

WE MUST SURRENDER UNCONDITIONALLY!

By David Lee Burris



In this classic satire, the Duchess (Peter Sellers) and the Prime Minister (Peter Sellers) of the tiny Duchy of Grand Fenwick have come up with a brilliant plan to keep their country from going broke — make war on the United States, lose, then collect lots of American post-war aid. Their only mistake is not telling their invasion force leader (Sellers again, in chain mail!) that he's supposed to lose. Sellers lands in New York City during an air raid drill and finds the streets empty. He then proceeds to capture a brilliant scientist (David Kossoff), his assistant (Jean Seberg) and his awesome new weapon. The U.S. is forced to surrender! Grand Fenwick then forms the League of Little Nations which presents the big nations with its terms — Peace Forever.

A COLOR FILM



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Partial Obedience is Disobedience

The Sin of Stubbornness

Now whoever thought of stubbornness as a sin? “Preacher, where did you ever come up with that idea?”, you may be asking. Well, basically from one Old Testament passage which we will consider later:

The word “stubborn” takes on a vividness when broken down. The root “stub” can be defined as “the stump of a tree, the short blunt part of anything after the large part has been broken off or used up.” Picture the stiffness, rigidity or hardness of the stub of a weed which the mower has clipped near the ground. Contrast that stiffness with the prior flexibility of the weed as it swayed gracefully in the wind. The idea of “stubborn” thus becomes “fixed, resolute, or unyielding; especially, obstinate . . . difficult to handle, manage or treat; refractory” (Webster).

The word “stubborn” appears five times and the word “stubbornness” twice in the King James version of the Bible. A study of the passages can teach us a great deal about the – shall we call it a malady, an attitude? The Bible uses of the term show it identified often with an attitude of rebellion. In Deut. 9:27, Moses pled for God to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and “look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin.” Read the entire ninth chapter, and note: “ye have been rebellious” (vs. 7, 24) and, “thou are (it is) a stiffnecked people” (vs. 6, 13). The Psalmist (78:8) even called Israel “a stubborn and rebellious generation” because their heart was not set on God’s service. That same relation between stubbornness and rebellion is seen in the case of the uncontrollable son (Deut. 21:18-20).

In Judges 2:19, it is connected with self-seeking – “they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.” A lack of faithfulness in marriage and playing the part of a harlot led Solomon to call the evil woman of Proverbs (7:6-23) “loud and stubborn.”

But the example of King Saul (1st Samuel 15) is verily a study of such stubbornness. Samuel calls Saul’s behavior “rebellion” and shows it to be- the result of “stubbornness.” Read the chapter and let’s consider Saul’s problem.

He had “grown up” in his own estimation – no longer little in his own sight (v. 17). Quite a change had come over him since the time of his anointing (9:21). On another occasion, he had “done foolishly” and “not kept the commandment of the Lord” (1 Sam. 13:8-13). Peace offerings were to be offered at the door of the tabernacle (Lev. 17:1-6). Saul’s power had gone to his head. How often in our day do we see those who cannot become prosperous or powerful without losing their humility and submissiveness?

Saul elevated his-own thoughts over God’s instruction. God said, “utterly destroy.” Saul thought the best of the spoil should be saved (v. 19) and the vile and,- refuse destroyed (v. 9). What he thought to be good was in fact evil; because it was disobedience: He had not learned that God’s thoughts and man’s thoughts are often greatly divergent, Isaiah 53:8-9).

The king sought to justify himself and blame others for his disobedience (v. 20-21). He had understood his mission, for he admitted the spoil “should have been destroyed.” He blamed the people and tried to rationalize their motive -they only did it “to sacrifice to the Lord thy God.” But he learned that partial obedience is disobedience (v. 11, 22) and that he, himself, was guilty.

Samuel's rebuke of Saul is stern and pointed. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" **God does not require obedience to one commandment to the point of another being violated.** God required sacrifices, but not of the Amalekite spoils – it was to be destroyed.

God requires Christians to give (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8-9), but not to the point that they engage in dishonest effort in order to give, or to give more. "It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). Basically, what Samuel is saying to Saul is that God grades "A" for obedience – "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (cf. Ex. 19:5; Hos. 6:6). Samuel likens Saul's rebellion unto witchcraft or divination, a practice definitely prohibited in Israel (Deut. 18:10). His "stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry," also disdainful to God (Ex. 20:3-5).

The results of Saul's stubbornness are far-reaching. The kingdom is taken from him; and Samuel, the seer, departs permanently from him (v. 23, 35). The light he refused is darkened, and the voice he rejected is silenced. Even though Saul confessed his sin and worshiped God (v. 24-31), the effects of his sin were permanent – "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day . . . the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent" (v. 27, 29). Many moderns need also to learn the devastating and far-reaching effects of their sin, and that though sin may be repented of, the effects may remain.

Now, if it be argued stubbornness is itself not a sin, only that attitude which may lead to sin, I answer – "a mere technicality!" Look at its company: rebellion, self-exaltation, lack of submissiveness, witchcraft, idolatry and iniquity. The child of God must guard against stubbornness in his own life in all his relationships & the Christian parent is challenged to do all within his power to keep his child from developing a stubborn will. - *Norman E. Fultz*

To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice

By Dick Blackford

Introduction

Samuel also said to Saul, 'The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord' (1st Samuel 15:1). This gave Samuel the right to instruct Saul as to what the Lord wanted from him. The prophet acted as a mouth for God. To hear one was to hear the other. When Samuel told Saul to hearken, that meant he was to do so with deep interest, understanding, humility and sincere submission.

I. **The commandment was clear.** "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suck-ling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (verse 3). This was divine vengeance and justice being rendered. The Amalekites had occupied land on the frontiers of Egypt and Palestine. When Israel was finally being freed from many years of slavery the Amalekites treated an already suppressed and suffering people with cruelty as they fled Egypt. Amalek smote the hindmost of the people, those who were faint, weary and too weak to keep up with the rest. Israel was required to remember this treacherous treatment (Deut. 25:18f). They joined several other nations at different times to fight against God's people and are mentioned as oppressors of Israel (Judg. 10:12). Let no one question the justice of God. The Judge of all the earth doeth right. The commandment was perfectly clear.

Saul and the people disobeyed God, destroying the vile and refuse but keeping the things of value. They also spared Agag, king of the Amalekites. Inspiration shows Saul and the people were in this together (v. 9).

II. Men are self-deceived when they think their sacrifices equal obedience. Saul said, “I have performed the command of the Lord” (15:13), “Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way the Lord sent me” (v. 20). Untrue, and Saul knew it for he repeated the commandment back to Samuel (v. 21). However, he sought to justify it on the basis that the spoils they brought back were to be sacrificed to God.

How many times has human reason won out in the hearts of men over the teaching of God’s word? Many of these [innovations] have been “justified” on the basis that “the end justifies the means God will be pleased with our sacrifices.”

III. Partial obedience is equal to no obedience at all. It can be said that Saul and the people did partially obey the command of God. They destroyed some of the Amalekites and they did utterly destroy all that was vile & refuse (v. 9). But denial of disobedience does not make it so. Saul did not utterly destroy the people, for we read of the Amalekites several times after this event who were still “alive and well.” David fought against them and an Amalekite claimed to have killed Saul when he died (2 Sam. 1:1-16). Saul also spared Agag and preserved the things of value. Some today think as long as they keep the “spirit” of God’s word (what “they” think God really intended), then the details of obedience are relatively unimportant. The “new hermeneutic” reinforces as self-serving. Every generation has had its “new hermeneutics.” Saul had his.

IV. Disobedience is often caused by fear of men rather than fear of God. Saul said, “I have transgressed . . . because I feared the people and obeyed their voice” (v. 24). This kept some Jewish rulers from accepting Christ (Jn. 12:42,43).

If Saul had feared God more, he need have feared the people less. When we see that he was rejected from being king and treatment Samuel gave to Agag, those who would disobey should greatly fear God much more than they fear men.

