

Expository Files



Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley - Editors

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Front Page

Osama Bin Laden Threatens the Nation Again

By David Arnold

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*[My friend and brother David Arnold wrote the following and I thought it insightful. He did not write it as an article for publication, but was merely communicating some of his thoughts to some friends. He doubts that it is "polished" enough in its present form (but poor me; it looks fine to me; I can't tell) but still gave me permission to use it as my front page editorial this month, and am happy to be able to do so. Jon W. Quinn]*

On the morning news it was reported that Osama Bin Laden has made another terrorist threat against the United States. He appears to have been the chief planner and murderer of 3000 at the World Trade Centers three years ago.

Even though we pray for our country and the military daily, I just realized this morning that we do not pray for the capture of Osama. This will be added to our prayers. There have been many evil men in history, and I believe he is one of them. Perhaps God allowed him to come to his power to wake up the people of this country. God used Nebuchadnezzar as His servant to punish Judah and other nations because of their sins. I believe God, through His Son, is in control now. Col. 1:17; Acts 17:24-31; Dan. 4:1-37. Note verses 31-32.

If this nation does not forsake much of its evil and turn to God, I have no question but that the time will come when evil men, such as those holding to an evil religion, may overpower it. I believe this nation may be given the opportunity through the next few years to make this turn unto God. It can turn, but based on the history of Israel and Judah, their examples are not encouraging that it will turn.

There may be a time, as in the history of Judah, that God expects us to accept the terror of an evil leader and nation. I pray that we will repent before this takes place.

Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah that the Chaldeans were going to destroy Jerusalem, even if only the wounded among the Chaldeans remained. Jerusalem would yet be burned. Jer. 37:1-10. Zedekiah was told to surrender to the king of Babylon and that his life and the city would be spared. Jer. 38:14-18. Zedekiah, because of fear, did not want to do this. Later, he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, his two sons were killed in his sight, and his eyes were put out. Jer. 39:1-7. This is "recounted" in Jer. 52:1-11.

How terrible was Zedekiah's rebellion against the will of God. His sons are killed in his sight. The very last thing he saw was the deaths of those sons. His eyes were put out, and Jerusalem was destroyed.

Pray that our nation will be delivered and that evil men will be delivered to punishment. Pray that we, or our children, or theirs will not face such a situation as was experienced by Zedekiah, the nobles of the land of Judah and Jerusalem.

Remember: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34.

***The Messiah and Jerusalem: The Amazing Prophecy of Daniel  
(Daniel 9:24-27)  
By Jon W. Quinn***

Jesus had died. He had been "cut off from the land of the living." On the third day, He was raised back up to life. On the following forty days, He met with His apostles to help them in understanding how the events that they had witnessed had been prophesied and how that His rejection, death, burial and resurrection were a fulfillment of these ancient prophecies. There were over 300 prophecies written from 400 to 1,000 years previous to His coming. All of them were fulfilled.

One of the most remarkable (to me, at least) of these prophecies is one made by Daniel. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. o you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27).

### The Historical Context

The nation of Judah had fallen away from God. Jeremiah had foretold that God would withhold His blessings and protection, and that Judah would be conquered and taken into captivity which would last for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10). This was later fulfilled when Babylon conquered Judah and took them into captivity, the first deportation according to history took place in 605 B.C. and the return in 535 B.C. Daniel himself was one of the young men taken into captivity and lived to see the return commence under Darius (Daniel 9:2).

70 years fulfilled a Divine pattern. The Law of Moses had commanded that every 7th year be a "sabbatical year." This Law of God had been neglected for most of Israel's history, so the Lord decreed that they would spend one year in captivity for every sabbatical year they had failed to keep as a nation. They had missed 70 sabbatical years during their 490 years as a nation.

But also, this 490 year figure not only looked back into time, it also looked forward. The Messiah would come and "make atonement for iniquity" in 70 units of seven, referred to in the context as "weeks" but the word means a unit of seven. In this case, it would not be 7 days but 7 years (Daniel 9:24; cf. 2 Chronicles 36:20,21; Leviticus 25:3,4).

The time of Daniel's prophecy can be precisely pin pointed due to the mention of Darius beginning his reign (Daniel 9:1,2). This would make it 538 B.C. The angel Gabriel assures Daniel that not only will he see the return from captivity, but also gives much more far reaching information concerning the coming of the Messiah another five centuries in the future.

