

ChalcedonReport

MINISTRY NEWS FROM THE CHALCEDON FOUNDATION® APRIL 2022

Reading Rushdoony... Out Loud

Nathan Conkey

Since July of 2020 it's been my great pleasure to work together with Jeremy Walker, of Grace Community School, and Nicene Covenant Church—with the full cooperation of the Chalcedon Foundation—on a project to narrate all of R. J. Rushdoony's published work, minus the poetry, for upload and distribution on various audio book platforms such as audible.com as well as RushdoonyRadio.org.

Through this process, I have learned a great deal while being brought face to face with the claims of God Almighty more times than I can count. If I were asked, I could not say which is my favorite book, nor can I delineate all that I've learned or what might be the most important thing I've read. Instead, I want to share how this grand project began, the progress made, why it's important, and how it could best be followed up.

Free Gold Coins

The project started in the rolling hills of County Down, Northern Ireland, more than twenty years ago, when I first came across the late Dr. Gary North's Freebooks.com. I downloaded all the books but didn't quite devour them due to my undeveloped mental prowess, but I had a fairly decent nibble at them. It was as if Dr. North was giving away free gold coins. I instantly saw the absolute necessity for Christian education, and the complete antithesis behind the world outside of Christ. I had found my home, so to speak. By the grace of God, I was forever delivered from halfway house Christianity.



Narrator Nathan Conkey in his makeshift recording studio where he labors through the thousands of pages of Rushdoony's books.

Another factor was my discovering the original narrator of Rushdoony's works: Rushdoony himself!

In 2007, I began listening to the Mt. Olive tape library collection of Rushdoony's lectures and sermons—including the sizable list of Q&A sessions—that were featured on Chalcedon's website. These were encoded as mp3s, which meant I could download them for free, and once again I was showered with the wealth of wisdom found in Rushdoony's talks.

These downloads enabled me to spend a great deal of time with Rushdoony as I took him along with me as I went about my business.

Korea and Mexico

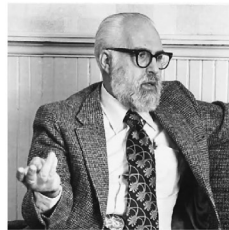
While living in a small apartment in Korea in 2013, I was inspired by Chalcedon's podcasting efforts to nervously launch my own podcast. Although that podcast is best to be forgotten, it was my first attempt at producing something digital for others to consume.

Switch to a first floor apartment in Puebla, Mexico, where I began to narrate the books of Stephen Perks, which I also cringe to think about. The floors were uncarpeted, and the walls made of cement, and that made for a low quality audio presentation, but I was learning and growing as a content producer.

Around this time I was asked to serve as a volunteer narrator for Reconstructionist Radio, and because of that, I was able to narrate some of Chalcedon's materials. It was the Lord's tithe that allowed me to give so much time to narration, and if you gave to support me while I was in Puebla, working under Mr. Roger Oliver, I thank you!

Building My Recording Booth

After West Africa, South Korea, and Central Mexico, what exotic land would I be blown to by the winds of God's immeasurably wise and gracious providence? Well, a pig farm, of course! Yorkshire beckoned. The Southern African Bion family graciously hosted me for almost a year after my return to

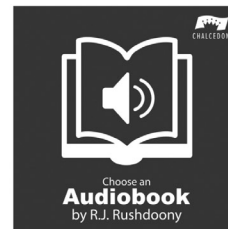


Rousas John Rushdoony's Lectures & Sermons Available on Rushdoony Radio!

Welcome to Rushdoony Radio! If you are looking for lectures, sermons, and more by Rousas John Rushdoony you are in the right place!

Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God's law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church's false view of God's law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today, took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting: <https://chalcedon.edu/founder>



Hosted by Jeremy Walker RushdoonyRadio.org features Christian Reconstruction audio content.

Mexico. As a note, if you support foreign missionaries, don't forget to help them transition back home. If they aren't tentmakers, encourage them to get a skill, preferably location-independent. I myself tried getting an online tutoring business off the ground on Udemy—as a follow up to my English course for Spanish-speakers—but to no avail. However, I had taken two courses on doing voiceovers while in Mexico, and the Lord brought to mind ACX.com, the backend of Audible, where voiceover artists compete for books to narrate.

