourselves. So while we affirm the influence and work of demons, at the same time we do not believe that every single case is due to demons. Ultimately the Christian in his ministry to others is always to be in subjection to the will of God. In some cases it is God's will that Christians be relieved from certain illnesses. On the other hand, the reverse may be true. The apostle Paul knew that it was God's will for him to keep the thorn in the flesh which had been put there by Satan, as the Bible clearly teaches.

Should a Christian encounter one whom he believes to be demon possessed he is faced with a very serious situation. The first point would be to make certain that you, yourself, are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is wise that another spiritually mature believer or others who are stable in the faith, be brought into the picture as well, at least to assist in the evaluation. Our Lord commended prayer in such circumstances. He strongly indicated, "These can only go out by prayer." It would be very dangerous to try to deal hastily with such a serious case. Then, always seek the mind of the Lord for the actual situation. Ask Him for His strength, wisdom and guidance for your specific needs. Whatever is achieved can only be done in the Name and power of Jesus Christ. These are the only safe principles drawn from the New Testament.

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PSALM 139

By: Dr. Al Sanders

In the 139th Psalm, perhaps better than any other passage of Scripture, we discover the magnitude of God in four specific, non-duplicated areas of His character. Nowhere is His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and what we might term His "omni-righteousness," more strikingly set forth. At the same time, nowhere do we find a more emphatic assertion of man's personality as distinct from that of Deity. From a basic standpoint it answers the ponderous question of those who are seeking an answer for their identity crisis as to the personal interrogation, "Who am I?" One can't read these 24 verses without coming to a stark realization of the presence, power, and personality of our blessed God!

First of all, before we look at the actual verses, note for a moment the inscription which declares that it is addressed to the Chief Musician. Psalms for the Choir Director have particular significance. The reason it is so addressed, I believe, is because it is worthy of the most excellent of soloists. Furthermore, it is designated to be heard in public worship.

Of these 24 verses we actually have four different and distinct stanzas, each of six verses. As it is set up in this way, we discover each stanza in progression deals with God's omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and adding a fourth, sometimes overlooked, His omni-righteousness. Have you ever been in a meeting where you felt the presence of God so close to you that you could almost reach out and touch Him? Well, in a way, that is exactly how I feel about this Psalm.

We are immediately impressed with a number of pronouns used. It makes the reading so personal. It is not a cold and abstract thing whatsoever. While God is specifically named six times He is referred to pronominally 30 times with words like "Thou," "Thine," "Thy," and "Thee." On the other side of the ledger, the Psalmist speaks of himself 50 times, 16 times using the word "me" and 15 times using the word "my." So, it is an intensely personal document dealing with the revelation of God in our lives day by day.

David opens his heart by saying, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me." Although he is talking about Jehovah, Who knows all things, it is not so much that God is omniscient as it is that the all-knowing One is intimately acquainted with me!

In the original Hebrew the word "search" has several backgrounds. It means such things as soldiers looking for contraband or pillagers ransacking a house for plunder. Of course, in those two cases the investigators involved have no knowledge of where the item is for which they are seeking. Not so with God. The Lord knows all things naturally, completely and without any effort. He doesn't need a search warrant to come into your lives desperately hunting for the unknown. What do you look for in life? God digs in you to find out what needs you have. Of course, one of the common terms in our modern-day society is the fact that when we understand someone, when we are on their same wave length, we say, "I dig you!" That is exactly what David is testifying here, "O Lord, you dig me! You understand me. You know me completely." This searching, from a human standpoint, always implies a lack of knowledge, but not so with the Lord.

Note how personal this verse is. It is not, "O Lord, you know all things." That, of course, is true. But the exclamation comes in understanding the fact, "O Lord, you know me!" "Know" in the Hebrew means to be able to discern everything perfectly

and correctly all at one time. Do you realize how terrible it would be if in our human minds we knew everything perfectly all at one time? For example, just consider in one area. If you knew what tomorrow held, the problems with which you might be confronted at your office or in your home, the illness that could easily be a term situation with you, the involvements of your young people in sin and immorality, if you knew all of these things why it would only breed confusion and despair. This is why our God alone is omniscient, because He knows everything perfectly and at once. One of the kindest things He has done for us is to put a veil over tomorrow's unknowns.

There is one other thing which I think is fascinating about this first verse. Note that the word "me" is in italics; it has been supplied by the translators. If you dropped that off you would perhaps get a better view of what David is trying to say, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known . . ." Everything is there, completely revealed! The Lord knows exactly what we are, even though we are so slow to know ourselves. It is like seeing your own photograph. Frequently we will observe or comment, as most people usually do, "Is that really me?" Of course it is but we don't take the time to truly know ourselves, much less the needs we each experience.

God is searching out our lives right now. He knows both the good and the bad. I heard a woman comment just recently, and I'm sure you have heard something similar. She complained, "My husband and I went together for three years before our wedding. But I never really knew him until we were married and I asked him for money!" The implication is that before marriage things were on a different basis, but after that new relationship, somehow all the glaring faults came out. Aren't you glad the Lord Jesus loved us, even knowing all our faults? How wonderful that even while we were yet sinners, enemies of His love, He gave His life for us. Listen, God knows you better than you know yourself, and the amazing thing is that He loves you just the same. And I say that for myself as well.

Verse two brings the suggestion into even sharper focus. David observes, "Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thoughts afar off." The Psalmist is as certain of God's existence as he is of his own. Here are two of an individual's most common acts: sitting down and getting up. How many times a day do we do these things? It isn't just the physical aspect of sitting down and getting up but I believe that it includes when you sink down in discouragement and disappointment or when you rise in pride and conceit. In these aspects of "down sitting and uprising," God knows all about our needs.

I used to enjoy looking at a cut-away beehive down at Knott's Berry Farm, not too far from our Biola campus. I don't know if they still have it. It was right at the entrance to the berry market and one could see these energetic bees as they moved in and out of the hive, filling up with honey and then wax all the various cavities that were there. There is a beautiful analogy to this I think when we realize that to others about us we are as opaque beehives. No one can possibly see what is being done on the inside. They can see everything, even the thoughts which go in as well as that which comes out in word and deed, but just what takes place on the inside no one knows except God. And to the Lord we are like that cut-away beehive at Knott's Berry Farm. He can see everything that is happening on the inside. He knows exactly what is taking place.

He understands our thoughts afar off. Now, where is God? Well, we realize that He is omnipresent, that is, everywhere present at the same time. But where His dwelling place is in heaven no one can be sure. We understand that light travels at a tremendous rate of speed, but supposing the Lord is 20 billion light years away. You see, the real question isn't the possible distance of God, for that makes absolutely no difference. The fact that He knows our ideas long before we even comprehend them is what's in view. It is an amazing thing to realize.

Verse 3 continues, "Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." I enjoy using the New American Standard Bible; it's an excellent translation and we would commend it to you. By using it there is some help in two areas of this verse. The first is "compassest," which really means to scrutinize and carefully investigate. The second thing is a modification of the word "acquainted." In the original, as it is reflected in the NASB, it is not just a passing friendship, but really "Thou art intimately acquainted with all my ways." Here again it is a similar thing to the previous passage. My activities, my paths, my rest, my lying down--we are totally surrounded by our God. David says, "I may leave your path, O God, but you never leave mine. I may sleep, but you never do. You know every single habit, good and bad of my life."

Then, there is a further bit that reveals the all-knowing omniscience of the Lord to us. I am sure all of us were amazed a few months ago when we read of the impending divorce of the well-known newspaper columnist, Ann Landers. I know absolutely nothing about the situation and I don't single her out because of what took place in her life after more than three and a half decades of marriage. The thing that did impress me was in the evaluation she gave of the situation. These were her words as she was open enough to declare, "The lady with all of the answers doesn't know the answer to this one!" But, my friend, you can be assured of one solid fact, and that is, God does.

Verse 4 explains, "For there is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." It is like a seed in the soil. The results are eventually known. The negative statement here makes the situation even more emphatic. Every word is well known before it is even spoken. Silence can't conceal our thoughts. God knows each of them. Some experience you may have, just because you bite your tongue, doesn't mean God isn't aware of the evil thoughts in your heart. It is true we can often repent of speaking, but seldom do we have to repent of silence. But this is a picture of our relationship to God, not just to men. My mother used to have a little phrase, "Be silent and be thought a fool; speak and remove all doubt." That is so true from our standpoint with others. I agree with the Psalmist when he prayed, "O Lord, set a watch before the doors of my mouth." But, you see, here in the 139th Psalm it is not the mouth but rather the tongue. Notice how far back David goes. Before the word is spoken or articulated, yes, even before it is formed, the Lord knows all about it. The philosopher Plutarch of old wrote these perceptive words, "Man may see thee do an impious deed, but God the very inmost thought can read."

In verse 5 we get an even better picture of the Lord's protecting hand upon us. "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." The New American Standard Bible provides the word "enclosed" as perhaps a little better understanding for "beset." It is as though God is behind us recording all our sins or else blotting them out in His grace. But He is also before us, foreknowing the deeds and providing for our needs.

We can actually say our loving heavenly Father has enfolded His arms around us in His matchless grace. This is in keeping with other Psalms we have read, too. For instance, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him. . . and delivereth them." And again, "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Nothing can escape God's all-knowing eye.

The words "thine hand" in the authorized version, are better translated, "the palm of thine hand." When I was a boy I had pneumonia one time. I think I must have been about 10 years of age and I was sick with a high fever. Oh, how good it felt to have my mother rub my forehead with the palm of her hand. It brought relief to the hot, damp brow. And this, here in verse 5, is even better than that. Certainly it far transcends the so-called "body language" of our day. Generally that is taken up with individuals who are trying to get something for themselves so that they might gain

either financially or perhaps sexually. God places the protecting palm of His hand upon us for the comfort and strength we so desperately need.

We go to Dallas quite frequently with our production ministry for the television programs. Whenever we have guests there they usually like to go downtown and see the place where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. We will drive down a little gravel road by the freeway and point out the Texas Book Depository building from which structure, on the sixth floor, sources indicate the President was fatally shot. It happened just as he went down toward the underpass. There was a motorcade in front of him and one behind him; guards were watching everywhere. Unfortunately, however, there was no protection from above. But you can be sure that there is from God! He boxes us in, not just behind and before, but then He puts the very palm of His hand of love upon us; the softest part. That isn't just for physical protection but also, and more importantly, for spiritual sustenance as well.

It causes me to break out singing that old song of Scottish background we used to love so well, "Cheer up, ye saints of God, there's nothing to worry about; nothing to make you feel afraid; nothing to make you doubt. Remember, Jesus never fails, so why not trust Him and shout? You'll be sorry you worried at all tomorrow morning!"

There are many things that quite frankly completely "boggle" my mind. For instance, the landing of a 747. A pilot told me not too long ago the reason they come down so gently is because the entire controls are taken over by computer. It feels like a feather when they touch the runway. That absolutely amazes me. In our television work I am completely astounded at the editing equipment which has been devised for putting programs together on video tape. Here again, computers are utilized. An operator sitting at a special keyboard can control numerous machines, putting everything in its proper perspective and order, with the exact production codes coming out as though hours or days had been spent on the project. Truly, it "boggles" my mind.

This is so true when you think of almost any other field of endeavor. For instance, in the area of medical science, consider some of the operations which are at the same time intricate and delicate, while being yet life-saving. I read recently where surgeons are now working on operations of the heart, going in through the toes. They have a device which can accomplish the desired goal entirely in another part of the anatomy. It indeed "boggles" my mind. But all of these things and perhaps many others which would come to your mind at this time are really nothing compared to the realization of God's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

David testifies, "Such knowledge," that is, the knowledge of God's protection at every side," is too wonderful for me. It is high; I cannot attain unto it." There is an old proverb which states, "A wonder grows grayheaded in seven days." That simply suggests that once you know the mechanics and the operations involved in a certain function it's no longer as "mind-boggling" as it perhaps was to you when you originally looked at it. The landing of a 747 seems routine to the pilots. The editing equipment for video tape productions is second nature to the operators. The surgeons are constantly finding new and better ways of taking care of man's ailments. But the knowledge of God's marvelous protecting love and concern is too wonderful ever to lose its marvel, even the longest day of our lives. We may not have great educations, or on the other hand we may have forgotten all we know, still, the most important thing anyone can learn, despite an educational background or perhaps a lack of it, is to consider the knowledge, the omniscience of God.

When we look at perfection what happens is that it shows up all our own imperfections. In this way we realize the urgent need of leaning more heavily upon the Lord. We have, after all, a very stunted amount of knowledge. Being associated with Biola

College now for about 25 years, I certainly believe in education. But there's something special I appreciate most about the school. It is the fact that Biola's premise and understanding is that the foundation, the starting point, the fountain-head for each student's life is a knowledge of God. Our dedicated faculty can then show our students how such knowledge is "too wonderful for me." David frankly testified, "It is high; I cannot attain unto it."

If memory serves me correctly, it was Mark Twain who observed that every man is really a fool when you get him off the subject on which he was educated. Now, that could never be said of our Lord, for there is nothing, absolutely nothing, unknown to Him. Here's a lesson we need to learn today, and all our days. It's very true when we realize it's what we learn, after we think we know it all, that really counts, and this is what makes the difference in our outlook on life.

It is interesting to discover the word "know" is found more than 200 times in the Bible. On the other hand, "guess" doesn't even appear once. We are reminded of the apostle John's words in his first epistle, "These things have I written unto you that believe, that you may know that you have eternal life." This knowledge is what each one of us needs. You may not have that perfect wisdom of God which sees beyond all the microscopic details of today, but you can know Him and have the assurance of life eternal.

The Psalmist concludes verse 6 of this 139th chapter by realizing, "I cannot attain unto it." I like that, and aren't you glad we have a perfect Savior? Every one of us no matter how good we may be or think we may be, has missed the mark and come short of the glory of God. The Lord has given us His perfect truth to encourage and sustain us in our daily pathway.

Now we find the first major change in this chapter because this is a four-stanza hymn of praise to the Lord, with six verses to each stanza. The first six dealt with the omniscience, or all-knowing eye of the Lord. The next six verses interestingly have to do with the universal presence of God--that is, the Lord is everywhere present at the same time. From a theological standpoint the term to express this characteristic is His omnipresence. The question certainly strikes at the very heart of man's identity crisis.

David says, "Where shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" Just reading it flat out like that we are immediately faced with the question, "Why would he want to?" This again perfectly portrays man's imperfections for we all miss the mark! It shows how individuals are in their natural unredeemed state, seeking to get away from the Lord. Thy hymn writer expresses it, "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love."

The Psalmist pondered, "Where shall I go to get away from Thy Spirit?" Man has constantly tried to avoid that most important of all encounters, only to discover in that avoidance absolute misery of soul and defeat of purpose. Let's remember those truths contained in the Word which tell us, "All things are open and naked to Him with whom we have to do."

I'm afraid too often, not just to people of the world, but also some Christians have the mistaken idea that God only dwells in heaven. That's not true at all. He is here in this radio studio today. He is there in your automobile. He is with you at home, or in that sick room. He is there, wherever you may be.

There is an old story that has oft been repeated, but it bears on this subject. An atheist asked a Christian, "Where is God?" The believer responded simply, "You first tell me where He's not." It's like the astronauts several years ago who were

told by the Russian cosmonauts while out in space that they didn't see God anywhere. One of our men, apparently with a good deal of understanding concerning Scripture, observed, "All you'd have to do is just take one step out of your space craft, without any life support equipment, and you'd meet God." And he was right!

David is praying, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?" The relationship the king had with the third Person of the Trinity in those days was far different from what we can experience today. At that time the Spirit would come and leave a man, depending upon the circumstances or the sin that might be involved. We have a classic case of that in the life of Saul. The Spirit absolutely left him. Today, when a believer receives Jesus Christ as Savior, he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and He absolutely never leaves him. Make no mistake, the Spirit can be quenched, the Spirit can be turned aside, but He continues to reside within the tabernacle or the body of every individual who by faith has received Christ as personal Savior. You see, there is no place we can go as believers without taking the Spirit right along with us. That's not only from a physical standpoint, but more impressively and something we often forget is that we take the Spirit of God with us in our thoughts; when we look at things we know we shouldn't be seeing, or when we think things we know should never cross the mind of a child of God.

"Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" Why, we can't run fast enough to get away from Him. There is a television series on the air about the "Six Million Dollar Man" who is put together by scientists after an air crash. Frankly, I doubt the government could construct him for six million! He has his bionic equipment which supposedly enables him to do like the proverbial superman, outrace speeding cars. But even with all that paraphernalia built in we'd actually be hobbled should we be given the same opportunity for it is impossible to flee from the presence of God.

I'm afraid too many of us are like St. Augustine of old who prayed sincerely, "Lord, make me holy. . . but not yet!" We still want our own way; we still want to be involved with those things that are not beholden for a believer. It was also Augustine who thankfully exclaimed, "The only way to flee from God is to flee to Him." That is exactly what David understood.

In verse 8 we begin a four-part answer to this rhetorical question just discussed. In first part the Psalmist says, "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there."

Some months ago we were doing some interviews on the spot with people visiting Cypress Gardens, Florida. On this particular day we were asking folk all over the United States and Canada what first came to their mind when they heard the word "heaven." We got all kinds of responses. One fellow said he thought heaven would be like Cypress Gardens, but his wife reminded him that after having come down from Detroit last winter anything would look like heaven! We talked to one family where the mother and father declined to say anything. Their young son, however, wanted to be on television so he volunteered to participate. He asked what the question was so he could give it some thought. I would judge he was perhaps 10 or 11 years old, certainly no more than that. I told him simply that the question would be on the subject of heaven. He looked at me rather quizzically and then responded, "Well, what's heaven?" I couldn't believe my ears. His older sister, maybe 12 or 13, encouraged him, "Oh, you know what he means. That's where Grandmother's supposed to be." Now, that apparently was all the young child knew or had ever been told about heaven. What a sad commentary on the times in which we're living!

God is in heaven, yes, but He's other places, too. David grasped the truth, "If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there!" It would be well to point out at this juncture that hell at the present time isn't occupied. Of course, it was never

created for man but rather for the devil and his angels. It is also important to realize that God never sends anyone to hell. A person, by his rejection of the Lord's provision of salvation, Jesus Christ His Son, is what consigns an individual, by his own decision, to that very real place of eternal torment and separation from God. But in the original Hebrew the word here is not that for "hell," but rather it is "hades" in the Greek, or the Hebrew term "sheol." All it means is simply the abode of the dead.

Without getting too involved at this point, let's just simply point out that before the death and resurrection of Christ, hades was divided into two separate compartments. This we see clearly from the 16th chapter of Luke. There was the abode of the unrighteous dead, a place to which all unbelievers go today, awaiting the final Great White Throne Judgment, when all who are in the abode of the unrighteous dead will be consigned to hell forever. There was also the abode of the righteous dead, sometimes called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom. David is simply saying, "If I go into the presence of God in heaven, I'll find the Lord there. And if I die and go into the abode of the unrighteous dead, in Sheol, He'll be there, too." There's just no possible escaping Him whatsoever. From heaven to hades, from the utmost to the uttermost, He is there.

