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May 2000



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The *Berean Bible Society* is an organization for the promotion of Bible study by means of newspaper series, recorded Bible lessons, and the distribution of Bible study literature. It is a non-profit organization, a work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

There is an old saying that still rings true today, “You can’t tell a book by its cover.” Insightful! But, it does make an *impression* and first impressions are important. With this in mind, we are in the process of giving our literature a new look. Fear not! This by no way means that the message of these works is going to be altered in any way. We stand without apology for the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

It is imperative, however, to keep pace with the times so that the appearance of our literature doesn’t look dated. This can be a real hindrance to getting the message out to those who are initially exposed to our materials. Furthermore, we have been receiving book orders from *Amazon.com* and *Barnes and Noble* who are, as you know, national booksellers. In addition we are hoping to place our works with Kregel, Zondervan and Christian Book Distributors. Eventually all of our literature will have the ISBN numbers and bar coding required for the national book houses to carry our books. With more and more searching for the truth, we could well be on the threshold of a major breakthrough exposing thousands of believers to the Word, rightly divided.

Christine Mulholland, one of our BBI students, has graciously agreed to help us bring the appearance of our literature into the 21st Century. Christine is a Graphic Design Artist who is well qualified to undertake the challenge. Since she will have to juggle this project between her family and schooling, we’re sure Christine will covet your prayers.

Kevin has already put a new face on twelve of our tracts as you can see from the example, *Don’t Come An Inch Closer*. In order to put our best foot forward for the unsaved, we have gone to glossy paper with a four-color format on the front cover. They are really eye catching and we should add that each tract contains a thought-provoking message of salvation. For those who are interested, we are offering a “free sample packet” of these tracts upon request. Quantities of one hundred tracts, *per title*, are also available for \$5.00 each. For an order form, simply drop us a note.



Affectionately, in Christ,
Paul M. Sadler
President

From Illinois:

"Thank you for leading me to Christ."

From Australia:

"Please send us 20 of the *Ephesians* Commentary. We have waited many years for it. As for the *Searchlight*, it is attractive, it is just the right size, the type is easy to read and it is always a blessing."

From Ohio:

"I'm a 77 year old ex-marine sergeant of WWII & Korean vintage and feel qualified to say that the COM-MANDER-IN-CHIEF is well pleased with the way you presented Him in your commentary on Ephesians. I am sure there must have been times when you wished there were 28 hour days, but you got the job done for His glory and that's what matters. Congratulations on a job well done. Take an extra coffee break today." (YES, SIR!!! Ed.)

From the Internet:

"Thank you so much for the use of your lending library and prompt service. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the tapes and will be looking forward to borrowing more tapes in the future."

From Wyoming:

"I've been moved recently to write and express my deep appreciation for your teaching. You folks have faithfully sent me the *Berean Searchlight* since September 1997 and I do thank you. As I've matured spiritually, those lessons in the *Searchlight* have helped clarify some life-long teachings. What a blessing it has been to be taught nothing but the doctrines of Grace for over 30 years! What a responsibility to share it with others."

From North Carolina:

"I live in a town with no known Grace believers and without your monthly publication and book offerings, I would be in a terrible situation spiritually. I thank the Lord Jesus Christ for your ministry. He is faithful."

From Nova Scotia, Canada:

"Thank you for faithfully sending the *Berean Searchlight* to me for many years. However, since I feel that you are biblically in error over such matters as baptism and the *dispensational* nature of the Sermon on the Mount, please remove my name from your mailing list. I do rejoice that you have been used of the Lord to lead souls to the Lord Jesus Christ."

From Missouri:

"I want to thank you for having sent me the pamphlet, *The Unpardonable Sin*. Finally the subject has been made clear at last. Many do not know anything about dispensations. I was one of those people. Now at last I understand and am no longer fearful. My prayer is that others may receive this pamphlet which will end their fear and torment."

From Florida:

"I received *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* yesterday and was so happy. It's a beautiful book. More important the few chapters I have read so far are so good. I thank God for Pastor Sadler and Pastor Stam. The Lord has really given these men so much insight. I am looking forward to meeting them in heaven."

From Hawaii:

"In the 70's I received certification from *Martin Luther College* in New Ulen, MN and taught in the elementary school in Yakima, WA for five years. Paul's teachings are very important to me and several times I have been able to answer some tricky questions in Bible study because of the material I've received from you. Thank you."

From Iowa:

"I am enjoying the articles on I & II Peter. I hope James is next. It is about time *grace teaching* on these epistles is being presented. Keep up the great *Grace Work*." (We agree that this has been long, long overdue. In fact, this series has given new meaning to a grassroots effort. Ed.)

From Oregon:

“Want to let you know we enjoy the *Berean Searchlight*. It is such a joy every month. Thanks for sending it to us so faithfully and I’ve been reading your new book on Ephesians. Just received it this past week and have read half of it. It is such a good book; I hate to put it down. I just want to read and read. Thank you for writing this new book. It is very good. I pray lots of people will read it.”

From New York:

“While I never have fully understood your *rightly dividing the Word of truth, etc.*, we do have the common belief in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But I do read some of your articles in the *Berean Searchlight* and thus the small contribution towards its continuance to me. The December ’99 issue, page 19, *The Lighter Side* was great. I’d like to see more stuff like that.”

