

The Restoration of All Things

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Judging Righteously	1
Chapter 2: Universalism vs. Restorationism	5
Chapter 3: The Ages	9
Chapter 4: Every Knee Will Bow	13
Chapter 5: Adam vs. Jesus Christ	17
Chapter 6: All Things Under His Feet	21
Chapter 7: The Laws of Redemption	25
Chapter 8: The Covenant with the Four Beasts	29
Chapter 9: David's Prophecies	37

Chapter 1

Judging Righteously

Acts 3:20 and 21 says,

²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, ²¹ whom the heavens must receive [*dechomai*, "accept, receive, take"] until the times of the restitution ["restoration"--NASB] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

It is a function of the Elijah ministry to "restore all things" (Matt. 17:11), and Acts 3:21 above tells us that this ministry of restoration was prophesied throughout the Old Testament ("since the world began"). Thus, we should expect to find it clearly referenced not only in the New Testament, but all through the Old as well.

The need for restoration in the ages to come implies that the world has become corrupted and is in need of restoration. The verse also tells us that the second coming of Christ will bring about this restoration, for "the heavens must receive" Him until this time of restoration begins.

Normally, Christians are taught that Jesus is coming back soon--and boy is He mad! We are afflicted with Jonathan Edwards' "Angry God" Syndrome, instead of the biblical view of the God of Love as manifested in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is indeed coming to judge the world, for all judgment has been committed to Him (John 5:27). But judgment is not synonymous with condemnation. The Greek word for judgment is also the word for discernment. To judge means to rightly divide the word of truth. Once a judge has heard from the witnesses and has discerned who is lying and who is telling the truth, he is able to render a proper judgment in the case to restore the lawful order. He then may judge the sinner by making him pay restitution, or he may judge the righteous by justifying or acquitting him.

Both types of judgment are done out of a heart of love, for love pursues the truth, and where there is offense (sin), love corrects the sinner through the judgment of the law. The sinner's heart may be self-centered and hardened, of course, and thus from his viewpoint, the law is evil, but this perception is an illusion. The purpose of the law is to correct the sinner and restore the lawful order.

And so, the divine judgments that are coming upon the earth are meant to restore all things, not to destroy all things. The law destroys the sin, not the sinner, and the law's judgments destroy the sin from the earth, rather than destroying the earth itself.

If we aspire to be overcomers that will rule and reign with Him as "priests" in the age to come (Rev. 20:6), then we should now be in training for the priesthood. This does not necessarily require going to seminary, but it does require learning how to judge (discern truth). Paul alludes to this in 1 Cor. 6:2 and 3, when he says,

² Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . ³ Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Many have this idea that only Jesus will judge the world. We are taught a distorted view of Matt. 7:1, which says, "*Judge not that you be not judged.*" While it is true that we will be judged according to our own standard of measure (as the law itself teaches), Paul chides the Corinthian Church for not having anyone who can judge their internal disputes in a godly fashion (1 Cor. 5:4, 5).

Was Paul contradicting Jesus? No, of course not. A mature believer who knows the law and understands the mind of its Author renders righteous judgments (decisions). Such a judge takes this job seriously, knowing that if he renders judgments that are contrary to the divine law, he will be held accountable even in this present life. Why? Because God will teach him by personal experience. He will probably have to experience the same kind of wrong judgment laid upon himself that he decided earlier.

I say this, by the way, because I had to learn this lesson the hard way myself. But having gone through it, I now thank God for always judging me according to the standard of my own measure when I judged others unrighteously. It taught me what it feels like to be falsely accused or to be judged more harshly than the law allows.

In past ages God has been training judges for the age to come, that they might partake of the Elijah ministry to "restore all things," as Jesus said. Paul himself was in training as a judge, and we get a glimpse of his concept of judgment in 2 Cor. 5:14 and 15,

¹⁴ For the love of Christ constrains us, because WE THUS JUDGE, that if One died for all, then are all dead; ¹⁵ and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.

What kind of judgment is that? He is saying that Christ died for all, or on behalf of all. Therefore, all are dead (because all are identified with Christ in His death). The result of this is that they will live no more for themselves (selfishly) but rather will live for Christ who died for them and rose again.

This is an incredible statement that not many have fully grasped— simply because it seems too good to be true. Yet Paul enlarges upon this in the next verses, telling us the message that we are to give to the world as ambassadors of Christ and His Kingdom:

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled US to himself by Jesus Christ and has given to US the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing THEIR trespasses unto THEM; and has committed unto US the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be YE reconciled to God.

Take note especially how Paul speaks of "us" and "them." We who have become believers are "us." We are ambassadors giving a message to "them," that is, to "the world" of unbelievers. What is our message? It is "the word of reconciliation." We are to tell the world that God is "*not imputing their trespasses unto them.*"

This statement is so foreign to Christians today that their minds often cannot grasp what Paul is saying. Because Christians have been taught so thoroughly about the Angry God who judges sinners, they have a difficult time taking Paul at his word. They make excuses for Paul saying, "*Well, he could not possibly mean this, because of all the other verses dealing with divine judgment upon sinners. So we have to be careful not to take this out of context with all of those other verses about divine judgment.*"

I agree that we should always take things in context, as long as we do not make the "context" contradict the present passage.

Paul says we are ambassadors. An ambassador represents his government and is its spokesman. As ambassadors we represent Jesus Christ to the world. Our message boils down to this: "*that God was in Christ reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing THEIR trespasses unto THEM.*"

Secondly, our message is an appeal for THEM to be reconciled to God (vs. 20). It is apparent that they are not currently reconciled to God, otherwise there would be no need for such a message to be given. How, then, can God not impute their trespasses unto them, seeing that they are not yet reconciled to God? Does it not require belief in Christ and the Cross to avoid the judgment for one's trespasses?

Yes, of course it does. That is made abundantly clear all through Scripture. We will resolve this dilemma as we continue.

Chapter 2

Universalism vs. Restorationism

Jesus said in Matt. 7:1, "*Judge not, lest you be judged.*" But Paul said in 1 Cor. 6:2, "*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?*" Paul chides the Church for not having anyone capable of judging disputes within the Church. Did Paul contradict Jesus? Not at all.

We make thousands of judgments every day. Every decision is a judgment, for we decide which path to take is the right one and which is the wrong one. To judge and to discern come from the same Greek word. We need the gift of spiritual discernment to judge what is true and what is false. Furthermore, God created authority (Rom. 13:1; John 5:27) to judge disputes between men. Jesus' statement was a warning not to judge by one's own personal view but to discern by the Spirit. In that way our judgment will not be our own, but the Father's.

There are those who teach that all judgment is wrong, making no distinction between discernment and condemnation. Likewise, they make no distinction between issuing imperfect judgment from the mind of man and perfect judgment which comes from God.

Those who are afraid of being God's judges are really afraid of the authority that God has given those called to rule (as overcomers). Perhaps many such people are not called to rule at all and thus have no unction to learn how to judge righteously. I can only say that in my experience with God, I see that He is training me—often by trial and error—how to judge righteously by the mind of Christ.

Half of this training is in studying the word. The other half is in developing the spiritual gifts, particularly that of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment (1 Cor. 12:8-10). It is important to study the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) in our search for truth. But this not enough. There is a spiritual side of us that must be developed, because it is the Holy Spirit that leads us into all truth (John 16:13).

