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Solo Christo—Sola Scriptura—Sola Fida—Sola Gratia

*Glory to God in the highest, and on
earth peace, good will toward men.*

Luke 2:14



GOOD
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Editorial

I can tell that Christmas is near. No, it's not because the usual pre-Christmas advertisements have already begun nor that now and again I can hear a Christmas carol. It's the change of attitude in the children I meet each day. They are doing things with an air of expectancy. They are busy making plans for the traditional Christmas parties. I watched one little boy inflate more than a dozen balloons in an incredibly short time. I listened to one mother telling her two sons that they would not be going to a Christmas party until they tidied their bedrooms. It was like magic. They sprang into action and bustling with energy they brought order out of chaos in record time!

A child is probably happier on Christmas Eve than on any other day of the year. Why? It is because an event in the future promises a more meaningful life. It's the anticipation of a happier life. The children were fired by a new sense of meaning and lived with a strong sense of expectancy. So strong in fact that even the most boring tasks (tidying the bedroom!) gets done with great gusto!

The behavioral change in the children can be explained in one word — hope. Their future had become intensely hopeful. What a difference hope makes! An anecdote from the writings of Viktor Frankl illustrates the power of hope. Some prisoners were transferred from Auschwitz to Dachau. The journey took two days and three nights, during which they were packed so tight that few could sit down. At Dachau, they had to stand in line all night and throughout the next morning in freezing rain, as punishment because one man had fallen asleep and missed the roll call. Yet they were all immensely happy, laughing and making jokes: because Dachau had no incinerator chimney! The future was open to possibility, to life. They could hope!

None of us could live very long without the values of faith, hope and love. Millions today are suffering from what has been called the "nothing neurosis." It is an experience that comes when we try to live by bread alone, ignoring the transcendent dimension to life.

There is a life which is natural to man, and there is another kind of life for which we must consciously decide. When Joshua confronted his people with the fundamental choice of deciding for God or the gods of the Amorites (Jos 24:15), he was inviting the liberated people of Israel to live transcendentally, to live with faith, hope and love. Jesus too acknowledged the transcendent dimension to life when he said "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." (Mt 6:33). Christmas is an invitation to live transcendentally. This special time invites us to experience faith, hope and love as revealed in the life of Jesus. Christians more than any other people may live hopefully. Our hope-filled future should transform our life in the present. The most boring and menial tasks can be done with bustling energy. The Christ child is the hope of the world and Christmas is a time to rejoice in hope.

—Noel Mason



BETHLEHEM HAD NO CHRISTMAS TREE, ONLY THE SHADOWS OF A CROSS

Desmond Ford

You have certainly got to hand it to him. The devil is very smart. He does not force us against our wills to do evil. Instead, he makes evil look good. After all he is not called "the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev 12:9) for nothing. How else could he persuade the majority of men and women to sell eternity for time, heaven for hell and God's smile for his wrath?

Yes, the devil makes good look ill and evil good. He turns everything upside down. Take Christmas. Does not the very

thought of it make you nostalgic for the happy times of childhood and youth? Does not the word conjure up feelings of comfort, love, satisfaction and memories of friends, family and feasts? It is so for most of us.

The Original Christmas

But the realities associated with the coming of the Christ child were far different. Poverty and want, ignominy and rejection, pain and exile, shadows and fears characterize the earliest childhood of this the most perfect being of

Adam's race. Maybe you are listening to "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," or "O Come All Ye Faithful," in the background, but the reality back there included the sound of thundering hooves as soldiers poured into Bethlehem to kill babies under the age of two. We think of throwing our homes open to scattered family members and friends, but at Bethlehem there was a closed door and "no room at the inn." We link with Christmas, abundance of food, drink, warmth and love, but the original Christmas was otherwise. In Joseph's offering of a pair of turtledoves we have the evidence that they could not even afford a lamb for a burnt offering. They slept on straw by the animals, and probably laid there feeling the pangs of hunger.

In our Lord's first earthly resting place, the place of sacrificial animals, we have the hint of the purpose of his coming. His chief purpose in taking a body was that he might die. He came in the darkness that he might be the light of the world, he came as poor that he might make many rich. He came as one rejected by kings and rulers that he might make us kings who would rule forever and ever. He lived as a man that he might ultimately die, in order that we might die to the world, the flesh and the devil, and thereby live.

Mary sensed that her child would be the One to implement heaven's reversal of earth's status quo. She sang of God's future accomplishments as though they were already achieved.

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man. (Lk 2:51,52)

Do not the words warn us against measuring the future by the present? Do they not warn us against the acceptance of contemporary values?

The Shadow of a Cross

As we think of the rejection of the Son of God by the leaders of Israel from the moment of the rumor of his birth, as we

contemplate the poverty of his nativity, the hasty exile to Egypt and the subsequent slaughter, is it not apparent that the cross was the pattern of his whole life and not just its last day? But further, is it not just as apparent when one reads his teachings that the same cross is meant to be the pattern of our lives too? For it is written: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mk 8:34,35). Indeed, it is frankly stated by Christ that no man can be his follower unless he "hate" (i.e., love less) "his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life" (Lk 14:26). And Christ knowing that his demands are overwhelming warns us to count the cost before we pretend to lift his cross.

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Lk 14:28-33)

This sort of talk cannot be accepted easily. We prefer Christmas carols, feasting, holidaying and altogether having "a jolly good time." You remember that Peter just could not take it and therefore besought the Lord to reconsider. But the stinging rejoinder was that Peter had become a Satan in his attempt to dodge the cross (Mt 16:22-26). Picture the Lord saying in effect to the big fisherman: "Listen, Peter, not only is the cross inevitable for me, but it is so for you also, if

you are truly going to be my disciple."

No, it is not human nature to like the cross. When our Lord on another occasion spoke about the necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, multitudes who followed him rapidly thinned out leaving chiefly the twelve (Jn 6:66,67). The crowd had just eaten the loaves and fishes and these were more to their liking than the flesh and blood of the Son of Man.

We are told from the television and radio pulpit that to become a Christian will guarantee economic prosperity and deliverance from sickness and pain.

So it remains true in 1985, that Christ has many lovers of his heavenly kingdom but few bearers of his cross. Many are desirous of consolation but few can stand tribulation. There are many companions at Christ's table when it is freighted with good things, but few of those feasting are prepared to fast with him in the wilderness of temptation. Oh yes, they will sing with him as the disciples did at the end of the Last Supper, but who wants to suffer with him along the path to Calvary? "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled" (Mt 26:56). It is so easy to follow the Master in the breaking of bread, but who wants to drink the cup of his passion?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as a Christian, died to family, fame, success and patriotism. Then at 40 he died for the last time. A little time before he was hung by the Nazis he wrote: "When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die."

