

G R A C E

SOUND OF

... it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace ... Hebrews 13:9

Issue 163 Dec 2009, Jan 2010

The Marks of a New Covenant Ministry —Part One

A Study in Second Corinthians 3

John G. Reisinger

In 2 Corinthians 2:16, Paul introduces the theme that he will develop more fully in chapter 3—the contrast between life and death. He likens the knowledge of Christ, spread through preaching Christ, to a fragrance. A person perceives that smell as either pleasant or repellent, depending on whether the hearer is being saved or is perishing. Paul’s use of contrast here—of one action with two possible outcomes—follows the convention used by Luke as he presents Christ as one person who will have two different effects on the people of Israel (some will rise and some will fall - Luke 2:34). John also uses this format when he writes of the judgment that Christ brings into the world: one judgment with two outcomes—sight for some who were blind, and blindness for some who could see (John 9:39). Peter, too, uses this formula to show that Christ as the cornerstone of Zion has two possible contrasting responses: belief and honor or unbelief and shame (1 Pet. 2:6-8). One way, then, to spread the smell of death, which is analogous to falling, blindness, and shame, is to preach Christ to those who are perishing.

Reisinger—Continued on page 2

In This Issue	
Marks of New a Covenant Ministry-Part 1 John G. Reisinger	1
Reformed Evangelism Andrew Smith	1
Naaman the Leper –Part IV Dr. Philip W. McMillin	3
Why I Believe in Jesus A. Blake White	5
The Law David Martyn Lloyd-Jones	9

REFORMED EVANGELISM: CALLING PEOPLE TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST BY DECLARING HIM AS PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Part 2

Andrew Smith

Last time (*Sound of Grace*, Issue 162) we began considering the identity of Reformed Evangelism (RE). We saw first that RE is fundamentally opposed to semi-pelagian techniques and methods. That is, RE replaces the common, but erroneous “*pressing for a decision*” method with a “*precision in communicating the Gospel*” method. As we saw, RE is founded upon a proper theology (what the Gospel is). It is only from this foundation of a proper theology that a proper methodology (how to communicate this Gospel message) can be built. This is how I defined RE:

Reformed Evangelism is the passionate responsibility of God’s people, the church, to biblically and clearly declare Jesus

Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King to sinners by identifying with Christ as “prophets”, “priests”, and “kings”.

The first part of the definition describes the theology of RE (declaring who Christ is); the latter part describes the methodology (how we share Christ with others). This definition led to a simple proposition: *RE derives its methodology (the way one shares Christ) from its theology (what one believes about Christ and the Gospel message)*. Both the definition and the proposition provide us with three primary sections to this series of articles: 1) Declaring Christ as Prophet, 2) Declaring Christ as Priest, and 3) Declar-

Smith—Continued on page 6

Reisinger—Continued from page 1

In chapter 3, however, Paul adopts a slightly different approach to the contrast he wants to make between life and death. In verses 3-6, he presents two different kinds of one thing: letters written with ink in contrast to letters written with the Spirit (v. 3); tablets of stone in contrast to tablets of human hearts (v.3); a covenant of the letter in contrast to a covenant of the Spirit (v. 6); a ministry of death in contrast to a ministry of life (v. 6). Another way, then, to spread death—to minister it—is to preach the Old Covenant.

In verses 7-18, Paul utilizes a third way to think about the contrast between life and death. Here, he compares two different kinds of one thing that have the same effect, but to differing degrees. He is mirroring the point and the formula he used in 2:15-16 (one thing with two different effects). His point in those verses was that a single ministry has a smell, but the smell may have opposite effects. His point in these verses is that all God-ordained ministry has a glory, but the glory has degrees. The impermanent ministry of death had glory, but the permanent ministry of life has more glory (vv. 7-11). Paul concludes from this contrast that ministers of the New Covenant are not like Moses, the minister of the Old Covenant (vv. 12-13). Hearers of the Old Covenant are not like hearers of the New Covenant (vv.13-16). The result of the New Covenant is freedom and transformation (v. 17-18). Freedom and transformation is analogous to life. The way, then, to spread life is to preach the New Covenant.

According to Paul, preaching Christ may or may not result in the smell of death, but preaching anything but Christ will *inevitably* result in the smell of death. To preach the old Mosaic Covenant as the rule of life for New Covenant believers is to minister death. God deliberately designed the

Old Covenant to kill. To preach the New Covenant is to preach a ministry that God deliberately designed to bring life and liberty. It is a serious business to preach, knowing that your message will close forever some eyes even as it will open forever other eyes. Little wonder that Paul comments, “*who is sufficient for such a task?*” (2 Cor. 2:16). Given the life and death nature of the ministry of preaching, why would anyone preach? Paul explains why he preaches, describing not only the absolute confidence a New Covenant preacher has in preaching Christ, but also the ground of that confidence (2 Cor. 3:4-6). We preach as people “sent from God” (2 Cor. 2:17) to declare the risen Christ as the triple fulfillment of Moses as prophet, Aaron as priest, and David as king.

Let us look carefully at 2 Corinthians 3, considering both the contrasts Paul makes and their implications. We will begin with the first three verses:

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor. 3:1-3 NIV)

In verses 1-3, Paul uses the life-death contrast to describe **The Credentials of a New Covenant**

Reisinger—Continued on page 4


Grace Gems!

A treasury of ageless sovereign grace devotional writings. Freely download thousands of choice Puritan books, sermons and quotes — along with select audio messages. Sign up to receive daily Puritan **audio** and **text** devotionals, delivered directly to your email. *No donations accepted.*

www.GraceGems.org

Sound of Grace is a publication of Sovereign Grace New Covenant Ministries, a tax exempt 501(c)3 corporation. Contributions to *Sound of Grace* are deductible under section 170 of the Code.

Sound of Grace is published 10 times a year. The subscription price is \$10.00 per year. This is a paper unashamedly committed to the truth of God's sovereign grace and New Covenant Theology. We invite all who love these same truths to pray for us and help us financially.

We do not take any paid advertising.

The use of an article by a particular person is not an endorsement of all that person believes, but it merely means that we thought that a particular article was worthy of printing.

Sound of Grace Board: John G. Reisinger, John Thorhauer, Bob VanWingerden and Jacob Moseley.

Editor: John G. Reisinger; Phone: (585)396-3385; e-mail: reisingerjohn@gmail.com.

Webmaster: Maurice Bergeron: webmaster@soundofgrace.com

General Manager: Jacob Moseley: info@newcovenantmedia.com

Send all orders and all subscriptions to: Sound of Grace, 5317 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21703-6938 – Phone 800-376-4146 or 301-473-8781 Fax 240-206-0373. Visit the bookstore: <http://www.newcovenantmedia.com>

Address all editorial material and questions to: John G. Reisinger, Sound of Grace, 3302 West Lake Rd, Canandaigua, NY 14424-2441.

Visit the Sound of Grace Web Page at: <http://www.soundofgrace.com>

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked “NKJV” are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Contributions

Orders

VISA or MasterCard

If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution to *Sound of Grace*, please mail a check to: Sound of Grace, 5317 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21703-6938.

Please check the mailing label to find the expiration of your subscription. Please send payment if you want your subscription to continue—\$10.00 for ten issues. If you are unable to subscribe at this time, please call or drop a note in the mail and we will be glad to continue sending *Sound of Grace* free of charge.

OUR LORD'S WORDS CONCERNING NAAMAN PART IV

Dr. Philip W. McMillin

"...God said, let Us make man in Our image..." (Gen 1:26). If we are not careful, even as we confess that creation was an act of almighty sovereignty, we may begin to think of people as having their personal origin as if only by a natural event.

However, I want you to think of Naaman instead of David as we read Psalm 139:13-16: "For You formed my inward parts; You covered [wove] me in my Mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

That is true of every person ever born. The RNA and the DNA, the genes that govern who we will be, are controlled by God, for the sperm which combines with the ovum was determined before the world began. If we are Mongols, we are so by the hand of God. A genius had the templates of his intelligence laid out precisely by God before time. Naaman would be exactly who he was—great, honorable, valorous and a leper—because God made him so. All that would happen to Naaman would somehow relate to his meeting with God on the banks of Jordan.

God was the potter, Naaman was the clay and God would make known the riches of his glory to him, a vessel of mercy, "...which he had prepared beforehand for glory" (Romans 9:23b).

Not only would Naaman have his leprosy healed by God, but also we will see that in his eternal counsel, both the leprosy of Naaman's body and the sin of his soul would be cleansed by an act of God in time.

This should be good news; to hear of such a God should make man rejoice. But actually, it was the declaration of his sovereignty to sinners that brought about the crucifixion of Christ.

Isaiah 61:1 - 2 is a prophecy of the one who would come as the first preacher of that gospel in its fullness. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn." Also, see Hebrews 2:3.

Christ himself applied this prophecy of Isaiah to himself in Luke 4:18-19. He said: "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

In verse 21 of Luke 4 these words of the Lord make a personal claim that he is the one who fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah: "And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'"

Verse 22a: "So all bore witness to

Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth," may be difficult at first, but bears great value if we spend time to search it out. The word translated *gracious* in this passage has several shades of meaning in the Greek, but one gives us the clue we need. Strong says the word can mean "spiritual, divine influence on the heart and the reflection of that in the life." These people marveled at the cultured excellence of his speech, but to believe that he was the Messiah that the prophets spoke of was incredible to them. This Godly man, so wise in his counsels, was an offense to them. Had not he gone to the Gentiles in Zebulun, Naphtali and beyond Jordan to Galilee of the Gentiles, before coming to Nazareth? Had not news of the excitement over his powerful preaching and the healing of many, even the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, reached their ears from there?

The Jews despised the Gentiles, here was a man who went and showed great favors to Gentile dogs, and now he comes to Israel and expects them to believe that he is their Messiah? In their hearts they said; "No indeed, we know where he came from and who he is."

Verses 23 and 24 show us that he knew what was in their minds and hearts. "He said to them, You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your country.' Then He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.'" He knows they despise him and condemn him in their hearts.

Reisinger—Continued from page 2

Minister. The saints themselves are Paul's credentials, proving he is sent from God. They are "living" epistles "known and read of all men." Changed lives are more reliable proof of qualification than written letters would be. A street preacher was preaching in a park and a man in the audience challenged him to a debate. The preacher said, "Fine, let's debate tomorrow at 2:00 PM. I have one request. I will bring six men and women who, through faith in Christ, have had their lives changed from sin, shame, and failure to holy living, peace of conscience before God, and victory. These people are living epistles of what I believe and preach. You bring six men and women whose lives have been changed through what you believe and preach." Of course, there was no debate.