V. The disobedient often shift the blame. Saul blamed the people (v. 15,21). As King, Saul should have restrained them. There is no record that he even told the people what God commanded.

Today when brethren apostatize blame is often placed on those who exposed their error. It is said that good men were “pushed,” “forced,” or “driven” into apostasy. But no one apostatizes who doesn’t want to. God did not accept Saul’s explanation for his apostasy. There is no evidence he will accept such explanations now.

VI. Success in life often goes to one’s head and leads to disobedience. “And Samuel said, when thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?” (v. 17) Being king of a great nation would be the ultimate in worldly status. Fame & prosperity accompany it. Saul raised a monument, a vainglorious trophy, to himself (not God) on Mt. Carmel. His pride was greater than his sense of duty. His sparing Agag was possibly to enjoy the glory of displaying him before others.

VII. The highest service we can render to God is complete obedience. “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (15:22,23). A careful conformity to his word recommends us to God more than any invention of men. The humble and conscientious obedience to God’s will pleases him far more than any “improvement” we may devise. Regardless of good intentions, God regards such partial disobedience as rebellion and stubbornness. **Motive does not justify conduct.**

VIII. Failure to obey causes sorrow to faithful, God-fearing men. When God told Samuel of Saul’s disobedience, it is said, “And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night” (v. 11). Perhaps more tears should be shed and more prayers prayed to God when brethren depart from the faith. Let us guard against the “I told you so” syndrome and come to a full recognition of this mournful situation.

IX. Rebuking sin should not be considered as a lack of love. “And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul” (v. 35a). It is possible that one may rebuke with an unloving heart, but to so accuse another may also be “justification” for continued disobedience. Even if I rebuke unlovingly, it doesn’t then justify the one whose error was rebuked. **My sin is not your salvation.** However, all rebuking should be done with love for both God and man. If Samuel could rebuke Saul yet still mourn for him, so can we.

GOD'S PERFECT & PERMISSIVE WILL

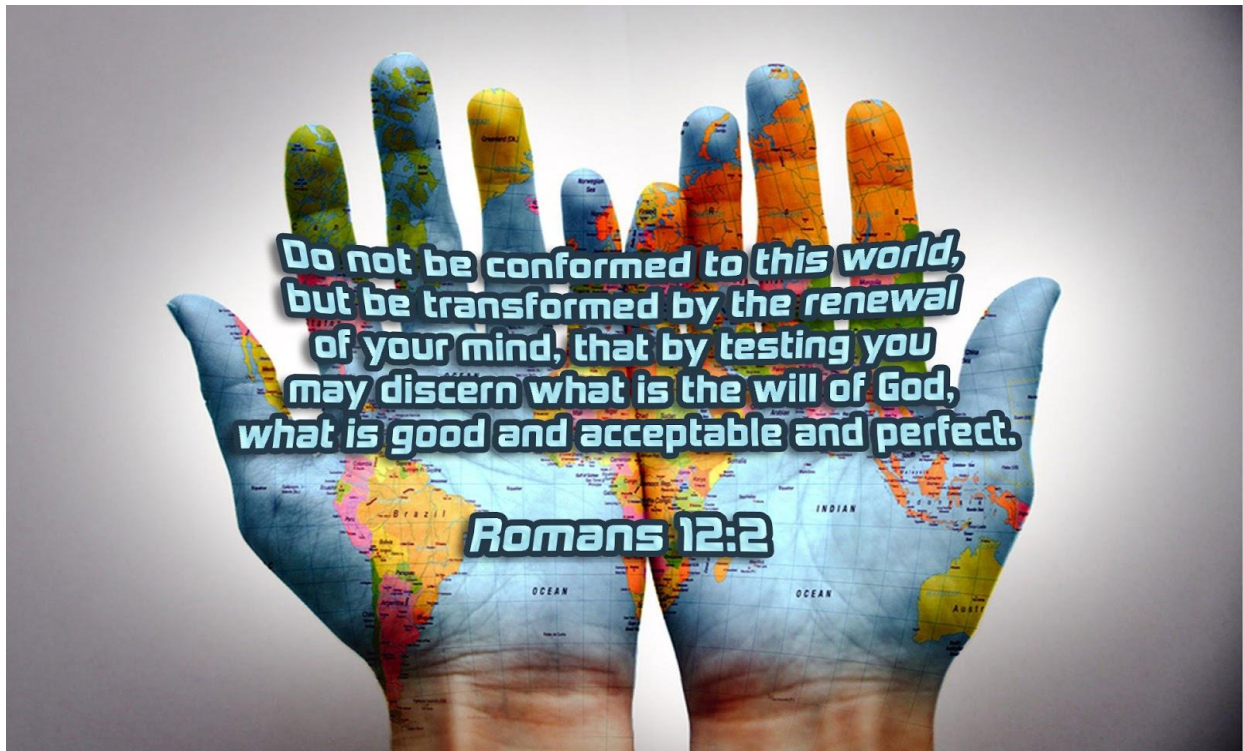
ROMANS 12:2



perfect

vs.

permissive



Living Yielded @ God's Perfect Will

CONVICTION: PREVENIENT GRACE

❖ “The word ‘prevenient’ is based upon two Latin words which mean ‘to come before.’ Thus prevenient or preliminary grace refers to the operation of God’s grace before we turn to God. Implied is the concept that God’s drawing grace precedes the human response of faith.”

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⊙ Calvinists believe that unregenerate people are so depraved that, left to themselves, they would never repent, believe and follow Jesus. And they are absolutely correct on that point. Jesus Christ said, ‘No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him’ [John 6: 44]
- ⊙ Contrary to what some Calvinist theologians try to tell us, however, the word *draw* doesn’t actually mean *drag* in the Greek language - per lexicon.

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⦿ And if God ‘draws’ people, that clearly indicates that people have a say in the matter of whether or not they will yield to His drawing. Thus, Christ not only affirmed that our salvation requires the work of God’s grace from the very start, but He also affirmed that each person will use his or her God-given ability to either resist or not resist God’s gracious drawing.

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⦿ As I’ve already stated, Calvinists believe that God draws only those whom He has allegedly predestined, and that He draws them so strongly that they can’t resist. He supposedly draws them ‘irresistibly.’
- ⦿ Non-Calvinists, on the other hand, believe that God could draw people irresistibly, but that He doesn’t. If He did, those who are irresistibly drawn, having no choice in the matter, would be virtual robots, and it could hardly be said they love God, as love is predicated on free choice. One wonders what God would desire with a group of robots. It could hardly be said that they have a relationship with them.

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⦿ Non-Calvinists see the Bible as a book about people who resist God’s drawing. The Old Testament, in particular, is a story of people who resisted Him, and most of them, as descendants of Israel, were specifically chosen by Him. They were chosen by Him yet they resisted Him.
- ⦿ And when God sent His Son into the world ‘that it might be saved’ the majority whom He came to save rejected Him – even the Bible students. [John 1: 11]

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⊙ Calvinists sometimes point out special people in the Bible, like the Apostle Paul, who certainly had a strong drawing from God the day he came to Christ. But because Saul(Paul) was struck down on the road to Damascus by a blinding light, does that prove his personal will had no part to play in his salvation? Could he have ignored his experience and continued his plan to persecute Christians? Of course he could. [See - Hebrews 13: 5; **1st Corinthians 9:27**]

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⊙ May I also point out that God's very strong drawing of Paul is not typical, and so it can't rightly serve as a typical example of how God generally deals with people. Moreover, God's strong drawing of Paul was a manifestation of God's drawing of you, me, and everyone else who ever heard Paul's words quoted in the gospel. God did not strongly draw Paul just for Paul's sake, but to draw you as well!

SEMI-PELAGIANISM

1. The God Who Draws

- ⊙ Moreover, Paul believed he was specially singled out by God because he was the foremost sinner, so that 'Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life' (1st Timothy 1:16) That is, God wanted every sinner to have hope because of His great mercy towards Paul. Thus Paul's special drawing does not buttress the idea of God's alleged pre-selection of a few; rather, it affirms God's universal love and mercy offered to every sinner.