I'd like to pause just long enough to comment on what I believe is one of the devil's cleverest and most successful lies. That is, his trying to make people think that physical death ends all. In a sense he's right, but that should be clarified with the fact that it only ends all opportunity to change one's destiny for eternity. The guilt of the human conscience which may weigh down an individual seeking to snuff out existence by suicide, really goes right on. The anguish and turmoil doesn't stop at physical death. That's the utmost foolishness of suicide. You can't possibly get away from God. If you make your bed in hell or hades, God is still there. Jonah, like so many others, tried to escape but he couldn't.

Some years ago Jim Vaus had a movie made of his life. I believe it was called, "Wiretapper." It told the intriguing story of how, although he had attended Biola College, living a rather displeasing life to the Lord while here, he only existed as a hypocrite. He became involved with organized crime as a wiretapper and through a series of circumstances which are long and involved, eventually came to the Lord during a Billy Graham Crusade. It was the historic 1949 encounter at the corner of Washington and Hill in Southern California. In a song Ralph Carmichael wrote for that motion picture, which has since become quite popular, he says exactly what David is talking about,

*"I cannot hide from God, however I may try;
Though mountains cover me, I'll not escape His eye.
I've wandered far and near, and yet His voice I
hear,
I know that I can never hide from God.*

*"How often in the past, I've gone my wicked way;
I knew I'd come at last to face another day;
When for my wasted years I'd pay in grief and
tears,
I knew that I could never hide from God.*

*"I cannot hide from Thee, dear Lord;
To escape Thee how often I've tried.
No rest shall I know while here below,
'Till in Christ my soul shall hide!"*

"If I go up into heaven," says there's something better than "The Friendly Skies of United!" It is the knowledge that should God call us to be with Himself, we will be instantaneously in His presence, for absent from the body means to be present with the Lord. I'm interested in the fact that David pondered, "If I make my bed in hades." It is not, "If I go to hades," but "If I make my bed in hades." The word in the Hebrew signifies bed as a place of inactivity. It shows that there is a lack of all opportunity to do anything else whatsoever for one's life and eventual eternal destiny.

Verse 9 reads further, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea." This now is the second part of the answer to that rhetorical question of verse seven which wonders, "How can I get away from God?" "The wings of the morning" give us the inconceivable rapidity with which light flies. It is almost an incalculable velocity--186,000 miles a second. The human mind can't even begin to get the idea. So David is saying, "Even though I had that kind of ability, the speed of light, for travel, I couldn't get away from God."

Now we go from one extreme to the other: "If I dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea," and the word "uttermost" here doesn't mean distance horizontally but it means depth vertically. I am fascinated by articles that have appeared in the National Geographic Magazine showing how deep some of the ocean floors are. And I tell you, having been in the Merchant Marines during World War II out in the Pacific, as well as living in Florida on the Gulf Coast for six years, subject to those devastating hurricanes, I have a great respect for the oceans.

We might use these two pictures here for something more. It's the excitement of the new day when we're on top as it were, coupled with the discouragement or depths of despondency as seen in the oceans rolling over us. David said from these two extremes, still I know God is there.

Vance Havner tells the story of an infidel father who tried to dissuade his young son about any need for personal faith in Jesus Christ. He painted a motto which he decided could be useful in instilling unbelief in his small boy. It was then hung up on the wall. It declared these three words, "God is nowhere." When his boy came home from school that day and saw the motto, he was excited. He told his daddy, "I see it now. That means just what our teacher at Sunday school has been saying, 'God is now here.'" He made four words out of the three and he was more right than his educated father.

Taking the wings of the morning, going to the uttermost depths of the sea, he concludes in verse 10, "Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Isn't it interesting, the use of the word "hand" in this passage? We saw it earlier in verse 5 where it says that we are boxed in, or we are taken care of from all sides. The Psalmist ends with the assurance, "And laid Thy hand upon me." It really is the palm of the hand, the softest part that is in view. Here in verse 10 it is the right hand that is holding us. What is at God's right hand? Why, His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you realize that the Savior is the One who wants to hold your hand and take you through the darkest experiences of life?

I remember some years ago when our children were very small we lived in Santa Barbara which is the town where I grew up. On one occasion we took the youngsters to see the well-known Fiesta Parade, that comes annually in August every year. Peggy, who was just a little tike then, barely able to walk, afraid perhaps of the horses, the floats, and all of the crowds, said, "Daddy, would you take my hand?" Oh, those words were precious. I long to hear them again. I probably never will. Did you ever stop to think how God would love to hear you say, "Heavenly Father, will you take my hand?" Yes, "Thy right hand shall hold me." That's Jesus Christ!

In verse 11 we pick up the concern for darkness as a means of being hidden from God. It's a fact that the darkness can often envelope our lives and even play tricks on us. Darkness signifies that which is unknown and foreboding. Yet, here David says, "I can't shut God out." I never liked the darkness when I was a boy; in fact, I don't enjoy it even now when I'm alone. I can remember how my mother would sometimes comfort me with the words, "Remember, son, in heaven there'll be no night there." I didn't know anything about the book of Revelation in those days, but it was a comfort to realize that someday we wouldn't have to experience that eclipse of the Lord.

"Men love darkness," John says, "because their deeds are evil." No human eye can scrutinize the actions but that doesn't mean God isn't aware of them. I must tell you a little story about my wonderful wife to whom I've been privileged to be married for more than 27 years. She's told me of something that brought shame to her, reflecting on her early childhood. When but a little girl, getting mad and upset at her parents, she would run into her clothes closet, get behind the dresses hanging there, shut the door, and then, in the complete darkness just let out any words that would come to her mind which would relieve her thinking relative to how she felt about her parents at that moment. She went into that darkened closet because she thought no one could see or hear. Listen, no darkness, physical or mental, can hide us from God.

"Surely the darkness shall cover me." No, it cannot, not with God's presence. In our home in Florida, because I was away a good deal of the time, we had flood lights installed and a switch in the bedroom so that if Margaret heard anything at night all she had to do was flip a switch and immediately the ground around the house was flooded with light. That was helpful but that is not even what David is talking about. "Even the night shall be light around me." He is referring to the fact that the night is just the same as the day. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

Let me just tuck in this little thought. God sometimes allows us to be put in the dark in order to prove to us that He is light. Do you feel like you're in darkness today? Then look to the Lord for your light and your strength. Listen, nothing can hide you from God. Not even that which hides everything else.

Verse 12, "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Again, we can delete the italics because this sentence just sums up all the previous ones as to the presence of the Lord. "The darkness and the light. . . both alike." No difference.

Let me give you a little story about a boy, we'll call him Johnny, who spilled his milk in the kitchen just before he went to bed one night. His mother told him, "Johnny, go outside and get the mop." He protested, "But Mom, it's dark out there and I'm scared." He began crying in fear, and his mother tried to comfort him with the thought, "Don't forget, Johnny, Jesus is out there watching you." Finally, he braved himself enough to open the door a crack and stick his head out. He called boldly, "Lord, if you're out there, will you please hand me the mop?" No, the darkness isn't pleasant for anyone! How good to know that our Savior is the Light of the World, as well as being the Light of our lives!

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NOTE: The conclusion of this commentary on Psalm 139 will be found in the November Radio Highlights.

II CORINTHIANS

By: Dr. J. Richard Chase

In this study we continue Paul's long list of areas describing the importance of being a faithful servant of the Lord. He wanted to make certain he didn't cause others to stumble. This great desire to serve effectively is expressed for us in II Corinthians 6:1-3. He then lists the various areas of concern in verses 4-10. The apostle always wanted to be a positive help to others in their ministry. He knew he was God's ambassador. He earnestly tried to build bridges to others, opening up avenues of service. He didn't want to let anything, even afflictions or hardships, foul up this obligation. He was especially concerned about "the word of truth" (v. 7). This refers to the Gospel messages. The apostle John uses a similar phrase, meaning the same thing. In Ephesians 1:13 Paul writes, "The message of truth, the gospel of your salvation." He identifies what he means by pointing out that it is the means by which we are born again. His goal was to proclaim the testimony in such a way that it wouldn't cause people to stumble or be confused and turned aside from the opportunity of eternal life.

The next phrase is "the power of God." It brings to mind the Holy Spirit in our lives and thereby is the possession of all God's servants. Paul didn't depend on human ingenuity or public relations techniques. Some tools seem to be more effective than others but always, in the final analysis, the power is ultimately from God. Earlier he had testified, "And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (I Cor. 2:4, 5). He wanted his message to be clear enough so that the power of God could shine through it.

The last phrase in verse seven reminds us that our work is "by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left." The complete armor of the believer is seen in Ephesians 6:10-18. These are the God-given implements of warfare available to the Christian as he goes out to do battle with Satan. So girded, we need not fear being an effective servant and soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul exhorts us to take up "the shield of faith," as well as to utilize "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." An ancient warrior would carry a shield on one arm so that he could ward off those who would attempt to fight him. In the other hand he would have his sword, which was the offensive weapon of battle. It took both hands to fight effectively. Perhaps this is what Paul has in mind here when he refers to the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Never forget that as believers in Christ we are completely and competently equipped to carry on the ministry. There is absolutely no excuse for us to cause others to stumble.

It is an important principle to realize that poor preparation causes stumbling. As an example, if you had a poor history teacher in high school or college it may have easily soured you on the subject even to this day. History can be a fascinating and intriguing subject, or it can be as dry as dust. It all depends on the person who is making the presentation. Someone who is incompetent can cause others to lose all interest. Such can be very human evaluations.

Many years ago, when I was a student at Biola in the late 40's, there was another fellow whose room was just down the hall by the name of Basil Costerisan. After he graduated from Biola he went to Southeast Asia where he served with Overseas Crusades doing an effective job for the Lord. Not too long ago he went home to be with the Lord. I can still remember going to Basil's dorm room where I found him

with papers spread all over the desk as he worked industriously. He explained, "I'm preparing an announcement for tomorrow at chapel on behalf of the Student Missionary Union. The reason I have all the papers is because this is a major obligation!" I thought to myself, "What's the big deal? Why put in so much work on just giving an announcement?" He must have sensed my thoughts because he explained further, "There are about a thousand students in chapel. I have just about five minutes to make that announcement. You multiply that out and it means collectively that I'm going to be taking 83 hours and 33 minutes of time! This is why I want to make sure every word counts!" That was quite a challenge to me and revealed the quality of his person and doubtless why the Lord used him so greatly in missionary service overseas.

Some people don't take seriously their opportunities for the Lord. Do you teach a Sunday school class? What is your practice? Do you use Saturday nights to open up your manual and glance through the materials so that at least you can stumble through the subject without appearing to be too far lost? Maybe you will even go so far as to have a concordance and look up a few verses. Such isn't really preparation. You may get by, and few people may realize your secret, but your effectiveness will be in question. Unless you master the subject and allow the subject to master your life you could actually be turning young or older people off to the Word of God. They might rightly observe, "The Bible is sure dull. It doesn't seem to be practical." This was Paul's great concern. He wanted to build bridges to other people. The apostle urges us, "Get a grasp of the word of truth. Avail yourselves of the resources that are on the right hand and the left hand which God has placed there for our benefit."

Being clever or cute to hold an audience or to get a response can cause stumbling too. Paul sets in contrast to the power of God, human ingenuity. All the good principles of rhetoric and tools for convincing presentation must be subject to the power of God. Paul wasn't looking for a pat on the back even though he doubtless knew well how to manipulate an audience. His desire was for people to know that God's Word is powerful! This takes work to do it effectively. There must be study as well as a knowledge of communication.

Back in the 19th century there was a New York lawyer by the name of Schuster who was very unscrupulous. Some people believe that he was the one who caused people to coin the word "shyster." He was a strong discredit to his profession. He gave all lawyers a "black eye." By the same token, an evangelist who is nothing more than a racketeer causes people to think that everyone in the ministry has only his own profit in view. Such people can only rely on their own human ingenuity because they know nothing of the real power of God. Paul emphasizes, "God forbid that I should be in that trap!" Poor preparation and a faulty handling of the Word of Truth could cause others to turn aside from the Gospel of grace. So, in the final analysis, being clever, depending upon your power rather than on God's, is a foolish mark of immaturity. Let us make certain we serve in an effective fashion so that we do not cause offense.

As we seek to be effective witnesses for Christ, whether in business, school, home or church, we should be very circumspect in our dealings with others. Because of our stand for the Lord we can be positive, even when maligned and slandered. Paul tells us that we should pattern our lives in such a way that we bring glory to the Lord "By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true" (II Corinthians 6:8).

Consider first of all the word "dishonor." In the Greek there is a term that means something very valuable; almost priceless. It is a commodity so special people would

give anything to possess it. When a negation is put in front of it then the word refers to something absolutely worthless which nobody wants. This is what is behind "dishonor." Paul is telling us that even though there are times when people look upon him as something absolutely worthless, he can still be effective.

The next idea is "evil report." In the original, by use of the little prefix, it has the idea of speaking ill of a person. That is the concept of gossip, which includes making up lies. The apostle knew that with those false rumors about himself there would be temptations to take matters into his own hands. Yet, he was determined not to become a stumbling block to others.

But what about the accusation of being "a deceiver?" There were those who so called him. Today there may be people who say we are deceivers if we attempt to share a word for the Lord. This title of deceiver really fits the Antichrist who is to come. He is pictured as the one who will restore total peace and order to our world. Obviously people will follow him because they want what he seems to offer. But he is an imposter and will ultimately bring tremendous destruction to the earth. To call a person an imposter or a deceiver is the same as a charge of disloyalty. Imagine the impropriety of those who had told Paul, "You're really not interested in the salvation of souls, in helping people in the area of eternal life." What an unfortunate attack!

This one last negative phrase is found in verse 9, "as unknown." This is raising the attitude of suspicion and a lack of trust. It is another of the arrows a person carries who loves to gossip and undercut. You can be shot down by dishonor, with an evil report, as a deceiver, while also being dismissed as "unknown." What is our response when people come at us with such harsh accusations? Paul calmly points out that he doesn't want to give any cause for offense so that the ministry won't be discredited. The tendency is for us to strike back hard. Instead, Paul strikes back in defense of his calling as an apostle. He emphasizes the importance and glory of the great God whom he serves. He doesn't "fly off the handle," as perhaps some of us would do. He wanted people to see something different in his life so that he could tell them, "The secret of my power is in a close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ!" This is a very practical lesson we certainly all need to learn. There can be no boasting in the flesh, it must always be recognized that maturity and progress come only through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

Certainly Paul exercised greater restraint than would be expected by most human individuals. He was firmly convinced that "we are ambassadors for Christ" (II Cor. 5:20). This is the divine relationship. This is a great answer for discouragement. If things aren't going well and you are receiving all kinds of criticism, recognize that you are in God's work, following His plan. By His Holy Spirit, keep right on going. Never forget that in the final analysis God is the evaluator. He is the only One who ultimately counts. If you are working for man you will learn to play man's game to get his praise. If you work for God you can be assured of the spiritual dividends for all eternity. Yes, the only way to be effective is to play God's game by His rules and live for His commendation. Of course, we must watch being obnoxious or insensitive people. Some seem to feel, "I'm doing God's job so I don't care what anybody thinks!" Paul knew the importance of understanding others, trying to relate to them in Christian love. You are actually in partnership with God, doing what He wants you to do in an enlightened and effective manner as we are encouraged in Scripture. Nothing can hurt you if you are prepared in this manner. Yes, the Christian is joined up with the Lord and can be blessed despite the fact that he may be maligned and slandered by others.

On the positive side we can likewise be useful even when praised and honored. There is a different problem here. This is the anecdote for pride. Some people say that

being a college president is like walking on a high wire. It is exhilarating and exciting but one false step and it is also disaster. This is true in our Christian life. How easy it is to fall with pride. Somehow the whole life is damaged there by. God has a way of reminding us that it is His strength and not ours. First of all, in verse eight it is "by glory." This is the contrast to dishonor. It means when a good word is spoken of us. There is no one more obnoxious than somebody who knows he is right. He delights in observing, "I told you so!" He wants to rub your nose in the principles he seeks to present. How can one be without offense when people keep patting him on the back? How can you be without offense when there is a measure of glory if you do your job well? First of all, recognize that if you let it go to your head you will become a stumbling block to others instead of building bridges. Your attitude is crucial! None of us likes the egotistical kind of person who has all the answers.

The apostle underscored that we are in partnership with God. He is the One who has given us the power. We are thereby known by Him. There is glory because we stand with Him. We present the true message in a proper way, receiving a good report. Too many are like the woman who supposedly asked, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" Then she added quickly, "And why am I?" Too many pat themselves on the back constantly.

God help us to be instruments in His hands, not soloists beating our own little drums. We may be misunderstood and maligned. We may be praised as if we had some personal message no one else could share or preach. But we are not to let either discouragement or pride cause us to trip others and to divide us from an effective ministry. We are in fellowship with God; we are His ambassadors. Our effectiveness can be maintained if we walk faithfully with Him.

One of the longer sentences in Paul's epistles is found in the sixth chapter of II Corinthians verses 3 to 10. In the Greek there are 146 words used and in most of our English translations there are about 180. This is one of the apostle's exhaustive lists of importance. A similar example is in Romans 8:35 where Paul starts out by saying that there is nothing which can separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus. Then, from that point to verse 39 he covers anything and everything to amplify the idea that indeed nothing can separate us from the Savior. In the passage before us we are urged to remember that absolutely nothing should be found in our lives which would cause others to stumble and lose the way. In every-thing we are to commend ourselves, to build bridges in an effort to reach other people for Christ. The series of exhortations is completed in the last part of verse 9 and concluded in verse 10.

In this final section we focus on what might be termed the balanced life. Literally Paul is saying, "In everything I want to make sure I'm an effective servant of the Lord." The first principle is that while in Christ we may be poor in body, still we can be alive in the Spirit. The latter portion of verse 9 reads, "as dying, yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things." The apostle had already pointed out the power of Christ even amid affliction (II Cor. 1:8, 9). Although poor in body he was indeed alive in the Spirit because of what God had done for him through the Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:8-12). Even though we have problems in the flesh, yet this gives us an opportunity, through the demonstration of our victorious life in Christ, to be effective in the lives of others. While it may work death in us, yet it results in spiritual life for others. Usually when a person is under severe handicap or illness it is human nature to moan and groan. What we need to be reminded of is that in some cases this could cause some individuals to stumble. The Christian life recognizes that while we may be poor in body yet we can be alive in the Spirit. In this way there can be a fantastic

witness which results.

In the last phrase of verse 9 we read, "as punished yet not put to death." This could refer to a number of problems Paul experienced in the flesh. The word translated "punished" in the original can also mean "discipline." One of the great passages on this subject is found in Hebrews 12:6-8. We are reminded that "Whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." This is a necessary part of life because it corrects, guides, directs, molds and shapes us for a more positive influence. The writer goes on to point out, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." We need to strengthen our hands which so often are weak and feeble (Hebrews 12:9-13).

The superiority of Paul can be seen in the fact that despair didn't always set in. In the midst of all his problems and afflictions he never got so dissatisfied that people said, "Well, you can write Christianity off. Look at the apostle Paul. All his fancy words didn't mean a thing." Rather, he knew the power of God in his life. Hence, even in the midst of bodily affliction and holy correction he wasn't a stumbling block to others. People came to him, wanting to know his secret for life. He commended himself by the pattern of life consistently lived. In this way doors were opened.

