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**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1997  
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT**

**EDITORIAL**

IT IS ONE THING to declare what is true with the mouth, and another thing to believe it in the heart. For Israel there must be both the avowal and the believing that Jesus is Lord and that God rouses Him from among the dead (Rom.10:8-13) in order for salvation to enter into their experience. It is a great step to speak the truth, a blessed gift of God. But it is often found that our words are contradictory because faith does not prosper along with the avowal of truth.

Hence among the Galatians were those who doubtless affirmed by their words the crucifixion of Christ but denied the significance of the cross (see p.251). It did not speak to them of the end of the flesh and its boasting (see p.242). Elihu (see p.281) affirmed that God was over all the habitation (Job 34:13), but he had trouble believing that God Himself was the Director (*cf* Job 36:22) of Job's sufferings.

However, for the generation of Israelites to whom Jesus ministered, there was little either of avowal of truth or of faith (see p.265). For the majority, their hearts were stoutened, lest they would hear and perceive (Matt.13:14,15). But the purpose of Jesus to save them from their sins will assuredly be realized.

So today, many do not even speak of God as the Creator and Director. And others who, like Elihu, declare that God truly is over all, obscure this truth with further claims about the human will and wickedness that imply God cannot fulfill His will and make His glories known to all. Indeed we often hear our brethren say that God has accomplished our salvation through the cross of Christ, and yet they also insist that there are requirements placed on us in order to complete this "accomplished" work. Faith has not kept up with the avowal.

May God grant us a growing faith that accords with our proclamation of His Word.

D.H.H.

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE WORLD

GOD has three distinct, yet parallel lines in carrying out His grand purpose of revealing Himself. One operates in the material, one in the temporal, and the other the spiritual sphere. One is concerned with the heavens and the earth, the second with the eons, the third with the *worlds*. These run parallel in space, time and spiritual operation. In these there are three major divisions, conforming with the three heavens and earths, or five minor divisions, corresponding to the five eons or worlds. The material changes are comparatively easy to grasp, and the temporal, the eons, are comparatively simple, but His spiritual operations are more difficult, yet they may be seen and apprehended best by their association with the corresponding earths and eons.

The material creation is by far the best example of order which our senses can perceive. The finest human fabrication cannot compare with the solar “system” or with the earth, even in its present state of disintegration. The Scriptures often use this system to illustrate the “world” of humanity, as when our Lord told His disciples, “I am the light of the world” (John.8:12). That is, apart from Him, mankind gropes in the dark, and does not really know what it is doing or whither it is going, or even why it exists.

### KOSMOS

The essential meaning of the Greek word for *world*, is SYSTEM, order, or adornment. This is easily remembered by our English derivative *cosmetic*, a substance

used for human adornment. SYSTEM is its basic thought which is largely preserved in the scholarly name for the physical universe, the *cosmos*, which the dictionary explains as an orderly and harmonious system, contrasted with *chaos*. Indeed, the CV translates the verb *adorn*. Slaves are to *adorn* the teaching (Titus.2:10; 1 Tim.2:9). The walls of the new Jerusalem are to be *adorned* with precious stones (Rev.21:19). This should always be remembered when the word is used in a context which implies something good.

The Greek word for “world” may also be rendered “adornment” (1 Pet.3:3). There is an element of beauty in all orderly arrangement, so that the “world,” as created, was a beautiful as well as an efficient implement for the revelation of God in the beginning, and will be in the consummation. It may be applied to the constitution of human society, especially before sin entered, and when the relations of Adam and Eve to the lower creatures, to each other, and to Elohim were still unspoiled. And it will also apply, with fuller force, to the future, when all creatures will be in harmony with the Father.

### THE WORLD AND THE SAINTS

The fact that the present world is subject to the just verdict of God (Rom.3:19), a criminal as it were ready for trial and sentence, and enemy of the great Judge, while the believer has been justified from all sin and transgression, and is reconciled with God, constitutes the great gulf between the called and the world. But it is not easy to realize how great this chasm is, in practice, and very few, if any, of us are able to walk in fullest recognition of His truth. It may help us, therefore to consider the contrasts as we find them in the case of God’s Son, when He was in the world, as revealed in John’s account, and then those which apply directly to us, as presented in Paul’s epistles.

## THE SON AND THE WORLD

The key to the character of the world of mankind lies in its relation to God through His Son. The world came into being through Him, yet, when He became flesh and was in the world, it failed to recognize Him. Even His own nation rejected Him, except the little band who believed on Him and accepted Him, who were especially empowered for this privilege by God. Expressed by means of an illuminating figure of speech the world of mankind had reverted to a chaos like the physical earth at the disruption (Gen.1:2). They were in darkness, and He came as a light. But they did not like the light, but loved the darkness, because their deeds were evil (John 1:8-12).

In such a case the just course would be to judge the world, and deal with men according to their deserts. Our Lord had the power and the right. He could have called more than twelve legions of messengers to enforce His just sentence (Matt.26:53), at anytime. Even the might of Rome could not have withstood His verdicts. But He did not, at that time, seek to assert His power, or to set right the evils of the world. Indeed, the machinations of the Adversary, and the world which was under his influence, were the essential background for the display of His highest and most precious attributes, His grace and love. Apart from His presence we would never have known the wickedness of the world, or the goodness and grace of God. We know so little of the evil of the world today because we offer so little contrast to it.

## THE LAMB OF GOD

When John the baptist introduced Jesus to Israel, He did not announce Him as the grand King for Whom Israel was looking and longing, but as the great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, Who will take away the sin, not merely of Israel, but of the whole *world*. In other words, His atti-

tude toward the world was an expression of God's *sacrificial love*, rather than one of condemnation. Judgment must come, in the future kingdom, but not during His sojourn among them, in His humiliation.

## THE HATRED OF THE WORLD

The world did not fully vent its hatred of God's Son until His death upon the accursed stake. Then the two principal divisions of world power, the ecclesiastical and the political, joined in condemning Him, the priests because He exposed their hypocrisy and the political powers because He threatened their authority. Between them both He seemed to sink to the lowest level of human weakness and shame. In reality, however He offered the Sacrifice that settled for all sin, and laid the foundation for all future power and glory. Then it was that the world exposed its true character. It condemned itself when it crucified the Lord of glory. Throughout this eon it is worthy of the fate it dealt out to the Son of God. Let us give it this shameful place in our estimation.

The hatred of the world culminated in the crucifixion of Christ, but it did not cease then. It still continues in the various phases of the world, especially the ecclesiastical, for our realm, unlike that of Israel, is not on earth but inherent in the heavens (Phil.3:20), so we must be subject to the superior authorities on earth (Rom.13:1). But, though we do not wrestle with blood and flesh, we do wrestle with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:10-13). In place of Pilate and the Roman world power, we are opposed by spirit forces among the celestials. This is the principal difference between our opposition and that of our Lord's day.

There is a widespread idea that, since the crucifixion and the spread of Christianity, the world is becoming better. Indeed, the "church" seems to cherish the mistaken notion

that world betterment is its chief function! The fallacy of this false inference is evident from the fact that, instead of improving in God's sight, it is fast approaching, if it is not already in, one of the perilous periods which characterize the last days. Every one of the twenty indictments of 2 Timothy 3:1-5, from selfishness to a denial of the power of devoteness, is abundantly evident. Politically, notwithstanding the union of the nations, there is perplexity and fear. Morally there is steady deterioration. Religiously, formality and outward show has largely replaced spiritual power. The world is worse and ripe for judgment.

#### OUR PRESENT PLACE IN THE WORLD

It is of utmost importance that the saints grasp their present relation to the world, for, while they are *in* this world, they are not *of* it. God does not, as a rule, call the wise of the world, or the powerful, or the noble, and those who are something, but rather the stupid, and the weak and the ignoble, and the contemptible, and those considered nothing. The reason is simple. *No flesh at all shall boast in His sight.* There is to be no boasting except in the Lord (1 Cor.1:26-31).

#### PAUL'S EXAMPLE

In his contact with the Corinthians, Paul had already declared this truth by his actions, which, we may well believe, were more effective than words. No doubt he was far superior to most other men in word and wisdom, and he had an excellent opportunity to display it, especially in Greece, where such gifts were highly esteemed. But his theme, a crucified Saviour, was by no means such as would appeal to his audience, nor could it be enforced by the usual persuasive arguments. Apart from God's intervention by His spirit there was no likelihood of any response. His weakness, fear, and trembling cancelled his

personal power, so made room for the outflow of God's spirit (1 Cor.2:1-5).

The cross, situated at the very center of the eons and the worlds is the climax of all wisdom when viewed from the divine standpoint. No other occurrence during the eons or in the worlds so clearly reveals, not only the ruin of man, but the love of God, as the *crucifixion* of the Lord of *glory*, the utter debasement of the highest of all God's creatures, the divine curse resting on the Beloved of His heart, for the sake of His sinful creatures. It is utterly impossible to even imagine any other action that would so completely demonstrate the fullness of the divine affection.

#### WORLD CRUCIFIED

The world was crucified to Paul and he to the world by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.6:14). While the world directly in view here is the world of Judaism, it, in fact, is but a picture of the greater system in which we all presently live. The spirit of both is boasting in the flesh. All such glory is shameful, and will give place to a new creation (Gal.6:15). Most of us have a very vague notion of the force of the term "world" in this connection, and of its place in God's plan. It is used of the various *systems* which He uses during the eonian times. Like the respective epochal eons, the five corresponding worlds are arranged as a reversal. The first world was created good, and so with the last. The second from the beginning and end see the entrance and exit of evil, under the first and the last Adams. The central wicked world, in which we live, is the worst of all and comes to its climax in the cross, the summit of human depravity, and will end in the impending era of God's indignation.

