

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD

There is something wrong with the world. Yes, there is something seriously wrong with the system, the order, the arrangement into which every man is born and in which every man must live. A malignancy has insinuated itself into every part of the environment which is man's home.

The Lord Jesus spoke of the joy of a woman "that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21). This is good, and good parents continue to rejoice when a child is born, but it is doubtful if serious minded parents today can find joy in the kind of world into which a child is born.

The world today is desperately ill - so seriously ill that many wonder if it can be saved. The eruptions which are seen in every land are indicative of the deeper illness that lies within. Men do what they can to alleviate these openly festering spots, and they may at times achieve some degree of success, but it soon breaks forth in a more or less virulent form in the same or another place. Thus the world that God made as a habitation for man becomes increasingly inhospitable to those who are born into it.

Some who have a favored place in the status quo may scoff at this, telling us that the world is a wonderful place. Those who say this are limiting the world to their own little circle, and they show little compassion for the multitudes who are less favored than they. Yes, when the world is surveyed as a whole there can be only one conclusion. A malignancy is rampant in the world from which the world needs to be saved.

Since a man is the sum of all the influences that work on him and in him, it can be seen that this world makes men what they are, and in turn man makes the world what it is now, resulting in a vicious circle that is always deteriorating and from which there is no release.

In view of the situation that exists it should be a wellspring of encouragement and consolation to all who take God at His word that we are told in Scripture that "the Father has commissioned the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 12:47). In view of this statement we know that the world is salvable, that in the divine plan the world is to be saved, and that the world is to be saved by Jesus Christ.

At this point it needs to be declared that the salvation of the world does not necessarily mean the salvation of a single individual that lives in it. This is a Biblical principle that many have difficulty in comprehending. In the hope of making this clear, let us approach it from another angle.

The Salvation of Israel

Present day Jewish thought does not follow any fixed pattern. There is no such thing as a generally accepted Jewish creed. Beliefs and practices vary widely among them. The average Jew knows little or nothing about the book we call the Old Testament, and his thinking as a rule is not greatly influenced by it. This may sound strange to some inasmuch as it is customary to attribute to all Jews a familiarity with the first thirty-nine books of what we call the Bible. But very few of them have any knowledge of what it says, even though they may speak vaguely about numerous things declared in it.

If the reader were to converse with an intelligent Jew, one who has some unbiased knowledge of the Old Testament, he would find that he believes in what he calls "community salvation." He may be somewhat vague in setting it forth, but if his views are examined it will be found that by "the community" he means the community of Israel. In other words he believes that Israel as a nation is going to be rescued, delivered, and made safe, that this dispersed nation is going to be regathered, that the people who are now despised are going to be honored, that those who now live in fear of discrimination and persecution will be brought into a condition wherein they never again will need to be afraid. By the term "community salvation" the Jew means the redemption, the restoration, the forgiveness, and the blessing of the people called Israel. He has no definite ideas as to how this is all to come about, nevertheless, he believes it and hopes some new order of things will bring it to pass.

It cannot be said that the average Jew bases this hope upon the promises of God. He could do so, but as a rule he does not, even though the Bible will provide him with statements that declare the salvation of Israel. Take for example Ezekiel's great prophecy:

Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 37:21-23.

The salvation of Israel is also unequivocally declared in the New Testament.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Rom. 11:26, 27.

It was the word of the angel unto Joseph that Mary's child should be called "Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21. The witness of the two disciples on the Emmaus road shows that it was the belief of the twelve that they "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). In this they were right. Israel is to be redeemed, and that redemption will be the work of a redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus the Christian is required by the Word of God to agree with the Jew in his concept of "community salvation." However, he cannot agree with him in his rejection of individual salvation. The salvation of an individual also is a most essential part of divine revelation.

Those Jews who believe in the salvation of Israel are always at a loss to explain how or why they expect to have any part in it. They have the vague thought that if they are alive when it happens that they will be swept into it and become a part of it, but if they should die before it takes place they know of no way they can enter into it. Some have the vague hope that since they can say "We have Abraham for our father" that this will guarantee them a place, but it needs to be pointed out that this would require them to be raised from the dead, and this is an idea that is foreign to all their thinking. This is hardly strange since the idea of men being raised from the dead to live upon this earth again is also foreign to the thinking that now prevails throughout Christendom.

The Jew needs individual salvation here and now if he wants the guarantee that he will have a place in that God-redeemed and God-established nation. The words spoken by Jesus Christ are applicable here:

Jesus said unto he r, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. John 11:25, 26.

By these words He gave assurance to all who heard Him that by entering into personal salvation they would have the guarantee of entering into all the blessings that would ensue when God saved Israel. This individual salvation could become theirs by believing in Him.

The Jew must always keep in mind that there is no guarantee of salvation for the individual in the salvation of Israel. "All Israel" does not mean every Israelite that has ever lived upon the earth. The salvation of a man, whether Jew or Gentile, is always a personal matter, and such salvation has always been possible at all times.

Individual salvation was experienced and enjoyed by such men as Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and the three Hebrew children, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan. 1:7). These found the Lord God to be "a little sanctuary" in the countries to which they were dispersed (Eze. 11:16). Along with these are a host of others whose names and history are not mentioned in the Word of God, but who are definitely in view in the eulogy recorded in Hebrews 11:36-40.

This personal salvation brought these men and women little but hate, scorn, and persecution in their lifetime, but it also brought them the guarantee of an exalted place in Israel when God redeems that nation and people. Each one of these, those named and those unnamed, will be raised from the dead to participate in all the blessings of Israel when that nation is saved. Godly men waited for this "redemption of Israel". And inasmuch as many could not live long enough to enjoy it, they knew they would need both resurrection and life to participate in it. Jesus Christ presented Himself to them as being the embodiment of both. "I am the resurrection and the life" was His specific claim. (John 11:25).

World Salvation

That the Bible teaches individual salvation most Christians will agree. That it teaches the salvation of Israel, some will agree. But that it teaches the salvation of the world, very few will agree. The average Christian knows nothing about this great truth. It is not in his thoughts and it forms no part of his hopes. And since with many, only such things are true that they know and believe, they are inclined to quickly deny and repudiate all ideas of the salvation of the world. By so doing they create a mental block that makes acceptance of the idea impossible, no matter how much Biblical evidence may be marshaled in support of it. Theology as a whole has never given any place to this great truth.