I recall two students who attended Biola College some years ago. One had everything going for him physically speaking. He was tall, dark, handsome and very athletic. Somehow or other he got it into his head that he wasn't what he should be. This caused him to be very discouraged. He lost not only his own perspective in life but also his testimony with others. Other students saw it and some even observed, "He's a detriment! Nobody's ever going to accept Christ if they meet him!" On the other hand, there was another student who didn't have a complete body. He had lost his sight in Korea. Still, while poor physically he was rich in spirit. He was the vibrant type of Christian, always joyous in the Lord. What a contrast between the two! This was Paul's point. Even though poor in the body, he was alive in the Spirit. For this reason there is no need for us to grumble and to be discouraged. Such only causes others to stumble, wondering whether your God really is all powerful. Use your circumstances, whatever they may be, to build bridges to reach other people.

In Christ we may be burdened but ever optimistic and confident. In the first phrase of verse 10 we find the example, "As sorrowful yet always rejoicing." We see here the apostle's burden for others. He could have been weighted down, as we learned in an earlier study, because of what some were saying about him and his work. He knew the many increasing numbers who needed to hear the Gospel and yet at times he was delayed and unable to move on. Still, these things didn't sour his outlook on life. He continued his efforts to reach the lost. He constantly referred to his commitment to Christ and what it means in his life of victory. When you and I are burdened, God can give us through the ministry of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, and patience (Galatians 5:22, 23). These are the Lord's gifts and aren't subject to circumstances nor to the manipulations of man. If we live only on what comes into us on the human level we will always find defeat. There can be no rejoicing whatsoever.

One other element is crucial and that is in Christ we may be financially poor but still able to give much. The last phrases of verse 10 testify "as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things." These phrases are interesting and certainly paradoxical. Most of us don't have much of this world's goods and thereby can't give a great deal to Christian organizations. Never confuse the giving of material substance with the giving of other things that can be so much more of value. The giving of yourself is what is primarily vital. Paul tells the believers at Corinth, "I didn't have much to give you as far as physical goods are concerned, but I gave you something of far greater value. I presented you the Savior, the Lord

Jesus Christ, in the message of grace through faith."

You may have children in your home and feel you don't have much to give them. But by living the proper Christian life before them you can give them a pattern of existence that will transform their entire lives for now as well as for all eternity through a commitment to Jesus Christ. You may not be able to supply all of the things you think are essential, yet don't overlook, through love, that which is paramount, and that for which you are truly responsible. That doesn't excuse us from turning every possible stone to provide a measure of essentials for our loved ones, but the making of money shouldn't be our consuming goal. It should rather be seen in your life as the pattern for others in your family.

Paul talks about the riches of Christ in Ephesians 3:8. These are the things that are ours when we walk in fellowship with the Lord. He also refers to the message presented to the Corinthian church which enriched them in their lives in all manner of things (I Cor. 1:4, 5). In essence he tells them, "You may have had nice homes, you may have had a nice chariot and a beautiful team of horses; you may have had all the things you wanted, but I enriched you because I introduced you to Jesus Christ." What a tremendous lesson! To be effective servants of the Lord, despite circumstances under which we find ourselves, we are to keep our eyes on the goal that we might not be guilty of causing someone else to stumble and to lose the way.

In Christ we may be poor in body but still alive in the Spirit. We may be burdened, weighed down and sorrowful but we should be ever optimistic and confident because of the Lord whom we serve. Even though financially poor we are still able to give much. The riches of the Lord Jesus Christ are ours forevermore. There are opportunities you have to live your life in such a way that despite physical infirmity, sadness and financial reverses you won't allow these things to become stones of offense and stumbling to others. Paul wanted to make certain that nothing would ever allow him to become ineffective in the Christian ministry. I trust this can be true in each of our lives as we face the important days ahead.

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REVELATION NO. 151

By: Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson

Some very monumental events will transpire in the last times after the Church, made up of all true born again believers, is taken home to be with the Lord. The last world religious system, referred to in Revelation 17 as the prostitute, will be destroyed by the Antichrist. This will bring to an end all apostate religion. The massive political system which then takes over is finally brought to its downfall by God Himself. This second Babylon is annihilated before the bodily return of Christ. The picture is clearly portrayed in the 18th chapter of Revelation. Revelation 19 begins, "And after these things," which refers to these monumental cataclysmic events. Later in this chapter which portrays a scene of heavenly rejoicing, we are ushered into "the marriage of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7). This brings us right back to where we left off in chapter four with the Body of Christ, the New Testament Church. It is my earnest conviction that John represents the Body of Christ, the New Testament Church. He sees the door of heaven open and hears the voice which says, "Come up hither." This is when believers, represented by the apostle, go home to be with the Lord in the air.

It is a good thing to question the constituency of the Church. Some congregations vary from well structured, wealthy, highly organized institutions to what are known as underground cell groups. Of course, there is everything inbetween these polarized positions.

There are a number of Biblical metaphors which show what the Church really is. We find it referred to in the New Testament as the family, a bride, a vineyard, a temple, a building, a kingdom, and a flock. All other metaphors have Old Testament equivalents except for "the Body of Christ." This is the unique position that the Church has in the Lord Jesus Christ. It isn't a physical building but rather a group of born again believers. It isn't a denomination, sect, or association, but rather as a spiritual body. The Church is a communion, a sweet fellowship of love, and includes all born again believers out of all churches (as well as no churches) around this world.

Undergirding the scriptural teaching about the Body of Christ is the concept of Biblical unity. All of us who have been born again are brought together in a spiritual unity such as this world doesn't possess nor understand (I Cor. 12:12). Even as a physical being must be one so it is with the Bride. We are one and so also is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what He is talking about in Revelation 19:17. We know that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church or the Body. Looking at that picture from a different perspective, it is obvious that one can cut off a hand or an arm, but there won't be any life if you cut off the head. Life will go on without a hand or an arm but the body thereby is saved. Cut off the head and the life is gone. The same thing is true in the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13; 5:23). Christians are all one. Salvation is the initial point of their unity. Every believer comes to God through faith in Christ, being all baptized by one Holy Spirit and placed into the Body. This occurs the moment we receive the Savior by faith. Every true Christian also has the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Bible says that we have "all been made to drink into one Spirit." No believer is left out (Romans 8:9). There is no such thing as a saved individual who doesn't have the Holy Spirit. The unity of the Church is completely wrapped up in the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:3). The Church's unity isn't based on an artificial organizational relationship, nor even upon the fact that people go to church.

In Revelation 19 the Second Coming of Christ is the paramount event taking place. It will be a tremendous hour. We will be with the Lord at that time, a part of His Body. Remember, every Biblical metaphor of the Church, without exception, emphasized the unity of this one Body, known as the true Church!

The glorious coming of the Lord Jesus to this earth is what transpires beginning with the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation. We will rejoice and give honor to the Lamb because as His Bride we will have made ourselves ready (19:7). Up until this time the Church has only been known as the Bride of Christ. There will be a marriage taking place which will last for all eternity. Everyone who has been born again by faith is a member of this mystical Body.

In the book of Ephesians we have some excellent background of the meaning of the Church. Paul tells us, for example, that God has made known unto us a mystery, that is a sacred secret, hidden in the Old Testament, and not revealed until the Holy Spirit showed it to the apostle (Ephesians 1:9, 10). There had been a revelation of this mystery for our benefit (3:3). The secret which has now been known is that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body" (Ephesians 3:5, 6). Verse nine of this same chapter portrays the fellowship of the mystery. All who believe in Jesus Christ will be members of the Body or Bride of Christ, which is the New Testament Church (Ephesians 6:19). Ephesians 2:15 pictures that Body as "one new man." We have been molded together on the basis of our mutual belief and faith in Jesus Christ. Before any of us were born or even the earth had been formed, God planned the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6). A mystery in the Biblical sense is a truth which the Lord ordained in eternity past. He has hidden it purposely to be revealed at a certain time. Realize for a moment that God loved you so much that He placed you within the Body of Christ in His own master plan before this world had ever been created. That should be enough to make anyone rejoice! God knew you by name before the world ever began. He counted you a part of His blessed Church. You may be sure that the Church is going to be married finally to the One to whom she has been espoused these many, many years. Believers are in the Body because God's eternal plan put them there. No wonder the apostle Paul, in his writings to the Ephesians, so highly praises the Lord. In the first chapter of this epistle he deals with the past aspect of God's eternal formation of this Body (4-6). The second segment deals with the present aspect of our salvation (vs. 7-11). The third aspect of the praise deals with the future salvation of the believer (vs. 12-15). God's eternal plan for the Body has three parts: the past, which is election; the present, which is redemption; and the future, which is inheritance.

Revelation 19:8 shows that the Bride is arrayed in fine linen. There will be a beautiful marriage ceremony which will take place one of these days. Jesus Christ will come back to this earth at the end of the Tribulation. He will set up His kingdom rule over the world. In that interval between the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Kingdom it is my conviction that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place. This is when Christ is actually joined in eternal wedlock to the Church, His Body. What a glorious day this will be for all of us believers! Revelation 19:7-10 is really a pre-announcement, given in connection with the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the preceding first six verses. Before the Kingdom begins the Messiah must first finish the task of world judgment. This comes at the end of the last great battle of Armageddon. The two beasts, the political ruler and the Antichrist, along with the bound devil in the bottomless pit, must be completed so all of this will occur at this particular time. It becomes an even more thrilling story when we understand these great coming events.

In the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ we see many factors epitomized and brought to our attention in Revelation 19. In verses 7 to 10 we have the beautiful marriage supper of the Lamb which is announced in heaven and to the earth. Continuing

the praise of the Lord their God the great multitudes now announce a major feature of Christ's reign upon the earth. It is His marriage to the Bride, which is the true Church, made up of all born again believers. The event itself takes place in heaven. The scene is absolutely celestial. The event is obviously subsequent to the destruction of Babylon which occurs at the end of the Tribulation. This is immediate climaxed and succeeded by the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

Though marriage customs vary in the ancient world, usually there were three major aspects. First was the marriage contract. This was often consummated by the parents when the parties to the marriage were still children. The payment of a suitable dowry was often a feature of the contract. When consummated, the contract meant that the couple were legally married. Secondly, at a later time, when the couple had reached a suitable age, the next phase of the wedding took place. This was a ceremony in which the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, went to the house of the bride to escort her to his home and the marriage supper, to which the guests were invited. It was such a feast which Jesus attended in Cana of Galilee, recorded in John 2.

The marriage symbolism here in Revelation 19:7, 8 is beautifully fulfilled in the relationship of Jesus Christ to His own Church. The wedding contract is consummated at the time when the Church is redeemed. When Christ comes for His Church at the rapture, which precedes the Tribulation, then there is the second phase of the wedding fulfilled. The third phase follows which is the wedding feast. Here it is significant to notice that the Bride is already the wife of the Lamb. That which is announced in verses 7 and 8 isn't the wedding union but rather the wedding feast. Of primary importance at this point is the order of events.

Another problem of interpretation is the proper inclusion of the term "wife" in verses 7 and 8. In the Biblical usage of the figure of marriage, variations can be observed in both the Old and New Testaments. Frequently in the Old Testament Israel is described as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah. She will be restored to her position as a faithful wife in the future kingdom rule of Christ. While marriage is often used as an illustration of various truths, the norm for the doctrine is that Israel is already married to Jehovah and has proved unfaithful to her responsibility as a wife. By contrast to this in the New Testament, the Church is pictured as a virgin who is waiting for her bridegroom (II Cor. 11:2). In this case the wedding union is still future as well as the wedding feast.

The marriage of the Lamb is properly the marriage supper or the feast of the Lamb. It is the final aspect of the marriage relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. There is a beautiful picture drawn of the holiness and righteousness of the Church in that hour for the Bride is described as "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." The fine linen, we read, "is the righteousness of the saints." The reference seems not to be justification by faith, by which we become Christian people, but rather the righteousness which was wrought in the lives of believers who comprise the Body of Christ, the wife of the Lamb. This is the sense of the unusual phrase that "the wife hath made herself ready." In Ephesians 5:26, 27 Jesus Christ is said to be carrying on a present work with His Church that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. The view is to the future presentation in glory as we are seen "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." We are to be holy and without blemish. You see, the present work of spiritual sanctification of the Church must be distinguished from eternal justification. Justification by its nature is an act of God by which a believer is declared to be righteous. Sanctification is the work of God in the believer who has already been saved. So, in essence, justification refers to salvation while sanctification refers to spiritual growth and maturity once one has already been saved. We work for God because we have already been saved. What a glorious consummating event that will be when we enter into this marvelous phase of our relationship to the Savior!

Revelation chapter 19 parallels the parable in Matthew 22:1-14 to the marriage supper of the Lamb. If you recall, there were some people who weren't interested in attending the marriage feast the king gave for his own son. When the guests were compelled to come to the wedding feast one was discovered who was without a wedding garment. Jesus said that he would be cast into outer darkness. This parable refers to a marriage feast to take place on earth and not in heaven. No person would be able to enter heaven without a proper wedding garment. Also, it is impossible for one to be cast into outer darkness once he has gotten to heaven. Such teaching would be foreign to Scripture. The message our Lord illustrated has to do with people on earth during the kingdom age of Christ. Of course, the saints of the Church will be there in their glorified bodies just as Jesus was on earth in His glorified body after His resurrection. There will also be guests there in their natural bodies. They will be the population of the kingdom over which Christ, together with believers, will be ruling and reigning. Any unbelievers who attempt to attend the feast will be cast into outer darkness.

Another interesting parable is found in Matthew 25:1-13. This has a bearing on Revelation 19:7, 8. You will recall the illustration of the wise and foolish virgins. Here it isn't that the guests are disinterested in attending but rather that they aren't prepared. This parable gives us an excellent picture of Israel on earth at the end of the Tribulation. She will be waiting for her Messiah to return from heaven with His Bride, the Church. Some will be prepared to meet Him and thereby able to enter the millennial kingdom. Others will not have that privilege since they failed to avail themselves of God's provisions. All the virgins had lamps of profession, but not all were filled with oil. Of these who had no salvation the Savior will have to say, "I don't know you at all." Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit who comes into our lives the moment we accept Christ as Redeemer.

In applying the oriental marriage customs to the Church, we know that we were chosen by the Father before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1:3, 4). It is necessary to trust in Christ before spiritual benefits can actually be applied to our lives (Ephesians 1:12-14). As we believe we are united into one Body and are betrothed to the Lord, after the Rapture we fully become the Bride of Christ. In our study of Revelation 19, the betrothal and marriage have already taken place. What remains is the marriage supper or feast. This is why the blessed announcement is given of this great event (Rev. 19:7). Scripture declares, "His wife hath made herself ready." The marriage took place in heaven but the marriage feast will occur, I believe, on earth. After the marriage the Bride and Bridegroom return to the earth for the marriage supper. The center of attraction is not the Bride, but the Bridegroom, as is emphasized in the statement, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him."

Some time ago I was in Washington, D. C. to visit my son. While there I visited the Smithsonian Institute. In one of the sections of that great museum there is an array of all the wives of all the Presidents of the United States. Passing by the display windows you can see them dressed in their special gowns which they wore in their own individual day. It is a most magnificent sight, to be sure. In Rev. 19:8 we see that there is a special gown for this completely unique occasion of the marriage feast of the Lamb. "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." This wardrobe represents the Church's righteousness. It portrays God's sanctifying work in this present hour and typifies the righteous activities of the believer. This also emphasizes that after the judgment seat of Christ has taken place the Lord presents to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27).

The gown is to be worn only for the wedding feast and not for the wedding itself. Afterwards it is laid aside for all eternity. The Bride is then again clothed in the

righteousness of the Bridegroom. The Bride's righteous acts flow from a righteous character.

The apostle John records, "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (v. 9). The call goes out to those who are the invited guests to the marriage feast. Christ and His Bride, having been married in heaven, now return to earth where the great marriage feast takes place. Remember that we believers now living on the earth are betrothed unto Jesus Christ. The Church will be raptured from the earth before the Tribulation begins (as is beautifully pictured in Rev. 4). So those who have placed their faith in Christ truly have much for which to look forward.

Because John the Baptist lived before the day of Pentecost he is considered to be an Old Testament saint. He said about himself in John 3:29 that he was a "friend of the Bridegroom." In this way John the Baptist lived before the time of the cross and resurrection of the Savior. This was most certainly before the age of the New Testament Church. Luke 13:28, 29 further emphasizes the fact that there will be Old Testament saints in the kingdom present too at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Also, there will be the Tribulation believers who were martyred during that seven year unprecedented period (Rev. 20:4). As indicated in the parable of the ten virgins, redeemed Israel will also be present at the marriage feast (Matt. 25:1-13). Believing Gentiles saved during the Tribulation period will be there (Matt. 25:31ff). It is interesting to notice that Hebrews 1:6 indicates that the angels may also be present. In the Greek this passage declares, "Again when He bringeth back Jesus Christ to the earth," then the angels will worship the Lord. Can't you visualize with me what a tremendous spiritual moment that will be in the history of the entire universe?

The Old Testament saints, and those saved during the Tribulation, will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation. Only those who are found to be "in Christ," or who have been saved or born again, will be resurrected at the Rapture (I Thess. 4:16, 17). No believers, except Church saints, are spoken of as being "in Christ." This is because only Church saints have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. Old Testament or Tribulation saints are never spoken of as being "in Christ," even though they have trusted in God. Daniel 12 indicates that the resurrection of the Old Testament saints will be after the Tribulation is over (Daniel 12:1). Daniel doesn't distinguish any time element involved between the resurrection of believers and unbelievers. He simply referred, as Jesus Himself did, to both resurrections in the same passage of truth.

Old Testament believers were promised a kingdom on the earth. The resurrection at the end of the Tribulation makes it possible for them to inherit the kingdom, as well as to be at the marriage feast of the Lamb. Also, Daniel 12:11 and 12 mentions two time periods that extend beyond the end of the Tribulation. It is at the middle of the Tribulation when the abomination of desolation (the image of the Antichrist) is set up. To the end of those seven years is usually spoken of as 1260 days, or 42 months. This, of course, makes three and one-half years. Daniel wrote in verse 13, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." It is evident that the time involved for these extra days is after the Tribulation. This seems to be a clear Scriptural indication that Daniel won't be resurrected until after the Tribulation is over, even though he may have trusted in the Lord and believed in God. He is certainly not a member of the Body of Christ. This is strictly New Testament truth given to Paul which the Holy Spirit would have us understand.

When the Lord Jesus Christ visibly and bodily returns to this earth His feet will touch the Mount of Olives. He will then begin His thousand year rule and reign over the earth. This of course will follow the final consummation of the campaign of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21). As one great Bible teacher observed about this passage, "What an unimaginable catastrophe this will be! What death and what carnage as such a vast holocaust closes out human history." He was most perceptive in his observations. The battle of Armageddon, and the war of Megeddo, is the scene in which the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, makes His appearance, intervening in human history. As Jude expresses it, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all" (v. 14, 15).

Immediately after the wedding supper our Lord appears in glory with His angelic hosts as well as with His saints. Notice that history doesn't quietly nor gradually merge into the kingdom of our Lord. The end comes violently and with great fury. The whole earth is bathed in blood as a result of the judgment of that great day of God Almighty. The mighty conflict described here is one which has been foretold throughout all the pages of the Bible. The book of Revelation is only the unveiling and the presentation of Jesus Christ at the consummation of the age. Prophecy throughout both Old and New Testaments clearly portrays the end of this world through mighty, indescribable conflicts. World history will end in war and desolation. In order to be accurate to the Word of God one must say that this is absolutely true.