From Iowa:

“Just a line to let you know how I enjoy my *Searchlight*. I hope that what I am sending you will help some in the printing and sending out of the *Searchlight*.”

From Ohio:

“Impressed and blessed by your *60th Anniversary Edition* that came today. Great issue—great articles and each one definitive and valuable. Kudos to you and all the brethren.” (We have received many such glowing reports regarding the March issue. Several have inquired if it would be possible to go to a four-color glossy format every month. It is under consideration at this time to include glossy paper as a standard format for the *Searchlight*. Ed.)

From California:

“Many thanks for all your booklets of guidance and inspiration. Just a small offering to help where needed.”

From Virginia:

“I truly need to take a minute to tell you that I honestly thank God for you guys. The *Searchlight* that you publish is a true gift from God.”

From Washington:

“I look forward to receiving the *Searchlight* for it’s *rightly dividing the Word of truth*. I just got around to reading the Dec. ’99 issue with its article on *The Wise Men* by Paul Sadler; and Dr. Stam’s comments on the birth of Christ (very good for the soul)...I’m a very active 80 year old and this article touched my heart—it’s a long story. God bless you all.”

From Pennsylvania:

“Just received *Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*. What a joy to read and study with the Bible open. Thank you so much for your work on this. Enclosed is a gift, use where it is needed most.”

From Wisconsin:

“It’s time again to share in the work of our wonderful Lord....Oh my, WHAT would we do without Him? The *Searchlight* has arrived and thanks again for all the good things therein! Is what John writes in his epistles (I, II, III John) for the circumcision...It certainly sounds like it, but is it?” (Yes, I personally believe that James through Revelation was written to the circumcision. These writings consistently follow the prophetic theme. Ed.)

From Oregon:

“Enclosed is a love gift for the ministry. Your love of the *Truth* is greatly appreciated.”

From Pennsylvania:

“Thanks so much for your books. They are a real blessing. When I can send a donation, it will be there. I wish I could send thousands. Keep up the precious work. We just keep looking up!”

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter (Part IV)

By Paul M. Sadler

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

—I Peter 1:5

The salvation of Israel is two-dimensional. The *physical* side of her deliverance was always paramount in the minds of most Jews, especially those of the dispersion. Historically she had suffered unspeakable atrocities, which left her clinging tenaciously to the promise of Zacharias: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath...raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David...that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us” (Luke 1:68-71). As we know, Peter was charged with the *spiritual* side of things, calling upon his hearers shortly after Pentecost to “repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Both of these elements of Israel’s salvation are *future*, which helps to explain Peter’s “time phrases” in his epistles, such as, “ready to be revealed in the last time,” “receiving the end of your faith,” “hope to the end,” etc. (I Pet. 1:5,9,13). The “last time” and “the end” Peter speaks of here are the *last days* of prophecy that have been temporarily interrupted by the present age of grace. Consequently, the Hebrew race, including every detail of their redemption, is being preserved by the power of God until Christ returns

in glory to establish His millennial kingdom.

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (I Pet. 1:6).

While those of the dispersion rejoiced in the day of their coming visitation, they found themselves in the midst of fiery trials, for the time then present. This is one of the mysterious paradoxes of the Christian faith. Normally, far too much value is placed upon the temporal things of this life. A man who has been told he has a terminal illness suddenly has little interest in the possessions he has amassed over the years. With death on his brow, his thoughts immediately turn to spiritual things. This is one of the benefits of trials, they tend to focus our attention on that which is eternal.

In regard to Peter’s hearers, who were dangling over the fires of persecution, he was happy to learn that they were rejoicing in hope in spite of their “heaviness through manifold temptations.” In the original language, the term “manifold” refers to the various *types* of trials they were enduring, not their number. According to Vine, the Gr. word *peirasmos*, “temptations” was like a coat of many colors, it included trials, testings, and solicitations to do evil. So then, these dear saints were enduring *different kinds* of trials, testings, and solicitations for faithfully proclaiming the kingdom gospel. The Prophetic Scriptures contain many examples of such temptations.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Few have undergone as many *trials* as Job. After Satan charged God with placing a hedge about His servant, God delivered Job into his hands, with the stipulation that his life was not to be taken. Satan wasted no time in devising a malicious plan to destroy Job's confidence in God. Shortly thereafter, Job's sons and daughters perished during a violent storm. While he was recovering from this news a messenger came to inform him that enemies, which he probably didn't even know he had, plundered his herds and killed his servants. As he was speaking, another messenger appeared to tell Job that fire came out of heaven and consumed his flocks of sheep and those who tended them.

What would be your response if all your children were taken from you in a moment of time and you suffered the financial loss of everything? This is precisely what happened to Job, yet he never wavered nor charged God foolishly. So Satan appeared again before God to raise the stakes. In essence, he said, allow me to touch his flesh and he will curse you to your face. If you touch a man's flesh, you have his undivided attention! "So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes" (Job 2:7,8).

Job could have easily related to the words of the modern day poet: "It was pain that knocked upon my door, and said that she had come to stay. Though I would not welcome her, but bade her to go away, she entered in, and like my own shadow she followed me. And from

her stabbing, stinging sword no moment was I free." The patriarch's endurance through these trials gave God an occasion to demonstrate His faithfulness. Trials are skillful instructors. The practical lesson that Job learned through the ordeal was *patience*. It also gave him the opportunity to show his devotion to God, which will result in eternal glory.

