

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #96

COMMENTARY ON: 24:14-27

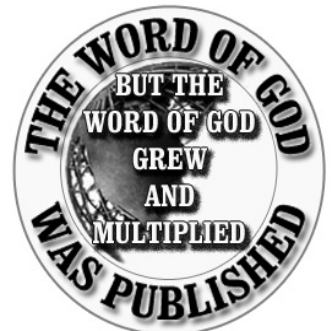
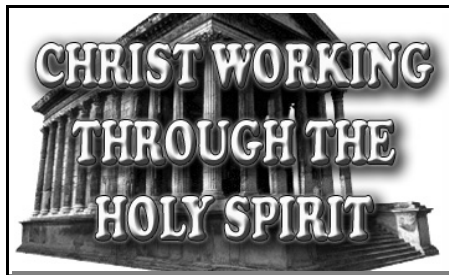
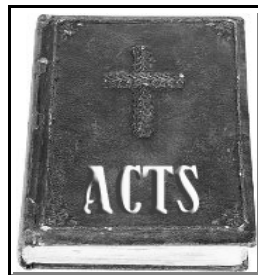
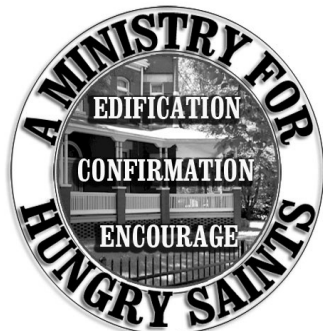
STANDING BEFORE FELIX

Paul now commences his defense before Felix. The manner in which he does this, as well as the words that he chooses, is of especial significance. Here is a sterling example of a man that is close enough to the Lord to be consciously directed by Him. His words will be straightforward, with no attempt to minimize his faith. He will not be ashamed to identify himself with a group that is by no means popular or even condoned by the Jewish leaders. There is a boldness in his words that can only come from faith, and it is coupled with a precision that glorifies God and appeals to those who are of tender heart. Paul does not allow himself to be sidetracked to inconsequential matters, or to become absorbed with an effort to impress Felix. He tells the unvarnished truth concerning his activity, and the reason for it. It is clear from his presentation that he is not a religious opportunist. Also, he speaks in a manner that will not bring reproach on the Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

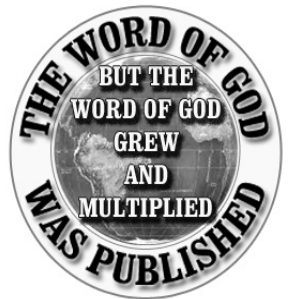
" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ

The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 96



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

STANDING BEFORE FELIX

“ 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. 17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. 20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. 22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. 23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. 24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. 26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.” (Acts 24:14-27)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
Paul now commences his defense before Felix. The manner in which he does this, as well as the words that he chooses, is of especial significance. Here is a sterling

example of a man that is close enough to the Lord to be consciously directed by Him. His words will be straightforward, with no attempt to minimize his faith. He will not be ashamed to identify himself with a group

that is by no means popular or even condoned by the Jewish leaders. There is a boldness in his words that can only come from faith, and it is coupled with a precision that glorifies God and appeals to those who

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are of tender heart. Paul does not allow himself to be sidetracked to inconsequential matters, or to become absorbed with an effort to impress Felix. He tells the unvarnished truth concerning his activity, and the reason for it. It is clear from his presentation that he is not a religious opportunist. Also, he speaks in a manner that will not bring reproach on the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE TRUTH OF GOD

The Scriptures, are comprised of the writings of an estimated forty different men, over a period of 1,600 years. Yet there is nothing fragmented about its contents. They have a solitary focus, and fit together under the umbrella of Divine purpose. The understanding of the harmony of the Scriptures is determined by the extent of one's knowledge of God. The greater familiarity there is with the Lord, through Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, the more the Scriptures are seen as a single unit.

PROGRESSION IS SEEN

There is a progression seen in Scripture that strictly parallels the revelation given to men. The beginning of the Scriptures establishes that God is the Architect, Creator, and Sustainer of everything that is made.

IN THE CREATION, the nature and ability of God is seen: His *"eternal power and Godhead,"* or Divinity (Rom 1:20). Enough is revealed to lead men to worship God, and to ascribe causes to Him. However. Fallen man *"changed the glory of God"* into something that reflected their own desires or fears. No one concluded the right thing when they observed nature, thus confirming that the human race had, indeed, fallen.

AFTER THE EXPULSION AND BEFORE THE OLD COVENANT. In and after the expulsion of our parents from the garden, and until the giving of the Law, God revealed much of Himself. His intolerance of sin was seen.

- ⇒ In the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden (Gen 3:24).
- ⇒ It was seen again in God's dealings with Cain (Gen 4:12).
- ⇒ In the flood (Gen 6:13,17).
- ⇒ In the cursing of Canaan (Gen 9:25).
- ⇒ In the judgment in the plain of Shinar where the people sought to build a tower that reached into heaven. (Gen 11:8).
- ⇒ In the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain (Gen 19:24-25).
- ⇒ In the threat to take king Abimilech's life because he sought Sarah, Abraham's wife (Gen 20:3-6).

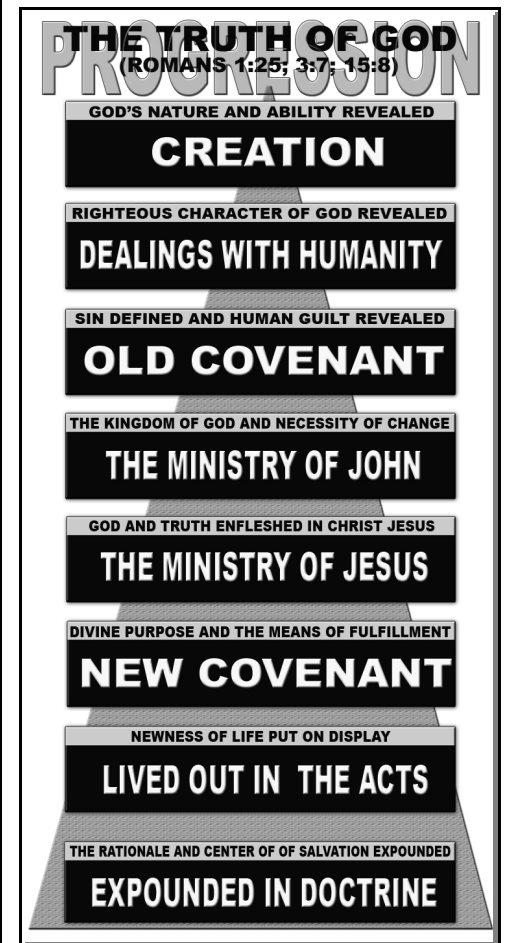
During this period, the possibility of identity with God was demonstrated in both Enoch and Noah walking with God (Gen 5:22; 5:24; 6:9). In Noah and Abraham God also revealed that He made covenants with people (Gen 6:18; 9:9,11,15; 17:2). In Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob God confirmed that He told men things that would happen in the future, both near and far (Gen 6:17; 12:2; 15:12-14; 18:17; 26:3; 28:13-14; 35:12).

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

THE OLD COVENANT. Here God focused not only on the sin of man, but upon his sinful nature. It was a condition that could not remain in the dark recesses of ignorance. Therefore in preparation for a Savior from sin, the Law defined sin, making men knowledgeable of its nature and of man's desperate for a Savior (Rom 3:20). Men were also made more knowledgeable of Divine purpose, the wages of sin, and the need for a Redeemer. The absolute necessity of righteousness was seen, as well as man's impotence to make himself righteous.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. At the appointed time, John the Baptist appeared on the Judean scene. He had a fresh message that consisted of two key elements: men must repent, and the Kingdom of God was about to appear (Matt 3:23). In this men saw that it was God's nature not to do something until He had first revealed it to His prophets (Amos 3:7). In John's ministry the Lord made known that He makes preparations among men for what He is going to do (Lk 1:76).

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS



CHRIST. Jesus was a bodily depiction of God Himself – Emmanuel (Matt 1:23). He translated the Divine nature into life – life that could be seen. In Him the goodness of God was seen, for He went about *“doing good and healing, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil”* (Acts 10:38). He confirmed the inferiority of the devil and his hosts, which could not do a thing to inhibit or in any way to restrain His ministry (Matt 8:16; Lk 11:20). He personified the grace of God (John 1:17), and in his teaching confirmed the abhorrence of Deity for hypocrisy and lifeless religion (Matt 17:7-9; 23:13-29).

THE NEW COVENANT. In the New Covenant, the Divine requirements for

newness of life being lived out. Men were involved in the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. The role of preaching, the essentiality of believing, and the triumphant nature of faith is seen. How do godly people go about making decisions concerning the will of God? It is lived out in the selecting of a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:24-25), responding to persecution (Acts 4:24-31), and where to preach the Gospel (Acts 13:2-3). How do people live when the Holy Spirit, takes up residence in them, and they yield to His influences? It is lived out in the book of Acts. If there are any questions about how God reacts to hypocrisy in His church, it is made quite clear in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). In all of this we see God’s willingness and forwardness to employ His

Scripture, as well as the true nature of spiritual life. There is a Divine cause made known in all revelation. In the various accounts the truth of God’s sovereignty, the immutability of His counsel, and the effectiveness of His work are seen.

The record before us is no different. In it we are beholding the fulfillment of God’s word, confirmation of His power, and the impact of faith upon those possessing it. We are also being exposed to the nature of the devil’s work, as well as its absolute inferiority.

As is true of all revelation, there is a certain progression in it that glorifies God. What Moses received was greater than what Noah and others before him received. The prophets received more than Moses, and John the Baptist was given to see more than the prophets before him.

As is true of all revelation, there is a certain progression in it that glorifies God. What Moses received was greater than what Noah and others before him received. The prophets received more than Moses, and John the Baptist was given to see more than the prophets before him.

Unlike the world, *“more”* revelation does not involve the abrogation of previous revelations. For example, the Law has been ended as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4), but remains *“for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine”* (1 Tim 1:9-10).

the acceptance of men were established and confirmed. Because of the atoning death of Christ and His triumphant resurrection, God could now write His laws upon the hearts of men and put them into their minds. He could now be their God by choice, and they could be His people. Their sins would be remembered no more, and He would be merciful to their unrighteousness (Heb 10:16). Men could now be born again (1 Pet 1:23), partake of Christ (Heb 3:14), and become a new creation (1 Cor 5:17). This confirmed that God could not receive men as they were. Further He could not save them unless it was righteous to do so. The New Covenant is established within the framework of the preparatory and continued work of Christ.

LIVED OUT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. The book of Acts is the chronicles of

people in His service.

EXPOUNDED IN DOCTRINE. Confirming that God desires His Person and will to be known, these realities are expounded in the epistles. While human conduct is addressed in the epistles, that is not the heart of them. They are rather an exposition of Christ Jesus, the Gospel, the purpose of God, and the nature of spiritual life. These are the matters that are to be understood or comprehended – something that can only be accomplished by faith.

A WHOLLY UNITED BOOK

There is a unity in Scripture that could not possible have been achieved by human effort alone. The golden thread of Divine Purpose and the scarlet strand of redemption are woven throughout Scripture. The promises are reflected in the accounts of

The progress revelations of God are like a light that gets brighter and brighter, providing a proper perspective of the past as well as the future. They are like the river of Ezekiel’s vision that became wider and deeper as it progressed (Ezek 47).

No succeeding revelation contradicts a previous one. Rather, in fuller light we discern more clearly lesser lights, comprehending their purpose, which is not always eternal. Scripture refers to this kind of comprehension in these words: *“For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9). This is an indispensable form of vision.

I CONFESS UNTO THEE

“24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my

fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”

This is now Paul’s third defense concerning the Jews dragging him out of the Temple and making false charges against

him.

- ⇒ Acts 22:1-21 – Before the Jewish council.
- ⇒ Acts 23:1-6 – Before the Jewish council
- ⇒ Acts 24:10-21 – Before Felix

The things included in this three-fold defense are worthy of your perusal.