We are to worship Him in spirit and in truth—BOTH. Many groups specialize in Bible study to learn truth, but they neglect the spiritual gifts. Others focus so much upon experiencing spiritual gifts that they neglect the study of Scripture. The winning combination is a balance of both spirit and truth.

Many have been hampered in the past by the teaching that the law has been discarded or "put away." They do not realize that Jesus affirmed the law (Matt. 5:17-19) and that Paul "established" it (Rom. 3:31). Paul makes it clear that the law's purpose has NEVER been to justify anyone, but rather to give us the knowledge of what sin is (Rom. 3:20). John says point blank that "*sin is lawlessness*" (1 John 3:4).

The putting away of the law essentially had the effect of legalizing sin so that men could then commit whatever sin they chose with immunity from divine prosecution. If our government were to follow the example of the Church (and it has), it would legalize such things as sexual sins, abortion, and the "right" of government officials to lie to the public for the sake of "national security." Others are pressing to legalize certain drugs, which, if successful, would eliminate a great deal of "sin" (crime) in America and greatly reduce the prison population.

Paul says, "*where there is no law, neither is there violation*" (Rom. 4:15). In order for something to be a sin there must be a law that makes that act a sin. Putting away the law is man's way of legalizing or decriminalizing sin. God's way is to recognize the law and then pay its full penalty, as Jesus did on the cross.

With this in mind, let us go back to Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 5 and the ministry of reconciliation. Paul says in verse 19 that our message is that God is not imputing the world's trespasses unto them. The Universalist view, as developed some centuries ago, is that the law was put away at the cross; therefore, there is no more sin to impute to the world. This is how God saves everyone, they say. Without law, there is no accountability for sin, for Paul says in Rom. 3:19,

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God.

It is one thing to say that the world has no sin at all; it is quite another to say that God is not *imputing* their sin to them. The first statement says that sin no longer exists; the second recognizes the existence of sin, but says that Jesus has paid the penalty for sin on the cross. The first destroys the law; the second honors the law enough to pay its full demand.

Universalism seeks to save all mankind by destroying the law, which would then make its violation impossible, regardless of what a man might do to his neighbor. The events of 9-11-01? That was not murder, they would say. There is no such thing as murder, because the law against murder was repealed at the cross.

Obviously, I do not teach Universalism. I teach "Restorationism," and since I coined the word in this context, I have the privilege of defining it. It is the belief that all of creation will be restored and reconciled to Him, not by putting away the law, but by paying its full penalty. Secondly, while Jesus obtained the FACT of salvation for all men, the TIMING of salvation differs and depends upon which "squadron" (Greek: *tagma*) one is in. 1 Cor. 15:22 and 23 say,

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order [*tagma*, "squadron"].

There is more than one resurrection coming. The first "squadron" will be those who are called to rule and reign with Him (Rev. 20:4-6). The second group will be those believers who are raised along with all the unbelievers (John 5:28, 29; Luke 12:46) at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-13). This second group of believers will miss the first resurrection and will not reign with Christ during the thousand years in the Tabernacles Age to come. Nonetheless, they will certainly be "saved yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). Jesus made it clear in Luke 12:46-49 that those servants of God who mistreated others would receive a "flogging" before being given their reward.

The third group will be the unbelievers themselves, *after their time of judgment has been completed*, for there will be a Jubilee at the end of time according to the law, wherein all of creation will be set free in the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21).

The primary distinction between Universalism and Restorationism is in this matter of divine judgment. The one makes no provision for any judgment, no accountability for past actions, and makes spiritual growth unnecessary and irrelevant in the end. The other view recognizes the reality and seriousness of sin, pays its full penalty as the law demands for the ultimate reconciliation of creation, and yet saves believers by faith and unbelievers through judgments, discipline, and spiritual growth.

The judgments of God are established in the law itself. In the law, there is no sin worthy of torture in a literal fire. The fire is the "fiery law" itself (Deut. 33:2). His Word is like a fire (Jer. 23:29), for its purpose is to cleanse, purify, and burn out the dross in order to bring forth a perfect, finished product. This is seen especially in the fact that the "flogging" that the second group of believers receive is spoken of in terms of "fire," even though they are not burned in any literal sense. Luke 12:49 concludes that passage with Jesus' statement:

⁴⁹ I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!

Jesus was not yearning for the day when people would be tortured in a literal fire forever and ever. The "fire" he was casting into the earth was already defined in the previous verses as few or many lashes, taken directly from the law in Deut. 25:2 and 3,

² Then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. ³ He may beat him forty times but no more, lest he beat him with many more stripes than these, and your brother be degraded in your eyes.

There was a limit on the number of lashes that a sinner could receive for misdemeanors, even as there was a limit on the number of years that felons would have to be enslaved. The Jubilee law limited the time of enslavement and disinheritance to a maximum of 49 years (Lev. 25:10). Such is the grace in the law of Jubilee and in the law of beatings. The justice of God does not include endless punishment. Neither does the grace of God come without justice.

Thus, in the end of the "lake of fire," when the "fire" has done its work, sin will have been fully purged and creation restored. The law sentences no one to be tortured, for torture is only justified in the traditions of men. Instead, unbelievers (felons) are to be "sold" and placed under the authority of a righteous man who will teach him righteousness by discipline (if necessary) and labor. Yet even for felons there is a Jubilee, for on that day all debt (liability for sin) is cancelled, and every man is restored to his own inheritance (Lev. 25:40, 41).

God's purpose for creation will then be fulfilled, and God will be a success, not a failure.

The Jubilee is the law of grace, where every man's debt is cancelled whether or not they have paid their full debt. And yet the time preceding this Jubilee is the time of judgment and discipline for the sinner, during which time he learns righteousness. Isaiah 26:9 says,

⁹ For when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

The prophet understood the purpose of the divine law and knew that it was designed to bring people to repentance and restoration, not to destroy them for all time or to endlessly torture them. The law makes provision for a sinner to be “sold” into the hands of another (Ex. 22:3). The judge determines the length of sentence according to the amount of debt that the sinner owes his victims. In this case, of course, the debt will be too much for any sinner to repay, regardless of how many years he serves. This is why he must await the great Creation Jubilee before he will be restored to the inheritance that God has prepared for him.

The main point to understand, though, is that the law mandates mercy along with justice. Built into the law is a limitation on judgment for sin. For this reason the New Testament often speaks of *eonian* judgment—that is, age-abiding judgment, or judgment during the eon (age). Though *eonian* is usually mistranslated to mean “eternal” or “everlasting,” this is not the true meaning of the word. Young’s Literal Translation translates Matt. 25:46,

⁴⁶ And these shall go away to punishment age-during, but the righteous to life age-during.

Dr. Young recognized that the Greek word *eonian* pertained to an eon, or an age—not to eternity. While Scripture speaks everywhere of a coming judgment, there is no place in Scripture that teaches *unending* judgment. Such an idea comes from the mind of man and men’s incorrect interpretations of the law. Men like Scofield spoke of the “pitiless severity” of the law, not understanding that man’s laws are often pitiless, including their views on unending torture in a literal fire called “hell.” Men fancy God’s justice as severe and their own justice as more merciful than God’s. This is an illusion that springs from man’s pride.

Chapter 3

The Ages

The Greek noun *aion* means "an eon," or "an age." Its adjective form is *aionios*, which means "age-abiding," or "pertaining to an age." Back in the early fifth century, when Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into his Latin Vulgate, he had two Latin words that were a rough equivalent of *aionian*. They were *aeternum* and *seculum*.