Trials can also come in the form of persecution from the world. You will recall the time King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all the inhabitants of Babylon were to fall down and worship the golden image he had erected to himself. Ancient rulers often believed themselves to be a god or an extension of the gods. Thus, anyone who failed to bow before the image of Nebuchadnezzar was under the sentence of death.

Since certain unbelieving Chaldeans were envious of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, because they held lofty positions in the king's affairs, they informed Nebuchadnezzar that certain Jews refused to worship his image. In the midst of a sea of people who prostrated themselves, these three noble Hebrew young men stood out like three white marble pillars on the desert plain. They were *obedient* to God's commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Essentially, they refused to compromise that which they knew was right and pleasing to God.

Nebuchadnezzar was so infuriated with his Hebrew subjects he commanded that the city furnace be heated to seven times its normal temperature. It was so hot that those who took Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the entrance perished. Imagine Nebuchadnezzar's surprise when he saw four men, the fourth being the Son of God, walking in

the midst of the fiery furnace. God delivered his servants from sure death that fateful day. Moreover, “the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them” (Dan. 3:27).

The power of God is able to deliver His own from the jaws of death as this trial poignantly demonstrates. Of course, the practical lesson our three Hebrew friends learned was that God delights in *obedience*. In the words of Samuel, “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Sam. 15:22).

When we think of being *tested* of God, Abraham probably comes to mind. God instructed Abraham to offer his son, the son of his love, as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. Only a well seasoned, tested man of faith would be able to bear up under such circumstances. Abraham was one such man. Without hesitation he arose early the next morning and he and Isaac made the three-day journey to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered. Faith rises early to fulfill the Word of God.

At this time Isaac was about 24 years of age; therefore he could have easily overthrown the purpose of his aged father. But he, *too*, was being tested. God was preparing the metal from which a great nation would soon be forged. Upon learning the will of God, Isaac *voluntarily* agreed to lay down his life in obedience to his father’s will.

Would have Abraham actually offered his only begotten son? Absolutely! In fact, the knife was probably in the downward motion

“God
delights in
obedience.”

when the angel of the Lord stopped him saying: “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me,” that is, *from the Lord*.

God always leaves a way of *escape* when testing His own. It is often overlooked, but God had previously told Abraham that if he offered his son as a burnt offering, He would *raise* him from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). Isaac undoubtedly understood this as well. This particular trial shows that God is merciful and will always honor His Word. Abraham believed God, which won him the distinct privilege of being the “father of all them that believe.” The practical lesson we glean from this trial is that faith is always well pleasing to God.

A trial may also take the form of a *temptation*. Since this would be contrary to God’s nature, such solicitations to evil are the devices of Satan. After Joseph was sold into Egypt, Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh who was the captain of the guard, purchased him. Everything that Joseph put his hand to prospered; consequently, Potiphar placed him as the chief overseer of all that he possessed. The Lord dealt favorably with Joseph, but Satan sought to diminish God’s favor through an alluring temptation.

As Joseph was tending to the affairs of his master’s house, Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce him.

“And it came to pass after these things, that his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife...There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.... And she caught him by his garment, saying, lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Gen. 39:7-12).

Notice, that as the temptation was unfolding Joseph kept his eyes upon the Lord. In reply to her seduction, Joseph essentially says that such an adulterous relationship, in addition to being a great wickedness, was a sin against God. He could not bear the thought of *grieving* the heart of God who had been so gracious to him. But he was human and subject to like passions as anyone else. Joseph’s response to the temptation was the proper one; he *fled* like a rabbit being pursued by a bloodhound. When temptation wraps her warm embrace around a would-be victim, the only way to avoid her deadly clutches is to *flee*; otherwise guilt will become an unwanted friend. Flee from her presence to the safety of God’s Word.

Temptations give God the opportunity to show forth His longsuffering. Joseph’s correct response to it demonstrated his love for the Lord, not to sin against God. The practical lesson here is to never take your eyes off of the Lord, because self enjoys the company of temptation!

THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 1:6,7).

Like the foregoing patriarchs, Peter says to his readers that the trial of their faith was *more precious* than gold that has been purified. The goldsmith subjects gold, the most precious of all metals, to such intense heat that the impurities in the metal surface to the top. After the impurities are removed all that remains is pure gold. Thus, Peter would have his hearers understand that even though they were enduring the furnace of affliction, there was a purpose; apparently certain areas of their lives needed purifying.

God was removing the impurities of sin and unbelief through the refining process of testings, which make the believer more *trustworthy* and *dependable*. As it has been correctly said, “God is looking for faithful, dependable workers, not necessarily gifted, educated, or cultured ones. Christian suffering is one of the most potent means to this end.”¹ Notice that Peter states that the trial of their faith was “more precious than of gold that perisheth.” In other words, faith that has been *approved* of God was of a far greater value than gold that perishes, implying that it would be to their eternal benefit.

In time past, many of the Old Testament prophesies had both a short term and long term view.

Sometimes both were fulfilled in the prophet's lifetime, but more often than not, there was hundreds and sometimes thousands of years between the two. We believe the same can be said regarding Peter's instructions here in I and II Peter. They were not only timely for those of the dispersion; his counsel will also be consoling to his countrymen who live through the coming day of the Lord.