ACTS 22:1-21

1. Paul was a Jew.
2. He was born in Tarsus.
3. He was brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel according to the perfect manner of the Law.
4. He was zealous toward God.
5. He persecuted the *“the way”* unto death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.
6. He received letters from the high priest and the elders to bring believers from Damascus bound to Jerusalem.
7. He was confronted by the glorified Jesus en route to Damascus, whom he did not know.
8. He inquired who He was, and was told it was Jesus of Nazareth whom he was persecuting.
9. The men who were with him saw the light, were afraid, but did not understand the voice that was speaking to him.
10. Upon inquiry, he was told to go into Damascus where someone would tell him what he ought to do.
11. Being blinded by the bright light, he was led into the city by those who were with him.
12. A devout Jew named Ananias came to him to recover his sight, and telling him he was a chosen vessel to be Christ’s witness.
13. At the word of Ananas, he was baptized, washing away his sins.
14. Later, when he came into Jerusalem, while he was praying in the Temple, the Lord appeared to him, instructing him to leave Jerusalem, for they would not receive Him.
15. He confessed to Jesus that he had imprisoned and beat believers in every synagogue, and had consented to the death of Stephen.
16. Jesus told him he would be sent to the Gentiles.

ACTS 23:1-6

17. Paul declared he had lived in all good conscience until that very day.
18. Perceiving that one part of the council was Pharisees, and the other

Sadducees, Paul declared he had been called into question concerning the hope of the resurrection.

ACTS 24:10-21

19. He had only been in Jerusalem for twelve days.
20. He was not found disputing or raising up the people in the Temple, in the synagogues, or in the city.
21. The Jews could not prove their allegations against him.
22. He worshiped God after the way the Jews called heresy.
23. He believed all things written in Moses and the prophets.
24. He had hope toward God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. Both of the just and the unjust.
25. He exercised himself to always have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.
26. He had brought alms for his nation, and offerings.
27. Jews from Asia found him purified in the Temple, and he was not with a multitude or attended by tumult.
28. The original accusers should have been present at this hearing.
29. He challenges those at the hearing to make known any evil doing in him, exempting the tumult caused by him confessing he held to the hope of the resurrection.

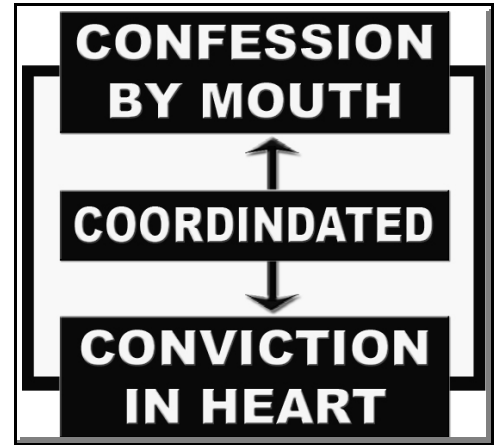
I CONFESS UNTO THEE

“But this I confess unto thee . . .”
 Other versions read, *“I admit,”*^{NASB} *“I will say openly,”*^{BBE} *“I avow,”*^{DARBY} *“I acknowledge,”*^{MRD} *“freely admit,”*^{MESSAGE} *“certainly admit.”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“I am avowing.”*^{INTERLINEAR}

What is a confession? **It is an admission of something true.** It is an acknowledgment of a certain condition or truth that has been embraced.

The etymological meaning of the word *“confess”* is, *“to say the same thing as another, i. e. to agree with, assent . . . to profess,”*^{THAYER} *“admit; declare, say plainly; promise; claim,”*^{UBS} and *“to express openly one’s allegiance to a proposition or person - ‘to profess, to confess, confession.’”*^{LOUW-NIDA}

Paul has no shame concerning the truth he has embraced, and the way with which he has chosen to be identified. He knew that Jesus said, *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the*



holy angels” (Mark 8:38). Even if his life appears to be jeopardized by his acknowledgment of being identified with a way that is unapproved by the Jewish leaders, and unknown by Gentile rulers, yet Paul will not hesitate to articulate openly what is in his heart.

THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL HERESY

“ . . . that after the way which they call heresy . . .” Other versions read, *“the Way which they call a sect,”*^{NKJV} *“after that Way, which to them is not the true religion,”*^{BBE} *“the Way [of the Lord], which they call a [heretical, division-producing] sect,”*^{AMPLIFIED} *“their leaders think that the Lord’s Way which I follow is based on wrong beliefs,”*^{CEV} *“that Way which they say is false,”*^{GNB} and *“the Way, which they malign as a dead-end street.”*^{MESSAGE}

One thing that can be said for the Jewish council – they did know that Paul’s commitment was to something radically different than their own. They chose to refer to *“the way”* he had embraced as a *“heresy,”* or division based upon things that were not true. It seems to me that it is in order to point out that *“the way”* has been greatly obscured in our day. This is *“the way”* that is *“narrow,”* and is entered at a *“strait,”* or *“small”*^{NASB} gate and leads *“unto life”* (Matt 7:14). It is a *“high way”* that is called *“The way of holiness,”* and will not allow the *“unclean”* to walk upon it (Isa 35:8). This *“way”* is personified by Jesus Christ Himself, who is *“the Way”* (John 14:6). Whatever is unlike Christ, or contradicts His Person, character, and work, has nothing whatsoever to do with this *“way.”* Fulfilling the word of Peter, the Jewish leaders had spoken evil of *“the way of truth”* (2 Pet 2:2), even though that perspective was hidden from them. The way they called *“heresy”* was

actually “*the way of righteousness*” (2 Pet 2:21) and “*the way of God in truth*” (Matt 22:16; Mk 12:14). It is “*the way of peace*” in which God and man are reconciled (Lk 1:79).

It was actually Paul’s opponents that were sectarian, having chosen to embrace their own heresy.

I WORSHIP THE GOD OF MY FATHERS

“... so worship I the God of my fathers...” Other versions read, “I do serve,” ^{NASB} “so serve I,” ^{ASV} “I do give worship,” ^{BBE} “I worship (serve),” ^{AMPLIFIED} and “I am offering Divine service.”
INTERLINEAR

In some circles, the word “worship” sparks a lot of controversy. In other circles, it is equated with a certain type of singing, referred to as “praise and worship.” In New Covenant writings, the word “worship” is never used in a stereotyped manner, or confined to a certain kind of gathering. The following table reflects its various tenses in some of the standard versions.

VERSION	TIMES USED
King James Version	44
New King James	43
New American Standard	42
New International	50
New Revised Standard	56
Revised Standard	52

Greek words translated “worship” include:

- ⇒ λατρεύουσιν (latreuo). Translated “serve,” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB} and “worship” ^{NIV/NRSV/RSV}
- ⇒ προσκυνεῖν (proskuneo). Translated “worship,” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV/RSV}
- ⇒ λειτουργούντων (leitourgeo). Translated “ministered to,” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB} “worshipping.” ^{NIV/NRSV/RSV}
- ⇒ σεβομένη (sebomai). Translated “worshipped” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV/RSV}
- ⇒ εὐσεβείτε (sebasma). Translated “devotions,” ^{KJV} “worship,” ^{NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV/RSV}
- ⇒ λατρεία (latreuo). Translated “worship,” ^{KJV/NKJV/NIV/NRSV/RSV/NIV/NRSV/RSV} “serve,” ^{NASB} “service.” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB/NIV}
- ⇒ εἰδωλολατρία (eidolatreia). Translated,

“idolatry,” ^{KJV/NKJV/NASB/NIV} “worship of idols,” ^{NRSV/RSV}
⇒ θρησκεία (threskeia). Translated “worshipping,” ^{KJV} “worship,” ^{NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV/RSV}

As you can see, the word “worship” is used in a variety of ways.

- ⇒ Often it is associated with an outward motion, such as bowing the head (Gen 24:26,48; Ex 4:31;2:27).
- ⇒ Bowing down to the earth (2 Chron 7:3).
- ⇒ Lying prostrate with the face toward the earth (John 5:14; 2 Chron 20:18; 1 Cor 14:25).
- ⇒ Jacob worshiped God, “leaning on the top of his staff” (Heb 11:21).
- ⇒ Worship is also associated with speaking to the Lord (2 Chron 7:3; Matt 8:2).
- ⇒ The Ethiopian enuch came to Jerusalem “for to worship” (Acts 8:27). Years later Paul said he came to Jerusalem “for to worship” (Acts 24:11).

However, in this text, and in most apostolic doctrine, “worship” has to do with serving God – i.e. yielding up our lives to Him (John 4:23-24; John 9:31; Acts 16:14; 18:7; 24:14; Phil 3:3; Heb 10:2). It is in this sense that Paul confessed before Felix, “I worship the God of my fathers.”

Worship Under the Law

Under the Law worship was associated with ceremonies, times, and seasons. The vast majority of the Exodus-through-Malachi texts using the various forms of “worship” had to do with NOT worshipping other gods. At least seven uses of the term were prophetic in nature, foretelling the era of the New Covenant (Psa 22:27; 65:4; Isa 27:13; 49:7; Ezek 46:2-3; Zeph 2:11). In the Old Covenant writings, a significant number of references have to do with seasons and ceremonies (i.e. Deut 26:10; 1 Sam 1:3; 2 Kgs 17:36; Jer 7:2).

Worship in the Gospels

There are twenty-four references to “worship” (in all of its varied forms) in the Gospels. Nine of them have to do with people worshipping Jesus, bowing to Him, and generally asking Him for a blessing (Matt 2:2,11; 8:2;14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:17; Lk

24:52; John 9:38). Jesus told the woman at the well that God was seeking “true worshipers” who worshiped Him “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). That is, that really did worship Him, in keeping with the truth made known about God, and their own character. He also told her that this kind of worship was not associated with a place.

Worship in the Book of Acts

There are eleven references to “worship” in the book of Acts. The eunuch went to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8:27). Cornelius worshiped Peter, and Peter told him to stand up and cease such action (Acts 10:25-26). Lydia is said to be one “which worshiped God” (Acts 16:14). The same is said of Justus (Acts 18:7). Paul told the Athenian philosophers that God is not worshiped with men’s hands (Acts 17:25). Paul said he came to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 24:11), and that he was one that “worshiped the God of [his] fathers” (Acts 24:14).

Worship in the Epistles

The epistles contain nine reference to worship. Some of the references have to do with the worship of other gods, or NOT worshipping he true God (Rom 1:25; Col 2:19,23; 2 Thess 2:4). There is a record of angels being told to worship Jesus when He came into the world (Heb 1:6). The book of Hebrews mentions the “worshippers” that were under the Old Covenant, whose conscience was not purged by the sacrifices of old (Heb 10:2). It is also written that Jacob worshiped God while he was leaning His staff (Heb 11:21). Those who are in Christ are said to “worship God in the Spirit” (Phil 3:3).

Worship in the Book of the Revelation

The book of the Revelation contains thirteen references to worship. Heavenly personalities are said to worship God (Rev 4:10; 5:6; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4). Those on the earth are challenged to “worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters” (Rev 14:7). It is prophesied that “all nations shall come and worship before” the Lord (Rev 15:4). John fell down before an angel to worship him, and was rebuked for it (Rev 19:10).

Paul Worshiped God

This statement is made in view of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Paul was not speaking of routines, places, and periodic activities. He was rather speaking of his service to God – how that he conducted his life within an acute awareness of God, through Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit.

This is the kind of life the saved of the Lord live. It is not a goal, but a reality. This is confirmed by the word of Paul concerning the identity of the people of God: *“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”* (Phil 3:3). Some of the things involved in this worship are as follows. This is only representative of the nature of worship, but will provide a perspective that will assist the good and honest heart in a proper consideration of this grand reality – worship.