Throughout the history of Christendom there have always been beliefs about "the end of the world," an idea which is amply supported by numerous mistranslations in the *King James Version* of the New Testament. Reformed theology has always made much of "the end of the world," holding as it does that a time is coming when there will be naught but an "eternal heaven" and an "eternal hell," and that all descendants of Adam will be found in one of these.

Such ideas as "the end of the world" and "the salvation of the world" are mutually exclusive. However, that which is to end is represented by the Greek word *aion*. That which is to be saved is expressed by the word *kosmos*.

While a definition of terms is always good at the beginning of any study, there can be no simple definition of the exceedingly complex idea that is designated by the word *world*. The study of this word presents difficulties that are not found in regard to the average Biblical subject. The Greek word which it translates (*kosmos*) is found 187 times in the New Testament. It is translated "world" consistently in all but one of these occurrences. The sentences in which it is found are as a rule simple statements of facts, yet it is exceedingly difficult to discern the actual thing spoken about. A definition which seems to fit perfectly in several passages will fly to pieces when put into another passage. For example, in John 7:4 the *Scofield Reference Bible* states in the margin that *kosmo* means "mankind," in John 7:7 that it means "world-system," and in Acts 17:24 that it means "earth." This shows the problems an expositor faces when he tries to give a simple definition of the word *world*.

There are many who believe that this term stands for all that is wicked and ungodly, that it is rightly the first member of that unholy triumvirate, the last two of which is "the flesh and the devil" They believe that it is doomed to destruction, and it is therefore foolish to talk about its salvation. I can sympathize with all who feel this way, and I realize how difficult it will be to "write on a clean slate" when one begins to present the salvation of the world. However, let all remember that it is the Apostle John who speaks about the salvation of the world (John 3:17) and we need to give due heed to what he has to say. In passages such as John 3:17 the word *world* is usually taken to mean "mankind." And while there is no doubt that mankind is in the picture here, mankind is not the world. There was a world before man was created.

In common parlance the word *world* is often used to designate this planet, the earth. An examination of all occurrences of *kosmos* in the New Testament will show that not one of them means the earth. The world is an order or system related to this earth - it is not this planet.

While it would be good to start out with a simple definition of the *world*, I do not plan to try to do this, as I am not able to do so. I will say certain things about the world in the hope that the reader will understand better what I am talking about when I speak of its salvation.

That the Greek word *kosmos* has to do with order, system, arrangement, and beauty is a fact that is well known. By its usage in the New Testament it is evident that in its highest meaning it has to do with an order, system, and arrangement which is such because it has been determined by a master mind, a master arranger, a supreme architect. And since in the history of this planet there has been a world that has perished (2 Peter 3: 6) it needs to be recognized that the word *kosmos* may not always speak of the same world.

That God made the world (Acts 17: 24) and that God loves the world (John 3: 16) are truths that must be believed by all who accept the Bible as God's Word. But that the world He made is now in "the bondage of corruption" waiting to be delivered (Rom. 8: 21) is also a truth that demands recognition. Furthermore we are told that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). This will result in a "new creation," a fact that leads Paul to declare that if any man be in Christ he is "new creation," that is, a definite and congruous part of the world that is to be. Thus the "new" is created out of the "old" with no loss of continuity, both in regard to the individual and the world. And even as the individual is salvable, so also the world is salvable. The chief difference is that the individual *can* be saved, but the world *will* be saved. Jesus Christ is declared to be the Savior of the world. He is never at any time set forth as being the Savior of every human being that has ever lived upon the earth. He is declared to be the Savior of Israel, and so "all Israel" will certainly be saved, but this does not mean every descendant of Abraham. He is declared to be "the Savior of all men" (I Tim. 4:10) but this term does not mean every man that has ever lived upon the earth. "All men" is mankind, the human race, humanity, or humankind.

The United States government has undertaken to be the savior of the whooping crane, of which less than fifty are known to be in existence today. We may not be able to save this beautiful bird, but if we are able then that kind of bird will not suffer the fate of the passenger pigeon and the dodo bird. Even so God has declared Himself to be the Savior of mankind. We cannot question His ability in regard to this, so we can rest assured that mankind shall not perish from the earth. However, there is more to the salvation of mankind than its mere preservation. When humanity becomes what God intended it should be, only then can it be said that it has been saved. And only when the world becomes all that God created it to be can it be said that the world has been saved. This world was created as a place for men to live, not a place for men to die.

In seeking to understand the world, let us consider by way of contrast the moon. The moon has no world such as the earth has. There is no system, arrangement, or order upon the moon that is suitable for human beings. In fact, the moon is actually a part of our world. It was created by God as a part of his arrangement for the earth, one of two great lights, it being the lesser light intended to rule the night (Gen. 1:14-18).

When and if men ever travel to the moon it will be necessary for them to take along a certain essential amount of the order or arrangement which belongs to the earth. They will need air to breathe, food to eat, water to drink, and all other things that are absolutely essential to life. Man was made by God for the earth and of the earth, and the earth and its order were made for man. This order or system is God's creation, and all its complexities are still unknown and unrealized. Such things as the electronic microscope are ever revealing more and more about the magnificence of God's marvelous arrangement. Men now know much more about the creation than they do the Creator. In fact they worship and serve the creation more than they do the Creator.

The evolutionist believes that the order was always here and that it produced man. They hold that if this order is duplicated somewhere else in the universe that it too has produced life that is comparable to man. Those who accept God's revelation believe that the order was created by God with man in view and that man was created to live in this environment.

If the earth were today in a condition comparable to the moon, or if it were in that condition described in Genesis 1:2, such an environment would make life as we know it impossible. An order, arrangement, or system would need to be created that is harmonious to life, and it will require a very special arrangement if that life is to be human life. Taking it for granted that such vital factors as gravitation, friction, and magnetism are present, there would still be needed light, atmosphere, dry land, vegetation, and a multiplicity of other things that are essential to man's existence. God has provided this; providing not only things essential to existence, but to man's well-being and happiness. It is man's privilege to investigate God's order and discover its wonders. He is to use the world, but is not to abuse it. God has given us "richly all things to enjoy," (I Tim. 6:17).

This order is the world. This is the world that God made. This is the world that God loves. This is the world that God is going to save.

It is obvious to any observer that we live in a world which has been arranged by a Master Arranger. This arrangement gives witness to the glory of the Creator, and in spite of the difficulties and darkness, the invisible attributes of God are seen in creation's order. This we are plainly told in Romans 1:20, where *apo ktiseos kosmou* should read "from creation's order," rather than "the creation of the world."