#### THE VARIOUS WORLDS

There are five different "worlds" mentioned in Scrip-

ture which vary much in character, according to the eon in which each is found. We live in the present *wicked* eon (Gal.1:4), so it is a hateful (John.15:18), corrupt (2 Pet. 1:4), world. But the first and last worlds have no such character. Before the disruption, ere sin had entered and man had not even been created, there is no intimation of wickedness. So, also, in the world of the new creation, after the great white throne judgment, everyone is ready to be subject to God, the Father. These two worlds are not wicked, by any means.

Only because the first, faultless world was *not adapted to bring about God's glorious goal*, was it rejected and ruined and readjusted for the first phase of His dealings with humanity. This was altogether according to God's will, and not in the least due to human failure or transgression, although it prepared for it and foreshadowed it. As the great Subjector of all, He not only had the *right* to work His will in the physical realm, but His innate love demanded reciprocation, and fully justified every temporal evil that would make it possible for Him to reveal His fatherly affection for the creatures of His hand and *heart*.

#### THE ANCIENT WORLD

The worlds before and after the present wicked world are alike in this, that subjection, or government, is under the first Adam and his sons in the past, and under the Second Adam in the future. There will be a vast advance in the future, but it is still necessary to deal in judgment with individuals and nations. In the ancient world we have the problem of evil, the disruption of the first earth, repeated in the spiritual sphere. We are now distinctly told that Yahweh Elohim Himself caused the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to grow in the garden (Gen.2:9). Adam did not plant it there, nor did the Adversary. It was God's doing, and in later revelation He definitely takes the responsibility

(*cf* Rom.11:32). The reason is clear. Good cannot be really "known" or appreciated apart from the experience of evil.

#### THE PRESENT WICKED WORLD

We are now prepared to see why this world is wicked beyond the rest, and should be crucified. Essentially, wickedness is insubjection to the Deity, Who takes the title of Subjector during the eonian times, in which the world systems operate. The worlds before and after this are held in a measure of subjection by Adam and his greater Son, but today there is no head or central authority in charge of mankind. Noah's eldest son did not take over the rule of the rest. The divine right of kings is a myth, except in the case of His own nation, Israel. Even there, *the Only One Who is equipped to subject others to the Supreme Subjector was crowned with thorns and crucified*. The world that committed this accursed crime is fit for nothing else than crucifixion.

#### THE FOURTH WORLD

As the deluge destroyed the previous world and prepared for the present, so the impending judgments will clear the scene for Messiah's kingdom. As in the days of Noah, so it will come, unexpectedly, and by means of tremendous physical catastrophies, clear the scene for the reign of Christ Himself. Because of His presence and power, it will be a glorious world compared with the previous ones, but evil and enmity will only be suppressed on the part of the other nations. So it, more definitely than other worlds, is limited in time (to a thousand years). Then Satan is loosed and deceives the people for the last time. Thus even this world has a share of evil, to set forth the good.

#### THE FIFTH WORLD

The fifth world is the result of a new creation, and dif-

fers from the first largely in that it is the fruit of its disruption, as well as the other worlds (Rev.21-22). But, even with all its many blessings, it is not the consummation, when God becomes All in all. The lake of fire is still present (Rev.21:8).

The blessings are largely confined to one nation, Israel, and their holy city, New Jerusalem, to which the nations bring their glory. They will still need healing (Rev.22:2). Some will be unjust and filthy (Rev.22:11). Without the city are evil characters (Rev.22:15). Throughout the worlds and eons, evil has its place, as God's means of revealing to mankind the innate operations of His heart.

#### THE FINAL SYSTEM

Only Paul can carry us beyond the heavens into the celestial regions, or beyond the eons in the course of time. At the consummation all sovereignty and authority and power, the kingdom of Israel and the nations will be abolished. Those who have died, and are in the lake of fire, which is the second death, will be vivified. Even the Son Himself, Who has succeeded in subjecting all to God, will Himself be subject, that God may be All in all. This is the final, perfect system, in which all have been headed up in the Christ (Eph.1:10), Who then brings all under the august Headship of the Father.

A. E. Knoch

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## BOASTING IN THE CROSS

(Galatians 6:11-18)

*Lo! with what size letters I write to you with my own hand! (6:11)*

“It seems probable that the rest of the epistle was penned by Paul himself. His usual custom was to write only a short ending to attest the genuineness of a letter [*cp* 2 Thess. 3:17], but here he is so concerned that he rehearses the heart of the argument in his own handwriting. It has been suggested that the writing was in large letters because of his defective eyesight [*cp* 4:15b].”<sup>1</sup>

While this may be so, we cannot help wondering whether it may not also be the case that if, at this juncture, Paul now takes pen in hand himself and inscribes the remainder of the epistle *personally, written in large letters*, he does so more especially to draw attention to the summary of the entire epistle which follows. In any case, it is helpful to picture this brief, remaining portion of the epistle as perhaps having been written thus, that we might take special note of what is said here accordingly:

*Whoever are wanting to put on a fair face in the flesh, these are compelling you to circumcise only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus. For not even they who are circumcising are maintaining law, but they want you to be circumcised that they should be boasting in that flesh of yours. (6:12,13)*

Paul does not say that “*some*” among his opposers who wished to put on “a fair face *in the flesh*” were guilty of such unworthy motives as to be practicing such a doc-

trine in order to escape persecution for the cross of Christ Jesus, but that “*whoever*” among them<sup>2</sup> were practicing such a doctrine were motivated thus.

The only reason these opposers had so “revised” Paul’s message was to avoid persecution, especially such persecution as the apostle himself had undergone because of his heralding of the evangel, uncorrupted. Whether Jew or Greek, the vast majority of men were offended by Paul’s heralding, “according as the truth is in Jesus” (*cp* Eph.4:21).

Since the mass of men were scandalized by the truth of the evangel, they persecuted both those who taught it and those who accepted it. Hence, by twisting the evangel—specifically, by giving man himself a key role with a view to his justification—these circumcisionists succeeded not only in contriving a message which would be inoffensive and acceptable to the masses, but one which would deceive even many of God’s own, such as the Galatians. This same basic error has prevailed throughout the centuries, even as it continues to prevail today.

“The circumcisionists played for *popularity*. They were after a ‘show.’ They used the gospel to swell their own ranks. The rite of circumcision, apart from any moral and spiritual considerations, filled them with pride. They ‘counted’ their converts, and rivalled with each other for Jewish favor on that ground. To be able to point to a bodily condition or some other outward observance as proof of their influence—this was their object. Their policy was cowardly. Their zeal for circumcision was not genuine. In theory, their enthusiasm for the rite was ascribed to its supposed virtue; in fact, they used it as a makeshift to avoid persecution. They were insincere as well as unprincipled and selfish. These men who professed such zeal for the law,

2. The scope of “whoever” here is that of all who were compelling the Galatians to circumcise: “*Whoever . . . these are compelling you . . .*”

neither respected nor regarded it; they used it to secure position and the perquisites of religious place. Insincere, cowardly, time-servers—such were the circumcisionists. They were facing two ways, studying the safest, not the truest course, anxious to be friends at once with Christ and His enemies.”<sup>3</sup>

The hypocrisy and inconsistency in such an approach is transparent. It is not as if even those who were circumcising or imposing other points of law for justification were actually *maintaining* law, but at most were only attempting to do so. Yet whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is *not remaining* in *all things* written in the scroll of the law to do them (3:10; *cp* Deut.27:26; 28:15).

The criterion of law-justification is not that the listeners of law are just with God, but that the doers of law shall be justified (Rom.2:13; *cf* Deut.6:25). Nevertheless, since all are under sin (Rom.3:9), no one measures up to this criterion. Hence, by works of law, no flesh at all *shall* be justified in God’s sight. Law affords the human not a means of justification but of condemnation, for through law is the recognition of sin (Rom.3:20).

Even those in Israel who were comparatively faithful and worthy, were never “of” works of law in such a sense as to make their own obedience the ultimate basis of blessing. They too had sinned (even if less than many of their fellows), and so had become liable for all the law’s curses (James 2:10), even as the rest. They had no more claim on God’s blessing than the wicked kings of old, and could only look to His mercy, according to His *grace*.<sup>4</sup>

3. Vladimir Gelesnoff, PAUL’S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, p. 132.

4. Paul’s words in Romans 9:15 in his slightly adapted citation of God’s declaration of Exodus 33:19, reads, “I shall be *merciful* to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be *pitying* whomever I may be pitying.” In Exodus 33:19 itself, however, the record is that Yahweh said

Hence, in any ultimate sense, such faithful ones were by no means “resting on law” (*cf* Rom.2:17), even though it remained their duty to heed it. Instead, their only hope, even as our own, was the grace and compassion of God. And, like ourselves again, they could only become willing to obey in the day of God’s *power* (*cf* Psa.110:3; *cp* Rom.7:15; 8:7).

#### SCANDALOUS TRUTH

The theme of the believer’s dependence upon God’s *spirit*, in His *grace*, both for justification through Christ and faithful service in His name, permeates this entire epistle. Yet alas, in the case of the Galatians, the flesh’s native desire to exalt itself through its own sufficiency had gained the day and so had crowded out the *evangel* of grace.

If Paul had continued to herald circumcision, his later persecutions for *not* heralding circumcision would never have occurred. As he said, “If I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?” (5:11a). Yet, conversely, as he went on to say, “Consequently the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified” (5:11b).