- ⇒ Living unto the One who died for us and rose again (2 Cor 5:15).
- ⇒ Yielding our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, and refusing to be conformed to this world (Rom 12:1-2).
- ⇒ Seeking the things that are above, and setting our affection upon them (Col 3:1-2).
- ⇒ Coming boldly to the throne of all grace (Heb 4:16).
- ⇒ Drawing nigh to God (Heb 7:19; James 4:80).
- ⇒ Expressing charity out of a pure heart, and maintaining a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5).
- ⇒ Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:2).
- ⇒ Yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom 6:13,16,19).
- ⇒ Reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God (Rom 6:11).
- ⇒ Running the race set before us with patience, looking to Jesus (Heb 12:1-2).

This is a description of a manner of life that is characteristic of those who are living by faith and walking in the Spirit. No person who falls short in these areas is really capable of consistently worshipping God. Further, I do not know how you could offer hope to those who are not living in this manner. Failing in these critical areas is a matter that must be corrected, for they all depend upon the resources provided in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Modern Worship

We are living in a period of time when the preachers, teachers, and spiritual leaders of the churches have allowed a spurious definition of worship to assume dominance in the churches. It is the kind of worship that can be turned on and off like a light switch. It has also been allowed to upstage the preaching of the Word, so that people are brought to imagine that frothy words repeated like a Hindu mantra are worship. People who obviously live at a distance from God can participate in such expressions, imagining they are the better for it. Now there is a new jargon in the churches – “praise and worship” – and it is imagined that it represents a revival of sorts. Of course, it has not stemmed the tide of iniquity that is pouring into the church, or resulted in a better understanding of the Person, purpose, and salvation of God.

What is called “praise and worship” in our time is more like the manner in which Israel worshiped the Lord. They honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him (Isa 29:13; Matt 15:7-9). Jesus soundly rebuked the generation extant at the time of His ministry, declaring that their worship was “*vain*,” or pointless and without profit. Yet, there has been an astounding revival of that kind of honor in our time.

Given what Jesus and apostolic doctrine says about “*worship*” such an approach to worship can by no means be justified. The thrust of the New Covenant must be ignored to entertain such shallow notions.

Further, if Paul were to stand in the average church and say, “*so worship I the God of my fathers*,” the people would not have the faintest idea what he was talking about. Some might think he was speaking about a certain style of music. **Notice, that Paul relates “*worship*” with what was taught.** That is why the Jews referred to the “*way*” in which he worshiped God as “*heresy*” – which is a doctrinal thrust the Jews perceived as incorrect. If Paul had merely been in the Temple and synagogues

as an idle listener, he would have received no opposition. It is the doctrine that he preached and that directed his life that brought the opposition. In this regard, he mirrored the Lord Jesus Himself.

BELIEVING ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

“...*believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.*” Other versions read, “*believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets,*” ^{NASB} “*I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,*” ^{NIV} “*believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets,*” ^{NRSV} and “*still persuaded of the truth of and believing in and placing full confidence in everything laid down in the Law [of Moses] or written in the prophets.*” ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is a challenging statement. Paul is saying more than, “I believe every word of the Bible.” He certainly did believe every word in the Scriptures, but his words reflect a larger consideration. **He was saying that he shaped his understanding and perspective according to the Scriptures.** That was the standard by which he measured all other expressions. In him the saying was fulfilled, “*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isa 8:20).

Even concerning God’s “*great salvation*” and the message of the Gospel, what is preached is in strict accord with what was written by Moses and the Prophets. This is declared in a number of places.

⇒ **PHILIP TESTIFIES TO NATHANAEAL.** “*Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” (John 1:45).

⇒ **JESUS TO THE TWO ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS.** “*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded*

Even concerning God’s “great salvation” and the message of the Gospel, what is preached is in strict accord with what was written by Moses and the Prophets. This is declared in a number of places.

unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27).

- ⇒ **JESUS TO THE ELEVEN AND THOSE WITH THEM.** “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in **the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.** (Luke 24:44).
- ⇒ **THE PREACHING OF PAUL.** “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those **which the prophets and Moses did say should come**” (Acts 26:22). “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both **out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening**” (Acts 28:23).

receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

- ⇒ **JAMES TO THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE.** “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree **the words of the prophets; as it is written**” (Acts 15:14-15)
- ⇒ **PAUL TO THE BELIEVERS IN ROME.** “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by **the law and the prophets**” (Rom 3:21). “But now is made manifest, and by **the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith**” (Rom 16:26).
- ⇒ **PETER TO THE SCATTERED JEWISH BELIEVERS.** “Of which salvation **the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit**

It was owing to the writings of Moses and the Prophets that those of honest and good hearts were able to recognize the Christ and embrace Him. That was the indispensable and primary ministry of Moses and the Prophets.

What of Our Time?

Although the clear teaching of the apostles is that the Christ Himself, together with the salvation of God, was announced by Moses and the Prophets, one can scarcely find a professing believer that has an intelligent grasp of these things. A Jesus is being preached that cannot be confirmed by Moses and the Prophets. It is really “another Jesus” – a spurious one. A way of salvation is being preached that cannot be confirmed by Moses and the Prophets. One rarely hears what Moses and the Prophets foretold about the character and lives of those who are being saved – those associated with Christ and the New Covenant. Wholly erroneous ideas about these matters have easily arisen and been perpetrated with little objection or inquiry.

However, this was not the manner of preaching and profession in the beginning of the day of salvation. There was an acute awareness among the informed of the proclamation of “another Jesus,” “another Spirit,” and “another gospel” (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6). In order to decipher the true from the false, at least two things were required. First, “the anointing” that teaches believers to distinguish the true from the false (1 John 2:20,27). Second, a knowledge of the prophecies of Moses and the Prophets. These were used by the Holy Spirit to teach distinctions to the people.

Where such a knowledge is lacking, it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to know that the Jesus one has embraced is “the Lord’s Christ.” The modern church has not done well in assisting the people to take hold of this perspective. Much of what it is saying actually clouds the truth.

It was owing to the writings of Moses and the Prophets that those of honest and good hearts were able to recognize the Christ and embrace Him. That was the indispensable and primary ministry of Moses and the Prophets.

- ⇒ **PETER IN THE TEMPLE.** “Yea, and **all the prophets** from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:24).
- ⇒ **PETER AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS.** “To him give **all the prophets** witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall

of Christ which was in them did signify, when it **testified beforehand** the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet 1:11).

- ⇒ **PAUL TO TIMOTHY.** “And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**” (2 Tim 3:15).

HOPE TOWARD GOD

“¹⁵ **And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.**”

It is good to consider where Paul places the accent in this defense. This is not

the first time he spoke in such a manner, or with such a thrust. You will find that, within the context of the contemporary *Christian* emphasis, there is a strange ring to what the apostle says. But that strangeness is only owing to the religious climate that has been produced by the preaching and teaching of

our time.

HOPE TOWARD GOD

“*And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow . . .*” Other versions read, “*I have hope in God,*”^{NKJV} “*having hope in God,*”^{NASB} “*hoping in God,*”

BBE "hope towards God," DARBY "and I believe," LIVING "belief in God," IE "a hope directed towards God," WEYMOUTH "look for," MONTGOMERY "I am just as sure," CEV "living in hopeful anticipation," MESSAGE and "having expectation." INTERLINEAR

Although some versions use the words "believe,"^{LIVING} and "belief,"^{IE} that is not a proper translation of the word used here. The Greek word is ἐλπίδα, which, as used here, has the following lexical meaning: "expectation of good . . . joyful and confident expectation,"^{THAYER} "expected and awaited . . . prospect . . . expectation of a divinely provided future,"^{FRIBERG} and "to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial."^{LOUW-NIDA}

This Greek word is used fifty-three times from Acts through First John. It is not used a single time in the Gospels, or the book of the Revelation. An alternative word for hope (ἐλπίζετε) is used one time from Matthew through Revelation, where it speaks of lending to people in hope of gaining (Lk 6:34).

Hope in Genesis Through Malachi

The reality of hoping in God was introduced by Abraham, who is said to have "believed in hope" (Rom 4:18), although no reference is made directly to "hope" from Genesis through Judges. The first mentioning of "hope" in any tense is Ruth 1:12 – and there it refers to Naomi not hoping for a husband. Ezra referred to "hope" in regards to Israel refraining from marrying heathen women (Ezra 10:2). The book of Esther refers to "hope" affirming that the Jew's enemies "hoped" to have the rule over them (Esth 9:1). The book of Job contains sixteen reference to "hope" (4:6; 5:16; 6:11,20; 7:6; 8:13,14; 11:18,20; 14:7; 17:15; 19:20; 27:8; 31:24; 41:9). Most of the references were an expression of favor in the future.

The Psalms contain twenty-six references to hope. Some of them were prophecies of the coming Messiah (16:9; 22:9). Most of them are expressions of reliance upon the Lord (31:24; 33:18; 38:15; 39:7; 42:5,11; 43:5; 71:5,14; 78:7; 119:43; 49,74,81,114,116,147,165; 130:5,7; 131:3; 146:5; 147:11).

Proverbs contains seven references to hope, most of which are very general in nature (10:28; 11:7; 13:12; 14:32; 19:18; 26:12; 29:20).

There are twenty-seven references

to hope in Isaiah through Malachi. The Lord is referred to as "the hope of Israel" (Jer 14:8; 17:13; 50:7). There are a number of references that accent conditions in which there was "no hope" (Isa 38:18; 57:10; Jer 2:25; 3:23; 18:12; Lam 3:18; Ezek 13:6; 19:5; 37:11). The blessing of hoping in the Lord is mentioned (Jer 17:7,17; Lam 3:21,24,26,29). God announces that there is hope for His people (Jer 31:17). Hosea mentioned "a door of hope" (Hos 2:15). Joel promised the Lord would be "the hope of His people" (Joel 3:16). Zechariah wrote of the "prisoners of hope" (Zech 9:12).

Romans through Jude contain forty-seven references to hope. Apostolic doctrine announces that we are "saved by hope" (Rom 8:24). There is "rejoicing in hope" (Rom 12:12; Heb 3:6), and "hope" that proceeds from the "patience and comfort" generated by "the Scriptures" (Rom 15:4). We read of "the God of hope" (Rom 15:13), hoping "all things" (1 Cor 13:7), and having "hope in Christ" (1 Cor 15:19). "Hope" is declared to be something we possess (2 Cor 3:12). There is "the hope of righteousness" for which we patiently wait through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:5). We

(1 Thess 1:3). We read of "the hope of salvation" that is a helmet to protect the mind (1 Thess 5:5). God has given to the saints "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (2 Thess 2:16). Jesus is referred to as "our hope" (1 Tim 1:1). There is "the hope of eternal life" (Tit 1:2; 3:7), and "the blessed hope" of "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit 2:13). We are told of "the full assurance of hope" (Heb 6:11), laying hold on "the hope set before us" (Heb 6:18), and "hope" that is an "anchor of the soul" (Heb 6:19). We have been "begotten again unto a lively hope" (1 Pet 1:3). Believers "hope unto the end" (1 Pet 1:13), and are to live so they can "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that in you" (1 Pet 3:15).

The Uniqueness of Hope Under the New Covenant

Notice the clarity and certitude that is related to hope now that sin has been put away, and Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. Hope is now fuller than it ever was before. Noone prior to the enthronement of Jesus had such a strong hope concerning the end of the world and entrance into

**HOPE SUSTAINS THE SOUL,
FOR WE ARE "SAVED BY HOPE."
IT REACHES FORWARD TO THE
RESURRECTION, WHICH IS
THE OPEN AND FINAL DEFEAT
OF THE LAST ENEMY.**

**CHRIST'S COMING
THE END OF THE WORLD
THE DAY OF JUDGMENT
EVER WITH THE LORD**

**FAITH IN ITS
FORWARD
POSTURE**



HOPE

THE RESURRECTION

THE PASSING OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

read of "the hope of His calling" (Eph 1:18), "one hope" (Eph 4:4), and "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven" (Col 1:5). There is "the hope" that is generated through the Gospel (Col 1:23), "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27), and the "patience of hope"

eternity. These things had simply not been brought to light as they have been in Christ Jesus. The best of believers prior to Jesus simply could not see as far as the saints can now. That is why it is written, ". . . God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an

holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:8-10).