It was an ideal environment or order which God provided for man. Man was expected to appropriate, utilize and enjoy God's creation. However, things have gone wrong, and they have gone wrong just because man chose it to be that way. A facetious remark often heard is that there is nothing wrong with the world, it's the people in it. But there is something wrong with the world as well as the people in it.

What Is Wrong With the World

The most revealing statement found in the Bible concerning the present world is the declaration of Paul in **Romans 5:12**:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed through into all mankind, in which all sinned. (TRV)

It was through one man that sin entered into the world, and the fact of sin in the world is a fact to be faced and a fact to be reckoned with. Death entered into the world by this sin, and now sin is transmitted through death. Men sin because they are mortal, that is, dying. If the world is to be saved it will be necessary that sin as a principle will need to be removed from it. This is a definite part of God's plan, even as John the Baptist announced: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

This passage is foolishly limited by some to be a statement applicable to such as receive Christ, and it is enlarged by certain universalists to take in every member of the human race, but it does not deal with either of these. The world does not mean "some men" and it does not mean "all men." Jesus Christ in His death has done all that is necessary to remove sin from the world. One man (Adam) did all that was needed to bring it in and another man (Christ Jesus) has done all that is necessary to take it out. When that moment comes in God's time-table for the removal of sin, it will also mean the removal of death and all that flows out of it.

When the companion principles of sin and death are removed from the world, this does not mean that no man will ever sin again or that none will ever die. However, never again can a man be a "federal head" that will bring the principle of sin back into the world, and death or mortality will not be transmitted. It will be in the world even as Jeremiah declared it will be in Israel:

In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. Jer. 31:29,30.

The salvation of the world is one great segment of the work of God that will result in the kingdom of God becoming a reality upon the earth. God's government is to be over a saved world. He will save (rescue, deliver, make safe) the world first, then He will judge it (declare what is right, establish the right). When God saves the world, He will also save humanity. When He saves the world, He will also save Israel.

We teach our children that God is great and that God is good. This is true, and they should be taught this. And since it is true let us expect that when God sees fit to act again in a manifest way that His acts will be in harmony with and be a revelation of His greatness and goodness.

God's long display of grace is not going to be followed by a great display of wrath. God's present method of: dealing will close with the greatest act of grace He has ever performed. This is in harmony with His character. It is what we should expect of Him.

The End

WHEN HE SHALL COME

I desire to say and to have it on record that I believe in the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. I believe in this because it is written in the Word of God. There is no compulsion from any other source that requires me to believe this. It is not the creed of any group with whom I fellowship. I believe it just because it is written that "this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11). In fact I hesitate not at all to make the boast that there is no man upon the earth who believes any more strongly in the personal, visible, return of Jesus Christ to the earth than I do. I am a believer; believing is my business; it is my way of life; and I do not stumble at the details once I can settle it in my mind that it is what the Word says.

Furthermore, I believe that this personal and visible return of Jesus Christ is with the purpose in view that He will be personally present upon the earth for a thousand years. Even though this is declared only one time in the Word of God that is enough for the believer. I agree not at all with those who make so much of Christ's coming and so little of His personal presence. I make much of His thousand year personal presence and less of His coming. His presence is the important truth, not the journey that brings Him back.

I believe that His thousand-year personal presence will be a thousand-year *parousia*. A personal presence is not necessarily a *parousia*. There can be a personal presence that is a *parousia*, and there can be a personal presence that is not a *parousia*. Most men have terminated their studies of the word *parousia* prematurely and have wound up with the erroneous conclusion that this word means naught but personal presence. This is the basic idea in it, and a *parousia* is not possible apart from a personal presence, yet a personal presence mayor may not be a *parousia*. More on this in a later

study, this being a preliminary word to stir up the minds of those who have a taste for progressive Bible study.

My belief in the personal return and presence of Christ does not include all of the ideas connected with it that have been concocted by the emotional and illogical preachers of prophecy. I have no time at all for the thousand-and-one events, past and present, that have been set forth as signs that the return of the Lord is imminent. I do not believe that the Christians of the first century expected the return of Christ in their lifetime. If they did, then they were led into this expectation by the Spirit of God, only to be disappointed when it did not take place. Many passages are cited to prove that the first followers of Christ believed in His return at any moment, but I insist that all such passages are misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied. The Bible does not teach the possibility of the Lord Jesus returning tomorrow, or this week or this year. If He did, it would upset God's own revealed order of events. This order of events may not be crystal clear, but it is clear enough to tell anyone with the least grain of reasoning ability that Elijah must come and restore all things before Christ returns (Matt. 17:11), and that a "man of lawlessness" must be unveiled who will be seated in "the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). Since this one will be destroyed by the advent (the momentous arrival) of Christ's *parousia* it is evident that the *parousia* cannot take place until God's temple has been rebuilt.

However, I do seek to know and to believe all that the Bible teaches concerning the personal return and presence of Jesus Christ. Some things revealed are not so pleasant, yet they must be believed. For example, it is my conviction that 2 Thess. 1:8-10 refers to His coming in order that He might be personally present upon the earth. Here we read:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

In this passage the indicting finger is pointed directly at those "who know not God, and those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is to these that he deals out vengeance. These, we are told, will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." And no matter just what the Greek words translated "everlasting destruction" may mean (I hold they mean divine extermination) it is evident that this is the end of these so far as the face of the Lord and the glory of His power are concerned. Such words as "flaming fire" and "vengeance" cannot be interpreted as meaning a mild rebuke.

Now let us suppose that this should take place today, as so many hold and teach. Suppose that Jesus Christ should return to the earth today. What would be the outcome so far as the teeming millions of the earth are concerned?

According to present population figures or estimates there are 680 million people living in China. Of these how many can it be said that they know God and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ?