This great battle of Armageddon has been described several times in the book of Revelation. We read of it in the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15). The conflict is again mentioned in Revelation 14:17-20 as we see the grapes cast into the winepress. All of this is a metaphor as well as a reality. Jesus Christ, coming in His judgment, will tread under His feet all the wicked and as a result, the reality of blood will come forth as the last part of the campaign of Armageddon. The degree of the slaughter is almost impossible for our minds to consider. The world has never conceived nor seen anything comparable to this last great battle which will destroy apostate humanity. The land of Israel, about 200 miles long and 200 miles wide, will have blood so deep that it will come up to the bridles of the horses.

Another reference to this last conflict is in Rev. 16:12-16. The whole encounter is absolutely unbelievable and unimaginable. We as believers need not be frightened by such prophecies. Rather, we should rejoice in that we have such a great God and a wonderful Savior. We can thank the Lord daily for His compassionate grace and loving mercy in that He has extended to us forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life with Him forever.

In Rev. 19:11-21 we not only find the Second Coming of Christ in glory but also the event which immediately precedes that marvelous occurrence which is known as the battle of Armageddon. This is additionally presented in Rev. 16:14 and 19:17-19. The kings of the whole world are to be gathered together through the activity of the triad of evil for what is called "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." This isn't actually a single battle except here when Jesus Christ returns.

From the broad scope, Armageddon is really a campaign in which a number of strategic battles are fought across the years. God deals in judgment with the nations because of their persecution of Israel (Joel 3:2), their sinfulness (Rev. 19:15), and the godlessness of the nations of the world (Rev. 16:9). These happenings, culminating in the gathering of Armageddon, are viewed by God as one great connected campaign in which a number of conflagrations have been fought. All of them take place under the word "Armageddon."

The hill of Mageddo is an extended plain on which many of Israel's previous conflicts

have been fought. Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites there (Jude 4, 5). Gideon triumphed over the Midianites (Judges 7). King Saul was slain in the battle with the Philistines (I Samuel 31:8). Ahaziah was killed by Jehu (II Kings 9:27), and Josiah was slain in the invasion by the Egyptians (II Kings 23:29ff).

Mageddo is located on the plain of Isdralon which has been a chosen place for the encampment in every battle carried on in Palestine. This includes from the day of Nebuchadnezzar until the disastrous march of Napoleon from Egypt into Syria. Jews and Gentiles, Christians and anti-Christians, with warriors of every nation under heaven, have pitched their tents here.

There are several other geographical locations involved in this great campaign. The first is made clear in Joel 3:2, 13. Here God refers to events taking place in the area East of Jerusalem. Ezekiel tells of the same area as the valley of Jehosaphat (39:11). This was the travel route going away from the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah 34:63 pictures the Lord coming from Edom, south of Jerusalem when He returns from judgment. Jerusalem itself seems to be the center of conflict (Zech. 12:2-11; 14:2). This gives us a picture of just how extensive the warfare will be. Such a wide area would cover the entire land of Palestine.

It appears from the Bible that this last great battle will reach far beyond Armageddon. The valley of Mageddo will be mainly the place where the troops will gather together from the four corners of the earth. From there they will spread out over the entire land of Palestine, separated by various periods of time. Again, Joel speaks of the last battle being fought in the valley of Jehosaphat, close by the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah showed Christ coming with blood-stained garments from Edom which is south in Palestine. To this agree the words of the prophet Ezekiel when he pictures the armies of this great battle covering the entire land. The blood will flow to the bits of the horses' bridles for 1600 furlongs. This is equivalent to 200 miles. What a slaughter it will be. Of the campaign of Armageddon, God's Word prophesies very clearly, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle."

Who will have a part in this tremendous campaign? The alignment of nations during the Tribulation has already been seen in the Bible. There were four great world powers in history past. Now, another great power must be added because of His active participation in the campaign. We refer to the Lord Himself who will participate in this total campaign. He will come with His armies from heaven at the end of the campaign of Armageddon. While the various powers of the earth will fight against each other, as well as against Israel, they ultimately seek to defeat the God of Israel and, as a result, are totally annihilated.

In the campaign of Armageddon it is interesting to consider the chronology of events. According to Daniel 9:26, 27 the Antichrist, the superman prince of the Roman Empire, will make a covenant with Israel for a seven-year period. This evidently restores the Jews to a place among the nations of the world, with protection guaranteed by this leader of the ten confederated western European kingdom. Many Bible teachers consider this to be the revived Roman Empire. This will be a devilish imitation of the fulfillment of God's Abrahamic covenant which gave Israel the title deed to the land.

The action is pictured by John (Rev. 6:2) as a rider going forth to conquer. Sovereignty is given to him as a result of peaceful negotiation. A condition of relative calm exists for three and a half years, after which the covenant will be broken by the Antichrist who then shows himself for the wicked, diabolical creature he really is. The Great Tribulation hits in full fury (Matt. 24:21). This diabolical activity, moving the nations against Israel in those days, is clearly depicted by

John (Revelation 16:13). The Lord allows Satan to execute a program in His wrath against the whole world.

Some people believe that Armageddon will be a conflict between the Roman Empire and the northern confederacy headed up by Russia. Others look at it as a conflict between the Roman Empire and the kings of the East, or the Asiatic powers. Still others characterize it as a conflict between all the nations and God. There are even more views, some based on certain Scriptures, which would take more divergent views. One can quickly see the tremendous spread of concepts which adherents have held across the years.

The great movements of armies in the conflict of Armageddon begin with an invasion of Palestine by the king of the north and the king of the south (Daniel 11:40). The head of the Roman Empire, this western European and northern African confederation, is known as the little horn of Daniel. The head of the Israeli states will be federated together by the creation of a covenant (Daniel 9:27). Obviously the Jewish nation will need security against invasion by the Arabic nations as well as from any other potential foe. With this invasion the events of the campaign begin. As a result, the whole world is shaken.

The initial movement in the first part of Armageddon is described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The powers represented in this tremendous chapter have already been identified as Russia and her satellites. Therefore, only the events need to be summarized. There is general agreement among many evangelical Bible teachers today concerning the specific chronology. It surely would be during the first portion of the broad spectrum of the total campaign. Russia makes an alliance with Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Germany and Turkey (Ezekiel 38:2,5,6). The land of Palestine seems like a pushover and easy prey (38:11). A protest is made to this invasion but it goes unheeded. The extent of the battle must be learned from other Scripture. Ezekiel omits the progress of the conflict but rather describes the destruction of those who invade the land on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:2-4). Here God intervenes through a convulsion of nature (Ezekiel 38:20-22). It is such a severe thing that seven months are consumed in disposing of all the dead bodies. Remember, this is only the first section of the total campaign of Armageddon.

There are a number of considerations which make it clear that this invasion by Gog isn't the same as the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16:16 and 19:17-21. In the first there are definite allies mentioned along with Russia, while with Armageddon all the nations of the world are going to be engaged (Joel 3:2). Gog comes from the north while at Armageddon the armies come from the whole earth. Gog invades to take a spoil and there is a protest against Gog's invasion (Ezekiel 38:13), while at Armageddon there isn't anything heard because all the armies are joined against the people of Israel in Jerusalem. Gog in Ezekiel 38 involves Russia, heading the armies in the invasion (Ezekiel 38:7), but in the last portion of the campaign of Armageddon, the beast himself is the head of the invasion. Russia is overthrown by God's creating convulsions of nature while the armies of Armageddon are destroyed by the sword that goes out of the mouth of Christ. It is interesting and important to keep in mind these important distinctions.

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OCTOBER PANEL

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

Q. "We have some preachers in our area who say that God doesn't heal sick people today. They believe the power was given to the apostles, and after they died it wasn't extended to anyone else. Do you think this is true? I've seen many people prayed for but I've not seen anyone I know personally who has been cured."

A. You perhaps have in mind what might be termed "instantaneous" healing. As an example, we have never seen an arm or leg that was broken healed instantly. The original physical condition would need to be verified first of all. This isn't to imply that if it pleased the Lord He couldn't do it. In a much larger sense God does heal sick people today. In each case it is not a matter of demanding or insisting, but a commitment that is dedicated to affirming, "Not my will, but Thine be done." The Lord has given us intelligence as well as medicine and doctors. God, in His sovereignty, may choose to use a physician to bring restoration physically. Those people whom we have seen cured have all been in instances where the Lord has used the illness and the healing to His glory. We don't limit the Lord's means in healing nor do we limit the time element in His divine working.

Q. "Is the use of 'yoga' contrary to Biblical teaching?"

A. Yoga and Christianity are actually poles apart. The first comes from the areas of India and is built on nonbiblical philosophies. It is a "do-it-yourself" religion which, with all of the others like it, are under the condemnation of Galatians 1. They are a "different gospel." There is only one way of salvation and no other than the one in the Bible. It took God's infinite Son to make it possible for us to have eternal life. The devil will always seek to come in insidiously to bring our downfall in most subtle ways. Avoid those things which are not firmly based upon Scriptural truth!

Q. "What do you think of a young minister criticizing other religions from the pulpit? (In my estimation, regardless of what church one's a member of, they are all good people.) Why not let other religions believe what they wish?"

A. Keep in mind the extremely important principle that we are not saved on the basis of whether we are good or not. The Bible teaches, "There is not one that doeth good, no not one." God reminds us of the fact that even our righteousnesses are as "filthy rags" in His sight. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." There is only one way by which we can be saved. This is through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, appropriated by us through faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8, 9). If we let other religions believe what they wish, that would mean there would be no reason for missionary work; no need for preaching or evangelistic meetings. It would be the height of spiritual indifference if we did not help others to see the condemnation resting upon their heads by rejection of the light of God's truth. Comments or warnings can be made from the pulpit in love, yet they must be made clearly. There is only one way to heaven and that is through Jesus Christ as Savior (John 14:6). Sometimes it is good to get people disturbed so they will begin to think about their position before God and just exactly what they believe. Being faithful to the Word of God and emphasizing the fact that the only way of salvation is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the business of anyone who stands behind the sacred desk.

Q. "Regarding the account in Matthew 21:18, 19 of Jesus cursing the fig tree, do you believe that the barren fig tree refers to the nation Israel?"

A. There are several prominent passages on this picture. We should also include Mark 11:12-14 with the one in Matthew since they refer to individual Israelites, not to the nation as a whole. They were being given this opportunity for spiritual fruit but none was to be found. Just as the Lord said in another place, "The kingdom is being taken away from this generation." Fig trees which have retained their leaves through the winter usually have figs also. It was still too early for new leaves or fruit and Christ could have expected some fruit that was already there. The Lord wanted to see if there had been any residue of faith and godliness in Israel from what the prophets had preached in the Old Testament. The other passage is Luke 13:6 which does have reference to the nation as a whole. This section is our Lord Jesus coming to Israel now as a nation. It isn't a picture of being withered away. He came seeking fruit and suggests it be given the opportunity for fruit bearing. He says, "Let's see if there will be fruit." And, of course, there were above 500 brethren, as well as the apostles and later multitudes. There were many who believed. Thank God there is always opportunity for an individual to receive the Savior by faith!

Q. "The Bible speaks of the meek inheriting the earth. We also read where the lamb shall lie down with the lion and that a child shall play at the adder's den. Somewhere it declared, 'The earth shall abide forever.' Most ministers say that the Church will be with the Lord forever. Who are the ones to inherit the earth?"

A. There are several important parts to this particular question. Matthew 5:5, as a part of the Sermon on the Mount and as one of the Beatitudes, speaks about the meek inheriting the earth. Reference to the lamb lying down with the lion and circumstances during the Millennium are recorded in Isaiah 11:6-9. In Ecclesiastes 1:4 we read, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." Keep in mind that there are other passages in Scripture which specifically state that the earth as we know it now will not abide forever. The seeming contradiction is explained when one has a proper understanding of the book of Ecclesiastes which is a treatise on man's reasoning. Apart from God he can only see things as empty, without permanent value, and leading to frustration. "All is vanity." This isn't God speaking, although the Lord directed that this bit of man's philosophical thinking should be recorded in the Scriptures. While man says, "The earth shall abide forever," God replies, "No, that's not the case. The earth is going to be destroyed so that there can be a new heaven and a new earth." As far as natural man is concerned, he has no other concept. The earth was here yesterday, as well as in the distant past. Therefore, from all indications it will continue on indefinitely. The Lord affirms that just the opposite is true. It is most definitely true that the Church will be with the Lord forever (I Thess. 4:13-18). Those who inherit the earth, according to Revelation, will be all the saints of God; those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ. These will be the meek ones. There will be a new heaven and a new earth and righteousness will continue to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Q. "In I Corinthians 7:14, is the unbelieving partner actually saved without a personal commitment to Christ?"

A. This passage has puzzled many Bible readers since they fail to realize that sometimes the same word in English can have more than one meaning. At this point, remember an important rule of Bible interpretation: never put a doubtful passage, or a section with unclear meaning, over against a "verily, verily" truth. Throughout God's Word we come to the full recognition that absolutely no person can actually be saved without a personal commitment to the Savior. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My words

and believes on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul isn't trying to deny or negate those wonderful passages. The apostle would never give an explanation of salvation contrary to that in the Gospel (Romans 10:9, 10). No unbeliever, as a partner in marriage, can be saved without a personal commitment to Christ. The words "sanctified" and "holy" are related Biblically. They do not always picture salvation from an eternal standpoint but rather as an involvement with many vicissitudes and experiences of life, can provide a terrific testimony on the part of the saved one over against the unsaved. It can also place the whole family relationship in a new framework. In this manner the children will be set apart as highly privileged. Generally speaking they are more apt to be saved than if either one of the parents went off from them. In grace, married partners are to live together so that salvation may eventually reach the household in individual and personal commitment. God's ultimate desire is for entire families to be born again!

Q. "Are the words 'heart' and 'mind' synonymous?"

A. From both a physical and medical standpoint the answer is no. We read in Matthew 22:37 these words, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Here a clear distinction is made. The word "heart" is used in several ways in Scripture. It refers physically to that organ which pumps blood through our system. At the same time, most generally, it is also used to refer to the whole of one's emotional being. The mind is a part of that but the heart is far more than merely the mind. To be saved, a man must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with his mind but that is not enough. The devils believe with their minds (James 2:19). They are certainly not saved. It requires not just intellect but the entire being in its total personality.

Q. "Are fallen angels and demons the same thing?"

A. We know, first of all, that Satan is over all demons. All angels originally, including the devil, were in a state of perfection. Some followed Lucifer in his sinful pride so that now we have fallen angels. It seems from Scripture that apparently demons are not bound whereas fallen angels are (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). There is an excellent word on this subject in the New Scofield Bible, page 1003. From all the available verses involved there does appear to be a real difference between these two groups. People used to laugh at the thought of demons, but now possession by evil spirits is being talked of more and more. Exorcism is the process of expelling demons. So, generally speaking, there is no passage in Scripture that says demons equal fallen angels, although they all seem to be a part of the same army under Satan.

Q. "Are people going to recognize each other in hell?"

A. Thank the Lord that the answer to this we will never know experientially if we are born-again believers in Christ. On this question the Bible does not give us a specific answer. In Luke 16:19-31 we have the account of the rich man who is in hades, the abode of the unrighteous dead. There is clearly recognition in that place to which all go who have rejected Christ where they will await the final judgment and eventual consignment to hell. Based on this account one would be inclined to believe that people will recognize each other in hell. This might well make hell in part hell. There will be nothing there but anger and viciousness with all good compassion eliminated. Part of the suffering in hell is the utter loneliness of individuals who are in that place because they have nowhere to turn for friendship or fellowship whatsoever. We hate even to speak about hell because it is such a terrible place. Even the Bible is very reserved in its comments. Still, it gives us enough of a hint to indicate that it is an indescribably terrible place in every way. You may be sure there will be no such thing as love or friendship in hell.

Q. "Jesus states in Matthew 19:28 that His twelve disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Judas fell from his apostleship. Did the Lord include Judas when He made this statement or will it be Matthias, the one who was selected to replace Judas?"

A. The verse reads, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This "regeneration" doesn't mean the regeneration of the soul. This is the renovation of the earth as in Isaiah 35. Our Lord knew at that time that Judas would betray Him. In His omniscience He knows all things perfectly, naturally, completely and at once. Matthias was eventually selected as his replacement (Acts 1:23-26). There are two schools of thought concerning this passage and its fulfillment. Some think the 12th apostle will be Matthias. Certainly he was the one chosen. Others hold to the opinion that it will be Paul because of the importance of his later ministry. Certainly, in the book of Acts, he and Peter were the prominent ones. Still in all, as far as Matthew 19:28 is concerned, Jesus called disciples, so it could well be Matthias. It is not a point for dogmatism.

Q. "Was it necessary for Jesus to be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit? Did He have the Holy Spirit before the dove lit on His shoulder?"

A. Whenever there is an area of Christian judgment we don't say we have the last word. Here, however, we can be absolutely certain. Our Savior, as well as the Holy Spirit, are both a part of the Trinity. Notice that Scripture doesn't say that Christ received the Holy Spirit. It tells us that when the Lord was baptized John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. Nowhere in Scripture does it refer to our Lord receiving the Holy Spirit. They are both a part of God the Father, co-equal, co-eternal, and full of the same majesty, glory and honor. Some have the idea from life that a son is younger and perhaps not as illustrious as his father. Also that the Spirit may be something else, almost as an influence. These views are altogether wrong. To summarize the situation it would be proper to declare that everything which transpired prenatally and in the incarnation with reference to our Lord Jesus Christ was with the full cooperation and the full partnership of the Holy Spirit. While the Holy Spirit comes on our Lord Jesus as a dove, He never came to man this way. Rather, He came on man as fire because there was dross and impurity to burn out. With Christ this wasn't needed. The Bible never confuses the Persons of the Trinity. Christ always was God, even prenatally, so He couldn't have received the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism.

Q. "Will you please explain the following phrases: 'to fall,' 'to fall into sin,' and 'to fall away.'"

A. This phrase "to fall" is found in the book of Jude verse 24 in that great benediction. It means literally, "stumbling." Satan knows he can't rob us of our salvation so he seeks to trip us up and draw us away from God. "To fall into sin" is another way of expressing the thought of stumbling into sinning. It isn't a question of falling away from salvation. Our manner of life as Christians should be to walk clearly and steadily in the light of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. "To fall away" is a phrase from II Thessalonians 2:3. "That day shall not come, except there come the falling away first." This teaches us the dangers of apostasy. Those who have been professing Christians (not possessing) who fall away from their declarations and go their own sinful, iniquitous ways were never saved in the first place. The falling away can come through temptation, persecution or other ways. In the visible church today there are many people who have made a profession but their lives aren't changed. They don't possess Jesus Christ, and more significantly, He doesn't possess them. When the pleasures of this world entice them they fall away.

They simply went along with those who were real, born-again Christians. Theirs is the judgment of perdition.

Q. "In II Kings 6:5, 6 there is an incident which relates to the prophet Elisha. 'But as one was felling the beam, the axhead fell into the water; and he cried, and said, Alas, master! For it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in there, and the iron did swim.' Will you please explain this passage?"