Aeternum is where we get our word "eternal," and *seculum* is where we get our word "secular" (worldly). *Aeternus* had a double meaning: (1) unending time, and (2) an age, or a limited period of time. We read this in a scholar's footnote found in Augustine's City of God, XXII, i, which says,

"The words 'eternal' and 'eternity' from Latin *aeternus*, *aeternitas*, are related to *aevum*, which means BOTH 'unending time' and 'a period of time'; for the second meaning the commoner word is *aetas*."

Augustine himself was a contemporary of Jerome in the fifth century, but Augustine did not know Greek. Peter Brown writes in his book, Augustine of Hippo, p. 36,

"Augustine's failure to learn Greek was a momentous casualty of the late Roman educational system; he will become the only Latin philosopher in antiquity to be virtually ignorant of Greek."

Thus, when reading the New Testament in Latin, Augustine took the word *aeternus* to mean unending time, rather than an indefinite period of time. His influence essentially established this definition as the standard meaning of *aeternus*-and as the centuries passed, this meaning came to be seen as the equivalent of the Greek word *aionian*.

Even so, Augustine's error was apparently pointed out to him later, but it is often difficult to correct one's teaching once that teaching has been accepted by the public. Dr. F.W. Farrar tells us of this in his book, Mercy and Judgment, p. 178,

"Since *aion* meant 'age,' *aionios* means, properly, 'belonging to an age,' or 'age-long,' and anyone who asserts that it must mean 'endless' defends a position which even Augustine practically abandoned twelve centuries ago."

There are at least four modern translations that render the word *aionian* correctly. Young's Literal renders it "age-during." Rotherham's The Emphasized Bible renders it "age-abiding." Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott and The Concordant New Testament leave the original Greek word intact, simply using *aionian*.

I say this so that no one thinks that I am pulling these things out of thin air. The word means an indefinite period of time, which, as Dr. Bullinger says in Appendix 129 of The Companion Bible, "*may be limited or extended as the context of each occurrence may demand*." For other quotations from the scholars, see chapter 5 of my book, The Judgments of the Divine Law.

One of the most tragic casualties of this mistranslation of *aionian* has been the understanding of the Ages and specifically "The Age," which was a reference to the Messianic Age to come. We read often of "the age to come" or "in the ages to come" (Eph. 2:7). Of particular note is Mark 10:30, where Jesus says, "and in the *aion* to come, *aionian* life."

The age to come is what they called the Messianic Age. Because we understand two comings of Christ, we see this Messianic Age as beginning with the second coming of Christ. I believe that it is the thousand-year period of Rev. 20:6. I call it the Tabernacles Age, which follows the first resurrection.

Those overcomers who are raised in the first resurrection will be the first to receive immortality during "The Age." The rest of the dead, however, will not be so fortunate, but will have to wait until that Age is completed.

Hence, the Bible everywhere urges us to attain life in "The Age." Unfortunately, this phrase is usually mistranslated "eternal life," as if to say "immortality." Thus, we miss the real significance of the phrase. Yes, of course, it involves receiving immortality, but it is telling us to strive to be an overcomer so that we may receive this immortality in the first resurrection. That way we have immortal Life during "The Age" to come and do not have to wait around for an extra thousand years.

In short, *aionian* life specifically references TIMING, not merely the QUALITY of life. It is immortal life IN THE AGE, not mere immortality by itself.

Matt. 25:46 (KJV) says,

⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

Both "everlasting" and "eternal" here come from the Greek word *aionian*. The Cambridge Bible Commentary, by A.W. Argyle, says this about Matt. 25:46,

"46. *eternal punishment*, i.e., punishment characteristic of the Age to come, not meaning that it lasts for ever.

"*eternal life*, i.e., the life that belongs to the Age to come, the full abundant life which is fellowship with God."

Technically, this *aionian* punishment is scheduled for the age that follows the age to come, for the Great White Throne Judgment occurs at the end of the coming Age. Yet the *aionian* life (above) is surely a reference to the Age that is soon coming, for this is the desire of the overcomer—to inherit life in the Messianic Age to come.

Some of this is quite technical, so I have tried to simplify it as much as possible. I have already discussed the concept of the first resurrection and the thousand-year Tabernacles Age in other writings such as The Purpose of Resurrection, so I am hoping that most of you will already have some foundational knowledge of this.

The point I want to make is this: when you read "everlasting" or "eternal" in the Bible, you cannot take these translations at face value. The Hebrew word *olam* and its Greek equivalent, *aionian*, properly mean "an age, an indefinite period of time." Hebrew thinking in Jesus' day looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, in which He would rule the earth with His people in a Great Sabbath millennium. This idea was expressed in the phrase, "The Age" and "The aionian Kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11).

The things "OF HIS KINGDOM" will have no end, of course (Luke 1:33). But the Kingdom Age itself is the final Age before the great Judgment introduces an entirely different scenario in the earth. This comes forth in the Hebrew phrase *olam va'ad*, "to the age and beyond." (used in Ex. 15:18; Ps. 9:5; Ps. 10:16; Ps. 45:6; Dan. 12:3)

Jerome's translation, as misinterpreted by Augustine, largely eradicated the understanding of the ages from the Latin Church, and this has carried into most modern translations as well. Yet there are at least four translations which restore the true meaning of *aion* and *aionian*.

A more complete study of this is found in chapter 5 of The Judgments of the Divine Law. There is also a study of the early Greek Church fathers in chapter 6 of the above book, showing that they assumed the judgment of the wicked was to be temporary, and its purpose was to purify and cleanse the sinners, so that they could be saved.

Some Latin Church fathers (like Augustine) disagreed, believing that the judgment was "eternal." Ultimately, the Roman Church later tried to reconcile those contradictory teachings, and they concluded that some people went to "purgatory," while others went to "hell." In both cases, however, they literalized the fire, rather than seeing it in terms of the divine law.

Once we come to understand how we got to where we are today, we can more easily see the mistakes of the past and make the necessary corrections in our thinking.

Chapter 4

Every Knee Will Bow

There is a popular Christian praise and worship song that is sung all over the world called "Come, Now is the Time to Worship." A lot of hymnbook theology is trite and often downright untrue or misleading, but this particular song is true. Yet most Christians do not even realize what they are singing. Within the song is this:

*One day every tongue will confess You are God.
One day every knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose You now!*

It is based upon two passages: Phil. 2:10, 11 and 1 Tim. 4:10. The first reads,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Paul was, in turn, quoting from Isaiah 45:23-25, which says,

²³ I have sworn by Myself [God's vow], the Word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. ²⁴ They will say of Me, "Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength." Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him shall be put to shame. ²⁵ In the Lord all the offspring of Israel will be justified, and will glory.

Here God swears that every knee will bow and every tongue swear allegiance to Him. This, of course, will occur at the Great White Throne Judgment, when there will be no more unbelievers. The prophet then speaks to the people in his day, saying in verse 25, "*in the Lord all the offspring of Israel will be justified.*"

These are the same Israelites who were such unbelievers that God sent the whole nation into exile into Assyria and divorced the nation (Jer. 3:8). Isaiah lived to see that day and probably wrote this passage some time after this great divorce. Surely he knew that most of those Israelites were not justified by faith during their life here on earth. Yet he says that in that day all Israel will be JUSTIFIED, which we know comes only BY FAITH.