India has 403 million people, Russia has 208 million, Africa has 230 million, Europe (not including U.S.S.R.) has 417 million. Of how many of these can it be said that they know God and that they obey the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The United States has 179 million people. And even in our own supposedly Christian nation, of how many can it be said that they know God and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ? Having traveled this country from coast to coast I have not found very many who even have knowledge of the gospel of Christ, let alone who obey it. And it is useless to point to all the buildings called churches which are seen everywhere in our land. As a rule each one of these represents a different opinion concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ, if opinion they have at all. No, it cannot be said of the 179 million people of the U.S.A. that they know God and are obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The figures set forth above comprise 2 billion, 117 million, and these make up the greater part of the earth's estimated 2 billion, 905 million population. And even though many of these would need to be reckoned as God-fearing, moral men and women, yet the test laid down in 2 Thess. 1:8 is far more stringent. To escape the punishment that is meted out at the return of the Lord Jesus, a man must qualify as one who knows God and who obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Among those listed above are 12 million Jews, whose chief characteristic for 1900 years has been their rejection of every claim concerning Jesus Christ, both as to His mission and message. What would happen to them if Christ should return today? Would not Israel as a living people be wiped out? How then would God fulfill all the wonderful promises He has made to them, or His promises to nations and peoples? There is no picture in the Bible of the earth denuded of its inhabitants, either by man or by God. God's picture so far as Israel is concerned is set forth in many passages, one of which is **Ezekiel 34:11-15**.

For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries; and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.

And God's picture so far as nations and peoples are concerned is set forth in passages such as **Isaiah 2: 2-4**.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

With these facts before him, let the reader decide which event will occur first. Shall the world see first that picture described in Ezekiel 34 and Isaiah 2 or will it see that divine vengeance described in 2 Thess. 1:8. I hold that if God takes vengeance first, if He removes all who know not God and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, then His wonderful promises to Israel, to the nations, and to peoples will never be fulfilled.

If divine vengeance and wrath come first, and if this is then followed by the reign of Jesus Christ upon and over the earth, then how will the grand promise in Matthew 12:18-21 be fulfilled:

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.

The truth declared here and that set forth in 2 Thess. 1:7-10 are so opposed that they are mutually exclusive. They will both be fulfilled, but they cannot be fulfilled at the same time. In the Matthew passage we see Christ declaring judgment to the nations. Judgment here means what is right in God's sight, His order, His will for nations. If nations ever know what is right in God's sight they will have to be given positive light, absolute truth, and full knowledge of the divine will. God will not be stingy in giving this for He sends forth wave after wave of judgment, wave after wave of light, truth and knowledge until He has gained the victory. In doing this He will display great tenderness so that no bruised reed shall be broken and no smoldering wick shall be quenched. The result will be that nations will put their trust in His name. This will be the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in **Psalm 76:8:**

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.

The divine vengeance spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 is of such nature that divine justice would require that certain other things must be true before it can ever be executed. This vengeance is not meted out to those who have lived their lives in open sin. It is the portion of those who know not God -and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, before this divine vengeance could be executed there would first of all need to be an unmistakable opportunity given to every man to know God. There would have to be clear presentation of God to man in such way that man could lay hold of this knowledge. Every man would need to be brought into that position in which the Pharisees stood in the time of Christ, of whom it was said:

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. John 16:22, 24.

Once such an opportunity is given to know God, then any punishment given to those who know not God would be richly deserved and its justice could not be questioned.

The same is true of obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are prone to think of the "gospel of Jesus Christ" as being a message concerning the way of salvation, but it needs to be remembered that every "right message" of Christ is a gospel. It would be quite difficult to say which one of the many messages of Christ is in view here. Be that as it may, before a man could be punished for not obeying the gospel of Christ there would need to be some clear and manifest presentation of this gospel so that a man could know exactly what it is and what it demands. If any think that it is clear today, then let them say whether Matt. 5:42, Luke 3:14, and Luke 12:33 are part of the gospel of Christ.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Matt. 5:42.

Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. Luke 3:14.

Sell that ye have, and give alms. Luke 12:33.

In view of the fact that the Judge of all the earth- always acts in perfect justice, there can be no question but that the justice threatened in 2 Thess.1:8 can be executed only upon such as God has given a clear opportunity to know Him and to whom He has made manifest just what the gospel of Christ is and what constitutes obedience to it. This our great God will certainly do, for it is declared in many places in the Word of God.

Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. Psalm 25:8.

His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled. Psalm 97:4.

The Lord hath made known His salvation: his righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the nations. Psalm 98:2.

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

When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Isa. 26:9.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isa. 40:5.

And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord from that day forward. Ezek. 39:21, 22.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Mal 4:5, 6.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. . . before that great and notable day of the Lord come. Acts 2:17-20.

In the nine passages quoted above we see some of the concomitant blessings that will come upon Israel and the nations when God breaks His long silence and injects Himself openly into the affairs of men and nations. Most teachers of prophecy hold that all these things (except Mal. 4: 5-6) will begin with the return of Jesus Christ, but this is not so. Note carefully what these passages tell us God will do:

1. God teaches sinners in the way.
2. He illuminates the world
3. He makes known, in an open and palpable manner, His salvation.
4. He makes known His righteousness (what is right in His sight) openly in the sight of the nations.
5. He brings His judgments into the earth, and from these judgments the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness.
6. His glory is revealed and every man living upon the earth perceives it at the same time.
7. He sets His glory among the nations, and the nations will see the wonderful judgments that He executes in Israel.

8. Elijah returns to the earth to accomplish in Israel the restoration of all things (Matt. 17:11). The Davidic dynasty is restored with David upon the throne (Acts 15:16), individual Israelites are restored to their tribes, and the tribes are restored to their ancient inheritance. The priesthood is restored, and the ancient divine ritual is observed again in a temple that is truly the temple of God.

9. God pours out of His spirit upon all flesh. This definitely takes place in "the last day" and it takes place before the "great and notable day of the Lord."

These are concurrent blessings. They will yet take place upon this earth. But the stubborn question persists. Will these things take place before the return of Jesus Christ or do they follow it? Do they take place before He takes vengeance upon and eliminates those who know not God and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, or do these events follow this cleansing from the earth of all ignorant and disobedient men?

I believe that this matter of "times and seasons" can be quickly settled for all who so desire it. Does it not seem logical that the good and upright God who has promised to "teach sinners in the way" will not eliminate these sinners first. And while "the knowledge of the Lord" is a relative matter, there are numerous places in the Old Testament which speak of God doing these great and marvelous things in Israel and among the nations with the declared end in view that they shall come to know Him. Take for example Isaiah's strange prophecy:

And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it. Isa. 19 :21.

In spite of the difficulties this passage suggests, this is the inspired Word of God, and once God has done the great work that results in this blessed condition, the Egyptians will be among those who can pass the great test of knowing God and obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ. In view of this it is easy to determine which comes first. It will be the work of God that results in knowledge and obedience, not that work that eliminates those who know not God and are disobedient.