I built a makeshift booth out of scrap wood and acoustic blankets and was soon narrating my first audiobook for Audible.com, and getting paid. Several books later Covid struck, and God moved me to a town outside Edinburgh, Scotland, where another Southern African brother offered me hospitality in a much quieter house allowing me to record a better finished audiobook.

The final "starting point" came a few miles from the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland, in a house belonging to a sister, which was vacant because

of Covid restrictions. By then, I had finished seventeen books for Audible and knew my way around. That's when Jeremy Walker approached me with an idea to record Rushdoony's complete works for Audible. During my time in Puebla, Mexico, I was twice able to visit Naples, Florida, home of Grace Community School and Nicene Covenant Church, and build relationships with the folks there, particularly Jeremy.

The Recording Strategy

How did Jeremy and I tackle this ambitious project? We began with the shortest book by page number, *God's Plan for Victory*—weighing in at 41 pages—and worked up to the books I am currently working on, the titanic three-volume *Faith and Action*, a whopping 1,634 pages long.

How is this all done? I work in a homemade acoustic booth with the text of each book displayed in front of me on a mounted screen in a PDF or Kindle file. A high-quality microphone is suspended on a boom arm to my side,

and I snuggle myself into the booth in a kneeling position where I launch the software, swing the mic into position a handspan from my lips, and hit the record button. Every time I make a mistake, or mispronounce a word, I hit the punch and roll button on my recording program and fix the error.

I'll have a spreadsheet open to record the duration of each chapter, and I'll use Google's translation tool for the pronunciation of foreign words. Of course, my trusty "Hannover" Starbucks mug is at my side and full of water for lubrication. When I've finished my narration work for the week, I'll render the audio into a WAV file and upload it to Google Drive for review and proofing. The work is checked for stray bumps and for faithfulness to the text of the book. If there are any mistakes to be corrected, Jeremy will send the work back to me with instructions. This process has pushed me to check my own work more rigorously.

That's really the process in a nutshell. You start, keep going, and you don't stop. Honestly, it does help if you like the sound of your own voice. Imagine hearing it repeatedly during recording and reviewing! On Jeremy's end, he sprinkles magic dust on the recordings and then submits them to ACX/Audible, RushdoonyRadio.org, and now, CanonPress's subscription service.

Laboring in the Word

Since July 2020, our small team has chipped away at recording roughly 16,000 pages of Rushdoony's writings which represents fifty-nine full books, forty-nine of which have been published on Audible.com.

All of this was made possible by the providence of God, painstaking work, and Christian hospitality. Beyond that, it was individual Christians and businesses that tithed out of their increase. As you probably know, the tithe is God's own catalyst to make something out of nothing in a secondary, creaturely manner. Vision on its own doesn't get the work done. Volunteer work can be done to a high standard, but in God's economy, those who labor "in the word"

Audible.com, the world's leading audio book provider features 49 of Rushdoony's book so far.

deserve the honor of financial support. It's God's money, and Christians put it to work to help advance the Kingdom!

Future Suggestions

There is no doubt that printed books will continue for a long time—especially amongst the Reformed reading community—but eBooks and PDFs have their place as each format will serve a different sector of the market. For example, freely available PDFs of Reconstructionist books, including Rushdoony's work—translated into Spanish—are having a transformative effect on many in the Hispanic world where paper book printing would not be feasible. By God's grace, changing the publishing format can help immensely in reaching those who are hungry for truth.

However, there is another format which I feel merits attention that could greatly extend the impact of Rushdoony's thought. As you know, Rushdoony weaves many threads through all his books such as infallibility, presuppositionalism, covenantalism, and eschatology. He then applies these widely to various spheres of life such as medicine and mental health. His topics cover history, historiography, theology,

law, philosophy and much more. Understanding this requires focused study, but many do not have the time or the background to read through all Rushdoony's books.