That is, in that case, those considerations related to the cross which scandalize the mind of man would no longer be a problem since they would no longer exist. So long as man may suppose that he can do something for his own justification, that is, something with a view to that objective being realized, he is content. He is content, because of the gratification of his own supposed virtue thus afforded him. He may have committed many a sin, but at least when it comes to doing those things which he fancies must be done in order to save his own neck, he is really quite an

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to Moses, “I will be *gracious* to whom I am being gracious and will have *compassion* for whom I am having compassion.” Thus we learn that God’s mercy is according to His grace, and His pity according to His compassion.

all-right fellow after all. By doing what he imagines is required of him, then, he will *save himself* from disqualification for heaven so that God will save him from hell.

Indeed, if it should be announced to a believer of such a mind that salvation is granted gratuitously in grace, apart from law, and hence *that all boasting in self is debarred* (Rom.3:27), he or she simply will not tolerate any such affirmation.

The snare or “scandal” (*scandalon*) of the cross consists in its all-sufficiency for justification and attendant blessing of salvation. In the sight of God, man can become justified only through the *gratuitous* and *gracious* deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24).

Yet this truth scandalizes the fleshly mind which in its pride ever seeks to “do its part,” that it might gain its own glory. Since to the flesh, the truth of the cross becomes the snare<sup>5</sup> of the cross, those who would stand for its truth, must also bear the persecutions which attend such a stand.

“Persecution” is not confined to retributive acts of extreme bodily injury, but may consist of any type of *mistreatment* of another as a result of such a one’s having incurred the displeasure of the persecutor. Many who are actually egregious persecutors would deny the charge, ones who in their religious zeal may be largely unaware of their acts, and attitudes, of persecution.

The Greek word translated “persecution” (*diogmos*, CHASING), as a verb (*dioko*), is translated not only “persecute” but “pursue.” It is used both of positive pursuing (e.g., 1 Thess.5:15) and of negative “chasing” (as here, in 5:11 and 6:12). Such “chasing” may be overt or covert, subtle or obvious, even as slight or extreme. Those who take an open stand for the truth of the *evangel*, however, *will*, in whatever way or degree, be “persecuted” for so doing.

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5. i.e., “a means of tripping or a cause of falling,” KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.275.

## A CORRESPONDENT RANSOM FOR ALL

One may be a friend of *Christ*, and yet an enemy of His *cross* (Phil.3:18b), that is, of its significance and accomplishment. One may speak continually of the crucifixion *event*, while continually denying the crucifixion *accomplishment*. Paul entreats the Philippians to become imitators of him, and to be noting those who are walking thus, “according as you have us for a model.” He does so, for, as he says and had often told them before, there are many who are walking as “*enemies* of the *cross* of Christ.”

The contrast which Paul draws here in Philippians 3:18, is not between believers and unbelievers, but between those who are imitating him and those who are not imitating him, in relation to the “cross” of Christ. Obviously, Paul does not hereby refer to the wooden instrument itself upon which Christ was impaled, but, by metonymy, to the significance of the Death which occurred thereupon, the death of Christ, and the achievement of the deliverance which was wrought there, that of the salvation of all mankind and the reconciliation of all, throughout the universe.

Unbelievers, as a rule, if they have even heard of it, do not so much oppose as simply ignore God’s gracious work of salvation for all through Christ. It is rather *unfaithful believers*—in contradistinction to Paul and those believers who would imitate him—who stand against the truth concerning the cross. The Philippians hardly needed to be told to imitate *Paul* in his acceptance of the mere event of the cross; any believer would do for that. Nor is it at point by Paul’s words here for the Philippians to become careful to maintain their wariness of the claims of atheists or idolators, ones who often deny even the event of the cross, who in any case disclaim it of all salvific value.

It becomes evident, then, that in speaking of those who are enemies of the *cross* in contrast to those who are *not*, Paul does not set in opposition believers and unbeliev-

ers, but *faithful believers* and *unfaithful believers*, in this relation. He does so in respect of each class of believers’ walk in consideration of the *significance* and *achievement* of the cross.

The significance of the cross as to the individual sinner concerns not so much what the sinner has *done*, but what the sinner *is*. One who sins, sins because he *is* a sinner. It is because he is such an awful person that he has done such awful things! The lusts of the flesh, collectively (even if not, perhaps, in some points, individually), are *his* lusts! If he is less guilty than others of certain of the more socially unacceptable works of the flesh, he is still quite guilty himself of various of the more socially acceptable fleshly desires.

The desire of the flesh is a terrible thing. This is so not only in its acknowledged perversions such as rape or murder, but in its perversions which, in its own perverseness, it deems only “minor shortcomings.” These include sins such as self-exaltation, coveting, and ostentation, not to mention vanity, impatience, unkindness, strife, and anger.

How one may compare to other men is not the point. Every sinner *himself* is such a terrible sinner that none other than Christ Himself had to die for that sinner alone, let the sins and needs of others be what they will.

Further, every sinner himself is such a terrible sinner that his justification, hence, his salvation, would seem to be impossible. And, unless God should take the most extreme measures at unspeakably great cost both to Himself and to His Son, every sinner is such a terrible sinner that indeed his salvation would be impossible.

To speak as a man, By our sins, we have made ourselves the worst imaginable nuisance to God and caused Him an unfathomable measure of trouble. How would *you* like it if you had to give up *your* most precious child—the only one who had truly loved you and been obedient to you—to death, even a death of *crucifixion*? And most especially,

how would you like it if you had to do this because it was the only way to ransom the rest of your children out of the terrible plight which had befallen them due to their own foolish wickedness?

Thus the significance of the cross, in respect to the sinner, is that such were *our* deserts. It is *we* who are deserving of death (*cp* Rom.1:32), not Christ. To say that crucifixion was the Roman death penalty, not the Mosaic, misses the point. The point is that the sufferings of the cross comprised the death which *God Himself* appointed unto His Son in His death for sinners (*cf* Acts 4:27,28). If some swift, painless, and shameless form of euthanasia performed in private might have sufficed, doubtlessly it would have been employed. No; to ransom such as ourselves, nothing less than an ignominious and public, literally *excrucciating* (i.e., “from the cross”) death would suffice.

In relation to the sinner, considered as such, *this* is the significance of the cross. Since it is so exceedingly uncomplimentary of the flesh, however, the flesh does not care for such a message at all. The believer, while actively believing under the influence of God’s spirit, loves the word of the cross; for it at once serves to humble him and to exalt his God even as His vast love. Yet let that same believer be removed from vital influences of the spirit and left to himself, which is to say to his own flesh, and he will once again yield to whatever desires of the flesh happen to be his peculiar portion.

Most believers are too pious to join voices with Cicero the Roman orator and openly declare, “No wise man ever thanked God for virtue.” Yet not many believers are sufficiently enlightened and devout to thank God alone for virtue, while meaning what they say. Howbeit, the apostle Paul, at the zenith of this summary word in defense of his evangel of grace, plainly declares:

*Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the*

*cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* (6:14)

The world specifically and immediately in view in the above quotation is the world of Judaism, for this is the world of the context. To be strictly literal, in each case where the above text reads “the world,” it should simply be “world.” In more literal English, we would render this idiomatically as “a world.”

Paul, through the truths contained in his evangel, especially in his prophetic writings of the “untraceable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8), was vitally aware of “the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:8) contained therein, which transcended the revelations given earlier to the Circumcision concerning the kingdom and its law.

Hence, to Paul, the world of Judaism with all its laws, rituals, and related service, no longer had any practical existence, insofar as any involvements of his own therein were concerned. That world had been crucified to him. Similarly, Paul the apostle, likewise, who in his evangel of justification apart from law no longer had any place within the environs of Judaism, had become “dead” from the perspective of that world. Thus he had been crucified to it.

No doubt, most today are motivated to make law-obedience or some other form of “requirement-meeting” compulsory, because they think that it *is* compulsory,<sup>6</sup> even in our calling today. Still, the fact remains that to teach that “eternal” salvation can only be obtained by the cross *plus something else* (it makes little difference what) is effectually to boast not only in the cross but in that something else as well, whether intentionally or not.

6. Law-obedience for entrance into the terrestrial kingdom is indeed compulsory under the Circumcision administration. That calling and its blessing, however, is still on a *basis* of *grace* for those who are *chosen*. The blessings of the Circumcision have no more place for prideful notions of free will than the blessings of the Uncircumcision.

Boasting is not confined to overt bragging, but includes all inward glorying and exulting as well, according to a boastful spirit (1 Cor.4:7; *cp* Prov.6:17a, “exalted eyes”). Preachers continually praise their converts for making their “decision for Christ.” They are taught to think well of themselves for having used their “free will” aright in “accepting Christ,” unlike so many others who have not done so. Indeed, if it is something ultimately of man himself alone which determines whether one enjoys eternal bliss or is subjected to eternal misery, how could one *not*, even if only inwardly, extol his own greatness for an achievement of such stupendous importance?

#### IN CHRIST, A NEW CREATION

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation. And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God.* (6:15,16)

Believers of the Circumcision who were enlightened, who recognized the *grace* of their own calling, albeit of a grace under the law which acknowledged its requisite place in relation to their entrance into the terrestrial kingdom, would therefore continue in the observance of its various particulars, or elements.

It is true that the elements of their system had a vital place in relation to their allotment of *eonian* life in the *kingdom* announced by their prophets. That allotment was only granted as a reward for worthiness of service, according to the criterion of the Mosaic law. Ultimately speaking, however, it would be only those whom God would make worthy, according to His choice in grace (Rom.11:2-5; *cp* Isa.26:12), who would become worthy of that glorious reward. Even so, they themselves must strive and struggle daily that they might not be classed among the doers of lawlessness and thus debarred from the kingdom.