Consider also this passage from the prophecy of Jeremiah:

For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart. Jer. 24:6,7.

This passage shows that since enabling is required if a man is to know God, He will supply this need. "I will give them an heart to know Me" are His gracious words. It should be easy to see that this will not be done after He eliminates all who do not know Him. No, He will not be guilty of doing "too much, too late." He will give Israel a heart to know Him and this will be the result:

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Jeremiah 31:34.

From this it is evident that if any Israelite at the return of Christ suffers divine vengeance it will be because he has despised and given up knowledge. This may be the fate of some, but it cannot be the fate of many in Israel.

The vengeance described in 2 Thess. 1:8 is most drastic. However, let it be kept firmly in mind that it is a matter that belongs to "the day of the Lord." Before this day of the Lord comes we know that God will send Elijah to Israel (Mal. 4:5, 6), and He will "pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17-20). We need to more and more fix our attention upon things that will precede the day of the Lord.

The End.

JOHN'S GOSPEL

CONCERNING THE WRITER

There are five men in the New Testament named John. These are John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1); John the 'Apostle, son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21); John, surnamed Mark (Acts 12:12); John, the chief priest (Acts 4:6); and John, father of Simon Peter (John 1: 42, so most texts.) As a rule it is simple to distinguish which John is meant, as the writers are usually careful to identify the one of whom they are speaking. For example, Matthew in his first use of this name says: "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea" (Matt. 3:1). However, when the Gospel of John is read one comes upon a statement concerning a man named John, and no immediate clue is given as to which John is meant.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. John 1:6-8.

Of the five Johns mentioned in the New Testament, these words could be true of two of them. They could be entirely true of John the Baptist, and they could also be true of John, the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, the writer of the fourth gospel. Thus the question that arises is - Which John is spoken of here? It is John the Baptist, or is it John the Apostle?

To many this has already been settled by tradition, and they will refuse to give it any further thought. However, the assiduous Bible student can take nothing for granted. He must get the facts. And when all the facts are gathered and weighed, the balance tips in favor of John the Apostle, the writer of this book.

After long study it has become my conviction that these words speak of the writer of this book, and that they set forth (1) the fact of his commission, (2) his name, (3) the purpose of his commission, and (4) a safeguard against any false conceptions that may arise concerning his person and his work.

I desire to be on record as believing this. And I will be glad if others after careful study see fit to agree with me. If not, then we must agree to differ. This is not an idea that I am running up the flagpole to see how many will salute it. This is a profound conviction concerning a matter of truth, which while it may seem unimportant to many, it is important to me.

Out of all that has been written by men inspired by God, the prologue to John's Gospel stands out as a paragraph that is most profound, most lofty, and incomparable in every way. In the first fourteen verses we find brief, succinct statements of facts which speak of the divine Word, the Creator of all, the Light and the Life. These declarations are some of the most important facts to be found in the entire Bible. Here we find simple and clear statements concerning Christ, yet each one is so weighty and profound that no human mind is able to fathom them.

In view of this it seems somewhat strange that in the midst of this glorious revelation that the writer should digress in order to introduce to us John the Baptist. The person and work of John the Baptist has nothing to do with the truth revealed in John 1:14. The proper place to bring in John the Baptist is after "the Word was made flesh," and before He begins His ministry. This is exactly what is done beginning with 1:15, for there, the John referred to is John the Baptist. If verses 6 to 8 refer to John the Baptist, then it seems that the writer would have placed them after verse 14 and in close connection with verses 15 to 34.

However, it is not strange at all that after the amazing and incomparable revelation of the divine Word in John 1:1-5 that the writer should digress, declare his commission, give his name, tell of his purpose in writing, and raise a safeguard against making him to be anything more than a witness. He does not write as an apostle, prophet, or priest. He writes as a man commissioned of God - but strictly as a witness to the Light. Having declared his commission - so that all who read will know that he cannot be regarded as the same kind of man as those spoken of in Jeremiah 23: 21: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" - he resumes his transcendent witness concerning the One who is the true Light.

A literal and carefully worked-out translation of John 1:6-8 will read:

There came to be a man, commissioned of God. His name, John. This one came for a witness, that he should be witnessing concerning the Light, that all should be believing through him. He was not the Light, but that he should be witnessing concerning that Light.

In an expanded version this will read:

There suddenly came to be a man commissioned of God, with authority for the execution of the task assigned to him. His name, John. This man came for a witness, in order that he might produce a testimony concerning the Light, with the end in view that all might believe through his testimony concerning the Light. This man was not the Light, but he was commissioned in order that he should be testifying concerning the Light.

Many who are only vaguely acquainted with the contents of John's Gospel will think it strange that a writer would speak of himself in such a seemingly detached manner. However, the careful student will know that John speaks of himself in this same manner in seven other places - always speaking in such a way that a careless reader might think he was speaking of someone else. In this Gospel all statements that concern the writer are carefully repressed. The Spirit of God leads him to stay in the shadow of his Lord, always concealing his own individuality. The references of John to himself need to be carefully considered.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. John 13:23.

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. John 19:26,27.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. John 19:35.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him. John 20:2.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. John 21:7.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? John 21:20.

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. John 21:24.

In each reference quoted above it can be seen that John always speaks of himself as if he were speaking of another, and, in the final reference, as if others were speaking of him.

This method of speaking, while not common, is not unusual. Paul found it necessary on one occasion to use this same literary device in speaking of himself. In 2 Cor. 12:1- 5 we read:

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

In the ministry of Paul it became necessary at one time for him to boast. He was forced by his detractors to tell about a phenomenal experience of his, using it as a club to demolish the false pretenses of those who played themselves up as superlative apostles. In reporting his experience Paul spoke as though it happened to another man, even as if it were not he to whom it happened. That this man was Paul, no one can doubt. Yet he was led by the Spirit of God to tell of it as though it had happened to another.

The higher a man's work, the more glorious his privileges, the more need there is for genuine humility. However highly the Lord may favor and bless His servants, it is necessary that they remain meek and lowly in heart, even as He was when He walked upon the earth. This was true of Paul, to whom was given transcendent personal revelations, and it was true of John, the son of Zebedee, who was commissioned to write a testimony concerning Jesus Christ that all through it might believe (John 1:7,19:35,20:31). Think of the honor of writing the testimony to which all must come if they are to qualify in the sight of God as believers.

