

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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DON'T SAY IT

It is a fact well known to the diligent Bible student that certain great truths of Scripture are hidden from the reader of the English Bible due to weak translations. However, it is not so well known that in some instances certain great truths are obscured because a translation is too strong. This causes the Spirit of God to seem to say things that are not in harmony with revealed truth. A clear example of this is seen in **I Timothy 6: 10** where we read that **"the love of money is the root of all evil."** This is not true, neither did the Holy Spirit say it. **"The love of money is a root of all the evils,"** comes much nearer to expressing the mind of the Spirit. It is well known that there is no evil that the love of money cannot lead man into. He may not murder for money, but the love of money leads many men to murder.

Another example of too strong a translation, and the one which will be considered in this study, is found in the words of Paul:

Wherefore I give you to understand. that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed. I Corinthians 12:3.

It is my conviction that this statement as it stands in our English Bibles is far too strong. I believe that it says more than the Apostle intended when he spoke the original of these words. This passage would lead us to think that there were two groups in the Corinthian assembly; one which said, "Jesus is accursed," and the other which said, "Jesus is Lord." Here Paul is supposed to have informed them that those who said, "Jesus is accursed," did not speak by the Spirit of God.

If this is what Paul told them, we cannot but feel that it was an insult to their spiritual intelligence, even if they were only babes in Christ. The youngest babe in Christ knows instinctively that a man does not speak by the Spirit of God when he says, "Jesus is accursed." If any man in Corinth did this,

it was not necessary for Paul to inform them that such men were devoid of the Spirit of God. Furthermore, all will agree that if Paul had intended to say something along this line, a much milder statement would have sufficed and been much more effective. He could have said: "No man speaking by the Spirit of God says one word against Jesus."

If I say of a man that he would not steal a million dollars, it is a very doubtful compliment indeed. But if I say that he would not touch one cent that did not belong to him, this would be a sincere tribute to his honesty. We defeat our own purposes when we make our words too strong; therefore, we would hardly expect too- strong a statement from the inspired pen of Paul. Nevertheless, it is evident that his statement in the first part of I Corinthians 12:3 is far too strong as it stands in our English versions. We need to carefully consider the original of this passage. .

The Greek word here translated "accursed" is **anathema**. It appears also in Romans 9:3 where Paul says that he had wished himself to be "accursed from Christ." The phrase "accursed from Christ" does not have any real meaning as one will find when he tries to explain it. Our word accursed means "doomed to destruction." In Romans 9:3 the translators put "**separated**" in the margin. This is the fundamental meaning of the Greek word anathema: a thing severed, separated, or removed. The purpose or the results of this "severing" must be discovered from the context. It is not indicated in the word itself. Paul had wished himself to "be severed from Christ." This may seem to be a weaker statement, but it is in reality much stronger since it does not say too much. .

In Galatians 1:8, 9 the word anathema appears twice and is translated "accursed" both times. Even here "severed" or "cut off" would express the truth much better than "accursed." Paul did not call upon the Galatians to pronounce a curse upon the false teachers; that is, to doom them to destruction. They could not have done this, as they would have been usurping the rights of the Judge of all the earth. Paul called upon the Galatians to sever or cut off these false teachers by rejecting their ministry. We find this same truth expressed in other words in Galatians 5:12.

Paul's statement in I Corinthians 12:3 might better be translated: "No man speaking in union with God's Spirit says, Jesus is severed." Then if we desire to know what this means it is explained by the contrasting statement which follows it: "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit" To say that "Jesus is Lord" is the exact opposite of saying that, "Jesus is severed." To say that, "Jesus is Lord" is to make Him one with God. To say that, "Jesus is Lord" is to confess His Deity and admit His humanity. To say that "Jesus is severed" is to confess His humanity and deny His Deity.

In the past two thousand years there have been those who have heaped many honors upon Jesus Christ, but they have always made Him to be One removed from the Deity. They have declared Him to be the most eminent of all creatures, but a creature distinguished from the Creator. They have ascribed to Him great antiquity, admitted His preexistence, and have placed Him above the highest archangel. Yet they insist that He is separate from God. They feel He is much nearer to God than is man; nevertheless, He is severed from God. Such theories are usually traced back to one Arius, and they usually bear his name, but it is evident that they first appeared in Corinth when certain men tried to make too sharp a severance between Jesus and God. Paul answered their teaching by one of the strongest statements to be found in Scripture: **No man speaking in union with the Spirit of God says that Jesus is separate or removed from God.** Furthermore, he went on to declare that it required a higher intuition than any of which man alone is capable to confess that Jesus is Lord. If the Deity of Jesus Christ becomes a certainty of faith as well as a conclusion of the intellect it must be the result of a mental capacity that is supplied only by the Holy Spirit. The wisdom to say that Jesus is Lord is possible only to those who possess the Holy Spirit. Man unaided cannot do this. Those who cannot believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ have never met the divine conditions for knowing this truth. .

It is only by means of the light that the Spirit of God gives that a man can form a true conclusion concerning the character of Jesus Christ. If he makes too sharp a distinction between Christ and God, if He says that Christ is separate from God, then he does not speak in union with the Spirit of God. No man speaking in union with the Spirit of God says that Jesus is severed. This is the emphatic declaration of Paul. Therefore, don't say it!

A glance at the map of Lake Huron will show that that part of it, which reaches out into the State of Michigan is called Saginaw Bay. This is a clearly defined body of water, but no man who has any knowledge of the facts would ever say that Saginaw Bay is no part of Lake Huron, or that it is severed from it. Ships that sail on the waters of Saginaw Bay are actually sailing on the waters of Lake Huron. If a man walking would seek to trace out the shores of Saginaw Bay, he would soon face an insurmountable difficulty. He would find that he has to include the entire shoreline of Lake Huron.