### **The Messiah and His Mission**

The prophecy states forth the primary mission of the Messiah, and gives several particulars in addition to a very precise timing of the event 1) He would come and deal with the problem of sin. (9:24). Note three different phrases used in the prophecy; “to finish the transgression”; “to make an end of sin”; “to make atonement for iniquity.” Jesus introduced a system by His own blood through which one can be washed from his sins and held accountable for them no longer as well as continue to be forgiven as one walks by faith and seeks forgiveness by repentance.

2) He would bring in everlasting righteousness. (9:24). Jesus enacted heaven's plan to make sinners righteous by grace through faith (Romans 1:16,17; 3:21-26).

3) He would seal up the vision (9:24). This means to bring to completion; to close or finish. With the coming of Jesus and His new covenant, Divine revelation was completed. With the generation who were alive during Jesus' life, we see the last living prophets and prophetesses. With those men and women and the messages given through them, prophecy would cease. (Hebrews 1:1,2; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

4) He would anoint the Holy Place. (9:24). Jesus is the Messiah (Hebrew), or Christ (Greek). Both of these words mean “anointed one.” When Jesus ascended into heaven, He entered the true, spiritual Holy Place where He lives and intercedes for us (Hebrews 9:11,12).

5) He will make a firm covenant with many. (9:27). His covenant is the New Testament, ratified by His death (Hebrews 8:6).

6) He will bring OT sacrifices to an end. (9:27). He did this by offering Himself as our only perfect sin offering, thus fulfilling the Law and taking that system out of the way. (Hebrews 7:18,19; 24,25).

## **The Prophetic Chronology**

Daniel's prophecy itself indicates when it will be fulfilled. It tells us of the beginning point, the duration period, and the fulfilling event.

The beginning point (9:25). The edict to rebuild Jerusalem is where we begin the 490 year count down to the Messiah. There were actually three such edicts issued, so we'll have to figure out which one.

The duration period (9:24). 70 weeks. Again, the term "week" means "unit of seven" and could refer to seven days, weeks, months or years. Since the looking back covered 490 years, then it is reasonable to do the same looking forward.

The fulfilling event (9:26). This would be the 'cutting off of the Messiah.' This refers to His death. This will happen in the middle of the final "unit of seven" or 486 1/2 years in the future.

In 457 B.C. Ezra led a group back to rebuild Jerusalem by the King's edict (Ezra 7:6,7; 9:9). To this beginning point. Add the above 486 1/2 years and we come to 30 A.D. which is the date of the crucifixion! Following this, as punishment for putting the Messiah to death, Jerusalem would be destroyed. This, too, was accomplished by the Roman armies led by "the prince who is to come" (this would be Titus who would take his father's place as emperor) exactly as Daniel had said (cf. Matthew 24:15; 34). After a siege, Jerusalem was burned and the sanctuary was completely destroyed. But Jesus had already ascended back to heaven to serve in the new sanctuary. Our hope is in Him!

*Based on article by Wayne Jackson;  
Reason & Revelation; 1997*

### ***Leaders Needed (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12) By Edward C. Barnes***

THE APOSTLE PAUL ESTABLISHED more churches than any other apostle or first century evangelist. He was chosen to write more New Testament books than any other inspired writer. More about Paul's life is

revealed on the pages of holy writ than any person other than our Lord. He is known even today as the all time most successful champion of the faith. Yet, he was constantly under pressure from false teachers and mis-guided brethren to defend his authority as an apostle. Most of the books which bear his name contain sections in which he speaks "foolishly" (2 Cor 11:16) in defense of his right to claim apostleship and instruct churches (selfless actions for which he was ironically rejected and persecuted).

Possibly the first book written by Paul, First Thessalonians contains a "foolish" self-defense section. Chapter two and verse one points out that Paul's work in Thessalonica had been declared a failure (in vain) by some and Paul is forced to respond to the unfair and false criticism. Within the course of his response the apostle points out not only that much had been accomplished for the cause of Christ in Thessalonica, but it was done in such a way that revealed great leadership qualities on the part of Paul. Of course he was not bragging on himself as a great leader, but his innocent recollection of his behavior among them reveals such qualities. It is the purpose of this article to point out these qualities as worthy of our emulation as we seek to influence others for Christ.