Still, in the case of any such Circumcision believers, as much so as for the rest of mankind, it is through the work of Christ *alone* that sin is taken away, that man is conciliated to God, that justification is afforded, that vivification (with its attendant immortality and incorruption) is granted, and that peace and reconciliation are established.

It is in light of all such considerations that Paul declares: “*In Christ Jesus*, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation.” In relation to that which God achieves in grace through Christ Jesus, what is true of circumcision is true of all law: *it is nothing*. Instead, in Christ Jesus, what is everything, is the new creation which God achieves for all through the blood of Christ’s cross.

Hence, “*whoever* shall observe the elements *by this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God” (6:15,16). Whether, in the case of an observant, believing Jew or proselyte, who thus would observe the elements literally, or in the case of all called according to Paul’s evangel, who thus observe the elements in spirit (5:25), Paul invokes peace upon them, considered individually.

Similarly, he goes on to speak specifically of those faithful ones within the nation of Israel considered as a discrete company, invoking peace and mercy upon them collectively. Such ones comprise all out of Israel who through faith are “Israel” indeed (i.e., “upright with El”; Gen.32:28; *cf* Rom.9:6b). More fully expressed, the phrase “also on the Israel of God,” is: “also, may peace and mercy be upon the Israel of God.”

“Paul does not wish to condemn all of the Circumcision indiscriminately for the sins of his opponents. Those amongst them who acknowledge the power of the cross in the midst of their observances, on these he invokes peace and mercy, for they are the true Israel of God.”<sup>7</sup>

7. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.285.

*For the rest, let no one afford me weariness, for I am bearing in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. (6:17)*

By this sobering word, Paul plainly intimates that this is to be the end of the matter. It is as if he were to declare: "See here; this is the way it is. Period. I am bearing in my body the brand marks [*stigmata*] of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who personally revealed to me the very evangel which I proclaimed to you and must now defend before you. Do not weary me any further with any of your 'Yes-but' retorts."

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren! Amen! (6:18)*

Paul's emphasis here on *spirit*, is in line with the overall teaching of the epistle. As the evangel is full of the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is to this grace alone which Paul appeals. The apostle thus expresses his longing for the Galatians, his beloved but "foolish, little children" in faith, that the Lord's grace might illumine them and God's spirit empower them, that they might embrace the truth and no longer oppose it.

Paul was confident *in the Lord* that the day would come (whether or not it came, following this time, during his lifetime) when the Galatians would be rejoicing in the truth of the evangel which he was heralding among the nations (2:2) and in nothing would be disposed otherwise (5:10).

Since our Saviour, God, wills not only that the Galatian saints should be saved and come into a realization of the truth, but that "all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (1 Tim.2:4), we would join our voice with Paul's in this same confidence. It is our God and Father Himself, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has formed the decision that such a goal should be realized. How we rejoice to know that all His counsel shall be confirmed, and that all His desire He will do (Isa.46:10). To Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! J.R.C.

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*He Shall Save His People*

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### LEST THEY PERCEIVE

THE DISCIPLES were told not to herald the kingdom to anyone except "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5). Now in Matthew 13 Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables, and in fact, "apart from a parable He spoke nothing to them" (13:34). He changes His emphasis from the nearness of the kingdom to the *secrets* of the kingdom which are made known only to the disciples (13:11). The rest are made deaf and blinded with stoutened hearts "lest at some time they . . . should be turning about, and I should be healing them" (v.15).

The way in which our Lord conducted His ministry to Israel is full of surprises. The messenger's prophecy to Joseph had been that Jesus would save His people from their sins (Matt.1:21). Yet this goal has not yet been announced to the people. To the contrary, Jesus has warned that "broad is the gate and spacious is the way which is leading away into destruction, and many are those entering through it. Yet what a cramped gate and narrowed way is the one leading away into life, and few are those who are finding it" (Matt. 7:13,14). The call for repentance has not been heeded by those to whom it was given; hence the Lord declared, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! . . . For Tyre and Sidon shall it be more tolerable in the day of judging than for you" (11:21,22).

In short, Jesus has not pointed the people to His position as Saviour from their sins. He has predicted that only a few would heed His message about the kingdom and find the way to life. He has told the disciples to go only to Isra-

elites. And now he speaks in parables which He will not explain to the people in general, lest they repent, and He tells the disciples the people as a whole have been blinded.

#### NOT GIVEN TO KNOW

We can say all we want about the disciples eventually being commissioned to disciple “all the nations” (Matt. 28:19), and we can try to convince ourselves that Jesus kept truth hidden only from those who had already shown they would not receive it, but these facts do not change the fact that the ministry of Jesus did not result in saving the very people who received it, and the testimony of our Lord is that this failure finds its roots in divine prophecy made centuries before. It is clearly the operation of God.

What was happening “filled up” (Matt.13:14a) the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9,10 which says as translated from the Hebrew: “Go, and you will say to this people, Hear ye hear, yet do not understand; and see, ye see, yet do not know. Stouten the heart of this people, and make its ears heavy, and make its eyes squint, lest it may see with its eyes, and with its ears it may hear, and with its heart it may understand.”

To the vast majority of the people of Israel it was not given (Matt.13:11b) to understand what Jesus was saying. It was not given to them to perceive and to know, *lest they should be turning about and the Lord be healing them* (Matt.13:15).

Jesus was able to speak plainly. He could have avoided the use of parables, or in using them to give the explanation of them to everyone. But He did not minister to the people this way; He did not tell them openly and plainly these secrets of the kingdom; for if He did take this approach in His ministry the people would have repented and turned about from their ways and He would have saved them. He spoke in parables, *lest* they should be healed! The word

*heal* comes close to the idea of *save*, and is often used to picture the broader work of deliverance from any danger. But Jesus spoke in such a way that the people would not turn from their ways and be saved.

#### SPEAKING IN PARABLES

The parables on Matthew 13 are elucidated to the disciples by the Lord. They indicate that only a few Israelites will enjoy the “superfluity” of blessing in the kingdom (v.12). This is in accord with the ways of God, which are not our ways. God blinds the hearts of the many and grants understanding to the few. He sows, or places, the various individual types of people in a situation favorable or unfavorable to the firm reception of the Word (Matt.13:18-23). Some who heard Jesus speak did so while placed in an environment that was hostile to understanding and appreciating the message, being sown “beside the road,” or “in the thorns.”

Nothing could so clearly present the truth that the kingdom will come and be administered in a way that glorifies God. To those who were given, more was to be given (13:12). The privileged blessings of the kingdom would not be enjoyed by every Israelite, for only a few would be granted the insight and the faith to treasure these blessings and “shine out as the sun” (v.43) in the kingdom. These blessings are *given* in accord with God’s operation in placing Israelites in environments which either are conducive or not conducive to understanding and heeding of the Word.

#### FIRE AND GNASHING OF TEETH

In view of these many factors limiting the effect of Jesus’ teaching in the hearts of His people, we surely must take special care in attempting to understand His warnings of judgment. If someone is sown “among the thorns,” that is, receives the word in an environment (in which they were

“sown”) of many worries of life and struggles to earn money, they will suffer loss for it. But God’s wisdom, in placing only a few in situations where they will understand what they hear, cannot be honored if the lamentation and gnashing of teeth of the many is eternal and hopeless.

From the very lessons of these parables, the meaning of the burning of the darnel (v.30) cannot be everlasting hell. It is more than irreverence, it is a denial of His wisdom and righteousness to speak of God as annihilating or tormenting forever those whom He has blinded, from whom understanding has been taken away, through the instrument of the Adversary.

Their stoutened hearts will bring them eventually to “a furnace of fire” and “lamentation and gnashing of teeth,” but to speak of these results of their sins in terms of the traditional hell is to twist the Scriptures and its revelations of the living, wise and powerful God of all goodness, out of all recognition. God Who kept them from turning about from their self-centered and proud ways will bring them to the realization of the evils of these ways. But this too will be for their good and the glory of God.

As the farmer burns up the darnel after it has been separated from the harvested grain, so also God will exclude those deceived by Satan from the blessings of the kingdom. But this “furnace of fire,” characterized by intense sorrow over their loss will certainly have benefits of opening their eyes and hearts to the truth and an appreciation of God. The sentence is severe, and we would not minimize the severity of its significance, but it is a judgment of God, Who judges in accord with truth and for purposes that harmonize with His glorious Being. This fire and this weeping are divine operations of condemnation, but they are not expressions of some sort of everlasting, hopeless reprobation. Our Lord is not speaking of hell,

and it is shameful to obscure His place as Saviour by thus twisting His words.

#### THE SAVIOUR’S WISDOM AND POWER

But also, this fire and weeping is not God’s means of saving from sin. It may open up their eyes, but it cannot save these sinners from their sins. Nor indeed does the hearing and believing and heeding of the Word save the disciples from their sins. It is Jesus alone Who saves His people from their sins. Though this is not being made known as He traverses the land of Israel, it will be the solid foundation for all the blessings of pardon and rule and life promised to that people.

But for now, here in Matthew 13, that is not being made known even to the disciples. What is being made known, however, is great and glorious! Even in His own country where He was not honored, the people were astonished at His “wisdom and powerful deeds” (Matt.13:54).

In this the people of Nazareth were not thinking of a kind of wisdom that depends on human beings using their free will to change their thinking and their will in order to make themselves worthy of the kingdom. They were not thinking of a kind of power that is dependent on their own independent decisions in order to be employed. And they were not thinking of a power that sent and kept sinners in pain and lamentation forever, or annihilated what it could not save. Instead, they were thinking of a wisdom that knew hidden things about themselves and revealed secret things from God, and they were thinking of a power that healed and blessed.

#### THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

We have been granted further revelations of divine wisdom and power in the wisdom and power of the cross. What was being shown by the blinding of many hearts

and the choosing of a few disciples to understand and heed Jesus' words is shown also in our own calling. "For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble, but the stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong, and the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is, *so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight*" (1 Cor.1:26-29).

This wisdom of choosing fishermen over the learned Pharisees, or people like the Corinthians (and us) over others who seem more deserving, is a wisdom that brings out the power and grace and love of God. But it does not exclude His righteousness and involve sending those who are not called to endless punishment. Indeed, the greatest example of stubborn phariseism was Saul of Tarsus!

The wisdom of the cross is to save in full recognition of the entire helplessness and hopelessness of sinful humanity. "For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor.5:14). In reality, those who are wise according to the flesh are not wise; no one can truly be called strong or noble. These value judgments are only temporary, part of what seems to be so for the present. But in faith we see all put to death in the death of Christ, and all headed up in the Christ in vivification and reconciliation.

Since this is so, the teaching of everlasting hell is proven false. It is a doctrine that distorts and hides God's character and that denies His deity. "O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! . . . seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:33,36).

D.H.H.

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*Concordant Version of the Book of Job*

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JOB 32-37

**32** <sup>+</sup>So <sup>ˈ</sup>these three <sup>ˈ</sup>men <sup>ˈ</sup>ceased from answering <sup>ˈ</sup>Job, for he was **righteous in his own eyes.** <sup>2</sup> <sup>+</sup>Yet the **anger of Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite, from the family of Ram,** grew <sup>ˈ</sup>hot. His **anger** burned <sup>ˈ</sup>hot <sup>ˈ</sup>against Job <sup>ˆ</sup>because he **justified** <sup>ˈ</sup>his own soul rather <sup>ˆ</sup>than Elohim. <sup>3</sup> <sup>+</sup>And his **anger** burned <sup>ˈ</sup>hot <sup>ˈ</sup>against his three associates <sup>ˆ</sup>because <sup>ˆ</sup>they had not found an answer, and so they <sup>ˈ</sup>condemned <sup>ˆ</sup>Elohim<sup>ph</sup>. <sup>4</sup> <sup>+</sup>As for Elihu, he had tarried <sup>ˈ</sup>while <sup>ˆ</sup>they spoke <sup>ˆ</sup>to Job, for they were **older** <sup>ˆ</sup>than he was <sup>ˆ</sup>in days. <sup>5</sup> <sup>+</sup>When Elihu <sup>ˈ</sup>saw that there was **no further answer in the mouths of the three men,** <sup>+</sup> his **anger** grew even <sup>ˈ</sup>hotter. <sup>6</sup> <sup>+</sup>So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite <sup>ˈ</sup>answered <sup>+</sup> saying:

**I am junior to you <sup>ˆ</sup>in days, and you are hoary headed;  
Therefore I shrank back and was <sup>ˈ</sup>fearful  
From disclosing <sup>ˈ</sup>my knowledge <sup>ˆ</sup>to you.**  
<sup>7</sup> **I said to myself, Let days speak  
And many years <sup>ˆ</sup>make wisdom <sup>ˈ</sup>known.**  
<sup>8</sup> **But <sup>ˆ</sup>surely it is the spirit in a mortal,  
And the breath of Him Who-Suffices  
that <sup>ˆ</sup>gives them <sup>ˈ</sup>understanding.**  
<sup>9</sup> **Seniors may not be wise  
<sup>+</sup>Or elders <sup>ˈ</sup>understand right judgment.**  
<sup>10</sup> **Therefore I say, Do hearken to me;  
Let me disclose my knowledge, me too.**

32:3 *S-ph* Elohim: Hb Job.

32:4 --- they spoke: MT speeches.

- 11 Behold, I waited for your words;  
I listened <sup>fr</sup>for your understanding  
<sup>fr</sup>While you were sounding out declarations.
- 12 + I <sup>m</sup>gave consideration <sup>fr</sup>to you,  
+Yet behold, there was no correcting <sup>o</sup>f Job  
Or answer<sup>l</sup> to his <sup>sa</sup>arguments from you.
- 13 Beware lest you <sup>l</sup>say, We have found wisdom;  
El Himself <sup>~</sup>is our <sup>l</sup>Mentor<sup>~</sup>, not man.
- 14 +Hence <sup>~</sup>I shall not array<sup>~</sup> such declarations <sup>7</sup>as these<sup>~</sup>,  
And <sup>i</sup>with your <sup>sa</sup>arguments I shall not reply to him.
- 15 They are dismayed; they do not answer further;  
They shift declarations away from them.
- 16 + I have waited, but <sup>t</sup>since they are not speaking,  
<sup>t</sup>Since they stand and do not answer further,
- 17 Let me answer, me too, with my portion;  
Let me disclose my knowledge, me too.
- 18 For I am full of declarations;  
The spirit of my inner being constrains me.
- 19 Behold, my inner being is like wine that is not <sup>l</sup>opened,  
Like new wineskins, it is ready to <sup>l</sup>split.
- 20 Let me <sup>l</sup>speak so <sup>+</sup>that it can ventilate <sup>o</sup> me;  
I must <sup>l</sup>open my lips and <sup>l</sup>answer.
- 21 <sup>pr</sup>Indeed I certainly shall not show  
partiality to any man,  
Nor shall I flatter <sup>o</sup> a human.
- 22 For I do not know how I could <sup>l</sup>flatter,  
Else my <sup>d</sup>Maker<sup>l</sup> would <sup>l</sup>carry me off speedily.
- 33 Nevertheless <sup>+</sup>now, I pray,  
O Job, hear my declarations,  
And do <sup>c</sup>give ear to all my words.
- 2 Behold, <sup>pr</sup>now, I open my mouth;  
My tongue speaks <sup>i</sup>on my palate.
- 3 My <sup>sa</sup>arguments reflect the uprightness of my heart,  
And my lips declare knowledge in purity<sup>l</sup>.

32:13 --- is our <sup>l</sup>Mentor: Hb <sup>l</sup>whisks him away.32:14 --- I shall not array: Hb he has not arrayed; 7-- as these: Hb <sup>l</sup>against me.

- 4 The spirit of El, it has <sup>d</sup>made me,  
And the breath of Him Who-Suffices,  
it <sup>m</sup>preserves me <sup>l</sup>alive.
- 5 Reply to me if you <sup>l</sup>can;  
Do arrange yourself and stand up before me;
- 6 Behold, I am corresponding <sup>as</sup>to you <sup>o</sup>before El;  
I myself <sup>mr</sup>also was nipped off from the clay.
- 7 Behold, no<sup>t</sup> dread of me should frighten you,  
And my palm shall not lie heavy on you.
- 8 Yea, you have <sup>sa</sup>spoken in my ears,  
And I have <sup>l</sup>heard the sound of these declarations:
- 9 I am spotless, without transgression;  
I am unstained, and no<sup>t</sup> depravity is <sup>o</sup>in me;
- 10 Behold, He <sup>l</sup>finds reasons to repudiate <sup>on</sup> me  
And <sup>l</sup>reckons me <sup>o</sup>as an enemy<sup>l</sup> to Him;
- 11 He <sup>l</sup>places my feet in shackles;  
He <sup>l</sup>observes all my paths.
- 12 Behold, I am answering you:  
In this you are not justified,  
For Eloah is <sup>mm</sup>greater <sup>f</sup>than a mortal.
- 13 For what reason do you contend <sup>o</sup>against Him  
That He does not <sup>l</sup>answer all his<sup>o</sup> words?
- 14 <sup>t</sup>Indeed El does <sup>l</sup>speak <sup>i</sup>once,  
And <sup>i</sup>twice, yet no<sup>t</sup> one <sup>l</sup>regards it,
- 15 In a dream, a vision of the night,  
<sup>i</sup>When stupor falls<sup>o</sup> upon men,  
In slumberings on their bed;
- 16 Then He <sup>l</sup>reveals matters to the ear of men,  
And He <sup>7</sup>dismays them<sup>c</sup> <sup>i</sup>with <sup>7</sup>admonitions<sup>~</sup>,
- 17 To withdraw a human <sup>7</sup>from<sup>c</sup> his <sup>d</sup>deed,  
And that He may <sup>~</sup>obliterate<sup>~</sup> pride <sup>f</sup>in a master.

33:13 his: i.e., man's.

33:16 7--c <sup>l</sup>dismays them: MT <sup>l</sup>seals; 7-- admonitions: Hb their admonition.

33:17 7--c from: Hb lost by haplography; --- obliterate: Hb cover.

- 18 He <sup>h</sup>keeps back his soul from the pit  
And his life from passing<sup>-</sup> into <sup>~</sup>the unseen<sup>~</sup>.
- 19 +Also he is corrected <sup>i</sup>by pain on his bed,  
And by perennial disputing in his bones,
- 20 So +that bread is repugnant to him, to his life,  
And to his soul, the food of yearning.
- 21 His flesh is <sup>all</sup>vanishing from sight,  
And his bones are ridges that once were not seen.
- 22 + His soul draws <sup>h</sup>near to the pit  
And his life to <sup>~</sup>the <sup>n</sup>place of the dead<sup>~</sup>.
- 23 If there is a messenger on his behalf,  
An intermediary<sup>l</sup>, one <sup>f</sup>out of a thousand,  
To tell <sup>g</sup> the human what is upright for him,
- 24 And he is <sup>h</sup>gracious to him and <sup>h</sup>says,  
Do ransom him from descending<sup>-</sup> to the pit;  
I have found a propitiatory shelter;
- 25 Then his flesh will become hale <sup>f</sup>with youth  
And shall be restored to the days of his adolescence.
- 26 He shall entreat to Eloah, and He shall accept him;  
+ He shall see His face <sup>i</sup>with joyful shouting  
And He shall restore to the mortal his righteousness.
- 27 He shall sing <sup>on</sup>before men and say,  
I have sinned and contorted what is upright,  
+Yet He did not compensate it fully to me.
- 28 He ransomed my soul from passing<sup>-</sup> into the pit,  
And my life is seeing <sup>i</sup> the light.
- 29 Behold, El is effecting all these things  
Twice and thrice with a master,
- 30 To restore his soul from the pit,  
To enlighten him <sup>i</sup>with the light of the living.
- 31 Attend, Job; hearken to me;  
Be silent, and I myself shall speak.