Even so it is with the man Christ Jesus. As we see Him upon the earth He is without doubt a clearly defined individual personality. But when we seek from the Word of God an answer to the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" we will soon find that He has no boundaries, and that we are dealing with One who is not less than God. If we seek to encompass Him, we will be forced to include God. **"In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9.**

The End

GOD'S JUDGMENTS

As a rule the average professing Christian feels that only moral lapses are sins. This is a worldly idea that has no foundation in the Word of God. In Scripture any deviation from known truth is sin, and to persist in ignorance lest these deviations should come to light is a greater sin. In view of this, we need to confess our sin and the sin of those who have gone before us because we have slandered the character of God by reading a false and unscriptural meaning into the word judgment. We have attached to it such ideas as condemnation, punishment, plagues, curses, and woes. But even a cursory investigation will reveal at once that these are not the ideas God intended to convey when He spoke this word. Words are expressions of thoughts, and if we read the wrong thought into a word we fail to get the message the speaker intended to convey. In wresting the word judgment, we have changed the truth of God into a lie.

The Hebrew word for judgment is **mishpat** (pronounced mishpot). It occurs 416 times in the Old Testament, and it was one of the most pleasant words that could fall upon the ear of the Hebrew. His mind would dwell long upon any passage in the Scripture wherein this word appears. "I will sing of mercy and of judgment," was the song of the Psalmist in Psalm 101:1. This alone is sufficient to show that the word stands for something that is glorious and wonderful, for David would not be singing of plagues, curses, or punishments. In Hosea 2:19, 20 this word occurs in the following list—righteousness, judgment, loving kindness, mercies, and faithfulness. Thus we see that this word takes its place and fits in with things that are glorious and wonderful. And since it is here related to betrothal (marriage) it cannot mean anything like punishment, curses, or plagues.

It is going to be exceedingly hard for us to purge from our minds the false ideas which are attached to this word. I speak from experience. We will find it almost impossible to cease using it as a symbol to express the ideas of punishment, condemnation, and penalty. We will also find it quite difficult to enter into the true meaning of this word. But if we can discover the truth God intended to convey when He used this word, then associate these ideas with it when we come upon it in the Old Testament, we will gain much truth and an understanding of many passages, which hitherto have been enigmas.

The study of the Word of God is primarily a study of the words God has used. The meaning of any word in the Bible must be obtained from its use. If we do not establish the meaning of God's words from His own use of them, then we must assume the responsibility of making them mean what we choose they shall mean. The meaning of God's words can be fixed only by their use in Scripture. This statement can be accepted and followed out to all its conclusions without falling into the "one word, one meaning" fallacy. Every word in Scripture has a certain fundamental meaning. If any word seems to have two fundamental meanings, then it is two words and should be treated as two words, even though spelled the same. We might call the fundamental meaning of a word its approximate meaning. We cannot say dogmatically in advance the exact or full meaning of any word. All we can say in advance is its approximate meaning, then settle upon its exact and full meaning after it is used in a sentence. This is called the law of the context. For example the word dark means approximately "the absence of light" But in the phrase "a dark day" it does not mean the same degree of darkness as in the phrase "a dark night."

It is just here that so many fail in dealing with the words of Scripture. They try to decide in advance the exact and full meaning of a word, then abandon it in confusion when they find it will not fit in certain contexts. We should fix only an approximate or fundamental meaning upon a word, then allow the context to reveal its exact meaning. This must never be forgotten as we consider the word judgment.

Of course we will need to consider the Hebrew word as any tracing out of the English word will lead only to greater confusion. Note this example from the book of Proverbs:

An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. Judgments are prepared for scorners. and stripes for the back of fools. Proverbs 19:28, 29.

The English word judgment appears twice in this passage and the second occurrence most certainly shows that it refers to punishments. However, when we check the Hebrew we find that the first occurrence is the word **mishpat** and the second is the word **shephet**. This second word does mean punishment as other occurrences in Exodus 6:6, 7:4, 12:12, Ezekiel 14:21 will certainly show. But we are not dealing with this word. It is the Hebrew word **mishpat** that is the subject of our study, a word, which never means punishment in any of its 416 occurrences.

I do not wish to create a prejudice in the minds of my readers in favor of any one definition of this word. I would prefer that they study every occurrence of this word and arrive at their own understanding. But I have already partially defined it in a previous study (Volume XI - Number 6) and it is now my present purpose to teach the subject, and not simply to urge others to study it. Therefore, it is necessary for me to state in the beginning what I have found that this word means.

An examination of all occurrences will bring the conviction that this word means approximately an established order or system. When it refers to God's judgments it has to do with an established or a fixed order or system, which has its source in Him. More on this later, this being only a preliminary statement. Let us consider some illustrations of this.

I recently traveled on a train with a number of boys on their way to a military school. It appeared that some were on their way to begin their studies, and others had been students a year or more. Their discussions and friendly banter had mostly to do with the regulations of the school; that is, its established order, system, or customs. In other words they were discussing the judgments of the school in which they were students. These judgments were based upon and were the results of rules, customs, principles, and traditions.

It is this idea that led Rotherham to translate **Isaiah 26:9** as follows:

When thy regulations extend to the earth. the inhabitants of the world will have learned righteousness.