Peter speaks of their period of suffering as being "for a season." That is, a brief or short period, which we know was the case in the first century. But the same can be said of the coming Tribulation period that will span seven years. It, too, is a little season (See Rev. 6:11). This is the period known as Jacob's Trouble. Interestingly, Peter uses the exact same Greek word found in Revelation 3:10, "the hour of *temptation*," when he speaks of the manifold *temptations* that they were called upon to endure. The hour of temptation refers to the coming Tribulation, specifically the latter half of it known as the Great Tribulation.

Peter's illustration of the trial of their faith being more precious than gold wasn't without rhyme or reason. It finds its source in a prophetic utterance made by the prophet. Zechariah says concerning Israel's *future* time of trouble: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as *gold* is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zech. 13:9).

As we have seen, the patriarchs of old suffered many trials and temptations, and the future Tribulation

saints will experience the same, but with greater frequency and intensity. In fact, our Lord said of that time, if those days were not shortened all flesh would be destroyed from the face of the earth. Peter's desire for his readers was that their faith "might [may] be found unto praise and honor and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ." Thus, the full disclosure of what these sufferings have achieved in the lives of the kingdom saints will not be revealed until the *Second Coming of Christ*. At that day, they will receive the commendation of God, "well done, *thou* good and faithful servant."

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *Him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8).

Peter is careful here to use the pronoun "you" instead of "we." As an apostle of the kingdom, he had seen the Lord and spent the better part of three years with the Master. But these dear saints of the dispersion never had that privilege, yet they loved Him and were rejoicing with unspeakable joy.

Unlike Thomas who refused to believe until he saw the resurrected Christ, these saints believed having never seen Him. Thus, there is an *added* blessing for all that have believed on Him but never laid eyes upon the glory of His presence. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed" (John 20:29).

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Kenneth Wuest, Vol. II, pages 26,27.

Freedom From Anger

By Pastor John Frederickson

Conflict is a part of life. It is inevitable that we will face situations that will evoke the hot emotion of anger within us. When this happens, we're not alone. Everyone experiences anger from time to time. In fact, many individuals in the Bible became angry. Remember when *Moses* returned from Mt. Siani with the ten commandments written by the finger of God upon tablets of stone? Upon seeing the idolatry and nakedness of Israel, in anger he broke those tablets (Ex. 32:19). Remember when the ark of God was being moved on a cart and *Uzzah* touched the ark to keep it from falling (II Sam. 6:6)? The Lord immediately struck him dead for touching what was holy, but *David* became angry with God over *Uzzah's* life being taken. Remember the Scriptures often refer to the Lord as being angry (i.e. righteous anger)? Psalm 7:11 tells us, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Mark 3:5 also refers to *the Savior* who "looked round about on them (the Pharisees) with anger, being grieved for their hardness of heart."

With these examples in mind, we should not be surprised when we sense anger in ourselves or see anger in others. In fact, it would be unrealistic not to expect to have some angry interaction even with those who are close to us in life. With family and close friends we have more frequent contact, have higher expectations, and feel more at ease to be frank about everything. Sometimes this familiarity brings conflict, but it's normal especially in families. Remember when *Miriam* and *Aaron* "spoke against

Moses" (in Num. 12:1) because of his wife and position of leadership? Even families and friends sometimes have conflicts that result in an angry outburst. When this happens, *it does not mean we don't love the one who is the object of our anger, or that we're not loved* when we face the anger of another. It doesn't even mean that the emotion of anger is wrong in itself. What it does mean, however, is that a problem exists that must be handled in a mature and godly manner. To help us know how to deal with these difficult situations, God has provided principles in His Word to guide us. If we choose to apply these principles, relationships can be preserved, the Lord will be honored, and our lives will be happier. So let's discover what God has to say about how to deal with anger and choose to follow His counsels.

Choose to be Slow to Anger.

No one can make us become angry, we allow ourselves this indulgence. God expects each of us to have "*rule over his own spirit*" (Prov. 25:28). That means we must not allow ourselves to become easily or often provoked. Young people today would say, "take a chill pill." God puts it this way: "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). Anger quite often leads to a loss of control in things we say and do. Unfortunately we can't take either back, and we can do irreparable damage. So memorize verses like Proverbs 14:29, "he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit

exalteth folly.” (See also Eccl. 7:9; James 1:19).

Choose to Avoid Friendships With Angry People. Like it or not, we are influenced by those with whom we spend time. Bad attitudes, being easily offended, and quick tempered responses are things that will easily rub off on us. That’s why God’s counsel is “make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Prov. 22:24). We can save ourselves, our friends, and our families a lot of unnecessary grief by following this simple rule from the Lord.

Choose to Carefully Consider if your Anger is Legitimate. For all of us, the truth is that many times our anger is not warranted. We’re quite capable of being too easily agitated, having wrong perceptions, making mountains out of mole hills, or simply having a wrong attitude. When God’s servant Jonah fled from the task he’d been entrusted with, “then said the Lord, doest thou well to be angry” (Jonah 4:4). Like Jonah, we too can have a wrong perspective in things, and become angry when it is entirely unnecessary. A reasonable and godly response, at the onset of angry emotions, is to think the matter through from both sides, and *listen carefully* to what others are trying to tell us.