It needs to be remembered that in the outflow of God's plans and purposes there came a certain moment when John, the son of Zebedee was commanded to write. This command was his commission and authority to do so. As he wrote, God gave him the material He would have him to set forth. God's declared purpose in all this was to produce a compendium of certain highly significant facts concerning Jesus Christ, consisting for the greater part of things He said and things He did, concerning which facts John was inspired to add a great deal of explanatory material. Thus a written record was produced with the still greater objective in view that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through His name (John 20:31).

There can be no doubt but that the moment this record was written it began to produce. God's word, as sent out by Him, never fails to produce. It never returns to Him void. It always accomplishes that which pleases Him, and it prospers in the purpose for which He sends it forth (See Isa. 55:11).

At the time John wrote, God's administration of grace had made its advent. One of the first blessings it brought was a written record that is without discrimination of any kind. This is the book we now call John's Gospel. Once it was written its message was available for any man to take to himself and then to take its message to others. Faithful men did this, and this is the ministry that produced that new and different company of believers that Paul writes to in his Ephesians and Colossian epistles. These are the ones who believed apart from miracle or sign. These are the ones of whom it can be said with qualification: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20: 29).

From the moment this book was written, all who have qualified as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have done so by believing the things recorded here. This is God's gracious provision so that men might believe, and this provision cannot be ignored or neglected. To qualify as a believer, the testimony set forth in John's Gospel must become a definite part of our thinking, our life, and our character.

In view of all this, the statement found in John 1:7, that all through it might believe, will be seen to fit the witness recorded in John's Gospel, but it will not fit the message and ministry of John the Baptist. An examination of Acts 18:24-28 and Acts 19:17 will show that the message and ministry of John the Baptist does not measure up to this description. This is sufficient to show that John 1:6-8 is not speaking of John the Baptist.

Due to the nature of: the message that John was to put into writing, a message that sets forth Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, with the end in view of producing believers, the Spirit of God led him to always keep himself in the background. This provides a perfect example of all who today undertake to be "faithful dispensers of "Christ," even as Epaphras was to the Colossians (Col. 1:7).

THE INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: KJV.

Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus, through the will of God, to all the saints, the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus. TRV.

(In these studies the initials *KJV* stand for *The King James Version* of the Bible. The initials *TRV* stand for *The Resultant Version*, a designation which I use to identify my own version, the results of my own studies. No man can make an honest study of Ephesians without doing some translating. He must find the Greek word, examine it with care, make a tentative decision as to its meaning, consult all available sources of material, then come to some conclusion as to what the word actually means in the context where it is found. The expositor who does not translate may be doing nothing more than expounding a translator's errors. As these studies are prepared, careful consideration will be given to every word in the Greek text of Ephesians and the results will be set forth as *The Resultant Version*. These studies will be based upon this version.)

PAUL - In addition to calling him "Saul" his father gave him the Roman name "Paul" (Acts 13: 9). There is no evidence that Saul's name was changed to Paul. Both of these names are purely human designations, and the great significance some claim to see in these two names seems to me to

be wholly imaginary. It has been said that if Saul as a boy were playing in the streets of Tarsus and his father came to the door to call him into the house he would have called out "Saul! Saul!" And if Paul had been too far away to hear, his companions would have relayed the message by saying, "Paul, your father wants you!"

APOSTLE - Paul's introduction of himself is in harmony with the character of this epistle. It is authoritative in regard to a new revelation of truth. No one is associated with him in this as he alone is the authoritative revelator of these truths. The word *apostle* is a transliteration of the Greek word *apostolos*. It is carried over, not translated. If it were translated we would need to use either envoy or ambassador. It is formed from two words *apo*, from, and *stel*, put, which together mean to put someone at a distance as a representative. It was not a continuing office. It ceased when the work was finished, and was resumed when a new commission was given. It is bad that the word *apostle* has become linked up with religion and associated with churches. The same is true of the words pastor, minister, bishop, and deacon. Men are not able to think of these apart from churches. While it is true that men sent out as representatives by outcalled men became their apostles (see 2 Cor. 8:23, where "messengers" should read "apostles"), this is not the general rule. As a rule the apostles were men sent by Christ, not by a church. Paul's insistence that his apostleship was "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:1) shows that it had no source whatsoever in men.

OF CHRIST JESUS - The order of these words is well attested and it is important, putting the emphasis on Christ, the divine, descriptive title. "Christ" is the transliteration of *christos* which means "anointed," and this Greek word is the divine translation of the Hebrew word *mashiyach*. The complete equality of *mashiyach* and *christos* is established by the Spirit of God in John 1:41. In the Bible neither Messiah nor Christ is ever linked up with Israel, giving them some special claim upon Him. Andrew did not say, "We have found our Messiah" (John 1: 41). See also John 4:25, 29, and 42. The Samaritan men declared that they knew that "this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." The common custom of speaking of "Israel's Messiah" and "the Jewish Messiah" is contrary to God's Word. It is as bad as if we should say "California's President", or "London's Queen Elizabeth." These statements may be true in a sense, but they are inaccurate and misleading. Both descriptive names, Messiah and Christ, have been drained of their glorious significance by relating them to Israel. Christ is God's Messiah, not Israel's. Israel has a claim on the Messiah, but not an exclusive claim.

The words "Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus" at the opening of this letter gives it an official character. Note the difference between this and John's Gospel. John was commissioned solely as a witness and he wrote as such. Paul was commissioned as an apostle, and he magnified his apostleship in this epistle.

THROUGH THE WILL OF GOD - "Through" is *dia* which denotes the channel or agent. "Will" is *thelema*, which means intent or design, the first of seven occurrences in Ephesians (1:1,5,9,11; 2:3; 5:17; 6:6). This phrase denotes Paul's apostleship as a commission which came to him neither by his own will nor by the act of any man. He writes this letter by direct, divine appointment. All who read it should keep this in mind.

TO ALL THE SAINTS - The word *pasin* (all) has sufficient manuscript support to justify giving it a place in the text. However, it does not fit too well if the words "in Ephesus" are retained. It would be superfluous for Paul to say "to all the saints which are at Ephesus," since he would hardly be sending an epistle to *some* of the saints there. Those who struggle to make this a circular letter to many "churches" would make more progress if they recognized it as a circular or general letter addressed to "all the saints, the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus."

