

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## *MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST*

The things that I believe about Jesus Christ represent my faith in Him. Each thing that I believe concerning Him must be based upon the Word of God. There is no room here for personal opinions, ideas or imaginations. And no one should borrow the beliefs of others and call them his own. The only thing that can truly be called faith in Jesus Christ is our belief in the record that God has given of His Son. The more we know of this, the more we can believe, the more faith we can have. The less we know of this, the less faith we have, the less we believe. Thousands are struggling to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, hoping to obtain all the marvelous blessings that are guaranteed to all who believe, yet they are vainly trying to believe when they have nothing to believe. The preachers and evangelists have been guilty of urging men to believe, without having given them anything to believe. Years ago I determined never to urge a man to believe until I had given him a message for his faith to act upon.

When one seeks the answer to the questions, "Who was Jesus Christ?" and "What relationship does He bear to His God and Father?" he is seeking the most important and far reaching truths in the Word of God. I have labored upon this for years so as to feel assured that I have uncovered and recovered the truth of God upon these all-important subjects. I have discovered for myself much truth, as one is bound to do when he searches diligently for truth in the right place. And when the truth is found it always satisfies. One is never disappointed in it if truth is his one desire. .

I have received numerous questions about these subjects, but all of these deal with particular truths that cannot be understood apart from the great general truth of God and Christ and the relationship they bear one to the other. If the general truths were understood, these particular questions and difficulties would automatically disappear. We cannot reason from the particular to the general, and it is my opinion that all who have tried it on these subjects have produced an unholy mess rather than the truth of God.

My understanding of these truths is to be set forth under title of *My Faith in Jesus Christ*. This will allow me some liberty of expression since I will be setting forth my faith in Him, the things I believe concerning Him.

(To Be Continued, Vol. VII, No. 6)

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## Truth From The Scripture (Continued from Vol. VII, No.3)

The word *covenant* has been for many years a theological term. It is used by religious men in such a way that one must always wonder just what is meant by it, if anything. It is often used by men in such a way that it conveys no sense. By way of self examination it would be well if each student of God's Word would ask himself just what he means when he uses this word and what meaning it conveys to him when he hears it. Then he should check these with the Word of God.

The dictionary defines the word *covenant* as being "an agreement between two or more persons or parties." The idea of *an agreement* should be read into every occurrence of the word *covenant* in the Bible. In fact, if the word *agreement* is substituted for the word *covenant* it will carry more force and better express the truth I since the word agreement has no theological coloring.

Therefore, in Genesis 12 we read of the agreement that God made with Abraham. When the details of this agreement are carefully considered, they will show how foreign to fact and to Scripture is the idea that the present day believer is a party to this agreement, or is related in any way to it. We do not come under this agreement and we are not blessed because of it. As Dr. C. I. Scofield says, "The dispensation of promise was exclusively Israelitish."

The things that God promised to Abraham are the features that make up the Abrahamic covenant. These are as follows:

1. I will make of thee a great nation. Gen. 12:2.
2. I will bless thee, and make thy name great. Gen. 12: 2.
3. Thou shalt be a blessing. Gen. 12:2.
4. I will bless them that bless thee. Gen. 12: 3.
5. I will curse him that curseth thee. Gen. 12:3.
6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Gen. 12: 3.
7. Unto thy seed will I give this land. Gen. 12:7.
8. The land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. Gen. 13:15.
9. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. Gen. 13:16.
10. Tell the stars if thou be able to number them, so shall thy seed be. Gen. 15:5.
11. I will multiply thee exceedingly. Gen. 17:2.
12. I will make nations of thee. Gen. 17:6.
13. Kings shall come out of thee. Gen. 17:6.
14. I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee. Gen. 17:7.
15. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. Gen. 22:17.

These fifteen statements are the things that God promised to do for and through Abraham and his descendants after him. However, the Scriptures make it exceedingly plain that these promises were to Abraham's seed that came through Isaac and not through Ishmael.