33:18 --- the unseen: Hb javelin.

33:22 --- the place of the dead: Hb those <sup>h</sup>putting to death.

- 32 If there are declarations, reply to me;  
Speak, for I would delight to justify<sup>-</sup> you.
- 33 If there is no word from you, hearken to me;  
Be silent, and I shall train you in wisdom.
- 34 +Then Elihu continued to <sup>h</sup>answer, + <sup>h</sup>saying:  
2 Hear my declarations, you wise men,  
And you having knowledge, <sup>h</sup>give ear to me.
- 3 For the ear <sup>h</sup>tests declarations  
+As the palate <sup>h</sup>tastes <sup>g</sup> food<sup>-</sup>.
- 4 Let us <sup>h</sup>choose for ourselves what is due;  
Let us <sup>h</sup>know <sup>bt</sup>among us what is good.
- 5 For Job has said: I am just,  
+Yet El, He has taken away my due;
- 6 <sup>on</sup>Concerning my due, should I lie?  
My <sup>~</sup>lesion<sup>~</sup> is mortal<sup>l</sup>, yet I am without transgression.
- 7 <sup>h</sup>What master is like Job?  
He <sup>h</sup>drinks derision like water;
- 8 + He travels <sup>g</sup>in partnership  
with contrivers<sup>l</sup> of lawlessness  
And <sup>g</sup> goes<sup>-</sup> about with men of wickedness.
- 9 For he says, It is <sup>h</sup>unprofitable for a master  
<sup>h</sup>When he strives to be acceptable<sup>-</sup> <sup>wi</sup>to Elohim.
- 10 Wherefore, men of heart understanding,  
hearken to me:  
Far be it <sup>g</sup>from El <sup>f</sup>to do wickedness,  
And Him Who-Suffices <sup>f</sup>to do iniquity.
- 11 For the contrivance of a human,  
He shall repay it to him,  
And according to man's path,  
He shall provide it to him.
- 12 El, truly indeed He does not <sup>h</sup>do <sup>h</sup>wickedness,  
And He Who-Suffices does not <sup>h</sup>distort judgment.
- 13 <sup>h</sup>Who gave supervision <sup>on</sup>to Him over<sup>d</sup> the earth,  
And <sup>h</sup>who <sup>pl</sup>placed Him over the habitance, all of it?

34:6 --- lesion: Hb arrow.

- 14 **If He** <sup>1</sup>places it in **His heart** <sup>2</sup>concerning him,<sup>◇</sup>  
 He can <sup>3</sup>gather back **His spirit**  
 and **His breath to Himself**;
- 15 **All flesh** would <sup>4</sup>breathe its **last together**,  
 And **humanity** would <sup>5</sup>return <sup>on</sup>to the **soil**.
- 16 <sup>+</sup>**Now** if you have **understanding**, do **hear this**;  
 Do <sup>6</sup>give ear to the **sound of my declarations**.
- 17 **Indeed**, can anyone **hating right judgment** <sup>7</sup>govern?  
 And <sup>8</sup>would you <sup>9</sup>condemn  
 the **Abundantly Righteous One**,
- 18 <sup>7</sup>Who says<sup>~c</sup> to a **king**, **Worthless one**,  
 And to **patrons**, **Wicked one**,
- 19 **Who does not repute chiefs**,  
 Nor is **He partial** to the **rich-man** <sup>bf</sup>above the **poor**,  
 For they all are the <sup>d</sup>work of **His hands**?
- 20 In a **moment they** <sup>10</sup>die;  
<sup>+</sup> At **midnight** the **people** <sup>11</sup>reel and <sup>12</sup>pass away,  
 And the **sturdy** are <sup>13</sup>taken away <sup>14</sup>by no<sup>t</sup> human **hand**.
- 21 For **His eyes** are **on** the **ways of a man**,  
 And **He** <sup>15</sup>sees all his **steps**.
- 22 There is **no darkness** and **no blackest shadow**  
 To **conceal there** the **contrivers** <sup>16</sup>of **lawlessness**.
- 23 For it is **not** <sup>on</sup>for a **man** that he may <sup>pl</sup>set  
 an <sup>17</sup>appointed **time**<sup>~</sup>  
 To **go** <sup>18</sup>before **El** in **judgment**.
- 24 **He** <sup>19</sup>smashes those of **abundance**  
<sup>not</sup>without **investigation**  
 And <sup>20</sup>installs others <sup>21</sup>in their **stead**.
- 25 **Wherefore**, **He** <sup>22</sup>recognizes their **occupations**  
 And <sup>23</sup>overturns them in a **night**, and they are <sup>24</sup>crushed.
- 26 **He** <sup>25</sup>slaps them down <sup>26</sup>with the **wicked**,  
 In a <sup>ri</sup>place <sup>w</sup>where<sup>◇</sup> all can **see**!

34:14 him: i.e., man.

34:18 7~c Who says: MT Can one say.

34:23 --- appointed time: Hb further.

34:26 \*where: transposition from v.27a.

- 27 **Because they withdrew** from following **Him**  
 And did **not contemplate** any of **His ways**,
- 28 But they **caused** the **cry of the poor** one  
 to be **brought** <sup>on</sup>before **Him**,  
 So <sup>+</sup>that **He** <sup>29</sup>heard the **cry of the** <sup>30</sup>humbled.
- 29 <sup>+</sup>**When He** <sup>31</sup>is <sup>32</sup>quiet, <sup>+</sup> <sup>a</sup>who can <sup>33</sup>condemn?  
<sup>+</sup>**When He** <sup>34</sup>conceals **His face**, <sup>+</sup> <sup>a</sup>who can <sup>35</sup>regard **Him**?  
<sup>+</sup>**Yet He** is **over a nation** and **over humanity** alike,
- 30 <sup>f</sup>**Lest** a **polluted human** <sup>36</sup>reign,  
 One from the **entrappers of the people**.
- 31 **Indeed** has one **said to El**, <sup>37</sup>I have been **lured away**~;  
**I shall not harm** <sup>38</sup>any<sup>f</sup>more~;
- 32 <sup>~</sup>Until<sup>~</sup> I can <sup>39</sup>perceive, **direct me Yourself**;  
**If I have contrived iniquity**, **I shall not do so again**?
- 33 **Shall He repay it** <sup>f wi</sup>on your terms  
<sup>40</sup>since you have **rejected** otherwise,  
<sup>41</sup>Since you yourself are **choosing**, and **not I**?  
<sup>+</sup>**Now what you know**, **speak**.
- 34 **Men of heart** understanding shall **say to me**,  
 And any **wise master** who is **hearkening to me**:
- 35 **Job is not speaking** <sup>42</sup>with **knowledge**,  
 And his **words** are **not** <sup>43</sup>with **intelligence**.
- 36 **My will** is that **Job** should be **tested unto permanence**  
<sup>on</sup>For making **replies** <sup>44</sup>like men of **lawlessness**.
- 37 For **he** <sup>45</sup>adds **transgression** <sup>on</sup>to his **sin**;  
<sup>46</sup>Among us **he** <sup>47</sup>slaps his **hands**  
 And <sup>48</sup>increases his **sayings** <sup>49</sup>against **El**.
- 35 <sup>+</sup>**Then Elihu** continued to **answer**, <sup>+</sup> **saying**:  
<sup>2</sup> Is **this** what you **reckon** <sup>50</sup>as **right judgment**?  
 Do you **say**, This is **my righteousness** <sup>f</sup>before **El**,
- 3 <sup>+</sup>**When you** <sup>51</sup>ask, <sup>w</sup>How is it <sup>52</sup>profitable to <sup>53</sup>me~?  
 What more do **I** <sup>54</sup>benefit <sup>f</sup>than if I had **sinned**?

34:31 --- I have been lured away: MT I have borne; --- any<sup>f</sup>more: Hb lost by haplography.

34:32 --- Until: Hb Apart from.

35:3 --- me: Hb you.

- 4 I myself shall reply to you with declarations,  
And to your associates with you.
- 5 Look at the heavens and see;  
+ Regard the skies; they are loftier <sup>f</sup>than you.
- 6 If you sin, what effect do you have on Him,  
And if your transgressions are many,  
what do you do to Him?
- 7 If you are righteous, what do you give to Him?  
Or what does He derive from your hand?
- 8 Your wickedness affects a man like yourself,  
And your righteousness a son of humanity.
- 9 Under a multitude of exploitings they cry out;  
They implore under the arm  
of those with <sup>mm</sup>great power.
- 10 +But not one has said, Where is Eloah, my <sup>d</sup>Maker,  
Who is giving psalms in the night,  
11 Training us <sup>f</sup>by the beasts of the earth,  
And <sup>f</sup>by the flyer of the heavens, He makes us wise?
- 12 There they cry, +yet He does not answer  
<sup>f</sup>Because of the pride of evil men.
- 13 Yea, it is futility; El does not hear,  
And He Who-Suffices does not regard it.
- 14 How much less when you <sup>lsa</sup>complain  
you cannot find Him out,  
That adjudication is set before Him,  
and you are waiting for Him?
- 15 And now because He does not visit His anger  
And does not acknowledge <sup>i</sup>  
the <sup>7</sup>transgression of ~humanity~,  
16 + Job is opening his mouth wide with transitory breath;  
He makes declarations about <sup>i</sup> without knowledge.
- 36 + Elihu continued, + saying:  
2 Compass about a me a bit,  
and I shall disclose it all to you,  
For I still have declarations concerning Eloah.