A. Elisha was to Elijah what Joshua was to Moses. The two were both understudies. When Elijah was caught up to glory he asked Elisha what he would like as a parting gift. The gracious and wise answer was for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to be upon him. He was asking for the right of the firstborn's inheritance from his father. He was promised the bestowal if his faith was kept with singleness of purpose. He did fulfill the requirement and as a result he practically doubled the miracles of Elijah. The account of the axhead floating is an actual, historical occurrence. The explanation is simply that it was a miracle of God. In this particular case the laws of nature which declare that iron will not swim, were for the moment put aside. This was truly a supernatural event!

Q. "If a person finds himself in a church where he feels the Holy Spirit is not in control, should he try to remedy the situation or just quietly leave?"

A. This is a troubling question and difficult to answer without knowing all of the exact conditions. First of all, in love, always try to remedy the situation. Do not back away but let your position be known. Do it carefully as well as prayerfully. Try to avoid antagonizing people in what you say or do. At the same time, you owe it to the Holy Spirit to let the facts be known as you see them. There are churches which have gone so far afield in apostasy and unbelief that it seems they are past redemption so far as returning to allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way. In this case one should leave, telling those in authority very kindly your personal position and convictions. This, we believe, would be the Scriptural way of handling the situation.

Q. "Does the book of Obadiah refer to the problem between Egypt and Israel today?"

A. It is interesting to note how people are seeking for Biblical light relative to the tense situation between Egypt and Israel. As a matter of fact, in Ezekiel there are more chapters given to Egypt than found in any other book. There are also a number of chapters in Jeremiah. Obadiah is the only book in the Old Testament with just one chapter, however, the reference is not to Egypt and Israel. Egypt is south and west of the Holy Land while Edom is definitely south and east of Jerusalem and Canaan proper. Looking at the eastern side of the Jordan there are three nations related to Israel: Amon, Moab and Edom. Edom was a brother of Jacob while Amon and Moab were children of Lot. Egypt was never related to Jacob's descendants. So, while Obadiah does talk about God's judgments in the end times on the enemies of Israel, the reference specifically isn't to Egypt.

Q. "Lately I've been wondering if Adam and Eve would go to heaven. I can't recall their offering any sacrifices or repenting of their sin."

A. It is generally accepted among Bible believing students that Adam and Eve would be in heaven. We remember that after the two had eaten of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden their eyes were open and they knew they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. This was to cover their shame of the sin. God had pronounced judgment upon them as well as upon the serpent. The Lord Himself made for them coats of skins so that they could be properly clothed.

This was a type of Christ who was made unto us righteousness. These were divinely provided garments so that the first sinners might be made fit for God's presence. They weren't instructed at this point to make any kind of an altar. Yet, God in a sense provided the altar and the sacrifice because He had to kill the innocent animal in order to make them coverings.

Q. "Focusing on Genesis 1:28 where God tells Adam and Eve to 'replenish the earth,' would this lead us to believe that there were human beings on the earth before Adam and Eve?"

A. There are those who hold to such a view, however, it certainly isn't supported in Scripture. There is no Biblical basis to the concept that the human family began antecedent to Adam and Eve. God's dealings have always been with Adam from the start. "Therefore, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Keep in mind that the word "replenish" means one thing today in comparison with its usage during the time of the King James translation. In Hebrew the word simply means "to fill." We must be careful how we seek to apply certain words.

Q. "Was the apostle Paul a married man?"

A. The answer to this seems clear from his own statement in I Corinthians 7:8, "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I." The strong implication is that Paul was not a married man. There was no law against it in connection with his religious duties before his conversion. There has been the suggestion that perhaps he was a widower. We have no Scriptural evidence to that effect. It may well be that Paul had the gift of celibacy. Without question, if he had been married, after he became a Christian, his wife would certainly have led a very lonely life. This may be one reason why, in the wisdom of God, he remained single. It enabled him to be free to go as the Lord directed.

Q. "How is it possible for Lucifer to have sinned against God when no sin existed in heaven? Was it possible for God to create a being that He knew would sin and destroy perfection? Did the angels, therefore, have free wills and the ability to choose sin?"

A. The answer to your three questions is a three-fold yes. Ezekiel 28 indicates that Satan was created perfect in wisdom and holiness. God made angels, as well as man, creatures able to choose. He wanted those who would love Him naturally and not by force. Certainly the Lord knows all things actual or possible. The devil wasn't created as a fallen angel. Yes, angels have free wills, just as man does. They have the ability to choose. This is why we have the expression of will in Isaiah 14:13,14, "I will."

Q. "What can one say to a person who thinks a Christian can't sin?"

A. There are those who hold to the unscriptural view of "sinless perfectionism." One clear answer from the Bible is found in I John 1:8-10, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." How could anything be more specific? Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John is talking to Christians. The ideal Christian life is one apart from sin. Thank God, however, there is plenty of provision made in case we do sin (I John 2:1). We have heard one Bible teacher's suggestion, "If a man says he doesn't sin, don't argue with him. Just go home and ask his wife!"

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“A WORLD OF LIONS”

By: Reverend Charles Swindoll, Pastor
Evangelical Free Church
Fullerton, California

The world is filled, as it was in the day of the prophet Daniel in the long ago, with lions. While some have been tamed, there are many more who have not been. I remember a fellow who attended my high school. He was a fellow who was frankly just as mean as he could be. He dressed all in black. He wore a black turtleneck and a black tight pair of pants. He even had black hair with a big ducktail in the back. You know that type of person, I'm sure. He had big taps on his shoes and he was thoroughly mean. He was a football nut and played linebacker on defense, fullback on offense. And he just kind of laid around in the grass and jumped up and ate people every once in awhile, just to kind of keep himself alert!

There were kids in the school who tried to witness to him. He'd never listen for he just hated the Name of Jesus. He used to curse and do all sorts of things to embarrass any of the Christians. He took delight in devouring them like a roaring lion. Then one day he was in his own motorboat. It had a real thin, shallow hull on it with a big, heavy Evinrude motor on the back. He was skimming around the west end of Galveston Bay and flipped over in a sudden storm that came up. The boat went under but thankfully this fellow found a rock. It was covered over with barnacles. As he grabbed hold of the rock, the surf in the tumultuous squall that came up moved him up and down. The front of his body just became crab meat as he was raked up and down. Suddenly he thought, "Maybe there is something to prayer. I've heard about that." He said something like, "Oh, God, if you will save me I'll do your will." It wasn't but two or three minutes until the Coast Guard, led by God, came right around the end of the jetty and was able to pick him up. He quickly forgot his promise when he healed up. Of course, he still bore the marks on him although he never kept his vow. Then through an interesting and tragic chain things changed. This mean fellow was dating a girl in his senior class. He had an unfortunate automobile accident in which she was killed and he was thrown through the windshield. He received an ugly cut right across his face. He has it to this very day. He said to me, "Chuck, you know it was in the hospital when I took my first shower after that accident. I took all of my clothes off and was getting ready to get into the tub. When I looked into the mirror I saw the marks of a very stubborn man. So, I just got down on my knees, right there in that hospital bathroom, and I confessed, "Lord, I'll keep my promise." Here was now a tamed lion who at this very moment is a minister of the Gospel. He had roared all the way through life until God said, "That's enough roaring!"

Remember, in the words of Henrietta Mears, "The world cannot breed a lion that God cannot tame." That also includes you! That includes the child you think that God has taken His hand off. That includes the one you may have taken off your prayer list. You may have thought God is through there but He isn't. That business friend of yours, that colleague with whom God isn't finished. There will be west jetties in their lives, too, an accident, a series of events, which will tame them and bring them to Him. Yes, the Bible is an amazing book because God is an amazing God!

"WORRY"

By: Dr. Curtis Mitchell

These thoughts are dedicated to everyone who has worried in the past, and everyone who at present might be worried, or any who might plan to worry in the future! Worry is certainly common to all of us. It is increasingly a problem in our world as man suddenly discovers that he is a victim of his own technology. Jesus Christ provides the ideal possibility for a worry-free life. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). A heart free from fear should be our consistent experience. Unfortunately, none of us consistently appropriates all of the provisions we have in the Savior.

The classic passage is in Matthew 6:25-34. In verse 25 we are actually commanded not to worry. Coming as an imperative we read, "Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on." Don't think you are doing God a favor by dressing like "something the cat drug in." Using another form of the same word Paul also commands us, "Be anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6).

In verses 26 to 32 we see how really ridiculous it is to worry. If God gives us our life He will certainly take care of the things to sustain it. An argument comes from biology in verse 26, "Consider the birds." One doesn't see any neurotic birds around and yet they are taken care of. "You're worth more than any birds. You're special!" Worry deceives you into thinking the Lord doesn't care.

In verse 27 we are reminded that we can't do anything about most things anyway. You can't even add one small cubit to your stature. In verses 28 to 31 we have a strong persuasion from botany. "Consider the lilies and the grass." Although they are only temporary and transitory, God takes care of them. You are permanent and very special in His eyes. Verse 32 shows us from pagan philosophy the folly of worry. It's perfectly logical for the unsaved to go around worrying about the stock market; being all ripped apart about their security. The child of God who acts like this is denying the very existence of God.

No wonder the Savior has to observe, "Oh ye of little faith." Every time you and I worry, regardless of the circumstances, it is always a lack of faith. In essence we are saying, "God, I don't believe you can handle this situation."

The Bible not only gives us the cause for worry, but also it gives us the cure. We need to develop a growing faith in God and His Word. It is a fact that as our faith grows our worry will also diminish. We know that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). This means more than just reading the Bible. You can even memorize verses of Scripture and never hear what God is telling you. To "hear" the Word means that you are forcing yourself to face the implications of what the Lord is telling us. Without question, one of the best ways to get to

know the Savior better is through this Book. You cannot develop a growing faith without getting consistently into the Scriptures. Only in this way can you find out what His plans and principles are for your life. This causes you to develop a consistent confidence in Christ so that worry becomes a diminishing factor in your life.

Occasionally there are momentous problems which crash in upon us. When you come to an emergency situation you need immediate help. First of all, force yourself to admit your own inadequacy. Remember, God's strength is made perfect in weakness. I then ask myself, "Mitchell, is God able to do something about this problem?" I use the Bible to see exactly what God has done. I may read the same passage untold times and yet I need to hear what God is telling me. This is how my faith is stimulated. There are hundreds of God's promises to consider. Why not list some of them in the flyleaf of your Bible? Remember, "My God shall supply all your need" (Philippians 4:19). "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). Force yourself to face the implications of those promises. Hear what God is telling you. You will be thoroughly convinced that not only is the Lord willing to take your problem, but also it is His strongest desire. So often I say to myself, "Now, Mitchell, you're an idiot if you try to handle worry by yourself. God is more than adequate to handle your need. He practically begs you to give Him your worry. Why don't you let Him have it and then go to sleep?" I remember the words, "By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving." I then can enter in with the realization that "the peace of God that passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-8). This is what stimulates your faith so that the worry begins to flee.

To be realistic there will be times in your life when this procedure will need to be repeated the very next day. You know what you do with a physical malady. When symptoms come, a spoonful of medicine is taken. The symptoms go away if it is the right medicine. When the symptoms recur, you take another spoonful of medicine. There have been times in my life when worries come and I have had to go through this same process four or five times a day. Each experience my faith is stimulated.

In Matthew 6:33 the Lord enjoins us, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." In other words, put the Lord and His program at the top of your totem pole. Be correctly oriented toward the Savior. It is much like what Paul declared, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things below" (Colossians 3:2).

Reverend Charles Swindoll tells an interesting story about a young couple who had gone to a Navigator's Bible conference. All week long this key verse was hammered away, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." The husband and wife, driving home, decided they would make this their life motto. As they rode along praising the Lord because of their mountaintop experience, the man lost control of the car. As it crashed the automobile ended upside down in a ditch beside the highway. The couple crawled out, brushed themselves off, discovering they weren't seriously hurt. They got on top of the upside down car. Claspng their hands they closed their eyes and began to sing the Doxology. When they finished, they opened their eyes to see a policeman who had come up. He was standing there respectfully with his hat off over his heart. Well, when you stop to think about it, why not sing? My unsaved neighbors live with worry. I don't need to. In coming to know Christ as Savior I am supposed to have some answers and resources. Paul could testify, "I've learned in whatsoever state I am, there-with to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

Jesus also tells us, "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil

thereof" (Matthew 6:34). We are to live one day at a time and not worry about the future. The devil's is if he can't get you worrying about something that's happened in the past, or something happening right now, he will seek to get you worrying about what you envision might happen in the future. Worry has such a vivid imagination! Some of you have cultivated the fine art of worry, honing it down to a fine edge! Let me give you a suggestion. Get yourself a worry book. Go to the store, buy a little looseleaf notebook and carry it in your pocket or purse. Every time you catch yourself worrying, get out your book and put down the date, recording explicitly the thing you are most concerned about. You know what will happen? By the end of the month you will see how foolish worry has been. Ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredths percent of the things you worry about in the future never happen. You waste all that nervous energy worrying about it, and it never takes place. The things that are really going to happen, we are usually too unknowing to worry about. So, why worry about anything? Begin to realize the truth of the fact, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). The same Savior who saw you through the crises in the past will also see you through any that might lie ahead. Yes, live each day at a time. Do each task as it appears. Give your best as each situation arises, and then leave the rest to the Lord. Worry is needless, useless, injurious, and worst of all it is pagan. Worry is a terrible testimony. We are living in a pragmatic society which is looking for something that works. It is not enough just to have a bumper sticker on your car affirming, "Christ is the Answer," as true as that is. We have to put our theology into shoe leather, showing others in the nitty-gritty of daily living that the Savior really is adequate. In this day and age, increasingly men's hearts are failing them for fear. This is why we ought to stand out as lights so that others may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Remember these words of challenge, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

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“BEARING FRUIT”

By: Dr. David Hocking

When a person looks back over his life and tries to reflect on what he has done, he often asks the question, "What has really remained of lasting value?" We should want to make certain that we become involved only in those activities which will bring glory to God's Name. There is almost a Christian obsession about business which seems to destroy the life right out of us, taking away what is really important. Our Lord taught us what is really important in His discourse about the vine and the branches as recorded in John 15:1-17. In the original language this is all one paragraph. It virtually throbs with the illustration of bearing fruit. There are different opinions as to what the fruit is here. It makes all the difference in the world as to how you understand it. We know there is the fruit of salvation. This isn't in view here or we would have someone here who is losing his salvation. It says he is cast away like a branch and is burned up in the fire. Some commentators believe the referral is to good works, encouraging Christians to devote themselves to service. There is no question that this is important since we are created unto good works. There are those who are led to Christ which could also be thought of as fruit bearing. As important as this is, I don't believe this is what the Lord has in mind in John 15. I believe the best way to interpret God's Word is to let the Bible explain itself. According to Galatians 5:22, 23 the fruit God is talking about is a product of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is described in a nine-fold way: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. Now, these aren't individual fruits in the sense of being separated one from the other. Note that it is "fruit" in the singular. This is what Christ is talking about which appears obvious from the context.

According to the text, the true vine is Jesus Christ. The Greek word "true" has the idea of being genuine, instead of counterfeit. We see a lot of counterfeit vines around, even individual Christians. You aren't the vine; you aren't the source of strength or power. Jesus is the vine. The Father, according to this illustration, is the vinedresser. God's love causes Him to discipline and chasten His child. The purpose is that we might become more productive (Hebrews 12:5-11). God wants to produce fruit.

The branch is the believer. There is a lot of interesting things about a branch. When I was in Palestine I went to a vineyard being curious about this illustration. I noticed that these vines have ropes tying them up so they wouldn't drop on the ground. The farmer told me, "Well, if the vine falls down it will usually spoil the fruit. If it breaks off, in about a day's time, it withers away." This forms an interesting parallel to our own productivity in an intimate relationship with Christ. These vines in Palestine have an enormous trunk root system which is big and strong. It has to support the branches and fruit. So is our relationship to Christ who is the support of our lives.

There is also discipline for the branches. Our Lord taught that every branch in Him

that doesn't bear fruit, He takes it away. Every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it may bear more fruit. The purpose of God in disciplining is so we may bear more fruit. The Lord wants you to have more love, joy, and peace in your life. The way He accomplishes that in terms of spiritual maturity is by bringing chastening, testing and trials to your life. He will never stop doing that until the day Jesus comes again. James reminds us that the testing of our faith is producing patience, both of which are fruit of the Holy Spirit. No matter what your problems are the Lord allows these things for your good. He is trying to make you more productive in your life.

The vinedresser prunes the vine. In the Greek this means "to cleanse," or literally "to wash with water." The farmer has to be careful not to put too much water on the vines. It must be done properly. It is all a very delicate process. I see a Father's love here as He is pruning and chastening us, applying the washing of the water of the Word. He does so gently, yes, lovingly, so that the job can be completed. Some things cause friction but they also round off the rough edges. If you want to be a more loving person you have to realize that discipline, suffering and testing can be a necessary part of it.

Notice what the Scripture says, "Every branch that does not bear fruit, He takes away." The whole issue is dealing with the Christian's value and importance. Paul was concerned about being put on the shelf because of a lack of discipline in his life (I Corinthians 9). According to the Bible, if you aren't productive in the fruit of the Spirit, you lose your value usefulness as a believer. No one likes to have a person minister to them who has no love, joy, peace, or longsuffering. Fruit is the key to all Christian ministry.

The third thing is the matter of dependency of the branches upon the vine. Jesus urged, "Abide in Me, and I in you." That means to really make your home there. Settle down so that you are comfortable with Christ. The key is the Word of God being in you. Your brain is like a computer. As the Scripture goes into it you then become programmed to think as Jesus would think, react as He would react, and respond as He would respond. As a result, you manifest the likeness of Christ. The Savior pointed out, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself." Christian, if you try to produce love in and of yourself you are always going to be frustrated and discouraged. Don't try to drum up joy in yourself. It takes trust and dependence upon the power of God's life in you to accomplish these things.

The dependency of the branches bring the evidence of fruit itself. The branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in Christ. Unless the Lord has so absorbed Himself into your life, your thoughts won't be His thoughts. Until you get on your heart what is on His heart, you can't be productive. It isn't what I think or what I believe, it is what the Lord wants in my life. The most important thing is for me to know Him so that I may grow in His grace and knowledge. Everything else is secondary. The extent of fruit is that as we abide in Christ we can bear much fruit. Apart from Him we can do nothing. I don't believe Jesus is teaching us in this passage that there are some Christians who just have some fruit, others who have more fruit, and still some few who have much fruit. It just depends on where you are. We should be faithful whatever our calling, but the Lord wants all of us to bear much fruit. Only when we do can the Father be glorified. This is the purpose of our very existence.

We get to the point where we bear much fruit through the cleansing and pruning process. This makes us become more productive. There is nothing we can do apart from the source of power which comes from the vine.

There is a danger in not bearing fruit. Christ pointed out forcefully, "If anyone

does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." If we don't bear the fruit of the Spirit we lose our value and purpose. We aren't needed anymore and may be put on the shelf. There is also a loss of reward. The illustration of being in the fire and being burned is related to I Corinthians 3:11-15. The product of the Spirit's ministry is like gold, silver and precious stone. The product of the ministry of the flesh is like wood, hay and stubble. The latter burns up even though we are saved, yet so as by fire. This speaks of the judgment seat of Christ. This is like a graduation service in a college. All of the seniors may be graduating yet only a few receive the honors. The rewards may be different than what we think. Whether you are a five-talent person or a ten-talent person, the reward is hearing Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The one who understands the slave-master relationship understands the importance of those words.