Choose to Delay Actions and Words Until in Control. One of the worst things to do when we’re upset is to react immediately. Delaying any response, even for a few moments, gives us an opportunity

to pray about what to say, and how to handle our situation correctly. As believers, we need to strive for godliness even in stressful situations. *If we’re not in control* of ourselves or able to allow God to control what and how much we say—*then we’re not ready to proceed.* When the time is right our words should be limited and chosen very carefully. Our standard must be that of Proverbs 29:11, “a fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.”

Choose to Avoid Sinful Responses. In Christ, we have both the capability, and the responsibility to avoid sinful responses. The Lord tells us when we are angry to “sin not,” (Eph. 4:26a). During times of heightened emotions we’re more vulnerable to sin and excess. Threats, shouting, violence, hurtful words, and attempts to get even are natural responses to anger. But believers have a higher calling and *must choose to do right.* Therefore,

Psalm 37:8 urges us to “cease from anger and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any way to do evil.” Even when we’ve been wronged, we must do what is right.

Choose Confrontation When Warranted. We’re going to be pretty hard to live with if we travel this road too often. But sometimes it’s really necessary. When the Corinthians were guilty of flagrant sin, Paul wrote them a strong letter confronting them with their wrongs. But notice he did so out of “anguish of heart” (II Cor. 2:4). He certainly did not relish the task. Moreover, his goal was not merely



to give them a piece of his mind. In every line you can see that *his goal was RESTORATION*, with both his words and tone enhancing that goal. When it is necessary, and when done correctly, let's remember two standards to follow: "if a man be overtaken in a fault...restore such an one *in a spirit of meekness*" (Gal. 6:1), and whenever possible, "*debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself*, and discover not a secret to another" (Prov. 25:9).


Choose to Respond Softly to Anger. This does not mean that you allow others to walk over you or that you give the appearance of being wrong. It simply means that you are *choosing to deal with your anger, or the anger of another, in a Christlike way.* Moreover, the approach of a bull in a china closet will only aggravate everyone, and makes any constructive resolution more difficult. But calm words with a calm approach will set the stage for meaningful dialogue, therefore, we must remember, "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stirreth up strife" (Prov. 15:1).

Choose to Pass Over an Offense when Possible. We always have this option, and it should be exercised more often than any other. Doing so demonstrates maturity, love, spiritual growth, and balance. An unwillingness or inability to allow love to "cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8), or annoyances we find in others, reveals that many times the real problem is with ourselves, more than anyone else. Proverbs 19:11 explains "the discretion of a man deferreth his anger: and *it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*" Making this decision does not mean we deny being hurt, or agree with a wrong. It means we are choosing to be guided by love,

"...calm words with a calm approach will set the stage for meaningful dialogue..."

that we're allowing God to right any wrong, and trusting God to enable us to forgive without holding a grudge. When possible, this is a liberating decision that leads to our own spiritual growth, not to mention greater harmony with others.

The subject of dealing with anger is complicated enough that other pertinent things could also be included. Some might suggest making a commitment to *always ask for forgiveness* once realizing we were wrong. Others believe some kind of an *accountability system* to family or a mature Christian, helps. In unresolved instances of anger, biblical precedence exists for *appealing to members of the local church* in an attempt to find a better resolution. Each of the above suggestions can serve as a deterrent to anger, and an incentive to strive for restoration.

If God has spoken to your heart about the problem of anger and the excesses that accompany it, then praise His holy name! You have just taken the first step toward victory. Now, despite any failures in the past, **DON'T GIVE UP; LOOK UP to God in prayer**, asking Him to help you find freedom from anger by implementing the biblical principles we've just studied. He's waiting for your cry, and when you come to Him with a sincere heart He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). 

Repentance and Grace

By Cornelius R. Stam

NO careful student of the Scriptures will deny that the salvation of a sinner is impossible apart from repentance, for the simple reason that repentance, in the New Testament sense, signified simply *a change of mind* (especially morally).

When the sinner is convicted by the Holy Spirit of the seriousness of sin and of judgment, and cries to the Lord to save him, he has, of course, repented, or changed his mind.

Many of God's servants, however, considering only the fact that sinners need such a change of mind, conclude that the way to produce the greatest results in their ministry is to stress repentance.

Those who make repentance their theme today do so because they have failed to learn the lesson which God has demonstrated historically. They cry to men to change their minds and hearts, forgetting that the *goodness* of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4). God has demonstrated, historically, the fact that when men are given holy laws to keep they only break them, and when they are called upon to repent of their transgressions they only become angry. What man therefore needs is the *grace* of God, not only to accomplish his salvation for him, but also to touch his heart and make him willing to receive it. This is why we contend that in every dispensation man has been saved *essentially* by grace through faith,¹ though this was not "manifested"

until "due time," through the Apostle Paul (I Tim. 2:6,7).

One thing is certain: that evangelists who would bring us back to the gospels and to Pentecost; who insist that repentance is the message for the hour, should cease talking only in generalities and should dare to preach it as it was preached when it was in order.

When John the Baptist preached repentance, he was specific. He dealt with the *particular* sins of the publicans, the soldiers, and the common people. He drove the Pharisees and Sadducees away from his baptism, calling them a "generation of vipers" and demanded "fruits meet for repentance." He faced even Herod the king, rebuking him for living with his brother's wife and "for all the evils which he had done."