If we keep in mind that "to regulate" means "to adjust or control by rule, method or established mode" we will see that the word regulations does set forth much of the truth in the Hebrew word mishpat. However, since it sets forth only one facet of the truth, I would not recommend it as a uniform translation of this Hebrew word. It is useful only where mishpat seems to indicate that which brings about the order rather than the order itself.

In every American city there is an established order, which is usually fixed by ordinances passed by the city council or aldermen. This order varies from city to city, and conduct, which violates the order of one city may be wholly compatible with the order of another municipality. Any city has the right to establish its own order and to arrest as disorderly all who violate it. The established order in any city are the judgments of that city.

Man's judgments in any matter are his established order, and God's judgments are His order. God's judgment is related to His will and His ways. When God's will is done on earth as well as in the heavens, then His judgments will extend to the earth.

With these thoughts before us, let us consider certain passages in the Old Testament, which will shed further light on this approximate definition. The word mishpat first occurs in Genesis 18:19. Of Abraham the Lord said:

For I know him, for he will command his children and his household after him and they will keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him. Genesis 18:19.

In this passage judgment is linked up with "the way of the Lord," and it is something that God expects men to do. To "do judgment" is to walk in conformity with the order that God has established. If we note that way means manner, method, mode, fashion, style, we will see the harmony between the "way of the Lord" and "the judgment of the Lord."

The second occurrence is found in **Genesis 18:25** where it is translated "right."

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

The question, which Abraham asked was: **Shall not the Judge of all the earth act in harmony with His established principles of justice?** That is, will He deal with righteous men as if they were the same in His sight as the guilty? If He destroyed the just as if they were wicked, He would violate His own order.

In the next occurrence the word mishpat is translated **manner**, as it is in forty other occurrences in the Old Testament. Joseph declared to the chief butler:

Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shall deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand. after the former manner when thou wast his butler. Genesis 40:13.

It was the established order (mishpat) in Pharaoh's palace that the chief butler should fill Pharaoh's cup and place it in his hand. Joseph declared that within three days the chief butler would again be doing this in accord with the established order (judgment) of Pharaoh's household.

Thus the first three occurrences of the word mishpat in the Bible demonstrates the correctness of the definition that has been given to it—an established order, custom, or manner. A few more references will demonstrate this still further.

In Exodus 15:25 mishpat is translated "**ordinance.**" When the context is considered it will be found that this "ordinance" consisted of a divinely ordered state of affairs under which if Israel did that which was right in His sight, gave ear to His commandments, and kept all His statutes, He would lay upon them none of the diseases which He had laid upon the Egyptians. This was a blessed arrangement indeed.

In Exodus 21:1 God declared to Moses: **Now these are the judgments, which thou shalt set before them. Exodus 21:1.**

A reading of the three chapters that follow and which sets forth these judgments will show that God was revealing a divine order to which every Israelite was to conform. To walk contrary to this divine order was to walk disorderly; that is, to be guilty of disorderly conduct. The word **mishpat** also appears in Exodus 21:9 where it is translated "manner," and in 21:31 where it is translated "**judgment.**" See also Leviticus 18:4, 5, 26.

In four occurrences mishpat has been translated "**order.**" An instance is seen of this when David said of their failure to bring the ark to Jerusalem:

For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. I Chronicles 15:13.

God had declared how the ark was to be carried. This established a divine judgment or order in regard to transporting it. They failed to follow this order. See also I Chronicles 23:31 and II Chronicles 8:14 where mishpat is also translated order.

Nehemiah declared that God gave Israel right judgments (Neh. 9:13), but that they sinned against his judgments (9:29). David sang of God's judgments when he declared:

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold. Yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping them is great reward. Psalm 19:9-11.

Usages such as these make it impossible for us to connect the word mishpat with curses, plagues, punishments, or woes. With these facts before us we are now ready to proceed to the consideration of certain outstanding passages and find in them glorious revelations concerning God's wonderful judgments.

The Result of God's Judgments

Isaiah speaks of a time to come when God's judgments are in the earth and declares the result.

For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Isaiah 26:9.

This being true it declares earth's best and greatest hope. There is nothing better we can desire for the earth and its inhabitants than that God should bring in His judgments. It is most evident that the inspired writers of the Old Testament anticipated this time and called it "the judgment," meaning the period of time when God's judgments would be in the earth. Of this time David declared:

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment. Psalm 1:5.

The word "stand" in this passage means "arise," and speaks of resurrection. If this is true, the reverse will also be true, and we can state assuredly that the godly will arise to participate in "the day of judgment." This is a fact we should hold firmly as we seek further light upon it.

An outstanding passage in which the word judgment appears three times is **Isaiah 42:1-4**. We will consider this verse by verse.

Behold My servant, whom I uphold: mine elect. in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

That this passage speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ is evident from Matthew 12:18-21. Thus we have here a promise that Jesus Christ will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, or to the nations. This does not mean that He will punish the Gentile nations for their sins. This is taught in other places in Scripture, but it is not the teaching of this passage. The promise here is that Christ will bring forth and impose upon the nations of this world a divine order. This will guarantee security and peace.

Under His order **'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'** The manner in which Christ is to accomplish this is set forth in the next passage.

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. Isaiah 42:2.

This prophecy cannot be truly applied to Christ in the three years of His earthly ministry, for then He did cry out and His voice was heard in the streets. See Matthew 4:17; 27:46, 50; John 7:37. If we attempt to find the final definitive fulfillment of this prophecy in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, we will create insurmountable difficulties, which the honest student cannot ignore. Furthermore, it is most evident that He has not yet brought "judgment to the Gentiles."