The text implies that someone in Corinth was criticizing Paul for not using letters of recommendation. These critics do not seem to be of the same stripe as those in Galatia, even though they had the same goal. Paul never mentions circumcision in this letter. Regardless, it is obvious these people were challenging Paul's credentials, just as the Judaizers had done in Galatia. If Paul's opponents could discredit him, they could gain a more sympathetic hearing for their message or more prestige for their own ministry. It is possible that those who opposed Paul demanded that he produce a letter of recommendation from the apostles in Jerusalem. Paul's critics may have had forced letters or have even lied to get letters of recommendation. Paul did not need such letters. The Corinthian believers themselves, as products of his ministry, were more than sufficient to prove that he was a true apostle of Christ, and that his message was from God. Those believers were written on Paul's heart. They were a "letter from Christ" for all to see and read. Their changed lives demonstrated the power

of Paul's message of grace. Paul could boast of them even as he did the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:2-10).

The rest of 2 Corinthians 3 contains Paul's comparison of the ministry of death produced by Moses and the Old Covenant at Sinai with the ministry of life produced by Christ and the New Covenant and the cross. Here we have **The Consequences of a New Covenant Ministry**. When Paul mentions, in verse 2, *letters written on the heart*, he may have been thinking of Jeremiah 31:33. Regardless, several other aspects of the comparison are obvious. Paul begins by characterizing the ministry of the Old Covenant in terms of death and condemnation.

v. 7 - *Now if the ministry that brought death...*

v. 9 - *If the ministry that condemns men...*

It would have seemed reasonable to Paul's Jewish adversaries to use Moses as a model for ministry and to believe that obeying the words of Moses would lead to victorious living for the people of God. After all, God attested to Moses' divine mission by working miracles, wonders, and signs through him. Did not the law that God gave through Moses come with great glory (v. 7 and Exod. 34)? It is easy to see why it was so difficult for the Jewish believers to abandon Judaism completely. Yet Paul contrasts the glory that accompanied Moses with the glory that comes with the Spirit, and insists that Moses' glory is inferior. It was transient; the glory of the Spirit is permanent. It was a ministry of condemnation; the Spirit's ministry is of righteousness. Compared to the glory of the New Covenant, Paul writes, the glory of the Old is nothing at all. One consequence of the New Covenant ministry, then, is an exceedingly greater glory because of the permanent and justifying nature of the covenant.

Paul is not in any way denigrating

either Moses or the Old Covenant. His purpose is to demonstrate the superiority of the new and gracious covenant established by Christ over the old legal covenant given through Moses. To do this, Paul argues from the lesser to the greater. If the Old Covenant was only temporary but nonetheless came with a glory so overpowering that the Israelites could not look steadfastly at the face of Moses, *how much greater* must the New Covenant be, whose splendor is permanent and whose glory does not fade. The implication of Paul's argument is that the fading glory of the Old Covenant indicated that it would be superseded by something far more glorious. Because of its transitory character, the Old Covenant has no lasting effect.

Paul's view of the Mosaic ministry is far different from that of many theologians today. Preaching Moses is not, as many insist, the key to a victorious life for the New Covenant people of God. It does not lead to sanctification but, as mentioned above, it leads to *death* (v. 7) and *condemnation* (v. 9). If you associate your ministry with Moses, as Paul's opponents were doing, you are in effect ministering death and condemnation, and not life and sanctification as you intend.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones points that out in Romans. Paul's position on the law is that it can neither justify nor sanctify:

But the Apostle has another particular object in view also, namely, to show that sanctification by the Law is as impossible as was justification by the Law. The theme of the first four chapters of the Epistle [Romans] is that a sinner can never be justified by the Law. He had already summed that up in a great statement in chapter 3, verse 20: 'Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified in his sight'. There it is stated categorically. Now, here he is saying in effect in chapter 7, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no man be sancti-

Why I Believe in Jesus

A. Blake White

I suppose to begin with, it was not entirely my choice. Of course, I had to make a choice, but after making the choice I have come to realize that I was enabled to choose. He pursued me. His grace and beauty, when revealed, is irresistible. On the other hand, there are several reasons why I believed at first, and continue to believe that Israel's Messiah is the true Lord of the world.

Christ is the only solution to the predicament I was in. I know my heart. It is exceedingly wicked. My guilt was real. I knew I deserved eternal punishment. When I came to see the value of God's name, I knew I had to seek reconciliation with him. I needed forgiveness. How could he bear with someone like me, who had belittled his name repeatedly? I found the answer in Christ. Christ is the solution to my sin and guilt. Trusting in the wrath-absorbing cross of Christ is the way that God can remain just, and yet justify ungodly people like me. Christ gave me new life, and freed me from the power of sin. Christ brings true joy, the kind that does not go away the next morning. I found that Jesus was and is the answer to my predicament.

We are all in a sad predicament. Our wills prefer the darkness. We are naturally self-oriented. One need not live long to grasp the fallenness of the world. Babies do not have to be taught to disobey. Sadly, it comes naturally. We have locks on our doors, then locks on top of those locks. We suspiciously look through the peephole anytime we hear an unexpected knock. We expect the worse from people, rightfully so. Our society *needs* the police. Women *need* to carry mace. We *should not* leave our possessions lying around unwatched.

Why is this? What answer does the unbelieving world give to this answer? We understand that because of the fall, people are twisted. This is not the way it is supposed to be. Indeed, it will not remain this way. People have real guilt. There are of course variations as to how people try to cope with this guilt. Some work; some play; some drink; some use and abuse. Guilt is universal. Christianity alone has a rational and experientially satisfying solution.

I believe in Jesus because he brings me security. Oh, how the world longs for security. It is hard to find these days, even in places it should be found such as the family. All are insecure. When one trusts Christ, Christ becomes his legal representative before the Father. Those who trust in Jesus are transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light. Now all the Father sees of me, is his Son. All that Jesus is and was, is now mine because I have been united to him through faith. What I could not do, he did. He kept the law in its entirety, in my place. O blessed exchange. He bore my sins on that cursed tree. I am counted righteous in him. I am eternally secure in him.

In our day, naturalism is assumed by most. Evolution is accepted as fact rather than theory. It is *the* worldview that Christianity must compete with in the West. I am not convinced that there is no supernatural. Naturalism cannot be lived with. I still believe in Jesus.

I believe in Jesus, because without him, I have no grounding to use my reason. It is ironic that unbelievers accuse Christianity of being irrational. This comes from a person who believes that human beings are

nothing more than time plus chance plus matter in motion. We are only physical, nothing more. We have no minds, but only brains on their view. Only electro-chemical reactions in my head. Yet, one must ask, are the laws of logic physical? Obviously not, but how can a person who believes in evolution appeal to anything that is not material? The naturalist finds himself in a quandary. You see, there is more to this world than simply the material. Unbelief has no rational grounding for their trust in reason. As Cornelius Van Til has said, those who accuse God of being illogical are like the little girl who slaps her daddy on the face but can only do so because she is sitting on his lap. Jesus tells me I can use my reason because I am created in the image of God, who is completely orderly and rational. I am created to think his thoughts after him.

I believe in Jesus because without him, one cannot make sense of love and beauty. I love my wife. Most husbands do, at least on a superficial level. But, how does unbelief explain these emotions? Is this simply an illusory feeling that makes sure that I mate with my wife, and thus continue the human race? No, God created us to love him and love others. This is what it means to be truly human. Love is real, and without God, you cannot make any sense out of love. The same goes for beauty, and creativity. We are created by the ultimate artist, the incomparable creator. We enjoy beautiful works of art because it is a small reflection of the beauty of God.

I believe in Jesus because he gives me purpose. So many people walk around this world for years and years with absolutely no purpose. I am called to glorify God by enjoying him forever in every task I undertake. From memorizing his Word to washing the dishes, it is all for his glory and is extremely significant. Christ also gives purpose to the world,

Smith—Continued from page 1

ing Christ as King. As I stated last time, we will move through these three headings and in the process, I will show how RE derives its methodology from its theology. This will, therefore, lead us to consider not only *what* we declare (the essence of our message), but also *how* we declare that message (our attitudes, motives, etc.)

In this second article, we find ourselves in the middle of the first primary section (Declaring Christ as Prophet). We are seeking to answer two questions in this first section. Last time we answered the first question and began to answer the second question. The first question was, “How do we declare Christ as Prophet in our evangelism?” This, we said, boils down to pointing to Christ as the very self-revelation of God. Simply put, we must make it clear to people that Jesus Christ is the ultimate representative of God. We concluded that this was important because Jesus the Prophet reveals the character and holiness of God not only in what He *said*, but also in the way, He *lived*. We must make this clear to people. The second question proposed was, “How do we identify with Christ as prophets in our evangelism?” The following statement was made: *First, identifying with Christ as a prophet means we embrace our role as prophet/evangelists*. In short, we saw that this means we understood that evangelism is an issue of obedience for the New Covenant believer. Let us look at another way we identify with Christ as “prophets”.

Here is the second way: *Identifying with Christ as a prophet also means that we are consumed with taking the time to teach others about Christ through relationships*. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist and then emphasized the means of using Scripture to do so, which is profitable, he says, first, for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16). Teaching doctrine

concerning Christ is central to RE. Christianity is not mystical, but relies heavily on reason and explanation of truth (Is. 1:18; Mt. 4:4; 7:24-27).¹ According to God’s design of His universe, man must hear and understand what God says or he will not be saved. The Gospel message aims to instruct our minds about who we are, and who God is. Thus, RE must strive to teach doctrine accurately. This will take time, which necessitates the value of engendering genuine friendships with sinners. We ought to pray that God would open the doors for us to befriend the lost. RE rightly sees that, in a sense, one must earn the right to share the Gospel with someone.² This is done through relationships and patient teaching. We are to model the Apostle Paul who grew to love people with patient persistence, though this was no doubt difficult at times (1 Thess. 2:7-11), and then shared Christ with them in the process. He was patient and gentle as he taught them the Gospel through both word and deed. A much over used cliché fits well with what I am discussing, “People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” It is clear from the passage in Thessalonians that the effectiveness of Paul’s teaching grew out of his relationships with others. People listened to Paul’s teaching because he showed his love to them as he fed them Gospel food bit by bit. They witnessed him slowly reach into their lives and drop slivers of Gospel truth into their mouths. It is this patient process in which the Spirit is pleased to produce genuine conversions.

J.I. Packer explains that teaching

1 Kim Riddlebarger, *Telling the Truth in Love*. Riddlebarger points out that Martin Lloyd-Jones lists this as one of the fundamental principles of biblical evangelism.