#### READY TO SACRIFICE

There are other more well known passages which cite leadership qualities that are needed in the Lord's church, such as the list of qualifications given to elders and deacons in 1 Timothy and Titus, but here we look not to a list but to an example. Paul's example was one of sacrifice. As he states in 2 Cor 12:15, he was willing to "spend and be spent" for the sake of those whom he desired to be saved.

Before coming to Thessalonica, Paul had suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, but that was not enough to send him packing. He then "dared" to preach the same mis-aligned gospel in Thessalonica. He showed nothing less than great bravery in taking the gospel to others. How much opposition (either from within ourselves, or without) are we willing to overcome and endure to get the gospel message out to the throngs of people surrounding us? If we expect to grow as a group of the Lord's people, we must be willing to sacrifice ourselves, in keeping with Paul's example of leadership, in order to achieve that growth.

#### MADE HIMSELF APPROVED

Paul was personally chosen and approved by God as an apostle (Gal 1:15,16). Part of that approval was based on Paul's zeal and dedication to personal purity. He was striving to please God who looks on the heart (Rom. 8:27). There was no "error", "impurity" or "deceit" on Paul's part as he delivered the gospel in Thessalonica. Later in verse 10 Paul writes, "You are our witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous, and blameless we were among you who believed." Had there been dishonesty or deceit on Paul's part and the accusations against his motives been accurate, he would have accomplished nothing good for the cause of Christ.

We also must first be pure (James 3:17) if we expect God to approve our ministry. To be entrusted with the gospel is a sacred honor. We must strive to uphold it with purity both in word and example. Let there be no one among us who uses flattery, greed, hypocrisy, or a men-pleasing spirit as we seek to bring others to Christ.

#### ABLE TO CARE

As an apostle, Paul could rightly have expected and pressed the saints in Thessalonica for more financial support. He insisted that he had this right, but usually refused to take advantage of it (1 Cor 9:3-14; 2 Cor 11:7-11). On the contrary, he was to them as a mother - gentle and caring. Among those of the church who were weak, Paul emphasized his capacity for care rather than authority or dominance. The nursing mother referred to in this context may not have been the natural mother, but a surrogate mother, who nonetheless grew close to the children in her care. She often formed a bond with the children which was closer than that of the biological mother. Nevertheless, Paul uses such words as gentle, caring, little children, love, delighted to share, and dear to us in describing his attitude and actions toward those saints at Thessalonica. Can we be any less caring toward one another and those whom we desire to bring to Christ?

#### UNAFRAID OF WORK

Apparently Paul had to remind the saints in Thessalonica of how he had laboriously preached the gospel among them. Maybe this remembrance would prove to them that his motives were pure. He brings to their attention the long hours of extreme toil and hardship, working night and day, supporting himself through secular work (along with additional help from the church in Philippi - Phil 4:16) as he preached and sought to establish them spiritually. He later points out that he worked in such a manner due to the fact that they needed to see an example of personal sacrifice (2 Thess

3:7-10). Are we willing to work as hard for the growth of the church? When we can truthfully say that we are working as hard in the Lord's church as the apostle Paul did in Thessalonica and elsewhere, then we will see the church grow.

#### EAGER TO ENCOURAGE

Earlier Paul compared his service to them to that of a mother, loving and caring for her children. He now reminds the Christians at Thessalonica that he also behaved toward them as a concerned father. He uses such words as encouraging, comforting and urging as he sought to lead them into lives worthy of the God, who had called them into his kingdom and glory. Is this not a great sermon for those of us who have earthly children in our homes, as well as to those of us who seek to reach others with the gospel? How eager are we to edify brethren and convert sinners?

There is indeed a great need for leaders in the Lord's church, not just in the form of elders and influential evangelists, but also in all Christians who love to seek and save the lost. If we are willing to add to our lives the qualities of leadership that Paul exemplified in reaching, teaching and strengthening the Thessalonians with the truth, we are likely to see growth in the church as surely as they did in Thessalonica!

***The Glorified Christ***  
***(Revelation 1:5)***  
***By Warren E. Berkley***

When you think of the book of Revelation what are the first images that come to your mind? Probably the dramatic symbols written by John and their proper interpretation. Also the application of those messages to your daily life.

Let's go beyond our first impressions to the Person of the book. The person of this book is not the apostle John who saw the visions and recorded them. The person of this book is not the great red dragon or the beast from the sea. The person who is at the center of this book is Jesus Christ.