But did not Jesus talk about the life more abundant, the gift of heaven's peace, the assurance of a kingdom joyously given by the Father, the forgiveness of all manner of sin and blasphemy, the joy that no one could take from us, the gift of the Comforter that we might never be lonely, or useless, or powerless or without direction? Did he not offer us rest? Yes, yes, yes. All of these and more. But notice the conjunction of contrasts in Mark 10:29,30:

Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.'

A hundredfold of houses and brothers and sisters and mothers, etc., etc., WITH PERSECUTIONS. Hmmm...And there are, as we have seen, many of his proclamations that spell out the sacrificial life so clearly that even we pharisees should be able to see it. (Consider also Jn 12:24 and 15:2. More talk about dying and the unceasing minideaths of pruning).

So the old illustration is true. There is a cross and a throne in every life. Either Christ is on the cross and our own ego is on the throne; or else he is enthroned as Lord and our selfish nature is crucified (observe: crucified, not executed. Crucifixion is a slow, lingering death, not sudden and momentary). Was not my baptism a symbol of it all? Bonhoeffer, seeing this clearly, wrote:

By baptism we were made partakers in the death of Christ. Through our baptismal death we have been condemned to death and have died just as Christ died once for all. There can be no repetition of his sacrifice. Therefore the baptised person dies in Christ once and for all. Now he is dead. The daily dying of the Christian life is merely the consequence of the one baptismal death, just as the tree dies after its roots have been cut away... From now on the baptised can know themselves only as dead men, in whom everything necessary for salvation has already been accomplished. The baptized live, not by a literal repetition of this death, but by a constant renewal of their faith in the death of Christ as his act of grace in us. The source of their faith lies in the once-for-allness of Christ's death, which they have experienced in their baptism. (The Cost of Discipleship, p. 210)

Paul spelled it out:

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication,

impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Col 3:5-10)

Popular Christianity

Now this is not the emphasis of popular Christianity. Rather, we are told from the television and radio pulpit that to become a Christian will guarantee economic prosperity and deliverance from sickness and pain. The crown of success, wealth, painless existence is snatched at without the willingness to shoulder the cross (daily). Paul condemned such religion in his day (see 1 Cor 4:8 and contrast verses 9-13 of the same chapter and also 2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:23-12:10).

The writer of the following verses had a theology more in accord with Jesus and Paul than with our contemporary popularists of a cut-rate gospel.

Am I a soldier of the cross, A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause?
Or blush to speak His name?
Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
Whilst others fought to win the
prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?
Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend of grace,
To help me on to God?
Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

True Christianity

Did you know that in this century more Christians have been martyred for their Lord than in all the other centuries combined? In South America, USSR, Africa and elsewhere the blood of Christians has been the seed of Christian harvests. And in all ages many of the most saintly followers of Christ have suffered most from the ravages of disease. William Carey's sister did more for the conversion

of India than her famous brother, but she did it all by prayer from her sickroom where she was confined for decades. Calvin wrote endless letters to kings and governors and church leaders, as well as commentaries on every book of the Bible except Revelation, but he also was riddled with disease which made his life a martyrdom. Joni Eareckson Tada represents a countless host of sufferers who learned from Romans 8:18-25 that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed when the curse is lifted at the end-time.

Please observe: the work of the Lord and the life of the true disciple always carry the Lord's own mark — the mark of the cross. God's work is never done under ideal circumstances, never done as we would choose for it to be done. And similarly the Christian life is not what most anticipate — it is not the removal of pain and trouble and care, it is something better, even the bestowing of the loving presence of Christ in every furnace fire or every swelling flood. In this life, not even the believer sees his ideals fully satisfied. Brokenness is our state till we receive a glorified body. There is no unthreatened peace down here, no crown without thorns. But it will not be so forever. As the Negro preacher repeated again and again: Today's Friday, (meaning crucifixion day) but Sunday's a-coming."

All this is wrapped up in the Christmas story of Bethlehem. We see the blood of the Christ child shed in circumcision. We hear the cries of the martyred infants in that quiet village. We smell the odors of the Judean stable and we touch the poverty-stamped swaddling clothes. But in and through it all, we see the glory of him who delights to work by paradox, who plants eternity in time, righteousness in the midst of sin, a Savior among beasts, that we who now suffer might one day reign.

Be Encouraged

If this Christmas you look about you and sigh for the smallness of the success of the gospel, if you look within and sigh again — this time over the smallness of your Christian growth, will you not remember that the Creator of the universe began the transformation

of the universe by planting a seed in the womb of a poor peasant girl, a seed so small that it could not be seen though it contained God himself? Will you not meditate on the fact that the decisive birthday of the world took place in a small inn of a small village of a small province of the world's smallest nation? Limitation and pain are not the signs that Satan is winning, they are often the signs that God is irresistibly at work trampling Satan under his feet. Was it not that way on the cross itself, even that cross imaged by the confines of the tiny manger of Bethlehem?

Recently I heard Dr. A. Campoli address a ministerial group with these words:

Here's the problem. Tell me about this Jesus that you propagate. Does He really incarnate Yahweh? Is He really the Jesus of the New Testament? Or do you preach a Jesus that in a sense incarnates the values of this democratic capitalist society? Tell me about this Jesus you preach. As I listen to the radio and to the television I'm scared. For the Jesus that is propagated in the world today has nothing to do with the Jesus of Scripture...one of the real problems that you are going to have is that if you start preaching the Jesus of Scripture you are going to run contrary to the value system of your congregation. My only response to this problem... — Well what's the point of spending your life preaching any other Jesus than the one of Scripture? Do you want to spend your life preaching about a Jesus who never existed? We could ask another question.

Do you want to live by a version of the gospel that has no reality? Or will you respond to the greatest adventure of all with the same eagerness that men and women have always responded with to ventures that challenged them with the possible loss of all things including life itself? Christmas and New Year run into each other. Therefore behold the Bethlehem event without the fashionable squint and resolve accordingly how to live in 1986.

We wish you, not a merry Christmas, but a blessed Christmas as the Spirit of God whispers to you the real truths of the gospel way to glory.

JESUS: MAN FOR TODAY

(A Christmas Reflection)

Noel Mason

We ought to choose some good man, and always have him before our eyes that we may live as if he watched us, and do everything as if he saw.

Seneca (c. 4 B.C. — A.D.65)

*Where do I go?
Follow the river.
Where do I go?
Follow the gulls.
Where is the something,
Where is the **someone**
That tells me why
I live and die?*

Hair



From the days of Seneca, the gentle stoic, to the authors of the modern, popular musical *Hair*, we have been searching for someone to believe in, someone to emulate, someone to explain why we live and die. Someone to solve the riddle of life. We have sensed that a gifted man or woman is of great value to millions of ordinary people. Many great persons have been set before us. Men like Socrates, Zeno, Aristotle, Plato, Buddha, Muhammad, Mao Tse-Tung, and Ghandi. Great leaders like Napoleon, Churchill and Kennedy have cast their spell upon us. Today, the idol is more likely to be a gifted entertainer, a singer, an actor or for most young people a sportsman, an outstanding quarterback or an athlete.