Bearing fruit is very, very important. There is some real discipline needed if you want to experience this in your life. Our Lord taught that the power of His Word will affect the response of fruit-bearing. "If My words abide in you, you can ask what you want to and it will be done to you. And by this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." The productivity of your life will be fantastic when God's Word is poured into it. The Savior also emphasized the importance of a pattern of obedience. He reminds us, "If you keep My commandments, you abide in My love." Practical obedience to God's Word is the issue in terms of seeing the result of His fruit in our lives. Face the fact that apart from the Word we are lost. Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, I chose you." That word is "to elect." The primary emphasis to His disciples isn't simply salvation but also the issue of bearing fruit. Why did the Lord choose you and me? It certainly wasn't based on our worthiness! Some have the idea that they are so super-sainted that the Trinity is going to be lucky to have them in heaven. This isn't His plan at all. God didn't choose you because you were talented and could do a lot of things for Him. This foolishly ignores the greatness and sovereignty of the Almighty. The Lord selected you before the foundation of the world. He knew your name before you were ever born. What is His plan and design for your life? If I am truly to honor and praise Him my relationship to Christ is extremely important. He chose me that I might bear fruit.

There are definite results to expect. First, we are assured "Your fruit will remain; it will endure." The fruit of the Holy Spirit, according to Scripture, will never pass away. This is what we need to concentrate on. The promise comes, "Whatever you ask of the Father in My Name, He will give it to you." Mark it down Christian. Always study the Word first and then pray. The proper application of Scripture will govern your intercession. God's will is in the Word. Allow these truths to begin to control your entire outlook. This gives you the motivation for prayer. It affects your whole life. Bear fruit! God wants you to do this. Be done with lesser things when they conflict and become substitutes for the most important. The greatest thing you can ask God to do in your life is to make you a productive Christian in bearing fruit of the Holy Spirit. "Lord, make me productive with Your fruit, not simply my business and activity."

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"PSALM 139"

By: Dr. Al Sanders

David asks in verse 21 of Psalm 139 a question which is pragmatic in its basis, suggesting that it is possible at times to hate something and yet not have that hatred be considered by God as a sin. We remember Paul's exhortation: "Be angry and sin not." Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David's two questions are these: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those who rise up against thee?" In the light of this ask yourself, "Am I a good hater?" To hate someone for his own sake, or for any evil he or she may have done to us, would be entirely wrong. God's Word definitely speaks against such practice. As a matter of fact, the more we love God the more indignant we should grow with sin, especially if it is seen in our own lives. "Hatred does more damage to the container in which it's stored than to the person or the object on what it's poured." Too frequently we have a tendency to hate the sinner while at the same time respecting, countenancing, or even loving the sin. Whereas David had things in proper perspective. He knew correctly that we are to hate the sin but do as God shows us and that is to love or to have compassion on the sinner.

When it came to transgressions, David wasn't neutral in his feelings concerning evil. Verse 22 declares, "I hate them (that is, the sinfulness that is so rampant in the world) with perfect hatred." Now, "perfect" here means mature or full. Then he goes on to say, "I count them mine enemies." In other words, those who are against God, those who are enemies of the Lord are basically our enemies too, as believers in Christ.

When it comes to a proper stance we are to take on the subject of sinfulness, we can't possibly afford to compromise, to take simply the middle ground, or to be stand-offish and neutral. David looked upon the sinfulness of man as the Lord does--with a perfect hatred, hating their iniquity but loving God's creation. This is far different than a hatred that is born of a rebellious heart. Such is repeatedly condemned in Scripture!

There is another possible conception here, too. The subject of hatred being directed to those who are the enemies of God could refer not just to individuals and their practices, but also to our own thoughts and the sins that flood our concepts. Sometimes we allow our minds to run in channels which are really contrary to the will of God. Do we count such solicitations to evil as also being the enemies of God? What kind of hatred do we have of those temptations to which we seem continually to give in?

Aristotle once affirmed, "Anybody can become angry; that's easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way, that's not easy." David knew it but he had found the right way to be angry and sin not. Because you see, the man who can't be angry at evil really, in the final analysis, lacks the enthusiasm for God and good.

The final summary of Psalm 139 comes in verses 23 and 24. David entreats the Lord, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." First of all, a word of caution: don't ever utter this prayer unless you're willing for God to do exactly what He desires to do and what you request! It may be costly. It could well be an expensive thing emotionally, spiritually, and even physically if you ask the Lord to search you out and to remove those things which are displeasing and unseemly to Him. You see, the searching and the trying (which simply means to dig, to pillage, to rummage, to go through every particle and parcel in one's life) actually requires an impartial jury. That's why you or I couldn't be the judge and jury of our own lives. It doesn't work that way! David realized he couldn't trust himself to do this searching. . . and he was right.

The Psalmist was a man of supreme courage. I wonder if we are? Let's think back to when David was a young man. He executed a giant by the name of Goliath, using only a slingshot. Still, when he was in his early years he killed both a lion and a bear with his own hands. Yet, when it comes to the situation of looking into his own heart, he found that the hardest thing of all to accomplish. He was right in wanting to know all his sins, and in having them brought out into the open. Most of us are just the opposite--we'd like to forget ours! That doesn't necessarily mean to confess them, but rather just to have somebody overlook them so God can't see them. No, it's not an easy thing to do, to mean this prayer, "Search me, O God."

We must realize that sin is worse than a terminal disease. We can't expect to find restoration for our souls, minds or bodies without experiencing the cleansing God wants to give to us. For an example, if you're ill you go to a physician, trying to determine accurately the extent of the disease. You don't hold back on explaining to the doctor just exactly how you feel; you don't hesitate to recite every single ache and pain that just might possibly be significant for his diagnosis. This is why David is saying, "Rummage, pillage, dig through my life, Lord. Search me out and know in Your omniscience just exactly what my needs may be."

It was the ancient theologian John Calvin who commented on this verse, "That man (namely, the Psalmist David) must have a rare confidence, who offers himself so boldly to the scrutiny of God's righteous judgment." And he was right. Would we be as willing?

David plaintively asks, "See if there be." Do you suppose that God might find some unseemly thing in your life? I don't hesitate to say I know that there would be something in mine. And there's no way by which we can judge ourselves. It definitely has to be done by God. Don't try to accomplish it any other way.

Too many of us are like the little boy who proudly announced to his playmate, "I'm six feet tall." His friend laughed in scorn, "Of course you're not! How do you figure you're six feet tall?" Rather proudly the first lad pulled himself up to explain, "Well, I just simply took off my shoe and measured it up the side of my body. And it went six times so that means I must be six feet tall!" His friend scoffed and rightly chided, "Don't you know, you can't measure yourself by yourself?" And we can't, either. Nor can we even measure ourselves by our neighbor, or any other person, no matter how low or how high the standard. We have to measure ourselves by the perfect standards God has established. In the final analysis, that is all that counts. All things are open and naked to Him with whom we have to do.

Very beautifully, this verse and chapter end where verse one began. The whole

point is that our thoughts might be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The word "try" means to cull out, to sift, to test, to weigh, to make a trial. David bravely requests, "See if there be any wicked way. . . and lead me in the way everlasting." To summarize, this requires that we're definitely willing to let God take from us those oft-besetting sins. Or, as Augustine of old prayed, "Take the sins from me, and even more, take me from the sins." This is a beautiful way to start as well as to finish every day. The apostle John reminds us, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not." Then he goes on to say, "And if we do sin, make sure you understand that we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous."

"See if there be any wicked way in me." In the Hebrew it's not just so much the idea of sinfulness, although that's most certainly a part of it. But the translation is really the word "hurtful," or "the way of pain." You see on television a lot of advertisements for Anacin, Bufferin, Bayer Aspirin, and all of these headache remedies. But, I tell you the way of pain is not a physical problem that necessarily just gives us the headache to endure. The meaning behind this is that it pains God's Holy Spirit when we sin and when we live in such continual degradation.

Just be sure that when you pray to be released from your sins you really want to be delivered from all of them. Don't be like that carnal Christian who, during prayer meeting week after week, would always get up and pray something like this, "Oh, Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of our lives." You can imagine how this got to be so wearisome for everyone. Finally, one of the old deacons in the church took action. This particular night when people were given the opportunity to pray, he heard the weaker brother piously entone, "Oh, Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of our lives!" Well, the deacon knew what kind of a life the fellow had been leading. It was more than he could take so he urgently petitioned, "Don't do it, Lord! Instead of that, make him kill the spiders!" Do you have any spiders that need killing? We need to make certain that we really want to be released of our sins as well as from the power of those strong temptations which would seek to overcome us. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

At this point we have reached the halfway mark in our study of Psalm 139, having treated with the first six verses God's omniscience. And then secondly, the next series of six verses, 7 to 12, answering the question, where can a person hide from God? The third set of six verses, 13 to 18, deals with God's omnipotence. It is interesting to realize that here the Psalmist could have talked about the creative handiwork of the Lord throughout the universe. In this world we see He has formed things with such perfect order and they are held in proper balance by His almighty hand. We could also consider the fact that God's handiwork in omnipotence can be seen even in the tiny atom. But instead of any of these things the Psalmist deals with the subject of omnipotence from the standpoint of human creation: the remarkable aspect of our complete and complex bodies.

One of the large areas in the field of advertising today is packaging. People are paid vast sums of money to come up with designs which will attractively present the product to the public, not only in such a way that the consumer will buy the commodity, but also so that the package will give perfect protection to that item in shipping as well as on the way home after purchase. But in all of the developments in this intriguing field of containerization, no one has really improved upon the packaging the Lord has shown us in so many beautiful ways. For instance, consider a California Sunkist navel orange with that thick beautiful peel which protects the precious fruit so perfectly on the inside. Or, what about a banana

that has its wrapping tightly formed around it from the time it grows on the tree until in a "hand" with others it reached our kitchen table. But even more than these, God's packaging can be seen in the human life. Here in verse 13 of Psalm 139 David observes, "For Thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."

Let us look at that word "possessed," which indicates the Lord's rightful ownership. It is not just a case of God observing our lives (for we know from the earlier passages in this chapter that He does that continually and constantly). The thought here is that the Lord indwells us. This we realize is true if, by faith, we have received Jesus Christ as Savior. The Holy Spirit literally takes up residence within our bodies. We become the temples of God. But this is even far more than that. The idea signifies complete ownership in the lives of ours. That is perfect ownership!

The Psalmist goes on to say, "The Lord possesses my reins." Now in the Hebrew the idea behind "reins" is really the word "kidneys." You see, the ancients believed that the kidneys actually contained the seat of man's desires and longings! His most hidden and vital portion were his reins or his kidneys. And in a sense it is true. The sensitivity to pain in this region would cause some who might not be schooled in the field of human anatomy to think this might indeed be the central source of man's difficulties. But what is behind this particular idea is the fact that God has possessed the strongest sensibilities, the very driving powers and ambition of our lives.

David goes on to say in a further explanation, "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb." The word for covered means, "to weave or to knit together." What a perfect term for God's tapestry of the human life, weaving together the arteries, the membranes, the muscles, the nerves, the veins, the capillaries, all of these things knit together and necessary to one another.

The science of embryology was largely unknown in David's day, and yet here in vivid and delicate language he explains man's prenatal development. Because, you see, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, David is both a scientist and a theologian.

The only possible response to such a realization are the next four words: "I will praise Thee." "Never mind your past efforts," David urges us, while at the same time assuring his own heart, "I will praise Him." In school, at the office, driving along the freeway, when you are mad, when you are sad, when you are tempted, when you are discouraged--the secret is, "I will praise Thee."

It is not a case here of self-depreciation on the part of the author, because of some physical infirmity, but it is what God has done, so admirably constructed in these human bodies. Yet, we realize that they are constantly in danger of being dissolved because of innumerable problems and diseases. It is only when we realize that we are awesomely and wonderfully made that indeed we can say with the poet of old, "Our life contains a thousand strings, and dies if one be gone. Strange that a harp of a thousand strings should keep in tune so long."

Often we carry on with the mistaken idea that life is going to keep on just the same as it is now. But it never does. Things will never ever be the same. . . never. Job was so right when he observed, "My life is but a hand's breadth. My life is faster than a weaver's shuttle." What graphic pictures of how brittle our existence can be. James points out the fact that our lives are not more than merely a vapor, here for a moment, and then gone in a second of time.

Of course, from a spiritual standpoint we are actually made for all eternity. These souls will live on and the bodies will be given their resurrected form, even like that of our blessed Savior's. The problem is that, although the soul knows the marvelous works of God, so often the flesh is in control and we forget the Lord's handiwork. Never overlook the fact that the Lord places an important premium on the bodies of men and women. It may not be that we human beings value it very highly, however. In fact, I was interested to read recently in the Los Angeles TIMES where at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Dr. Donald T. Forman has propounded some amazing statistics. After exhaustive tests he has discovered that the inorganic components of a person weighing only 150 pounds are now worth \$5.60. Now, that may not sound like a great deal of value to you, but keep in mind that back in 1969, six years ago, the same person weighing 150 pounds was only worth \$3.50. If you go back as far as I do, to 1936 (and even further) the individual was only worth 98 cents. Of course, I repeat and stress the fact that those moneterial values are only as far as the chemical components are concerned. Again, in His omnipotent sight God's value is inestimable. He was even willing for His own Son to die for us. And we can never forget that tremendous truth, that our souls may know right well the fact that we are marvelously, wonderfully and fearfully made.

Dr. Alton Everest gives us a fascinating illustration that if a man were to make an electronic equivalent to the human brain it would require our largest building, something like the Pentagon in Washington, D. C., to house it, and all the electricity that could be generated at Niagara Falls to operate it. That is just the brain of one single individual.

As far as the ear is concerned, suppose you played a single note on the piano. After that, you played the very next adjacent note. While we are only able to hear from the piano two different notes, the human ear is able to detect ten other tones only represented by the crack on that piano between the two notes. A piano has 88 keys while the keyboard of the inner ear has about 15,000.

Stop to consider for one other moment the subject of the heart. This is a muscle that does most of the heavy work in the body, causing the blood to surge through-out our frame everyday that we draw breath. We take it all so much for granted. Actually, it is a double pump system with two circulatory systems all in one. If you could consider for a moment a figure eight in your mind's eye, then think about the heart as being at the junction of the figure eight. The lower part of this system is the circulation through the veins, arteries, capillaries of the body. The upper is the pulmonary circulation with blood sent through the lungs, purified, and then made ready for the repeat round trip. And you know, blood travels fast, too. It takes eight seconds for a round trip to the brain and only 18 seconds for a round trip to the big toe. On the average, the heart beats 72 times a minute but with exertion it can go to as rapid a pace as 200 times a minute.

At the normal rate, the heart beats about 100,000 times a day. Just how many times that would be for my lifetime or your life span I haven't tried to make my pocket calculator go that high. Let us estimate, again at this normal 72 times a minute rate, would be about 40 million times a year, and in a normal lifetime about two or three billion times. The amazing thing is that it does that normally, without any lubrication or vacation. Unlike most of our automobiles, which perhaps have to be recalled by the manufacturer, the human heart doesn't have those problems as a rule. Of course, we realize there are complications because of age, disease, or for some other circulatory reason. But we are talking about the general rule. In the human embryo the heart starts beating long before there even is a heart. The heart pumps from five to six quarts of blood through the vessels each minute. That means in a lifetime, pumping more than 264 million quarts! Now, to get an

idea of how much work this heart does, suppose you could take a single beat and convert the power that is generated into usable energy. Lift up your Bible for a moment. It weighs a couple of pounds. One heart beat could raise that Book a foot or more. Now that is a lot of concentrated power. Here is another illustration. If you could take all the power generated or represented by that heart in one single day's time (over a hundred thousand beats), and concentrate it into one huge throb of vital power, it would be sufficient to throw a Volkswagen some six stories into the air. That is absolutely amazing!

We know that all tissue has to rest at some time or other. But the question comes, how can the heart, which beats year in and year out, second in and second out, ever get any kind of a rest? The Lord has seen to that as well! Look at it this way. Each beat lasts approximately 1/8th of a second. The contractions take about 1/10th of a second, so that leaves about 1/16th of a second for the heart to be at complete rest. If you figured that out mathematically it would ultimately mean that the heart rests about six hours a day or 20 years during an average lifetime. The only problem is that this refreshing pause has to be broken up into rests lasting for only 1/16th of a second. Not very long intervals!

Suffice it to say, David wasn't an evolutionist. He believed in the creative power of God and that the Lord formed everything out of absolute nothing. Yes, marvelous and wonderful is the creation of our heavenly Father. But greater still is the marvel that He makes saints out of sinners and that the glory of the first birth, being physical, can't even begin to be compared with the glory of the second birth in eternal salvation.

Is evolution anything to be concerned about? Quite frankly, it takes vastly more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe in creation. Maybe you have heard this but it is a practical illustration. The probability of evolution is vaguely compared to someone believing that an explosion in a type foundry resulted miraculously in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. We are so wonderfully made and God's omnipotence is certainly shown clearly in the human formation of these fascinating bodies of ours.

Verse 15 suggests, "My substance was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." The word for "substance" here is "frame." In fact, the New American Standard Bible uses the possible idea of "bones." "My bones were not hidden from Thee." Let me suggest the very obvious that there is nothing more hidden than the development of the human fetus or embryo. There is no light in the womb and there are only dark and narrow confines.

The secret of God's labor is purposely not seen by man. As a matter of fact, much of the development of the inner man is still proceeding in secret. Only God can view what is taking place. One translation puts it this way, "We are embroidered with great skill." My wife does a lot of work on needlepoint as I'm sure many of you ladies do. I am absolutely amazed at how she can take those beautiful colors and make such pretty pictures from them. On one side the pattern makes perfect sense, but on the other it is a confusing mass of jumbled colors. As we consider all the aspects of God's creative handiwork in His omnipotence, relating it for this moment to the human body, what tapestry can even begin to equal the human fabric, hidden from others, revealed to none? Actually, our living substance is only completely seen by God.

In verse 16 we have the further information, "Thine eyes (that is, God's eyes) did see my substance." Here "substance" is a little different from the way it was used in the preceding verse. David says, "And in Thy book all my members were

written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Our family likes to go down to a place called the Pottery Shack in Laguna Beach. At specified hours you can watch the fellow there as he takes a worthless lump of unseemly clay and begins to shape it on the constantly turning wheel. When you look at what he is doing at first you would think it was going to be an exercise in utter futility. But, the potter has in mind what his work of art is going to look like in its final state. So does God when He looks at us. We ought to be profoundly glad for that! He sees all our imperfections but He knows what He can make out of us through His Holy Spirit in this life as well as in the life to come.

I was in the Cleveland Airport not too long ago and saw a fascinating motto over one of the desks. It really intrigued me so I copied it down. First of all, in big, bold letters there were the two beseeching words, "BE PATIENT." Then underneath that the legend explained, "God isn't through with me yet." How very true the realization of the Lord's testimony in this effect. Paul knew it as he wrote to the church at Philippi in affirming, "He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it (will work it out, will bring it to maturity) until the day of Jesus Christ."

The problem to be faced is that so often we are greatly troubled by defects which may appear on the outward surface, but then there isn't really a troubling of spirit by the deformities which come from within, in the soul. There are many people who buy artificial beauty from Grecian Formula 19, Miss Clairol, Mabelleine, or Revlon to supply natural beauty. In some cases that isn't a bad idea at all. But still we have to realize that beauty is only skin deep. There are spiritual needs and imperfections which have to be met and cared for as well.