It has become customary with one school of thought among professing Christians to insist that all prophecies not fulfilled at the first coming of Christ will be fulfilled at or after the second coming. This arises from a false idea that nothing positive for this earth can be done by Christ unless He is somewhere upon the earth, that His hands are tied as long as He sits at the Father's right hand. The unreasonableness of this idea becomes apparent the moment it is carefully considered. Three statements from Scripture are enough to reveal its error.

It is expedient for you (to your advantage) that I go away. John 16:7.

If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said. I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. John 14:28.

So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about for their sakes there fore return thou on high. Psalm 7:7.

The difficulties we create if we try to apply Isaiah 42:1, 2 to the earthly ministry of Christ are exceeded if we attempt to apply it to the second coming. The second coming begins with the Lord Himself descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. See I Thess. 4:16. Therefore, this prophecy must be fulfilled sometime between the Lord's cries from the Cross and the shout that is heard at His second coming. Only one interpretation is possible. This prophecy will be fulfilled before the second coming by the Lord working from heaven. His manner of working will be tender, but sure:

A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench: 'He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. Isaiah 42:3-4.

The great work of Christ in setting judgment in the earth has not yet begun. It has long been delayed due to the bringing in of the present dispensation of the grace of God. The present dispensation was a secret hid in God and it is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy, It is not God's present purpose to establish judgment in the earth. At present God dispenses naught but grace. All that He dispenses now comes within this category. His purpose in this is to demonstrate the graciousness of His character. In the dispensation that follows this, God will predominately dispense judgment. All such as light, law, statutes, way, will, and truth come under the category of judgment, Our God is a God of order, and this will yet be demonstrated when He brings His order into the earth.

The first great truths concerning God's judgments are found in the Old Testament. When we have entered into an understanding of the things revealed there, we are ready to proceed into the New Testament and enter into all that it reveals concerning judgment. The witness of both will be found to be harmonious, It could not be otherwise.

If Isaiah 42:1 is compared with Matthew 12 :18 we will find that the **Greek word krisis** corresponds to the **Hebrew word mishpat**, since they are used interchangeably by the Holy Spirit. This Greek word has many derived meanings and figurative uses not found in the Hebrew word. For example, krisis is used of the retribution or punishment that falls upon those who violate the judgments of God. However, this is a derived meaning and it should not become the leading definition of the word.

Much time and thought will need to be given to the word judgment in the New Testament. This is a major project that may require years of effort. My own studies to date have brought forth certain interesting facts which I will pass on to other students for whatever help they may be to them.

The "**day in which God will judge the world in righteousness**" spoken of in Acts 17:31 is the period of time when God's judgments are in the earth, as set forth in Isaiah 26:9. This is usually made to be a day when God metes out punishment to all men, but this confuses judging with punishment. Paul's statement is a repetition of the truth found in **Psalm 9:7-9**.

But the Lord shall endure forever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness. He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

The "day of judgment" spoken of in Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24 is not the assize of the great white throne. It is my conviction that these passages speak of that period of time, when God's judgments will be in the earth.

In Matthew 12:36 our Lord declared that every idle word (statement or declaration) that men shall speak they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. The usual interpretation of this passage is that God is now keeping a record of all that men say, then someday they are going to be hauled into His court to explain and give an account for every idle word spoken. This would be a rather useless procedure, especially so in the case of unbelievers who are condemned anyway. We err when we try to make this to be true at the. present time rather than in the day of judgment. It is not until the time when God's judgments are in the earth that men will have to give an account for every idle word. And it will be a daily accounting.

In the day that God establishes His order in the earth, the Holy Spirit, acting as a Paraclete, will enlighten every man concerning God's established order. The Spirit of truth will impart understanding to every man concerning judgment, in fulfillment of our Lord's promise in John 16:7,8.

Several years ago in the course of a journey I passed from one state to another. I had no more than crossed the border when I was stopped by a friendly policeman who welcomed me to the state, then imparted to me information concerning the established order in that state, so far as the speed of automobiles was concerned. This was done because that state had a lower maximum speed limit than the surrounding states. After enlightening me concerning this, he discreetly informed me that a record was kept of all license numbers, and that if I got into any trouble over speeding it would be impossible for me to claim ignorance as an excuse.

At present we live under man's order; that is, man's judgments. The time will come when God will intervene, take control, and establish His order or His judgments in the earth. This change will be so radical that it will be necessary for Him to inform all men concerning His order or His judgments. This He will do, for the Holy Spirit will enlighten the world (mankind) concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. Isaiah 29:18.

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding. and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. Isaiah 29:24.

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way. walk ye in It, when ye turn to the right hand. and when ye turn to the left. Isaiah 30:21.

These three passages reveal some of the work of God which will be a reality in the day when His judgments are in the earth. In view of this we could well wish that God's glorious day of judgment shall be delayed no longer. How glorious it will be when men can say in truth:

He is the Lord our God. His judgments are in all the earth. Psalm 105:7.

Blessed are they that keep judgment. and he that doeth righteousness at all times. Psalm 106:3.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Proverbs 21:3.

It is joy to the just to do judgment. but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. Proverbs 21:15.

The End

THINK ON THESE THINGS – IMMINENCY?

The enemies of Jesus Christ will someday become His footstool. Do you agree, or not? This truth is declared seven times in Scripture. It appears first in the Psalms:

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Psalm. 110:1.

This truth is repeated five times in the New Testament (Matt. 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 29:43, Acts 2:35, Heb. 1:13), and an additional thought is added in **Hebrews 10:12,13:**

But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

These passages present Scriptural facts. If any deny the facts revealed in these verses, they deny the Word of God. We who believe have the deep conviction that the enemies of Jesus Christ will someday be made His footstool.