But the influence of the world's great men is always cut short by the revelation of their private lives. Sadly we learn that they are all too much like us. We are shocked to learn that our hero, our superstar, is addicted to drugs or has connections with the underworld, etc. To whom shall we turn?

When we look back into history we discover that one group of

people, more than any other, the Jews, expected someone to emerge who would show them the way. Someone who would satisfy the deepest longings of their hearts. A long-celebrated line of prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Daniel, etc — fanned this expectancy with their visions of a new world, a new age of everlasting peace and justice.

*Follow me and I will
make you fishers of
men. (Mk 1:17)*

In the fullness of time, from an unexpected quarter came the cry of excitement, "We have found the Messiah!" (Jn 1:41). Some fishermen looked up from their nets and saw a stranger, standing on the shore of Lake Galilee. Then, across the blue waters came the challenging invitation "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mk 1:17). It was Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

His Impact

The Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum, who listened to his first sermon, found that there was an unusual power in Jesus'

presence and teaching. "And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes...What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding regions of Galilee" (Mk 1:22, 27,28). Listening to his words and beholding his works, people from all walks of life felt themselves confronted with the evidence that here is the very presence of God.

In Jesus' day the leaders of Israel believed that the Spirit was quenched with the death of the last writing prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.¹ The lament of the Psalmist was the lament of many of the pious:

"There is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Ps 74:9). But in Jesus' presence many felt a new impulse of inspiration. His presence, his life was so inspiring that his followers felt the quenched Spirit had returned. Within a surprisingly short time after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples and thousands of others



THE CHRISTMAS MIRROR

Gillian Ford

Acknowledgment is made for the idea of the story to **Children's Gospel Story Sermons**, by Hugh T. Kerr, D.D. published by Fleming H. Revell, 1921.

I was once travelling through Europe and had a short stopover in Rome. We didn't stop long as it was so expensive, but I did so want to see the art museum in the Vatican. Because our plane was due to go, I had to run there by myself and run back — it was about three miles each way. I only had about twenty minutes in the museum but I could see what wonderful paintings there were in there.

Hugh Kerr tells the story of two young American girls who spent one winter in the city of Rome while their parents were there on business. The girls attended art school and were able to visit many museums including the one I told you I saw.

One Saturday they set out to see a painting



called "The Aurora" (that means "Dawn"). This painting represents the sunrise and pictures the chariot of the sun coming up through the clouds and driving away the dark. It's a picture of horses and clouds, young men and girls, and darkness and light. The man who painted it, Guido Reni didn't paint it on a canvas or even on a wall, but on a ceiling.

When the girls got to the palace where the picture was, they had to crane their necks to look up and see this wonderful painting. And it **was** wonderful with its beautiful colors and great golden background.

Can you imagine looking up at the sky at an airplane, an air balloon, or the stars for a long time. You know how after a while you get a crick in the neck or a backache. Your eyes get blurred and tired. Perhaps because you're young, it doesn't bother you at all, but I know it would

affect me like that.

That's what happened to the girls. They got stiff necks and finally had to look down, away from the ceiling to get their eyes and necks rested. As they looked down, amazingly they saw the painting again and found out they hadn't needed to look up at all. A mirror had been provided so they could see the ceiling easily. It was so much easier to relax and appreciate the painting.

Christmas is just a mirror. God's glory is revealed in it. For many centuries, men had been gazing up at the heavens trying to see God. How weary they had grown. But when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God came in him to earth. As Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men gazed upon the tiny face in that manger, they were looking into the very face of God. When Jesus grew up, he said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father."

So when you want to know what God is like, look at his mirror — Jesus. See Jesus as an obedient child. See him grown up loving everybody and taking care of their needs and sickness. See him weeping over the city of Jerusalem as he sees in the future the sorrows they will endure because of their naughty ways. See him telling the Pharisees off, but angry in a right way — not like us. See him in pain, dying on the cross for us, so that we may be saved from our sins and live forever. Kind, loving truth and goodness, caring for people, willing to die for his people — that's our Jesus, our mirror of what God the Father is like.

The Apostle Paul said once "By beholding we become changed." And it's true. As we look into the mirror of the life of Jesus and don't resist, we will be changed and become more like him. Won't you look this Christmas?

THE BEASTS FROM UNDER THE SEA

Gillian Ford

Daniel 7

In the ancient countries of the Far East there was a common story about how the world was first made. It told of a great battle between a warrior, storm god and a fierce dragon. In the conflict, the storm god won, split the dragon in two pieces and crushed its many heads (it supposedly had seven of them with ten horns). The story said that it was from these two parts of the dragon that the earth and skies were made. In some versions of the story, while the dragon was killed and thrown down into a huge underworld pit of water, it kept coming back to life. It was always trying to swim back up out of the sea and go wild, destroying the inhabitants of the earth.

Of course this was a pagan story and the Babylonians knew it very well. You can tell it wasn't a true story in the sense we understand "true." The Israelites learned it from their captors and many of the countries around them taught and believed it. And the Bible writers used it. There are many, many references in the Bible to this story or parts of it, if you know where to look. But there was a big difference in the way the Israelites and Babylonians thought about this story.

You see, the Babylonians, who held Daniel and many other Israelites captive, believed that there

were many gods in this world. The storm god and the dragon god in this story were just two out of a whole load of them. But Daniel and the tribe of Israel believed there was only one true God. So when the Bible writers used this story, they made the storm god become their God, Jehovah. They made the dragon into Satan. The pictures of God as a storm god and Satan as a dragon were taken from an "untrue" story — but what they taught — that God defeated Satan — was true.

The dragon was also sometimes called a sea serpent and you will find that throughout the Bible Satan is often called a dragon or a serpent. Books like the Psalms, Job and Jeremiah, use the picture of the dragon's head being crushed to describe the overthrow of wicked powers. The book of Revelation speaks about a war in heaven between Michael and the dragon and how the dragon is wounded unto death (it means actually killed) and thrown into the bottomless pit. The Apostle John who wrote it is referring directly to that old creation story. He used it to describe the battle between Christ and Satan and the fact that Jesus won.

Now back to Daniel. The first six chapters of Daniel are full of stories. Then there is a change. In chapter seven, Daniel lays down to rest and has a vivid dream. Because of it he is going to lose

a lot of nights' sleep. The rest of the book of Daniel is going to explain and add to this dream and its meaning for the future of Daniel and his people. But you'll see that chapter seven uses "pictures" that come from the old creation story we talked about.