Yet many would have us believe that in spite of their justification, these sinners will be lost forever in the judgment to come. There is no statement in the Bible saying that one can only be saved in this present life. The Church has often quoted Heb. 9:27, "*and inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,*" explaining that this means this life is the only opportunity for justification. But read the verse for yourself. It does not say that.

It is true that men die once, and then comes the judgment when they are raised at the Great White Throne. But Paul says that every tongue will "*confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*" In 1 Cor. 12:3 Paul says, "*no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.*" So let no one say that their confession was apart from the moving of the Holy Spirit. Paul says again in Rom. 10:9,

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

It is to the glory of God—established by a divine vow—that every tongue will confess that He is Lord in that day. If they make that confession, it is a profession of faith made by the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is inconceivable that anyone would or could refuse to believe when confronted by the full power and majesty of God Himself. There have been many revivals on earth where men fell to the ground confessing their sins in the street while passing by the building where the Spirit of God was moving in a powerful way. How much more at the Great White Throne Judgment?

When I was young, I often heard the statement that "there is no second chance." Well, in a way that is correct, for God leaves nothing to *chance*. But even the law itself gives people a second opportunity for justification. The feast of Passover is a celebration of the Cross and the Lamb of God who died for the sin of the world. We keep Passover today, not by putting blood on our houses, but by applying the blood of the true Lamb to our heart and mind (our "house"). This is how we are "justified by faith."

But in Numbers 9:9-11 God revealed to Moses that if a man could not keep the Passover in the first month, he was to keep it in the second month. This prophesies of the second opportunity for justification.

¹⁰ If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the Lord. ¹¹ In the second month on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, they shall observe it.

The application to us is this: a person touching death ("a dead person") refers ultimately to our mortal bodies, the "body of death" (Rom. 7:24). Believers are those who have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14) and are clean through the Word which was spoken to them (John 15:3). Unbelievers are still unclean by reason of touching a dead body. Yet even these will have a second opportunity later, according to the law of Moses, which is the expression of a merciful God.

Secondly, if a person is on a long journey (from God), like the prodigal son in Luke 15, he too will have a second opportunity to keep the Passover. These provisions are made for the benefit of the majority of mankind, who are yet dead in their sins and whose hearts are far from God.

When God makes a vow, we ought to take special notice of it. His vow in Isaiah 45 is not based upon any conditions. It is simply a statement of what God will do by His own will. It is similar in nature to His vow in Num. 14:21, where He vowed, "*As I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.*"

Such a vow is not based upon the will of man or the will of the flesh, but only the will of God (John 1:13). This does not mean that He forces anyone to be justified; rather, He will make everyone willing and desirous of being justified. Some will be justified in their life time; most will be justified at the Great White Throne. Those who accepted Him earlier will be rewarded accordingly. Those who only accept Him later will be "*saved yet so as by fire*" (1 Cor. 3:15).

This brings us to the second verse on which the song is based (quoted earlier). 1 Tim. 4:10 says,

¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

He did NOT say that God is the Savior of all men—whoops! I mean all believers. He did NOT say that God is the Savior of all men, SPECIFICALLY believers. The word is "especially" (NASB). Strong's Concordance says that the word (#3122) means "*most (in the greatest degree) or particularly.*"

Paul uses this term again in Phil. 4:22, saying, "*All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.*" In other words, there is a special greeting from those of Caesar's household, but all the saints send greetings.

In the same way, *He is the Savior of all men, especially believers.* There is a special salvation for believers, but He will save all men.

As the song goes, "*The greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose You now!*" Overcomers will be raised at the first resurrection to rule with Him. Believers will be rewarded and unbelievers judged at the White Throne. But all will ultimately be saved.

Chapter 5

Adam vs. Jesus Christ

Paul's most complete resurrection teaching is found in 1 Cor. 15. The first 21 verses prove the resurrection in a manner consistent with his early training as a Pharisee. The primary difference is that he proves it by Jesus' resurrection—something that no Pharisee would have dared to do. Their denominational opponents, the Sadducees, denied the idea of resurrection, being influenced by the Greek view that matter was evil and that the goal of mankind was to get rid of this "evil" body. They taught that death frees us from this body of death so that, if worthy, we might go to heaven and live in a spiritual body. If yet unworthy, we would be reincarnated in a flesh body in order to have another opportunity to achieve perfection by moral evolution.

In 1 Cor. 15:22 and 23, after using Christ's resurrection to prove that we too will be resurrected, Paul takes his teaching to the next level, dealing with the *scope* of resurrection:

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order [*tagma*, 'squadron'].

Here Paul compares Adam with Christ—two different men. Adam sinned; Christ did not. Adam's sin brought death to all and subjected the entire creation to vanity; Christ's righteousness brought life to all and set the entire creation free.

The comparison is in the fact that each man's act had an opposite effect upon creation. Yet the word "as" means that something is *alike* in that statement. Adam and Christ are not the same; sin and righteousness are not alike; death and life are opposites. The only factor that makes them alike is the "ALL" affected by these two men.

Even as Adam's sin brought death to ALL men and subjected the entire creation to vanity (Rom. 8:20), so also Christ's righteousness brought life to ALL men and set the entire creation free. "*Creation was subjected to vanity not willingly,*" that is, apart from its own will or choice or decision. It was adversely affected through Adam's sin, not for any sin of its own.

This is by the Law of Headship, or Authority. The decisions of the one in authority affect all of those under him for better or for worse. Thus, Rom. 5:12 says,

¹² Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, ON WHICH [*eph ho*] **all sin.**

Paul explains in Romans 5 that Adam's sin was imputed to all of us. This means that we were all held accountable for Adam's sin, as if we had done it. We were legally guilty, and so all men received the penalty for Adam's sin. That penalty was death, or mortality. In becoming mortal, or death-ridden, we became morally weak or sick, and this, in turn, has caused us to sin. We received death—*on which all sin*.

Most translations, beginning with Jerome's Latin Vulgate, say "for that all sin" (KJV) or "because all sinned" (NASB), as if to say that we became mortal because we sinned. This is incorrect. We sin because we are mortal, not the other way around. We are born mortal before we had opportunity to sin for ourselves.

We are mortal because of *Adam's* sin, not because of our own sin.

The translators misunderstood Paul because they thought Paul had made a mistake. They thought he was contradicting his statement in Rom. 6:23, "*the wages of sin is death.*" They did not understand that the wages of Adam's sin was the first death (mortality) which was passed down to all men; and that the wages of our own personal sins is the second death—the judgment of law at the Great White Throne.

How, then, did the translators misunderstand (and disagree with) the Apostle Paul? It began over 1600 years ago.

When Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate around 400 A.D., he rendered the last phrase of Rom. 5:12, "*because all have sinned*" instead of "*on which all sinned.*"

The Jerome Biblical Commentary, page 307, admits that this translation has a serious problem by making Paul contradict himself within the same verse:

"A difficulty often found with it is that it seems to make Paul say in 5:12c-d something contradictory to what he says in 12:a-b. In the beginning of the verse sin and death are ascribed to Adam; now death seems to be due to man's deeds."

Jerome's lack of understanding was passed down to most modern translators as well. Very few realized that Paul was talking about two kinds of death: the first being the result of Adam's sin, and the second being the result of our own sin.

The point is that Adam's transgression was reversed in Christ, whose righteousness and righteous act on the cross brought life to all of creation. Both acts were done outside of ourselves, not by our will. Likewise, even as we all shared in the consequences of Adam's sin before our wills had been formed, so also do we all share in the salvation brought about by Christ's righteous act, which was done apart from our wills. Just as Adam's sin resulted in every man's death, so also Christ's righteous act resulted in every man being given life in the end.