2 Packer, “The idea that a single evangelistic sermon or a single serious conversation ought to suffice for the conversion of anyone who is ever going to be converted is really silly” (120).

was the primary means of the Apostle Paul. He observes, “Clearly, in Paul’s view, his first and fundamental job as a preacher of the gospel was to communicate knowledge—to get gospel truth fixed in men’s minds. To him, teaching the truth was the basic evangelistic activity; to him, therefore, the only right method of evangelism was the teaching method.”³ In addition, Packer points to Luke’s description of Paul’s evangelistic activity with different verbs which are synonymous with the teaching method. Paul “disputed, reasoned, taught and persuaded” (Acts 9:29; 17:2, 17; 18:4, 11; 19:8; 24:25; 28:31) others regarding the Gospel.⁴ In addition, Paul spoke of the priority of teaching as central to his Apostolic calling (2 Tim. 1:8-11). Furthermore, he affirms this priority of teaching as a universal principle applicable for more than Apostles (Rom. 10:14-17). And again, in Colossians he describes presenting Christ to others as “teaching” (Col. 1:28). Throughout his epistles, Paul makes it clear that the dissemination of the message of the Gospel through preaching (information, instruction) possess power to save souls (1 Cor. 1:21).

In short, teaching is inescapable for Biblical evangelism. This is why RE rightly gives teaching a central place in the presentation of the Gospel. “Getting the Gospel right” is the motto, not “Getting the sinner to say a prayer”. The power is in the message of the Gospel being spoken and taught to others (Is. 55:11).

Practically, this means that RE does not focus on results to measure the effectiveness of evangelism. Rather, it focuses on disseminating the message, and leaves the results to the Spirit of God. Results should never be a litmus test for faithful evangelism.⁵

3 Packer, 49.

4 Packer, 48.

5 John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*,

through his creating and sustaining word. This universe is heading somewhere. The fall of humanity did not only affect humans. It affected the whole cosmos, and it now groans in anticipation of the return of King Jesus. Christ will judge the world, and then establish the new heavens and new Earth where we will reign with him forever. The entire cosmos will be redeemed and renewed when he returns. The naturalist has not a clue as to where this world is going.

I believe in Jesus because unbelief has no rational grounding for human dignity and human responsibility and freedom. Their own worldview cannot make sense of human dignity, responsibility, and freedom, but they live inconsistently on this point, as with so many others. If we are simply time plus chance plus matter in motion, then why are we any different from rocks? Or dogs? You will never see a naturalist attend a funeral for a cockroach but according to their worldview, there is no difference between human beings and any other animal. It's all matter in motion from an impersonal beginning. We are unique though, because God has created us in his image and likeness. People should attend funerals, but Christians are the only ones who have a rational grounding for doing so. Again and again, unbelief lives off "borrowed capital."

I believe in Jesus because without him, there is no reason for holding to moral absolutes. Again, no one lives this way. Everyone lives as if there are moral truths that are binding on all people for all time. No one approves of the inter-familial cannibalism that takes place in some cultures. Unbelievers make moral judgments all the time though. They will loudly say how wrong it was for the Muslims to do what they did at 9/11. But ask them why they think it is wrong, and they will end up having to say, "I just think it is wrong." If they say morals are culturally relative, what makes your culture better than theirs? The problem here is that your personal beliefs are not binding on anyone. Obviously, the Muslims who attacked NYC felt it was okay *for them*. There must be an absolute moral standard, and there is: the will and character of God revealed to us in Scripture. Impersonal plus time plus chance does not produce moral criteria. Whatever is, just is. There can be no 'oughts' in the unbelieving worldview. Moreover, unbelief has no rational basis for distinguishing between good and evil, because there is no standard. What one believes to be evil is fine for him. It is just a result of the electro-chemical reactions going off in his head, after all. So one man decides to kill a child; to be consistent, an unbeliever has no right to say that is wrong. It is just time, matter, and chance. The strong

eating the weak. No one lives this way. Unbelief bumps against reality at every point. This is because this is God's world.

I believe in Jesus, because he allows me to do science. Science would be useless if it were not for the uniformity of nature. However, this is a big assumption. On the naturalistic worldview, what basis is there to believe that the future will be like the past? To answer that the past has shown us this much is to beg the question. In a chance-random universe, there is no reason to assume that the future will be like the past. However, the Christian worldview makes sense of science. We know the future will resemble the past because of the sovereign will of God, apart from whom not even a sparrow falls to the ground. Even science, which supposedly discredits the Christian faith, must assume the Christian faith to do its work.

There are many more reasons why I am a Christian. At the end of the day, nothing makes sense apart from Jesus. There is no other worldview that makes human experience intelligible. No other worldview will stand a chance rationally or experientially. Unbelief offers nothing but dissatisfaction then damnation. Christianity answers everything. It provides a Savior who is sufficient to forgive and renew us from our crooked living, and our crooked thinking. Ω

God's Hatred of Sin

J. A. James

The death of Christ, apprehended by faith, presents the strongest motives to holiness—by setting forth in the most vivid and striking manner ...

- The evil nature of sin;
- The holiness and justice of God;
- His determination to punish transgression;
- The fearfulness of falling into the hands of the living God.

Not all the judgments God ever inflicted—nor all the threatenings He ever denounced give such an impressive warning against sin, and admonition to righteousness—as the death of Christ.

The torments of the bottomless pit are not so dreadful a demonstration of God's hatred of sin, as the agonies of the cross!

Smith—Continued from page 6

Evangelism works like the planting of the Chinese bamboo tree that, once planted, appears to do nothing for four years. However, by the fifth year it can shoot up to ninety feet in sixty days.⁶ The fruit of our labor sometimes does not appear until much work has been done. We must not grow weary as we teach those with whom God has sovereignly placed us in relationship. In his article on Calvin and evangelism, Joel Beeke poses the question, “Isn’t the very heartbeat of Reformed Evangelism to follow God rather than try to lead Him?” We follow God in obedience by faithfully teaching the Gospel to others, not by trying to “lead Him” by manipulating someone to say the sinner’s prayer.⁷

All of this means that God-centered evangelism is also “local church centered”. Teaching the Gospel is the central duty of the church. Therefore, the preaching ministry of the church will serve as the impetus for faithful evangelism among God’s people. In addition, domestic and foreign missions will rightly be “local church centered” in that they will serve in the setting apart of missionaries and pastors, in addition to offering prayer and financial support for the planting of other churches with the same focus

(Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1993). On the other hand, see Piper’s understanding of “response” as part of fulfilling the mission’s mandate (pp. 208 ff.).

6 I stole this illustration from Joel Beeke in his article on Calvin.

7 Someone once asked Martin Lloyd-Jones why he did not hold revivalist campaigns at Westminster Chapel in a day in which they were common. Lloyd-Jones amusingly answered, “I do—every Sunday”. He said this because he understood that the “word about Christ” (Col. 3:16) taught Sunday after Sunday was the essence of evangelism. Lloyd-Jones preached expositionally through books of the Bible. To him this was evangelism! Indeed, he was right.

(Acts 13:2-4; Eph. 3:10).⁸ RE does not oppose parachurch organizations so long as they are gospel centered and do not serve as an alternative to local church membership. When Christ commissioned the Apostles to go into the entire world preaching the Gospel (Mt. 28:18-20), He was giving an assignment to the church in all ages. The Apostles were the foundation of the church. To change the analogy, they were the embryo of the church.⁹ Therefore, when Christ commissioned the Apostles, he was commissioning the church in all times and contexts to make disciples until He returned. Making disciples involves teaching. I believe this means that we must adopt Christ’s command to the Apostles in Acts 1:8.¹⁰

Though we have already looked at what the Gospel is, and thus seen what the content of our message should be composed of (See Issue 161, *Sound of Grace, What is the Gospel?* by Bob Bonser), let me touch on the essentials of the message we declare as prophet/evangelists. *First, the content of our message will include setting Jesus Christ before sinners as the objective standard of the holy character of God, and thereby show them that they have broken God’s law.* In the Old Testament, the role of the prophet included interpreting and applying the law. In fact, one might say that his primary role was to show where the people had broken the law. Only after this could he then speak about the gracious promises of God that would come through the Messiah. We too, must tell the sinner that He stands condemned before His Creator

8 Read Beeke’s article on missionary work flowing from Calvin’s church in Geneva (70-79).

9 Kuiper, 104. Kuiper uses this metaphor convincingly.

10 Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

because he has broken His Creator’s law. In doing this, we are actually doing what Christ—the Prophet of all prophets—did during His earthly ministry. He showed people their sin before His Holy Father by pointing to the character of His Holy Father. Thus, we read Christ declaring to sinners, “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). In short, we are to show people that they are sinners, standing guilty before a holy God. The concept of “guilt” primarily deals with one’s standing before God. Tom Wells explains:

[G]uilt stands as a barrier between God and man. Man is a wrong-doer. Man is a sinner, a criminal in the sight of God. There can be no question of free and open fellowship between God and man as long as man remains guilty before the bar of God. The justice of God is at stake. Will He make laws and then allow man to trample them underfoot? That is the modern dream, but it is a lie” (Isaiah 59:2). There the lie is exposed. As a lawbreaker man is exposed to the just penalty of his sin. He is guilty in that sense”.¹¹

In addition, showing people that they are sinners will include a clear affirmation of the reality of hell as a punishment for sin (Mt. 3:12; 25:41, 46). A Biblical affirmation of hell to the sinner shows forth: 1) the seriousness of sin in God’s eyes, and 2) and the worth of God (and His holy character).¹²

11 Wells, 24.

12 John Piper. *Let the Nations be Glad*. Piper is insightful on this point, “Hell is a dreadful reality. To speak of it lightly proves we do not grasp its horror. I know of no one who has overstated the terrors of hell. We can scarcely surpass the horrid images Jesus used. We are meant to shudder. Why? Because the infinite horrors of hell are intended by God to be a vivid demonstration of the infinite value of his glory which sinners have belittled. The Biblical assumption of the justice of hell is the clearest testimony to the infiniteness

Smith—Continued on page 16

The Law¹

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (Romans 7: 1, KJV)

This seventh chapter is one of the famous chapters in the Epistle to the Romans, and indeed in the Bible as a whole. Anyone who knows anything about Christian doctrine and theology will often have talked about and argued over this chapter. No other chapter, perhaps, has been more frequently the cause of discussion and disputation and argument. That is why most people are more familiar with it than with chapter 6, but if I were compelled to compare these chapters with each other, I would say that the sixth is a more important chapter than this one. However, that does not matter.

Most people are familiar with this seventh chapter because of the argument that generally takes place with regard to the final section that runs from verse 13 to the end of the chapter. The great point of discussion is as to what exactly Paul is saying there. Is he describing himself as he then was, or as he once was in the past? Is it the description of a man before his conversion or of a man after his conversion? That is the subject of the great argument.