The first things Daniel saw were a bunch of strange animals coming up to the surface of the sea one-by-one. They looked something like animals we know — at least the first three did but even they were mixtures. The fourth one was remarkably like the dragon in that old creation story. Yet they all had one thing in common. They all shared the same character as that old dragon Satan. We know that because they came from the same place. (You'll remember that in that old creation story, the dragon was thrown down into the bottomless pit at the bottom of the sea.)

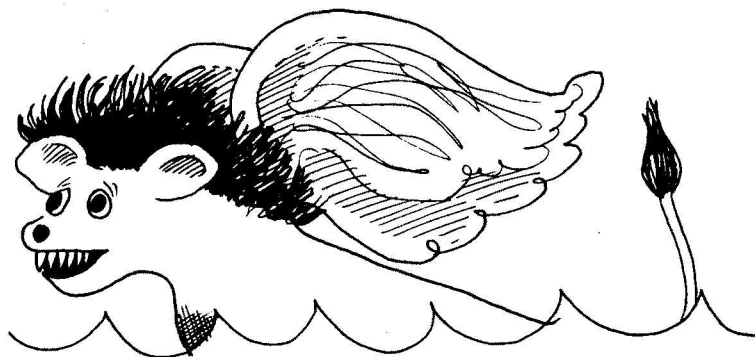
Now picture in your mind's eye these four funny animals coming up — a lion with eagle's wings, a lopsided bear with ribs in its mouth, a leopard with four heads and four sets of wings and another indescribably fierce beast with seven heads (Revelation 12:3) and ten horns and iron teeth. Now as you imagine them don't think of the sea as calm and quiet like glass. There's a violent storm going on with lots of wind and thunder and lightning and huge waves.

Sometimes when you read about the wind, the sea, animals and horns in the Bible, they mean exactly that. At other times in symbolic books like Daniel and Revelation, they mean something different.

You'll need to take my word for it that stormy winds mean unrest and revolution and war among the nations of the world and the great sea with its mighty waters means world powers that are hostile to God. Wild animals, according to the Jews, represented all those pagan nations around them who were enemies of Israel and Israel's God. Horns on the wild animals' heads represented kings. You see kings were thought of as leaders of their flock (just as animal flocks had leaders). Kings wore crowns made of horns, and so a horn came to represent a king leading his troops into battle.

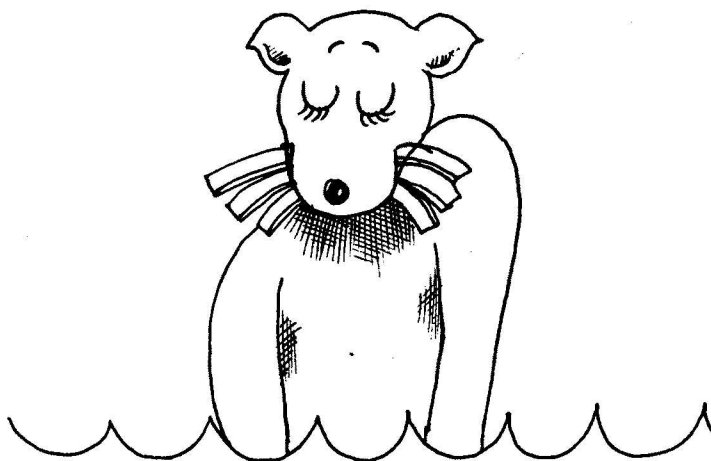
What Daniel is picturing here as the animals come up from the great sea are enemy nations rising up in the world, and the horns that sometimes came up and other times were torn out, were kings of those nations. The dream will tell us what is going to happen to the people of God right down to the end of the world.

You see, the first animal represented the kingdom of Babylon. Since gold was the king of



metals (remember Babylon was the head of gold in Daniel 2), the lion the king of animals, and the eagle the king of birds — this animal represented Babylon with her royal kingly dignity. At first it had wings to show its movement as it rapidly crossed the then known world enlarging its borders and conquering its neighbors. But later, as the Scripture says, it stood on its two feet like a man. It stopped warring and spreading its borders and concentrated on governing the kingdom it already had.

The second animal represented the kingdoms of Media and Persia which joined together as



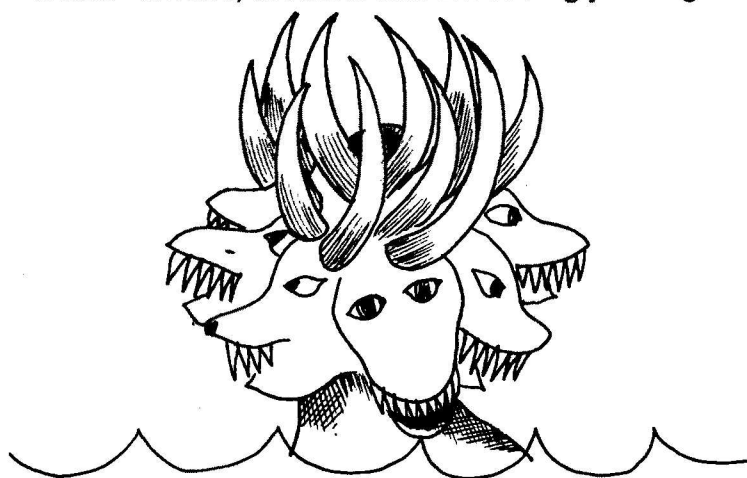
Medo-Persia to make one kingdom. It was a bear with one side lifted up higher than the other to show it was made up of two nations. Like a bear it was greedy, hungry and slow-moving. The three ribs it held in its mouth were the three main kingdoms it took over, including Babylon. If it had three legs or three arms in its mouth, you might think the other nations were only crippled but survived. But since it held ribs, you know those kingdoms were really defeated.

The third animal was a leopard with four heads and four wings. Here you have a fast animal (the leopard can really move) which has wings — so it's double fast. That describes the kingdom of Greece very well. It spread its kingdom with great speed. The four heads and four wings



represented the dividing of the kingdom of Greece under four leaders. Their names are hard to spell so I'll leave them out.

The fourth beast was a real fright. Daniel said it was "terrible, dreadful and exceedingly strong."



So here's a beast that is worse than all the others put together. It was more proud, more blaspheming, more brutal, more persecuting. An ordinary wild animal will kill for food but leave behind the parts of the body that it doesn't want. But this terrible beast stamps on what is left over with its feet and breaks it in pieces. It tries to devour the whole earth. It tells us in Daniel 7:7 that this animal has ten horns and if you look in Revelation 12:3 it says it had seven heads and ten horns. So this animal is the one from that old creation story. It's the worst animal, the worst nation and the most like that old dragon Satan in character. The Apostle John applies this animal to Rome and yet made it a symbol of an evil power that has popped up over and over in history. We call it Antichrist but more about that later.