What Is A Saint

The word *hagiois* (plural of *hagios*) translated "saints" here is an adjective used like a noun. If we maintained it as an adjective we would need to translate it "holy ones". In the New Testament *hagios* is translated *holy* 163 times, *saints* 62 times, *Holy One*, 4 times. Both words, *holy* and *saint*, have been given such strange and unscriptural meanings by the world and the church that they misrepresent the Greek word. I doubt if it is possible to restore these words to their ancient and noble meanings. They have become so tainted with falsehood and superstition that to use them to describe a man makes that man a weird, abnormal person, a man unfitted to fill a place among ordinary men. In fact these words are often used as sneering epithets to be hurled at all who refuse to run with the crowd in great excesses of wickedness. "He thinks he is a saint", was the report on one who wanted no part of a wild "office party," and "little Miss Holy" was the name given to a sweet young girl who refused to make herself available for the same affair.

A man opens himself: up to the most damaging ridicule if he insists that according to God's Word he is a saint and would like to be considered as one. Some men dare to speak in a general sense and say that "we are saints" or that "the believer is a saint", but few there are who dare to claim this as a personal honor. All this is due to the erroneous meaning given to the word *saint*. If a man should announce that he is a saint, it would sound like unmitigated boasting, and those who sought to debate his claim would probably argue as follows:

"You say you're a saint? How can you be a saint? Who ever heard of a saint wearing a necktie? A saint wears a robe, but you wear coat and trousers! A saint always has a scraggly beard, but you are smooth shaven! A saint has a lean and hungry look, but you appear well-fed! Saints do not have homes, they usually live in caves, but you live in a well kept house! A saint never bathes, except ceremonially, but you bathe daily just because you like to be clean! How can you be a saint, you're not even a Catholic, you must be a Catholic to be a saint!"

When a word occurs 239 times in the New Testament, as does the word *hagjos*, its true meaning cannot be hidden and all its shades of meaning will come to light. This word basically describes something that has been separated for special use or service. In the Bible any person, place, or thing that has been designated or marked out by God for Himself in order that it might be used by Him or serve Him in some special way is called holy. If it is a person that is thus separated, such an one is called a holy one or saint. The basic meaning of *hagios* is separation, and it is always related to service. Jerusalem is called "the holy city" and Israel is called "the holy nation" in view of the fact that both of these are marked out by God to serve Him in some special way. As to whether God will ever use Washington, London, or Paris is open to question, there being no revelation in the Word concerning these cities. But Jerusalem has been marked out to serve God in a very special way, as is declared in many places in Sacred Scripture. Thus it is the holy city. Note this word in Luke 2:23 and Acts 7:33. All who are deemed by God to be believers in Christ are by Him declared to be holy and are designated as saints. These are marked out to serve God in a very special way when His order is established upon the earth. As Weymouth sees it in Ephesians 1: 14: "which He has purchased to be especially His for the extolling of His glory."

THE ONES BEING - Concisely stated, the rule of Greek grammar which justifies this translation is that when an article is followed by a verbal adjective (participle) it becomes a substantive. The article here being plural it is expressed in translation by supplying the word "ones." A. T. Robertson calls this the "articular participle". He deals with this rule at length, establishes it by many

illustrative passages, then goes on to say: "An ingenious person might apply this in Eph. 1: 1 to the text with *en Epheso* absent; but the usual view needs no defense against such an alternative" (Grammar of Greek N.T., page 1107). The "usual view" referred to here by Robertson is that the original copy of this letter had a blank space and it was expected that names of various cities would be filled in as copies were made. If this is so then there would be no need to apply the rule set forth above. However, I reject all theories that are adopted in the hope of making this a letter written to an institution or organization. This letter is addressed to individuals.

Faithful or Believing

AND BELIEVING IN CHRIST JESUS - Should the word *pistois* (plural of *pistos*) to be translated "faithful ones" or "believing ones?" Is this epistle addressed to those who are faithful in Christ Jesus, or to those who are believing in Christ Jesus? After long and careful study it is my conviction that this should read "the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus." Since there are those who are building major ideas on the word "faithful" here, we need to assemble and examine all the facts that are pertinent so that we can arrive at an honest conclusion.

There are those who believe that this can be quickly settled by examining all occurrences of the word *pistos*, but this it not so. Out of the sixty-six occurrences of this word it is translated "faithful" fifty-three times. Many think that this should settle the matter. This could be conclusive evidence if there were no other facts to be considered, but it needs to be remembered that Biblical matters cannot be settled by majority vote. *Pistos* can mean "faithful" (1 *Cor.* 1:9) and it can mean "believing" (John 20:27). If this word is used in a passive sense it should be translated "faithful" If it is used in an active sense it should be rendered "believing."

In order to comprehend the importance of this matter and to understand the problem, the student should consider what this verse says if it is translated "believing", and also what it says when it is translated "faithful" Those who contend for one view or another on this passage are very weak when it comes to defining their terms.

The word *faithful* in its primary, basic significance means "full of faith." If this meaning is carried into Eph. 1:1 then it speaks of those who are "full of faith in Christ Jesus." If this is done, then there can be no objection to rendering *pistos* by the word "faithful." A man full of faith in Christ Jesus is a believer in Christ Jesus, one of God's believing ones. However, I would sound a warning and declare that we should be on guard against those who would rewrite the Word of God here by inserting the ideas of being full of faith in "Paul's final revelation," or "the gospel of the dispensation of grace" or "the church of the mystery." This is being done, and needs to be condemned as disloyalty to the Word of God. Let us keep Christ Jesus in this passage and reject all attempts to crowd Him out.

However, while the word "faithful" means "full of faith" it is seldom if ever used in this sense today. It is used as a rule to describe those who are trustworthy, reliable, loyal, constant.

To state the whole matter succinctly, a faithful man is one whom another trusts, and a believing man is one who trusts in another. Which idea is Paul seeking to set forth in Ephesians 1:1?

If we treat *pistos* as being used here in the passive sense then it should be translated "faithful", and this will mean that this epistle is addressed to saints whom Christ can trust, that is, saints who are trustworthy, reliable, loyal.

If we treat *pistos* as being used here in an active sense, then it should be translated "believing." This will mean that this epistle is addressed to those who trust in Christ, saints who consider Him to be trustworthy, reliable, and loyal; therefore they have put their faith in Him.

