

ENLIGHTENED FAITH¹

To understand the “why” of God’s actions or methods is not essential. Blind² faith in Him brings such blessings. But an enlightened faith (a faith which includes an understanding of the “why” or the reason for God’s actions) strengthens one’s spiritual resolve and can be the basis of spiritual growth otherwise unattainable. At least that’s the way it has been for me. God’s Word, of course, is the basis for an enlightened faith, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God.³ In my experience, understanding “why” strengthens “...the substance of things hoped for”⁴ to more quickly bring into existence the fruit of faith, “...the evidence of things not seen.”⁵ Here are some examples that have helped me along the way.

One day as Jesus taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders confronted Him.⁶ During the confrontation Jesus began to speak to them in Parables and said, “A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. Again he sent them

¹Hebrews 6:4.

²Blind faith meaning not understanding the reason for obedience as compared with the fact that all faith is “blind” in that it is trusting in the unseen.

³Romans 10:17.

⁴Hebrews 11:1 (a).

⁵Hebrews 11:1 (b).

⁶See Mark 11:27. Those who confronted Jesus were the “church leaders” of His day, I. e., those in authority who knew the scriptures and used them as a legal weapon to justify themselves and crucify Him. He warned his disciples against such legalistic *doctrine* which He called *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. As it was then, so it is today. See also Matthew 16:5-12.

another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But those vinedressers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others.”⁷

Here is my understanding of the parable: The vineyard is the world, God is the owner, Jesus is the son, Satan and his angels are the vinedressers who fraudulently obtained the world lease from Adam this way: When God created man in His own image, He blessed them, told them to be fruitful and multiply, gave them dominion over the world, told them to subdue it, to include every thing that moved and all plant life on the earth, and gave to them green plants for food.⁸ As a part of God’s blessing, man⁹ was originally created to live eternally. This blessing, however, was dependent upon keeping God’s commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [and blessing and calamity], enforced by the death penalty for disobedience.¹⁰ When Eve was deceived and Adam disobeyed knowingly, he thereby fraudulently relinquished to Satan and his

⁷Mark 12:1-9, NKJV (Underlining added).

⁸Genesis 1:28-30. It is interesting to note that apparently man originally was a vegetarian.

⁹“Man,” meaning male and female, God’s way of referring to His creation. “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.” (Genesis 5:1, 2, RSV). God’s name for man and woman was Man. It was Adam who named his wife Eve and who called her woman. See Genesis 2:23; 3:20.

¹⁰Genesis 2:15-17, bracket insertion from The Amplified Bible (TAB).

angels,¹¹ the authority over the earth given to him by God. Paraphrased, the two accounts were along this line: God said, “If you eat it, you shall surely die.” Satan’s reply was, “God is a liar. If you eat it you won’t die. You’ll like it, and it will make you wise like God.” Thus, with the first lie of record, sin (and death) entered into the world, disenfranchised Adam of his authority and dominion over the earth and relinquished it to Satan. Here is some scriptural support for this conclusion: “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.¹² And “The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the Lord’s; But the earth He has given to the children of men.¹³ Jesus called Satan “the ruler of this world”¹⁴ and the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Church in Corinth called Satan “the god of this age.”¹⁵ These references seem to confirm my understanding of this parable. God, of course, owns the earth as its Creator, but He gave to perfect¹⁶ man dominion to subdue His creation. When Adam disobeyed God and thereby relinquished to Satan his authority over the earth, God’s redemptive plan was immediately set in motion. Since He had given to man authority and dominion over the earth, and since His Word is Truth, He could not change His Word to deal with the matter without negating His original commitment to man. So the authority given to man had to remain in place and plans were immediately instigated by God for Adam’s “replacement” to wrest from Satan the authority on earth he had fraudulently

obtained from the first man Adam. Hence the “last Adam [Jesus] who became a life-giving spirit”¹⁷ had to be born of woman (as the Son of man) to comply with God’s original authority given to man. Throughout His personal ministry, Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of man at least sixty-seven¹⁸ times as recorded in “the Gospels,” including the “parallel” duplications. Several times He did confess that He was the Son of God, but throughout His personal ministry, in the large majority of cases, He referred to Himself, as the Son of man. Jesus also had to be born of a virgin, of the Seed of woman¹⁹ to escape the Adamic curse. That is why He could live a sinless life as opposed to all born of the seed of man, who are born in sin as a descendent of the first Adam through whom sin and death entered into the world.²⁰