And out of this nasty, nasty creature comes up another horn (so now it has eleven). It's just a little horn, a little king but he is even more violent than the beast itself. He even dug up three other horns. It was this little horn that made Daniel so dismayed as he thought about the terrible things this king would say about God and the terrible things he would do to Daniel's people.

But while the little horn was bad news to Daniel, you'll see next time that there's good news coming. God is not going to let all these wicked kings treat Daniel's people so terribly forever. No, the little horn is going to be zapped and God is going to set up his own kingdom on earth. We'll talk about it some more next time when we find out who that little horn is and how God is going to judge him.



were convinced that God had been present uniquely and finally in Jesus, in a way markedly different to the way he had been present in the great prophets of Israel. According to Martin Hengel, between A.D. 31-35 a Christological explosion took place in the earliest Christian community.² The law and the temple were displaced from the center of religion. Christ became the "water," the "bread" of life, in short "the way, the truth and the life." Jesus' earliest followers began to read the Old Testament in the light of their experience with Christ. They quickly saw that "all the promises of God find their yes in him" (2 Cor 1:20). C. F. D. Moule expressed the point well when he wrote:

On no other great figure in Judaism, before or since, have all the collective figures and images of the people of God been seen to converge: the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 (crushed, extinguished, but creating life and healing for others); the Son of Man of Daniel 7 (the loyal people of God, brought very low and vindicated in heaven); the Son of God of Exodus 4:23, Hosea 11:1 (chosen to have a close relation with his Father on behalf of man); the stone of Psalm 118:22f., rejected by the expert builders but, in the event, vindicated; the stone which, if trusted (Is 28:16), becomes the very foundation stone, but if rejected, a cause of downfall (Is 8:14). Indeed, over and above such symbols and metaphors, Jesus is seen as, collectively Israel...and more still, seen as collectively, Man, Adam.³

What an extraordinary impact! Within an incredibly short period of time the story of Jesus is proclaimed in poem, song and sermon from Jerusalem to Rome. Secular historians testify to the rapidly spreading flame of Christianity. Pliny, governor of Pontus and Bithynia complains of the aggressive expansion of the Christian superstition. It looked as if the world was being turned upside down! (Acts 17:6)

A Hoax?

But could it all have been a

hoax? Did the early Christian disciples go too far in their claims about Jesus? Too enthusiastic, maybe? We all know how stories about great people can get exaggerated. Could it be that the Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is a historical person but one overlaid with a lot of pious, religious imagination? Fortunately, we have examples of such imaginative versions of the life of Christ. For example, in the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus molds twelve little mud sparrows on the Sabbath day, and by clapping his hands causes them to fly away, to the amazement of Joseph, etc. But the portraits of Jesus in the canonical Gospels are of a different quality to those in the Apocryphal gospels. They bear all the marks of an authentic person, not that of a fanciful literary creation. Consider the judgment of one Christian scholar:

It is difficult for anyone, even a consummate master of imaginative writing, to create a picture of a deeply pure, good person moving about in an impure environment, without making him a prig or a prude or a sort of plaster saint.

The moral earnestness of the first Christian evangelists forbids the judgment that they were sincere yet deluded religious fanatics.

How comes it that, through all the Gospel traditions without exception, there comes a remarkably firmly-drawn portrait of an attractive young man moving freely about among women of all sorts, including the decidedly disreputable, without a trace of sentimentality, unnaturalness, or prudery, and yet, at every point, maintaining a simple integrity of character?

Is this because the environments in which the traditions were preserved and through which they were transmitted were peculiarly favourable to such a portrait? On the contrary, it seems that they were rather hostile to it.⁴

It is clear from the writings of the New Testament that the experience of the early Christian evangelists moves on a much deeper level than that of some overpious sectarians. The moral earnestness of the first Christian evangelists forbids the judgment that they were sincere yet deluded religious fanatics. Their testimony of Christ comes from the depth of their hearts. It was while he was in a Roman dungeon waiting for his execution that Paul wrote:

I rejoice in the Lord greatly... for I have learned, in whatever state I am to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. (Php 4:10-12)

Their experience of Christ as a power for good amidst all the adversities of first-century life is what motivated them to write the story of Jesus. Such an experience protected them from unrealistic, fanciful presentations of Christ. Their experience of the love of Christ was so strong that not even a brutal Roman flogging could quench their burning passion to tell the story of Jesus.

Jesus: Man for Today

Centuries have come and gone but the impact of Jesus is still being felt today. Dr. Hans Kung, in his book *On Being A Christian* writes:

None of the great founders of religions lived in so restricted an area. None lived for such a terribly short time. None died so young. And yet how great his influence has been: every fourth human being, about a thousand million human beings, are called Christians. Numerically, Christianity is well ahead of all world religions.⁵

Centuries of time seem to have only increased his power and influence upon the world. His word has come true, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away" (Mt 24:35). Jesus is still the man for today. Paradoxically, he is that because he is nobody's man. Throughout history men have tried to fit him into their scheme

of things. But always he breaks free.

He did not belong to the establishment nor to the revolutionary party, but neither did he want to opt out of ordinary life, to be an ascetic monk. Obviously he did not adopt the role which a saint or a seeker after holiness, or even a prophet, is frequently expected to play. For this he was too normal in his clothing, his eating habits, his general behavior... (So he became a) *skandalon*, a small stone over which one might stumble... He was attacked on all sides. He had not played any of the expected roles: for those who supported law and order he turned out to be a provocateur, dangerous to the system. He disappointed the activist revolutionaries by his nonviolent love of peace... he offended the passive, world-forsaking ascetics by his uninhibited worldliness. And for the devout who adapted themselves to the world he was too uncompromising. For the silent majority he was too noisy and for the noisy minority he was too quiet, too gentle for the strict and too strict for the gentle. He was an obvious outsider.⁶

He is no different today. The Jesus of history is the Christ of faith. He will not be tamed and domesticated. In himself he will always be the *crucified-risen* savior

of the world (1 Cor 1:23). We may try to make him in our image — a charismatic wonder-worker perhaps, — but the historical Jesus who saw himself primarily as the suffering Son of Man won't fit that category.

Is Jesus Relevant?

Some impatiently ask: But how can someone who lived two-thousand years ago be relevant to us today? The answer is simple. Jesus didn't major in minors. He spoke about the timeless things, the great constants of life and history. Things like our relationship to God and other people, love, forgiveness, sin, guilt and death, etc. A little knowledge of history and one modern newspaper is enough to show that human nature has not changed.