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits



who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. 'I am the alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the end,' says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty'." Rev. 1:4-8

One of the great keys to understanding the book of Revelation (in fact, understanding the New Testament and the whole Bible) is the truth about Jesus Christ, revealed in the dignified language of this final book of the New Testament. Reverently consider what is said of Him in Rev. 1:5.

#### Jesus Christ Is "The Faithful Witness"

A witness is one who testifies, so the chief expectation of a witness is to tell the truth. In our system – civil and criminal courts and investigative hearings – witnesses are qualified in terms of three things: Reputation, Competence & Knowledge.

If someone has a bad or questionable reputation – if they might be considered incompetent in some way – or if they do not really know about the matter under consideration – they are not regarded as good witnesses.

These requirements must be met: Reputation, Competence and Knowledge. Witnesses can quickly be impeached if they lack these qualifications. When Jesus Christ is judged by these three standards the conclusion is, He is the perfect witness. Let's examine Him by each of the three qualifications:

As to REPUTATION – Even the Roman official whose permission was sought to execute Jesus said: "I have found no guilt in this man," (Lk. 23:13). Honest readers of the Bible today conclude that Jesus suffered no mark against His reputation. Peter said of Him: He "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him," (Acts 10:38). Pilate's wife said: "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him," (Matt. 27:19). Quoting from Isa. 6, 1 Pet. 3:22 says, He "committed no sin, nor was

guile found in His mouth.” Judged based on reputation, Jesus is qualified as The Faithful Witness.

COMPETENCE is another standard applied to witnesses. Competence means mentally capable; having those skills of judgment, reaction and capacity for mature decisions. The temple guards who came to arrest Jesus – observed, and then confessed the maturity, the competence they saw in Him.

They said, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks,” (Jno. 7:46). Now these were the officers of the chief priests and Pharisees; men not likely to entertain any prejudiced in favor of Jesus. They had never heard anybody speak such deep and profound things. Their confession of His competence was similar to the observation made after His “sermon on the Mount” – “He taught them as One having authority, not as the Scribes,” (Matt. 7:29). Jesus proves Himself to be a faithful witness – in His spotless reputation; in His impressive competence . . .

And, in His KNOWLEDGE. The question here is, does the witness know what He is talking about? In the first chapter of Colossians Paul describes Jesus Christ in many ways, with words and phrases chosen by the Holy Spirit to put before us the Incomparable Christ (Col. 1:13-20). Look at that first phrase in verse 16: “...by Him all things were created...” Jesus was there when all things were created – but not an inactive observer; rather an active, divine participant in the work of creation. “...By Him all things were created...” Jesus possesses the perfect knowledge of One who was active in the creation of all things.

I ask you to consider, therefore, Jesus Christ as the faithful witness. He enjoys spotless reputation, perfect competence, and the highest kind of knowledge. Now remember – the chief expectation of a witness is – to tell the truth. Jesus has absolutely no other experience – I mean, He has never told anything that wasn’t the truth! He is, and ought to be so regarded by us today – as The Faithful Witness.

I was doing some work on another subject for another lesson the other day - and I had reason to look up the word “Martyr” in Easton’s Bible Dictionary. I found this entry:

Martyr — one who bears witness of the truth, and suffers death in the cause of Christ (Acts 22:20; Rev. 2:13; 17:6). In this sense Stephen was the first

martyr. The Greek word so rendered in all other cases is translated “witness.” (1.) In a court of justice (Matt. 18:16; 26:65; Acts 6:13; 7:58; Heb. 10:28; 1 Tim. 5:19). (2.) As of one bearing testimony to the truth of what he has seen or known (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 22; Rom. 1:9; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10; 1 John 1:2). [1]

Jesus Christ lived by the truth of God and died because of that loyalty. All that He did; all that He was; all that He said was because of His resolute loyalty to the truth of God. He bore witness to what He knew was true and right and that standard has been conveyed to us – through His chosen men – written in the New Testament. Jesus said one time: “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father...,” (Jno. 8:38). There’s your FAITHFUL WITNESS. “I’m telling you what I know to be true...” “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father,” and then in this same context He said: “...if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine,” (Jno. 8:31).

Our pressing need today – as individuals made in the image of God – is to accept Jesus Christ as The Faithful Witness. He faithfully testified the truth

of God and His life exemplified that standard. He caused His testimony to be written for our learning and for our living today. You need someone in your life who will tell you the truth about yourself. You need someone in your life who will tell you the truth about God. You need someone in your life who will tell you the truth about how you ought to think . . . how you ought to speak . . . what you ought to do . . . and how you should prepare for death. Jesus Christ is that Faithful Witness.