The Drawing Power of God

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

•



On the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had fed a great multitude, likely more than ten thousand (cf. Jn. 6:10b) with only five small barley cakes and two fish.

The crowd was awed tremendously by this sign, perceiving the Lord to be the prophet they had long anticipated (cf. Deut. 18:15-17). They wanted to enthrone him as their king. And they would have had he not withdrawn himself alone to a nearby mountain (Jn. 6:15).

At this point, the disciples' understanding of the Lord's mission was still limited. Probably very discouraged that Jesus had ignored the misguided overture, they entered a boat at evening time and made their way westward across the lake — a journey of about a dozen miles at its widest point.

When they were three or four miles out, sometime between three and six in the morning (Mk. 6:48), Christ approached the boat, walking on the face of the “distressed” waters (Mt. 14:24). This miracle, in their presence alone, certainly must have been designed to lift their troubled spirits.

That the sign stirred them is clear, because they “worshipped him,” acknowledging him as the Son of God (Mt. 14:33). And yet, their faith in him was far from complete. The miracle of the loaves and fish still had not made its full impact upon their understanding. Mark forcefully describes their hearts as, in a sense, hardened (Mk. 6:52).

On the following day, the multitude discovered that Christ was no longer in the region. They boarded boats for Capernaum, seeking him. When they tracked him down, Jesus gave them a kindly rebuke because he perceived that many were interested primarily in more bread to satiate their hunger (Jn. 6:26b). Others, however, apparently fathomed the Lord’s supernatural ability and they brought their sick for healing. And so many were made whole (Mk. 6:54ff).

Working for the Food of Eternal Life

It was on this occasion that the Savior gave sobering instruction about the need to **work for the food** that results in **eternal life**. This spiritual food would be that which would be given by the Son of Man.

Note that “work” (i.e., due diligence and obedience) is not antagonistic to the idea of a “gift,” as many sincere religionists contend (see Jn. 6:27-29). In this very context, even **belief is designated as a work** (Jn. 6:29).

Still focusing upon their hunger, the multitude appealed to Old Testament Scripture, suggesting Moses provided bread for Israel in the wilderness. The obvious inference was that they wanted more free bread from the miracle-worker.

Presently, however, Christ directed the exchange to the nature of **true bread** (Jn. 6:32). Several times the expression “out of heaven” (vv. 31-33) was employed. Finally, employing strong metaphorical language, the Savior declared: “I am the bread of life” (v. 35), and then, “I am come down from heaven” (vv. 38, 41).

When the Jews heard that “down-out-of-heaven” language, it caused a vigorous commotion. They caught the drift of what he said about having come down out of heaven, but surmised they had the perfect rebuttal. They replied, in effect: “You did not come out of heaven. Your parents are Joseph and Mary. How can you possibly claim a pre-earthly existence in heaven?”

Christ might well have refuted their logic & argued the case for his virginal conception and birth. But he did not. The evidence for that would be amply woven into the sacred record for documentation at the appropriate time. They were not ready for this disclosure at the moment.

Time and again the careful student notes that Jesus did not respond to insincere quibbles in the course of his teaching. Such would have been a waste of precious time. Rather there were crucial issues pressing and these were to be developed at present. Modern Bible teachers would do well to take note of this wise teaching procedure.

The Divine Drawing

With a most emphatic thrust of truth, the Master Teacher said:

No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draws him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes unto me” (Jn. 6:44-45).

It is upon this passage that we pause to focus our attention. The following points are worthy of serious reflection.

It is important to note first of all that Jesus appeals to the Old Testament (Isa. 54:13) to buttress his argument.

The term “prophets” is a general reference, similar to how we say, “The Bible says ...”

The expression “it is written” (found eighty-two times in the New Testament, including parallels) always refers to a divine document, the validity of which is unequivocally affirmed.

The first clause of this sentence, “No man can come unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him,” has been one of the most abused texts of the New Testament for many centuries.

For example, John Calvin taught that man is “so enslaved by the yoke of sin, he cannot of his own nature aim at good either in wish or actual pursuit” (1975a, 265). Thus, one “cannot possibly come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit.” He is drawn “both in mind and spirit exalted far above [his] own understanding” (500). The drawing is not indirectly through the Scriptures, but “inwardly by the Spirit” (277). God works in the elect so as to “guide, turn, and govern [their] heart by his Spirit” (Ibid., 269). The “grace of God is insipid to men, until the Holy Spirit gives it its savor” (1975b, 253).

A careful examination of the passage, however, reveals the following facts.

The statement, “No man can come to me [Christ], except the Father that sent me draw him,” is explicit.

The only route to Christ is by means of the **drawing of God**. But that does not completely explain the issue.

Two questions are paramount:

- Is the “drawing” by God irresistible. In other words, is the divine drawing an appeal to man’s mind (intellect and emotion) or is it a force so strong as to bypass man’s free will?
- Is the drawing miraculous by the direct impulse of the Holy Spirit? Or is it **indirectly** exerted through a divinely appointed means?

In his commentary on *The Gospel According to John*, the late Leon Morris argued that it is utterly impossible for a man to come to Christ on “his own volition”. Rather God himself must initiate the action. He repudiated the idea that choice is “the free decision of man.”

Calvin is quoted to the effect that the Spirit moves upon some, to turn them from unwilling to willing. It is alleged that God’s drawing power is always triumphant. It simply cannot be resisted (1995, 328-329). While this view is popular among some, in fact, it is antagonistic to the teaching of the New Testament.

God's Drawing Not By Force

First, the drawing is not by a force that is “irresistible,” as some claim (Sproul 1994, 69). Sproul cites Kittel on the word “draw” as meaning “an irresistible and supernatural force” (1964, 503), but this descriptive does not fit the **biblical evidence**. It is **commentary**, not a definition. For a discussion of the distinction between “draw” and “drag,” see Trench (1890, section xxi; cf. Vine 1991, on “drag”).

If “draw” means an “irresistible force,” then **all** would be saved. Why? Because later in this same Gospel narrative the Lord says: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will **draw all men** unto myself” (Jn. 12:32).

The drawing is a beneficent pull. The Lord said to ancient Israel: “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I **drawn** you” (Jer. 31:3; cf. Song of Sol. 1:4).

How Does God Draw Men to Christ?

In verse forty-five, Jesus reveals precisely **how God draws people to Christ**. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 54:13) and possibly alluding to Jeremiah 31:34, the Lord employs **four verbs** to stress the **personal volition** of human beings and the method employed in their being drawn to him. They must be taught, hear, learn, and come. To ignore these inspired words is exegetically dishonest.

Taught

The term “taught” is from the adjective **didaktos**. It's found only twice in the Greek New Testament. The word has to do with “being taught, instructed” (Danker et al. 2000, 240).

In 1st Cor. 2:13 it is employed of the teaching that ultimately originates with the Holy Spirit but is made known by means of **words** through men who convey the message — either those inspired originally or now by means of their words as recorded in Scripture.

Professor Merrill Tenney wrote: “Verse 45 indicates that God would do his drawing **through the Scriptures** and that those who were obedient to God’s will as revealed in the Scriptures would come to Jesus” (1981, 76; emphasis added). Bernard observed that the “drawing” was by “being taught” (1928, 205).

Some appeal to 1 Thessalonians 4:9 in an attempt to establish the theory that the teaching is in an internal, subjective instruction by the Holy Spirit (Hiebert 1971, 178).

“[Y]ou have no need to have any one write to you, for your yourselves have been taught of God.”

But the actual point here being made is that the teaching regarding brotherly love had been done previously. In fact, since their conversion, they had already understood that they all were family by virtue of a common new birth. Paul was simply reminding them that such an elementary matter did not need to be rehearsed in the present letter.

Hearing

The word “heard” is important because it is preliminary to coming to Christ.