It is impressive to read the Gospel of Mark noting how Jesus' ministry immediately focuses on big things. Consider one example — the forgiveness of sins. Early in Jesus' ministry we hear the assuring words "My son, your sins are forgiven" (Mk 2:6). It was this controversial act that antagonized the pious of his day. Finally, they conspired to kill him. Jesus died for his insistence that God's forgiving grace was available for those beyond the boundaries of the law. Was it worth it? "Everyone who knows what it is to be forgiven," wrote James Denney, "knows also that forgiveness is the greatest regenerative force in the

life of man."⁷ That's exactly what our modern world needs — a great regenerative force! We can only look to one for such a force — the crucified-risen Christ.

This Christmas season let us reflect on that one solitary life that has the power to change the world. Let us take time to hear his voice. He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside. He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which we shall pass through in His fellowship and, as an ineffable mystery, we shall learn in our own experience who He is...⁸ Jesus the Man for today! How shall we respond to his command — "Follow me"? There's only one way — with single minded devotion — with our hands and our feet!

1. J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 81
2. M. Hengel, *Between Jesus And Paul*, p. 42
3. C. F. D. Moule, *The Birth Of The New Testament*, p. 81,88
4. C. F. D. Moule, *The Phenomena Of The New Testament*, pp. 63ff
5. Hans Küng, *On Being A Christian*, p. 150
6. *Ibid*, p. 200
7. J. Denney, *Christian Doctrine Of Reconciliation*, p. 6
8. This is an adaptation of Albert Schweitzer's famous statement. See *Quest*, p. 403

Questions and Answers

Q. What is the literal meaning of the word so often translated "iniquity" in our English Bibles? I find a variety of translations.

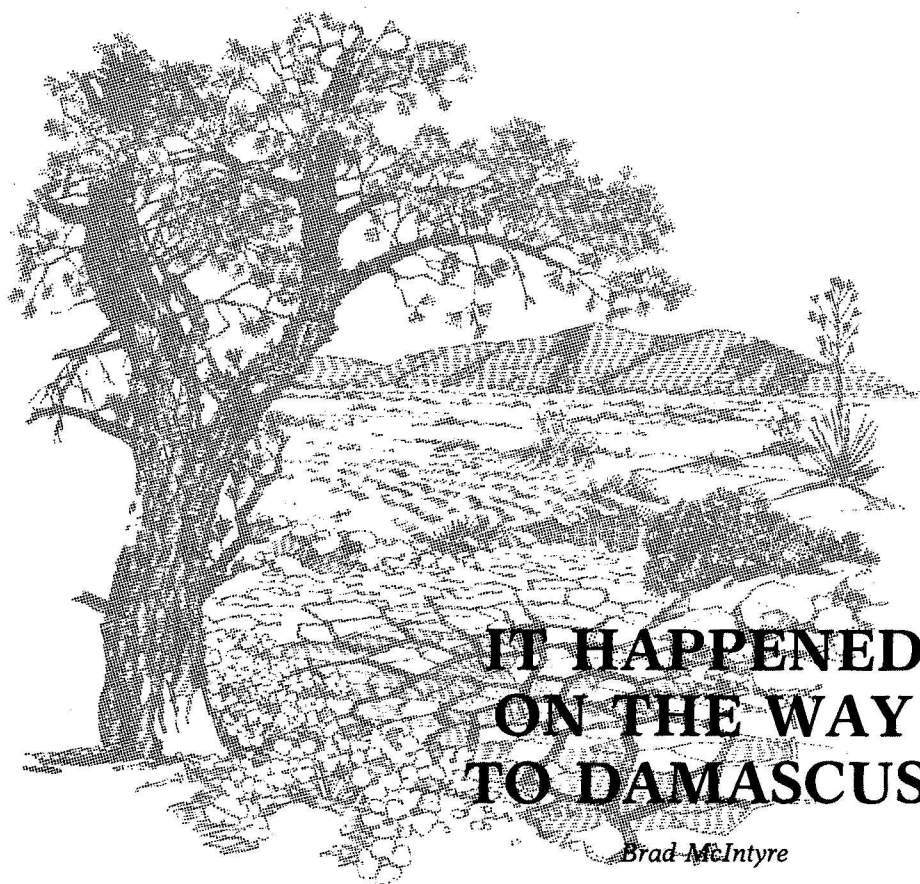
A. The Greek term is *anomia* and its precise translation is "lawlessness." In its various forms the root appears about twenty times in the New Testament. Well-known instances include Matthew 7:23 "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity"; 1 John 3:4 "sin is transgression of the law," 2 Thessalonians 2:3 "that man of sin." It is Matthew's favorite term for evil being found more often in his Gospel than any other book of the New Testament. Thus, it appears not only in the Sermon on the Mount but also the address from the Mount of Olives. In the latter we read that in the last days "lawlessness shall abound" (Mt 24:12). Even Paul could find no stronger description for Antichrist than that he would be "that man of lawlessness." Young's translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:7 has "the secret of the lawlessness;" verse 8: "the Lawless One," and Rotherham, Williams, and Moffatt render similarly. These translators have not only given the literal meaning of the Greek but also recognized that Paul is alluding to Daniel 7:25 which predicted the coming of one who would "change times and laws."

The Hebrew and Greek terms for law signify direction or standard. Thus they came to assume larger meanings such as the system or books which embodied God's directions for behavior, i.e. Judaism and the Old Testament. But wherever translators have used "iniquity" or similar terms the narrower and original meaning of law is involved. The very essence of evil according to Christ and the apostles of the New Testament is to deliberately transgress divine precepts.

When we come to the last writer of Scripture, John the Apostle, we

find that he never uses the simple word for law (1 Jn 3:4 uses not *nomos* but *anomia*) inasmuch as in preceding decades there had been much wrangling in the church over how much of the ancient system of Judaism given that name still applied as duty. Furthermore, Paul too had in his defense of justification again and again repudiated all lawkeeping (even of NT precepts such as "the new commandment") as a *method* of righteousness, and stressed also the limitations of the old system compared with the light of revelation's high noon brought by Christ and the Spirit. In view of these negative connotations for law (as applied to legalism and the Mosaic system) we can see the divine wisdom that led John to avoid the term. In its place he used in the last book of the New Testament three terms associated with the Decalogue — a standard whose principles, all of them, are taken for granted in the New Testament as still relevant (see, for example, Mt 19:17-19; Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:5-9; 1 Tim 1:8-11). These three are *diatheke*, *entolai*, and *marturion* or to give their English equivalents, covenant, commandments, and testimony. See Revelation 11:19; 14:12; 12:17; 15:5 and compare Exodus 34:28-29: "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand..." The first two terms, covenant and commandments, often have a much broader meaning than the Decalogue, but the third term, testimony, when used in association with the tabernacle in both testaments always and only means the Ten Commandments. Thus, when Revelation 15:5 speaks of the heavenly temple as the tabernacle of the testimony it is saying that it is the place of God's eternal law — the Decalogue, though undoubtedly now to be understood in heights and depths such as the Old-Covenant people never fully perceived. Antinomianism (opposition to law) is a Christian heresy and finds no support in the New Testament.