So the second Adam or the “last Adam” came to reclaim that which was stolen from the first Adam by Satan. And through the Atonement²¹ of Jesus that was begun. His death, burial and resurrection (to include all of His activities between death and resurrection²²) completed Phase I of the reclamation project. Phase II of the project today is left up to believers like you and me. The spiritual battle must be joined by believers who will deliberately take up arms in the spiritual conflict now in progress.²³ In the Atonement, Jesus conquered and disarmed Satan and his angels over whom believers now have power in

¹¹Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 furnish a picture of Satan’s original condition and the reasons for his loss of that position. These passages, prophetically addressed to the kings of Babylon and Tyre, are seen by most scholars to refer to Satan himself. They tell of an exalted angelic being, one of God’s creatures, who became proud and ambitious, determined to usurp God’s throne, and thus removed by God -- banished to hell from his position of great dignity and honor.” Information source: Jack W. Hayford, **Hayford’s Bible Handbook**, “Satan”, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p.. 750, 751.

¹²Psalms 24:1, NKJV.

¹³Psalms 115:16, NKJV.

¹⁴John 12:31.

¹⁵II Corinthians 4:4.

¹⁶Adam was perfect because he was created sinless as a triune being (body, soul and spirit) in the image of The Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

¹⁷I Corinthians 15:45, (Brackets added)

¹⁸Source: Alexander Cruden, **Cruden’s Complete Concordance**, “son of man” (The John C. Winston Company, 1930) p. 412.

¹⁹Genesis 3:15. This is the only bible reference to the Seed of woman producing offspring. In every other case the term used is “the seed of man.”

²⁰Read the fifth chapter of Romans.

²¹Atonement, meaning the act by which God restored the relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and man through the shedding of the blood of Jesus in His death on the cross, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, see Hebrews 9:22.

²²Some of the references which seem to indicate activities of Jesus between His death on the cross and His resurrection: Matthew 12:40; Ephesians 4:8-10; Colossians 2:15; I Peter 3:18-20.

²³See Ephesians 6:10-18; II Corinthians 10:3, 4.

His name.²⁴ And it is interesting to note that God gave Jesus the authority to execute judgment on the earth because He (Jesus) was the *Son of man*, not because He was the Son of God.²⁵ He had willingly given up, completely relinquished (emptied Himself of) His God-head power²⁶ in order to become the Son of man, born of woman, so He could operate under the original dominion of the earth given to the first man Adam by God. This means that He, of his own volition, deliberately divorced Himself of His God-head power in order to literally become the second Adam, that is, in order to become what the first Adam literally was before he “blew it” and succumbed to Satan’s trickery. Satan comes only to rob, steal, kill and destroy²⁷ and that’s what he did to Adam. He robbed Adam of his birthright to eternal life in fellowship with God, enticed him to disobey God and thereby with his own sin, purchased a death warrant for himself and his progeny. But let it be clearly known that through the Atonement, dominion of the earth was returned to Man, Jesus became Lord and Satan and his angels are now subject to every believer “in the Name of Jesus.”²⁸ In order to triumph over Satan, Jesus had to withstand Satan’s challenge just as Adam did. He had to succeed in what the first Adam failed at in order to become what the first Adam was intended to be. That’s why He came. Satan had to be defeated on his own turf (fraudulently obtained), and thrown out as an impostor. Jesus did it! And that’s good news!

We have no record of Jesus as the Son of God healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead or giving good news to the poor prior to His encounter with the Holy Spirit at the beginning of His ministry. Luke’s account of the incident reveals that “...when Jesus also had been baptized [of John] and *was praying*, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a

dove,...”²⁹ It was then that His ministry began at about 30 years of age.³⁰ *It seems therefore, that it was the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power that gave Him, as the Son of man, the ability to perform miracles in His ministry.*³¹ Had He done them as the Son of God, He would not have been able to meet the requirements set forth in the beginning, when, according to the Word, God gave to Man irrevocable dominion over the earth along with the authority to subdue it. If this conclusion is correct, it gives believers today a lot more in common with Jesus as the Son of man, during His personal ministry, than I had previously envisioned. And that’s exciting.

