

*Faith for All of Life*  
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# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

PROCLAIMING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

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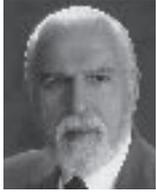
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# Political Saviors

[Reprinted from *Salvation and Godly Rule* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2004 ed.), 63-71.]

R. J. Rushdoony



In describing the events of Palm Sunday, St. Matthew wrote:

**4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken**

by the prophet saying,

**5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. (Matt. 21:4-5)**

This formula, “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,” appears in nearly the same words twelve times in Matthew’s Gospel, three times in Mark, six times in Luke, and eight times in John. It is also common in Acts and the Epistles. Even more common is an expression declaring that it was thus written by a prophet: such references are almost too numerous to cite.

In this case, the citation refers to Zechariah 9:9–10; although verse 10 is not cited, it is clearly in mind, and the joyful reaction of the people made it clear that they saw the self-conscious fulfillment of the prophecy as a declaration of peace, victory, and dominion:

**9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.**

**10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace**

**unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.**

Whatever else this and all other citations of the fulfillment of prophecy have to say, they do make it clear that history moves in terms of God’s plan and is predestined by Him. What He has declared, He brings to pass. Not only do the writers rejoice in every fulfillment of prophecy, but they also clearly rejoice in the fact that, *whatever God has promised and declared, that He will perform*. Predestination by God is implicit or explicit in all of Scripture.

Predestination by man, however, is implicit and explicit in humanism, scientific socialism, and in every doctrine of political salvation. Man seeks to supplant God’s eternal decree with his own total plan. The scientific socialist state is man’s predestination of man and his world.

The Triumphal Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem is directly related to this humanistic hope and in contradiction to it.

The world of Christ’s day was well aware of the Biblical faith and hope which, from Judea, was extensively taught and propagated by Judean missionaries. In 61 B. C., Cicero had rejected it as a “barbarian superstition.” Biblical faith all the same appealed to many who were “longing to believe that one day wickedness would be abolished, the arrogant would be punished, and a higher justice would be established.”<sup>1</sup>

In paganism, such a hope was normally essentially a political hope. Religion was primarily concerned, in its cultic

form, with insurance against problems. Positive action towards justice and salvation was basically political. Only as the political hope in the form of the Roman Empire began to fade into cynicism did pagan cults offer salvation, and even then it was identified with security rather than victory.

Rome, as it developed from a City-State to an empire, presented itself as “the City of Justice, belonging to all humanity.” This Greater Rome was man’s vehicle of salvation. Cicero hailed Octavian as a savior. “In him we place our hopes of liberty; from him we have already received salvation (Philippics, V, vxiii, 49).” Cicero spoke of Rome as “the light of the world, the guardian of all nations (Philippics, IV, vi, 14).”<sup>2</sup>

Roman politicians saw their regimes as new eras, opening up salvation for a needy world. Julius Caesar, like others, instituted calendar changes and reform as *Pontifex Maximus* to indicate that time now had a new meaning. His assassins believed equally as much that their political assassination would renew the past and the present.

Almost as if they wanted to re-establish the ancient course of events, the conspirators chose March 15—the feast of Anna Perenna, which had been New Year’s Day in the old calendar—to murder the man who had subverted the very sequence of the days.<sup>3</sup>

Whether with Caesar, Brutus, or their predecessors and successors, salvation meant the power of the state and its sword. Salvation meant coercion.

The nature of political salvation has not changed since then. Whether in

Marxist socialist states, Fabian socialist orders, or in the democracies, political salvation means coercion. The state has a plan, and man and society must submit to the predestined Procrustean pattern. Procrustes, the Greek robber of legend, amputated or stretched the limbs of his captives to fit a certain bed and thereby destroyed them. His victims were unwilling victims, but the modern citizens, believing in political salvation, demand a Procrustean bed for society and only complain when it is they who are stretched out upon it.