—Desmond Ford



IT HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO DAMASCUS

Brad McIntyre

Conversion is a life-changing experience. It represents a radical shift in one's self-understanding. Perhaps the most famous conversion of all is that of the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. A lot of ink has been spilled over Paul's conversion and I plan to spill some more!

I specifically want to explore how Paul's conversion transformed his view of the law. Often, when discussing the role of the law in Paul, we pass by his conversion as if it's immaterial. But I believe Paul's conversion is the key to understanding his approach to the law.

This article merely begins to sort out the thorny issue of Paul and the law. It is not an exhaustive study. Instead, I will explore what I feel is the primary root of Paul's attitude toward the law, namely, *his conversion on the road to Damascus*.

Understanding Paul

However, our biggest mistake in reading Paul is to think we understand him. We come to Paul's writings with preconceived images of who he is, what he believes, and what he's fighting against.

For example, we sometimes view Paul as a first-century Martin Luther struggling against legalism. But is this true? Is it fair to interpret Paul through the experience of Martin Luther or even from the perspective of our own experience? The voice of the "real" Paul is often drowned out by the noise of our own ideas of who Paul is (or should be!).

We can also neutralize Paul by "balancing" him with other parts of the NT. If Paul says something that sounds a bit unorthodox to us, we immediately offset him with some other NT text. In other words, sometimes it's hard to take Paul straight, on his own terms. We dilute his uniqueness by harmonizing what he says with everything else in the NT. Let's allow Paul to speak for himself without playing him off against the rest of the NT writings.

What follows will challenge some of our traditional views of Paul. It is designed to stimulate rather than indoctrinate.

Our Starting Place

Paul's conversion is the best starting place for understanding his view of the law. Don't let the

simplicity of this statement fool you! Read it again.

What am I saying? Mainly this: Paul's theology flows from his experience of the risen Christ. *The law did not lead Paul to Christ; Christ forced Paul to rethink the law.* Do you see the difference?

You might say, Paul's theology flowed downward — from God's deed to our need, not vice versa. Paul doesn't start with sin and work toward Christ as a logical solution; he starts with the solution (Christ) and works backward to the problem (sin).

What does this mean in regard to the law? *To Paul, Christ is everything, and everything is to be validated by Christ.* If the law, therefore, continues to be valid in any way for Christians, it is only in relation to Christ. The law apart from Christ has no binding authority. This does not mean the entire law is abolished. But it does mean that Christ is the supreme authority for the Christian, not the law.

Therefore, Damascus is the starting place for understanding Paul, for there Paul met the risen Christ and came away transformed.

Damascus Revisited

What happened that day on the Damascus road? As you recall, Acts pictures Paul as a raving fanatic:

But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (8:3)

Apparently, Paul wasn't content to clean house in Jerusalem only. He chased Christians all the way to Damascus with orders from the Jewish high priest (Acts 9:1-2). Notice that Paul was attacking *Jewish* Christians. The first Christians were Jewish and never considered themselves to be non-Jews. But Paul fought them because they preached a crucified Messiah and threatened to undermine the authority of the temple and the law of Moses (Acts 6:13). Paul carried out his holy war against these Jewish heretics.

As Paul traveled to Damascus, Christ appeared to him in a stunning vision (Acts 9:3-7; 22:6-11). Two insights turned Paul's life upside down. First, he saw the risen Christ and could not

longer deny that Jesus of Nazareth was God's appointed Messiah. Shortly after arriving in Damascus, Paul went to the synagogues and preached Christ (Acts 9:20-22).

Second, Paul received his special commission to preach Christ to the Gentiles — the non-Jews. He becomes the official defense attorney for the pagans! Actually, Paul's "conversion" is really a call rather than a conversion in the traditional sense. Paul was not asked to repent but to "Go!" (Gal 1:16; Rom 11:13-14; Acts 9:15-16).

Why should these two insights affect Paul's understanding of the law?

A crucified Messiah was blasphemy within Judaism. Jesus could not be God's Chosen One. After all, his crucifixion proved he was a fraud. Moses said, "Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree" (Dt 21:23). God himself cursed Jesus of Nazareth on the cross. How, then, could he be the Messiah?

But Paul encountered the risen Christ and knew he was alive. The resurrection was a fact after all. Obviously God's opinion of Jesus differed from Judaism's! Yet why the cross? Here is where Paul begins to reason backward from God's solution to humanity's plight. The cross is a solution to something, but to what? If the Son of God had to die, sin must be exceedingly sinful. Further, if the cross is the only way to God, then the law isn't.

Please note these two important characteristics of Paul's theology: *the radical nature of sin and the weakness of the law*. Both these insights are deduced from Paul's new understanding of the cross.

But that's not all. Christ sent Paul to the Gentiles. What a switch! Even the pagans were children of Abraham by faith in Christ without having to pass through the law. Moreover, the Jews were no better off than the Gentiles; they too must trust in Christ despite their lawkeeping. Both Jew and Gentile are "equally culpable" yet "equally capable" of salvation through faith in Christ. This is the shocking message of Romans 3:9, 22-24:

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all

men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin. . . . There is no distinction; since all [Jew and Gentile] have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (cf. Rom 3:29-30; 10:12-13; Gal 2:15-16)

What is happening here? A very radical thing. Paul announces a gospel of universal salvation and thereby dispenses with Jewish privilege. "For God does not show favoritism" (Rom 2:11). Suddenly, the law is no longer a trump card in Israel's hand. Faith in Christ is the sole ground of salvation for Jew as well as for Gentile. If you have Jesus, you win the game!

Paul the Jew is a timeless example of legalism; he's a case study in "how not to get saved."

These two reasons then — the death of Christ and the inclusion of the Gentiles — turned Paul's view of the law upside down.

Why then the law? You can see the logic of the question. Christ now forces Paul to rethink his Jewish theology. From his Christ-centered perspective, *Paul works backward* to discover the role of the law in God's plan of salvation. Christ is not shaped to fit the framework of the law. The law is shaped to fit the framework of Christ.

Paul the Super Jew

Paul's gospel was not the result of a long, arduous spiritual struggle, but the surprising revelation of a new perspective on salvation. "It came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12).

Why is this so important? Because often we view Paul the Pharisee as knocking himself out trying to work his way to heaven. Paul the Jew is a timeless example of legalism; he's a case study in "how not to get saved." There he is, struggling to gain righteousness by lawkeeping but failing miserably. "Wretched man that I am!" he cries (Rom 7:24). Then he discovers the gospel and is

liberated ever after.

Maybe this was Martin Luther's experience or even yours, but I doubt it was Paul's. On the contrary, I see Paul as a happy Pharisee, and quite a successful one too. Listen to his own words:

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers (Gal 1:13-14).