The important elements of the agreement God made with Abraham should be clearly understood and fixed in the mind of the student. Most important of all is that God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed, and promised that they should be the channel by which all families of the earth were to be blessed. The land promised was the actual land where Abraham stood and which his eyes saw. This promise should not be "spiritualized," since it is literal. To "spiritualize" a thing is just a way to do away with it or make it void.

We must not fail to note carefully that the land was promised to Abraham's *seed*. A man's seed is his descendants. Therefore, this promise was made to everyone who could trace their ancestry to Abraham through Isaac. All such were born with a claim upon this promise. They were born in this covenant; born as a child of this covenant. All they needed to do to maintain themselves in this covenant was to meet the divine conditions that were imposed upon them. If they did so, then God would surely keep His part of the agreement and give them the land with all its attendant blessings. This was the hope of all who were born in the Abrahamic covenant. They lived and died in this hope. And since it was not fulfilled in their lifetime, it will be fulfilled to them in resurrection. God never breaks His Word, and the advent of death has no effect upon His purposes or promises. He promised the land to Abraham's seed, and Abraham's seed will receive this land if they lived and died a child of this covenant.

A true hope is based upon some promise of God. When God promises, those to whom He speaks can confidently hope in that promise. Since Abraham and his seed were promised a land with many attendant blessings, this became their hope. They did not hope "to die and go to heaven," but they did hope that after death they should, in resurrection, inherit the land. Since God has told Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs for four hundred years, it was impossible for any of his seed who lived during the three centuries after this promise was made, to realize it except in resurrection. Many of them lived and died in this hope. They will enter into their hope in resurrection.

This great truth stands out in an incident that happened over 1400 years after this promise had been made to Abraham. The seed of Abraham who lived in the days of Ezekiel had become quite discouraged. They knew that generation after generation had lived and died in the hope of entering into a God-given possession of the land but the hope was never realized. God in grace reaffirmed His great promise in a very forceful way. First, he gave Ezekiel a vision.

**The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the valley that was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.**

**And He said unto me, Son of Man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.**

**Again He said unto me, Prophecy unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and I will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath into you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Ezekiel 37:1-6.**

When Ezekiel obeyed these instructions, the bones came together in proper order; sinews, flesh and skin covered them, and when he prophesied again, breath came into them and they lived and stood up an exceeding great army.

This is the vision that Ezekiel saw. Many ingenious interpretations have been wrested from this chapter, but as a rule the God given interpretation or explanation is ignored. In verses one to ten we find the vision and from eleven to fourteen we have the interpretation or explanation. The divine interpretation of a figurative passage is always literal and it must not be forced back into a figure. In other words, we must not interpret God's interpretations or explain His explanations.

God's explanation of the vision is as follows:

**Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore, prophesy and say unto them, Thus said the Lord God; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and shall put My spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in our own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. Ezekiel 37:11-14.**

I am quite familiar with those explanations of these statements which interpret God's interpretation, making the "graves" to mean the nations where Israel is scattered, and this resurrection to be a national resurrection of Israelites living in the far distant centuries. And while it is true that Israel will some day be taken out of the nations where she is now scattered and will enjoy a national revival, nevertheless, that is not what the prophet speaks of here. Ezekiel spoke these words to men who lived in his time. These are now dead, so if this promise is fulfilled to those to whom it was spoken, they will have to be taken from the state of death and brought into the land of Israel.

Those to whom Ezekiel prophesied were discouraged. They said their hope was lost; it seemed to them that it could never be realized; it was nowhere in sight; they felt they were cut off from their portion. But God assures them that even though the promises made to Abraham's seed could not be realized in their lifetime, yet it would be realized in resurrection. The intervention of death could not and would not alter it. God would take them out of their graves and bring them into the land of Israel. This was their hope. It rested upon a sure foundation of promises made by God.