John the Baptist said of Jesus, “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.”³² Because of this scripture, for years I believed Jesus was the only one to receive the Spirit without measure. I now believe everyone who has received the Holy Spirit has received Him without measure because He is a Person. Not half a person, but a whole Person. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit even from His mother’s womb.³³ Filled means without measure, not half full, but full. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, “Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?”³⁴ Not half or part of Jesus, but all of Jesus (His Spirit). Years ago the Lord spoke to me and said, “You are filled with My Spirit from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet, as a hand fills a glove. And that is why you are saved.”³⁵ I therefore believe those who have the Holy Spirit have all of Him. Should one be called by God today to a ministry to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons and give good news to the poor, I believe the necessary Anointing and Power of the Holy Spirit will

²⁹Luke 3:21,22, RSV (Italics and brackets added).

³⁰Luke 3:23.

³¹Acts 10:38.

³²John 3:34, NKJV.

³³Luke 1:15.

³⁴II Corinthians 13:5, NKJV.

³⁵James L. Ash, **For Christians Only**, “Gleanings” (Published by James L. Ash, 1989), p.41

²⁴Mark 16:17, 18; Luke 10:19.

²⁵John 5:26, 27.

²⁶See Philippians 2:5-8; II Corinthians 8:9; 13:4; Romans 8:3.

²⁷John 10:1, 10.

²⁸Mark 16:17.

be provided for that ministry, as the one who is called remains faithful. But remember, Jesus did not come to do what *He wanted to do*. He came to do His Father's will, not His own. And as He was subservient to the Father's will and acted as He directed, the Anointing and Power of the Holy Spirit Enabled Him to become the victorious last Adam. And that is good news!

PRAYER REQUESTS

While channel surfing recently, I caught part of one segment of the Billy Graham San Antonio Crusade held this past summer. During the telecast Dr. Graham mentioned a television hook-up in Africa where it was estimated that he preached to *one billion* viewers! He then went on to mention something many of us excitedly await: At the present explosion growth rate of television transmitting facilities, by the year 2000 it will be possible for every nation in the world to receive a telecast from a single transmission point. TBN, the Christian television network, reportedly will be able to do that via their facilities to include both direct and satellite transmission. Dr. Graham then mentioned the words of Jesus, "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*"³⁶ The fulfillment of this prophecy will likely be possible by the year 2000 via television. Saints of God this is the most exciting time to be alive since the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Recently I found myself praying for the complete healing of Dr. Graham and Ann Anders, both of whom have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Ann is a dear friend of mine and a devoted child of God. Will you join me in praying that our Lord will completely heal both Dr. Graham and Ann Anders? As most of you know, there are a multiplicity of scriptures which support such a request. The bible declares that God made Jesus our wisdom, *our righteousness* and sanctification and redemption.³⁷ As children of God we can therefore go boldly to the throne of grace **with the righteousness**

of Jesus and pray for healing confident that He will hear and answer our prayers.

A word about Billy Graham. His ministry is a unique phenomenon in the history of the world from at least two standpoints: (a) the number of people preached to in person, and via radio and television, as a pioneer evangelist in both mediums, and (b) the way in which he has conducted himself as a man of God with integrity in overseeing the vastness of his ministry, including its financial aspect. There is a reason why God has blessed this man. The key may be this: Within the past couple of months, in answer to prayer, the Lord spoke to me and said, "The gifts and call of God are irrevocable. To make your calling and election sure, stay true to your calling and election." The reason God has so blessed Dr. Graham may be because he has been true to God's calling and election. I have prayed for the Lord to heal him so that his ministry might not be impaired. Next, a word about Ann Anders. She is a dear friend, devoted to our Lord, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease about three years ago. She and her husband Jim now live in Houston, Texas and are precious long-time friends in the Lord who stood by me at a time in my life when others walked away. I would be grateful if you would join me in praying for the complete healing of both Dr. Graham and Ann Anders.

A word to computer hacks....

God is the Bill Gates of heaven, Jesus is at the keyboard. Power source, the Holy Spirit. Last program update, 8:00 AM on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. Update software downloaded on the hard drive at 8:01 AM. First test run at 8:02 AM. Software pronounced "without glitches" at 8:03 AM. Full Power applied at 8:49 AM with system up and running. Complete Reality package on line at 9:00 AM Jerusalem time.

....more later, the Lord willing.

³⁶Matthew 24:14, NKJV (Italics added).

³⁷I Corinthians 1:30.