When our Lord preached repentance He too was specific, warning the people against the very leaders of His day and pronouncing woes upon them to their faces, listing the particular sins of which they were guilty (Matt. 23).

When Peter preached repentance at Pentecost he also was specific, charging Israel, and especially her rulers, with the crucifixion of Christ.

This is all in striking contrast to what some of our most popular evangelists are doing today as they preach a little grace and a little repentance; neither with true spiritual power. Those who are supposed to be "calling America to repentance" are very careful *not*

to be too specific. One of them, speaking in Washington, D.C., said: "We do not point our finger at anyone." If it is God's plan today to call the nations, and this particular nation, to repentance, Washington would surely be one place *to be specific*.

We do not deny that some who stress repentance are getting people saved, but we insist that they are *not* getting them saved by preaching repentance, but by whatever of the gospel of grace their message may contain.


Let us then take our place with the Apostle Paul, to whom the twelve, through their leaders, turned over their Gentile ministry (Gal. 2:2-9) and who said by divine inspiration:

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office" (Rom. 11:13).

Satan would, of course, oppose and oppress us for preaching God's

message for sinners today, the undiluted, unadulterated gospel of the grace of God, but when he does, let us again join Paul in saying with all our hearts:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

And, as we do this faithfully, sinners *will repent*; they will change their minds, not because we demanded it of them or even exhorted them to do it, but because, as we preached the glory of Christ's finished work and the wonder of God's love and grace, the Holy Spirit opened their eyes to see it, and their hearts to receive it. 

Endnote

1. See the author's book: "Things That Differ."

QUESTION BOX

"What does the apostle mean in Romans 3:3,4 when he states, '*What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*'?"

Essentially, Paul is saying that God is faithful to honor His Word no matter what man says or believes. For example, even though the evolutionist denies the existence of God and believes that life evolved on earth, it in no way changes the fact that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. If a child of God wavers in his belief regarding the resurrection, this doesn't alter the truth that God will raise the dead.

Thus saith the Lord, "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:52,53). Although a man may lose hope, God is still faithful to fulfill His promises. Therefore, "*let God be true, but every man a liar.*"

—Pastor Sadler

The Kingdom of God

Of Prophecy and of “The Mystery”

By Roland N. Icke, M.D.

Most of Scripture is concerned with the *prophesied* Kingdom of God, also called the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew’s Gospel. Prophecy and its fulfillment under the Messiah have primary reference to God’s sovereignly-chosen people, Israel. The specific Kingdom, called the “Kingdom of His dear Son,” “...of His Christ,” was *not prophesied*. God’s eternal purpose to save Gentiles in a *joint body* with Jews was “Hid in God” as a sacred secret (“*the mystery*”) until fulfilled. This *mystery* was revealed thereafter by the *glorified* Christ, through Paul’s epistles.

Alva J. McClain wrote in “The Greatness of the Kingdom,” p. 284: “The events attending the appearance of the Messianic King indicate a literal identity between the Kingdom preached in the Gospels and that of Old Testament prophecy.”¹

There is at least one phase of the Kingdom of God which is equivalent to the Kingdom of Heaven. This has reference to the prophetic Kingdom about which Jesus and His Apostles preached while He was with them on earth, and which they preached during the early Acts period. He was proclaimed to be Israel’s Messiah and King, the Heir promised to David (II Sam. 7:16), and the Son promised to Mary (Luke 1:31-33). He was “the Christ,” concerning whom the prophets spoke (Isa. 9:7, and chapter 53).

The term “Kingdom of Heaven” is used more than 30 times in the Gospel of Matthew, and the term “Kingdom of God” is used in more than 70 other references. Sometimes these refer to the same Kingdom and at other times they are different. This leads to the conclusion that the designation “Kingdom of God” is a universal term. It includes the Kingdom of Heaven and all other aspects of God’s jurisdiction over His creation, whether animal, vegetable, mineral, life, matter, energy, light or time. In these cases, the context often reveals a more specific designation. There are many aspects and phases of “The Kingdom.” No single definition is adequate for all these broad terms. God had a Theocratic Kingdom in the past. His *prophesied* Theocratic (Messianic) Kingdom was “at hand” when Christ was on earth. It is now *in absentia* but it will be restored after the tribulation, established in “the millennium,” and continue in eternity. Today, believers are members of the *unprophesied* Kingdom (to be considered later).

Though sometimes having uncertain meaning, the term “Kingdom of Heaven” (used only in Matthew’s Gospel) could have been used interchangeably with “Kingdom of God” in the following Scripture references:

Mark 1:14,15: “the kingdom of God is at hand.”

Luke 8:1: “glad tidings of the Kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:2: “sent them to preach the kingdom of God.”

Luke 10:9: “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”

Luke 21:31: “The kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”

Luke 23:51: “waited for the kingdom of God.”

His Kingdom, foretold in Old Testament prophecies, was actively proclaimed as *at hand* and partially fulfilled during the earthly presence of Jesus of Nazareth. It will be fulfilled completely in the future. God’s Kingdom of today is not found in the Old Testament Scriptures (Eph. 3:5,9; Col. 1:13), though its *salvation aspect* was anticipated by *types, patterns, and symbolic ordinances*. The *mystery aspect* was *progressively* revealed after Calvary and fits into the present *unpromised* interval during which “blindness in part is happened to Israel,” until the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25). The rest of these prophecies will then be fulfilled. “That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him” (Eph. 1:10). Our effort is limited to the consideration of these two aspects of God’s Kingdom, one promised and one *unpromised*. All aspects of His Kingdom are according to God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 2:7, 3:10,11).