Paul now speaks of hope in this lofty sense. While he will acknowledge that the Jews had this hope, it was, because of limited revelation, not as mature and precise as Paul’s.

THERE SHALL BE A RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

“ . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead . . .” Other versions read, “shall certainly be a resurrection,”^{NASB} “a coming back from the dead,”^{BBE} “there is to be a resurrection,”^{DARBY} “will come back to life,”^{GWN} “He will raise,”^{NLT} “the same resurrection from death,”^{TNT} and “a rising again from the dead.”^{YLT}

The resurrection of the dead will occur when Jesus comes – at the “last trump, when “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” At that time,. There will be no more enemies to defeat, for death is “the last enemy.” That means the present heavens and earth will also pass away, for they are in a state of decline

The resurrection of the dead will occur when Jesus comes – at the “last trump, when “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor 15:52). At that time,. There will be no more enemies to defeat, for death is “the last enemy” (1 Cor 15:26). That means the present heavens and earth will also pass away, for they are in a state of decline, having been made “subject to vanity” (Rom 8:20). It also means the end of Satan’s influence, for the domain in which he rules will have been done away.

Hope is faith in its forward posture. It looks forward with confidence to the consummation of the great salvation. In our text, Paul relates that “hope” to the resurrection of the dead – the appointed time when the saints will be made complete, with no vestige of the flesh remaining.

Revelation About the Resurrection Prior to Christ Jesus

Although the resurrection of the dead was not a frequent subject by the prophets, they did declare its reality in no uncertain words. It was a coming epoch that God Almighty did not want to be hidden from men.

⇒ **MEN SHALL LIVE AGAIN.** “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands” (Job 14:14-15).

⇒ **THE DEAD SHALL SEE GOD.** “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27).

⇒ **AWAKING WITH THE LORD’S LIKENESS.** “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psa 17:15).

⇒ **REDEEMED FROM THE POWER OF THE GRAVE.** “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah” (Psa 49:15).

⇒ **DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.** “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa 25:8).

⇒ **DEAD MEN SHALL LIVE.** “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast

out the dead” (Isa 26:19).

⇒ **THOSE IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE.** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan 12:2-3).

⇒ **RANSOMED FROM THE POWER OF THE GRAVE.** “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hosea 13:14).

Regarding the resurrection, it is tragic beyond description that many professing Christians speak less of, and lack the knowledge of, those living prior to “the day of salvation.” It is a condition that should cause great shame and aggressive repentance.

Proclamation of the Resurrection After the Enthronement of Jesus

Although there is not much talk about the resurrection of the dead in the church of our day, that event was frequently addressed in the apostolic writings and the record their preaching. Here is a sampling of those references.

⇒ **THE APOSTLES PREACHED THE RESURRECTION.** “And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:1-2).

⇒ **THE SKEPTICS SCOFFED AT THE PROCLAMATION OF THE RESURRECTION.** “Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18) . . . “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter” (Acts 17:32).

- ⇒ **PAUL CONFESSED TO BELIEVING THE DEAD WOULD BE RAISED.** *“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question”* (Acts 23:6).
- ⇒ **PAUL TO AGRIPPA.** *“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”* (Acts 26:8).
- ⇒ **THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY.** *“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”* (Rom 8:23).
- ⇒ **GOD WILL RAISE US UP.** *“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power”* (1 Cor 6:14).
- ⇒ **THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED.** *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”* (1 Cor 15:52).
- ⇒ **GOD WILL RAISE US BY JESUS.** *“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you”* (2 Cor 4:14).
- ⇒ **THE DESIRE TO KNOW THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION, AND TO ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION.** *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”* (Phil 3:10-11).
- ⇒ **THE CHANGE OF THE VILE BODY.** *“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* (Phil 3:21).
- ⇒ **THOSE WHO HAVE DIED WILL BE BROUGHT BACK.** *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring*

with Him” (1 Thess 4:14).

⇒ **THE RESURRECTION, PART OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DOCTRINE.** *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment”* (Heb 6:1-2).

BOTH OF THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

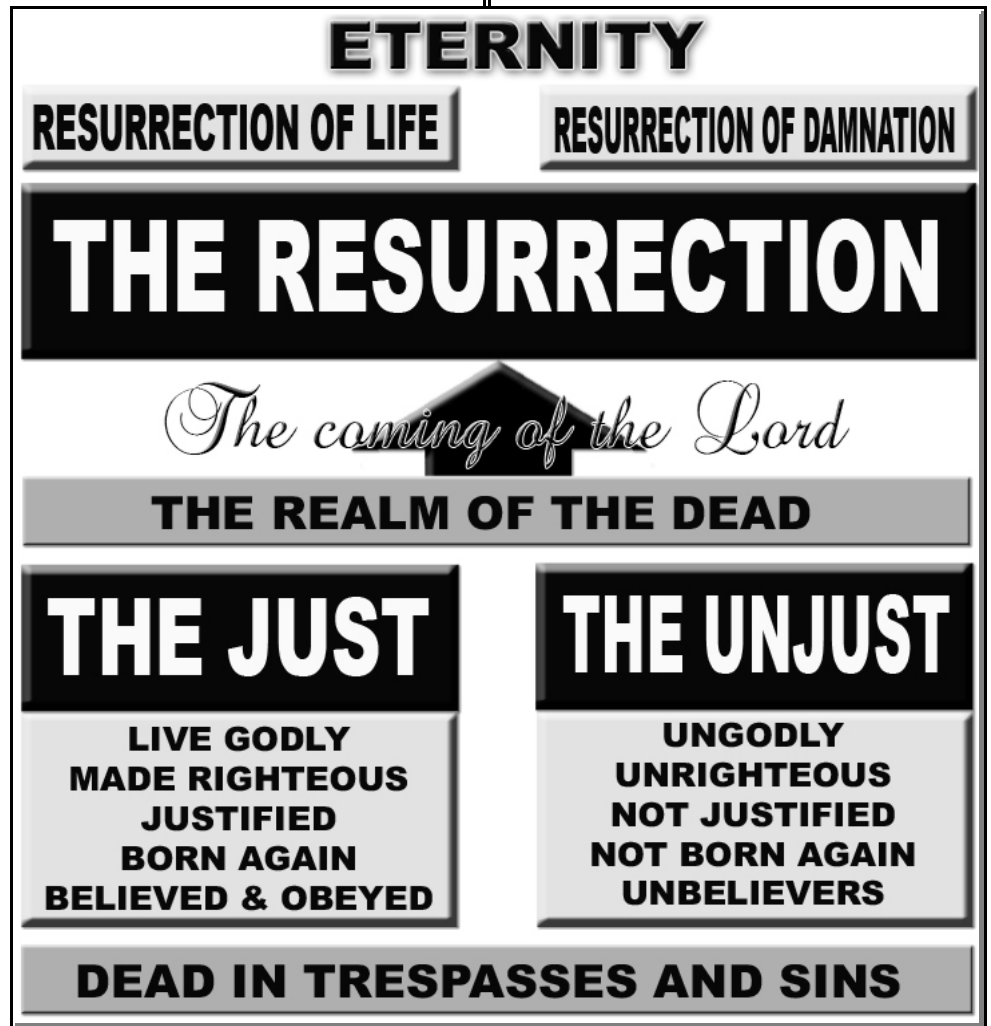
“ . . . both of the just and unjust.”

Other versions read, *“the righteous and the wicked,”* ^{NASB} *“the righteous and the unrighteous,”* ^{NRSV} *“upright men and wrongdoers,”* ^{BBE} *“that people with God’s*

AMPLIFIED

Some of the versions are a bit misleading at this point: *“upright men and wrongdoers,”* ^{BBE} and *“good and bad.”* ^{GWN} Whether intentional or not, this might leave people thinking that this is only a description of the outward conduct of the people. That is involved, to be sure, for a salvation that does not alter the conduct of those participating in it is really no salvation at all. The words *“just”* and *“unjust”* equate to *“righteous”* and *“unrighteous,”* or those who have been justified and those who have not.

In the broadest sense of the word, this means those whose life passes Divine scrutiny and those who do not. In the strictest sense, being righteous must be seen



approval and those without it,” ^{GWN} *“good and bad,”* ^{IE} *“the upright and the wicked,”* ^{WILLIAMS} and *“the righteous and the unrighteous (the just and the unjust).”*

as the result of God’s own work through Christ Jesus, for men are *“made righteous”* (Rom 5:19). The unjust are those who have not been made righteous.

Both of these categories will be raised at the same time, in a single resurrection. Jesus referred to this when speaking of His return, *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”* (John 5:28-29).

The word “resurrections” does not appear in any standard translation of

Scripture. *“Resurrection”* is nowhere mentioned in the plural – nowhere. We do read of a *“first resurrection,”* but never of a *“second resurrection.”* The expression *“first resurrection”* denotes an order or kind of resurrection. It is not a term indicating chronology. With consistency Scripture refers to *“THE resurrection”* (Matt 22:28,30,31; Mk 12:33; Lk 14:14; 20:33,35,36; Lk 20:36; John 5:29; John 11:24,25; Acts 4:2,33; 17:18,32; 23:6; 24:21; 1 Cor 15:21,42; Phil 3:11; 2 Tim 2:18; Heb 6:2). In all of these texts, the definite article for *“the”*

appears, signifying a singular, not a plural, expression.

In spite of the clarity of Scripture, the popular idea of the resurrection of the dead is that there will be two resurrections – one of the just, and one of the unjust. These two resurrections are taught to be separated by a thousand years. During that time, the saints will be absent from the earth, having been raptured. Jesus, however, associated ultimate life and damnation with a single resurrection.

SOMETHING TO BE MAINTAINED

“¹⁶ And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”

Paul now confesses to a manner of living that is counter to the culture in which we live. Even within the professing church, this is an exceedingly rare admission. Indeed, some people have never heard a human being speak in this manner. However, this IS the manner of spiritual life

I EXERCISE MYSELF

“And herein do I exercise myself. . .”

Other versions read, *“I myself always strive,”* ^{NKJV} *“I do my best,”* ^{NASB} *“I strive always,”* ^{NIV} *“I always take pains,”* ^{RSV} *“I make a point of,”* ^{CJB} *“I endeavor,”* ^{DOUAY} *“I also labor,”* ^{MRD} *“I always try,”* ^{NLT} *“herein study I,”* ^{PNT} *“I try with all my strength,”* ^{LIVING} *“my own earnest endeavor,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *“I always exercise and discipline myself [mortifying my body, deadening my carnal affections, bodily appetites, and worldly desires, endeavoring in all respects].”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The Greek word translated *“exercise”* is ἀσκήω, which has the following lexical meaning: *“to exercise (oneself), take pains, labor, strive,”* ^{THAYER} *“do one’s best to, strive to, exert oneself to,”* ^{FRIEBERG} *“endeavor, do one’s best,”* ^{UBS} and *“engage in some activity, with both continuity and effort - to do one’s best, to endeavor.”* ^{LOUW-NIDA}

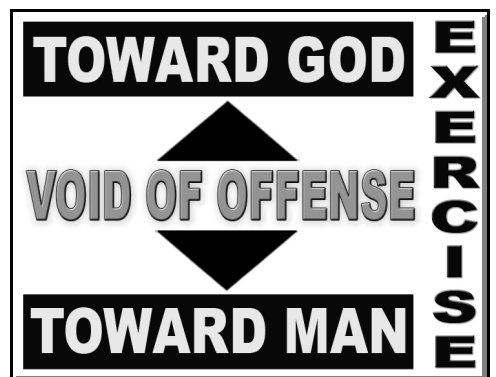
As used here, *“exercise”* involves extensive and consistent effort. The kind of life Paul described is elsewhere stated this way: *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”* (Phil 1:21). Again he confessed, *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and*

gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Stated yet another way it is living *“unto Him which died for them and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15). Jesus spoke of this manner of life when He revealed what was required to be His disciple. *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it”* (Matt 16:24-25).