The format that is missing is a self-paced, stand-alone video course with supporting quizzes that can take learners step by step through the theological, philosophical, historical, and educational teaching of Dr. Rushdoony. In this time of shaking, many are reassessing their views. Not everyone reads, not everyone listens to audiobooks, many are video-viewers, and still others take courses in order to better understand. Dr. Rushdoony's work is a rich mine of Christ-honoring, world-defeating, spiritual dynamite that more people need to read, and hear, and see.

Do pray that the Lord would bless and use the audiobooks already out there, pray for the months of work that lie ahead to publish the remaining eleven audiobooks. For more information about me, visit NathanTeacher.com. 🙏

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Love of God and His Word

R. J. Rushdoony (*Good Morning, Friends*, Vol. 3, pp. 73-76)

Good morning, friends. Our Scripture today is Psalm 119:1-40. This psalm has many familiar verses and here are a few of them:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed there according to thy word. (v. 9)

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (v. 11)

I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. (v. 16)

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. (v. 18)

I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thou thy commandments from me. (v. 19)

My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. (v. 25)

Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness. (v. 40)

One characteristic of this psalm stands out immediately. This is the longest psalm in the Bible, with 176 verses, and every verse except number 122 refers to the will of God as it is revealed in His Word, the Bible. Ten different words are used for this revealed will of God. It is called law, word, sayings, commandment, statutes, judgments or ordinances, precepts or injunctions, testimony, way, and path. The obvious and passionate fact is this: the deep and overriding love of the psalmist for God and His Word. The psalmist declares emphatically, "This I have had," i.e., the major blessing of my life, "that I have kept thy precepts" (v. 56, JPS). The experience of faithfulness gives him a deeper and more passionate desire for greater faithfulness, and for this he looks to God and His Word.

This psalm is an important one precisely because our modern weakness lies at this point. The psalmist loved, studied, and obeyed the Word of God. For all too many Christians nowadays, the Bible is a dusty book. Worse than that, for many its contents are taken with a grain of salt and a double dose of cynicism.

To take the Bible other than on its own declared value is to deny the claims it makes. When the Bible says one thing and we say another, we declare the Bible to be wrong or counterfeit and our word to be true. There is no point in evading the force of this issue: whose word shall we accept?

Nothing you and I can say about God has any value apart from Scripture. None of us can know God except as He reveals Himself to us in the person of His only begotten Son and through His Word, the Bible. To set ourselves up above His Word in criticism or judgment is to exalt our word above God and to declare His Word to be counterfeit. This is not faith, but unbelief; not strength, but weakness.

The strength of the psalmist who wrote Psalm 119 is simply this: his unreserved devotion to and love of the revealed will of God. And this love shines through in every verse.

Let's consider this matter of love briefly. When two people are in love, they not only enjoy being together but they also enjoy talking with one another. Good friends can stand in a doorway, unwilling to say goodnight, and talk for another hour and enjoy every minute of it. It's not the subject matter alone. The same topic can be deadly dull with someone else; it's the sense of communion that is a part of all talk with people we love.

It is this sense of delight in every word of God which rings out in Psalm 119. "Thy testimonies," the writer declares, "also are my delight and my counselors" (v. 24).

The word and will of God is not only his joy but, in time of trouble, his consolation. He looks to the Lord and says:

My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word. (v. 28)

My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. (v. 25)

The psalmist declares (vv. 145ff.) that he, on occasion of deep suffering, cried through the night and arose with this conviction: "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are true" (v. 151, RSV). His basic faith and assurance is this: God is sovereign and all powerful. In His hands are all things, and He governs the destinies of all men. Yet this almighty and infinite God is also the God who approaches man and talks to him on his own level of understanding.

As a result, he says with joy, as he contemplates the majesty and the nearness of God:

Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (vv. 164-165)

This last phrase, nothing shall offend them, is better translated, they shall have no occasion for stumbling. Life will not trip us up and leave us fallen and offended if we delight in God's Word and make it our meditation and our daily bread.

How can we have this peace and this victorious life that does not stumble as it meets God's providence and His dealings? The psalmist sees no way other than through the Word of God, Scripture.

If we lack this peace and victory, we can ask, and it shall be given. We can pray with the psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (v. 18). 📖