Let me state now at the very beginning that I shall have but little to say about that, because that is not, as I understand it, the most important question dealt with in this chapter. We shall discover the correct interpretation if we approach the entire chapter in the right way. The wrong approach, as I have just been indicating, is to

rush through the earlier verses in order to get to the final section. Most people who fail to understand the final section do so simply because they have never understood the first section. The Apostle Paul had a very logical mind; he always proceeds step-by-step. It follows therefore that it is particularly dangerous in his case to isolate or extract any one verse or paragraph. It is very important, therefore, as we come to consider the teaching of this chapter, that we should remind ourselves of its setting. How did he ever come to write it? What is he attempting to do as he writes it?

I start then by reminding you of the connection, the setting. Chapters 6 and 7 of this Epistle, it seems to me - and as we have seen in connection with chapter 6 - must be regarded as a parenthesis. The Apostle's exposition of the great doctrine of redemption, the main drift of his argument, goes straight on from chapter 5, verse 21, to chapter 8, verse 1, or, perhaps to chapter 8, verse 5. Chapters 6 and 7 are a parenthesis in which the Apostle turns aside in order to clear up certain difficulties which he knew would arise in the minds of the readers of this letter in Rome, and which had already arisen in the minds of many Christian people in other churches also. These difficulties arise from the tremendous statement Paul makes at the end of chapter 5, verses 20 and 21. "Moreover," he says, "the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." That is the fundamental statement which winds up the argument of chapter 5, and especially verses 12-19. There, Paul has been dealing with our incorporation into Christ, and explaining that we now are to Christ what we once were to Adam, and accordingly our whole future is certain and guar-

anteed because "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound", and "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so [will] grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Apostle is immediately aware of the fact that such a statement is liable to serious misunderstanding, that indeed it was being misunderstood. He has already said in chapter 3 that he is being "slanderosly reported" as saying certain things. He was frequently wronged in that way. We have also reminded ourselves that if our preaching does not expose us to these "slanderos" attacks the probability is that we are not really preaching the gospel. No man was so slandered as Martin Luther, who under the guidance of the Spirit rediscovered the great truth that led to the Protestant Reformation. He was constantly exposed to all sorts of slanderous statements in regard to both his teaching and his personal life. Any man who preaches the doctrine of justification by faith truly will be misunderstood. This is because of the staggering character of the great doctrine.

The Apostle sees at once that there was a likelihood of two main charges being brought against him. The first was the charge of antinomianism, the charge that he is more or less saying "Live as you like, sin as much as you like. All is well; grace will look after you and cover all your sin." He takes up that charge in chapter 6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" In earlier chapters on that text, we have seen how he refutes that argument completely. He does so in verses 1 - 13 of chapter 6 where he shows that the effect of abounding grace is not sin but righteousness. But then in verse 14, he had said that "sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace," and he knows again that that will be misunderstood,

Lloyd-Jones—Continued on page 13

¹ *Romans, The Law: Its Functions and Limits*, Exposition of Chapters 7:1-8:4, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI) Chapter 1

Reisinger—Continued from page 4

fied in his sight'. As it is impossible to be justified by the Law, it is equally impossible to be sanctified by the Law. As we shall see later, he even puts it as strongly as this, that not only can a man not be sanctified by the Law, but it is actually true to say that the Law is a hindrance to sanctification, and that it aggravates the problem of sanctification. That is the thesis of this 7th chapter; not only can a man not sanctify himself by observance of the Law; the Law is even a hindrance and an obstacle to sanctification. That is his general thesis, the fundamental proposition he sets out to prove; we must keep it very firmly in our minds.¹

Because of the law's adverse effect on justification and sanctification, the preacher who puts the conscience of a New Covenant believer under the Law of Moses and then tells them to strive to be holy according to this rule of life becomes an instrument (a minister) of death and condemnation. Conversely, the preacher who openly declares the New Covenant as the full and final authority for the content of the gospel

1 D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 7:1-8:4: The Law: Its Functions and Limits* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973) 5 (See excerpt on page 9 of this issue.)

message is an instrument (a minister) of *the Spirit* (v. 8) and of *righteousness* (v. 9). When Paul speaks of his preaching being the smell of death to some and the smell of life to others (2 Cor. 2:15, 16), he is not merely comparing the responses to that preaching by Gentile pagans and Gentile believers, he is also comparing the message of sovereign grace that he preached with the message of law that his Jewish detractors preached.

Let us consider the glory of the New Covenant as it pertains to the nature of Paul's living epistles and the message of grace that produced them. Paul first explains by using negative contrasts.

1. His ministry had nothing to do with the wisdom of man. He exposed that folly in 1 Corinthians 1:17-19. Paul did not give "insights," he preached the word of God.

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy

the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." (NIV)

2. His ministry had nothing to do with oratory or preaching skills. Paul covered that in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (NIV)

3. His ministry had nothing to do with winning his audience's approval or gaining accreditation from them. Paul made that clear in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, especially verse 3: "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court ..."

Paul then lists positive points about his message.

1. His *ministry* was distinctive because the *message* he preached was

Reisinger—Continued on page 12

Death

Charles H. Spurgeon

Life is nothing but death's hallway; and our pilgrimage on earth is but a journey to the grave. The pulse that preserves our life beats our death march, and the blood which circulates our life is floating it forward to the depths of death. Today we see our friends in health, tomorrow we hear of their death. Only yesterday, we shook hands with a strong man, and today we close his eyes. We rode in a coach of comfort only an hour ago, and in a few more hours the black hearse must carry us to the home of the living. Oh, how closely allied is death to life! The little lamb that plays in the field must soon feel the knife. The cow that lows in the pasture is fattening itself for the slaughter. Trees only grow to be cut down. Yes, and greater things than these feel death. Empires rise and flourish; they flourish only to fall into decay, they rise to fall. How often do we take up a history book, and read of the rise and fall of empires? We hear of the coronation and the death of kings. Death is the somber servant who rides behind the chariot of life. See life and death is close behind it. Death reaches far throughout this world, and has stamped all earthly creatures with an arrow pointing to the grave. Stars die; it is said that large and destructive fires have been seen in outer space, and astronomers have marked the funerals of planets—the decay of those mighty spheres, that we had imagined set forever in sockets of silver, to glisten as the lamps of eternity.

But blessed be God, there is one place where death is not life's brother—where life reigns alone; "to live" is not the first syllable which is to be followed by the next, "to die." There is a land where the death bells are never tolled, where grave clothes are never put on, where graves are never dug. Blessed land beyond the skies! To reach it, we must die.

In their minds, they were telling him that his first, his primary duty was to them. They were Israel, God's chosen people; they were the children of Abraham. Their Messiah would be one to restore their nation's glory and give them all the rich blessings of their earthly covenant. They proposed to make him their debtor and to demand his favor.

Their own stubbornness in refusing to see themselves as in need of the sort of a Messiah that Isaiah spoke of in verses 1 and 2 of Isaiah 61 was their curse and downfall. They were not interested in spiritual kingdoms or in one who came to save his people from their sins.

They had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Being ignorant of God's righteousness, they sought to be righteous in themselves and would not submit to the righteousness of God. They despised a Christ who was the end of the law for righteousness. They thought to fulfill the Mosaic Law to God's satisfaction through their own efforts (cf. Romans 10:2-5).

There are times when it may be necessary to confront the unrepentant sinner with the truth that God has the divine right to do as he wills with his own.

It is in Christ's address to these people in this context, namely his right to act in accordance with his own will rather than to respond to theirs, that we find Naaman mentioned.

Beginning with Luke 4:24: "Then He said, Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in His own country." That was the history of the prophets of Israel.

This is what Amos states are the words of the Lord: "I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, Oh you children of Israel? Says the Lord. But you gave the

Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'" (Amos 2:11-12). The same anti-prophet mind is described in Zechariah 7:7a: "Should you not have obeyed the words which the Lord proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited...?" Nevertheless, they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear.

It was to that nation and to the descendants of people just like them, that the Lord spoke these words: "But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarepath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian" (Luke 4:25-27).

Luke 4:28-30 tells us the response of these people to whom Christ preached. These are the same people who in verse 22 are said to have "borne witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious word that proceeded out of His mouth." They took no offense when he spoke of preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, setting the oppressed at liberty, or even when he said that he fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy by proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. They found no offense in a Savior who seemed to include all in dispensing his mercies.

But when he says he does as he wills with his own, or that many are called but few are chosen, or if he dares to tell some that they do not believe because they are not of his sheep, the response changes. And especially when names are brought to

the forefront and the privileged 'Naamans' are shown mercy, and they being Syrians as well; then the ire of the religious is aroused. Or if some in less desirable societies or countries are blessed while the 'children' go without, rebellion breaks out.

This is what the 'marvelers' at his words did: "So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through them, He went His way" (vs 28-30).

Oh if we only understood, if the natural man realized, that only one who does as he pleases in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and no one can restrain his hand or challenge what he does, only such a man can take a heart burning with enmity against the God of mercy, a heart set against God's law, and fill it with love for God and give it a desire to obey him. Without divine sovereignty, a stony heart cannot be made a heart of flesh, or the child of the devil be made the child of God.

These people whom Christ spoke to were of course an exceptionally wicked people, a people willing enough to have a king who would set up an earthly kingdom, but not such a king as Christ, who would bring a kingdom not of this earth, but a heavenly one. They would bow to the pomp and ceremony of an earthly ruler, a Herod, but not to a humble man, one meek and lowly in heart. The king of their choosing would serve them in an earthly role and as they desired, not set up the rule of God in their hearts. Soon they would crucify this man, calling him a supplanter.

Therefore, he spoke to them by example, calling up the history of their nation as a rebuke. He spoke of

Reisinger—Continued from page 10

distinctive. It was *the preaching of the cross* that made both his ministry and the living epistles it produced such a powerful demonstration of God's grace and power (1 Cor. 1:18). Paul preached Christ crucified in the room and stead of sinners. Lost people do not generally object to the preaching of the love of God. Most do not even object to hearing about the miracles of Christ. However, they all hate "the preaching of the cross." Why is that? Because the preaching of the cross is preaching the doctrine of propitiation, the awesome truth that nothing less than the blood atonement of Christ can satisfy a holy God and turn away his just wrath. Preaching the cross slays human self-righteousness. It crushes every false hope a sinner can conjure.

2. His ministry was also *effectual*. It produced life in dead sinners and quieted the conscience with assurance of justification. It changed people and revealed the glory and power of God's grace in their lives. Spiritual life comes from the Father, through the Son, and nourishes those who de-

pend on Jesus; in the same way that bread nourishes those who depend on it for physical life. Jesus is the New Covenant manna who is better than the manna of the Old Covenant (John. 6:48-51). Jesus is the New Covenant prophet who alone has the words of eternal life. This comparison was difficult for some of his Jewish disciples to accept.

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:60-69, NIV)

The powerful, effectual, and eternal nature of the New Covenant makes it a privilege to be a preacher and witness of its truth and glory!