The kind of life Paul describes is not a more advanced kind of life. In fact, he himself stated that this kind of life was the objective of the commandment of God. *“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith”* ^{NKJV} (1 Tim 1:5). **True spiritual life has no room for erratic and thoughtless living.** Self-centeredness and a lack of proper spiritual focus are all traits of the flesh, and they are not acceptable before God. The absence of these qualities is always owing to some kind of distraction or temptation.

A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENSE

“. . . to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”



Other versions read, *“to have a conscience without offence toward God and men,”* ^{NKJV} *“to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men,”* ^{NASB} *“always to keep my conscience clear before God and man,”* ^{NIV} *“to have no reason for shame before God or men,”* ^{BBE} *“to have in everything a conscience without offence towards God and men,”* ^{DARBY} *“to have always a pure conscience before God, and before men,”* ^{MRD} *“do what I believe is right before God and men,”* ^{LIVING} and *“to have a clear (unshaken, blameless) conscience, void of offence toward God and toward men.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This way of thinking is not to be confused with pleasing men, for, as Paul wrote, *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”* (Gal 1:10). It is never right to cater to the whims of men.

As concerns being void of *“offense toward man,”* Paul is referring to the sense of right and wrong that is maintained by men of moral integrity. This perspective is stated in Romans 14:17-18: *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”* In his epistle to Titus, Paul stated it this way: *“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you”* (Titus 2:7-8). This is also the condition described in Paul’s letter to the Philippians: *“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the*

midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15).

There is such a thing as “*having favor with all the people*” (Acts 2:47). When this favor involves unregenerate people, it has to do with a helpful and productive life that brings benefit to society. It is

understood that this does not exclude the possibility of rejection and persecution. But such responses will not be because of wrongdoing. No believer is to “*suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters*” (1 Pet 4:15). Thus Paul extended himself so as not to cause men to have a distorted view of God, or to live in such a way as to earn men’s

disfavor by an ungodly manner of life. This frame of mind is one required of all believers. They simply cannot approach life with themselves being the chief consideration.

It is not how they are treated that is the point, but if they are living above reproach. Godliness is an absolute requirement (Heb 12:14).

I CAME TO BRING ALMS

“¹⁷ Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.”

Paul is defending himself against the false charges of the Jews. They have charged him with being a trouble-maker among the Jews. If that was really the case, he would have spent a lot of time in Jerusalem, their chief city. However, instead of being a frequent visitor to Jerusalem, Paul now informs Felix of the facts.

I CAME AFTER MANY YEARS

“*Now after many years I came . . .*” Other versions read, “*after several years,*”^{NASB} “*after an absence of several years,*”^{NIV} “*after some years,*”^{NRSV} “*after a number of years,*”^{BBE} “*after a lapse of many years,*”^{DARBY} and “*I was away for many years.*”^{IE}

If Paul was really a troubler of the Jews, he would not have stayed away from the center of Jewish activity for “*several years.*”^{NASB} Translated from the word *πλείονων*, the word “*many*” means, “*greater in quantity: the object with which the comparison is made being,*”^{THAYER} “*many, a larger number; greater (greater than of comparison),*”^{UBS} and “*a relatively large quantity of objects or events - 'many, a great deal of, a great number of.*”^{LOUW-NIDA}

The point of comparison is with the “*twelve days*” Paul had been in Jerusalem. **If the charges that were leveled against him were true, it would prove exceedingly difficult to account for his absence from Jerusalem for a number of years.**

Concerning the probable length of this period of absence, I will simply pass. along an explanation provided in the Pulpit Commentary: “*St. Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem was that mentioned in Acts 18:22. Since then he had spent “some time” (χρόνον τινά) at Antioch, had gone over all the country of Phrygia and Galatia, had come to Ephesus,*

and stopped between two and three years there, had gone through Macedonia, had spent three months at Corinth, had returned to Macedonia, and from thence had come to Jerusalem in about fifty days. All which must have occupied four or five years – from A.D. 54 to A.D. 58 – according to most chronologers.”

Paul’s point is that his manner of life would not support the charges leveled against him.

TO BRING ALMS AND OFFERINGS

“*. . . to bring alms . . . and offerings.*” Other versions read, “*gifts for the poor . . . and offerings,*”^{NIV} “*alms . . . and to offer sacrifices,*”^{NRSV} “*give help and offerings,*”^{BBE} “*bring charitable gifts and offerings,*”^{CSB} “*gifts for the poor and offerings for God,*”^{GWN} “*impart alms and present an offering,*”^{MRD} “*do kind acts to my nation, and offerings,*”^{YLT} “*money to aid . . . to offer a sacrifice to God,*”^{LIVING} “*bring money . . . and to give some offerings,*”^{IE} “*bring contributions of . . . and to offer sacrifices,*”^{WILLIAMS} and “*bring . . . contributions of charity and offerings.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

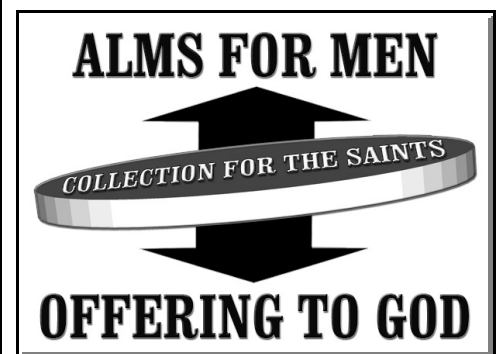
As you can see, there are two completely different ideas reflected in the various versions.

⇒ That both the alms and the offerings were presented to Paul’s nation – the Jews (NIV/BBE/CSB/IE/AMPLIFIED).

⇒ That alms were presented to the people, And a sacrifice was presented to God (NRSV/GWN/MRD/LIVING/WILLIAMS).

The charitable gift of which he speaks consisted of the offerings gathered from various churches (1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8; Rom 15:25-26,31). It is not likely that the offering he presented was the one related to the four men who had taken a vow (Acts 21:26). Paul did not come to Jerusalem to present that offering. It was made at the suggestion of James and the brethren after

he had arrived in Jerusalem (Acts 21:22-24).



It seems to me to be best to consider the “*offerings*” to be but another view of the “*alms.*” In delineating this offering to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that what the people gave was really being given to God Himself. “*Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*” (2 Cor 8:11-12). Although I am not willing to be contentious about it, I am persuaded that the “*alms*” and “*offerings*” were both referring to the gifts brought to the poor saints in Jerusalem.

TO MY NATION

“*. . . to my nation.*” Other versions read, “*my people,*”^{NIV} “*the people of my own nation,*”^{MRD} “*the Jews.*”^{LIVING}

This is a wise presentation of the case. Actually, the alms Paul had brought were not for the Jews in general, but for “*the poor saints which are at Jerusalem*” (Rom 15:26). In his exhortation to the Corinthians concerning this matter, this type of work is referred to as “*the ministry to the saints*”^{NASB} (1 Cor 16:15). He also wrote to the

Corinthians that this offering “*supplieth the want of the saints*” (2 Cor 9:12). Jesus referred to such acts of philanthropy as ministering to “*the least of these My brethren*” (Matt 25:40). When rebuking professed believers that lacked the required evidence of sonship, James wrote, “*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what*

doth it profit?” (James 2:15-16). So, there is really no question about the intended recipients of the “*alms*” and “*offerings*” Paul brought to Jerusalem.

Yet Paul generalizes by saying he brought the alms to his “*nation*” – which he most assuredly did, even though only a part of the nation received them. Of course, it would have been no different if he had brought the offerings for the unbelieving Jews who were poor – only a part of the nation would have

received them – the poor. However, this is not a matter on which to split hairs. Paul had been charged with being a defiling influence and one that fomented insurrection “*among the Jews.*” However, instead of causing agitation among his nation, he had assisted them in the hour of need. This is further something that could be corroborated. The charges, therefore, were not at all consistent with the real facts in the matter. Paul had been wholly misrepresented, and he wisely gives just enough information as can be fully corroborated.

THEY FOUND ME PURIFIED IN THE TEMPLE

“¹⁸ *Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.* ¹⁹ *Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.*”

Paul now spells out the circumstances at the time he was found by the Jews. Tertullus had been very general in his presentation – particularly regarding how the Jews had actually found Paul: “*Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law*” (Acts 24:6). The clear implication is that they had found him profaning, or defiling, the Temple.

CERTAIN JEWS FROM ASIA

“*Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me . . .*” This was conveniently omitted from Tertullus’ charges. He spoke for the ones who were present – “*whom WE took*” – as though this whole matter had been detected and addressed by the Jews from Jerusalem. The true sequence of events was as follows.

- ⇒ The Jews from Asia cried out, calling upon the men of Israel to “*help*” them (Acts 21:28a).
- ⇒ The Jews from Asia told the people Paul was teaching in every place “*against the people, and the Law, and this place*” [the Temple] (Acts 21:28b).
- ⇒ The Jews from Asia told the people Paul had “*brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place*” (Acts 21:28c).

Tertullus made no reference to the Jews from Asia, or the fact that the local Jews had not entered into public opposition of Paul until they were provoked, by the Jews from Asia. Now Paul refers to this fact that had not been set before the court.

It ought to be noted that the only charges that should be brought against the people of God are those that are false. No

FOUND ME PURIFIED IN THE TEMPLE

“*. . . purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult . . .*” Other versions read, “*occupied in the temple, having been purified, without any crowd or uproar,*”^{NASB} “*I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance,*”^{NIV} “*they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance,*”^{NRSV} and “*they found me [occupied in the rites of purification] in the temple, without any crowd or uproar.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Instead of stirring up a tumult, Paul had been engaged in an activity directed toward God alone. That action had to do with a vow he had made to the Lord. He was living his life in view of the Lord, not with a mind to promote a sect, as his accusers alleged.

Tertullus had made no mention of this vow, or the fact that Paul was there with four Jewish men who also were completing a vow to the Lord. This was not a private thing for Paul, for, as James and the elders had suggested, it was also done in order that others might see and know that Paul was not engaged in disrupting the Jews and their customs. The Jews from Asia had seen this suggestion being carried out, but made no association at all of the activity with a consciousness of God.

So it is that when deeds are done in the presence of unbelievers with an interest to pleasing God and confirming the nature of spiritual life, it may not solicit their approbation. The children of God cannot afford to be naive about this situation.

THEY OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN HERE

Instead of stirring up a tumult, Paul had been engaged in an activity directed toward God alone. That action had to do with a vow he had made to the Lord. He was living his life in view of the Lord, not with a mind to promote a sect, as his accusers alleged.

child of God should “*suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters*” (1 Pet 4:15). That is, such things should never be charged against the people of God in truth.

“... Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.” Other versions read, “who ought to have been present before you, and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me,”^{NASB} “it would have been better if they had come here to make a statement, if they have anything against me,”^{BBE} “It is they who ought to be here before you to bring charges, if they have anything against me,”^{CSB} and “whom it behoveth to be present before thee, and to

accuse, if they had anything against me.”^{YLT}

The reference is to the Jews from Asia who had raised the charges against Paul. Instead of the original accusers being there, Ananias and the council, or sanhedrin, were there, with Tertullus being their spokesman. The first time Ananias the high priest is mentioned is Acts 23:2. The council and the chief priests were summoned into the matter in Acts 22:39, well after the charges had been made. There is no record of

Tertullus’ involvement until the event that is now being reported.

Therefore, none of the original accusers were present at this trial. Well does Paul affirm they ought to have been there. This is a trial based upon hearsay and second and third reports, which violated both Jewish and Roman law. Jewish law required at least two witnesses to be present (Deut 17:6). The whole affair was nothing but a sham.

TESTIFY OF ANY EVIL FOUND IN ME

“²⁰ Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council.” Other versions read, “any wrongdoing,”^{NKJV} “misdeed,”^{NASB} “what crime they found in me,”^{NIV} “any iniquity,”^{DOUAY} “any unjust thing,”^{GENEVA} “what I was charged with while I stood in the council,”^{GWN} “evil doing,”^{TNT} “any unrighteousness,”^{YLT} “they didn’t find me guilty of anything when I was tried by their own council,”^{CEV} and “So ask these others what crime they’ve caught me in. Don’t let them hide behind this smooth-talking Tertullus.”^{MESSAGE}

To this point, nothing specific has been presented against Paul – only vague generalities (Acts 24:5-6).