The verb is a past tense form of **akouo**. Mounce notes that there are at least five senses in which **akouo** is used in the New Testament. In this case, it is a hearing with a **view to learning** (2007, 327). In other words, it involves receiving **information** about something (cf. Danker et al. 2000, 38).

Learning

“Learn” derives from **manthano**, “to gain knowledge or skill by instruction” (Danker 2000, 615). It involves more than mere exposure to information. It embraces the idea of grasping the significance of what has been taught (Matthew 13:23). As Mounce observes, it “involves not only exposure to information but also comprehension” (2007, 397). It conveys the sense of “understanding” (cf. Mt. 9:13).

No one is qualified to “come to” Christ, or even needs to if he is incompetent to understand the rudiments of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). Paul’s statement in Romans 6:17 that gospel obedience is “from the heart” shows, among other things, “that our decision to surrender to God was **our own choice** and was **not coerced** or **irresistibly imposed** upon us” (Cottrell 1996, 413; emphasis added).

This nullifies Calvinism’s dogma of predestination & denominationalism’s practice of infant sprinkling.

Coming to Jesus

The fourth verb is “comes.” Only those who are **taught** truth, **listen** intently with the motive of learning & who **understand** the foundational elements of the gospel are qualified to come to Christ.

While coming is the result of God’s drawing by means of revealed truth, the term contains the implication that one **has the ability** when the preliminary requisites are satisfied to come to the Lord.

Coming is not the result of divine compulsion. It derives from an intellectual and emotional **decision** to surrender to the Savior. Simple logic provides a clear picture of the process.

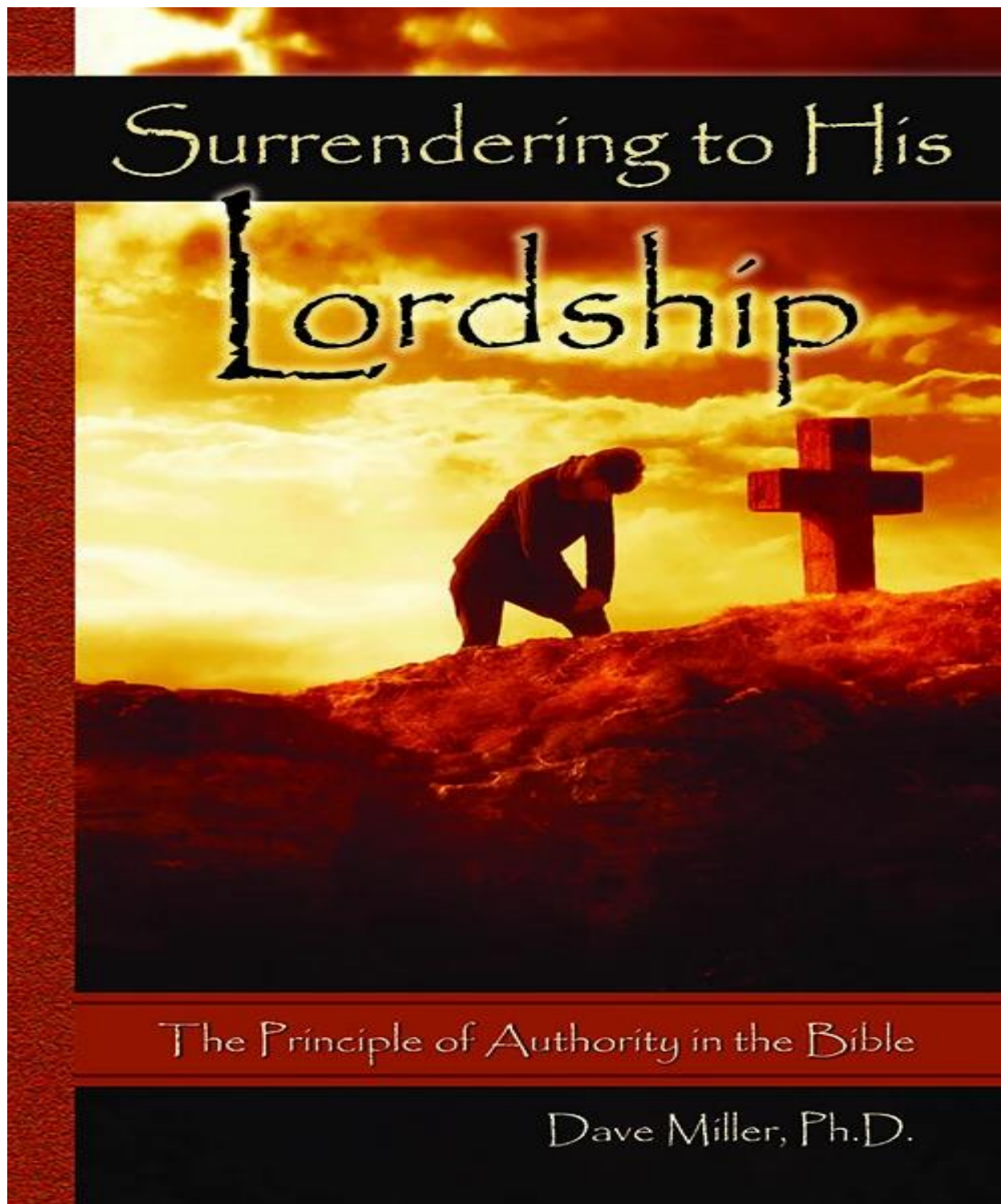
- God draws. People come.
- Those who come, however, are those who have been taught, who have heard and learned.
- Hence it is perfectly transparent that God draws sincere people by means of gospel instruction by which people are taught, hear, and learn.

Jesus invited the people of certain cities in Galilee to “come unto me” (Mt. 11:28), and that invitation had resident within it the implied **ability** to obey. Why invite those to come, who simply cannot, because of an alleged depravity that holds them incapacitated by sin?

In the final days prior to his crucifixion, Christ wept over the city of Jerusalem, lamenting the fact that though he had longed to gather them under his protective care, they **would not** (Mt. 23:37). There is a vast difference between “would not” and “could not.” However, if a stubborn person practices “I won’t” long enough, it can become “I can’t” (Jn. 12:39). See also John 5:40 and Revelation 22:17 for the matter of free will.

Conclusion

When John 6:44-45 is rescued from the morass of **sectarian theology**, it becomes thrillingly fresh invigorating the soul with instructive principles that guide one through the correct processes to the redemption that is through Christ.



Surrendering to His
Lordship

The Principle of Authority in the Bible

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Question: If all Christians have already yielded to Christ's lordship, why did Paul write Romans 12:1-2, commanding these believers to make forever surrender?

Here's what Paul wrote:

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living & holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Those words in no way imply that the Romans had not yet submitted to Christ. The phrase "present your bodies" is an aorist-tense verb in the Greek text. Some have tried to argue that it speaks of a first-time, once-for-all surrender.

That is an overly simplistic understanding of the aorist tense. It is more accurate instead to interpret Paul's command as calling for decisive, deliberate, but continuous surrender.

Romans 6:17-18 proves that Paul knew those believers had "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered [to them]. Being then made free from sin, [they] became the servants of righteousness" (KJV). Obviously, he was not later calling them to yield to Christ for the first time.

No one would argue that the command in verse two to "be transformed" negates the truth that those people were already transformed -- that they were new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

The simple teaching of Scripture is that faith, surrender, and the transformed life are not one-time events. The Word exhorts believers to have faith, surrender, and obey continuously. That does not mean they've never done those things before.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

When it comes to having a relationship with God, it's all or nothing.

by Trey Graham

In February 1862 during the American Civil War, the Union troops attacked the Confederate stronghold at Fort Donelson, Tennessee. The conflict finally ended when the northern commander, Brigadier General Ulysses Simpson Grant, convinced the southern commander, Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, to surrender.

When the two commanders met to negotiate the terms of the Confederate surrender, Buckner was surprised by Grant's proposal. He expected Grant to offer the terms of the surrender and then allow them to negotiate a final agreement.