As His representative, Adam was given *dominion* over all God’s earthly creation (Gen. 1:26-29). By disobedience, Adam *forfeited* his administrative right to Satan, giving him domination of all subsequent earthly systems of world

government (Luke 4:6,7). “This continuous warfare between Satan and God is the key to discerning the ultimate purpose of world history. Satan’s purpose is to overthrow God and usurp His place as the unique sovereign of the universe. God’s ultimate purpose is to demonstrate that He only (the Creator) is the ultimate sovereign.”² God allowed that challenge. By undeniable restoration at Calvary He *proved* to all creatures in heaven and earth that He has supreme authority over all that He created (II Cor. 5:19,21; Rev. 4:11, 11:15, 12:9-11).

In sovereign grace, God *chose* Abram (Abraham) out of heathen idolatry, and *gave* him an *unconditional promise*. Abraham was promised (1) a land (extending from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers (Gen. 15:18) and from Lebanon and the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea (Deut. 11:24)); (2) A great name; and (3) Blessings for Abraham (and through him to all families (nations) of the earth). The promise was confirmed and continued through Isaac (not Ishmael), through Jacob (not Esau), and applied through his twelve sons to their descendants who became the nation, Israel.

God made a *conditional covenant* to make Israel (not the Gentiles) a “peculiar treasure unto me above all people...and you shall be a Kingdom of priests, a holy nation...called the children of Israel” (Ex. 19:5,6), and shall reign over many nations (Deut. 15:6). This is the first use of the word “Kingdom” in the Scriptures. This was a Theocratic Kingdom under God through Moses as its mediator. At

Mt. Sinai, God gave specific requirements for Israel with promised blessings for *obedience* to all His commandments (Ex. 15:26; Deut. 11:22,23), and *curses* (punishment) for disobedience (Deut. 8:19, 11:28). The Lord did not choose Israel because of its numbers but “because the Lord loved you” and had given His promise to the patriarchs (Deut. 7:6-9). “All the people answered together and said: ‘All that the LORD has spoken, we will do’” (Ex. 19:5-9). God’s laws were promptly broken, the people were judged, and His laws were given again.

The Theocratic Kingdom continued after Moses’ death through Joshua and then through the Judges for about 450 years. Some of the judges were unfaithful. The people wanted “a king to judge us like all the nations.” The Lord said to Samuel: “Hearken to the people, they have not rejected you, but *they have rejected me*, that I should not reign over them” (I Sam. 8:3-22). Samuel entreated: “the Lord your *God was your King*” (I Sam. 12:12). King Saul reigned for about 40 years but became proud and jealous, causing Israel much distress. David was then chosen to be king and to lead the Israelites in conquest of their enemies. David prophesied about the coming Messiah, who would establish a righteous kingdom on earth (Acts 2:29-35). In spite of failures, David’s heart was “right” with God; his sins were confessed and forgiven (though judged). He was promised an Heir who would reign eternally (II Sam. 7:16).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times

past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1,2). Some of the “mysteries of the Kingdom” were revealed to His Apostles (Luke 8:11). The “mystery” (mysterion) was “Hid in God” (Eph. 3:5,9) until the “due time” after Calvary. It was “committed” first to Paul as a “steward” of the mysteries (Rom. 11:13; I Cor. 4:1,2, 9:17; I Tim. 1:16; Titus 1:3) and through him, by the Spirit, to the Apostles (Gal. 2:2) and to his associates (called holy apostles and prophets; Eph. 3:5). These include Timothy, Titus, Appollos, Barnabas, Silas, Sosthenes, and some others.

“The ‘mystery’
(mysterion) was
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3:5,9) until the ‘due
time’ after Calvary.”

Jesus came to fulfill the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 17:1-14) and to David (II Sam. 7:16), which promises were confirmed “by the mouth of all His holy prophets...since the world began” (Luke 1:69,70; Acts 3:21; Rom. 15:8).

This One, legally the “Seed” of Abraham and the “Son of David,” will establish a righteous Millennial Kingdom on earth. As the reigning Messiah, all enemies will be put under His feet. He will have crushed Satan, conquered death, and will deliver this Kingdom to

the Father, and will *reign with Him* forever (John 17:6-12; I Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 22:16) from the *throne of God and of the Lamb* (Rev. 11:15, 22:3-5).

Problems arise in understanding *which Kingdom is designated* unless we carefully distinguish between: (1) The *prophesied* “Kingdom of God” (the Kingdom of Heaven), also called the Messianic Kingdom, and (2) God’s *unprophesied* “Kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13), “the Church, the Body of Christ” in the present dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2). Both of these Kingdoms belong to the Kingdom of God in its broader sense. (3) Sometimes the phrase “Kingdom of...”, was used as a simile, metaphor, or in a *parable* (Matt. 13:3-53) with the meaning revealed only to the Apostles. These were all “fitting” to the prophetic Kingdom, but some were replaced by new revelations under Grace (after redemption by His blood at Calvary; Eph. 1:7).