### **Cut Off from the Covenant**

The words "the whole house of Israel" in Ezekiel 37:11 must not be taken to mean everyone of the natural descendants of Abraham. It was possible for one of Abraham's seed to be cut off so that he was no longer a part of the house of Israel. When circumcision was established as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, it was stated that the man who was uncircumcised was "cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant." Genesis 17:14. Such a one could never claim to come under a promise made to "the whole house of Israel." He had been cut off.

Other passages will show that there were many transgressions for which an Israelite could be cut off. See Exodus 12:15, 19; 30:33, 38; Leviticus 7:20, 21; Numbers 19:13, 20. If the whole nation trespassed, then the whole nation would be cut off. However, an individual Israelite could always be restored to his place in the house of Israel, or the whole nation could be restored to their place as the people of God. If the whole nation were cut off, then the members of the nation were placed upon the same footing and had the same responsibilities as the Gentiles. This is the condition of all of Abraham's descendants today. Before God they are "Lo Ammi," or "not My people." There is no feature of the agreement that God made with Abraham that is in force today. The blessings that will come to Israel under this covenant have been postponed until that day when the salvation of God returns to Israel.



Genesis 11 and 12 mark an important turning point in the divine dealing. Heretofore, the history has been that of the whole Adamic race. There have been neither Jew nor Gentile; all have been one in "the first man Adam." Henceforth, in the Scripture record, humanity must be thought of as a vast stream from which God, in the call of Abram and the creation of the nation of Israel, has but drawn off a slender rill, through which He may at last purify the great river itself.

The call of Abraham and the covenant that God made with him made no change in God's relationship to those who were not the seed of Abraham. That which had been God's will for them before his call continued to be God's will for them after his call. When circumcision was established as the sign of the covenant, it was the will of God that the seed of Abraham should be circumcised, and it was His will that the rest of mankind should not be. This was true even in the Acts period, after the Cross, as indicated in Paul's words:

**Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 1 Corinthians 7:19.**

Thus it was that two different bodies of people performed the will of God even though the practice of one was directly opposed to the other.

Abraham died in the faith, not having received the promise (Heb. 11:39), but after his death God confirmed the covenant to Isaac. Of his two sons, Esau and Jacob, the latter became possessor of the birthright. **Jacob's name was changed to Israel.** He became the father of twelve sons, these sons became the heads of twelve families, and these families (with some little variation) became the twelve tribes that formed the nation of Israel.

The increase of Israel from seventy souls to a great nation occurred while they were strangers in the land of Egypt. After four centuries they were brought out of Egypt through God's own intervention in their behalf. When they came to the wilderness of Sinai an event took place which has a bearing upon every part of the Word of God that follows **Exodus 19**. If this event is misunderstood, or if it is not fully comprehended, it will draw a veil over all the rest of the Word of God.

### **The Giving of the Law**

Israel was camped before Mount Sinai and the mount became at once a sanctuary where Moses could seek and meet God. Putting this to the test, Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain. These were His words:

**Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.** The house of Jacob and the children of Israel are one and the same. The repetition here is for the sake of emphasis. God wastes no words, and by this repetition He would force upon the attention of everyone who reads that these words were directed to one people and to them alone.

**Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.** They are reminded of God's past dealings with them. Every act of His had shown His love for them. He had done it all for their good, not for His own gain. He had demonstrated that He could be trusted, and that any agreement He proposed to them would be for their blessing and highest possible good. He had received nothing from them. They had received everything from Him. Now He is going to propose to them the most one-sided agreement ever set forth. By it Israel was to receive great blessings.

**Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed.** Before this, God had spoken to them in several ways and on numerous occasions. But their response had always been half-hearted and hesitant.

Their obedience was always accompanied with questions, murmurings and complaints. God intends to continue speaking to them, and he seeks for a whole-hearted, ready and willing obedience to His messages. This was no more than they should have done, so He was not asking much.