The only caveat given in 1 Cor. 15:23 is this: "*but every man in his own order.*" Not all will appropriate immortality at the same time. Jesus established the FACT of universal reconciliation, but the TIMING is determined by our will and actions. The overcomers will receive *aionian* life ("life in The Age") in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) so that they might reign with Him during the thousand-year Tabernacles Age.

The rest of the believers will be given life (immortality) when the thousand years is finished. This is the time of the general resurrection, when ALL who yet remain in the tombs "*shall hear His voice and shall come forth*" (John 5:28, 29). This will include both unbelievers and the rest of the believers who missed the first resurrection.

Those who refused Christ during their life time on earth, along with the great majority of mankind who never had opportunity to hear of Him in the life time, will confess Him as Lord at the Great White Throne. Even so, they will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13). Because all sin is reckoned as a debt, the great Judge will reckon each man's "debt" according to his sin and according to his level of knowledge (Luke 12:48) and then sentence him to be "sold" according to the law in Ex. 22:3. The purchaser will be an overcomer, one with the character of Jesus Christ, who will be given authority and responsibility to teach them righteousness by personal example and by force if necessary. This judgment will endure until the Creation Jubilee.

This time of biblical slavery (being a bondservant) is how the law judges debtors. All of the judgments of the law are said to be "fire." The totality of these judgments is called the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14).

No one will be tortured, for torture is not a judgment in biblical law, nor is it one of the fruits of the Spirit, nor is it consistent with the character of God as revealed in Christ. Some may receive 40 lashes with a whip, according to the law mentioned in Jesus' parable in Luke 12:48, but that, Jesus called a "fire" in verse 49.

All sinners are indebted to the law and will be "sold" to the body of Christ, coming under their authority as "servants" or "bond-slaves." But because they will perfectly manifest the love of Christ, they will treat each one with the love of God and will be charged with the responsibility of teaching them the ways of God. Thus, Isaiah 26:9 says,

²⁹ . . . for when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

The fire is the Word of God, including the "fiery law" (Deut. 33:2). It is the manifestation of the righteous character of God Himself, for He manifested Himself to Israel only as fire. He is a "consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24). When He comes in a baptism of fire, its purpose is to destroy "the flesh" and quicken our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11).

The fire is the glory of God as well, which will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The waters cover 100 percent of the sea; so also His glory will cover 100 percent of the earth.

The creation itself groans today under the oppression of sin, and it anxiously awaits the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19). Not only mankind, but everything in creation will be affected by the righteous act of Jesus Christ. Even as Adam was given dominion over all things and given headship over all, so also Christ, the Last Adam, has been given headship over all.

When Adam sinned, he and his wife and children were sold to pay the debt that he could not pay. In fact, *his entire estate* was sold to pay his debt, and it was still insufficient to pay the debt. Jesus spoke of this in a parable in Matt. 18:25,

²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children AND ALL THAT HE HAD, and repayment to be made.

Jesus came as the last Adam to reverse the curse and pay the full debt that Adam could not pay. In doing so, He redeemed not only Adam, but his wife and children (descendants) *and the entire estate* (the creation). Everything that was lost in Adam is redeemed in Christ. Hence, 1 John 2:2 says,

² **and He Himself is the propitiation [covering] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

Suppose you were to purchase a store full of merchandise. When the time came to possess it, would you be satisfied if you walked into the store and found only a few items on the shelf? Of course not. If you purchased the whole store, you would not rest until you obtained everything you paid for. Jesus paid for the sin of the whole world by His blood, which is worth far more than all of creation. He will not be satisfied until He receives all that He purchased.

In Matthew 13:44 Jesus told a short parable to teach us how extensive was the effect of His work on the cross:

⁴⁴ **The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.**

In verse 38 Jesus said that “the field is the world.” We know from Exodus 19:5 that Israel was God’s peculiar treasure. Jesus Himself is the “man” in the parable, who searches and finds the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Ezekiel 34:11). When a man stumbles upon treasure buried in a field, the treasure rightfully belongs to the one who owns the field. For this reason, the man in the parable could not simply take the treasure without first buying the field. To do so would be theft.

So Jesus found Israel, and in order to obtain that “peculiar treasure,” He purchased the field—THE WORLD. Thus, whether one interprets the treasure to be Israel as a nation or Christians, they represent a portion of mankind hidden in the world. Regardless of our view, one thing is clear: Jesus purchased the whole world in order to obtain the treasure.

All things were put under Adam's authority (Gen. 1:26-28). Psalm 8:6 repeats this, "*Thou hast put all things under his feet.*" Adam lost it all, but the Last Adam has redeemed it all. Thus the New Testament applies this to Christ in Heb. 2:6-8, under whose feet all things have now been rightfully subjected. In fact, Psalm 8:6 is the most often quoted Scripture in the New Testament. For this reason it ought to be seen as one of the most important concepts to study.

Chapter 6

All Things Under His Feet

When God created all things, He pronounced it "good" at each stage of creation and then "very good" at the end (Gen.1:31). Sin was not built into creation but was a later invasion, so to speak. But as time passed, men began to think that evil was inherent in creation and that matter itself was evil.

Soon they constructed theologies around that misunderstanding, wherein good and evil, light and darkness, spirit and matter, were opposed to each other eternally. The fall of man was said to be a matter of light mingling with darkness and good mingling with evil. Thus, the logical goal of history, they said, was to separate these two opposing "kingdoms" into their respective domains.

This dualistic theology presumed that good and evil were eternal kingdoms that would always coexist. The final goal of history was to separate men into heaven or hell, and all the evil and darkness would continue forever as one dark blot in God's creation.

By the fifth century A.D. the Church had drunk deeply from this non-biblical theology and had begun to adopt it officially in its own teaching and persecute those who denied it. This was one of the greatest tragedies of all time in the history of Christian thought.

In my view, sin is temporary. Because it had a beginning, it also will have an end. The whole idea of "restoration" implies that history is the process by which God is showing us the results of sin before finally restoring all things under His feet as it was at the beginning. Through this process, we will gain more at our maturity than we had in our naive beginnings. In Gen. 1: 26 we read,

²⁶ Then God said, Let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

This was the dominion mandate given to man, and it was the point where man's authority began, operating under the sovereignty of God. Sin, of course, made man a debtor in the eyes of the law, and so he was "sold" into bondage as "slaves of sin" (Rom. 6:17). With him was sold his wife, his children (descendants), and his entire estate, which was the whole earth.

Technically, he was sold to the earth itself, legally making him an earthly man with a carnal mind. This is why Gen. 3:17 says, "*cursed is the ground because of you.*" Verse 19 says, "*by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground.*" In the divine law (Ex. 22:1-4), a thief was to be "sold for his theft" if he could not pay the restitution required. He who bought the thief actually bought the thief's labor for a specified amount of time, and for this he was also required to pay the debt which the thief owed the victim.

The fact that Adam was required to labor for the earth until he died--and even then, the earth was to reclaim him--shows that the earth was the legal redeemer in this case. The earth, of course, was incapable of fulfilling its obligation to pay the debt for Adam's sin. And so the earth came under a "curse" as well. Cursed Time is always in terms of 414-year cycles. In this case, the flood came upon the earth (for non-payment of debt) after 4 x 414 years. A study of the genealogies in Genesis 5 proves that the flood occurred 1656 years from Adam, or 4 x 414.