To be made His footstool means to be under His feet. To be under His feet means to be in the place of subjection, under His rule, under His control. That this is to be done is attested to in many other Scriptures.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou In the midst of thine enemies. Psalm 110:2.

So the heathen (nations) shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the king of the earth thy glory. Psalm 102:15.

These are glorious prophecies, but they have not yet been fulfilled. Jesus Christ still sits at the right hand of the Father. His enemies are not yet under His feet.

The question I would have my readers to consider and answer is this: **Are the enemies of Christ brought in subjection to Him before His second coming or after His second coming?** On every hand we see sincere men who are declaring that Jesus Christ may come at any moment. They have failed to take into consideration the fact that **Jesus Christ sits at the Father's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool.** They are in reality declaring that the time will come when Christ becomes weary of waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool, so He leaves the Father's throne, descends to the earth and cuts His enemies to pieces in wrath.

The clear teaching of Scripture is that Christ will remain at the Father's right hand until such time as His enemies have been placed under His rule, in subjection to Him. They will never become subject to Him in this dispensation of grace. Isaiah 26:10. They will become subject before He leaves the Father's throne. These facts demand that there be a period of time before the second coming during which Christ will rule over His enemies. Think on these things.

The End

A NEW DISPENSATION

(Continued from Vol. XI, No.6)

A dispensation is an administration. To simplify this still further, we can say that an administration is a method of dealing. God's present method of dealing is entirely in grace, and nothing but grace enters into His present dealings with the world or His own who are in the world. This limits the activities and works of God at the present time, but it is a self-imposed limitation and it will result in a full demonstration of the graciousness of His character, a demonstration that will stand as a witness throughout all eternity.

While grace is all that God is dispensing today, it is not all that He can do, neither is it all that He will ever do in dealing with man. Our God is a God of power. His resources are unlimited. In the coming dispensation He will bring all His resources into action in relationship to His dealings with men. Even wrath will be seen, but wrath is always the last resource of power, not the first. Think what a difference it would make if today God would "pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh." He is going to do it someday. Think what the result would be if God would suddenly bring His judgments into the earth. He will do it someday, and the results will be glorious.

He Will Judge the World

The coming dispensation will be the day that God has appointed in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained (Acts 17:31). This means that God will determine the order for this world, and He will administer justice in harmony with that order. On every hand we find men who are attempting to set the divine order by which men should now live. They declare forms, manners, customs, and modes as if they were God's official spokesmen. Thus they become directors of men's consciences instead of heralds of the Word. Quite often they band themselves together as those who are likeminded, and this greatly increases their assurance that they speak on behalf of God when they issue their edicts concerning touch not, taste not, handle not. Some things they insist upon are good, some are ridiculous, and some are evil. At the best, the order they would establish is human. Even the divine order that God will someday impose upon the world should not by men be imposed in this dispensation of grace.

The new order of things, which God will bring into the earth will touch every phase of human life and affairs-social, business, family, education, politics, government, marriage, divorce, sports, and entertainment. Everything in these that does not conform to God's judgments will have to be brought into conformity or else be abolished. Even the secrets of men will then come under the scrutiny of God's fixed order. Secret pacts, agreements, covenants may still be made, but they must conform to the principles that God has established. If they do not, God will deal with the makers.

He Will Purge His Floor

It was the declaration of John the Baptist that Jesus Christ would thoroughly purge His floor, gather His wheat into the garner, then burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matthew 3:12). Not one stroke of work was done upon this during His earthly ministry, for His mission was then one of peace and good will. Men went so far as to spit in His face, but even they were not purged.

Before this declaration is ever fulfilled, that which corresponds to the wheat must be produced. This wheat is "the sons of the kingdom" as Matthew 13:38 emphatically declares. They are men who have been produced by and who are the result of God's rule or control over the earth. And they are not gathered into His barn simply to be stored there, or to be ground into flour. This wheat is "the good seed" and it is to be used to plant the world with the sons of the kingdom.

When God begins the new dispensation two great processes will be at work, producing wheat and purging the floor. This will provide in time the right material and a clean place for His great operations. The process by which He "purges His floor" is set forth in many places in the Old Testament.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1:4-6.

It is evident that when this great principle becomes a fact in the earth, His floor will in time be purged. This passage will be fully applicable in the coming dispensation. A still stronger statement is found in Psalm 7:11-12.

God judgeth the righteous and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow and made it ready.

This is not present truth. The truth for today is that God is actively gracious with the wicked every day. But when God intervenes and changes the entire complexion of the world, the truth declared in Psalm 7:11-12 will be in full force. Again we read in Psalms:

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. Psalm 37:9.

He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within My house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in My sight. I will early (morning by morning) destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all the wicked doers from the city of the Lord. Psalm 101:7, 8.

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more. Psalm 104:35.

The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy. Psalm 145:20.

For the upright shall dwell in the land and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it. Proverbs 2:21, 22.

If we look to the past, there is no place in history where these words are applicable. If we look to the present, experience tells us that transgressors are not being rooted out of the earth. If we look to the millennium, these words are not applicable for no transgressors will be there to be rooted out. The only place this can be applicable is in that period of time before the millennium when God's judgments are in the earth. Jesus Christ will yet thoroughly purge His floor. The final act in this purging is set forth in Matthew 13:41. This ushers in the millennium. There will be nothing that offends, and none who do iniquity in the millennium.