**And keep my covenant.** This means that they were to carefully observe the terms of an agreement that He was about to set before them. Their past experiences had demonstrated the love and the goodness of God. Therefore, they could accept without hesitation any agreement that God offered them without knowing its terms. They could "sign the contract without reading it," in the full assurance that it would be for their highest good.

**Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.** This description denotes a treasure acquired for a possession - - not one to trade with or dispose of at a profit. It is a treasure reserved for one's self, one that will be protected, preserved and cherished. For a nation to become such would guarantee its perpetuity, blessing and glory. Israel had the opportunity to become this by doing nothing more than what they should do.

**And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.** A priest stands between God and someone at a distance. Israel was to become a priestly nation in respect to all other nations. God would approach the nations by means of Israel, and the nations would approach God in the same way.

And an holy nation. The word *holy* means set apart, that is set apart or hallowed by God for His own use. They could become this, but no other nation could.

**These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.** Thus the "party of the second part" in this agreement is mentioned again. . There can be no mistake in regard to whom God will do these things. Only one nation could become a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This is the special manner in which God dealt with one nation. It had no bearing upon any other nation.

When these words were laid before the people of Israel, the response was immediate.

**And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. Exodus 19:8.**

When I am asked wherein my system of teaching differs from that presented in the notes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, I always point out my disagreement with the position taken in regard to the giving of the law and Israel's acceptance of it. Scofield held that Israel made a great mistake at Sinai in that "grace was given up for law." It is generally held by those who follow the *DarbyScofield* system of interpretation that "Israel, in a spirit of dark and senseless legality, abandoned Jehovah's covenant of pure grace for man's covenant of works." My studies force me to repudiate this idea in its entirety. If Deuteronomy 5:27 to 29 is read it will make manifest the erroneous nature of this teaching. "They have well said all that they have spoken," is God's word of commendation of their act.

I believe that we can safely adopt as a principle that one should always accept any proposition that God offers. When God offers to enter into a covenant with man, he can readily accept without even bothering to examine the details. God will never take advantage of anyone. No more advantageous agreement was ever offered than that which was offered by God to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. Israel made no mistake in accepting it. The mistake came in when she failed to fulfill her part of it.

## **The Ten Commandments**

It is my opinion that there is no single subject in the Word of God concerning which there are as many misconceptions as there are concerning the ten commandments. These misconceptions come

about as the result of the tendency throughout Christendom to make the ten commandments and the so-called Lord's Prayer the two main parts of the Word of God. Some commands to keep and a prayer to say are essential to all religions, and the religious feel quite "Christian" if their commands and prayer come from the Bible.

If men would recognize that the ten commandments were a part of an agreement made between God and the nation of Israel, most of these misconceptions would disappear. This truth is completely ignored, in spite of the plain declarations found in Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 4:12-13.

**And He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. Exodus 34:28.**

**And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. Deut. 4:12-13.**

The god of this age has so blinded the minds of the men of this world that they vainly believe that the favor of God can be gained by obeying certain rules and doing certain works. They find special delight in those commands, like "Touch not, taste not, handle not." All the religions of this world have these two principles in common - obeying rules and doing works. They differ only in what rules are to be obeyed and what works are to be done. This is where the faith of Jesus Christ differs from all religions. It gives liberty and offers its blessings "to him that worketh not."

The vast majority of people believe that the Bible is a book of ethics; that is, a book of morals; a book given solely for the purpose of telling man what is right and what is wrong, what to do and what not to do, and what religious ceremonies to observe in the worship of God. They open the Word of God expecting to find these things set forth by precepts and examples, but they find none of these things in Genesis or the first half of Exodus. But when they reach the middle of the book of Exodus and find a series of statements beginning with "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not," they feel they have at last discovered what they are looking for, a rule of life, a code of ethics, a list of all things that are moral and immoral.

However, I well realize that very few have even gone through this process to arrive at the ten commandments. They have simply memorized the ten commandments without regard to anything that goes before or follows after. Thus it is that text is removed from context, the living member is severed from the body of truth to which it belongs in order to provide a list of rules which blind leaders of the blind set forth as a means of winning the favor of God. They close their minds to the truth that these ten commandments were features in an agreement that was entered into between God and Israel.

