

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENT

What about those members of the human race who have never heard of the Lord Jesus, those who know nothing of His birth in Bethlehem, His death at Calvary, His resurrection from among the dead? What about those now living upon the earth who have never heard one word of the record God has given of His Son? What arrangement has God made for these? Were they ignored and passed by in God's great plan of redemption?

Does the Bible provide an answer to these complex questions? I believe that it does, and to it we will turn for the light that God has given on these difficult problems.

In the beginning of this study, it needs to be said that it is the duty of all who teach God's Word to discover and understand great and complex truths, then set them forth in words that are understandable by those being taught. This is not a simple matter since many times one will uncover truth and cannot find words to set it forth. In presenting the truth I now proclaim, I had to use the word "arrangement," even though I was reluctant to do so. And in setting forth this truth I will need to use it to the point of redundancy since there are no synonyms to take its place. The meaning of this word will become quite clear if we consider another divine arrangement before going on to consider what may well be the most important arrangement that God has established. It will help greatly if the reader will keep in mind that when God arranges a combination of things in a particular way for the accomplishment of a certain purpose, we have a divine arrangement that should not be ignored or set aside.

In the Bible we find one book or portion which is called "The Gospel of John." This book is a divine arrangement. The writer (John) declares: **"many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye (anyone who reads) might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name"** (John 20:30,31).

Consequently, we know that in this book we have a divine selection of material presented by God in order to produce a believer in Jesus Christ. Thus, on the basis of this divine declaration, we can assert that in John's gospel we have God's salvation-bringing message that God authorized (made freely available) to the nations by Paul's pronouncement in Acts 28:28. This is God's own arrangement for producing a believer, and we should observe it with diligence and care. Not as some do who insist that only the truth found in Ephesians and Colossians will save one today.

However, it is obvious that this arrangement was not available to men before John wrote his gospel. Neither is it available to men living today who do not have a copy of this book, and who may not be able to read it if one got to them. Nevertheless, we are able to point to men of ancient times who were God-fearing, perfect, upright individuals, who abstained from all evil and had a positive relationship with God.

What was the divine arrangement that made it possible for men such as Job and Abimelech (Gen. 20) to live God-fearing lives in relationship to the Deity?

The Bible provides the answer. It tells of a divine arrangement, one of great importance, yet one that is almost totally stultified and ignored. This arrangement dates from "in the beginning," even before man was created. It is still effective and working as positively as it did at the first. It is vitally related to the fact that God, the First Cause, the Supreme Being, is by His very nature incomprehensible, unknowable, and invisible. Therefore, in the world that God planned to create as the abode for man, a world that would contain all that is essential for man's highest good, there would need to be some arrangement for making God known. Otherwise, the man He planned to create would never have any knowledge that the God Who made Him even existed. He would spend his whole life in ignorance of the incomprehensible Creator.

Thus it was even before man's creation, there was in the world that he would inhabit, that aspect of the Deity which is called "**the Word**" (*ho Logos*). The truth here can be more forcefully set forth if we translate *ho Logos* as "the Expression," and understand it to be telling us of One Who is the Revealer or Expressor of God. In our language an expression is an arrangement of words (a sentence) that says something; it communicates. From the first verse of John's Gospel we know that when Adam appeared upon the earth, the Expression of God was in the world ready to perform His service of making known the Absolute God to him. This is how it was that Adam knew God.

Furthermore, we are told "**the Expression was toward God**"; it pertained to Him. To use the word "with" here as a translation of the word *pros* does nothing but cast a pall of darkness over this glorious revelation. Twenty times in the Greek Scriptures we find the phrase *pros ton Theon*, and only in this passage is it translated "with God"

(twice). The word *pros* here should be translated "toward"; then it will explain the relation of the Logos to the Deity. To this declaration is added the revelation that "**the Expression was God.**" Truly it was God Himself expressing and revealing Himself to man by means of a divine arrangement He had established.

The service of the Logos (Expression) did not end with Adam. It did its work in him, then continued it with all his descendants, for the Logos was the true Light that enlightens every man that comes into the world (John 1:9). Here there must be a definite exercise of faith. We must take God at His Word and think accordingly. Ask yourself, if you reject this simple statement of truth, will any more truth be given to you?