Several interesting details emerge from Paul's reference to his converts as "living epistles." God the Holy Spirit did the writing, Paul was the human pen God used, and the human heart was the material used for the writing of the epistle. The material used was not at all of good quality (1 Cor. 6:9-11) and the penman was surely not at all capable, but God has chosen to use the foolish and weak things to confound the mighty (1 Cor. 1:20-29). He uses vessels of clay to accomplish his sovereign purposes. Under the blessing of God, every believer has the great privilege of being a penman that God uses to witness the message and to write grace and glory on a human heart. When we witness the true gospel, we are not trying to

Reisinger—Continued on page 18

Dear Brother John,

I thank God upon every remembrance of you. I am thankful that He raises up men like you to labor so hard in His word that others might profit so greatly thereby. Thank you for your many years of ministry to me, my family and so many of my friends. Thank you for your friendship and your fellowship for all these years.

Thank you for the free resources on your web site and the *Sound of Grace* papers you send me. I am now seventy-nine years old and on a limited income, so I could not enjoy your ministry if I had to pay for it; so I also thank those who support you and your ministry. I spend a lot of time in your online library and web site and share many of the gems I have discovered there with a group of senior adults and a group of young people. I also share the SoG papers with them. Many of them do not have computers and can not visit the web site themselves.

You will never know this side of heaven how many lives you have touched for the Master. Also do not forget those the Lord gave you when we were in the Middle East. You are on my, on theirs, and many other people's list to thank again personally when we all get to heaven, but until then I will pray for you. Keep up the good fight because God is blessing your efforts. Again thank you, thank you. Tell Rosemary "Hi" for us.

Growing old is not for sissies. I can better understand the verse "Oh grave where is thy victory" if the Lord lets me tarry much longer everything is going to be worn out and dysfunctional.

By His grace and for His glory,

With much love,

Curtis C.

Lloyd-Jones—Continued from page 9

and people will say, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?” He refutes that also in a final and overwhelming manner in the remainder of chapter 6. He demolishes these false suggestions; he proves that the effect of abounding grace, far from encouraging sin, will mean the death of sin, and lead to holiness and righteousness and glory in the presence of God. Indeed, he proves that the whole design of grace is to promote holiness, because the purpose of grace is to make us holy, unblameable and perfect in the presence of God.

But there is still another problem to be dealt with, because at the end of chapter 5, in verses 20 and 21, he has not only been making statements about grace, but has also referred to the place and the function of the Law. This also, being misunderstood, led to the second charge that was being brought against the Apostle, namely, that his preaching of justification by faith only, and of our being united to the Lord Jesus Christ, seemed to be doing away altogether with the Law, and the whole notion of law, in God’s dealings with the human race. Now it is not surprising that people should say that, because the Apostle has used a somewhat daring phrase about the Law in the 20th verse of that 5th chapter. “Moreover”, he said, “the law entered”; which we paraphrased, “the law came in, not on the main line, but as it were, sideways”. Paul knew that people with a legalistic mind and with a Judaistic background were liable to say, “You should not speak of the Law in that way, you must not speak of the Law as something that comes in as a sort of aside. Is not that to derogate from the greatness and the glory of the Law? Is not that virtually to suggest that the Law is something more or less indifferent?” It was because the Apostle knew that his phrase was liable to misunderstanding that he devotes this

seventh chapter to an explanation and explication of what he meant by putting it in that way.

Then the Apostle had repeated this statement, and put it perhaps still more strongly in the 14th verse of chapter 6. In winding up his first argument in chapter 6 he had said, “For sin shall not have dominion over you”, and his reason for saying that is, “for [because] you are not under the law, but under grace”. He seems to glory in that fact. He seems to be striking another blow at the Law. He has already knocked it down, as it were, in chapter 5, verse 20; he is now trampling on it. At once his opponents take up the cudgels and say, “Surely these are very wrong and very dangerous statements to make; surely if you are going to abrogate the Law and do away with it altogether, you are doing away with every guarantee of righteous and holy conduct and behaviour. Sanctification is impossible without the Law. If you treat the Law in that way and dismiss it, and rejoice in doing so, are you not encouraging lawlessness, and are you not almost inciting people to live a sinful life?” Law, they believed, was the great guarantee of holy living and sanctification. The Apostle clearly has to safeguard himself, and the truth of the gospel, against that particular misunderstanding and charge.

Now that is exactly the purpose of this 7th chapter. It is to explain what he means when he says that the Law “came in by the side”, and that we should rejoice in the fact that we are not “under the law but under grace”. This seventh chapter is an expanded exposition or explication of both those statements, or, to put it more positively, its purpose is to show us the function and the purpose of the Law as given by God through Moses to the Children of Israel.

But the Apostle has another particular object in view also, namely, to show that sanctification by the Law is as impossible as was justification

by the Law. The theme of the first four chapters of the Epistle is that a sinner can never be justified by the Law. He had already summed that up in a great statement in chapter 3, verse 20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified in his sight”. There it is stated categorically. Now, here he is saying in effect in chapter 7, “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no man be sanctified in his sight”. As it is impossible to be justified by the Law, it is equally impossible to be sanctified by the Law. As we shall see later, he even puts it as strongly as this, that not only can a man not be sanctified by the Law, but it is actually true to say that the Law is a hindrance to sanctification, and that it aggravates the problem of sanctification. That is the thesis of this seventh chapter; not only can a man not sanctify himself by observance of the Law; the Law is even a hindrance and an obstacle to sanctification. That is his general thesis, the fundamental proposition he sets out to prove; we must keep it very firmly in our minds.

As we proceed to follow the detailed outworking of this proposition, we divide the chapter into three sections. Nowhere is it more important that we should have a bird’s-eye view of a chapter before we come to the details than here. It is easy to get muddled and lost in some of the detailed statements if we fail to bear in mind what Paul is basically saying to his readers. The first division consists of verses 1 to 6. Here we have a general statement in which he defines our relationship as believers to the Law. At the same time, he shows why a change in our relationship to the Law is as absolutely essential for our sanctification as it was for our justification. The key verse in this first section is verse 4; it is a crucial one. “Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” Why? “In order that you should be married

NEW COVENANT MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

TITLE	LIST	SALE	QUANTITY	COST
<i>Abraham's Four Seeds</i> —Reisinger	\$10.95	\$8.76		
<i>The Believer's Sabbath</i> —Reisinger	\$3.75	\$3.00		
<i>Biblical Law and Ethics: Absolute and Covenantal</i> —Long	\$15.75	\$12.60		
<i>But I Say Unto You</i> —Reisinger	\$10.95	\$8.68		
<i>Chosen in Eternity</i> —Reisinger	\$5.50	\$4.40		
<i>Christ, Lord and Lawgiver Over the Church</i> —Reisinger	\$2.50	\$2.00		
<i>Definite Atonement</i> —Long	\$10.95	\$8.76		
<i>The Doctrine of Baptism</i> —Sasser	\$3.50	\$2.80		
<i>Full Bellies and Empty Hearts</i> —Autio	\$14.99	\$12.00		
<i>Grace</i> —Reisinger	\$13.95	\$11.16		
<i>In Defense of Jesus, the New Lawgiver</i> —Reisinger	\$23.95	\$19.16		
<i>Is John G. Reisinger an Antinomian?</i> —Wells	\$4.25	\$3.40		
<i>John Bunyan on the Sabbath</i> —Reisinger	\$3.00	\$2.80		
<i>Jonathan Edwards on Biblical Hermeneutics and the "Covenant of Grace"</i> —Gilliland	\$3.95	\$3.16		
<i>Limited Atonement</i> —Reisinger	\$7.00	\$5.60		
<i>Ministry of Grace Essays in Honor of John G. Reisinger</i> —Steve West, Editor	\$14.85	\$11.88		
<i>The New Birth</i> — Reisinger	\$5.50	\$4.40		
<i>New Covenant Theology</i> —Wells & Zaspel	\$19.95	\$15.96		
<i>The Newness of the New Covenant</i> —White	\$12.99	\$10.39		
<i>The Obedience of Christ</i> —Van Court	\$2.50	\$2.00		
<i>Our Sovereign God</i> — Reisinger	\$4.45	\$3.56		
<i>Perseverance of the Saints</i> — Reisinger	\$6.00	\$4.80		
<i>The Priority of Jesus Christ</i> —Wells	\$11.95	\$9.56		
<i>A Prisoner's Christianity</i> —Woodrow	\$12.99	\$10.40		
<i>Prophetic Fulfillment—Spiritual, Natural, or Double?</i> —George	\$4.25	\$3.40		
<i>Saving the Saving Gospel</i> —West	\$12.99	\$10.40		
<i>Sinners, Jesus Will Receive</i> —Payne	\$9.99	\$8.00		
<i>Studies in Ecclesiastes</i> —Reisinger	\$23.99	\$19.20		
<i>Tablets of Stone</i> — Reisinger	\$10.95	\$8.75		
<i>The Sovereignty of God and Prayer</i> —Reisinger	\$5.75	\$4.60		
<i>The Sovereignty of God in Providence</i> — Reisinger	\$4.45	\$3.56		
<i>Total Depravity</i> — Reisinger	\$5.00	\$4.00		
<i>What is the Christian Faith?</i> — Reisinger	\$2.50	\$2.00		
<i>When Should a Christian Leave a Church?</i> —Reisinger	\$3.75	\$3.00		
			Total Price	
See Rate Charts on Page 15			Shipping	
Canadian orders—Visa or MasterCard only—please.			Total Order	

Ship to: _____
 Street address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Country: _____

My check (payable to New Covenant Media) is enclosed
 Charge to my: VISA MasterCard
 Expires _____/_____
 Account Number: _____/_____/_____
 Signature: _____