Reflecting on God's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, the Psalmist begins his conclusion in verse 17, "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" If you were to look around your home for all the things you consider your valuables, what would you find? Some priceless bits of porcelain? Perhaps an antique piece of furniture handed down from a relative; maybe a gold coin. What are the things that are precious to you? The truly precious things are the thoughts of God. This is why Paul wrote to the Roman Church, "O, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33).

David wasn't alarmed by the fact that God knew all about him. I wonder if we would be. The Psalmist is convinced, "O Lord, how great are Thy works and Thy thoughts are very deep." What occupies our individual mental processes day by day? What do you think about in a given 24 hour period? If we were honest, I am afraid most of us would have to say we have thoughts of pride, contempt, criticism, jealousy, hate, selfishness and even at times, immorality. Even more, if you took us at our very best moments, perhaps that would be when our thoughts are centered upon prayer. Even then, we would have to agree that the sphere of our thought interest is vastly limited in understanding God's truth and love.

Have you ever wondered what God thinks about? With His omniscience, I can assure you He thinks about you and me. God has thoughts of love, tenderness, mercy and compassion. The Lord isn't willing that any should perish. It would be absolutely inconceivable to imagine this world without a personal, thinking Redeemer! How precious are the thoughts of God! Could this be said of us as we ruminate, thinking about this thing and that? I know on occasion, when I wake up very tired in the morning, not having slept too well, my wife will ask me what the problem was. I might respond by commiserating, "Well, if I could just turn my mind off!" Have you ever felt that way? One of the best ways to turn your mind off is to turn it

to the thoughts of God, realizing all of His love, grace, and compassion for us. Here we are told that God created just so much sand. If you have been to the beach in recent days and have seen all the sand along the shore, you probably think that sand is in plentiful supply; it is an innumerable commodity, and yet the Creator only made so much of it. I don't suppose there is anything we have more of than sand. Nothing is lighter than a grain of it and nothing is heavier than wet sand. But while God created only so much sand, there is absolutely no end to His thoughts for you and for me.

Five hundred years before Christ, the philosopher Pindar commented, "If all His glorious deeds my song would tell, the shore's unnumbered stones I might recount as well." And he was right!

The last part of this is, David confides, "When I am awake, I am still with Thee." There are people today who are asleep perhaps not physically but certainly spiritually. They may be asleep because of depression, sin, pride, or neglect. When these things happen you can certainly be sure that the Lord hasn't left us; He hasn't moved one iota. When we awake out of our spiritual coldness and lethargy we will find that God is still there waiting for us. One of the best ways to fall asleep at night or to arouse ourselves in the morning is by being awakened to the presence of God. It is true, when we awake we may find the trouble is still with us, but how much better to find that God is still with us to meet our troubles.

Quite frankly, as we come to verse 19 we find an abrupt change. It is only natural for us to wonder why. In the next six verses we have a perfect definition of what we might term God's "omni-righteousness." He is always just and fair at all times.

Let us read verse 19 and you will see what I mean, "Surely, thou wilt slay the wicked, O God; depart from me therefore, ye bloody men." The question which immediately comes to my mind is, "Does this really fit in a Psalm of praise?" Most definitely it does because God, who sees all evil, will also, ultimately, slay all evil.

We have many lessons which this nation learned individually as well as governmentally with the Watergate tragedy. It is a simple fact of life that some sins may go unpunished for lack of evidence or even for lack of desire and vigor. That can be the most discouraging. When it comes to the sins of men, our courts are so capricious, but God is always righteous. The Lord will not always suffer His creation to be defaced by wickedness.

A very fine Christian woman Bible teacher asked me not too long ago why I seemed to enjoy the book of Psalms so much. She was frank to point out, "I just never read or study that section anymore because there seem to be so many things injected which don't square with the New Testament principle of love. The writer will veer off into bloody thoughts." She cited this passage wondering, "Since in the New Testament Jesus tells us we are to love our enemies, why would David say, 'O, God, slay the wicked?'" That is a very good question. In Romans 1:28 we get a graphic picture of the wickedness of men's hearts. Of course, this entire section has much to say by way of commentary on the subject, but just briefly this one sentence: "And even as they (that is, those who have rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ) did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not seemly (or convenient)."

Let's look at this question for a moment. Why does David pray, "Surely Thou wilt

slay the wicked"? Remember, everything in the Bible isn't necessarily a reflection of God's will. The book of Ecclesiastes is a good example of that. Of course, that portion of Scripture is truly inspired, the recording of it, but it is a commentary on life from man's limited viewpoint. It honestly mirrors only finite human concepts.

The second thing is, David is concerned about the enemies of God, not his own personal enemies. There were those who had ridden roughshod over the grace and love God bestowed upon His creation. We are always going to have trouble with people. It is terribly sad that Christians face so much trouble with other Christians. Old Mel Trotter, after he found the Lord as his Savior, commented one day, "I know a lot of wonderful people who are going to go to heaven someday, and...oh... how I wish they would hurry up!"

In David's case he isn't asking to do the slaying himself. He knew that vengeance belongs to God. The Psalmist wasn't trying to get even. He simply points out that someday the wicked will be slain because of their rejection of God's gift of love.

What a commentary on the times we find in verse 20, "For they speak against Thee wickedly, and Thine enemies take Thy Name in vain." I think of the sick TV variety or comedy, so-called. Most of those performers, if they stop to think at all, wouldn't consider themselves as enemies of God. Yet, in their blasphemous mimicry of spiritual ideals they can't be considered much more than those who are enemies of God. The Lord gave them tongues and yet they used them to speak against Him, to take His Name in vain. The Hebrew translates it, "They make sport of God."

In reading verse 20 you have to be impressed with the fact that David is far more concerned about what these people do to God and His Name than what they could possibly do to him. Whether he is speaking about the actual physical enemies of God or the tempting sins which come with regularity to all of us, makes little difference because we experience both.

May the Lord help us to understand our relationship to those in the world. We cannot be isolated from such things but by the Holy Spirit we can be insulated from them. The Bible tells us that evil communications corrupt good manners and the actual translation is that evil companions ruin the testimony. Don't be corrupted by the times in which we are living, nor by society as it seeks to foist itself upon us with that which is considered to be good, but actually, in the sight of God, it is vain and blasphemous.

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"REVELATION"

By: Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson

It will help you to understand future prophetic events if you realize that Armageddon isn't just a single battle but rather an entire campaign. The first part of the total conflagration will be the invasion of Palestine by Russia along with her Communist satellites in northern Europe (Ezekiel 38, 39). God steps in and defeats Israel's enemies. It is important to remember that this invasion doesn't refer to a past event in Israel's history. It is obvious that no activity experienced in that nation's background is sufficient to be the fulfillment of such a tremendous foretelling. Certainly that land has been overrun in the past, bringing untold hardship to the people. None of them, however, would ever answer to the breadth, length, height and misery of this one by Russia as seen in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Ezekiel 37 deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel to her own land. This is pictured as a gradual process. It is a regathering in unbelief with no spiritual light in the assembled "carcass" (Ezekiel 38:8). Chapter 40, without any question, carries us into the kingdom age of Christ. So, before this can transpire, there will be the events of the Tribulation. The context of the passage shows that this transpires between the time of the beginning of the restoration of Israel to the land and the coming kingdom rule of Jesus Christ in the Millennium. References are made to the element of time such as "in the latter days" (38:8, 16). This has specific application to the latter years of God's dealing with the nation Israel.

Another indication of the chronology is in Ezekiel 38:11 as the Jews are inhabiting their own land. This means the event would take place after the covenant, made by the coming Antichrist with the people of Israel (Daniel 9:27). This is connected with Israel's conversion, an occurrence obviously still in the future. The destruction of Russia is a sign which opens the nation's eyes to the Lord (Ezekiel 39:22). The final removal of the blindness doesn't come until after the return of Christ. There is an indication that the land will even be reforested. Ezekiel 39:10 confirms this idea since Israel has always been dependent upon other sources of supply for lumber.

The invasion described in Ezekiel has been related to nearly every major prophetic event. These positions must be examined carefully in order to determine what exactly is going to take place. I don't believe that the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 are the same as those of Revelation 20:8. Ezekiel mentions only a northern confederacy as being engaged in the invasion. Revelation 20 portrays all the nations of the earth gathered together at the close of the kingdom age. In Ezekiel there is no specific mention of the instrumentality of the devil nor of his being bound for a thousand years prior to that invasion. When you consider Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:8 both things are actually emphasized.

We do not know specifically when this invasion takes place. We do know that it will

be when Israel is dwelling in her own land (Ezekiel 38:8, 11). Those who believe that this devastation takes place at the beginning of the kingdom age interpret this peace as that which was promised by Jesus Christ as the Messiah. But there is nothing in Ezekiel 38 and 39 to indicate that this is the true Messiah-kind of a peace. It rather seems to be a false peace which has been guaranteed to Israel by the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). This is actually referred to elsewhere as "the agreement with hell" (Isaiah 28:18).

Ezekiel uses two expressions in the 38th chapter which may give a little indication according to the time of this attack. In verse 8 there appears the expression "latter years" and in verse 16 "latter days" of the history of Israel. This can't have any reference to the latter days of the Church age. The Body of Christ isn't seen here at all. God will be dealing with Israel in His divine economy at this particular moment in prophetic time. This all happens after the Church has gone and the Tribulation fully has set in.

In the complete panorama of the "battles" of Armageddon there is the invasion by Russia of the land of Palestine (Ezekiel 38, 39). The second state of this campaign is the tremendous oversweeping of Israel by all the forces of the Antichrist.

It is difficult to determine the specific activities of the nations involved. Many people have felt that this invasion records only certain empires; however, the study of Scripture indicates the movement of the king of the south who strikes against this beast-false prophet coalition (Daniel 11:40). Chronologically, it takes place at the time of the end, according to Biblical prophecy. The Southern drive is joined by the Northern confederacy so that Jerusalem is destroyed as a result (Zechariah 12:2). In turn, the armies of the North are done away with (Zechariah 12:4). Then, the full armies of the Antichrist move into the land of Palestine (Daniel 11:41). This coming world ruler turns against the hostility from the North headed by Russia.

Before this battle can be put together there appears a sign in the heavens. It is none other than the blessed Son of Man (Matthew 24:30). We do not know what this sign is, although its effect is certainly revealed. Armies thus turn from their hostility toward each other and unite together to fight against the Lord Himself.

Revelation 16:12 reveals that some supernatural event brings about the drying up of the River Euphrates. This allows the Asiatic powers to come from the Far East across this significant body of water. They challenge the authority of the beast, who is the head of the ten-confederated kingdom around the Mediterranean Sea. While the drying up of the River Euphrates is a prelude to the final act of the drama, keep in mind that it isn't the act itself. By a miracle of God Himself, the flow of the River Euphrates will be interrupted, even as were the waters of the Red Sea and of the River Jordan. All the evidence points toward the literal interpretation of Revelation 16:12. Those who come from the Far East will ultimately go down into devastation and defeat on the plains of Isdralon. The king of the South and this Far Eastern army of 200 million men, along with the evil superman, all conspire together. It is at this point that Jesus Christ will come again (Revelation 19:19). Such is the picture of the closing hostilities of this campaign of Armageddon (Zechariah 14:3; Revelation 16:14; Revelation 19:11, 12).

The importance of the resurrection is clearly seen in Revelation 19:8. The Old Testament associated the hope of resurrection with the Messianic anticipation of the Day of the Lord. This is an expression which means a specific period of time, beginning after the Church is raptured to be with the Lord, carrying on

through the Tribulation, and even through the thousand year kingdom rule of Christ. This is called the "Day of the Lord."

In Daniel the resurrection is seen to be an event which is subsequent to the time of trouble under the great world ruler (Daniel 12:1, 2). In Isaiah the resurrection is spoken of in reference to the "indignation of desolation" (Isaiah 26:19-21). In the Gospel according to John, the resurrection is stated as a hope which is associated with the last day (John 11:24). This is why we should consider the second coming of our Lord in its relation to the problem of the resurrection.

The subject of resurrection is one of the great cardinal doctrines of the Word of God. In the ministry of the disciples the theme of the resurrection dominated their preaching almost to the exclusion of Christ's death. In the more than 40 New Testament references to the resurrection (with the possible exception of Luke 2:34), it is always seen as a literal event and never in a spiritual, or non-literal sense. It always has to do with the raising up of the physical body. In the case of our Savior Himself, His was certainly a physical or real resurrection.

In the Bible there are two different kinds of resurrection brought to our attention. First, there is that which brings man eternal life. Secondly, there is the resurrection relating to the time of judgment. There are a number of Scriptures which teach us the reality of the resurrection of life (Luke 14:13, 14). This was the consuming goal of the apostle Paul (Philippians 3:14). Hebrews 11:35 rightly refers to the "better resurrection." Again, this is the resurrection of the believer (John 5:28, 29). John looked forward to this as he wrote, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). This is "the out resurrection from the dead." Such implies that other dead are left and not resurrected at this particular moment. Remember, of course, that all will be raised at a certain time, whether they be unbelievers or believers. The phrase "out from the dead" is not once applied to those who aren't saved.

The destiny, and not the time element, determines to which part of the resurrection program any event is to be assigned. The Bible speaks repeatedly of the resurrection which is to damnation or condemnation. This deals with the unconverted or the unbeliever. It is the second resurrection (John 5:29; Rev. 20:5). The first resurrection is completed before the thousand year rule of Jesus Christ. The dead referred to in Rev. 20:11, 12 are those who are left behind from the out-resurrection from among the dead ones. It constitutes those who are raised unto judgment and hell. Again, it isn't chronology which determines who is in the second resurrection, but rather the destiny of the individual who is raised in that resurrection. This is based entirely upon one's acceptance or rejection of God's love and grace personified in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The Bible very clearly teaches that there will be two important and significantly distinct resurrections. The first will be the resurrection of those who are believers in Jesus Christ, having been justified by God's grace. There is also the resurrection of those who have never been saved and accepted the Lord as their own personal Savior. One resurrection is unto eternal life while the other unto eternal damnation. The time element of these two momentous events is very important. The distinction caused some problems for the disciples (Mark 9:9, 10). The resurrection of the dead in itself was a common, accepted doctrine of the Jews (Hebrews 6:2). The resurrection from the dead, spoken of by Jesus, was a brand new revelation. Some had erroneously been led to believe that there would be just one general resurrection. Such might be the conclusion without the benefit of the New Testament.

One passage which is sometimes mistaken chronologically is Daniel 12:2, 3, "And many of them that sleep (are dead) in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." No distinction in time seems to be made. The conclusion has been that there will be a general resurrection with no distinction between saved and unsaved until after the event is over. This can't possibly be. The prophet Daniel is affirming the fact of the resurrection itself, pointing out that it will be universal. Another Scripture sometimes misapplied is John 5:28, 29, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." There are those who misuse the word "hour" thinking that it necessitates a general resurrection. The term doesn't need to imply such at all. It simply emphasizes the fact that there will be a coming resurrection program which the Lord has, with a division between the two resurrections.

It is interesting to notice in Revelation 20 that the two parts of the resurrection program of God are separated by an interval of a thousand years. It is during this time that the earth enjoys the kingdom rule of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:4-6).

The apostle Paul gives us an inspired outline of the events of God's resurrection program in I Corinthians 15:22-24, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; But every man in his own order; (note the importance) Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power." The word "order" is a military term, meaning a company, troop, band or rank of people. This is the significance of this aspect of future prophetic events, as related to the two resurrections.

To summarize a thumbnail sketch of the difference between the two resurrections is to realize at the outset that our Lord Jesus Christ was most certainly a part of the first resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20). The Bible also tells us that on that glorious day the graves of some of the saints were opened, and many walked among the people of Jerusalem. It is also definite that those who are a part of the Rapture or translation of the Church belong to this first resurrection. The bodies of many wonderful children of God are in the graves of this earth. Others have drowned in the sea, with still more cremated. Yet, all who have believed in Christ, in whatever generation that happened to be, are all a part of the first resurrection. The Savior Himself was the "firstfruits" of it, giving evidence of something positive to come. It is my conviction that those martyred during the Tribulation because of their faith in the Lord will also be a part of the first resurrection.

When Christ comes again bodily (Rev. 19:11), setting up His kingdom-rule over the earth, there will be another resurrection. This is the separation of the sheep from the goats, representing the different nations of the world in relation to how they treated the people of Israel. The unbeliever who is resurrected before the Great White Throne Judgment of God (Rev. 20) is a part of the second resurrection which issues in damnation, judgment and eternal hell.

In Rev. 19:11 we read, "And I saw heaven opened and, behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth

judge and make war." On down through verse 16 we see interestingly how the conquering Christ appears in His second coming. Looking at the Scripture very closely a number of things almost leap out at us. In the midst of indescribable conflict the nations of the world, banded together against God and His people Israel, suddenly see a tremendous sight. It is the visible coming of Jesus Christ from heaven. We view the Son of God, described as having eyes like a flame of fire, probing in the darkest recesses of the human soul. On his head are many crowns with a name written that no man knew but He Himself (v. 12).

The unpronounceable and unknowable Name of God belongs to our Savior. No man can know God, finite and restricted as we are. The only way man can see God is as the Almighty appeared in human form in the person of our Lord. Otherwise, God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ Jesus is the God of the universe. In no sense are we going to see three Gods when we get to heaven. This is absolutely not the situation. There is only one great Lord. We know Him as our Heavenly Father, our Savior and the Holy Spirit. It is somewhat like a three-stranded rope which is one and yet three. This great God is called in the Old Testament "Jehovah." He was incarnated in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-11). He is the Prince of Heaven, who is coming again.

We read in Revelation 19 that Christ will be clothed in garments dipped in the blood of His enemies. His pronounceable Name is "the Word of God" (19:13). This is the title by which we who are mortal know Jehovah (John 1:1). Through the eye of faith we see His glory, that as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. None of us would have been able to see God had it not been for His grace in being revealed in a human body.

We read that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (Rev. 19:15). He doesn't need to strike but simply to speak and the judgment is accomplished. This is the symbolism of the book of Revelation. There is no limitable power even in Christ's voice. Remember when the Savior was here upon the earth and evil men came to arrest Him? The Lord asked them, "Whom do you seek?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." With that the Savior avowed, "I am He." The Scriptures tell us that they all fell to the ground. So you see, even in the days of His humility, when He was here as a man, the armed guards couldn't stand in His presence. Think what power will be seen when He comes in glory with all the hosts of heaven! The scene is absolutely indescribable.

He will rule the nations with a rod of iron and will tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God (Rev. 19:15). We also discover that "Christ had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16). Do you remember when the wise men came from the East to mark the birth of Jesus? They wanted to see the King. When Pilate crucified Him they put an inscription on the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, a King." Whether born in a manger, nailed to a cross, or coming in power with the clouds of heaven, He is still a King.

We also have a description of the saints who will be with Him, "The armies that were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14). The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. God's tried, chosen, faithful people follow their Lord out of heaven. They previously, of course, have been resurrected at the Rapture of the Church. All of these are God's children by faith. It is a fact that when you interpret the Bible correctly, every incident and detail fits into place. In the fourth chapter of Revelation, the Church, God's sainted people, are all taken up into glory. The

of the fascinating prophetic pictures concerns the loosing of Satan for a brief period. John writes, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:1-3). We see his evil program and final doom which is certainly clearly determined (Rev. 20:7-10).