Grant, however, had other plans. When the southern leader sent a courier to ask for Grant's terms, the northern general replied with a note that contained the following message: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."

Buckner wrote in his reply, "The overwhelming force under your command compel me to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose."

Unusual demand

Grant's demand was unusual in warfare of the nineteenth century. The gentlemanly thing to do was to negotiate to find terms acceptable to both sides. In this case, however, Grant refused to negotiate, because the North needed to gain some momentum for their army. The Battle of Fort Donelson was the Union's first major victory of the war and helped spur its forces to continue fighting, eventually capturing the entire Mississippi River Valley. After this battle concluded, Grant received a promotion to major general and, due to his initials, was henceforth nicknamed "Unconditional Surrender."

What makes Grant's demand even more surprising is that he knew Buckner. It was common during the Civil War for opposing commanders to both be West Pointers and to have previously served together in the American army before the South seceded. These generals were no different. Having graduated from West Point, Grant in 1843 and Buckner a year later, both had known each other for over 20 years when their forces fought one another near Dover, Tennessee.

However, Grant and Buckner were not simply professional associates; they were friends. Not simply friends; they were close friends. How close? Simon Buckner had been a groomsman in the wedding of Ulysses and Julia Dent Grant in 1848, 13 years before the Civil War began and 14 years before the Battle of Fort Donelson.

Buckner and Grant were friends not only in life but also in death. In July 1885, when President Grant died of throat cancer, Kentucky Governor Buckner served as a pallbearer at his funeral.

Needed momentum

Why, then, at the Battle of Fort Donelson, would Grant require unconditional surrender from his friend? Why would he show no mercy to a fellow West Pointer? To answer this question, you must understand what was at stake.

For Grant, this battle provided the momentum his forces needed. In war, the victor does not negotiate with the victim. The winning side does not have to consult the losing side.

God's love

The same is true of God. He loves you. You are special and important to Him. How important? More important than a groomsman or a pallbearer. In fact, you and I are important enough to God that He would sacrifice His own Son so that we might have fellowship with Him. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16, 17).

As much as God loves us and wants to know us, however, we can come to know Him only on His terms. We are not allowed to make the rules. We can choose to follow God only by following His rules.

Greater and lesser

Spiritually, as militarily, the greater power sets the terms; the lesser simply must accept them. Grant's army was stronger than Buckner's. Buckner admitted that he had no choice but to surrender as Grant had demanded.

Likewise, God is the strong power. As Creator, He reigns over His creation. Just as Buckner was forced to surrender to Grant, so we must surrender to the Lord. Finite humans do not dictate to the infinite Father. Sinful men and women do not make demands on the sinless Savior.

If you and I want to know Christ as Savior, we don't negotiate surrender terms. We do not get the privilege of debate. Jesus' demands are the same as Grant's: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

“And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have.”—*1 Kings 20:1–4*.

What Ben hadad asked was *absolute surrender*; and what Ahab gave was what was asked of him—*absolute surrender*. I want to use these words: “My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have,” as the words of absolute surrender with which every child of God ought to yield himself to his Father. We have heard it before, but we need to hear it very definitely—the condition of God’s blessing is absolute surrender of all into His hands. Praise God! if our hearts are willing for that, there is no end to what God will do for us, and to the blessing God will bestow.

Yes, it has its foundation in the very nature of God. God cannot do otherwise. Who is God? He is the Fountain of life, the only Source of existence and power and goodness, and throughout the universe there is nothing good but what God works. God has created the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the flowers, and the trees, and the grass; and are they not all absolutely surrendered to God? Do they not allow God to work in them just what He pleases? God is life, and love, and blessing, and power, and infinite beauty, and God delights to communicate Himself to every child who is prepared to receive Him; but ah! this one want of absolute surrender is just the thing that hinders God. And now He comes, and as God He claims it. And every one of us is a temple of God, in which God will dwell and work mightily on one condition—absolute surrender to Him. God claims it, God is worthy of it, and without it God cannot work His blessed work in us.

And when you do yield yourself in absolute surrender, let it be in the faith that God does now accept of it. That is the great point, and that is what we so often miss:—that believers should be thus occupied with God in this matter of surrender. I pray you, be occupied with God. We want to get help, every one of us, so that in our daily life God shall be clearer to us, God shall have the right place, and be “all in all.” And if we are to have that through life, let us begin now and look away from ourselves, and look up to God. Let each believe,—while I, a poor worm on earth and a trembling child of God, full of failure and sin and fear, bow here, and no one knows what passes through my heart, and while I in simplicity say, O God, I accept Thy terms; I have pleaded for blessing on myself and others, I have accepted Thy terms of absolute surrender.

In this matter of surrender there are two, God and I—I a worm, God the everlasting and omnipotent Jehovah. Worm, will you be afraid to trust yourself to this mighty God now? God is willing. Do you not believe that He can keep you continually, day by day, and moment by moment?

A life of absolute surrender has its difficulties. I do not deny that. Yea, it has something far more than difficulties; it is a life that with men is absolutely impossible. But by the grace of God, by the power of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, it is a life to which we are destined, and a life that is possible for us, praise God! Let us believe that God will maintain it.

Such a life has two sides—on the one side, *absolute surrender to work what God wants you to do*; on the other side, *to let God work what He wants to do*.

First, to do what God wants you to do.

Give up yourselves absolutely to the will of God. You know something of that will; not enough, far from all. But say absolutely to the Lord God: “By Thy grace I desire to do Thy will in everything, every moment of every day.” Say: “Lord God, not a word upon my tongue but for Thy glory, not a movement of my temper but for Thy glory, not an affection of love or hate in my heart but for Thy glory, and according to Thy blessed will.”

Someone says: “Do you think that possible?”

I ask, What has God promised you, and what can God do to fill a vessel absolutely surrendered to Him? Oh, God wants to bless you in a way beyond what you expect. From the beginning ear hath not heard, neither hath the eye seen, what God hath prepared for them that wait for Him. God has prepared unheard-of things you never can think of; blessings much more wonderful than you can imagine, more mighty than you can conceive. They are divine blessings. Oh, say now:

“I give myself absolutely to God, to His will, to do only what God wants.”

It is God who will enable you to carry out the surrender.

And, on the other side, come and say: “I give myself absolutely to God, to let Him work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, as He has promised to do.”

Yes, the living God wants to work in His children in a way that we cannot understand, but that God’s Word has revealed, and He wants to work in us every moment of the day. God is willing to maintain our life. Only let our absolute surrender be one of simple, childlike, and unbounded trust.

WILL WONDERFULLY BLESS US

What Ahab said to his enemy, King Ben-hadad,—“My lord, O king, according to thy word I am thine, and all that I have”—shall we not say to our God and loving Father? If we do say it, God’s blessing will come upon us. God wants us to be separate from the world; we are called to come out from the world that hates God. Come out for God, and say: “Lord, anything for Thee.” If you say that with prayer, and speak that into God’s ear, He will accept it, and He will teach you what it means. Bow our knees to the Father to ask that He would strengthen us with all might by the Spirit in the inner man, and that He would fill us with His mighty power. And as the Spirit reveals Christ to us, Christ comes to live in our hearts forever, and the self-life is cast out.