He Will Plant His Wheat

The coming dispensation is the time when Jesus Christ will plant the world with the sons of the kingdom, in harmony with the truth revealed in the parable of the tares among the wheat. See Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. That this precedes the millennium is an obvious truth -that needs only to be pointed out. Furthermore, it is just as obvious that nothing that compares to this parable has ever been seen since these words were spoken. Any idea that present conditions are the result of Satan having surreptitiously planted tares in a field (world) that Christ had already planted with wheat is utterly childish. Where in the past or in the present do we see this world as a weed less field being planted with the sons of the kingdom? This belongs to a future day, and that future day is not the millennium. (See Vol. XI, No. 5 for additional material.)

The Times of Refreshing

The coming dispensation corresponds to "the times of refreshing" spoken of in Acts 3:19, 20. The divine order here is (1) Israel must repent; (2) Israel must be converted; (3) Israel's sins must be blotted out; (4) seasons of refreshing will come upon Israel from the face of the Lord; (5) then God will send back Jesus Christ. This is the divine order than can never be altered. (See Vol. XI, No.3.)

The Tabernacle of David

The coming dispensation is the time when the tabernacle of David is rebuilt. At the Jerusalem conference James declared that when God completed His purpose in "visiting the Gentiles," He would return to Israel and build again the tabernacle of David, rebuild the ruins and set it up (establish it). Acts 15:16-17. (See Vol. X, No.3 for additional material.)

The Day of His Power

The coming dispensation is the day when God reveals His power. This will be manifested in spiritual works more than in the physical. Of this the Psalmist was inspired to say:

Say unto God. How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. Psalm 66:3.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. in the beauty of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth. Psalm 110:3.

All thy works shall praise thee. O Lord: and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power. Psalm 145:10. 11.

His Love Continues

The coming dispensation is a great manifestation of the love of God shown to mankind through Jesus Christ. Our God is going to change His method of dealing with the world, but He will deal in love. All that He does will be for man's good. However, He will permit no rejection of His efforts, which are manifestations of His love. All of His great resources are going to be brought forth in behalf of man.

Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way. Psalm 25:8. 9.

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book. and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity. and out of darkness. Isaiah 29:18.

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding. and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. Isaiah 29:24.

And thine ears shall hear word behind thee. saying. This is the way. walk ye in it. when ye turn to the right hand. and when ye turn to the left. Isaiah 30:21.

Meditate upon these things. Consider the result when God does these things. Let your heart be lifted in wonder and praise.

The End

STUDIES IN ACTS

Chapter Six

In Israel no distinction was ever made between the civil government and the religious life of the people. All religious laws were civil laws and were enforced by the state upon all citizens. Or, to put it in the familiar language of today, there was no separation between church and state. Church and state were one in Israel.

To the people of Israel God had committed the care of every widow among them. See Deuteronomy 14:28, 29. This became the responsibility of all who ruled over the nation. Since it was the destiny of the twelve Apostles to "sit upon twelve thrones, judging (having jurisdiction over) the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28), the widows among the disciples of Christ became the immediate responsibility of the twelve. They were from Pentecost onward God's rulers over all who received Christ. Rank imposes obligations, and they could not ignore their obligation toward the widows among those whom God had placed under them.

The Apostles had unlimited funds at their disposal (Acts 4:34, 35), and if any widow was neglected it was not due to lack of means. As long as the believers were not too great in number, the daily distribution of funds from the common store was cared for by the Apostles. But when the number increased, the demands made by more important things caused this lesser ministry to be neglected.

6:1. And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

There are many passages in Acts, which cannot be properly understood until we know who are meant by the Grecians. These were not Gentiles. They were Israelites, even as the Hebrews were Israelites. They were not strictly Greek-speaking Jews, for the Hebrews also spoke and understood Greek. The marginal rendering in most Bibles is "Hellenists" which is a much better translation. They were Jews of the dispersion who had resided in foreign countries and had adopted the Greek customs and culture. The Hebrews resisted the influence of these foreign customs and remained loyal to the old traditions and culture of Judaism. They as a rule held the Hellenists in a certain degree of contempt. This would cause the Hellenists to take very seriously any real or fancied slight.

The murmuring of the Hellenists was not directed against the Apostles. They would hardly have done this after what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. But their widows have been neglected, and someone must be blamed, so they murmur against all Hebrews. Their cause was just, but their spirit led to contention. The Hebrew widows were also neglected, but complaint came only from the Hellenists.

6:2-4. Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them, and said. It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

The Apostles were busy men, but not in the sense of being workers with a thousand-and-one duties to perform. They had one great task, which more and more demanded every minute of their time. Everything they had ever known about the Old Testament had to be carefully reconsidered in the

light of all events that had taken place in the three years previous to Pentecost. Hundreds of former ideas and interpretations had to be abandoned, and new understandings had to be carefully and cautiously arrived at. This required consideration, investigation, and meditation, and all this had to be carefully seasoned with continual prayer. Then they needed to recall to mind and reconsider every word and every act of the Lord while He was upon earth. Finally this had to be delivered to the waiting people, many of whom never departed from the temple for fear of missing some word which the Apostles brought forth.

It may have been that at first the work of distributing the funds was a pleasant and relaxing interlude in their labors in the Word. But when the number of the disciples multiplied, the time, which could be given to this work was insufficient, and this caused the Hellenists to murmur at the neglect of their widows.

It is unreasonable for men to say that this incident was recorded to show "ministers" how to deal with those who murmur in their congregations, or how to properly organize and carry on the work of a church. It is enshrined in the Word to teach men a lesson in spiritual values, that service in relationship to the Word is more important than service in relationship to men. It repeats the lesson taught in the Mary and Martha incident recorded in Luke 10:38-42.