In a quotation cited by Trench, these eloquent words about the Faithful Witness:

“A faithful witness, because He gave faithful testimony concerning all things which were to be testified by Him in the world.

A faithful witness, because whatever He heard from the Father, He faithfully made known to His disciples.

A faithful witness, because He taught the way of God in truth, neither did He care for any one nor regard the person of men.

A faithful witness, because He announced condemnation to the reprobate and salvation to the elect.

A faithful witness because He confirmed by miracles the truth which He taught in words.

A faithful witness because He denied not, even in death, the Father's testimony to Himself.

A faithful witness, because He will give testimony in the day of judgment concerning the works of the good and of the evil." (From PORTRAITS OF JESUS IN REVELATION, by Weldon Warnock, FC Lectures, '94).

“The Firstborn from the Dead”

Jesus is called “The Firstborn of the dead,” Or in some translations: “The Firstborn From The Dead.” Now, if we only had the word “firstborn” there might be an impulsive conclusion about someone being the first to be born. In this context in Revelation chapter one – and particularly, in reference to Christ - we should read the entire phrase: FIRSTBORN OF THE DEAD, or FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD. The same expression is found in Colossians chapter one:

Col. 1:15 – the firstborn of all creation.

Col. 1:18 – firstborn from the dead.

Here in Rev. 1:5, in the King James, the expression is: First begotten of the dead. That word “begotten” carries the idea of primacy, priority; the first. The truth conveyed is this simple: Jesus arose from the dead, never to experience death again! Thus He is called “The Prince of Life” in Acts 3:15. And “the first fruits of those who are asleep,” in 1 Cor. 15:20. Hades held him for only a few hours and Peter announced this on the Day of Pentecost when He said: “God raised Him up again . . . since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power,” (Acts 2:24). Lazarus rose to die again. Christ rose to die no more. Scripture was fulfilled in this epoch event. Psalms 2:7 has God saying: This day have I begotten Thee – quoted by Paul in Acts 13:33, and referred to in Romans 1:1-4. Jesus was the first of the dead, to rise to life – never to die again.

This truth about Him is not only what we believe; it is our hope, as Paul said in 1 Thess. 4:14 – “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”

“The Ruler Over The Kings Of The Earth”

No ruler on earth is really supreme and absolutely autonomous. None. Men may acclaim their leaders to be sovereign; they may afford their human leaders the praise and titles that would express the language of final authority and elevated power. Yet - No ruler on earth is really supreme and absolutely autonomous.

God is in control and God has said concerning Jesus: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Ye Him,” (Matt. 17:5). God gave to Jesus Christ “all authority” in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Jesus is “The Ruler Over The Kings of The Earth!”

Let me ask you: Where are those men, who according to historical account, sought to dominate the world? Where are those who tried to build the Tower of Babel? Men like Nimrod? Pharaoh? Nebuchadnezzar? Cyrus, Alexander the Great Constantine? The Herods? Nero? Hitler, Stalin? They all died; their kingdoms fell; the dreams of their grandeur written in history books – but never achieved. Jesus Christ obtained by the cross and the will of God – what men have sought out by sin. He is the Ruler of the Kings of the earth. God raised Him from the dead, to His right hand and Phil. 2:9 describes this as God highly exalting Him, and bestowing on Him the name which is above every name. Everything is under the rule of Christ. Men function in civil governments on earth and in time. Men and nations compete; dictators rise and fall. Men treat their fellows with cruelty; advance their egocentric desires, sometimes in the name of religion – and eventually die and suffer the outcome of their sin. But everything is under the rule of Christ. In ultimate reality – no man or group of men can ever overrule Christ.

The world is in the hands of Christ, and His disciples take great comfort in that truth. This does not cancel the free moral agency of men and women. People make wrong choices; there are victims of sin. There are things happening in the earthly realm we may not fully understand while we are here. But in the heavenly realm, Deity remains in control.

If – in moments of trial – you should entertain any doubt about this; if you should think someday that perhaps men have ultimate control, read again

from Psalms, chapter two. When nations rage and people plot vain things . . . When the kings of the earth set themselves against what is right and take counsel together against the Lord . . . Verse 4 says: “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.”