M O R E R E S O U R C E S

TITLE	LIST	SALE	QUANTITY	COST
<i>Philosophical Dialogues on the Christian Faith</i> —Steve West	\$12.00	\$9.50		
<i>What Jesus Demands from the World</i> —John Piper	\$19.99	\$13.25		
<i>The First London Confession of Faith-1646 Edition</i> — Preface by Gary D. Long	\$7.99	\$6.50		
<i>All Things New</i> —Carl Hoch	\$19.98	\$15.95		
<i>Context! Evangelical Views on the Millenium Examined</i> —Gary D. Long	\$25.00	\$17.50		
<i>The Doctrine of Christ</i> —William Sasser	\$4.75	\$3.75		
<i>The Doctrine of Salvation</i> —William Sasser	\$4.75	\$3.75		
<i>The Doctrine of Man</i> —William Sasser	\$4.75	\$3.75		
<i>The Doctrine of God</i> —William Sasser	\$4.00	\$3.00		
<i>The Atoning Work of Jesus Christ</i> —William Sasser	\$5.00	\$4.00		
<i>The New Covenant and the Law of Christ</i> —Chris Scarborough	\$10.95	\$9.50		
<i>How to Keep Your Kids Drug Free</i> — Robert Morey	\$4.95	\$1.00		
<i>Battle of the Gods</i> — Robert Morey	\$10.95	\$2.00		
<i>Here is Your God</i> — Robert Morey	\$9.95	\$2.00		
<i>The Origins and Teaching of Freemasonry</i> — Robert Morey	\$7.95	\$2.00		
<i>Introduction to Defending the Faith</i> — Robert Morey	\$4.95	\$1.00		
<i>Should Christians Fear God Today?</i> —John Korsgaard	\$6.95	\$3.50		
<i>Justification by Faith</i> —James White	\$6.95	\$2.75		
<i>Answers to Catholic Claims</i> —James White	\$9.95	\$2.00		
<i>The Fatal Flaw</i> —James White	\$11.95	\$2.50		
<i>God's Sovereign Grace</i> —James White	\$8.95	\$3.50		
<i>Behind the Watchtower Curtain</i> —David A. Reed	\$10.95	\$2.00		
<i>How to Share Christ with a Jehovah's Witness</i> —Patrick J. Campbell	\$5.95	\$2.50		
<i>The Reformers and Their Stepchildren</i> —Leonard Verduin	\$9.95	\$9.50		
<i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> (The Accurate Revised Text by Barry E. Horner)	\$12.00	\$9.75		
<i>Biblical Eldership</i> —Alexander Strauch	\$14.99	\$9.30		
<i>Biblical Eldership Study Guide</i> —Alexander Strauch	\$19.99	\$12.50		
<i>Biblical Eldership Mentor's Guide</i> —Alexander Strauch	\$19.99	\$12.50		
			Total Price	
See Rate Charts Below			Shipping	
Canadian orders—Visa or MasterCard only—please.			Total Order	

Postage & Handling Rates United States	
Up to \$20.00	\$3.95
\$20.01—\$50.00	\$6.00
\$50.01 and Up	12%

Postage & Handling Rates Canada—VISA or MasterCard	
Up to \$30.00	\$7.50
\$30.01 and Up	25%

Postage & Handling Rates Overseas—VISA or MasterCard
Please call or e-mail for rates

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

2 Cor 9:15 NKJV

Smith—Continued from page 8

Second, the content of our message will include calling people to faith and repentance. This logically follows telling people they have broken God's law. A man-centered approach to evangelism will involve a denial that repentance and faith are tied together. However, Scripture presents them as two sides of the same coin. Sometimes "repenting" is set before lost sinners as the means to salvation (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30). At other times, "faith" or "believing" is used (Acts 16:31; John 3:16). So which is necessary for salvation? It appears we have a contradiction in Scripture. However, there are many other places where faith and repentance are both emphasized in the same verse (Mt. 11:28-29; Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1).

of the sin of failing to glorify God. All of us have failed. All the nations have failed. Therefore the weight of infinite guilt rests on every human head because of our failure to delight in God more than we delight in our own self-sufficiency" (126-127).

In his book *Come to Me*, Tom Wells explains what Matthew 11:28-29 means, "'Come to me' and 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me' are twins. What one means, the other means. To come to Christ is to take up His yoke and to embrace His teaching".¹³ In other words, Wells rightly affirms that Jesus was teaching the necessity of faith and repentance.

In simple terms, to call people to place faith in Christ means to ask them to rest and trust in Christ entirely as the one who can put them back into a right relationship with God. It is to tell people that Christ is the only substitute for sinners, that He was punished in the place of sinners. It is to communicate to sinners that they must trust in Christ's merits alone to appease the very wrath of God on the cross—a wrath they rightly deserved because they can't appease God's wrath, having broke God's law themselves, thus unable to be perfect like God (Mt. 5:48). It is to trust that

¹³ Wells, 30.

through Christ one's sins are forgiven. This belief is defined by confession of sin (I Jn. 1:9). In other words, to confess one's sins is to believe and trust that Christ paid for those sins. On the other hand, to call people to repent from the sin they confess is the other side of the coin. In both the Old and New Testaments the word *repent* basically means "to turn" or "to change one's mind".¹⁴ Our message of evangelism, thus, must include a call for people to change their mind about sin, and consciously turn from their life of sin to Christ. According to Wells, coming to Christ is to come to Him for forgiveness through faith, but it is also to come to Him in repentance by choosing to follow Him as Lord. Wells explains:

[W]hen the Lord Jesus calls you to Himself He goes a step further. He invites you to come under His *moral* lordship. That means that He will bind Himself to destroy the corruption that I have spoken of as one of the barriers that keep you from God. Now, of course,

¹⁴ See Anthony Hoekema for the various Greek and Hebrew words.

Charles H. Spurgeon

Death of the Righteous

What a great sorrow that the good should die! That the righteous should fall! Death, why don't you cut down the poisonous tree? Why don't you mow down the poisonous plant? Why do you touch the tree that has provided shade for the weary people? Why do you touch the flower whose perfume has made the earth joyous? Death, why do you snatch away the excellent of the earth, in whom is all of our delight? If you would use your axe, use it on the trees that draw nourishment, but produce no fruit; then we would thank you. But why will you cut down the cedars, why will you fell the godly trees of Lebanon? O Death, why don't you spare the church? Why must the pulpit be hung in black; why must the missionary outpost be filled with weeping? Why must the godly family lose its spiritual leader, and the house its head? O Death, where are you? Don't touch the earth's holy things; your hands are not fit to pollute the Israel of God. Why do you put your hand on the hearts of the elect? Oh, stop, stop; spare the righteous, Death, and take the bad! But no, it must not be; death comes and smiles at the godliest of us all; the most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. Weep, weep, weep, O church, for you have lost your martyrs; weep, O church, for you have lost your preachers, your holy men are fallen.

Weep fir tree, for the cedar has fallen, the godly fail, and the righteous are cut off. But stay awhile; I hear another voice. Say to the daughter of Judah, spare your weeping. Say to the Lord's flock, Cease, cease your sorrow; your martyrs are dead, but they are glorified; your ministers are gone, but they have ascended up to your Father and to their Father; your brethren are buried in the grave, but the archangel's trumpet will awaken them, and their spirits are even now with God.

some men say ‘No’ to this invitation. They do not want to part with their sins; rather they want to nourish them and cherish them. But such men cannot be said to trust Jesus Christ, for to trust the Lord Jesus is to believe that it is good for me to have my sins torn from my embrace even if it should cost me my life. To rely on Christ for forgiveness, without relying on Him to deal with the evil within me, is not to believe in the real Christ who offers Himself to me. It is to have faith in a savior who does not exist. The genuine Lord Jesus works cleansing in the men He pardons and pardons the men whom He cleanses.¹⁵

Wells then goes on to suggest that coming to Jesus as “your ruler and master” means He becomes Lord of everything about you: your principles, actions, and opinions.¹⁶ One finds a summary of his entire book when he states, “‘Come to me’ is a good way to express what He asks of you. So also is ‘Take my yoke upon you and learn from me’. At first glance, these may seem to be different things. Nevertheless, each says ‘Trust *Me*, believe in *Me*, and follow *Me*. That is what ‘coming to Jesus’ is all about.’”¹⁷

In fact, Jesus’ own statements on the radical nature of coming to Christ are enough to help us understand the importance of communicating to sinners the necessity of committing oneself wholly to Christ (Lk. 9:23-26; 14:26-33). Packer says, “The repentance that Christ requires of His people consists in a settled refusal to set any limit to the claims which He may make on our lives.”¹⁸ Jesus emphasized the importance of repentance after His resurrection (Lk. 24:46-47). Moreover, perhaps surprisingly to some, the New Testament Scriptures begin and end with the message of repentance (compare Mt. 3:2 and Rev. 3:19). Spurgeon once pointed out that *Savior* is used twice in the book of

Acts to describe Jesus. On the other hand, *Lord* is used ninety-two times.¹⁹ Spurgeon was one who was clear about the nature of true repentance:

Repentance to be sure must be *entire*. Many will say, Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other, but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep. O sirs, in God’s name let me entreat you: it is not the giving up of any one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin.”²⁰

Contrary to popular views of the Lordship of Christ today, nobody makes Christ Lord. The Bible presents Him as the already reigning Lord Jesus (Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:9-11). Thus, RE can be summarized, very simply, as calling people to come under the Lord Jesus Christ by trusting Him and repenting of sin. This approach acknowledges the reality of His present Lordship.²¹

Thus, we must call people to come to Christ, and coming to Christ includes faith (trust in Him for forgiveness) and repentance (trust in Him as our Master). We must tell people that Christ is *Savior* and *Lord*. That is, He saves us from the penalty of sin by forgiving us, but He also saves us from the power of sin by becoming our Lord and leading us into paths of righteousness.

Man-centered evangelism presses for a decision to “believe in Jesus”. God-centered evangelism presses for a clear presentation of the Gospel and calls for more than just belief, but also repentance. This is our duty as “prophets”. In the Old Testament, the prophets were powerless in forcing

people to turn to God. In the same way, we are powerless to turn people to God in our own strength. We have, however, been given the solemn responsibility to clearly set forth Christ. This is the basis of RE. This is allowing our theology (God is sovereign over all things) to drive our methodology (speaking the Gospel clearly and trusting in God to draw His own to Himself as He is pleased). God-centered evangelism involves telling people they must place faith in Christ and repent from sin, while at the same time telling them they cannot do this on their own because they have broken God’s law, and as a result will never seek Him on their own (Rom. 3:10 ff.). It emphasizes the truths of man’s alienation before God, God’s willingness to forgive, and man’s inability to come to God apart from His effectual call (Jn. 3:1-8).

In conclusion, declaring Christ as Prophet involves being precise about who Christ is, and thus what the Gospel is. In doing this we become “prophets”—prophets who declare Christ’s demand for all sinners to come to Him in repenting faith, and prophets who do this in obedience to God through the spirit of love and faithful teaching. To fall short of this is to fail in declaring Christ as Prophet.²² Ω

19 Earnest Reisinger, *Doctrinal Content of the Message of Evangelism*, (http://www.the-highway.com/evangelism1_Reisinger.html), no page numbers given.

20 A.W. Pink, *Repentance*, (Swengel, Pa, Reiner Publications, did not give a date), 26.

21 See John MacArthur’s book entitled *The Gospel According to Jesus*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1988).

22 Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Leicester, England, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994) 629-630. “We have a ‘prophetic’ role as we proclaim the Gospel to the world and thereby bring God’s saving Word to people. In fact, whenever we speak truthfully about God to believers or unbelievers we are fulfilling a ‘prophetic’ function (using the word *prophetic* in a very broad sense).”