(1) The *prophesied* Messiah’s Kingdom: Some have called this the Davidic Kingdom because it is primarily concerned with the eternal Kingdom which was promised to David (II Sam. 7:16) with Christ, whom King David prophetically called his “Seed,” “my Lord” (Psa. 110:1). Jesus verified that He was the object of that reference (Luke 20:41-44; John 4:25,26). The prophesied Messianic Kingdom was “*at hand*” in the presence of Israel’s Messiah during the earthly ministry of Jesus with His disciples. His mission was to convert those chosen Israelites, who by *physical* birth were the *natural* children of Abraham (Matt. 15:24),

into those becoming children of God by a *spiritual new birth*. “The *natural* man does not receive the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned” (I Cor. 2:14).

“The Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God.” “The Word was made *flesh* and dwelt among us” (John 1:1,14), “with all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9; Rev. 19:13). Jesus said: “He that has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 10:30, 14:9); “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). Jesus said: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “It is not meet to take the children’s (Israel’s) bread and cast it to dogs” (Gentiles) (Matt. 15:24,26).

(2) Paul called the *unprophesied* Kingdom of God in this present age of grace, “the Church (which is) the Body of Christ.” This was also called *the mystery*, because it was “kept *secret* since the world began” until it was revealed to him by the resurrected, glorified Lord several years after Calvary (Rom. 16:25; Gal. 1:11,12; Col. 1:13,14). This is a relationship *spiritually* between Christ, its heavenly Head, and redeemed fellow-members of His body (Jew and Gentile alike *individually*)

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living *on earth* but having *heavenly*, rather than *earthly* promises (Eph. 1:3,20, 2:5-7, 5:30; Titus 2:13). This could also logically be called Christ's "Body Kingdom." Neither term, "Davidic Kingdom" nor "Body Kingdom," is specifically so translated from the original Scripture texts but may reasonably be used for clarification of the references. In Paul's epistles, his term "Church of God" usually refers to Christ's "Body Church" and "Body Kingdom" except when *confirming* the *historical facts* of the "gospel by which we are saved" (I Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 9:20-22,27, 19:3-8). The "end-time" Kingdom will be delivered to God the Father, restoring dominion forfeited by Adam's sin (Heb. 12:22,28; I Cor. 15:24).

When one is saved today, by Grace through faith alone (in Christ's finished work at Calvary), the Spirit places this member into the *unpromised* "Body Church" as a new *spiritual* creation (I Cor. 12:13; II Cor. 5:17) and simultaneously translates him into "The Kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13,14). This is *not* an entrance into the *promised Davidic* Kingdom of God (properly called also the Kingdom of Heaven). *That Kingdom*, with *earthly blessings*, was promised to *redeemed* Israel and it included proselytes to Judaism (Acts 10:36-48). The Apostles had been instructed to pray for the Messiah's *promised spiritual* Kingdom to come out of heaven, and for its righteous conditions to be established *on earth* (Matt. 6:10). Since Christ's ascension, the Kingdom of God (of Heaven) in the person of the Messianic King has not been *at hand*. In the future

Millennial and eternal Kingdoms, Christ will reign with power and great glory.

What difference does it make? It should be remembered that God did *not* make a covenant with, or promise blessings directly to, any Gentiles since the days of the patriarchs, and that the Lord's earthly ministry was *only to Israel* (Matt. 15:24; Rom. 15:8). The Gentiles were "strangers from Israel's covenants, without hope and without God in the world." How thankful we Gentiles should be for the "But now in Christ Jesus" which changed that hopeless state and reconciled us to God (Eph. 2:12-16).

All our blessings, as believers today, are *spiritual, in heavenly places* (not earthly) in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). We are fellow-members in the Body Kingdom, without gender or racial distinction. "That He might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one *body* by the cross" (Eph. 2:16). *The earlier Bible teachers erred in claiming some of Isaiah's prophecies about Israel, when there was no Israel (between 70 A.D. and 1948), to mean the present Body Church and Body Kingdom. We have no right to select blessings promised to others in the Messianic Kingdom and claim them in this "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). God always fulfills His promises to the ones promised.*

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. Alva J. McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom," p. 284. Moody Press, Chicago, IL.
2. Renald E. Showers, "Foundations of Faith," Israel My Glory, Apr./May 1999, p. 28. Friends of Israel Gospel Ministries Inc., P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099-0908.

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD'S WORK: If you have a burden to see others reached for the grace of God after your homegoing, it is important to plan ahead. The gifts BBS has received from estates over the years have helped us to replenish our supply of *Things That Differ* and/or place books that are out of print back into print. Should you be planning to prepare your "Will" in the near future, prayerfully consider including the *Berean Bible Society*. This is one way to ensure that your legacy will be used to the glory of God. We should add that you might want to consider naming a neutral Executor, such as your bank, to guarantee that your wishes are honored.

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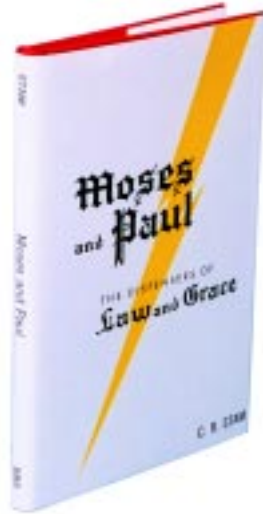
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