Jesus Christ is today the faithful witness; the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. One more thing from the book of Revelation – this statement of praise to Christ, in chapter five and verse 12: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing,” then in verse 13: “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

What is your present attitude Jesus Christ? Are you living under His authority today? Have you obeyed Him, being baptized into His death? Are you walking in Him - - the faithful witness; the firstborn from the dead . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth??

***What Is Romans 14 About?***  
***(Romans 14)***  
***By David Smitherman***

In order to answer our question let’s briefly notice what the Roman letter is about.

Justification by faith is the theme (1:16-17) and through chapter 11 this subject is developed. In chapter 12 the language changes and from a discussion of “doctrinal” themes Paul moves to a consideration of some “practical” matters. Having shown that they have been justified by faith, he now urges the Romans to live in a way that reflects that justification, and “therefore” in 12:1 signifies, “Because you’ve been justified by faith, here is the way you should live.” Those justified by faith have a wide range of duties to others who’ve been saved (12:1-21), obligations to civil government (13:1-7), and mankind in general (13:8-14). They also have responsibilities to one another as brethren in a more specific matter and this brings us to the section covered by 14:1-15:7.

Romans 14 is about “clean” things

When Paul said, “nothing is unclean of itself” (14:14) and “all things indeed are clean” (14:20b), he spoke of the disputable matters among the Roman brethren. Morally and spiritually the practices which were being engaged in or not being engaged in were pure. Likewise, they were of such a nature that, whether a man did or did not participate in the activities, “God hath received him” (14:3) and made him to “stand” (14:4), i.e., both the practices and those participating/not participating had God’s approval, whether they were “weak” or “strong”. Obviously, Paul is not talking about individuals who engage in such conduct as he had mentioned at the beginning of the letter (1:24-32) or that the Corinthians were rebuked for tolerating (1 Cor. 5), nor that which the Galatians were warned about (Gal. 5:19-21). Likewise, those choosing to “walk as the Gentiles” (Eph. 4:17-32) and not as “children of light” (Eph. 5:3-14) are not discussed. Things such as these are not under consideration in this chapter; it is not about removing restraints and objective standards of right and wrong.

#### Romans 14 is about divergent views

There were those in Rome who regarded as “unclean” things which were, in fact, “clean” (14:14,20b) and whose consciences led them to act accordingly. There were some, on the other hand, who recognized the moral and spiritual “cleanness” of these things and whose consciences led them to act in a different manner. Some could eat all things while others ate only herbs (14:2-3) and there were those who esteemed one day above another while some regarded all days alike (14:5-6). Paul called some of these brethren “weak” (14:1-2; 15:1) and others he said were “strong” (15:1). As stated previously, God accepted those in both “groups”.

#### Romans 14 is about being united

Twice in this section (14:1; 15:7) Paul issued a command to “receive” the “weak in faith” (a “welcome” that is accompanied by a “special interest on the part of the receiver, [The Expanded Vine’s, p. 860]). The apostle also ordered (15:2) the Roman saint to “please his neighbor” (“to strive to please; to accommodate one’s self to the opinions, desires, interests of others”, (Thayer, p. 72). And then there are the admonitions to “follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another” (14:19) and that “with one accord ye may with one mouth, glorify the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:6). Paul obviously wanted the Romans united.

Romans 14 is about attitudes and conduct

In order to be united certain attitudes and conduct need to either be avoided or included in our character. Let’s look at what some of these are.

Receive each other (14:1; 15:7) “Receive” in 14:3 describes God’s reception of us. Luke uses it in Acts 18:26 to describe the treatment of Apollos by Aquilla and Priscilla, and in Acts 28:2 to illustrate the kindness of the barbarians toward Paul. It also defines the way in which Philemon was to treat the runaway Onesimus upon his return (Philem. 17). We are to receive one another “without passing judgment on disputable matters” (NIV, 14:1) and “even as Christ also received you.”

Don’t set at nought (14:3,10) Those whose consciences permitted them to do what others could not are ordered not to “treat with contempt” (Thayer, 225) or “look down on” (NIV) those with whom they differed, an all-too-common problem with those whose knowledge has led to arrogance (1 Cor. 8:1).

Don’t judge (14:3-4, 10, 13) Paul is concerned that those whose consciences don’t allow them certain liberties which others take, not pass condemnatory judgment on those with whom they differ and reminds them that such judgment is forbidden because only one is our Judge (vss. 9-12).