The human race had been upon the earth for two thousand five hundred years before the ten commandments were given by God to Israel. The force of this truth is seldom realized, it being very difficult for us to conceive such a long period of time. It is like trying to comprehend a sum of money such as a billion dollars. But if we consider that standing where we are in human history one would need to go back five hundred years before the birth of Christ in order to cover a period of equal length, it will help us get a better idea of just how long man was upon the earth before God gave Israel the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. It is impossible for me to believe that the one hundred generations that had lived upon the earth before Moses had been without a moral code. Neither can I believe that the law gave a higher moral code than men had lived under before.

Take Cain for an example. He knew it was wrong, he knew he was sinning when he killed his brother Abel. Yet this was over two millenniums before God said to Israel through Moses, "Thou shalt not kill." Pharaoh knew that he could have no relationship with Sarai without sinning, and he knew that this would be wrong in God's sight (Gen. 12:10-20); yet this was four hundred years before God said to Israel, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Would any dare to say that adultery had not been wrong before the commandments were given since there was no law against it. Abimelech knew that adultery was sin (Gen. 20:9) but he did not have the ten commandments. Could Judah have excused his sin (Gen. 38) by saying, "There is no law against it." This would have been true, the ten commandments had not yet been given, but his acts were exceedingly wicked.

These events are sufficient to show that during the two and one-half millenniums that preceded the giving of the commandments to Israel, such acts as murder and adultery were sins against God. They were sins before the law was given, they were sins after the law was given and they would still be sins if the ten commandments had never been given.

Therefore when we say that the law was given to Israel and to Israel alone, this does not mean that we are free to commit the gross sins that it condemns. When we insist that the present day believer is not under the law, this does not mean that he can practice idolatry, commit murder and adultery, lie, steal, and covet. All things *prohibited* in the ten commandments are wrong for any and every man. They were not right before the law was given, and they did not become wrong when the law was given.

Apart from all prejudice, preconceptions and traditions, we need to make a new examination of everyone of these commandments, keeping in mind that these were the things God expected the children of Israel to do as their part of the agreement or covenant. This we will do in our next issue.

(To be Continued Vol. VII, No. 5)

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## ***FACING THE TRUTH***

### **Concerning "The Powers that Be"**

It is a truth that before His death the Lord Jesus conferred upon men great spiritual authority. The Scripture gives abundant and direct testimony to this.

**I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 16:19.**

That this great power or authority was not given to Peter alone is seen from the additional testimony given in Matthew 18:18, where the same words were spoken of a body of men.

It is a truth that while the principle of human government was instituted by God, yet God has never granted to any civil ruler the power and authority that was granted to these men. Therefore, between the "civil rulers" and the "spiritual rulers" that existed when Paul wrote his Roman epistle, if either were deserving of the title "higher powers" or "superior authorities" it was the spiritual rulers whose prohibitions and permissions were ratified by the heavens.

The full extent of the power possessed by these spiritual rulers is seen in the words of our Lord to His disciples after His resurrection:

**Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. John 20:23.**

In relationship to the proclamation of the kingdom, the disciples were certainly given the right to forgive sins. They had the actual power that a certain class of priests now claim. It was given by our Lord to His apostles and it was exercised by them.

It is a truth that those who possessed this great authority, to bind and loose, to remit and retain, also possessed full authority to support it. They did not bear the sword in vain. Men died and men were made alive at their word. The dealings of Peter with Ananias and Sapphira and his dealings with Dorcas are illustrations of this. The "civil powers" could take life by some violent action such as beheading or stoning, but Peter could take it by pronouncing the sentence. This alone is enough to prove which was the "higher power" or "superior authority."

It is a truth that this authority over men, demons and diseases extended throughout the thirty-three years covered by the book of Acts, but that it is not God's order for the present time is seen from the declaration "ONE LORD" in Ephesians 4:5.