There is a sinister coming personality who has led the beast, the false prophet and the kings of the earth into the winepress of wrath and judgment of Almighty God. It is due to Satan's luring, cunning and suave deception that final defeat has been unquestionably wrought. The open warfare against heaven has resulted in total annihilation. Make no mistake about it: the devil will not escape! The Lord has singled him out for a special judgment damnation.

There is first the binding of Satan who is the enemy of the people of God. John records for us that "the angel came down with the key to the abyss." The great chain in the angel's hand isn't like a blacksmith's chain at all. This one is of the Lord's making. We know of its similar use already as Jude tells us that "the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." This group may not be the same as here in Rev. 20, nevertheless, what kind of chain it may be is up to God. The Lord wields it, holding these evil, black, foul demons in the abyss. It is the same kind of chain that the angel comes to lay upon the devil himself.

Satan is the ultimate cause and the fountainhead of all the sin, iniquity and misery in the world. He has many agents working for him with demons by the hundreds of thousands. He also has many evil people duped in his employment. God finally and ultimately will deal personally with this great enemy. It is his cunning lies that have caused all the tears, heartaches, death, and destruction the world has seen through the centuries.

Satan is described by four different names, in the same order by which they are listed in Rev. 12. The first two reflect his personality while the second two are his actual, personal names. The first two of the four are "dragon," symbolizing his bestial leadership of the last great government of the world, and "that old serpent" referring to the subtleness of his nature. In the Garden of Eden it was as a serpent that he insinuated himself into the confidence of Adam and Eve, deflecting them away from God Himself. The next two designations are "the Devil," and "Satan." Remember, there is only one "diablos." That term is always used in the singular. At the same time, there are many, many demons. Sometimes the King James Version translates the Greek word "demon" as "devil," which isn't accurate. This is one who is opposed to God, as well as to every believer in Jesus Christ. In the original, the word Satan means "accuser." As he deceived our first parents, so he seeks to turn us away from all that is holy. He would have destroyed Job had it not been for the intervention and mercy of God. He assailed constantly our Lord Jesus Christ. God will send a mighty angel from heaven with a great chain in his hand to bind him.

Some may wonder where the abyss is and how it differs from hell itself. We know that there is an entire underworld beyond our sight. While the lake of fire is hell, the abyss is the Greek word meaning "bottomless pit." Seven of the nine times used in the New Testament are in the book of Revelation. Elsewhere it appears in Luke 8:31 and Romans 10:7. It is helpful to understand the background of this term.

In Luke 8:31 we recall the story of the Gadarene demoniac who had in him a legion of evil spirits. He was filled with vile iniquity and immoral filth. These demons drove the man to violence. When the Lord came, the demons recognized him and pleaded, "Lord, don't send us into the abyss before our time has come." This must be a horrible place where fallen angels are kept chained by the Lord Jesus.

In Romans 10:7 we are warned not to say that Christ is to come up from the abyss, suggesting that He might be one of the demons. All seven times in Revelation where the word abyss is used, it has the exact same meaning. It always refers to a place where fallen angels and foul evil spirits are imprisoned by the Lord. Into this place Satan will be cast for a thousand years.

There are also other places beyond this life besides the abyss. Rev. 19:20 emphasizes that the beast and the false prophet will both be cast into a lake of fire which burns with brimstone. This is the same judgment where ultimately the devil will be consigned after the kingdom age is over (Rev. 20:10). This is also tragically where the wicked dead will find their final eternal destiny (Rev. 20:13, 14; 21:8). The King James Version uses the Hebrew word "sheol" as "hell." The Greek word "hades" is also translated by "hell." This is unfortunate because those two terms mean something entirely different. "Sheol" is used in the Old Testament 65 different times. It is translated "hell" 31 times, the "grave" 31 times, and three times "the pit." The Greek word "hades" in the New Testament is the exact equivalent. It is used 11 times in the New Testament. Ten times it is translated by the word "hell" and once by the "grave." It is important to underscore that there is nothing in the words sheol or hades that refers to hell! Both of these words have reference to the departed, unseen world beyond this life. Before the resurrection of Christ all who died, saints as well as sinners, went to hades which was divided by two distinct compartments. There was the abode of the wicked dead, and the abode of the righteous dead. The latter is sometimes known in Scripture as paradise or Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:19-31). When Christ died He left His body in the grave but His soul and spirit went down into hades, or the godly half of sheol. He brought those Old Testament saints who were in Paradise up into heaven with Him (Ephesians 4:8). In hades, as it was originally known, there was a great chasm fixed between the two compartments. One could not pass over into the other. It is most important to remember that death absolutely seals one's final destiny. In this life only can you make your decision to receive or to reject the Lord Jesus Christ. After you breathe your last, whatever you have done is forever settled. It can in no way be changed.

One interesting thing about the story in Luke 16 concerning the rich man and Lazarus shows the difference between heaven and the godly half of sheol, and this place into which the devil is cast. To say the least, it is a monumental difference. When the rich man found out that his destiny was sealed, he cried out that he wanted somebody to go and tell his relatives not to come to this awful place but rather believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham rightly reminded him, "They have the law and the prophets, and if they don't believe the Scriptures then nothing that's said will help them anyway because they will reject it" (Luke 16:29, 30). When Jesus died on the cross, His soul and spirit not only was resurrected to heaven to announce His finished work, but also He went down into the godly half of hades and there declared His finished work. When He arose from the dead He ascended back to heaven. At that time He carried with Him the whole godly half of sheol or hades and brought them up into the presence of the Lord. Now, when believers die, they do not go into hades but directly to where Christ is. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." We have some glorious moments to which we can eagerly look forward.

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"PANEL DISCUSSION"

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

"There are many religious people who believe in God, but who don't believe in Jesus Christ, His Son. What will happen to them?"

It would be encouraging if we could hold out a word of hope, but we must be true to the Word of God. First, we should distinguish between "religion" and "Christianity." Religion has been pictured as man reaching up toward God, trying somehow to find Him. Christianity, on the other hand, is really God reaching down to man through Jesus Christ and providing salvation. There is obviously all the difference in the world between religion and Christianity. Man by nature is a religious being. One would have to educate and discipline himself into becoming an atheist. Humanity has been groping after the Lord ever since the fall of man. Our Savior clearly avowed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). A person cannot be saved by being religious, nor by being good. Eternal life is entirely through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His atoning work on Calvary's cross. Therefore, those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son are lost. This is exactly what the Word of God says and what we definitely believe and teach here at Biola. We want our students to go out and tell a lost world of the Savior and His redeeming love.

"In the Old Testament there is the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Some say that Lot's deliverance from the area is really a picture of the Church being taken out of the world before the Tribulation. If this is true, does the story of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back have any meaning?"

What you have indicated is certainly true. Lot's deliverance from Sodom and Gomorrah is a picture preview of how the Church will be raptured before God's judgment descends upon the earth. The Old Testament is in so many places a wonderful picture book of doctrines and meaningful teachings found in the New Testament. This is why the Old Testament is in Hebrew and the New Testament is in Greek. Greek is the language of logical reasoning, philosophical insights and abstract conceptions. On the other hand, the Semitic languages, for the most part, are pictorial.

When Lot lingered, the men wanted to hurry him along. They knew they were restrained until he was removed. Remember, God won't judge His own with the world. He didn't do it in the past when there were eternal issues involved. One of the most wonderful parts about all this is Genesis 19:29, "And it came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham." Consider the wonderful light and everflowing influence of that great servant of the Lord. We should always rejoice that we are all, saved Jew and Gentile alike, spiritual children of Abraham.

The story of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt because she looked back does illustrate several things. First of all, our hearts shouldn't be so rooted to the world that judgment overtakes us. This woman became a terrible, terrifying warning for us to keep our eyes in the right place. Because her heart wasn't right with the Lord she was overtaken in divine judgment.

Q. "Why is it that when I am praying, thoughts keep crowding into my mind about other things I have to do?"

A. Most of us experience problems of this type from time to time. There are always those thoughts, some high and noble concepts, while others immoral and impure, which would try to crowd in. Without question, this is a form of temptation which we must meet and overcome in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are led astray to sin in three ways: the world, the flesh and the devil. Ask the Lord to help you concentrate. It is a matter of disciplining yourself, doing everything possible to keep your mind stayed on the things of God. It may not be easy but the Holy Spirit will help and guide you. It will be a constant effort to be sure that you keep your mind on the things of the Lord.

Q. "Doesn't II Peter 1:20 teach that men shouldn't try to interpret prophecy? It seems that there are so many who have varying views on the book of Revelation."

A. The words teach us, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." Be sure you also read verse 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." Nowhere does the Bible teach that we should not seek to interpret prophecy using Scripture itself as our guide. In fact, in Revelation the whole book being prophetic in nature, reminds us, "Blessed is he that readeth and keepeth and understandeth." In the Amplified Bible the verse in question puts it, "First, understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of any personal or private or special interpretation." In other words, "No one can explain any written word of God merely as he likes it." The reason for this is that each passage must be compared with other Scriptural passages that deal with prophecy. Our interpretation can't be isolated from what the Scriptures teach elsewhere.

Q. "What would have happened if Eve had not yielded to temptation?"

A. Such, of course, is highly speculative. To take something hypothetical in theology over against what the Scriptures clearly teach is not a good practice. We can only surmise at that point that Adam and Eve would have gone on in that innocent condition. There would have been no testing as they were asked if they would obey the explicit clear command of God not to eat of the tree in the midst of the Garden. God, knowing all things from the beginning, realized that they would not only be tested, but also that they would fall (Romans 5:15). Sin didn't catch God by surprise. The plan of salvation wasn't an after-thought. Remember, the Lord prepares the remedy before the disease ever strikes.

Q. "Doesn't Colossians 2:18, 19 teach against the practice of praying for the 'fallen angels,' that they might be saved?"

A. Yes, it certainly does. The people at Colossae had a rather peculiar system of belief. They avowed that God was infinitely holy and that the devil was infinitely wicked. In between God and the devil there were a great number of deities or lesser gods. This philosophy had apparently crept into the church, too. The apostle wrote to correct that particular error as he exalts highly the Lord Jesus Christ in a manner that is unequal and unsurpassed in any other book. The Savior

the infinite God who is infinitely good. Paul specifically warns against worshipping of lesser deities which are simply false gods and figments of the imagination. We aren't even to worship good angels. Certainly we aren't to be praying for the evil wicked angels. Their lot was cast when they fell from heaven the time of Satan's sin. Their eternity was sealed right at that particular point.

"Why did God harden the heart of the Egyptian King to change the orders of seeing the Israelites under Moses?"

There is more to it than the fact that he simply reconsidered how foolish it would be to lose so many slaves. There are a number of times when we read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart." In other instances we find that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. There are two aspects to be considered: the God side and the man side. The Lord's side is judicial, majestic, sovereign, and powerful. The other consideration is personal responsibility. After all, Pharaoh still was a creature. He owed God obedience just as we do today. This he failed to render. Did God put the evil of hardening into Pharaoh's heart? No, that would make the Lord a party to sin. God was judging Pharaoh sovereignly for what was in his heart already. The circumstances which were brought around simply drew out the evil venom and opposition to God which were already there. This is a tremendous illustration of how the heart can become hardened by starting to say "No" to God. Remember, the same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay. Be sure your heart is kept open and responsive to the Lord at every point in your life.

Q. "I have read books by Alexander Hodge and Benjamin Warfield which state that there are two aspects to the atonement. The first is the obedience of Jesus Christ in that He had to do what Adam failed to fulfill. The second involvement is the substitutionary atonement. Can you please explain the obedience part of the atonement?"

A. Substitutionary atonement on the lowest level means that when one person fails to pay a debt, or is due to come under the judgment of a judge, another steps in to offer, "I will pay that debt," or "I will take in myself that judgment." This principle is beautifully revealed all the way through the Old Testament as we study the various sacrifices. In fact, this is the whole meaning of the first seven chapters of Leviticus concerning offerings. It is Biblical that there are two aspects to the atonement. Of course, from God's vantage point there are many other things involved. The death of Christ reconciled the very attributes of God. His holiness demanded that man die, and yet His love said, "I can't let him perish. There must be the death penalty. But I will see to it that it is fulfilled and will pay the price myself." Have you ever wondered why Christ lived on earth normally as a man, and then had three and a half years of wonderful public ministry? You see, we owe God not only for the debt we haven't paid, but also for the service we should have been giving Him all along. Remember that every law in the world requires two things: either obedience to its precepts or penalty for infraction. The Lord Jesus Christ complied entirely with both. He lived those marvelous, perfect years to show that the law couldn't find blame with Him. He paid every ounce of respect, obedience, compliance, and allegiance to God's law.

The law firmly requires that if anybody has not kept it entirely there must be death. So, the Lord Jesus Christ paid this price, too, because all of the human family, including Adam, never did the will of God. (This is very beautifully stated in the Scofield notes, page 1215, footnote 2; Romans 3:31.) "The sinner establishes the law in its right use and honor by confessing his guilt and just condemnation. Christ, on the sinner's behalf, establishes the law by obediently keeping its precepts." The Savior in grace established the law by obediently

keeping its precepts as well as by enduring its penalty of death. This is what the two theologians you have mentioned were talking about.

Q. "In John 8:11 the woman calls Jesus 'Lord.' In some Bible translations she calls Him 'Sir.' Which is correct according to the original text?"

A. In no translations we have checked do we find in this particular verse that she calls Him "Sir." Now, prior to this she has used that title, but not at this particular point. She declares, "No man, Lord." This word in the Greek means far more than simply "sir." The woman has recognized Christ at this point to be more than just another ordinary human being. He had told her things no one else could know, and He dealt with her in such wonderful love, compassion and conviction. For her to say "Lord" presented a definite testimony concerning her rising opinion of Him as Redeemer and Messiah. No, the proper translation at this point has to be "Lord."

Q. "Please explain why the works described in Matthew 7:23 were works of iniquity. The phrase reads, 'And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'"

A. This is a section from what is popularly known as "The Sermon on the Mount." In the verses immediately preceding, Christ has underscored, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." The reference here is to the Messianic kingdom. What the Savior is pointing out is that salvation requires more than mere profession. It has to be a matter of personal reality. Verse 23 refers to those who have never humbly avowed in essence, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." This is why Christ will pronounce, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The questioner doubtless wonders how such things as prophesying and casting out demons can be considered as works of iniquity. Keep in mind the fact that even seemingly wonderful works of philanthropy, charity, human kindness, and all the rest are completely secondary unless the reality of Christ is evident. If a person doesn't accept the Word of God concerning his sin, he is calling God a liar (I John 1). God isn't going to receive any kind of work, no matter how proper it appears to be, if the basic reality isn't there. Job told Eliphaz, "Even the plowing of the wicked is sinful." Is there anything wrong with plowing? No, but if the one who plows is sinful then he can't give God the glory. That is why in Proverbs we find the apt testimony, "If a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Whom are you trying to please? The Savior reminds us today, "This is the work of God; that ye believe on Him whom He has sent." It has to be a work of faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is reaching out the hand and receiving freely what God has already done for us in love and grace through Jesus Christ. If you have never done so, won't you receive the Savior now?

Q. "What impact does television have on one's spiritual development?"

A. Television is one of the most time-consuming activities man has ever known. Small children, in their developmental years, before they go to school, spend many hours in front of the "tube." There should be a means of distinguishing between programs. There is a far cry between the beauty of a Rose Parade as compared to some of the adult so-called comedy programs. Selectivity and guidance must be the keys. Anything which is a deterrant to spiritual development is to be avoided. There is a danger in watching programs which would interfere with our growth in God's grace. As an example, a child who is allowed to watch a great deal of violence on TV will have his outlook on life very definitely affected. The first research made on this did not seem to indicate much of an influence on children becoming more aggressive or hostile. Recent studies, however, have reversed this

viewpoint. If the hero of the program is rewarded or reinforced for being aggressive, hostile or violent, a child will imitate that same behaviour. There is no question but that television actually shapes minds and can definitely retard spiritual progress and understanding.

Did you know that a child, from the time he enters school until he graduates from senior high, will spend approximately 11,000 hours in public school. During the same period of time, he will have spent about 15,000 hours watching television. (This includes the time from when he is born.) Those who were born during the time that television was accessible, if they live to the age of 65, will have spent five years of their lives, 24 hours a day, watching TV! We feel that as believers we are going to be held accountable for the amount of time so spent.

How long has it been since we evaluated our own lives? What do we watch? Could we justify particular programs to our children if they were to ask us? Then, what positive alternatives do we have to offer our children if we do not allow them to view certain programs? There should be some family activities planned together.

Television dulls our sensitivity to tragedies all around us. Concern, compassion, sympathy and grief are not common commodities. A child watching TV, as an example, can assume that questionable sex, violence and profanity are the normal aspects of life. TV robs one of reading which is one of the great gifts we can give our youth. Certainly we can be kept from reading the Word of God and good Christian literature when we spend time before the TV. Our minds are not shaped in the way they should be.

Parents who are really interested in helping their children should sit down and watch the programs together, discussing and evaluating the purposes and individual merits. This will do a great deal in teaching good and practical habits. Make television viewing actually an educational time. One made a little sign to put on top of the TV set. It simply reads, "Would Jesus Christ enjoy watching this program with me?" Such an attitude of heart could revolutionize our viewing practices.

Q. "I have known several pastor's children who have turned out to be very rebellious. Why does this seem to happen so often to ministers?"

A. We do not know of any studies that have been made indicating that this happens more to the children of preachers than to others. A pastor and his family are in a prominent leadership position so that it becomes more pronounced when it happens. It is easy for a pastor to get wrapped up in his ministry so that he may have a tendency to neglect the proper guidance of his own family. Members of the congregation should be concerned about this problem, making sure they do not unduly weigh him down. He needs to have sufficient time for his home life. Also, let us not put unrealistic expectations on the pastor's family. They should not be judged by a different standard. His children can have their times of disobedience just as your own do.

Psychology reveals through research that when boys are deprived of their fathers they have a strong tendency to become hostile and aggressive. The dad has a vital role as sort of mediator for his son as to what is acceptable, aggressive behaviour and what is not. We want our children to strive to reach goals. Consider some of the great leaders of the Old Testament whose children did not turn out well because their fathers had not given them proper directions.

Ministers and missionaries live at a very highly committed level of Christian living. They have turned everything they have and are over to the Lord. Many times they consider their children to live with the same committed level of values, not

realizing that they may not have reached that point of dedication. An excessive expectation to live a committed life will cause many children to rebel, trying to get away from this pressure which may be abnormal to them in earlier years.

Q. "In what sense should we consider God as our Father? My own father was very mean and unfair. Sometimes I get this image of God when I think of Him in that relationship."

A. The human father should be judged and evaluated on the basis of how he correlates to the model of God expressed in the Bible. We see God as perfect, loving us at all times. Scripture reminds us that even though your father and mother may let you down, the Lord promises that He will never fail us. You need to take your eyes off of people and focus them on the Word and the revealed truth we find there. There is something for us to learn here, too. If our own parents did not live God-like lives, we can make certain we do before the Lord. This should be a vital point especially for young people. Do not just dwell on the past but take positive action for the future.