- ⇒ Paul is charged with being a “pestilent fellow.”
- ⇒ He is said to have been “a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world.”
- ⇒ He is charged with being “a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.”
- ⇒ Paul is also said to have “gone about to profane the Temple.”

Thus, no specific charge has been laid against the apostle. A specific act that proved him to be a “pestilent fellow” has not been cited. No particular act of sedition has been mentioned. What is intended by the expression that he was a “ringleader of the

sect of the Nazarenes” has not been specified. Precisely how he went about to “profane the Temple” has not been particularized.

Such a sloppy procedure violated the Law given to the Jews. They were not permitted to simply make allegations against a person, but had to have more than one witness to a particular charge. It is not that the Jewish leaders were ignorant of this requirement. When they brought Jesus before Caiaphas, they relied on “two false witnesses” (Matt 26:60). When they tried Stephen, they saw to it that a plurality of “false witnesses” spoke against him (Acts 6:13). But in the case of Paul, they did not present a single witness to corroborate their charges. Paul now clarifies this to Felix.

THE SINGLE EXCEPTION

“²¹ Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.”

Paul has nothing to hide, and so will acknowledge anything that may, on the surface, appear to justify the allegation that he is a “Pestilent fellow” and caused insurrection among the people.

EXCEPT . . . FOR THIS ONE VOICE

“Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them . . .” Other versions read, “this one statement which I shouted,”^{NKJV} “this one sentence that I called out,”^{NRSV} “this one thing which I said

among them in a loud voice,”^{BBE} “for this one voice only that I cried,”^{DOUAY} “They could accuse me of only one thing. As I stood among them, I shouted,”^{GWN} “unless it was my one outcry as I stood among them,”^{NAB} and “unless it was in that one expression which I made use of,”^{LIVING}

The statement to which Paul refers was not expressed in the Temple, nor was it addressed to the Jews in general. This was affirmed before the Jewish council, not as from an intruder, but as one who was defending himself before false charges. That council was comprised of Pharisees and Sadducees who differed significantly in their theology. Yet, they were quite willing to live with the variance, even though they were

together hostile against Paul. The statement Paul made did cause a tumult in that assembly, and therefore Paul adds a one-sentence explanation.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

“Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.” Other versions read, “concerning the resurrection of the dead,”^{NKJV} “other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today,’”^{NASB} and “In regard to the resurrection of the dead I am indicted and on trial before you this day!”^{AMPLIFIED}

Notice, this statement that caused

such an agitation in the council did not fall into any of the categories Tertullus presented before Felix. It did not confirm he was a pestilent fellow, for he acknowledge something that was common among the Jews – something that was revealed in their holy

Scriptures. It certainly did not contribute to any political anarchy, and it was not a criminal offense.

Yet, by mentioning this pivotal

fact, Paul has planted a seed, making reference to the resurrection of the dead. This will have an impact upon the council itself, as well as Felix. It will actually draw the attention away from him.

FELIX HAD A MORE PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

“²² And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.”

The text suggests that Paul knew the extent of Felix’s knowledge of “these things.” He therefore spoke in such a manner as to provoke Felix to serious thought about his case, thus avoiding Felix having to deal extensively with the Jews who were standing before him.

FELIX HAD A MORE PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

“And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way . . .” Other versions read, “more accurate knowledge of that way,”^{NASB} “being well acquainted with the Way,”^{NIV} “Rather well informed about the Way,”^{NRSV} “more exact knowledge concerning the WAY,”^{ASV} “a more detailed knowledge,”^{BBE} “of things connected with the Way,”^{CJB} “having most certain knowledge of this way,”^{DOUAY} “who knew Christians,”^{LIVING} “understood much about the way,”^{IE} “fairly well informed about the new life,”^{WEYMOUTH} “a fairly clear conception of the principles involved in The Way,”^{WEYMOUTH} and “a pretty accurate knowledge of the Way.”^{MONTGOMERY}

Felix was in Caesarea, the same city a certain centurion named Cornelius had been converted (Acts 10:1-48). Philip also came to this city, no doubt continuing “preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). It appears to me that possible exposure to those events, were now coupled with Paul’s testimony.

Once again, the doctrine and manner of life in Christ Jesus is referred to as “the Way.” This is an all-encompassing description that involves the purpose of God, the doctrine of Christ, and the manner of life of the believers. The purpose of God begins with a remedy for sin, and ends with

conformity to the image of Christ in glory. The means through which this is accomplished is “the doctrine of Christ” (Heb 6:1; 2 John 1:9). Elsewhere it is referred as “the record God has given of His Son” (1 John 5:10-11), and “the Gospel of Christ” (Rom 1:16).

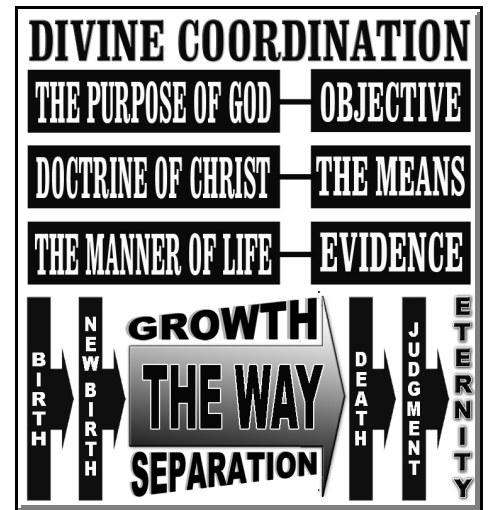
These three components work harmoniously together. None of them is at variance with another. Further, “the Way” requires the presence of them all. The purpose of God cannot be fulfilled by “another gospel,” or false way. Neither, indeed, does the Gospel yield a manner of life that is contrary to it. A holy Word cannot produce an unholy people, and an unholy people cannot present an accurate picture of Christ.

During the time of our text, the followers of Jesus had made such an impact on society that people knew about “the way.”

In Our Time

In our time, and in this generation, certain concepts of “the way” have been formed in those who are beholding professing Christians. Is there a person of sound mind who does not know that the modern church has left a bad taste in the mouths of society? It is not their righteousness that has caused these reactions, but their unrighteousness.

More and more it is becoming fashionable for professing Christians to speak more of what they are not than what they are in Christ Jesus. This approach is thought to be humble, but that conclusion is questionable, to say the least. If it is true that those in Christ are a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17 Gal 6:15), “created in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:10), “born of God” (1 John 3:9), and “made the righteousness of God” in Christ, they we ought to expect some kind of change to be wrought in the character and conduct of such people. If it is remotely possible that such statements are really nothing more than a metaphor, then Jesus has not spoken to us plainly as He promised



He would: “These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father” (John 16:25).

Every insightful believer can confess with Paul, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:12). This does not mean he slipped now and then, committing adultery, murder, lying, or some other outward sin. **He did not even do that when he lived under the Law and without Jesus.** He confessed, and the Spirit did not put a disclaimer on it, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, [I was] blameless” (Phil 3:6). Again he testified, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). His conscience was not perfect, to be sure, but he was outwardly living up to what he thought God required. When the Law did convict him of sin, it was not some act of outward immorality, but covetousness (Rom 7:7).

It is tragic that many professing Christians have more trouble maintaining a moral life than Paul did under the Law

– or Zecharias and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist. It is said of them, “*And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*” (Luke 1:6).

The concept of “*the way*” postulates an outward life that is not riddled with defects. Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1) is certainly not a casual work, but it is underwritten by Divine power wherever such an effort is extended. I do not know that the Scriptures ever make a point of **believers** always sinning, being dominated by sin, captured by habits, helpless, or unable to successfully resist the devil. If that assessment is true, those who affirm such things owe us an explanation.

HE DEFERRED THEM

“... he deferred them ...” Other

versions read, “*he adjourned the proceedings,*”^{NKJV} “*put them off,*”^{NASB} “*adjourned the hearing,*”^{NRSV} “*postponed the trial,*”^{NAB} “*delayed them,*”^{YLT} and “*told the Jews to wait.*”^{LIVING}

Even though Ananias and the council had traveled about seventy miles to stand before Felix and make their charges against Paul known, Felix simply dismisses the proceedings. He knows that he will need more information about these charges that have been delivered by the council. He also knows that what they have said did not agree with what he knew about those who were of “*the Way.*”

I WILL KNOW THE UTMOST OF YOUR MATTER

“... and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know

the uttermost of your matter.” Other versions read, “*I will make a decision on your case,*”^{NKJV} “*I will decide the case,*”^{NASB} “*I will determine your matter,*”^{ASV} “*I will give attention to your business,*”^{BBE} “*I will hear you,*”^{DOUAY} “*I will give hearing between you,*”^{MRD} “*I will know the utmost of your matter,*”^{PNT} “*I will know fully the things concerning you,*”^{YLT} and “*I will determine your case more fully.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Felix felt that when Lysias came and gave his report, he would have a full picture of the circumstances and be able to render a verdict. Although we will find his conduct was mixed with other motives, he did refuse to proceed any further until he was satisfied he knew all the facts in the case. **Proper judgments cannot be rendered until all of the facts have been assessed.**

KEEP PAUL, AND LET HIM HAVE LIBERTY

“²³ *And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or*

under guard but to give him some freedom,”^{NIV} “*he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence,*”^{ASV} “*keep Paul under his control, and to let him have everything he*

Pulpit Commentary offers this word: “It is also a common medical term for the cessation or remission of pain or disease. St. Paul uses it four times in his Epistles for “rest” or “ease” (2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:5; 8:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).”

Paul, then, was a prisoner with special privileges. This indicates that Felix had, in fact, seen through the false charges of the Jews. More specifically, God had enabled him to see through those false charges, and to actually have sympathy for Paul. God is revealed as moving men to favor His people

This provides a rather large consideration, ranging from the discomforts of incarceration to one of Paul’s chronic infirmities (2 Cor 11:30; 12:5,9,10), to the normal needs for nourishment and comfort.

Paul, then, was a prisoner with special privileges. This indicates that Felix had, in fact, seen through the false charges of the Jews. More specifically, God had enabled him to see through those false charges, and to actually have sympathy for Paul. God is revealed as moving men to favor His people.

come unto him.”

The trial being temporarily adjourned, what will Felix do with Paul? The verse that follows shows how God can give a man favor in the eyes of others who are not members of the household of faith. Remember, in Felix we do not find the paragon of virtue.

KEEP PAUL AND LET HIM HAVE LIBERTY

“*And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty . . .*” Other versions read, “*be kept in custody and yet have some freedom,*”^{NASB} “*keep Paul*

had need of,”^{BBE} “*keep Paul in custody, but to let him have considerable liberty,*”^{CJB} “*to keep Paul, and that he should have ease,*”^{GENEVA} “*should be kept under arrest but free from restriction,*”^{NJB} and “*keep [Paul] in custody, but to treat him with indulgence [giving him some liberty]*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated “*liberty*” is ἀνεσιή, which has the following lexical meaning, “a loosening, relaxing, spoken of a more tolerable condition in captivity . . . relief, rest,”^{THAYER} “relaxation of custody mitigation, measure of freedom,”^{FRIBERG} and “relaxation of custody mitigation, measure of freedom.”^{LOUW-NIDA} This word can also mean relief from disease as well as pain. **The**

⇨ **JOSEPH.** “*But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison*” (Gen 39:21). “*And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house*” (Acts 7:10).

⇨ **ISRAEL.** “*And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in*

the sight of the people” (Ex 11:3). “And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians” (Ex 12:36).

⇒ **DANIEL.** “Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs” (Dan 1:9).

That is precisely what took place in this text. The Lord turned the heart of Felix so he arranged for Paul’s care and comfort – all at the government’s expense.

