

These three chapters are a needed parenthetical bridge. They take the reader from the fundamental positional truths presented in Chapters 1-8 to the practical application of these truths to the believer's walk with God on this earth until the return of the Lord in Chapters 12-16. These three chapters provide context for the application and implementation of the revealed truth of the gospel into a blessed and fulfilling life as a believer walking with God here on earth. Insights into God's mind, His Plan and His sovereign ways are given to establish us and deepen our appreciation of what He has done for us and is doing with us.. Important questions tying the past to the present and the future are taken up and answered. In particular the role of the nation of Israel in history, it's present situation and predicted future glory are presented in detail for our instruction, edification and encouragement.

All through we see the wonderful grace of God. He offers salvation to all mankind, Jew and Gentile, on the same basis, faith in the shed blood of Christ. This despite the manifest long history of antagonism of both groups toward God. Believers emerge with no fear of our security nor of future events despite the predicted awful failure and departure of Christendom from Christ. They will receive their just reward and be "broken out" of their present place as God's testimony on earth during Israel's default. God's chosen people Israel, set aside for so long, will be brought back into national prominence when they receive their crucified King. He will reign over them and through them reign over the whole earth. God's righteousness is upheld all through the ages while His blessing flows out unhindered to all in this day of grace.

Some Lessons to Take

1. The discipline of Israel, His chosen people, mirrors God's discipline of individual saints down through the ages. He does so today in us, individually, and in the Assembly. He does not tolerate wickedness in that which professes His Name. And the more rigorously in those who are truly His upon whom He has set His Name. He wisely, faithfully chastens His own today. Sometimes this extends even to expelling believers from the Assembly. He does this with the purpose of clearing His Name, yet while bringing about conviction, humble confession and restoration of the soul to Himself. He is presently in the process of dealing this way with Israel nationally. So the New Testament commandments regarding discipline (Matthew 18:15-21, 1Corinthians 5, Galatians 5 and 6:1 and 2Corinthians 2 and 7) are not without precedent in Old Testament scripture. The Old Testament faithfully records God's longsuffering and faithful dealing with His beloved people Israel. **He hasn't changed.** His discipline of Israel will end in national restoration. Similarly an assembly's discipline of a sinning one called a believer is "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5). So all Israel will be saved after its sin has been purged out.

2. God in His sovereign power moves heaven and earth to get the attention of a lost sinner. Yet He deigns to use preaching of mere men, us, to bring the good news to the lost. What a privilege. What a responsibility. So we preach and spread the good news (and as necessary first the bad news). For we do not know who will hear and repent and be saved, even though God knows.

Even though God sovereignly blesses some men more than others in earthly ways, as He did Jacob over Esau, not one does He consign to hell. Esau in his pride and refusal to repent put himself there. God repeatedly plagued the god-king Pharaoh into submission, hardening his heart by relenting every time he bargained for relief. He finally drowned the proud stubborn king when he threatened His beloved chosen people Israel. For it was God that chose them out of the multitude of idolatrous nations through Abram whom He sovereignly chose to give unsolicited, unexpected, undeserved promises, Acts 7:1; Deut. 7:6-8. Promises impacting millions of descendants and their Gentile neighbors down through centuries since (and into times still future). So He has sovereignly provided untold blessing through His Son Jesus Christ, made of the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, to all who will but believe. At infinite cost to Himself and His Son, He chose me (despite my sinful self) and chose you, if you are saved. Are you? If not, bow now!

3. So we learn of God's sovereign choosing and calling out the undeserving and un-seeking to blessing. Each of us, having been born in sin, has done all that is necessary to consign ourselves to everlasting banishment from God's presence and blessing. No man, none of us, on his own seeks after God without His intervention. He consigns not one person to hell at birth though all immediately head that way. Yet He offers each of us eternal life through humbling (confessing Jesus is Lord) and simply placing personal trust upon His Provision for our salvation through His death and resurrection, Ch.10:9. It's FREE for the taking. Not of works lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2:8,9. The offer is to all!

By Ron Canner, January 9, 2008

Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood.

Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From that same love we gain;
Else sweetly as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain.

We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe;
The precious Savior and the power
That makes Him precious too.

Wm. Cowper, 1731 - 1800