It is a truth that the authority of these spiritual rulers extended to the right of assessing other believers for whatever amounts were required for their personal support of the ministry. This is set forth in 1 Corinthians 9:4-18 and 16:1.

It is a truth that Paul said in **Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."** At the time Paul spoke these words the highest civil power in Rome "was one of the vilest beasts in human form who ever occupied a throne - a sensuous, sensual brute, who ripped up the body of his own mother in order that he might see the womb that bore him an evil, blatant egotist of most despicable character, whose cruelties and injustices beggar all description."

And while we must honor the early Christians who did their very best to live at peace under such a ruler, yet I repudiate with all my heart, soul, strength and mind that Paul was telling these people and asking them to believe that this vile monster's power was of God, that he was ordained of God, that any who resisted him resisted the ordinance of God, that he was not a terror to good works -- only to evil, and if they did not want to be afraid of him to do good and they would have praise of the same. How could it be true of Nero, who contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that only the most infernal imagination could design, that he was "the minister of God to them for good. We must accept many Scriptural statements upon naked faith, but God never asks us to believe anything that is contrary to the normal nature He has implanted within us.

When Paul wrote Romans 13 there were "civil rulers" and "spiritual rulers" over the Roman believers. See Rom. 12:8. When Paul told them to be subject to the "higher powers" or "superior authorities," it was plain that he referred to the "spiritual rulers." A true sense of values will show at once the spiritual rulers were "higher" and "superior" in every way to the civil rulers. Their authority was in different spheres, yet spiritual authority was so much higher than civil authority that it could be called *superior*.

The "spiritual rulers" of that day could say, "Our power is of God," but Nero could not honestly say that his power came from God. History declares that he owed his throne to a crime, the blame of which rested on his wicked mother Agrippina, whose ambition for her son knew no bounds. She married the emperor Claudius, and influenced him to put aside his own son, Britannicus, in favor of Nero. Then, impatient to see her son on the throne, she caused Claudius to be poisoned. These are the stubborn facts of history that tell us how Nero gained his power. I cannot believe that it was of God, or that he was, ordained of God.

The "spiritual rulers" of that day could say, "We are ordained of God," but Nero could truthfully say no such thing. They could say, "Whosoever resists us, resists the ordinance of God," but it would have been the vilest blasphemy for Nero to have said this. This alone is sufficient to prove that the term "higher powers" did not refer to the civil rulers of that day.

One writer who has spoken against my interpretation of Romans 13 thinks that all difficulties will be cleared away and all questions answered if we consider this passage to be a revelation concerning governments and not governors; rule, but not rulers; and kingdoms, but not kings. However, even a casual reading of Romans 13 will show that this is not true. It speaks of *rulers*.

Other objectors to my position continue to ignore the point in dispute, which is, whether Romans 13:1-7 refers to the "spiritual rulers" of that time or the civil rulers of that time. They ignore this question and take up the matter of our duty toward the state or government, something that I have never questioned or disputed. I readily accept as my duty the exhortation given in Titus 3:2. To me, this refers to civil authorities, but it is my conviction that the majestic truths of Romans 13 were spoken of the spiritual rulers of that time, not of the civil rulers.

Those who say that Romans 13 sets forth the believer's duty to his government should be willing to give a detailed exposition of the first seven verses of this chapter, then apply it to our American way of life. They should state just who the "higher powers" and "the powers that be" are in this democracy. The claim that this refers to every government official from the President to the policeman shows either a woeful ignorance or a willful ignoring of the American governmental system.

In the *Declaration of Independence* we read:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is "their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

These words are in direct opposition to the statements made in Romans 13, if that passage refers to civil powers. The words "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" are diametrically opposed to the words "there is no power but of God the powers that be are ordained of God." The words of the *Declaration of Independence* refer to civil rulers. If the words of Romans 13 refer to civil rulers, then they are in conflict. My conviction is that Romans 13 refers to spiritual rulers; therefore, there is no conflict.