FORBID NONE OF HIS ACQUAINTANCE

“ . . . and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.” Other versions read, “not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him,”^{NKJV} “not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him,”^{NASB} “permit his friends to take care of his needs,”^{NIV} and “not to hinder his friends from ministering to his needs and serving him.”^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul’s “acquaintance” was doubtless the brethren – fellow believers. And why did Felix make such an arrangement? There is no record of any of

them being present at the trial. Luke, who is writing this narrative, was no doubt among these acquaintances. In the report of this whole episode, Luke writes, “when WE were come to Jerusalem” (Lk 21:17). Some are of the opinion his ministry included some kind of care for Paul’s infirmities. This is more than a mere possibility, as Paul referred to Luke as “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14).

We see in this a demonstration of the love of the brethren, by which we know we have passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14). The text also suggests that certain brethren were keeping abreast of the situation, and were there to help.

FELIX COMES AND SENDS FOR PAUL

“ ²⁴ *And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.*”

Now, after a period of time, Felix comes again. This time, however, he does not come to resume the trial. As far as the trial is concerned he is still waiting for Lysias to show up. His reason for coming is most arresting.

FELIX COMES AGAIN WITH HIS WIFE

CONCERNING DRUSILLA
 Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder, and was engaged to be married to Epiphanes, the son of King Antiochus, on condition that he would embrace the Jewish religion; but as he afterward refused to do that, the contract was broken off. Afterward she was given in marriage, by her brother Agrippa the younger, to Azizus, king of Emesa, upon his consent to be circumcised. When Felix was governor of Judea, he saw Drusilla and fell in love with her, and sent to her Simon, one of his friends, a Jew, by birth a Cyprian, who pretended to be a magician, to endeavour to persuade her to forsake her husband and to marry Felix. Accordingly, in order to avoid the envy of her sister Bernice, who treated her ill on account of her beauty, “she was prevailed on,” says Josephus, “to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix” (Josephus, Antiq., book 20, chapter 7, sections 1 and 2). – ALBERT BARNES

came with his wife Drusilla which was a Jewess . . .” Other versions read, “but some days later,”^{NASB} “Several days later,”^{NIV} “a few days later,”^{LIVING} and “Not long after this.”^{WEYMOUTH}

An English parallel for “certain days” is “a little while” – an unspecified period of time that was relatively brief. It was measured in terms of days, but only involved a few of them.

This time Felix has no intention of addressing the court case before him. Further, he comes with his wife, Drusilla, “which was a Jewess.” History records that she was the daughter

of the Herod that was eaten of worms (Acts 12:23), and the sister of Agrippa, who will be mentioned in the next chapter. The text states that she was a Jewess – like Timothy’s mother (Acts 16:1). I do not have a satisfactory explanation for her being the daughter of Herod, and yet a Jewess, nor have I read one. Commentators tend to skirt the matter, as well as the dictionary and encyclopedic references I have. I have found no one who endeavors to explain how it is that she was called a “Jewess.” I do not understand that this term was ordinarily applied to a proselyte. It is generally understood that Herod was a descendant of Esau – an Edomite. Yet, by profession, the Herodian dynasty was Jewish, making it the religion of the state, and seeking to exploit it for personal advantage. With that, I will

leave this subject, receiving the statement of Luke that Drusilla was a Jewess. I see no alternative to this procedure.

It is assumed that she is the one who compelled Felix to call for Paul. However, it can also be assumed that Felix was intrigued by Paul’s defense, and was thus prompted to make further inquiry into “the Way.”

HE SENT FOR PAUL AND HEARD HIM CONCERNING THE FAITH IN CHRIST

“ . . . he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.” Other versions read, “and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus,”^{NASB} and “listened to him [talk] about faith in Christ Jesus.”^{AMPLIFIED}

There have not been many dignitaries that have extended themselves to hear of faith in Christ. A certain “deputy,” or “proconsul,”^{NKJV} once called for Barnabas and Saul “and desired to hear the Word of God” (Acts 13:7). Now, however, Felix makes a special trip, bringing his wife, and hears Paul speak “concerning the faith in Christ.”

When I read this, I pondered who Felix might go to hear in our day, and what he would hear as well. I venture to say that many preachers would be found speechless if they were asked to speak “about faith in Christ.”^{NASB} That is the essence of “the Way.” Remove “Christ” and “faith,” and there really is nothing left to talk about.

“And after certain days, when Felix

THE MANNER OF PAUL'S REASONING

^{25a} **“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come . . .”**

What will Paul say? How will he speak? What will be his focus? Will he present an apologetic speech for becoming a disciple of Jesus? Will he cite proofs that Christ rose from the dead? Will he present the official doctrine of the church in Jerusalem? Or, will he adapt the message to every day life, telling Felix and his wife that Jesus is the answer to all of their problems, or that He is the secret to happiness? Perhaps he will major on the subject of marriage, seeing that a lot of unacceptable circumstances were related to their marriage. Then, he might give a dissertation on what is referred to by some as “the plan of salvation.” Does all of this sound a bit foolish? If so, that is because it is. Yet, who does not know that these are the kind of approaches he would hear in our day.

HE REASONED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“And as he reasoned of righteousness . . .” Other versions read, *“justice,”* ^{NRSV} *“God’s approval,”* ^{GWN} *“uprightness,”* ^{NJB} *“morality,”* ^{MONTGOMERY} *“doing right,”* ^{CEV} *“goodness,”* ^{GNB} and *“right relations with God.”* ^{MESSAGE}

As it is used here, the word *“righteousness”* has the following lexical meaning. *“Equity of character of act,”* ^{STRONG’S} *“the state of him who is such as he ought to be . . . the condition acceptable to God,”* ^{THAYER} *“of the right behavior that God requires of persons righteousness, good behavior, uprightness,”* ^{FRIEBERG} *“what God requires; what is right, righteousness, uprightness, justice; righting wrong,”* ^{UBS} and *“the act of doing what God requires - righteousness, doing what God requires, doing what is right.”* ^{LOUW-NIDA}

This has to do with human conduct. Jesus spoke of it in these words, *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt 5:20). Other versions read, *“surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees,”* ^{NASB} *“is not greater,”* ^{BBE} and *“is more than.”* ^{AMPLIFIED} This does involve the unseen qualities of character, sincerity, devotion, and fervency. However, this is not to the exclusion of upright conduct.

While it is true that righteousness is imputed to those having faith, that

righteousness is not surreal. It is what enables the one in Christ to live righteously, or in a righteous manner. This is essential, for *“the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God”* (1 Cor 6:9). Furthermore, that statement is followed by a reference to the outbreak of sin in human conduct: *“fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind”* – all evidence themselves in human behavior.

In his first epistle John defined righteous by teaching it is confirmed in the doing of it. *“If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him”* (1 John 2:29). And again, *“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous”* (1 John 3:7). And again, *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother”* (1 John 3:10). There should be no further need to establish the essentiality of a righteousness that is confirmed by conduct. **A salvation that does not impact upon the conduct of the individual is no salvation at all.** A righteousness that is not

understanding of unrighteousness? Such a thought is an insult to our intelligence. Paul reasoned with Felix about the necessity of righteousness, no doubt expounding the results of being unrighteous – as defined in apostolic doctrine.

HE REASONED OF TEMPERANCE

“And as he reasoned of . . . temperance . . .” Other versions reads, *“self-control,”* ^{NKJV} *“chastity,”* ^{DOUAY} *“holiness,”* ^{MRD} *“self-restraint,”* ^{NAB} and *“purity of life (the control of the passions).”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *“temperance”* has the following lexical meaning: *“self-control . . . the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites,”* ^{THAYER} and *“to exercise complete control over one’s desires and actions - ‘to control oneself, to exercise self-control, self-control.”* ^{LOUW-NIDA}

The perception of the necessity of this virtue has nearly been obliterated by the religion of our day. There are religious systems that develop in those who adopt them a kind of sympathy for the person who cannot control their passions. In fact, some well known and popular recovery programs teach people to say they are believers in Christ, yet their lives are “out of control.”

A salvation that does not impact upon the conduct of the individual is no salvation at all. A righteousness that is not confirmed in the behavior of the individual is really not righteousness. Men have invented a salvation that leaves the saved under the dominion of sin, even though such a condition belies what God has said about His great salvation.

confirmed in the behavior of the individual is really not righteousness. Men have invented a salvation that leaves the saved under the dominion of sin, even though such a condition belies what God has said about His great salvation.

If these things were not so, precisely how could Paul reason with Felix concerning righteousness? Is it remotely possible that such reasoning could be achieved if God was really tolerant and

“Temperance” is affirmed to be part of *“the fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal 5:23). That does not mean that it is a luxury, or that men can be saved without it. It is its essentiality that accounts for it being included in *“the fruit of the Spirit.”* In the working out of their salvation, believers are admonished to *“add”* temperance to their knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet 1:6). This admonition does not suggest that God will receive people without this quality. Rather, the reasoning is that He will not – that is

why the virtue must be found in the professing Christian.

In reasoning with Felix concerning

such a blessing.

I do not believe most professing Christians are aware of this requirement.

Intemperance is not all right in sinners, but unacceptable in saints. Under no condition is it acceptable. That is why Paul could reason on the matter. It is true that such a quality can openly be realized in Christ and through the Spirit. However, it is the necessity of this quality within men that makes such a circumstance such a blessing.

temperance, Paul was highlighting the necessity of controlling fleshly appetites. He did not tell Felix he could not possibly do this, anymore than the Law announced that no man could really keep it. The point is that this is something God absolutely requires. Temperance is not a quality for the more advanced. Every person, whether in or out of Christ, is required to stop the outbreak of wicked inner desires. This why Paul, even after he was converted, kept under his body, bringing it under control (1 Cor 9:27). It is why grace teaches us to effectively reject the call of fleshly lusts (Tit 2:11-12). It is why believers are admonished to “abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul” (1 Pet 2:11). It is why believers are told to “mortify” their members that are upon the earth (Col 3:5), and put to death “the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13). It is because this is necessary – not just for the saints, but for all men! Intemperance is not all right in sinners, but unacceptable in saints. Under no condition is it acceptable. That is why Paul could reason on the matter. It is true that such a quality can openly be realized in Christ and through the Spirit. However, it is the necessity of this quality within men that makes such a circumstance

And, with the rise of psychiatry and counseling, there appears to be a prevailing notion that God understands and is tolerant of the person who is lacking in this area.

HE REASONED OF JUDGMENT TO COME

“And as he reasoned of . . . judgment to come . . .” Other versions read, “the coming judgment,”^{NRSV} “future judgment,”^{RSV} “the judging which was to come,”^{BBE} “the judgment about to come,”^{DARBY} and “the judgment that is about to be.”^{YLT}

This is another much neglected subject: “the day of judgment.” The Gospels present Jesus referring to this day no less than five times (Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Mk 6:11). He referred to “the judgment” seven times (Matt 5:21,22; 12:42; 27:19; Lk 10:14; 11:31,32; John 12:31). Peter mentions “the day of judgment” two times (2 Pet 2:9; 3:7). The epistles refer “the judgment” six times (Rom 2:2,3; 14:10; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:27; Jude 1:6).

Solemnly the Spirit announces there are two appointments that every man will meet: death, and the judgment (Heb.

9:27). Jesus said that men would give an account to God for “every idle word” (Matt 12:36). Solomon said God would bring “every work into judgment” (Eccl 12:14). Paul said “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10). There is an appointed day when “the books will be opened,” and “the dead . . . will be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev 20:12). This is an “appointed day” (Heb 9:27), during which every word that God has ever spoken will be fully vindicated (Rom 3:4). Every person who has refused to believe the Gospel will be judged for not doing so. Every person who has failed to be “temperate in all things” (1 Cor 9:25) will be judged for not doing so. All who refused to restrain the flesh will be judged for that refusal.

In the day of judgment, only those who believed the Gospel and lived by faith, walking in the Spirit, will have “boldness,” or confidence (1 John 4:17). Men will be called into account before an assembled universe for living for themselves instead of for the One who died and rose again for them. Those who have received the love of the truth and lived in strict accord with it will be exonerated before all – even though the world had considered them foolish and impractical.