Don’t cause to stumble (14:13b, 21) Those justified by faith will not cause another to stumble (sin) by providing an occasion for such. Conduct like this would cause a brother or sister to violate their consciences, causing them to grieve (14:15) and thus destroying (14:15) or overthrowing (14:20) them (“to destroy utterly, to overthrow completely, Vine, p. 294).

Follow after (14:19). “Follow after” is translated “persecute” elsewhere (Matt. 5:10-12) and demands a diligent effort (see also Eph. 4:3, “give diligence”) of striving for an atmosphere in which peace and edification are possible.

Faith (14:22) Have that (subjective) faith in those matters we’ve determined to be “clean” or “unclean” (vs. 14) to ourselves before God and at the same



time be of the same mind, and with one accord, glorify God (15:6) along with those we have differences with.

Bear infirmities (15:1). Make whatever concessions need to be made and in so doing fulfill the final injunction...

Please your neighbor (15:2-4). Act in an inoffensive way in order that the consciences of others not be troubled.

Romans 14, then, is about maintaining unity in the midst of the type of diverse situations such as those Paul describes in this context, and the attitudes and conduct which will either bring about this unity or destroy it. Those who have been justified by faith should consider this is a serious responsibility.

***Beginnings - the Human Race***  
***Topical Study***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

The highway sign said “Welcome to the Garden of Eden. Population 02. Please don't litter”

Well, I doubt that there was such a sign. There would have been no need for it. Not at “the beginning.” And this was the beginning of all beginnings.

Adam and Eve were the first people to populate God's new, unspoiled earth. No invention of man can approach its beauty and perfection. But because of sin, our first grand parents were exiled from the garden. Their sin was the beginning of sin, and the beginning of consequences set in motion that would last throughout the scope of human history. The earth and all it contains has not ceased to feel the effects of transgression. But also, the promise is made that “through the seed of woman” that there would be provided hope for man in his sin.

The book of Genesis is referred to as “the book of beginnings.” In fact, that is what the word “genesis” means. It means “beginning.” Much of what we read in the book has very definite correlation to our lives and

conditions and hope right now. Consider how directly these things effect us today.

### “In Our Image”

The Scriptures explain to us that God is the source of our world. Without Him there would be no humanity, no life, no world, and no universe. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.... Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our 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 on the earth." (Genesis 1:1;26).

The second chapter of Genesis goes into greater detail regarding the creation of man, expanding on the short statement of 1:26,27. The things that separate man from the other creatures of the earth are that he was created in God's image (1:26) and God gave man a special spirit by breathing “into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7). This is why humanity is referred to as “the offspring of God.” (Acts 17:28,29).

God created man and placed him in a garden where he had everything he would need, except for one thing. He was alone and without companionship. The animals were too far beneath him to provide everything he needed in companionship, and God could relate to man as God, but not as an equal. God created woman as a helper fit for man (Genesis 2:18; 21-22).

### **Human Life and Animal Life**

There are organizations in our country today, some of them very radical and even potentially violent, that at the very least equate the lives of all living creatures as equally sacred. Some say it is immoral to eat meat and refer to people who do as murderers. Ironically, many of these people also have a very naturalistic view of the world, believing that the cosmos evolved into its present condition. Some might also be influenced by Hinduism or other Eastern mystical religions.

I always thought it was ironic that they view it to be immoral for me to eat a fish, but not for a bear to do so. If they are right, and we are all equal, then why not also protest when a bear eats a fish? Why don't they

march up to that bear with their signs and shake their fists in his face and yell, "Murderer!"? (I think I know why... I am just asking).

They are wrong. The human being is different from the other creatures of the earth by virtue of God's design. Implications of this include that human life is sacred and of much more value than animal life (Genesis 9:5,6; Matthew 10:31). Also, we can talk of man's moral responsibility, but not an animal's. We also notice that man's soul survives his physical death intact and we also recognize the brotherhood of all mankind. When man loses sight of these things, he often does become more like the animals he identifies with, a creature of instinct instead of a moral creature with moral values and judgments (2 Peter 2:12-ff).

### **Life Comes From God**

There is something that animal life and human life have in common. Neither is by accident. Both are by Divine plan and power. Life is not an accident. It is not the result of randomness. The intricacies of even the smallest cell is so overwhelmingly complicated that no one can reasonably explain how such would randomly occur with every little mechanism necessary for life to be functioning. Some like to talk of magnetic fields, heat, lightning and chemical compositions of the "early primordial soup" in which the first life was formed when everything was just right. Problem is, apart from God there is no "soup" either.... or world.... or sun.... or lightning.... or magnetic fields.... or matter.... nothing.