This law also reveals the principle of redemption, because the he who purchased a debtor (with his debt note) was known as a redeemer. Jesus, of course, was the great Redeemer, who paid for the sin of Adam and for the sin of the whole world (1 John 2:2). What the earth could not do, Jesus did. Paul expounds upon this in Romans 6, where he reminds believers that by the law of redemption, they were now free to stop sinning, because they were purchased with a price.

They were now to serve their new Master, rather than continue in sin. The law of redemption makes this clear in Lev. 25:53, saying of the redeemed debtor, "*Like a man hired year by year shall he be with him,*" that is, the redeemer. The law of redemption does not set the debtor free, but rather it gives him a new master. In other words, because Jesus has redeemed us, we are now to serve Him and have no right to continue in sin that grace may abound. We have only been set free from the dictates (or laws) of Sin, which is here personified as our former master.

Getting back to our original subject, Adam lost his authority over the earth through sin, at which point the earth was given authority over him. The law of redemption in Lev. 25:49 made provision for the debtor to pay for his own freedom,

saying, “if he prospers, he may redeem himself.” In the ultimate sense, of course, no man can redeem himself from the bondage of sin. It is an unpayable debt. For this reason, the whole world came under the law—that is, under the penalty of the law, which decreed man’s enslavement to the earth.

Jesus came as our near kinsman with the right of redemption, having come both of the seed of Abraham and as flesh and blood to establish kinship with Adam (Heb. 2:14). The price of redemption was His life, His blood on the cross, which, admittedly, was worth far more than the entire debt that mankind has ever incurred for sin. Yet He was willing to pay that price to redeem mankind and His creation.

Based upon the law of redemption, then, the whole creation became His servant, for He purchased it and obtained the divine right to receive the dominion that Adam had lost. So we read in Heb. 2:7-9,

⁷ Thou has made Him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honor, and hast appointed Him over the works of Thy hands; ⁸ Thou hast put all things [*panta*] in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we do not YET see all things subjected to Him. ⁹ But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

The first half is a quotation from Psalm 8:4-6, which is, in turn, a reference to Adam's Dominion Mandate over the earth. The book of Hebrews applies this to Jesus Himself, telling us that all of creation, (*panta*) has been subjected to Him. The "all" is further defined for our benefit so that we do not misunderstand: "*For in subjecting all things to Him, He left NOTHING that is NOT subject to Him.*"

Yet at the present time, we do not YET see all things subjected to Him (vs. 8). There is still much sin and rebellion in the earth. However, this does not mean that He has not purchased them already. It does not mean that they will be lost in the end, for that would indicate that in fact they were not really subjected to Him in the first place. But yet the FACT of universal reconciliation has already been established at the cross. It is only a matter of time before this is manifested in the earth.

Again quoting Psalm 8, Paul speaks of the extent of Christ's dominion also in Eph. 1:21-23,

²¹ far about all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things [*panta*] in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as Head over all things to the Church, ²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

In 1 Cor. 15:22-28 Paul explains the concept of the Restoration of All Things in the most detail. First, he establishes the thesis in verse 22,

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

Next, he shows that not all will be “made alive” at the same time. Verse 23 says, “but each in his own order.” We have seen earlier how the word “order” is from the Greek word *tagma*, which means “squadron.”

Paul goes on to explain that in the end, Christ “*must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet*” (vs. 25). The phrase “under His feet” means to put them under subjection, so that they become His servants. Finally, Paul reveals the end of the matter, after all of mankind has become subject to Christ in His Kingdom. Verses 26 and 27 say,

²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death, ²⁷ For He has put all things in subjection under His feet.

It is important to understand that death is the LAST enemy to be abolished, and *not the first*. Most modern eschatology is based on the idea that Christ will shortly return, at which time all the saints will be raised from the dead, and thus death will be abolished.

There are some, however, who move closer to the truth by saying that Christ will reign in the Millennium until the Great White Throne, at which time death will be abolished at the general resurrection. In other words, they say that all things will be in subjection under His feet by the end of the Millennium.

The problem with this view is that there is then a “second death” that exists after the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:14), which subjects unbelievers to the “lake of fire.” Unfortunately, Paul did not distinguish between the two types of death in his statement about death being abolished. This leaves some in doubt about which death was being abolished. But if we take it as death *in general*, then it must refer to the second death—not the first death (mortality).

The issue is clarified only when we link the abolition of death to the subjection of all things under His feet in verse 27:

²⁷ For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He [God the Father] is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸ And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

These verses, along with Heb. 2:6-8 and Eph. 1:21-23, show us that there are NO EXCEPTIONS (apart from God the Father) in the scope of His dominion over mankind and the creation in general. Col. 1:16-20 reinforces this by saying,

¹⁶ For by Him all things [*ta panta*, “the all”] were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions--all things have been created by Him and for Him. . . . ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things [*ta panta*] to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

In other words, God created “the all” and then has reconciled “the all” to Himself by means of the cross. People often object to the idea that “the all” actually means what it says. “You have to take it in context,” they insist. Well, alright, let us take “the all” in context here. The context defines “the all” as that which God created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, including thrones and dominions. Please tell me what part of creation Paul left out? It takes serious blindness to refuse to believe the plain words of the Apostle Paul.

See how many ways the Restoration of All Things is taught in the Scriptures. First, there is the law of Jubilee, which cancels all debt (sin) at the end of the time of judgment. Secondly, there is God’s vow in Num. 14:21 to fill the whole earth with His glory. Thirdly, Jesus says that if He were “lifted up” (crucified), He would draw [literally, “drag”] ALL MEN unto Himself. Fourth, Paul quotes Isaiah in Phil. 2:10, 11 that “every knee” will bow and “every tongue” will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Fifth, Paul quotes Psalm 8 in many places to show that “the all” will be subjected to Christ in the end.

The only reason people find Paul’s teaching offensive is because they really do not want all sinners to be saved. They give their money to the Church for the purpose of “saving souls” that they have never met, but they do not want certain ones to be saved, because they feel that they “deserve” to be punished forever.

It comes down to three primary objections. The first is to say some people are such huge sinners that their debt to the law exceeds the value of the blood of Christ. It says that Christ’s blood was insufficient to pay for the sin of the whole world.

The second objection says that Christ paid for the sin of the whole world, but that most of it was undeliverable, due to the will of man. This was the scenario presented by Moses in Numbers 14. God’s answer was that the whole earth will be filled with His glory, and not just Israel as a nation.

The third objection says that God does not love the world enough to actually purchase all of creation by His blood. This is the idea of limited atonement. It says that God elected only a few to be saved, and decided by His own sovereign will to cast away all others. But Jesus said in John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world.*”

Those who do not want to see all mankind saved are those who do not yet have the mind of Christ. Those who harbor grudges in their hearts against those who have abused them or wronged them in the past are those who do not know the love of Christ.

But those who have come to know the God of the Bible and to know the love of Christ which passes understanding are the ones that God is training to reign with Him both now and in the Age to come.

Chapter 7

The Laws of Redemption

When I was a child growing up as a missionary kid in the Philippines, we sang many times about Christ our Redeemer. My mother, who was Swedish, taught us the old Swedish song, "*Thanks to God for my Redeemer.*" I also remember Fred Ruhl, Roy Thomas, and Roy's father singing with their powerful voices the old hymn written by Philip Bliss in 1876 entitled, "*I Will Sing of My Redeemer.*"

*Sing, oh sing, of my Redeemer,
With His blood, He purchased me.
On the cross, He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.*

Perhaps it was assumed that we understood the definition of a redeemer, but I do not recall a single sermon or Bible study teaching us what a redeemer actually was. And so it was decades later before I discovered it in the law of Moses and was able to apply it beyond myself to all of creation.