How does one account for the glaring absence of preaching and testifying about the day of judgment? Why are sinners like Felix not being told of this? In all of the religious tutelage about witnessing to the lost, why is this approach rarely, if ever, mentioned? Was not Felix a sinner? Had he not called for Paul to have him speak “concerning the faith in Christ,” or “faith in Christ” (Acts 24:24). Yet, this reasoning is what Paul presented to him, which means his words were directly related to faith in Christ. Today, it would be quite challenging to find a person who would reason in such a manner.

FELIX HEARS AND TREMBLES

“^{25b} Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

The reaction of Felix to the words of Paul reveals at least two things. First, they confirm the fervency and exactness with

which Paul spoke. Second, they are proof that the Holy Spirit worked with the words Paul used.

FELIX TREMBLED

“Felix trembled . . .” Other versions read, “was afraid,”^{NKJV} “became frightened,”^{NASB} “was alarmed,”^{RSV} “was terrified,”^{ASV}

“had great fear,”^{BBE} “filled with fear,”^{DARBY} “took fright,”^{NJB} “became alarmed and terrified,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “felt things getting a little too close for comfort.”^{MESSAGE}

After hearing Paul’s reasoning, Felix was shaken to the core of his being. He had not heard accommodating words that

left him thinking how very much God loved him. Rather, the thoughts of his heart were made known (Heb 4:12). If he would react properly to the fear that now gripped him, it would prepare him for a blessing. If he did not, his condemned state would only be accentuated.

In our time, a line of reasoning that produces trembling, fear, alarm, and being terrified, would be considered wholly unacceptable. Such a message would be perceived as too negative. Why didn't Paul speak about how much God loved Felix? Why didn't he tell the ruler that Jesus loved him so much He died for him? The answer to these such questions is straightforward. It is because such words did not match the circumstance. It would not have been appropriate to speak to Felix like Peter did to those on the day of Pentecost. His words had to be appropriate for the occasion.

Sinners ought to be afraid of their situation. They are not righteous, not temperate, and not ready for the day of judgment. After all, *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb 10:31). The thought of facing God in an unrighteous state ought to terrify the individual. The very thought of standing before the Lord having indulged fleshly appetites rather than subduing them, ought to cause a person to shake with fear – to tremble. To stand at the day of judgment without preparing for the occasion is frightening to any soul who takes the word of God seriously.

Our day is tainted by erroneous presentations of God, a minimization of the enormity of sin, and the ignoring of the necessity to refuse to allow lusts to express themselves. Uninformed souls will say,

"Well, it is just as bad to think it as to do it." However, this only contains an element of truth. It is only true if the thought is welcomed and dwelt upon. Thoughts can be subdued, rejected, taken captive, and even

"when I find time,"^{NASB} *"when I find it convenient,"*^{NIV} *"when I have an opportunity,"*^{NRSV} *"when the right time comes,"*^{BEBE} and *"when I have time,"*^{IE} *"when I can find a convenient opportunity."*^{WEYMOUTH}

Our day is tainted by erroneous presentations of God, a minimization of the enormity of sin, and the ignoring of the necessity to refuse to allow lusts to express themselves.

cast down with spiritual weaponry (2 Cor 10:3-5; Tit 2:11-12).

GO THY WAY FOR THIS TIME

"... and answered, Go thy way for this time..." Other versions read, *"go away for now,"*^{NKJV} *"go away for the present,"*^{NASB} *"that's enough for now,"*^{NIV} *"For the time being, go away!,"*^{CJB} *"Leave for now,"*^{CSB} and *"thou hast done enough at this time."*^{TNT}

Instead of capitalizing upon this opportunity, Felix sought to delay his decision. He had heard enough for now, and did not want to hear any more. The sophist would say that he had reached his capacity, but that is not the truth. Felix assumed he was going to live. He assumed that Paul would be available to him in the future. He thought he would actually have another opportunity to talk to Paul.

WHEN I HAVE A CONVENIENT SEASON

"... when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Other versions read, *"when I have a convenient time,"*^{NKJV}

A *"convenient season"* is one that does not interfere with the preferred way of living. Actually, from a higher point of view, the time could not have been more convenient for Felix than that very hour. A preacher had been sent to him from God, and if he would heed what he said, he was not far from the Kingdom of God. But Felix did not see this. His heart had been *"hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"* (Heb 3:13). He would continue living as he had been doing, and wait for a convenient time to hear more – a time that would not interfere with the normality of his life.

There is no record of Felix ever calling for Paul speak of the faith again. The only other time Felix is mentioned is found in Acts 25:14. Even then, the mention of his name was by Festus, who told Agrippa of Paul saying, *"There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix."* Again, and for the final time, he was mentioned as being willing to please the Jews by leaving Paul in prison (Acts 24:27). What a foolish decision this man made at this most critical hour!

FELIX WAS LOOKING FOR A PAYOFF

"²⁶ He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

The Spirit now takes us behind the scenes, showing us the heart of Felix. This is something that Felix apparently did not express. He actually surmised that Paul was the same kind of man as himself, assuming he would do anything to be free.

HE HOPED HE WOULD RECEIVE MONEY

"He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him..." Other versions read, *"he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe,"*^{NIV} and *"he had hopes of receiving money from Paul."*^{NJB}

Now we learn there was an ulterior motive that was driving Felix. Paul must have discerned this to some extent, which perception shaped what he had to say to

Felix. Felix saw Paul as an opportunity to gain some wealth. Although he had heard Paul's defense, he did not grasp it's meaning at all. He knew nothing of living with a conscience toward God, and thus actually thought Paul would pay him a bribe to gain release from prison. **The carnal mind cannot receive the things of God – not even when it regards the motives of those who are living for the Lord. It is spiritually inept.**

HE SENT THE OFTENER

“... wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.” Other versions read, “more often,” ^{NKJV} “quite often,” ^{NASB} “frequently,” ^{NIV} “very often,” ^{NRSV} “from time to time,” ^{LIVING} and “he continued to send for him and was in his company and conversed with him often.”

AMPLIFIED

Although these were occasions that might be considered “more convenient,” it seems to me that this is not the case. At first, Felix wanted to hear about “the faith of Christ.” Now, the overriding concern was

obtaining money. **It successfully subdued any interest in knowing about faith in Christ or engaging in a fervent quest for righteousness, temperance, and readiness for the day of judgment. Thus, the interest he may have had in Christ was smothered.**

FESTUS COMES, BUT FELIX IS WILLING TO PLEASE THE JEWS

“²⁷ But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”

Luke now passes over a period of two years, not informing us of what may have occurred during that time. Although I have noted this before, I do so again. In Scripture, a point is made of especially significant happenings. The history that is recorded in Scripture is not intended to be thorough as men consider it. Only people and events that are in some way related to the purpose of God are recorded.

AFTER TWO YEARS

“But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room. . .” Other versions read, “succeeded Felix,” ^{NKJV} “Felix was succeeded by,” ^{NASB} “took the place of Felix,” ^{BBE} “Felix received a successor,” ^{CSB} “Felix was relieved,” ^{DARBY} and “Festus became governor.” ^{IE}

The word “room,” as used in the

Authorized Version, refers to a place of occupancy. In this case a place that was filled by another – a “room,” so to speak, of responsibility. We use the word “room” in this general sense. “Is there room for me?” One song of the faith affirms, “There’s room at the cross for you.” Here, of course, it is a political room, or area of responsibility.

“Porcius festus was put into the government of Judea in the sixth or seventh year of Nero.” ^{TREASURY OF SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE} We know little more of him, and he is only mentioned here because of Paul, Christ’s messenger to the Gentiles.

WILLING TO SHOW THE JEWS A PLEASURE

“... and Felix willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.” Other versions read, “wanting to do the Jews a favor,” ^{NKJV} “wanting to grant a favor to the Jews,” ^{NIV} “desiring to gain favor with the Jews,” ^{ASV} “desiring to have the approval of the Jews,” ^{BBE} and “wishing to gain favor with the Jews.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

This text reminds us of Herod, who, when he “saw” that killing James “pleased the Jews, [and] proceeded further to take Peter also,” fully intending to do the same with him (Acts 12:3). The Jews of reference are not the believing Jews, but the ones who did not believe – particularly those who had leveled charges against Paul.

All of this was an effort to be well pleasing in the eyes of the Jews. The Jews would be glad because Paul, they thought, was at least taken out of commission. They no doubt reasoned that they would now have done with his influence. However, the Lord was in charge of this circumstance, and **His** will would be done, not theirs!

The hardness of Felix is seen in the fact that he left Paul in prison for two full years, only calling him out in expectation of receiving a bribe from him. He apparently could have set him free at any time, but chose not to do so. Under the dominion of sin, this man thought only of himself, which is the identifying mark of sin.

CONCLUSION

We have been exposed to the “narrow way” that makes no room for the flesh. In all of the oppression aimed at Paul,

together with the refusal to release him from prison, it was only the outward man that was put at an inconvenience. Within, the peace of

God was ruling (Col 3:15). That is one of the key factors that enabled Paul to respond in a godly manner to these experiences.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

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Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

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BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

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COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

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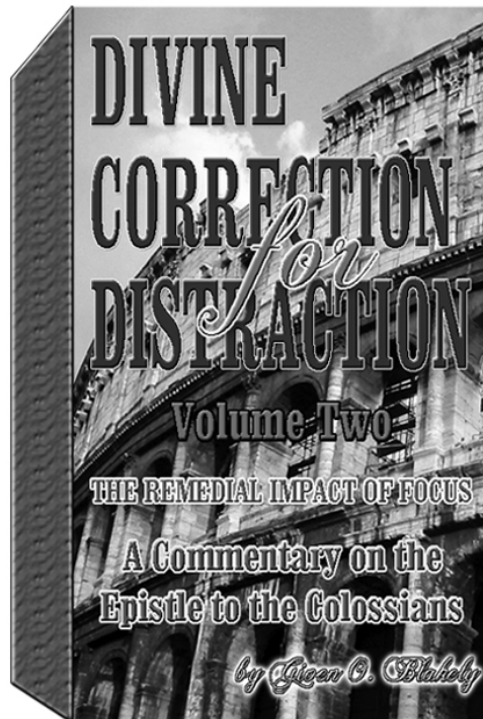
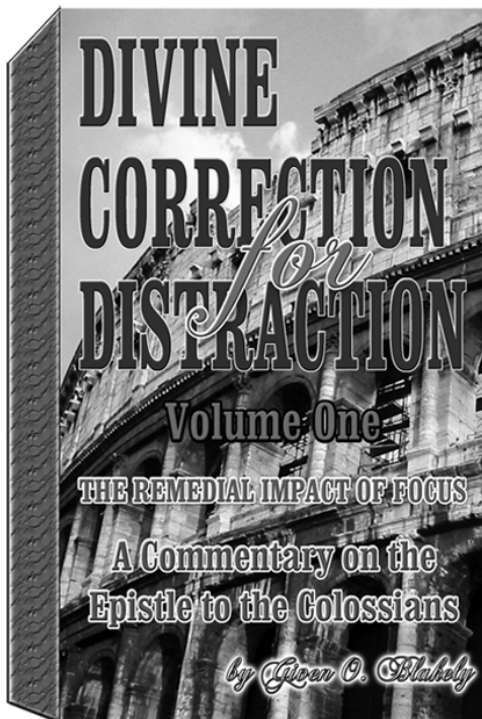
COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/18/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The ninety-seventh lesson will cover verses 1 through 12 of the twenty-fifth chapter: "PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR." Paul now confronts Festus, before whom the Jews had presented their case against Paul. Festus had come to Jerusalem, and the Jews asked him to bring Paul there, during which time they plotted to kill him. Festus did not concede to their wishes, but determined that legal proceedings should continue in Caesarea. It was during Paul's appearance before Festus that he appealed to Caesar, and his appeal was granted. He then determined to go there himself and hear the case against Paul. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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These are available in printed form, and in electronic book form. The Internet Link that introduces these books is listed at the bottom.