The predestination and salvation offered by humanism and socialism is coercive and destructive. The dream is of a great and noble leader on a white horse leading men into a new paradise, and, age after age, men have raised up to power their own murderers and cheered their parades to murderous power.

The Triumphal Entry had all this in mind and parodied it. Israel itself had succumbed to the political hope. The expectation of a world empire ruled by a Jewish messiah was present among the disciples themselves. The contrast between a conqueror riding on a white charger and an ass with its colt trotting along cannot be more marked. The one gives us a picture of power and might, the ability to compel and to destroy. The other is a picture, as Zechariah 9:9 makes clear, of one who is “lowly” or humble, with no apparent coercive power.

This difference is deliberate. The predestination of the state is brutal and coercive; it is on man’s level, in man’s time, and a pressure on man himself. The predestination of God is from all eternity, before time began; it does no violence to us, because we are what God created us to be, and all that He ordains is in conformity to our being because we are what He ordained us to be.

The use of the ass marked a renunciation of political power as the way of salvation. After Solomon came to the throne,

[H]orses became the distinctive riding beast of the nobility (I Kings 10:25, 28–29; II Kings 9:18–19, etc.). From this time onward the use of asses was characteristic of persons without rank. If the Messiah appears riding thus He must be of a humble rank and station.<sup>4</sup>

The crowds who hailed Jesus saw the prophecy fulfilled, but they insisted on seeing it in terms of their political hopes. They did this because the prophecy spoke of *dominion*. In Leupold’s translation, “And He shall speak peace to the nations; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, however humble the Messiah’s appearing and entry, He would still exercise world dominion.

The question, of course, is simply this: what does dominion mean? For the world, dominion is in essence the ability to exercise power and force over persons and things. What men mean by *dominion* is apparent in the connotation the word *domination* has. The expectation thus was that the appearance of the Messiah meant the domination of the world by a Jewish monarch. Jesus, recognizing their false hope, wept over the city, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” (Luke 19:42). As Stauffer wrote,

Many of them waved palms, thus making plain the political meaning of their demonstration. For the palm was the key emblem of Palestine in national heraldry and in the international emblematic language of the day. Palm trees and palm leaves are to be found on the Palestinian coins of the early Maccabees, the Hasmonaeans, the Herodians, the procurators, and the partisans; they are found also on Flavian coins celebrating victories and, above all, on the coins celebrating the advent of Hadrian. On these last coins we see Judea kneeling or sacrificing, surrounded by children bearing palms and marching in solemn procession to meet the approaching Emperor. This is how we must

understand the palms of Palm Sunday: Jerusalem was celebrating the epiphany of her messianic king. Even the children crying Hosannah are included in this description of the coming of a king.<sup>6</sup>

The dominion which Christ came to establish was not political, although it would have political repercussions and effect as men came under Christ’s dominion. Humanism speaks of man’s goodness, but, practically, it moves in terms of man’s depravity, because its plan for paradise is to coerce men into goodness as the state defines it. In effect, man is compelled, if he resists, to choose between the state’s definition of goodness or to be an outcast, or even to be executed. Political dominion and coercion are the humanistic means of coping with man’s sin. In such an order, the state exercises dominion over man, so that it is not man who exercises dominion, but man who is dominated by a ruling elite.

In Christ’s Kingdom, dominion is restored to man, who lost it by his fall, by man’s regeneration through Jesus Christ. Christ by His resurrection destroyed the dominion of death (Rom. 6:9). Therefore, “sin shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14). Man is freed into dominion. The state exercises dominion over man by means of coercive power: the gun and the bayonet are its compelling and persuading power. Christ the King leads His joint-heirs into dominion by His grace.