Just as all physical life comes from God, so it is with spiritual life and eternal life. It is all from God and of God. Sin brings death. Jesus brings life. "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36). Eternal life simply cannot be found anywhere else. As Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." (John 6:68). As many times as Jesus taught this, it is absolutely amazing that some who claim to speak for Christ today say that one can have eternal life apart from believing and obeying the Son. If it is so, then Jesus lied. If Jesus spoke the truth, then it is not so.

### **The Role of the Woman in the Home**

The fact is that this was determined by God at the beginning. To reject it is to disrespect and dishonor God. One of the reasons given for God's arrangement (which our culture frowns so on today, mocking and ridiculing His word) which includes the man being the head of his home is that Adam was created first, and then the woman to help him meet his responsibilities and provide loving and equal companionship. 1 Timothy 2:13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. (1 Timothy 2:13; Ephesians 5:22-33). This does not say that men and women are not equally precious in God's eyes. It merely recognizes that which God has ordained. That is our purpose as His children.

## ***The Plan of Salvation***

***By Jon W. Quinn***

### Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

### Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinner were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

*The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown*

## ***Final Page***

### ***Elijah: Are You Listening?***

***By Warren E. Berkley***

Elijah's first job involved great divine power but he delivered a message to a very unpleasant human audience. Elijah said to Ahab: "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word," (1 Kngs. 17:1). This was the beginning of roller coaster ride for the prophet from Tishbe in Gilead.

During the days that followed, he was briefly exiled in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, fed by the ravens and the brook. When the brook dried up, the Lord sent him to Zarephath of Sidon. He was fed by a widow, in keeping with the Lord's promise. When the widow's son became ill, she blamed Elijah: "What do you have against me, man of God? did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" (1 Kngs. 17:18). Elijah petitioned the Lord to restore his life, "and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived." In an extraordinary moment of celebration, the widow said, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth," (1 Kngs. 17:24).

After that, Elijah answered the Lord's call again, to present himself to Ahab. It was a time of great famine and Ahab had summoned Obadiah to help find some way to keep the livestock alive. As Obadiah traveled through the land on this mission, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized the man of God, and Elijah said to him, "Go tell your master, 'Elijah is here'," (1 Kngs. 18:8). Obadiah was upset with Elijah. "What have I done wrong," he said. He reminded Elijah of how he had protected the prophets from the cruel hand of Jezebel. Obadiah feared for his life.

"Elijah said, 'As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today'," (1 Kngs. 18:15). Obadiah carried the message to Ahab, and when Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" Elijah responded by telling Ahab the truth: "I have not made trouble for Israel ... but you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals."

This exchange led to the great contest with the gods of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kngs. 18:16-46). The false prophets were publicly humiliated, utterly defeated and slaughtered in the Kishon Valley. Elijah then said to Ahab, “You and go eat and drink now!” (see James 5:18). As the writer concludes the record of the event: “The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.”

Meanwhile, Jezebel was so furious, she threatened to put Elijah to death (1 Kngs. 19:1-13). He fled to Beersheba, sat down in despondency under a juniper tree. The account says, “Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.”

“When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. he came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. ‘I have had enough, Lord,’ than my ancestors.’ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep,” (1 Kngs. 19:3-5).

Asleep and depressed, an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” He arose and found a provisions miraculously supplied, then went forward. He traveled forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God, where he took up residence in a cave.

Here the Lord appeared unto him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” In answer to his despondent words God manifests to him his glory, and then directs him to return to Damascus and anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his room (1 Kings 19:13–21; comp. 2 Kings 8:7–15; 9:1–10). Some six years after this, Ahab and Jezebel suffered the violent deaths Elijah had prophesied. He dealt with Ahaziah, who had succeeded his father Ahab. Finally the time came for Elijah to be taken up into heaven (2 Kngs. 2). Elisha was his successor.

Elijah had to learn to experience the extraordinary, while living in the ordinary. He had to learn to be exhausted, but not discouraged; blamed but not blameworthy. He overcame discouragement by getting up, listening to the Lord and doing His will. God can mend the broken heart and restore us to usefulness, when we listen to Him. Are you listening?