15 Wells, 51-52.

16 Ibid., 53.

17 Ibid., 35.

18 Packer, p. 92.

Reisinger—Continued from page 12

write with an empty pen. The words of God can give life when blessed by the Spirit himself (John 6:63). We also note that the New Covenant writing of God is not with ink nor is it chiseled in stone. Verse 3 is quite clear that it is *with the Spirit of the living God, on tablets of human hearts*. Preaching Moses and the Old Covenant is like trying to pound truth into a heart of stone with the hammer and chisel of the law. That is an exercise in futility both for the person with the hammer and chisel as well as for the individual being hammered. Even if you could successfully pound the words of Moses into stony hearts, you would have only managed to increase the individual's condemnation. You have merely added to his or her guilt by more clearly revealing his or her true nature of sin and rebellion. New Covenant preaching does not look for a sharper chisel and a bigger hammer; nor does it try pounding harder. No, true New Covenant preaching brings out the effective writing tools of the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension. I have a word for Reformed preachers: If you would conquer the city of Mansoul, you must use the weapons that Bunyan describes in *Holy War*.

Verses 4-5 show us **The Confidence of a New Covenant Minister**. Paul writes, "Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God."

We are aware that, apart from the miraculous power of the gospel, we face an impossible task. We are fully conscious that God calls us to tell deaf people to hear, blind people to see, and dead people to live. However, we also have great confidence that all of those things will really happen when the gospel is preached. I once listened to a missionary say, "Our ministry is to deaf and blind people." The person next to me whispered, "I wish he would come down to my town; it is full of deaf and blind people." Our confidence in the New Covenant we preach assures us that some deaf people will hear, some blind people will see, and some dead people will come to life. Moreover, none of it will have anything to do with our ability. It will all be a result of the power of the gospel.

We believe that some souls **MUST** be saved. Our message will be heard and believed. It will be heard because

of him who sends us. Our confidence is in God's covenant. Some will be saved from every tribe and tongue. Our Lord will bring all of his own safely into the fold.

A young man named Ron Matthews was converted under our ministry in Toronto, Canada. God called him to be a missionary in South America. I preached his ordination service and used John 10:14-16 as my text. I emphasized the truth of election and effectual calling. Christ spoke of sheep that had been given to him by the Father and the certainty that he would bring them safely to himself. I said, "We do not ordain Ron to go on a fool's errand. We do not have hopes that he will find some sinners who are willing to be saved nor do we have hopes that Ron, by skillful preaching, will be able to persuade some sinners to trust Christ. No, no, we believe there is an 'election of grace' in Columbia, South America, and those elect will be made willing in the day of God's power (Psalm 110:3)."

If I had believed that success in the ministry depended on either Ron's preaching skills or the willingness of sinners to give God a chance, I would not have been at all interested in send-

I spotted this on a blog. The sentence in bold is my emphasis; after all our command from Jesus is not to follow letters but to be perfect with a perfect love like His:

"...when the devil comes and says, 'You have no standing, you are condemned, you are finished', you must say, 'No! My position did not depend upon what I was doing, or not doing; it is always dependent upon the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Turn to the devil and tell him, 'My relationship to God is not a variable one. The case is not that I am a child of God, and then again not a child of God. That is not the basis of my standing; that is not the position. When God had mercy upon me, He made me His child, and I remain His child. A very sinful and a very unworthy one perhaps, but still His child!'"

And now, when I fall into sin, I have not sinned against the law, I have sinned against love. Like the prodigal, I will go back to my Father and I will tell Him, "Father, I am not worthy to be called your son." But He will embrace me, and He will say, "Do not talk nonsense, you are My child," and He will shower His love upon me! That is the meaning of putting on the breastplate of righteousness! Never allow the devil to get you into a state of condemnation. Never allow a particular sin to call into question your standing before God. That question has been settled."

Martyn Lloyd Jones, *The Christian Soldier*, p. 255

Submitted by Ed Trefzger

ing him out as a missionary. I would have known that his mission would fail. However, because I believed (and still do) in the sovereign electing grace of God and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, I had every confidence that our brother's ministry would be successful.

I am so grateful that we do not have the commission that God gave Isaiah.

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. (Isa. 6:9-12, KJV)

Imagine knowing that not one of your hearers was going to believe. Your ministry was going to harden hearts and not a single person was going to be saved. If you asked God, as Isaiah did, "How long shall I preach?" and God said, "Until everything and everybody is destroyed," you would have no desire to fulfill such ministry. If I had Isaiah's commission, I would obey, but without joy. His ministry was designed to close eyes, but we are called to a ministry under the New Covenant that opens eyes and gives sinners new hearts. Our commission is Paul's commission.

'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

(Acts 26:16-18, NIV)

If we ministered the Old Covenant of law, we could have no confidence except of defeat. We could, of course, have a false hope by trusting in the ability of the flesh, but such hope would soon prove itself to be false. We could have no *valid* hope of seeing sinners actually changed. In contrast to this, feel the confidence Paul expresses in 2:14-17. Paul asks, "Who is sufficient to wield such a weapon of life and death?" The answer is YOU ARE! Through Christ, you are more than sufficient. Pastor Rodney Gray explains that we are competent because the New Covenant supplies its own sufficiency.

This is the third use of the word "competent" in the context of verses 5 and 6. It is worthwhile mentioning that the word conveys the idea of "measuring up" or, as suggested above, being "qualified." John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as the one "whose shoes I am not *worthy* (qualified, competent) to bear." The point here is that Paul does not locate his worthiness or competence as an apostle in his own performance as a man, but in the fact that *God has made him a new-covenant minister*. Competence, in this sense, is not a commodity which men *bring to* the ministry of the new covenant. Rather, competence is a product of the new covenant itself. Competence is bound up in the nature of the new covenant. To understand how this can be, we need only ponder Paul's explanation: "not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."²

We can do no better than quoting Wesley's great hymn in closing.

Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears,
The bleeding sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the throne my sur'ty stands,
Before the throne my sur'ty stands,
My name is written on his hands.

He ever lives above,

² This quotation is from a message that Pastor Rodney Gray gave at a pastor's conference. I have used many of his ideas in this series of articles.

For me to intercede,
His all redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead:
His blood atoned for all our race,
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me;
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die!

The Father hears him pray,
His dear anointed one;
He cannot turn away
The presence of his son;
His Spirit answers to the blood,
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled,
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry.³

New Covenant preachers present Jesus as the message of the New Covenant. The consequence of this preaching is that Jesus changes the lives of sinners. Those changed lives serve as the New Covenant minister's credentials and confidence. We can neither ask nor expect eloquence or law to accomplish the work that only the gospel of sovereign grace can do.

Continued next issue.

³ Charles Wesley, 1742.

McMillin—Continued from page 11

times when the judgment of God was openly displayed against their forefathers during days of great wickedness. His examples came from the northern kingdom, the kings of Israel or Samaria.

The first example is the widow who fed Elijah when he prayed and God sent judgment in the form of a famine on Israel. Ahab was king, but we need to note Scripture in order to grasp why Elijah prayed for the great drought and famine to come. It was a long period of national blasphemy.

The period began with Jeroboam the first, and his leading of the nation into idolatry to the golden calves. He is repeatedly spoken of as a king who caused all Israel to sin. Baasha, Nadab, Elah, Zimri, Tibni and Omri preceded Ahab. Evil kings, kings with polluted hearts, kings that were in themselves judgments, brought on an evil people because of their sin.

At this time Ahab reigned, and he is the son of Omri, and this is but a part of his record. “Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jereboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal

and worshipped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal which he had built in Samaria” (1 Kings 16:30-32). “And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” (1 Kings 16:33b).

These people were like the Pharisee who went to the temple to pray and said: “God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector” (Luke 18:11b). No, he was not like the others; he was self-righteous—which is worse. They were like the people of Ahab’s kingdom and they would experience a famine of the mercies of Christ, mercies that Christ would bestow on others.

They were filled with anger when Christ told them of the widow in Zarephath. However, the Lord would add insult to their injured pride. He said: “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian” (Luke 4:27).

After these two statements about the widow and the leper, Scripture states this: “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way” (Luke 4:28-30).

In John 8, Christ declared his deity to these people. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad. Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (vss 56-59).

In John 10, these people asked Christ to tell them plainly if he was the Christ. He answered, “I told you and you do not believe...” (John 10:25) and went on to explain that they did not believe because they were not of his sheep. Then He said, “I and My Father are one” (v 30) and they took up stones to stone him.

When the natural (unregenerate) man is confronted with God’s sovereignty, with God’s prerogative to do as he pleases with his creation and creatures, he hates it and the God who declared it. It is this God and this truth that we will see working in Naaman the leper. Ω

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” John 3:16

Reader, if God has given you His only begotten Son, beware of doubting His kindness and love, in any painful providence of your daily life! Never allow yourself to think hard thoughts of God. Never suppose that He can give you anything which is not really for your good. Remember the words of Paul: “He who spared not His own Son—but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things” (Romans 8:32).

See in every sorrow and trouble of your earthly pilgrimage—the hand of Him who gave Christ to die for your sins! That hand can never smite you—except in love! He who gave His only begotten Son for you, will never withhold anything from you which is really for your good. Lean back on this thought and be content. Say to yourself in the darkest hour of trial, “This also is ordered by Him who gave Christ to die for my sins. It cannot be wrong. It is done in love. It must be well.”

J. C. Ryle

Lloyd-Jones—Continued from page 13

to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.” But why should you be married to Him? Why should you be married to anyone, and in particular, why should you be married to Christ? Here is the answer: “that [in order that] we should bring forth fruit unto God”. That is the real subject matter; that is the vital question. What the Apostle is concerned about is the bringing forth of this fruit unto God; and his case in the whole chapter is that you can never bring forth fruit unto God as long as you are married to the Law. There is only one way to bring forth fruit unto God, and that is, to be married to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is Paul’s case! In verses 1 to 6 he puts it in a general way. What is our relationship, as believers, to the Law? It is not what it once was; there has been a change. He tells us how it came about, and he tells us the object and the purpose of it all. We could never produce fruit unto God unless that relationship had been changed and we had entered into a new relationship. That is the first section.

The second section runs from verse 7 to verse 12, and is a vindication of the Law. “What shall we say then?” If that first statement is correct someone is going to say, “Very well, that means that the Law is sin”. “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?” The answer is, “God forbid”; and the Apostle proceeds, as far as verse 12, to vindicate the Law in and of itself, and to show that it is not the Law that is responsible for our lack of fruit unto God, but that the trouble is in ourselves. As he had stated the matter in the first section, a careless reader might draw that deduction foolishly and wrongly and say, “Well then, there was something wrong with the Law if it could not make us bear fruit unto God”. “Oh no”, says Paul, “the trouble is not in the Law, it is in you.” So he gives us this great vindication of the Law. The Law has been given by God; and

therefore the trouble cannot be in the Law, it must be in us. He will later say a similar thing in one great assertion in chapter 8, verse 3, “For what the law could not do”. Why could it not do it? “In that it was weak through the flesh”. The weakness was not in the Law but in us; the Law was weak “through the flesh”. This is what Paul works out in verses 7-12. Chapter 8, verse 3, is but a summary of the theme that he has already argued out here.