Even after Adam sinned, and sin and death came into the world, the Logos, the Expression of God did not cease to do His work. Neither did He turn down His light. It was (and is) the divine arrangement that the Logos should express, declare, and reveal the Deity. He is the Light that has never become dim; He shines in and through the darkness, the true Light of God, not just a feeble flicker that teases mankind, but a divine Light that enlightens every man that comes into the world.

The truth of this universal enlightenment is clearly set forth in Paul's great appraisal and indictment of mankind in Romans, chapter one, where he declares that which is known of God (the fact of His existence and reality) is apparent among them for God makes it manifest to them (Rom. 1:19), then goes on to say "**when they knew God they glorified** (recognized) **Him not as God**" (1:21). Following this he says that mankind did not like to retain God in their knowledge, (1:28) all of which demonstrates the universal knowledge of God that existed among the ancients. It was a knowledge upon which they needed to act. They should have turned to the One they knew to exist, but they took off in the opposite direction. This caused God to "give them over" to their desires, but He never gave them up. Therefore, if anyone asks how ancient men could have known God, the Bible gives the answer. There was a divine arrangement that took care of this. In the complex of the Deity there was One Who expressed God, a provision that was an invitation for a man to seek God. There had to be receptivity. This universal gift of knowledge did not settle a man's destiny.

There are those who would have us believe that the knowledge of God among men was sustained by a "hand-me-down" process that began with Adam, who told Seth, who told Enos, who told Cainan, who told Mahalaleel, who told Enoch, who told Methuselah, who told Noah, etc., etc., as some tell us that the knowledge of the incomprehensible God was thus perpetuated. Such ideas as this would substitute the garbled reports of fallible men for the infallible work of the Logos, Who Himself was the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. Furthermore, I repudiate with all my might the idea that the Creator wrote "the gospel in the stars," so that men by studying the starry firmament could obtain the knowledge of God. This

would substitute the stars for the Logos, and all such acts of substitution come out of "the spirit of anti-Christ" which is ever in the world. (See Issue No. **SB160**). The stars are not God's arrangement for bringing the knowledge of His existence and reality to man. They attest to his creatorship.

The Logos of God was in the world from the beginning. He was the communicating voice for God in relationship to mankind. He did not need to be on the earth to be in the world, even though He was seen many times in the theophanies, that is, the visible appearances of God to man, as set forth in the Old Testament. When the Word (Logos) became flesh (John 1:14), no change was made in the divine arrangement for the revelation of God to man. He remained God's link of communication. **"No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"** (John 14:6), were His specific words concerning this. The "Voice" of God became louder through His manifestation in the flesh.

In the divine arrangement that centers in the Logos, we find the answer to the ubiquitous questions: What about all those individuals who lived and died before the advent of Jesus Christ? What about those who even today have never heard the record God has given of His Son?

In answer we could say that this is what the Logos is all about; but first of all we would ask these questions: Did these individuals have any light (John 1:9)? Did they know that God existed (Rom. 1:19)? Did they refuse to have the knowledge of God in their hearts (Rom. 1:28)? Were they without excuse (Rom. 1:20)? That which happened in their case is clearly set forth in John 1:10-13. The Logos was in the world bringing to every man that came into it the knowledge of the existence and reality of God. Many indeed acted upon this seeking for more light and knowledge from the One they knew to be. To as many as received Him (the Logos) He gave authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name. These were born (generated) not because of their natural qualities (flesh), not because of their nationality (blood), not because they willed it. It was all of God (John 1:12,13).

There are numerous examples of this in the Old Testament. There was Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abimelech (Gen. 20), Jethro (Ex. 18), the Queen of Sheba, and many others.

"But what about men today?" someone is sure to ask. This will be considered in another study, but for now I will say it is my firm conviction that if anyone anywhere responds to the work of the Logos, if he earnestly seeks to lay hold of the One Whom he has come to know now exists and is a present reality, he will in that day when God judges the living and the dead find an abundant entrance into the eonian kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

End Issue No. SB163