There is nothing in the inflection of the Greek word to guide us here. *Pistois* can be active or passive. However, it does seem that if it is passive it would be followed by the simple dative *Christo Iesou* without the insertion of *en* (in). Then it would read "faithful to Christ Jesus." But since *en* is there it seems it should be treated as an active. We are "faithful to" but we "believe in."

However, there is something that can settle this beyond all doubt, and for those whose goal is the truth, settle it in such a way that no questions will arise to trouble us. This matter can be settled by the context, and the context is the balance of the epistle. Every word that follows this opening verse is directed toward those addressed here. If this epistle is addressed to "saints who are faithful", then every word in it is spoken to them. This passage does not stand alone. It is false interpretation to establish something as a positive truth in this opening verse, then to forget all about it as so many do. If this epistle is addressed to "the faithful in Christ" then about everything Paul says in the last three chapters is uncalled for and out of place. Let us consider a few things Paul says in these chapters.

In Eph. 4:1, 2 they are earnestly admonished, beseeched, or entreated to "walk worthy of the calling wherewith" they are called. If they are faithful, they are walking in this manner, and the admonition is out of place. This is not an exhortation that they continue to walk worthy, a proper plea to faithful men. In fact Paul becomes specific and entreats them to walk lowly, meekly, patiently, and with forbearance.) All this is uncalled for if these are faithful men.

In 4: 17 they are told that from this time forth they are not to walk as other Gentiles walk. In 4:22 they are instructed to put off their former manner of life; in 4:25 to put away lying and speak the truth; in 4: 27 not to give any place to the devil; in 4: 28 to stop stealing (if this has been their habit) and go to work; in 4:29 to put off the false and speak the truth to one another; in 4:30, 31 they are asked to permit all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice to be put away from them; in 4:32 they are exhorted to "become kind" to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. These are strange exhortations indeed for those who have been addressed as faithful. If they are faithful, then these faults, vices and weaknesses have already been purged from their lives.

Let us suppose that a man describes one of his employees as trustworthy, dependable, and honest - that is, faithful, a faithful employee. Then he takes this man aside and speaks to him at length about the need for getting to work on time, of working whether he is being watched or not, of the need for more honesty in reporting his expense account, with a further word that if he has been dipping into the petty-cash drawer for personal use that he cease doing so. Would such a procedure make sense? Is this the way a man talks to a faithful employee?

If we make those addressed in this epistle to be "believers in Christ Jesus", then all the problems raised above will disappear. Believers need to be exhorted, even as Paul does here. The things condemned here are often found in their lives, especially if they are just starting out. It is quite evident that the one addressed in this epistle have not been very long in the faith. They need to be exhorted concerning even the fundamental moralities that should characterize the life of every believer.

There can be no doubt but that Paul is following in Ephesians 4, 5, and 6 a principle which he outlined in his Thessalonian epistle.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 2 Thess. 3 :11, 12.

The word "exhort" in the passages quoted above is the same word as is translated "beseech" in Eph. 4: 1. The words "them that are such" show that Paul's exhortations were directed toward those who needed such. He did not exhort faithful men to be faithful.

Ephesians 1: 15 shows that Paul knows those to whom he writes only by hearsay. He has heard of their "faith in the Lord Jesus." Having heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, he addresses them as "believers in Christ Jesus."

IN CHRIST JESUS - this exact phrase, linked up with *pistos*, is new. It is found only in Ephesians and Colossians. At the time these epistles were written a company of men were upon the earth who could be described as "believers in Christ Jesus." There is a reason for this new way of describing men. This will be explored in later studies.

SELECTED QUOTATIONS

The *character* of the Epistle itself and the relations between Paul and the Ephesian Church form weighty elements in the case. Everything goes to show how intimate these relations were, how peculiar was the place that this Church had in the Apostle's heart, how much it was in his care. Not only was he the founder of the Church of Ephesus, but he spent some three years preaching and teaching in the city. During that long residence his interest in his Ephesian converts was so keen and anxious and his labors in their behalf so great that he describes himself as "ceasing not to warn everyone day and night with tears" (Acts 20: 31). Various things that are mentioned or alluded to in his Epistles indicate how constantly he had them in his mind. And the farewell which he took of their elders at Miletas is among the most pathetic passages of the N.T. On his side there were words of tender solicitude and loving warning; on theirs thankfulness, affection, an emotion so profound that they "fell on his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that they should see his face no more." It is difficult to suppose that Paul could have written a letter intended specifically for this Church without giving some indication of what it was to him personally, without some reference to what he had done for it and the grateful response which his labors had found in it, without letting his feelings towards its members express itself in some form.

Yet this Epistle is in all these respects a singularly neutral composition, without the personal note that makes itself felt in such Epistles as those to Corinth and Philippi, with nothing to say about any individual but the bearer of the letter, with nothing to connect it with the particular locality, with little or nothing to recall Paul's stay in Ephesus or any of the many things that made his work among the Ephesians so memorable and the terms on which he and they stood to each other so close and affectionate. In the present case there is only the very general salutation which is given in the last two verses; and that is something less particular than the salutation with which the Epistle to the Philippians closes; while there are none of those personal touches throughout the Epistle to relieve the impersonal conclusion such as we find in these other letters. And in addition to the argument which founds on this neutral, impersonal quality of the Epistle, there are expressions here and there which perhaps suggest relations of a different kind from those which we know to have existed between Paul and the Ephesians. Not to speak of such passages as 1:15, there is 'the statement in 3: 4, which seems to some to mean that those addressed had yet to learn what Paul's "knowledge of the mystery in Christ" was; which could not be said of the Ephesians. There are also the two passages in which Paul uses the formula: "if indeed" (3:2, 4:21, 22); of which it may be said that, although *eige* does not necessarily express actual doubt, it is a particle more in place where the speaker's own experience or work *is* not *in* view, than where he addresses those who owe to him what they are and with whom his relations are direct and intimate. S. D. F. Salmond, D.D. in *The Expositors Greek Testament*.

The End.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

This issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH contains thirty-two pages, eight more than usual. This increases our cost by about one-third. I hesitated to undertake this additional obligation at this time, since quite a few who faithfully stand behind this ministry find it difficult at present to maintain their support of our work. I understand and appreciate their difficulties, and pray that something favorable will happen that will alleviate their present problems. However, I have gone ahead with this additional expense in the confidence that those who feel no present stringency will take care of the additional needs. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Enough said? Thank you!

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