I regret that my position in regard to Romans 13 has been twisted by some in such a way as to make it reflect upon my patriotism. It has been inferred that I believe and teach that the Christian should not obey any government. This is entirely false. I am and always have been a true patriot. Love of this country is very deep within me. I have endeavored to pass this on to my only child, and I find much satisfaction in the fact that she has been chosen by her teachers as the outstanding student in her high school class on the basis of "dependability, service, leadership and patriotism."

As a rule, when I am in Philadelphia, I go down to *Independence Hall*, the birthplace of American Freedom, the shrine of American patriotism. As I walk proudly there among the symbols of my American birthright, it is not hard for me to imagine Benjamin Franklin asserting that "the rulers are the servants, and the people their sovereigns." And here it was that the Constitutional Convention determined that we the people of the United States should govern.

The *Constitution* and the *Declaration* set forth just who the real powers are in this Democracy. One would need to regard these very lightly before he could feel that the "powers that be" are the elected officials. As an American, I do not believe it, and there is nothing in the Word of God that teaches me otherwise.

The End

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question.** What is the fate of those who die in infancy?

**Answer.** I fully agree with the reader who sent in this question that there is nothing in Scripture that permits anyone to distinguish between infants and adults. Believing as I do, that the dead are dead, and that there is a resurrection for everyone who dies because of Adam's sin, all who die in infancy will be raised from the dead and will appear before the great white throne. If they have been guilty of unbelief, abominations, murder, sorcery, idolatry, lying, adultery or uncleanness, they will have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death. If not, they will enter into the new heavens and new earth. Has anyone ever known of an infant who has committed any of these frightful sins.

"But," someone may say, "is not an infant an unbeliever?" I answer, "Positively not!" Unbelief is a positive act, a sin that must be committed. If belief is a positive act of the will, and it is, then unbelief must also be a positive act of the will. **No infant is an unbeliever.**

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## THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

The two meetings announced on the last page of this issue are the first of what we trust will be regular Spring and Fall meetings in a half dozen cities. We begin with Chicago and Grand Rapids this Spring, and hope to repeat these meetings in the Fall, adding other cities at that time. The purpose is to bring together as many as possible out of one area who are interested in the Word of God rightly divided and fully proclaimed apart from all denominational bias and prejudice. These meetings should make possible a great increase in fellowship and should be a source of much encouragement to many who are very much alone in their life and faith. This is a "post-war plan" that we are going ahead with at once in order to gain the experience needed to make future meetings of the greatest possible profit.

We are acting carefully in order to avoid setting any false standards in these initial meetings. God forbid that they should take on the nature of a "rally," or that they should become spectacular meetings that are foreign to the simple meetings we usually conduct. We will not seek "crowds," the chief feature will not be music - it will be the presentation of studies from the Word of God and the opportunity of fellowshiping one with another. For more detailed information - read on.

\*\*\*\*CHICAGO AREA SPRING MEETING. On behalf of the *Chicago Bible Fellowship* I wish to extend a personal invitation to all friends living within one hundred miles of Chicago to be present at

this meeting. There will be two services, one at 3: 00 and the other at 7:30. The evening meal may be secured at any of the numerous, good eating-places in Evanston. The Hall will be open between the two services. This will afford ample opportunity for brethren of like precious faith to become acquainted and talk things over. Friends from Milwaukee, Racine, Rockford, and Kankakee have already indicated they expect to be present at this service.

\*\*\*\*GRAND RAPIDS AREA SPRING MEETING. The believers who make up *The Gospel Fellowship* desire to extend a cordial invitation to all friends to attend this meeting in Grand Rapids. Plan to be with us for both services, afternoon and evening. A light evening lunch consisting of sandwiches, beverage and dessert will be served to all who attend., providing they notify us in advance that they will be present. Just send a penny postal card saying, "Mr. Jones and party of three will be present." This will keep us from wasting food or being short of it.

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