Christ marched into Jerusalem in humble manner, in a parody of statist might. “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.” He is declared “just, and having salvation.” He will “cut off” or eliminate the “battle bow” and the chariot, the weapons of war, and “the horse,” the symbol of the proud conqueror, will give way to His peace. Micah, as well as Isaiah, spoke of this peace:

**And he shall judge among many**

people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Micah 4:3)

9. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

10. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

11. And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds:

12. And I will cut off witchcraft out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:

13. Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. (Micah 5:9-13)

Christ, too, eliminates that which opposes His Kingdom, not by coercion but by the judgment of history, by means of that great shaking of the things which are, so that the things which cannot be shaken may alone remain (Heb. 12:27). His word to the nations is *peace*. But “war will cease on earth only when wickedness ceases, and wickedness will cease only when Christ’s universal empire begins.”<sup>7</sup>

Christ’s Kingdom comes by grace, and it restores man, whereas political salvation suppresses. Rome sought to be the City of Justice and became a city which even its emperors abandoned for other havens. But of Christ Zechariah says, “He is just.” His law gives men the means to liberty, dominion, and prosperity, and He, as the just ruler, is faithful to

His word (Deut. 28).

The crowd which on Palm Sunday hailed Jesus as the Messianic King, the Great King coming “in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 21:9), cried out savagely, before the week was over, “Crucify Him” (Mark 15:12–14). Their attitude had not greatly changed in those few days and was in essence the same. Their expectation of Jesus was an empire which would kill their enemies, in particular, Rome and its legions, its rulers, and tax collectors. When they thought of deliverance and salvation, they thought of death, death for their enemies, and death for those of their own race whom they hated. Again and again in the history of political saviors and salvation, deliverance has meant a blood bath, a reign of terror, concentration camps, and endless bloodshed. If hopes of political salvation are offered by the left, they mean death for capitalists, reactionaries, Christians, counter-revolutionaries, Ethiopians, Jews, or whomever they are opposed to. If hopes of political salvation are offered by the rightists or conservatives, again it means war and death, death for communists and for all who fit their definition of traitors. Political salvation means the elimination of an element in the life of the state, and it is a program of social regeneration by means of death, the death of all offending individuals, followed by the rigorous regimentation of the life of all the rest.

Biblical salvation means the elimination of sin and, finally, death by the atoning and regenerating work of Jesus Christ, and it is a gospel of individual and finally universal regeneration through His sovereign creating and recreating power. It offers grace to the guilty through Christ’s vicarious sacrifice and it sets forth God’s law as the way of sanctification, so that society can flourish and prosper under God.

God having created man in His image, man, even in his sin, inescap-

ably bears the stamp of God and moves in terms of godly categories which are perverted to man’s lawless ends. Man is a law creature: because he is a man, he must have law, direction, in his life. However much he hates God, fallen man still echoes God’s law. As a result, when fallen, sinful man faces the wrongs wrought by sin, everything within him cries out against it. The demand for justice was no less present in Rome, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and elsewhere than it is today. The cry for justice is as old as man. As God’s creature, man cries out against injustice, and his being longs for a just order even as the plant seeks the sun.

All through the ages, as man has confronted the havoc wrought by sin, he cries out in passion, “Someone must pay for this!” This is the cry of the law, vengeance, restitution. It cannot be evaded. Men may talk about eliminating judgment and restitution, but such an era is usually most ruthless about inflicting it. When fallen man begins to demand that “Someone must pay for this!,” it means that sin is followed by unremitting death. The Fall is all the more enforced by man himself. His activities become sadistic and masochistic. Being himself guilty, he passes the death sentence on himself with masochistic, suicidal actions and impulses. Indignant at the guilt of all other men, he turns on them sadistically, savagely, and murderously, laying upon them his guilt and also his wrath at the omnipresent evil he sees. The law becomes death, and a means of atonement and justification. Society and history become a long story of death-dealing as the way of salvation, so that, the greater man’s edifices, the greater his ruins. His hopes like his structures crumble as his salvation-death overtakes them all. Revolutionists have again and again seen that their reigns of terror will sooner or later overtake them, but they have no other way of salvation, and they pursue death until it destroys them.