It is strange indeed that all that many men can see in this chapter is "a lesson in church order." One of fallen man's acquired abilities is the ease with which he can turn from revealed, incontestable realities or facts, and then say in his heart that things are not as they are—they are as he desires them to be. In order to read the present church system into Acts the seven men chosen in this chapter are called "the first deacons." In fact Lenski, the Lutheran commentator, does not hesitate to read into this record a modern church meeting. He says: "The Twelve called the meeting and not Peter. In order to do so they must have discussed the matter among themselves and naturally would offer some proper plan for the congregation to adopt. But this amounted only to making a motion in the meeting and seconding it, after which all voted."

Thus all this is made to be common church practices, and all is in harmony with "Robert's Rules of Order." We live in a day when everything in Scripture is made to conform to church practices. Nothing in the churches is ever made to conform to the teaching of Scripture.

The simple fact is that the twelve called "the multitude of disciples" unto them. The Holy Spirit guards carefully against calling this "the church." The Apostles tell the disciples what must be done. This is done kindly but firmly. But it is not a proposition to consider. It is a directive to be acted upon. They declare that it is unreasonable that they should leave the word of God and serve tables, and they direct that seven men shall be selected by the multitude of disciples for the work of dispensing funds to the widows. These men are to be of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit, and full of wisdom. When they have done this, then the Apostles will turn over to these seven men the entire matter of dispensing food and funds to the widows.

The picture here is quite simple and its lines are sharply drawn. The work of receiving and distributing funds was a task that belonged to the Apostles. It was a right that the "multitude of disciples" had not granted them, neither could they take it away. But the disciples are given the privilege of bringing forward seven proper men, and having done so the Apostles will place them over this work. From that moment forth, this work will be out of the Apostles' hands. They will not even supervise it. That men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom should require supervision is unthinkable.

It should be noted that these seven men were not elected to an office. There was no office. It was a work to be done, and not an office to be filled. These seven men held no office and had no titles. They were never called deacons, as many like to think. They were neither controlled by the Apostles

or by the multitude. They are responsible only to God. I doubt if any report of "funds received and funds distributed" was ever made. If any man abused the trust placed in him, he would have died even as Ananias and Sapphira. The Acts period was not the dispensation of the grace of God.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip. and Prochorus, and Nicanor. and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. Acts 6:5 - 6

I am not impressed with the common teaching that insists that since these men all have Greek names they were all Hellenists. It is further taught that since the murmuring came from the Hellenists, the Hebrews generously turned the whole work of distributing funds over to them. Many Hebrews had Greek names. Two of the Apostles, Philip and Andrew, had Greek names, and they were Hebrews, not Hellenists. There was one proselyte among the seven who was neither, Hellenist or Hebrew.

These seven men were placed before the Apostles in order that the work, which the Apostles had done might be transferred to them. The Apostles first prayed. The mind of God in this matter had to be sought first. Then they laid their hands upon them. This is not ordination. Ordination as practiced in the churches today is entirely unknown to the Scripture. This was identification; not with the Apostles, but with the Lord. They are identified with Him as His dispensers of that which is His.

Identification was made a public reality in three different ways in Scripture. Priests and kings were identified with their office by anointing with oil. John the Baptist used water in identifying Jews with the repentant company in Israel. This numbered them among the people made ready for the Lord. The Apostles here used the common ceremony of laying on hands.

6:7. And the Word of God increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.

The Sanhedrin had attacked, the Apostles had been arrested and beaten, there had been murmuring among the disciples, but none of these had stopped the work, which the Lord was doing.

We should note here that the Word of God continued to grow. It being a living thing, it must grow. A passage, which has spoken its message to one generation, may speak much more truth to later generations. The Word of God is inexhaustible, and no verse in it can ever be exhausted.

6:8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

It is evident that the seven men chosen to distribute the funds did not confine themselves to this work. The great wonders and miracles done by Stephen were of the same character as those performed by the Apostles. And it is evident that these wonders and miracles were used to confirm a teaching ministry. The next two verses demonstrate this.

6:9-10. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which He spake.

There were many synagogues in Jerusalem. Some of these were maintained by Jews residing in foreign lands; and they provided places of resort when they visited Jerusalem. The synagogues mentioned here may have been composed mostly of Hellenists. Stephen was a Hellenist, and this may explain why his wonders and signs drew attention to him. The Hellenists would hardly have dared attack the Apostles who were Hebrews. In the debates, Stephen won every argument. But victory in argument settles nothing. They conspired to put him to death.

6:11. Then they suborned men which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.

When men oppose truth, we can be sure that when fair means fail they will resort to foul. They hire men to give false testimony. They link Moses and God together as if they were one, thus creating deep prejudice.

6:12-14. And they stirred up the people, and the elders and the scribes and came upon him, and caught him and brought him to the council. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law: For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

The pattern of their opposition follows a familiar path. They stir up a violent agitation. This creates an impression of great zeal for God on their part, and it makes impossible any careful or sober consideration. They inflame the passions of the people. The idea that a man had spoken blasphemy against Moses and God would stir up any Jew. They had the charge coming from so many quarters that it appeared to be true. People, elders, and scribes came upon him. False witnesses are exalted in order to strengthen their testimony. They give their own confused versions of Stephen's message as if they were verbatim accounts. As Luther said, "They lie and pervert and interpret in the worst fashion what has been said well and properly."

6:15. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel.

God gave Stephen a sign that appeared on his face that even his enemies saw. The Lord is with Stephen, even though his life is to come to a close under distressing circumstances.