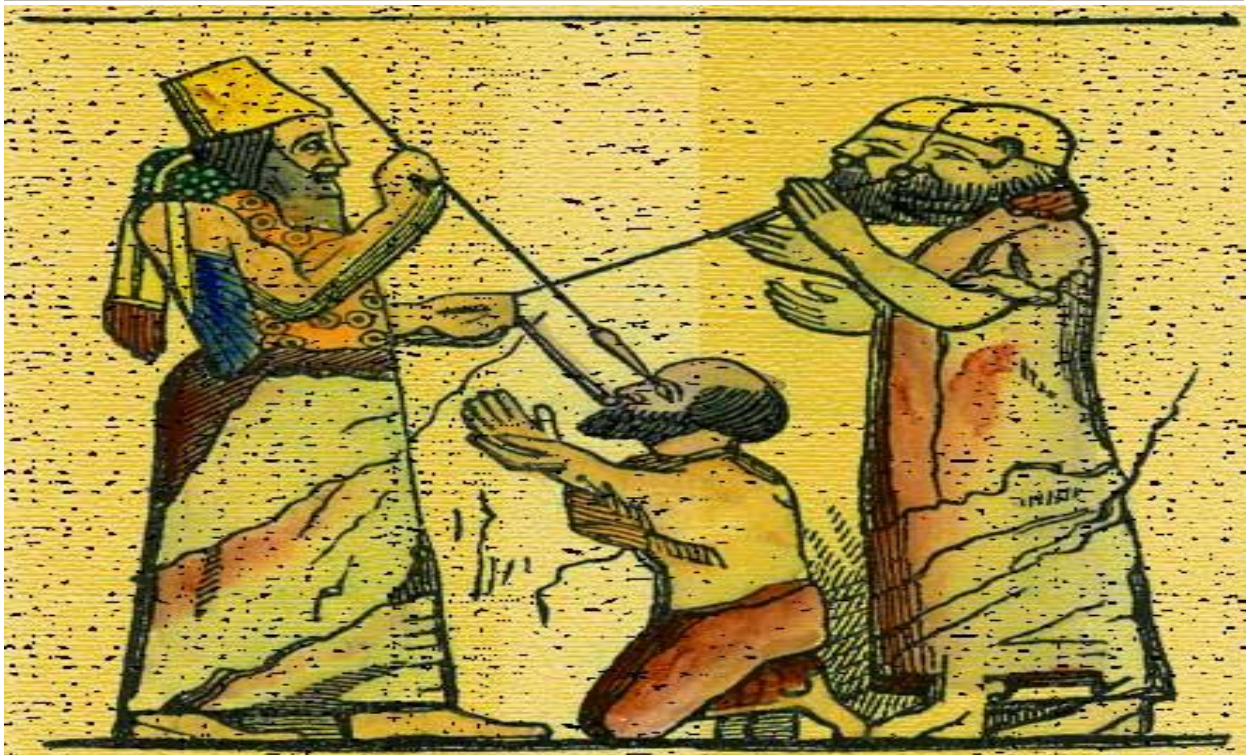
Do you love Christ? Do you long to be *in* Christ, and not *like* Him? Let death be to you the most desirable thing on earth; death to self, and fellowship with Christ. Surely one ought to say:

“Anything to bring me to separation, to death, for a life of full fellowship with God and Christ.”

Oh! come and cast this self-life and flesh-life at the feet of Jesus. Then trust Him. Do not worry yourselves with trying to understand all about it, but come in the living faith that Christ will come into you with the power of His death and the power of His life; and then the Holy Spirit will bring the whole Christ—Christ crucified and Christ risen and living in glory—into your heart.¹

¹ Murray, A. (1897). [*Absolute Surrender*](#) (pp. 5–18). New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.

Surrendering to Man's Inhumanity



Carving of Assyrian King Using Hooks & Gouging Eyes

This sketch is an archaeological discovery from ruins of Ancient Assyria. It reveals an Assyrian king blinding a captive king while holding his head still with a hook in his lips. The other kings are waiting for the same fate with bridles in their noses. The Bible reveals accounts of prisoners being blinded and this metaphor is used of God leading rebellious people and nations.

*"And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and **put out the eyes** of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon." - 2 Kings 25:7*

*"Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my **hook in thy nose**, and my **bridle in thy lips**, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." - Isaiah 37:29*

*"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put **hooks into thy jaws**, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen.." - Ezekiel 38:1-4*

There are many examples revealing Assyrian severity. A captured king was taken to the capital & compelled to pull the royal chariot of triumph. Rings were put thru their lips or noses and sometimes hands, feet, noses and ears were cut off, they were blinded and their tongues torn from their mouths. Prisoners were skinned alive and set on fire. Their skins were also hung near enemy city gates in order to collect tribute. The Lord allowed the ruthless Assyrians to capture the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC because of Israel's rebellion against Him. The Northern Tribes were never seen again.



Explains Jonah's Hatred of Ninevah

The inscriptions and the pictorial evidence both provide detailed information regarding the Assyrian treatment of conquered peoples, their armies & their rulers. In his official royal inscriptions, Ashurnasirpal II calls himself the “trampler of all enemies ... who defeated all his enemies [and] hung the corpses of his enemies on posts.” The treatment of captured enemies often depended on their readiness to submit themselves to the will of the Assyrian king:

“The nobles [and] elders of the city came out to me to save their lives. They seized my feet and said: ‘If it pleases you, kill! If it pleases you, spare! If it pleases you, do what you will!’”

In one case when a city resisted as long as possible instead of immediately submitting, Ashurnasirpal proudly records his punishment:

“I flayed as many nobles as had rebelled against me [and] draped their skins over the pile [of corpses]; some I spread out within the pile, some I erected on stakes upon the pile ... I flayed many right through my land [and] draped their skins over the walls.”

The account was probably intended not only to describe what had happened, but also to frighten anyone who might dare to resist. To suppress his enemies was the king's divine task. Supported by the gods, he always had to be victorious in battle and to punish disobedient people:

“I felled 50 of their fighting men with the sword, burnt 200 captives from them, [and] defeated in a battle on the plain 332 troops. ... With their blood I dyed the mountain red like red wool, [and] the rest of them the ravines [and] torrents of the mountain swallowed. I carried off captives [and] possessions from them. I cut off the heads of their fighters [and] built [therewith] a tower before their city. I burnt their adolescent boys [and] girls.”

A description of another conquest is even worse:

“In strife and conflict I besieged [and] conquered the city. I felled 3,000 of their fighting men with the sword ... I captured many troops alive: I cut off of some their arms [and] hands; I cut off of others their noses, ears, [and] extremities. I gouged out the eyes of many troops. I made one pile of the living [and] one of heads. I hung their heads on trees around the city.”

“I cut their throats like lambs. I cut off their precious lives (as one cuts) a string. Like the many waters of a storm, I made (the contents of) their gullets and entrails run down upon the wide earth. My prancing steeds harnessed for my riding, plunged into the streams of their blood as (into) a river. The wheels of my war chariot, which brings low the wicked and the evil, were bespattered with blood and filth. With the bodies of their warriors I filled the plain, like grass. (Their) testicles I cut off, and tore out their privates like the seeds of cucumbers.”

“Like a fish I caught him up out of the sea and cut off his head,” he said of the king of Sidon; “Their blood, like a broken dam, I caused to flow down the mountain gullies”; and “I hung the heads of Sanduarri [king of the cities of Kundi and Sizu] and Abdi-milkutti [king of Sidon] on the shoulders of their nobles and with singing and music I paraded through the public square of Nineveh.

Ashurbanipal, Esarhaddon's son, boasted:

“Their dismembered bodies I fed to the dogs, swine, wolves, and eagles, to the birds of heaven and the fish in the deep.... What was left of the feast of the dogs and swine, of their members which blocked the streets and filled the squares, I ordered them to remove from Babylon, Kutha and Sippar, and to cast them upon heaps.”

Contemporary History: POW's

Why was the Japanese army so brutal?

Under the Japanese warrior code surrender was an unspeakable disgrace; prisoners were despised and treated accordingly.

Through shootings, death marches, live burnings or burials, prisoners and civilians were regarded as little more than sport or target practice. Military command actively encouraged soldiers to murder, rape and pillage. Beheading competitions were commonplace.

"When the city fell in December 13, 1937, Japanese soldiers began an orgy of cruelty seldom if ever matched in world history. Tens of thousands of young men were rounded up and herded to the outer areas of the city, where they were mowed down by machine guns, used for bayonet practice, or soaked with gasoline and burned alive. For months the streets of the city were heaped with corpses and wreaked with stench of rotting human flesh. Years later experts at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) estimated that more than 260,000 non-combatants died at the hands of Japanese soldiers at Nanking in late 1937 and early 1938, though some experts have placed the figure at well over 350,000."