35:15 7-- transgression: Hb diffusion; --- humanity: Hb exceedingly.

- 3 I shall bear my knowledge from afar  
And ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 For truly my declarations are not false;  
One of integrity in knowledge is with you.
- 5 Behold, El is abundant in vigor<sup>o</sup>  
And does not reject the pure of heart.
- 6 He does not keep the wicked alive  
+But gives the humble their due.
- 7 He does not diminish the guard  
of His eyes over the righteous,  
+But with kings on the throne  
+ He seats them permanently,  
And they are elevated.
- 8 +But if being bound with manacles,  
They are seized by the cord lines of humiliation,
- 9 +Then He is telling them of their deeds  
And their transgressions, that they are making  
themselves arrogant masters.
- 10 +Thus He reveals  
to their ears His disciplining authority,  
And <sup>lsa</sup>demands that they turn back from lawlessness.
- 11 If they hearken and serve Him,  
They will finish their days in well-being  
And their years in pleasantness.
- 12 +But if they do not hearken,  
They pass away by the javelin  
And breathe their last <sup>as</sup> without knowledge.
- 13 +As for the polluted of heart who nourish anger,  
Who do not implore when He binds them,  
14 Their soul dies in youth,  
And their life ends among the cult-prostitutes.
- 15 He liberates the humbled one by his humiliations  
And reveals truth to their ears by oppression.

36:5 vigor: transposition from v.5b; --- the pure of: Hb abundant in.

36:13 --- nourish: Hb place.

16 **+Thus also He will allure you**  
**from the mouth of distress**  
 To a **wide** place *not* without constraint, *in* its stead;  
**And for rest at your table He will fill it with richness.**  
 17 **And with the adjudication of the wicked one**  
**you will be filled;**  
**Adjudication and right judgment shall be upheld.**  
 18 **'But ~beware~ lest one should 'allure you**  
***i*with affluence;**  
**+ Let not the vastness**  
**of the sheltering gift 'turn you aside.**  
 19 **Shall He arrange your salvation *not* without *i* distress**  
**And all exertions of vigor?**  
 20 **Do not 'gasp after the night**  
**'When peoples ascend<sup>r</sup> to their *u*place.**  
 21 **Beware, you must not 'turn around to lawlessness,**  
**For on account of this you have ~been tested~**  
***f*by humiliation.**  
 22 **Behold, El is 'impregnable in His vigor;**  
***a*Who is a Director<sup>l</sup> like Him?**  
 23 ***a*Who calls His way to account *on* against Him?**  
**+Or *a*who says, You have contrived iniquity?**  
 24 **Remember that you should extol His deeds,**  
**Of which men have sung.**  
 25 **All humanity have perceived *i* it;**  
**A mortal, he 'looks from afar.**  
 26 **Behold, El is so great + we cannot 'know it,**  
**And<sup>o</sup> the number of His years is fathomless.**  
 27 **For He 'condenses the drops of water**  
**That 'filter as rain for His mist,**  
 28 ***w*That 'exude from the skies**  
**And 'drip down on humanity ~as showers~.**

36:18 --- beware: Aramaic beware; MT fury.  
 36:21 --- been tested: Hb chosen.  
 36:26 And: transposition from middle of line.  
 36:28 --- as showers: Hb multitude.

29 **Indeed, *if* can one 'understand**  
**the spreading, thick clouds,**  
 The thunderous tumults from His booth?  
 30 **Behold, He spreads His ~mist~ over it,**  
**And covers the roots of the sea.**  
 31 **For *i*with them He ~gives 'sustenance~ to the peoples;**  
**He 'gives food *y*in abundance<sup>l</sup>.**  
 32 **He covers lightning *on* in His palms**  
**And 'instructs *on* it 'with sure aim<sup>l</sup>.**  
 33 **His ~thunder~ 'tells *on* about it,**  
 The cattle, also, *on* about what is coming up.  
 37 **Indeed, 'at this my heart 'trembles**  
**And 'leaps out *f*of its *ri*place.**  
 2 **Hearken, yea hearken<sup>r</sup>**  
***i*to the thunderous sound of His voice**  
**And the rumbling soliloquy that comes 'forth**  
**from His mouth;**  
 3 **Under the entire heavens He unleashes it,**  
**And His lightning over the wings of the earth.**  
 4 **After it 'roars a voice;**  
**He 'thunders *i*with His swelling voice**  
**And does not 'stem them so that His voice is 'heard.**  
 5 **El 'thunders marvelously<sup>l</sup> *i*with His voice,**  
**Doing great things +that we cannot 'know.**  
 6 **For He 'says to the snow, Fall<sup>o</sup> on the earth,**  
**And to the downpour of rain,**  
**+even His strong downpours of rains.**  
 7 ***i*On the hand of every human He places a 'seal**  
**So *y*that all ~men~ may know His *d*work.**  
 8 **+Then the wild animal 'enters into its lair,**  
**And 'tabernacles in its habitations.**

36:30 --- mist: Hb lightning (cf 32a).  
 36:31 --- gives 'sustenance: Hb 'adjudicates.  
 36:33 --- thunder: Hb shouting.  
 37:6 Fall: Hb word "be" has the Aramaic meaning "fall" here.  
 37:7 --- men: Hb men of.

- 9 From its **chamber** <sup>l</sup>comes the **sweeping** whirlwind,  
**And cold** from the **sifting** winds.
- 10 <sup>f</sup>By the **breath of El** ice <sup>~is</sup> <sup>lg</sup>made<sup>c</sup>,  
**And the broad waters** becomes <sup>i</sup> a **frozen solid**.
- 11 **Indeed, He** <sup>l</sup>encumbers the **thick** cloud  
<sup>i</sup>with **soaking** moisture;  
**He** <sup>l</sup>scatters **His lightning** cloud,  
12 **And He** directs them **round about**,  
**Turning** <sup>i</sup>according to **His strategies**,  
<sup>γ</sup>That their **deeds** be all <sup>w</sup>that **He** <sup>l</sup>instructs them  
**On the face of the earth's habitation**.
- 13 <sup>if</sup>**Whether** it be for a **club**  
<sup>~</sup>that **He** <sup>l</sup>fulfills **His approved** plan<sup>~</sup>,  
<sup>if</sup>**Or for benignity**, it is **He** Who **causes** it to <sup>l</sup>occur.
- 14 Do <sup>c</sup>give ear to **this, O Job**;  
**Stand and consider** the **marvelous**<sup>l</sup> works of **El**.
- 15 Do you **know in** what way **Eloah**  
<sup>pl</sup>sets<sup>c</sup> direction **over them**  
**And how He** **causes** the **lightning of His cloud** to **shine**?  
16 Do you **know** <sup>on</sup>about the **balancings of the thick** cloud,  
The **marvels of One** **flawless** in **knowledge**,
- 17 **You whose garments** are **warm**  
<sup>i</sup>When the **earth** is **quiet** <sup>f</sup>because of the **south** wind?  
18 Could you with **Him** have <sup>c</sup>made  
the <sup>l</sup>atmosphere <sup>γ</sup>in the **skies**,<sup>o</sup>  
**Steadfast** as a **mirror** that is **solidly**<sup>l</sup> set?  
19 **Inform us what we should say to Him**;  
**We cannot** <sup>l</sup>arrange our case <sup>f</sup>because of the **darkness**.
- 20 **Should it be recounted to Him that I** would <sup>l</sup>speak?  
<sup>if</sup>Would a man <sup>sa</sup>ask that he be <sup>l</sup>swallowed down?  
21 + **Now** men cannot **examine** the **sunlight**  
As it is **ablaze in the skies**,  
+**When the wind has passed and made them** <sup>l</sup>clean,

37:10 --c is <sup>lg</sup>made<sup>c</sup>: MT <sup>l</sup>gives.37:13 --- that **He** <sup>l</sup>fulfills **His approved** plan: Hb <sup>if</sup> for **His land**.

37:18 Could...skies: cf Gn 1:6-8.

- 22 **And from the north**, rays of **gold** <sup>l</sup>arrive.  
<sup>on</sup>About **Eloah** is **fearful** <sup>l</sup>splendor;
- 23 He **Who-Suffices**, we cannot **find Him** out,  
**Great in vigor and right judgment**,  
**And** <sup>mm</sup>abundant in **righteousness**, Who <sup>l</sup>humbles not.
- 24 **Wherefore, men fear Him**;  
**Do not all wise of heart** <sup>~</sup>stand in <sup>l</sup>fear<sup>~</sup>?

37:24 --- stand in <sup>l</sup>fear: Hb **He** <sup>l</sup>sees.

### THE SPEECHES OF ELIHU

THE BOOK OF JOB, like all Scripture, directs our attention to God. The evil that came upon Job could be directly traced to boils and Sabeans, Chaldeans, fire and storm, and then further back to Satan as recorded in chapters 1 and 2. But behind it all was the hand of God, as Job himself declared in his crucial question to his wife, “Indeed should we receive good from the One, Elohim, and should we not receive evil?” (Job 2:10).

In the debate between Job and his three associates (chapters 3-31), Job tenaciously maintained that his sufferings had a cause that lay within the control and purpose of God. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, however, would associate Job’s troubles with Deity only so far as they were divine responses to Job’s secret sins; otherwise, they would put God at a distance from all these great evils as though He were unconcerned with petty, human problems.