The End

OF WORDS AND NAMES

When a searcher discovers a truth in the Word of God it is his duty to present it to others for their consideration. In order to communicate his thoughts he must use words, phrases, and names. These must be honest and expressive, but most important of all they must conform to the Scripture precept "words easy to be understood." To find the right words, to cast these into proper phrases, to call things by right names is usually the most difficult task facing the one who seeks to set forth new truth.

It is my desire whenever possible to set forth Scriptural truths by using words and names from the Bible. But this is not always possible since most Scriptural words and phrases have already been wrested and misapplied. They have been used to designate false and unscriptural ideas, and these are the ideas that will come to mind in most hearers when they hear these words spoken or see them written.

In declaring that God is going to intervene and change the entire complexion of things, and that this will result in a golden age of peace and righteousness in advance of the second coming of Christ, the matter of words and names has been a constant problem. Here is a definite period of time, with a definite beginning and ending, but the problem of a proper and fitting title for it has been a major difficulty. Due consideration had to first be given to all the titles given to this period by the Word of God.

It is called "**the day of Christ.**" This is by far its simplest and most expressive title, for that is exactly what this period of time will be, the time when Jesus Christ has His day. However, I know well that most people think "the day of Christ" is something connected with what they call "the rapture," and they think of it as something that takes place in heaven rather than upon the earth. I trust the time will come when we can redeem this descriptive title from all the false ideas that have been read into it, but at the present time it conveys a different idea than the one I desire to set forth.

This period of time can also be called "**the last days**" (Acts 2:17), for it is called that in Scripture. However, this term is associated with so many false ideas that it cannot now be used. Popular prophetic interpretation makes "the last days" to be times of exceeding great wickedness, but this is not the testimony of the Word of God. We must not ignore the truth that more than one period of time is called "the last days."

The "**times of refreshing from the face of the Lord**" (Acts 3:19) is another divine designation for this period, but this has so long been applied to the millennium that it is not now expressive of a time that precedes the millennium. Nevertheless, it is a very expressive title, and a reading of the passage in which it occurs will show beyond question that it speaks of a time that precedes the second coming of Christ.

The "**time of the restoration of all things**" (Acts 3:21) is also highly expressive and it is certainly Scriptural so far as the Greek is concerned. However, it does not appear in our English version in common use.

This coming golden age is also called in Scripture "**the day in which God will judge the world in righteousness,**" and it is also called more briefly "**the day of judgment.**" But this cannot now be used freely as a descriptive title of this coming time since the average person thinks of nothing but punishment when he hears the word judgment.

The best and most used name in Scripture for this period of time is "**the kingdom of the heavens.**" However, this is one of the most abused terms to be found in all Scripture. Men make this to mean just what they desire it shall mean. To some it means "the church," to others it means "Christendom," and to others it means "the millennium." This title is God's own designation of this coming period of peace and righteousness. But since so many people think that "the kingdom of the heavens" is the millennium, we have found it necessary to say "the **premillennial** kingdom of the heavens" in order to emphasize the fact that we are dealing with a period of time that precedes the thousand years during which Satan is bound. In due time we will drop the word premillennial from our designation, but for the present it will be used to designate that rule of the heavens which precedes the millennium.

The End

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION: The world has gone so far from God and has become so corrupt that it can expect nothing from God but wrath. In view of this, how can you foresee a period of righteousness and blessing before the second coming?

ANSWER: Would you make this same statement concerning Israel that you make concerning the world? If Israel can expect blessing from God, the world can also expect blessing through Israel. Read carefully Ezekiel 20 and you will discover the ways of God when Israel became corrupt and

went from God. Wrath is always the last resource of power. God has not yet exhausted His resources in dealing with men. Isaiah declares that **"the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."** Isaiah 60:2.

QUESTION: Is God dispensing truth today?

ANSWER: God completed His great work of dispensing truth when the last word of the Bible was written. He has put into this all that man will ever need. The accurate truth for today is that God HAS dispensed truth, and this truth is enshrined in His Word. If men want truth today, they must go to the Bible. They cannot bypass or ignore God's written revelation and go direct to Him for truth.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

I am grateful for the favorable reception that has been given to my testimony that the Bible reveals that there will be seasons of peace, righteousness, and divine blessing in advance of the second coming of Christ to establish His millennial kingdom. Many are honestly checking my messages with the Scripture and are finding for themselves that Israel and the nations are to be blessed as a result of God giving light, pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh, and imposing His will and ways upon this world. Studies along these lines will dominate our pages for many issues. This truth is practical. This truth is glorious. This truth answers a multitude of questions. It should be noted that we have only begun to recover the truths concerning this golden age, which precedes the millennium. A friend has asked if I will devote one issue to questions and answers concerning this subject. I will be glad to do this if enough questions of general interest are sent in.

****My time from April 10 to May 10 was spent in ministry in Chicago, Rockford, and Kankakee, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Kalamazoo, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Toronto, Ontario; Buffalo, New York; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The attendance in most places was greater than ever before and the interest was the keenest I have ever witnessed. Another trip for ministry is already being planned for this fall.

****Our friends in the vicinity of Grand Rapids make possible a radio ministry over WFUR, 1570 Kc. Our program THIRTY MINUTES WITH THE BIBLE can be heard there every Sunday from 2:30 to 3:00 E.S.T.

****The price of THE WORD OF TRUTH is a personal request. This places your name on our regular readers' list and it remains there until you request its removal or else your address is lost to us beyond recovery. In the past five months requests for the magazine have come in at the rate of eighty each month. This is cause for rejoicing as it indicates an ever increasing ministry.

****Back issues of THE WORD OF TRUTH are available without cost to anyone who can make use of them.

End, Vol. XII, No. 1