The third and final section of the chapter consists of verses 13-25. This is nothing but a working out, in a practical and experimental manner, of the statement that he has already made in the first two sections. The Apostle wants to bring the truth right home to us, so he does not just state it as a general principle; he proceeds to show what our position would be if we were still left under the Law. He shows how utterly impossible our sanctification would be in that condition, and in a final word introduces the only hope in this respect: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

There, I suggest, is the general layout of the contents of this famous chapter. In other words, the business of chapter 7 is to repeat and to re-apply what he has said so grandly in chapter 5, verse 10, which is, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” - saved completely, saved entirely, fully sanctified and perfectly glorified. How? In the life of Jesus Christ! It is the only way, nothing else can do it. The Apostle repeats it here in chapter 7, verses 24 and 25: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” As we have indicated earlier, verses 12 to 21 in chapter 5 are but an outworking of that fundamental statement in the 10th verse of chapter 5. And we shall also

find, as we work our way through this chapter, that Paul repeats a number of things he has already said in chapter 6, and especially what he was saying towards the end where he introduced this whole notion of fruit-bearing. In verses 21-23 of chapter 6 he asks, “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” What he demonstrates in this 7th chapter is that there is only one way of bearing fruit unto God, and that is, to be married to, to be joined to, the Lord Jesus Christ. To be married to the Law means “fruit unto death”. There is only one way to have “fruit unto God” and to life, and that is, to be married to, to be joined unto the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle is going to prove that. He does so by proving that the Law could not do it, and that Christ can do it. That is the theme of this 7th chapter.

We shall find, at the same time that this is an amazing chapter in certain respects. It is beyond any doubt the profoundest analysis of sin, and of its ways and its results, which is to be found anywhere in the whole of Scripture. There is no more profound statement about sin, no more profound psychological analysis of sin and what it does, and how it does it, than you find here. It is indeed quite incomparable in that respect. It is also a mighty statement with respect to the function of the Law and the place of the Law in the life of the believer. It is also the greatest statement found anywhere in the whole range of Scripture with regard to the final impotence of the Law in the matter of salvation. So we must keep our eye on that. In doing so we shall also find that it is be-

Lloyd-Jones—Continued from page 21

yond any question the finest exposure of the utter futility of the position of those who think that morality alone is sufficient. It shows the complete futility of believing in Christian morality or ethics alone while shedding the Christian doctrine of salvation. There is no statement to be found anywhere that so utterly demolishes that position as this seventh chapter of Romans.

It is therefore a chapter that is very much needed at this present time. We are confronted today by numbers of people who take a very superior position as great intellects, great men. They are no longer interested in Christian doctrine. Of course not! They do not believe in the miraculous and supernatural; they do not believe in the absolute necessity of a substitutionary atonement. They have shed all that, but they claim to be holding on to the Christian ethic. Here is the chapter of all chapters, which exposes the utter futility of their position. They “talk loftily”, either because they are not familiar with this chapter, or else do not understand it. It is the final refutation of the foolish exaltation of ethics and morality at the expense of the doctrine of salvation. It is a glorious statement in that respect. And finally, in many ways it puts the doctrine of our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ in its highest form, and certainly in its most mystical

form. Here we are taught - of course we are taught it elsewhere also, but it is put very plainly here - that we are married to the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the particular illustration which the Apostle employs.

There, then, are the leading themes on which we must concentrate. Had you realized that these themes are found here? Or had you thought that there was only one subject dealt with in Romans, chapter 7, namely, the question, “Is this a description of a converted man or an unconverted man? Is it Paul in some transitory stage, passing as it were, from being unconverted to the glory of his position in chapter 8? Had you seen anything in it but that?” It is tragic that because of a false intellectual interest, and often because of a party spirit, Christians should rob themselves of the riches of this great chapter. How careful we should be in our handling of the Scripture!

I would venture to assert that many, not to say most of our troubles in the Christian life are due to our failure to grasp the teaching of this seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. For instance, what a totally inadequate conception people have of sin these days! How little talk there is about sin; how they dislike preaching that gets to grips with sin! “Ah”, they say, “we must always be positive. Tell us about salvation. We need not worry

our heads about sin and the depths of sin.” This explains why much of our modern Christianity is so superficial! People spend their time in arguing glibly about “going over from chapter 7 to chapter 8 of Romans” who have never yet been in chapter 7! They have never realized the depths of sin within themselves, they have never really known the power of sin, its awful tyranny and ugliness - this thing that is even able, as it were, to twist the Law of God to suit its own end, and to nullify the Law of God. What a terrible thing sin is! Many have thought that when they believed, or “took their decision” or “stepped forward”, all was clear, and they “were going to “live happily ever afterwards”. Then, ere long, they find themselves in certain troubles, and they do not understand, the reason being that they have never understood sin. They have been rushed to an untimely and doubtful birth; they have never really known repentance. They may have been told by an evangelist that they need not worry about repentance, that that will come later, that the great thing is to believe positively on the Lord Jesus Christ. But they have neither understood why, nor how, and inevitably they come into trouble later. They have never understood the teaching of this chapter on the depth of sin, the foulness of sin, the power of sin. Ω

SUBSCRIBE TO SOUND OF GRACE \$10.00 FOR TEN ISSUES

- My check (payable to Sound of Grace) is enclosed.
- Charge to my: VISA MasterCard Expires ____/____/____ Account Number: ____/____/____

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

**SUBSCRIPTION
ORDER/RENEWAL
FORM**

Sovereign Grace in the Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

John Thornbury

“And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me” (Acts 22:9).

It is no wonder that the writings of Paul the apostle are so full of glorifying the sovereign grace of God when we consider how he was saved. He referred to himself as the chief of sinners in I Tim. 1:16 and with profound gratitude, he stated that Christ Jesus came to save him. He added in the next verse that his conversion was a “pattern” to demonstrate and illustrate the longsuffering of the Lord. I do not believe that Paul meant that other people should expect such a dramatic conversion as he had, but I do believe that the same marvelous grace that he experienced is the basis for the deliverance of all God’s people from sin.

As we study Paul’s remarkable experience in the book of Acts, we should not only read about the historical account in Acts 9 but also Paul’s own personal narrative about how this happened in Acts 22. The latter gives some fascinating details that are not contained in the former. Here Paul is testifying before the people at Jerusalem following his arrest at the temple. He had been rescued by the authorities from the angry mob who were trying to kill him (Acts 21:31). It was a very hostile crowd to which Paul spoke in the Hebrew language.

God said to Ananias the disciple at Damascus, who was to give the task of taking Saul of Tarsus under his wing: “... he is a chosen vessel.” As I often pointed out to my congregation so many times, Paul was not on the way to a prayer meeting when God confronted him on the road to Damascus. He had received authority from

the high priest at Jerusalem to capture believers at Damascus and bring them back for punishment (Acts 22). The high priest, as well as the ruling Jewish elders, was there at Jerusalem as he spoke, and no doubt, they remembered very well the situation Paul was describing.

In his speech to these people at Jerusalem Paul seems to be strongly stressing *God’s initiative* in the remarkable change he had experienced. He did not say that he had made a decision for Christ or that he had accepted Jesus as his personal Savior. Instead he explained, no doubt with great emotion, how a great light from heaven shone around him and how Jesus spoke to him personally saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (22:7). Jesus called this raging enemy by his name as he seeks to convict him of his sin and set him on a different course. (Jesus in John 10:3 said that he calls his own sheep by name).

Paul seems to be stressing in the passage cited at the beginning (Acts 22:9), that he was the one in the vengeful group on the way to Damascus, which was singled out for mercy. Those who were with him “saw the light” and were frightened, but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to him. The powerful call “Saul, Saul” was sounded only in the ears of the leader.

I should think that anyone, regardless of his theological perspective, should see that this is remarkable. Who was *called* in this group? To whom did the risen, sovereign Savior *speak*? The answer is that the *ring-leader of the people* sent to persecute the Christians, who no doubt was the

guiltiest, and, because of his position, the most responsible, was the one chosen for grace.

This is not to say that the others with him may not have later been called. We do not know how many of them later become Christians. However, this we do know: God in infinite, sovereign mercy saved the worst of the gang. What amazing grace! What distinguishing favor!

What a lesson this should be to all believers! The only reason any of us have been delivered from the clutches of human depravity is the electing grace of God. The only reason any of us has been called is that God has in sovereign grace seen fit to change our hearts. There is no room for boasting here. Every Christian should make I Corinthians 4:7 a kind of motto; a mantra if you will. “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive. Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” If I mistake not, too often in the testimonies I hear of people who have come to the Lord, they subtly give themselves a portion of the credit. Down deep they think it was *their will, their faith, their action* that made the difference. This is wrong, wrong, wrong! *He* made us to differ. Let us give the proper glory to the proper source. “Salvation is of the Lord.”

SOVEREIGN GRACE NEW COVENANT MINISTRIES
5317 WYE CREEK DRIVE
FREDERICK, MARYLAND 21703-6938

Check your label for expiration.
This is Issue 163. Please renew
your subscription promptly.

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 45
FREDERICK, MD 21701

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

John Bunyan Conference

April 26-28, 2010

Reformed Baptist Church, Lewisburg, PA

The 2010 John Bunyan Conference is beginning to take shape. While there remains at least one speaker to be confirmed, please mark your calendar and plan to join us. As always, there will be lots of time allowed for questions and discussion. The topics on the agenda are certain to stimulate lively discussion. We decided to tackle some difficult subjects this year. In years past we have been able to earnestly discuss some areas where not all Calvinists and adherents of New Covenant Theology agree. The general theme of the conference will be **“The Relationship of the Old and the New.”**

John Reisinger will speak on “Continuity and Discontinuity” or the relationship of the old and new. What continues and what is done away with in Christ? This is a knotty problem of long standing. He will also speak on the “Active and Passive Obedience of Christ.”

Jack Jefferies will speak on “Seeing the New Testament through New Covenant eyes: Two Test Texts – The Point of the Parentheses in Romans 2:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 9:21.” Both of these texts are greatly misunderstood.

Blake White will have two messages on “The Law of Christ.” This phrase is thrown around without being carefully defined. This is an exceedingly important subject for new covenant people.

Fred Zaspel did his doctrinal thesis on B.B. Warfield and will share the results with two messages on this great giant of the past.

Scripture says, “Iron Sharpens Iron” (Prov. 27:17). This year’s topics assure that there will be some big grindstones at work on some long knives.

Please send any questions to: johnbunyanconf@comcast.net.