You can purchase anything, but you can redeem only that which you once owned. Having been taught in my early life that we were all conceived in sin and thus "lost" from the beginning, I believed that Jesus never really "owned" me until I became a believer and gave myself to Him. It occurred to me that Jesus may have purchased me, but He was really not my Redeemer. Either the Bible was wrong, or I was wrong in my biblical understanding.

Well, the Bible won the dispute. Yes, He really is my Redeemer, because I was a part of creation, which He owned by right of creation. In other words, the picture was bigger than any individual person. When Adam was "sold" into bondage, his children were sold also, along with his entire estate ("creation"). Thus, Jesus came to redeem that which He had owned but which later had been sold according to the divine law. And I was just one part of that which He owned at the beginning.

"*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,*" the Bible begins. This verse establishes God's ownership and certain rights that come with ownership. He owns it by right of creation. As another song goes, "*This is My Father's world.*" Yet all was sold at the Cosmic Pawn Shop in order to make payment for Adam's sin. And even then, the creation itself, with all its wealth and natural resources, was insufficient to pay for the smallest sin. So we entered a time of bondage according to the law.

If a man cannot repay the debt for sin, "*he shall be sold for his theft*" (Ex. 22:3). If the debtor is purchased by a non-kinsman, who presumably does not love the debtor, he is likely to think only in terms of increasing his own wealth, rather than the welfare of the slave-debtor. But as an antidote to this situation, a kinsman was given the right of redemption (Lev. 25:47-49), as long as he had sufficient money to pay the debt. Lev. 25:48 says (NASB),

⁴⁸ **then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him.**

You see, a friend may have the money to redeem a debtor, but he does not have a redemption *right*. The slave-master has no obligation to sell his slave to a non-kinsman—at any price.. The right of the slave-master to refuse the sale supersedes the right of a friend to purchase him. But if a kinsman comes with a sufficient amount of money to pay the remaining portion of the debt note, the slave-master has no choice in the matter. The kinsman's redemption right takes precedence over the slave-master's desire to keep the slave in his possession.

This is an extremely important law when we apply it to Jesus, the Redeemer of Creation. This is why Jesus had to come as a man of flesh and blood. Hebrews 2:11 says, "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren.*" Verses 14 and 15 say,

¹⁴ **Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."**

Verse 16 says further that He came more specifically as a descendant of Abraham. Thus, He came as a near kinsman on two levels: first as *flesh and blood* in order to qualify as a Kinsman Redeemer of Adam, and secondly as *a descendant of Abraham* in order to redeem Israel.

Our primary concern here is the fact that He came as a flesh-and-blood "Son of Man," in order to ensure His redemption right as a near kinsman to Adam. The law says that He had the *legal right* to redeem all mankind back to Adam, along with the entire estate that Adam lost.

The implications of this are enormous. Suppose you were to redeem an estate with all its contents. Then when you came to claim it, let us say you discovered that very little of it was left. Would you be satisfied? Of course not. Jesus redeemed everything that He had created before it was sold at the Cosmic Pawn Shop. He had the means to do it, for even though creation itself was insufficient to pay the debt for Adam's sin, certainly *His life and blood was worth far more than all the sins that have ever been committed from Adam to the end of time.*

Jesus therefore had the MEANS to redeem all of creation, and as a near Kinsman, he also had the lawful RIGHT of redemption. The only serious question remaining is this: Did Jesus actually WANT to redeem all of creation, or, as Calvinism teaches, is he content to redeem only a few items which He purchased by His blood?

This is really a question about the extent of the love of God. Does He love everything that He created? Does He really want it? Or did He determine at the beginning to redeem a tiny portion of it and burn the rest of it for eternity?

How many times have I heard teaching that "*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son*"? Yet that teaching is so often accompanied by the teaching about how God wishes so much that He could save everyone, but His hands are tied, because "He is a just God"??

In other words, He would dearly love to save everyone, but the law stands in his way. "He is a loving God, but He is also a just God," they say. His justice will not allow Him to save creation. Having studied the law, I disagree. The law is on Jesus' side! The law of redemption does allow Him as a Kinsman-Redeemer to claim all that He purchased. There is nothing unjust in this.

Those who teach these things have never studied the law of redemption. The only qualifier is that he must have enough cash to pay the amount of the debt note.

So where is the problem? There is no legal restriction.

There is, however, one thing that the law does NOT mandate. It does not say that a man must redeem his kinsman IMMEDIATELY. There is no time frame attached to this law. The law only tells us that if he is NOT redeemed in those years, then he must be set free in the year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:54 says,

⁵⁴ **Even if he is not redeemed by those means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, both he and his sons with him.**

The time of bondage is the time of potential redemption. But these years of redemption end when the redemption laws are swallowed up by the law of Jubilee. Under the law of Jubilee, all debtors are to be set free from bondage at the end of each 49-year cycle. Lev. 25:8-10 tells us about this year of Jubilee:

⁸ **You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years.** ¹⁰ **You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his property, and each of you shall return to his family.**

At the end of seven Sabbath years, the Jubilee was proclaimed, and all remaining debts were cancelled by grace alone. This prevented perpetual debts and also prevented never-ending punishment for sin. This is the Law of Grace in Scripture.

The fact is that when we deal with the outworking of the Plan in real life, most people on earth do not consent to be redeemed, either out of ignorance of His provision or because they have rejected it in the attempt to redeem themselves.

God will not force this redemption upon them, in spite of His love. But He knows that in the end, after the time of redemption has run its course, and after all sin has been judged during that time, He will invoke eminent domain over all creation by the law of Jubilee.

All that was His at the beginning will be restored to Him. It is written in the law of Jubilee, for "*even if he is not redeemed by those means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee.*"

Chapter 8

The Covenant with the Four Beasts

The Bible focuses primarily upon the history of the Birthright, which originally included the Dominion Mandate--the right to rule the earth that was passed down from Adam to succeeding generations. This Dominion Mandate ended with Jesus Christ, under whose feet were put all things.

For this reason, the Bible is mostly about the history of Israel and Judah, and it mentions other nations only as they come into contact with them. But this does not mean that God has no concern for other nations. Adam was given universal dominion, not just a little garden somewhere in the Middle East. Likewise, that same universal dominion has been given to Jesus Christ, who is King over all. Isaiah 54:5 says that the Redeemer of Israel is "the God of the whole earth."

The Bible speaks of five specific covenants in progressive order that establish the great plan to bring all things under the feet of Christ. The word of the Lord will always be fulfilled, and God made many "promises" and "vows" as well. But the first time the word "covenant" is used in the Bible is through Noah in Genesis 9:9 and 10,

⁹ Now behold, I Myself do establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you; ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

This covenant is not only with Noah and sons (man), but also with the birds, cattle, and beast of the earth. They all will benefit from this covenant quite literally. But more than this, these four categories of living species represent the whole earth. The scope of this covenant is explained in verses 16 as "*every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.*" Verse 17 says that the covenant was "*established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.*"

The continual repetition of this between verses 9 and 17 is to make sure we understand the universal scope of this covenant. All of this repetition makes one wonder if God knew most people would miss it.