Now in chapters 32 through 37 a new character comes before us, Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite. He is a young man with a great deal of self-confidence and ambition,

who trusts he can succeed where the other three failed in answering Job, and more importantly, in justifying God.

What Elihu says about *himself* is invariably bombastic and generally foolish: “Let me answer, me too, with my portion; Let me disclose my knowledge, me too. For I am full of declarations” (Job 32:17,18). But what he seeks to establish concerning *God* is worthy and right, and despite himself, he ends up, especially in chapter 37, contributing to the great revelation of divine glory that is provided by the book of Job as a whole. Ironically, it is when he adopts the very position of Job he was seeking to refute, that Elihu makes a positive contribution in glorifying God.

“LET ME ANSWER”

Elihu is angry against Job because, in his opinion, Job “justified his own soul rather than Elohim” (32:2). Indeed, Job’s defense of himself has often struck us this way as well; and Yahweh Himself will later ask Job, “Would you condemn Me that you might be justified?” (Job 40:8). The weakest parts of Job’s speeches were those concerned with himself, not because they were untrue but because they did not advance Job’s understanding of God.

Job’s self defense, of course, was in reply to the charges of his associates that he had committed hidden sins. Indeed, he succeeded in silencing his three accusers on this issue by setting forth his commendable record of righteousness in relation to other human beings. But, although Job had never forgotten that he was a sinner (*cf* 7:20), and consequently Elihu’s charge in 33:8 that Job claimed there was no depravity in him is clearly mistaken, nevertheless, Job’s defense of himself distracted from the vital question of God’s part in these experiences of evil.

Elihu was wrong in thinking Job was placing his own righteousness above God’s. But his perception that Job spoke of God as reckoning him as an enemy and plac-

ing his feet in shackles (33:10,11) was fully warranted (*cp* 13:24-27).

Again, when Elihu claims Job has said, “I am just” (34:5), there is misunderstanding, but Elihu heard correctly when he concluded that Job believed El had taken away his due (34:5; *cf* 27:2). Job was not comparing himself with God, but rather comparing his record with the accusations of his associates and then relating the facts of his sufferings with the fact of God’s supremacy in all things.

PLACED OVER ALL THE HABITANCE

Because he accurately sets forth Job’s thoughts relating his afflictions to Deity, Elihu finds himself in 34:10-13 saying more than he intended. He eagerly defends God’s righteousness: “Far be it from El to do wickedness, and Him Who-Suffices to do iniquity” (v.10). This, Elihu seems to say, should expose the foolishness of Job’s claims about God being involved in his sufferings. But, as though realizing that God may have good reason for bringing certain sufferings, Elihu adds that God does “repay” human beings for their contrivances (v.11). This is expanded in 34:21-27 by recognizing that God does *smash* and *overturn* and *crush* and *slap down* wicked men for their acts. But, Elihu quickly explains, these are not wicked acts, for they are matters of judgment which must not be distorted (34:12).

This means the acts, such as crushing and overturning, are not wicked in themselves but only in accord with the motivation and purpose involved. If the purpose is for good, then the evil, which may well involve much sorrow and affliction, is not absolutely evil, but only serves an ultimate good. If this is true when judgment and repayment are in view, it may well be true in Job’s case where repayment does not appear to be involved.

Now, with these remarkable testimonies, Elihu proceeds by praising God with a claim that appears through-

out Scripture and that most of us have echoed, but few have realized. God has supervision over the earth, and He is placed over the habitation, *all of it* (Job 34:13). God Who does not do wickedness is placed over all the earth where Job is in the midst of misery. This is Job's argument; more than that, it is his *hope*, his most fervent longing.

Perhaps realizing the implications of his words in 34:10-13, Elihu quickly turns to that very argument of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar that Elihu had promised he would not use (32:14). God does bring evils on people, but only as repayment for human wickedness (34:18-33). Then, almost desperately, Elihu returns to his attacks on Job's sayings concerning God. Any truly wise person, Elihu claims, would agree that Job has not spoken with knowledge (34:34,35). This will also be Yahweh's charge against Job. But, as we have noted, Job's sayings that were without intelligence were those concerning himself; what he said *concerning God* was rightly so (42:8), and not at all "against El" as Elihu thinks (34:37).

In not following through with praise for God's place over all, and in endeavoring to find Job at fault no matter what, Elihu gets caught up in a jumble of thoughts in chapter 35. He first charges Job with complaining his righteousness had not brought him any benefits (35:3; *cp* 34:9). Then Elihu seems to say in 35:5-7 that God is unaffected by either human transgression or righteousness. How these ideas fit together is almost impossible to see.

Yet once again, in 35:10,11, Elihu adjusts his thoughts in order to focus on the greatness of God. Here he points to Eloah as our *Maker*, Who gives psalms in the night, and Who conveys wisdom to us through the lower creatures of His hand.

But he returns to the theme of divine indifference, or at least unresponsiveness, in 35:12-15. This too was an argument occasionally used by the other three. But it is wholly

mistaken, as the Abundantly Righteous One Who is over all the habitation (*cf* 34:13,17) is soon to verify.

#### DECLARATIONS CONCERNING ELOAH

So far Elihu has not impressed us with the consistency of his arguments. But his determination to speak of God's righteousness coupled with his examination of Job's declarations concerning God is about to bear good fruit. It may be that his words in 35:10 stay with him, while the rest of his arguments in that chapter fade away as his own "transitory breath" rather than Job's (*cf* 35:16).

In any case, the personal title given God in 35:10 appears now in 36:3 as Elihu's own: "my Maker." Elihu does not speak of "my Judge," but of the One Who made me! This is not One Who is distanced from human concerns, but Who is very much involved with deeds of integrity (36:4) and vigor (v.5). Although Elihu continues to see this involvement mostly in terms of judgment (36:6-15), he also sees his Maker as using distress as a pathway to rest and salvation "Shall [El] arrange your salvation without distress and all exertions of vigor?" (36:16-19). Our experiences are part of God's *making* of us.

God teaches us by the testings of humiliation (36:20,21); "El is impregnable in His vigor; Who is a Director like Him?" (v.22). Even in trying to turn this truth about God against Job in verse 23 (as though Job really accused God of contriving iniquity), Elihu finds himself associating God with Job's troubles as the Maker and Director of all. He is to be extolled for His deeds and the greatness of His Being (36:24-26).

With praises like these concerning the supremacy of God, Elihu is beginning to fulfill the meaning of his name, "El-is-He;" indeed such a One as Elihu now describes, He is truly El. All that is wanting now is an association of this One with the afflictions of Job.

## THE RAIN AND THE THUNDER

This association begins in Job 36:27 with Elihu's praise of God as the One Who condenses the drops of water in the clouds into rain and mist. God's wisdom and power and ability for good in providing moisture for our needs shows His concern for humanity and responsibility for that which he has made (36:28-31).

God is responsible not only for rain and mist, but also for lightning and thunder (36:32,33). Such forces invariably bring distress and destruction in their wake. This speaks of evils from God for His own purposes, perhaps for discipline and correction, perhaps for unknown ends of the "Abundantly Righteous One" (34:17), Who does not contrive iniquity (36:23).

Then, as Elihu speaks of the rain, a storm arises in view of them all. And Elihu exclaims, "Indeed, at this my heart trembles and leaps out of its place" (37:1). God makes Himself apparent among them, as He is able to do at any time, but rarely does in the present eon.

The last storm of those days, mentioned in Job, involved a great wind or tornado that killed Job's children (Job 1:18,19). Now something like that terrible, destructive force, is appearing again. And Elihu associates it with God! "Hearken, yea hearken to the thunderous sound of His voice and the rumbling soliloquy that comes forth from His mouth" (37:2).

The storm comes not only with thunder but with snow and ice and downpour of rain, with sweeping whirlwind and thick cloud and soaking moisture (37:3-11). It is God Who sends it, directing and turning the clouds "according to His strategies" (v.12). It is El Who instructs it and causes it to occur, "whether it be for a club . . . or for benignity," in accord with his approved plan (37:13). Since this is so in relation to the frightening storm, it is true of the fearful evils that have engulfed Job.

At this point Elihu has adopted the argument of Job, and he turns to Job to give ear to these "marvelous works of El" (v.14). The questions he asks Job are very much like Yahweh's questions to come. Do you know about the marvels of God's ways in cloud and darkness, in warmth and quiet, in sunlight and wind (37:15-21)? These are matters which bring both good and evil into our lives. And they are all from God.

## THE SUNLIGHT ABLAZE IN THE SKY

Thus the storm is the final force that leads Elihu to his position of preparing the way for the Lord. It is given to Elihu to describe the magnificent scene of the approach of Him Who-Suffices:

The storm ceases, and the sunlight breaks through so brightly that no one can examine the skies, now completely cleared of clouds (37:21). In front of all who are gathered there about the suffering Job, Yahweh arrives from the north amid rays of gold and fearful splendor (v.22). Elihu had boasted that he would set them all straight concerning God, but now he declares, "He Who-Suffices, *we* cannot find Him out" (v.23).

But God is able to make Himself known. How easily Elihu is directed to turn the focus of his thoughts from a determination to expose the errors of Job to the glories of God in relation to all things, both good and evil! The great lesson given us in the speeches of Elihu is that He Who-Suffices can and will finally make Himself known in light blazing forth in contrast to the darkness which He also had sent. This is what Job has insisted must be so, and it is what Elihu had opposed but now is brought to embrace with exultation.

Now, standing in fear of Him (Job 37:24), Elihu and Job and all the rest are readied for Yahweh to speak.

D.H.H.

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