(The Rape of Nanking, p.4)

Japanese soldiers possessed an inherent brutality that came into effect in their treatment of civilians and prisoners of war. Japanese soldiers were instructed that if captured by the enemy they would not only dishonor the army, but also their parents. Once captured, a Japanese soldier's family regarded him as dead and his name was removed from the birth register.

"Brutality was a daily event for the Japanese soldier. He had to admit brutality against himself by his officers. This treatment he simply gave further to his subordinates or the prisoners, the last **because they were inferior to him after their surrender. Surrender simply did not exist to him, because he fought to the last drop of blood.**"

(The Rising Sun, p.37)

Surrendering to God's Blessings

False Peace

The prophet Ezekiel said much by way of reproof and condemnation for the false prophets of his day. In Ezekiel 13 he condemned them for their false promises of peace to the people of God - promises made at a time when God's people were in great danger! In verses 8 and 9 he thunders forth God's condemnation of the false prophets in these words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God." The reason for this attitude toward them is given in verse 10: "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace"

Giving false hopes of peace which lulled men into a false security were the usual evil work of the false prophets of Old Testament times (See Micah 3:5; Jer. 6:13, 14; 23:16, 17; etc.) However, the false prophets were not the only ones to blame, for, as Isaiah shows people who were rebellious toward God wanted the very thing false prophets had to offer. Through Isaiah God said, "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel, to cease from before us" (Isa. 30:8-10).

False prophets were glad to accommodate the desires of the people, so they preached peace when there was no peace. Jerusalem had been warned by the true prophets, but false prophets cried, "Peace, peace!" in opposition to the warnings for the purpose of soothing the people in their sins. It was the age-old problem of TRUTH versus ERROR!

There is much false peace in the world today and it is produced in the very same way it was brought about in Old Testament times: some people do not want the truth and false teachers oblige them by preaching peace when there is no peace.

There is the peace of unbelief now as then. The threatening of judgments were then discredited and the same thing is done today. When the threats of judgment are stressed in preaching today, some will scoff and refer to it as "that old hell fire and brimstone doctrine." (But see such passages as: Matt. 23: 33; 25:41; Mk. 9:43, 44; Rev. 20:15; 21:8). Many do not believe these passages simply because they do not want to believe them. They do not want to believe them because they want to continue in their sinful ways with a feeling of peace. This is why the heathen did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1: 18-32). Unbelief best accords with the conduct of one who is determined to continue in sin. Jesus well described the attitude of such people toward the truth when He said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (John 3:19, 20). The Psalmist shows that sinners do not Want God to exist. He said, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14: 1). Note who denied God's existence: those who were "corrupt" and did "abominable works!" In their denial of God's existence they could continue to sin with a feeling of peace. Friends, if you are enjoying the peace which comes from unbelief, be assured that is a FALSE PEACE and that the wall which you have daubed with untempered mortar is sure to fall! (Read Ezek. 13: 10-16).

Also, there is the peace of self-satisfaction. The true prophets were quick to condemn sin and their preaching made it difficult for sinners to feel at ease. However, the false prophets flattered with smooth words and gave them the feeling they desired without any change from their sinful course of action. This they wanted; and this they were quick to accept. Today, many want teaching which minimizes sin and guilt; teaching which lulls the conscience; teaching which does not disturb self-satisfaction; teaching which does not demand a radical change from their present sinful course; and teaching which will "lift up" and give them a "peaceful feeling" as they continue on in their disobedience! False teachers quickly bow to their demands and preach so as to nourish the peace which they desire - A FALSE PEACE.

Another false peace is the peace of "live and let live." This is the peace desired by those who tell us, "Just preach the gospel and let everybody alone- don't disturb the peace of the community by exposing and condemning the doctrines of other churches; go on your way and let them go theirs!" (Note: This is one reason why I know some in the church of Christ believe one church is just as good as another!) If this sentiment were universally followed, preaching and defending the truth would be eliminated and those in error would never be warned. This is not God's way! To Ezekiel God said, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou doest not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 33:7-9). This passage plainly shows that if the prophet did not warn those in iniquity, he would not deliver his soul (nor would theirs be delivered) and that he would be guilty of their blood. Question: Is this the course to pursue to obtain real peace? Definitely not! Truly, such would put one at peace with those in iniquity! But, who cannot see that to trade peace with God for peace with those in iniquity is a poor and stupid bargain???

Finally, there is the false peace of presumption. Many have a feeling of peace because they presume on God's goodness; i. e., they feel that God is too good and loving to really carry out the threats of punishment expressed in His word. This attitude is productive of a multitude of evils: (1) it causes doubt to arise in the hearts of many. Their natural and logical conclusion is: if God does not mean and will not do what he says on one point, why should I believe Him on any other point? Let those who are guilty of the presumption under consideration here try their hand at answering that question! (2) It causes children of God to be slack in their duties of teaching and warning. (3) It causes carelessness, indifference, and sin of many types. Yea, though it brings a feeling of peace to many, it is a false peace! Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke of God as a God of goodness AND severity: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). The same apostle said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5: 11). Again, he said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). And again, he declared, ". . . our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). If your peace is derived from the idea that God is so good He will let you get by although you flout His will (whether on the plan of salvation, the work of the church, worship, or any other matter) **YOUR PEACE IS FALSE!**

The only true peace is peace with God) and it is to be had only through Jesus Christ (See Rom. 5: 1). To enjoy this peace one must meet the requirements of Christ (Heb. 5:9) which include becoming a member of His church (God's family) and faithful Christian living. This is the way to have true, lasting, valuable peace. Friend, do you possess & enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding???

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A Life Of Peace

Is peace just an impossible dream? Perhaps, for many are unwilling to seek and follow the path of peace. Many today follow in the footsteps of doomed Jerusalem and close their eyes to the things that make for peace (Luke 19:44). But as the angels promised on that long ago night, there is a way of peace for those who are willing to strive to live in such a way that God will be pleased with them. Let us seek to learn the way of peace: in our lives, in our homes, in the church, and even in our nation.

The Prince of Peace

Centuries before the Savior was born, Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be "*The Prince of Peace*" and spoke of the wonderful blessings his reign of peace would bring (Isa. 9:6-7). Jesus echoed the pronouncement of the angelic hosts and promised to give peace to his followers (John 14:27; 16:33). He shed his blood to provide peace for mankind (Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 1:20). But only those who are willing to render obedience by faith to Jesus can have access to his peace (Romans 5:1-2). Today we face the question: Will we surrender our lives to the Prince of Peace or will we close our eyes to the things that make for peace?

The Peace That Jesus Gives

First and foremost, Jesus came to give peace *between man and his God*. Man by his sin has made himself the enemy of God. His sins have made a separation between himself and God (Isa. 59:1-2). He is dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-2). Through Christ and his death, God seeks to reconcile the world to himself (2nd Corinthians 5:18-19). If we are willing to come into Christ, he will wash away our sins and restore us to fellowship with God (Acts 22:16; Eph. 2:16).

Those who find peace with God will receive the second great gift of peace: *Peace with themselves*. In the world we will still experience tribulation, but in Christ we can find a peaceful center of rest (John 16:33). If we have found peace with God we can sleep soundly at night, secure in the knowledge that he who sees each sparrow fall is watching over us also (Matt. 10:29-31). We should not worry about food, clothing, and shelter because God will provide the necessities of life for those who put him first (Matt. 6:25-34). Rather than being anxious over what shall be tomorrow, Christians should take their worries to the Lord in believing prayer. We will find that the peace of God that passes all human understanding will guard our minds because we are in Christ (Phil. 4:6-7). “(Cast) all your cares upon him, because he cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). We cannot know what tomorrow holds, but we can know Who holds tomorrow!