Paul graduated at the head of his class in Jewish seminary and anticipated a bright future as he climbed the ranks of Judaism. Was he burdened by the law? He was "extremely zealous" for it, so zealous, in fact, that he persecuted Christians.

In Philippians 3 Paul writes that he was,

circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; regarding righteousness under the law, I was blameless (vv. 5-6).

Notice how Paul acknowledges that there *is* such a thing as "righteousness under the law," and he had it! Paul's fidelity to the law was "blameless." He flaunted his perfect pedigree and paraded his privileges as a Jew.

Someone may be asking, "But how could Paul claim perfection?" He didn't. He said his fidelity to the law was blameless; he never said he was sinless. There is a big difference.

We sometimes think blamelessness means sinlessness. We think that to be righteous is to be sinless. But the Jews of Paul's day did not think in terms of sinless perfection. To them, righteousness meant loyal observance of the Torah — the law of Moses — not sinless perfection. Every person possessed an evil as well as a good impulse, therefore, sinlessness was impossible. G. E. Ladd points out, the 'righteous' man is not the one who obeys the law flawlessly, but he alone who *strives* to regulate his life by the Law.¹

Paul was not claiming to be sinless when he said he was blameless. He was establishing his status as a loyal Jew dedicated to living in harmony with the Torah, striving to do so, and repenting when he failed. This is why we must rethink our traditional stereotype of Paul as a frustrated Pharisee striving for sinless perfection by his own efforts at lawkeeping.

There is no sign that Paul chafed under the law like Martin Luther or that he had personal difficulty fulfilling what he understood to be the requirements of the law.² We sometimes use Romans 7 to describe Paul's conscious experience of frustration under the law. Indeed, Romans 7 is an interpretation of Jewish existence under the law, but it is a *Christian* interpretation. Paul did not view Judaism this way until after his conversion! It was Christ who opened his eyes to see the futility of life under law.³ Therefore, Romans 7 does not describe what factors led Paul to Christ. It reveals Paul's assessment of Jewish life in light of Christ.

Paul did not surrender his sins when he came to Christ, but he did give up his achievements. Paul let go of his *successful* life in Judaism in order to gain Christ (Php 3:7-9).

The Heart of the Matter

Paul is famous for his teaching

on "righteousness by faith." This teaching says faith in Christ alone makes a person right with God. You can't merit God's favor by obeying the law. You might be a supermoral person, but so what? All your morality, all your religion, all your achievements count for nothing as far as salvation is concerned. The only way to God is through faith in Christ plus nothing. Apart from Christ, your morality will accompany you to the grave — forever.

Now, why did Paul reach such a conclusion? Because he realized the law could not be kept? No. Because he saw that sinless perfection was impossible? No. Because he struggled for years to earn God's favor by his own efforts only to fail in the end? No. Then why?

Because God decreed that salvation should come through Christ not through law. It isn't that the law cannot be kept or that the law is ungodly. Simply put, the law can't save (Gal 3:21-22). Life comes another way, through Christ. Thus the law has no saving power in a Christian's life. The law loses by default.

Judaism had one main flaw: it was Christless. Paul the Pharisee certainly kept the law, but it was a Christless obedience. *It wasn't that the law could not be kept, but that God ordained that righteousness*

should come another way, through faith in Christ. Paul's lawkeeping, no matter how blameless, was still Christless. Such obedience bypassed the cross and nullified the grace of God (Gal 2:21).

This insight followed the Damascus road experience. Once Paul discovered Christ, that was it for Judaism despite his success as a Pharisee. He saw that even successful lawkeeping could not make a person right with God. His motto became "Christ only."

Conclusion

How is it with us? Is Christ the center of our faith? Are all doctrines and practices validated by Christ alone? Further, who are the modern-day Gentiles we shun? How often are we like the Jews, boasting in our favored status before God?

God offers us a new experience leading to a new perspective. The experience is Christ. The perspective is the radical grace of God which destroys all barriers and moves toward that ultimate unity of all things in Jesus Christ.

1. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1974), p. 498.
2. Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Fortress Press, 1976), p. 13.
3. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 238.

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Letters

Gospel Feast

Sirs:

Thank you for the Portland GNU blessing! We truly appreciated the gospel feast. We brought a friend who was questioning and not attending church. He was so blessed and impressed with the Friday night sermon by Des. He wonders if you have a tape of that sermon. He so much wants a copy of it. Please let us know.

C.W., Boring, Oregon

Follow God's Leading

Sirs:

I have for some time considered sending you money as a donation for your efforts in contributing to a greater awareness of the gospel among Christians. I am particularly grateful to you for your efforts to bring the gospel to my own church.

I understand that a large part of your ministry is also directed at the masses of people in America and around the world who have never had a true introduction to Jesus Christ. May you continue to follow God's leading in this endeavor.

Because I am a student and my finances are not such that I can afford a larger donation, I will only send \$10.00 for now. I receive your magazine and I'm enjoying it.

By the way, Mr. Ford answered

a letter I sent to Good News Unlimited while I was in Canada. It was a very kind thing to do and I appreciated it very much. You people have a touch of class! B.R., Lincoln, Nebraska

Blessing from the Word

Sirs:

Just a short note to let you know how much I have appreciated some of the Tapes of the Month I've received recently. Ron Allen's message entitled "Learning to Groan Quietly," and Brad McIntyre's "What's Your Task?" were both such a blessing from the Word!

Please find enclosed a check for the Lord's work through GNU. I have decided to send my tithe to you because of a heartfelt conviction regarding your work there. May the Lord advance the pure gospel of His Son through you and others like you.

Also, you will find enclosed a check in the amount of \$15.00. Could you please send me 4 more copies of *Good News For Adventists*? And thank you so much for printing this magazine. It accomplished its goal of defining the beginning, function, and purpose of GNU, as well as making clear your position on certain issues from a biblical perspective. A number of those I have shared this magazine with have really been helped. In

addition, please send me a copy of the message, "Law, Liberty, and Life," which I heard on KAIM Radio in Honolulu the week of October 21st. Thank you again for being there.

J.W., Honolulu, Hawaii

A Short Note

Sirs:

Thanks so very much for the wonderful tapes you send us and *Good News Unlimited*. We thank you! We are so sorry we were not able to hear you in Portland. We did so want to come. If you come to Walla Walla again, please let us know — that is only 80 miles from us. Thank you again. Please pray for us.

R.L., Grandview, Washington

Senior Citizen's Highlight

Sirs:

I listen to Dr. Ford every afternoon, if possible, on KFIA, Sacramento. May your "good news" continue. It is the highlight of what might be a long afternoon for those of us who are "Senior Citizens." May your new year be even more fruitful than the past one. My prayers ascend each day for your continuing success.

H.T., Sacramento, California

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