The four categories specifically mentioned each have a head, or leading creature. Noah and sons represent MAN in general; the king of the birds is the EAGLE; the king of the cattle is the OX; and the king of the beasts is the LION. These creatures, then, appear as representatives of creation surrounding the throne of God in Rev. 4:7,

⁷And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

It was anciently understood also that these were the banners (Num. 2:2) of the four leading tribes of Israel surrounding the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. To the east was Judah, the lion (Gen. 49:9; Num. 2:3). To the west was Ephraim, the ox (Deut. 33:17; Num. 2:18); to the south was Reuben, the man (Gen. 49:3; Num. 2:10); and to the north was Dan, the flying eagle carrying away a serpent (Gen. 49:17; Num. 2:25).

The order of encampment around the tabernacle under Moses was meant to portray on earth that great heavenly temple revealed in Rev. 4:7. Yet it was all a revelation of the divine covenant with all of creation given in Genesis 9.

This is also the same vision that Ezekiel received in his first chapter. The prophet was looking toward the north (Ez. 1:4) and saw a vision of the throne of God with the four living creatures positioned even as the tribes of Israel around the throne. Verse 10 says,

¹⁰ And for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man (Reuben), all four had the face of a lion on the right (Judah on the east as one faces north) and the face of a bull on the left (Ephraim on the west), and all four had the face of an eagle (Dan).

Thus, we have three distinct witnesses—Moses, Ezekiel, and John—who tell us that the four living creatures in the covenant with Noah are represented around the throne of God. Although the tribes of Israel depict this in their order of encampment, they are essentially acting as types that represent the whole earth. What God did with the single nation of Israel was a type of a much bigger divine plan.

The covenant with Noah is the first in the Bible, and it establishes the scope of God's plan for the whole earth. It is the covenant of the Restoration of All Things, for it is the covenant with every living creature of all flesh. Thus, when we finally come to the end, John sees a great vision of this reconciliation in Revelation 5.

In verses 8-12 he sees the *overcomers* (those who "reign upon the earth") in agreement with God, saying in verse 12, **12 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.**

But then John sees a *greater company of people* in verses 13 and 14,

13 And every thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshipped.

In The Expositor's Bible, Vol. 6, p. 854, published by Eerdmans Publishing Co., Rev. William Milligan, D.D. explains this as follows:

"What a sublime conception have we here before us! The whole universe, from its remotest star to the things around us, and beneath our feet, is one—one in feeling, in emotion, in expression; one in heart and voice. Nothing is said of evil. Nor is it thought of. It is in the hands of God, who will work out His sovereign purposes in His own good time and way. We have only to listen to the universal harmony, and to see that it moves us to corresponding praise (v. 14).

"The redeemed creation is once more singled out for special mention. At chap. iv. 8, 10, they began the song; now we return to them that they may close it. All creation, man included, cries, Amen. The glorified Church has her heart too full to speak. She can only fall down and worship."

According to the Commentary on the Whole Bible, page 567 (Zondervan, undated),

"As in ch. 4.11, the four and twenty elders asserted God's worthiness to receive the glory, as having created all things, so here the four living creatures ratify by their 'Amen' the whole creation's ascription of the glory to Him."

This is an astonishing admission from Bible commentators who are forced by John's clear language to say that all of creation will one day be in agreement with God and will glorify Him—not from the pits of hell, but from the glory of a new heaven and a new earth.

This is also what Paul meant in Phil. 2:10 and 11 when he said that every knee would bow and every tongue confess "to the glory of God the Father." There is no glory in forcing everyone to confess the truth. The glory is in the fact that all of creation will come into AGREEMENT with a resounding "AMEN!" In fact, the divine plan is not completed until the four beasts say AMEN to the glory of God.

All of the other covenants after Noah build upon this first covenant and add details to the divine plan. The covenant with *Abraham* establishes the people THROUGH WHOM this divine plan will be established. That is, the seed of Abraham, first physical and then spiritual, are the ambassadors of Christ with the word of reconciliation to the rest of the world.

Later, the covenant with *Moses* establishes the standard of righteousness to which all shall attain. The Ten Commandments under the Old Covenant turn into the Ten Promises of the New Covenant. They are promises that we shall not murder, steal, or covet. In the New Covenant God takes upon Himself the responsibility to bring all men into perfection. The law—including the very spirit and intent of the law—is prophetic of what our nature will show forth in that day.

The covenant with David establishes the throne--that is, it establishes who will RULE this Kingdom. The highest dominion, of course, is given to Jesus Christ Himself, who received the Dominion Mandate, which was the calling of the house of Judah and specifically of David.

Finally, the New Covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ on the cross to make all of the previous covenants possible and to redeem all of creation. Without the cross, all of the previous covenants would fail. But Col. 1:16-20 says,

16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions--all things have been created by Him and for Him. . . . 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

The context of this great reconciliation tells us that the phrase “all things” means *all that was created*, whether in heaven or in earth. It was all created FOR HIM, and because He redeemed all that was lost in Adam, all things will indeed be given to Him in the end. That is the astounding plan of God for the earth.

Chapter 9

David's Prophecies

King David was a prophet as well as a king. As a king, he had many years in which to contemplate the divine plan for the nations other than his own. And though he lived in an Old Covenant time, he had a New Covenant perspective and prophesied accordingly. Here is what David had to say about the nations in general:

Psalm 66:4 says,

⁴ All the earth will worship Thee, and will sing praises to Thee; They will sing praises to Thy name. [Selah]

Psalm 67 says,

¹ God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us—² that Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations [goyim]. ³ Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee; ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth. ⁵ Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee. ⁶ The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. ⁷ God blesses us that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

Notice in verse 4 that the nations will “*be glad and sing for joy*” when God judges the people. Most people think of God’s judgment upon the nations as a condemnation that produces great fear and weeping. In verse 7 the summation is that God blesses “us” (that is, Israel) in order that “*all the ends of the earth may fear Him.*” No doubt Peter had this in mind when he preached in Acts 3:25, 26,

²⁵ It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, “And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” ²⁶ For you first, God raised up his Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.

In other words, God blesses “us” by turning us from our wicked ways, so that we will have a testimony and gospel with which to bless the other nations. Without God’s “blessing,” we cause the nations to blaspheme God and to reject Him (Isaiah 52:5; Rom. 2:24).

Psalm 72:11 says,

¹¹ And let all kings bow down before Him, all nations serve Him.

This is echoed in Rev. 15:3, 4 in the Song of Moses:

³ . . . “Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ Who will NOT fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed.”

The question in verse 4 is rhetorical, for it is inconceivable that any person would not fear and glorify His name in that day. It is only a matter of time before the glory of God is revealed to all mankind.

Psalm 78:71 speaks of “*Israel His inheritance.*” But Psalm 82:8 says,

⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is Thou who dost possess [inherit] all the nations.

All the nations are God’s inheritance—not merely Israel or Judah. Likewise, God will give the nations as the inheritance of the righteous, for we read in Psalm 2:8,

⁸ Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.

In the New Testament we find that this is not given to genealogical Israelites, but to those who believe in Jesus Christ and who are found worthy to rule those nations righteously. Jesus says in Matt. 5:5, “*the meek [humble] will inherit the earth,*” putting the qualifications for rulership upon character, not upon genealogy. In this, Jesus only quoted David in Psalm 37:11.

So we see David himself understanding that all nations belong to God and form His inheritance. He does not intend to destroy His inheritance, but to bring joy to it through righteous judgment.