The third great area in which Jesus provides peace is *peace with others*. Especially should this peace to be found among the fellow citizens of the kingdom of peace. When we find bickering and strife among those who claim to be God’s children, we must obviously conclude at least some of those involved have not surrendered their will to the Prince of Peace. In Ephesians 2, Paul described the horrible state of alienation, hostility, and enmity that existed between Jews and Greeks (vv. 11-12). This hatred between Jews and Gentiles ran bone deep and generations old. The current hatred that often exists between the races in our society would only look as mild dislike compared to the hostility these two groups felt and often exhibited towards each other. But God wrought peace between them by providing reconciliation through the cross of Christ in his one body, the church (Eph. 2:14-16). So those who have rendered obedience to the message of peace are now at peace with God and each other (Eph. 2:17).

And we can often be at peace even with those who are enemies of Christ because of our peaceful nature. Paul exhorted us to be at peace with “*all men*” as much as we can (Romans 12:18). But this peace is not to be purchased at the cost of truth. Jesus himself warned that for some his advent would bring a sword and not peace (Matt. 10:34). Sometimes we must unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and take up spiritual arms to defend the cause of the Prince of Peace. Jude wrote that we need to contend earnestly for the faith that God has once for all time delivered to his people (Jude 3).

An Example of a Peaceful Life

Consider Simon Peter as evidence of the great change that peace with God brings to the life of an individual. The gospels first introduce us to a Simon Peter who is a most un-peaceful man. He lacked peace with himself. While the great storm tosses Galilee’s waves, fearful Peter joins the other disciples in castigating the Lord for sleeping while they face imminent drowning (Mark 4:38). Peter was also violent and unpeaceful towards others. Perhaps Peter’s violence reached its peak the night of Jesus’ arrest when he reached out a sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest named Malchus (John 18:10).

Earlier, Jesus had reached to the heart of Peter’s troubled soul when he told Simon his mind was not set on the interests of God but of men (Matt. 16:23). Later, the Savior warned Peter that the outcome of the apostle’s failure to find lasting peace with God would be a time of severe trial when Satan would sift him like wheat (Luke 21:31). That very night, Jesus’ words were fulfilled. Simon sank to the depths of selfishness, three times denying his Lord, at least once with cursing and swearing (Mark 14:71). But the Father answered the prayer of Jesus: Simon’s faith did not fail. At this point, a look from the Savior pierced his heart and with bitter tears Simon repented. Ever after, Simon Peter was a changed man — a source of strength to others (Luke 21:32; 61-62).

And for Simon, finding peace with God brought peace with himself. The Peter who had fearfully awakened Jesus that storm-tossed night on the Sea of Galilee now found the peace to sleep very well the night before Herod had purposed his execution. So soundly was he sleeping that the angel sent to deliver Peter had to strike him in the side to awaken him (Acts 12:6, 7). Simon had learned to sleep like Jesus, and we need to learn to sleep like Peter.

But not only did Simon find peace with himself, but Peter also found peace with others. When for a moment the old, selfish Peter resurfaced at Antioch, the apostle Paul was forced to administer a public rebuke (Gal. 2:12-14). But Simon Peter, the man who once had stretched out a sword in bloody violence against another, later wrote of Paul as his *“beloved brother”* (2 Pet. 3:15).

The life of Peter testifies that those who will submit to the Prince of Peace truly find *“peace on earth”* (Luke 2:14). If you are seeking peace in your life, then seek to live the life that Christians live. By submitting your will to the Lord and striving every day to put God first in your life, you also can experience *“the peace of God that passes all understanding”* (Phil. 4:7).

- *Keith Storment*

Peace

By Mark Mayberry

In the New Testament, the word “peace” is found at the beginning or end of every epistle except for James and I John. The breadth of its meaning is apparent when it is linked with “grace” (Rom. 1:7), “life” (Rom. 8:6), and “righteousness” (Romans 14:17). It is used in benedictions like 1st Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20; 2 Peter 3:14. What are the different shades of meaning of this wonderful word?

Webster defines “peace” as “1. freedom from war; 2. a treaty or agreement to end war or the threat of war; 3. freedom from public disturbance or disorder; 4. freedom from disagreement or quarrels; harmony; concord; 5. an undisturbed state of mind; absence of mental conflict; serenity: in full, peace of mind; 6. calm; quiet; tranquility.”

The Greek word which is translated “peace” is defined by Thayer as ” 1. a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war . . . 2. peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord 3. security, safety, prosperity 4. spec. the Messiah’s peace. . . 5. the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ. . . 6. the blessed state of devout and upright men after death” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. eirene). Shalom is the Old Testament equivalent of eirene. It carried the idea of “completeness, soundness, wholeness, or well-being.” It was a typical greeting among the Hebrews.

Peace With God

Our first priority should be to find peace with God. Sin always brings unhappiness, conflict, and chaos into our lives (Psa. 1; Isa. 57:20-21). It causes fellowship with God to be broken (Isa. 59:1-2). If we are to avoid eternal condemnation, we must make peace with God. This cannot be accomplished on our terms; obedience to the Lord's will is the key (Isa. 55:7-9)!

The Old Testament prophets spoke of the Messianic age as a time of peace (Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6). The New Testament reveals the fulfillment of this hope (Lk. 1:78-79). Peace expresses the reconciliation that was made possible through the shed blood of Christ (Isa. 53:5; Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20-23).

Peace With Self

Today, peace of mind is a quality which is hard to find. The evidence is around us: delinquency, divorce, drug abuse, alcoholism, and suicide. Witness the physical signs of stress: hypertension, ulcers, heart attacks, etc.

Peace of mind cannot be found in drugs or alcohol. It does not come in capsules. The secret is not found in reading self-help books. We achieve peace of mind by applying the gospel to our lives and letting the God of Peace rule our hearts (Rom. 8:6; Col. 3:15). Inner tranquility is the result of faithful submission to the Lord (Matt. 11:28; Gal. 5:22; Phil. 4:7).

Christians should be the happiest and most well-adjusted people in the world. We may face difficult problems, but the peace of God enables us to maintain balance. Through Christ, we can overcome any adversity (Jn. 14:27; 16:33).

Peace With Others

In one sense, Jesus came, not to bring peace, but a sword (Matt. 10:34-36). This describes the struggle between righteousness and evil. At times we will experience conflict with the world, but as a rule, obedience to the Lord will improve all our relationships (Prov. 16:7; Rom. 12:18).

Christians must actively promote peace (Psalms 34:14; 133: 1; Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14). This not only means that we should avoid strife & discord; we should put positive effort into building up the body of Christ (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:3). If we are to achieve peace with others, we must have the attitude Paul speaks of in Philippians 2:1-8. He said, “Do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (w. 3-4, NASV). Selfishness will destroy peace and unity. We need to seek the good of others. **We can be at peace if we have the mind of Christ.**

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CONDITIONAL SALVATION CONTINGENT ON SURRENDER WITHOUT CONDITION

83.

I Surrender All.

(DUET.)

J. W. VAN DEVENTER.

W. S. WEEDEN.

1. { All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, All to him - I free-ly give; }
 { I will ev - er love and trust him, In his pres-ence dai-ly live. }
 2. { All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Hum-bly at his feet I bow, }
 { Worldly pleasures all for-sak - en, Take me, Je - sus, take me now. }
 3. { All to Je - sus I sur-ren-der, Make me, Sav-iour whol-ly thine; }
 { Let me feel the Ho - ly Spir - it, Tru - ly know that thou art mine. }

CHORUS.

I sur-ren-der all, I sur-ren-der all,
 I sur-ren-der all. I sur-ren-der all,
 I sur-ren-der all.

All to thee, my bless - ed Sav-iour, I sur-ren - der all.

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4. All to Jesus I surrender,
 Lord, I give myself to thee,
 Fill me with thy love and power,
 Let thy blessing fall on me.

5. All to Jesus I surrender,
 Now I feel the sacred flame;
 O the joy of full salvation!
 Glory, glory to his name!