The death of man cannot justify, redeem, atone, or regenerate. Jesus Christ, as man's only Redeemer, parodied the death march of world conquerors in His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The city rejected Him and looked to their own power to inflict death as the way of salvation. The Jewish-Roman War resulted (Luke 19:41-44), the greatest disaster of history (Matt. 24:21). As a result, Jesus, after having been whipped almost to death, and after a long night of agony,<sup>8</sup> could still declare, on His way to the cross, to the weeping women,

28. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

29. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the paps which never gave suck.

30. Then shall they begin to say to

the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? (Luke 23:28-31)

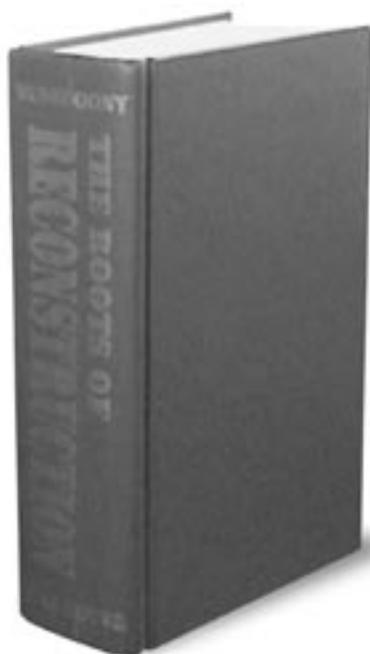
Salvation is not death, but every attempt at political salvation means death on a wholesale basis, massive, brutal death. Because Jesus Christ came to offer life, in fulfillment of prophecy He denied and parodied political salvation. Political saviors, He declared, are false men, murderers, thieves, and robbers. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

The Kingdom of God comes, not by theft and murder, not by political saviors, but by the grace of God unto salvation, and by obedience to His law. The ass was the symbol, not only

of a humble status, but of work. Not conquest but work, not coercion but patient labor in the Lord, establishes man's dominion under God. 🇺🇸

1. Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought, From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970), 76f.
2. *Ibid.*, 97, 120, 129.
3. *Ibid.*, 121.
4. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 175.
5. *Ibid.*, 163.
6. Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 110.
7. Thomas V. Moore, *Zechariah* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 151.
8. See C. Truman Davis, M.D., "The Crucifixion of Jesus, The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," *Arizona Medicine* (March 1965): 183-187.

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# Are We Wise Men?

Mark R. Rushdoony

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. (Matt. 2:1)



The Enlightenment represented a major shift in man's thinking about himself. It was a return to a non-Christian view of man as a being controlled by reason. The medieval position was Christian in its view that man was faith-driven: that is, man's thought is controlled by what he assumes is true.

What man assumes or believes may be true or untrue, but once he believes it to be fact, it is hard for him to let go—his assumption or his belief that something is true causes him to treat it as fact. Once such a fact becomes so widely accepted among many men that it is never doubted, it becomes a “truism.”

## Jumping to Assumptions

The brief references to the Magi or Wise Men afford us an example of how easily we accept a particular understanding of Scripture and stick to it tenaciously. Dr. Floyd Nolan Jones notes a widely held view of Matthew 2:1 that seems to create more problems than it resolves.<sup>1</sup> It has become very common to assume that the visit of the Magi and the slaughter of the innocents came long after the birth of Jesus even though Matthew 2:1 say they came “when” Jesus was born. The primary logic for this view is that it explains two facts: *first*, Jesus was in a house, not a stable, when the Wise Men visited; and *second*, Herod murdered all males under two years and younger.

To assume the Wise Men's visit came well after the birth of Jesus easily resolves these two facts of the narration, but it is not necessary to account for them. Joseph and Mary would have moved into better accommodations as soon as possible. Joseph had family ties to Bethlehem; the family would have likely been given more suitable shelter as soon as their need was known. Likewise, the slaughter of children up to two years old, even if Herod believed the child was a newborn, is not out of character. Herod was notorious for his brutal treatment of potential rivals. Herod killed every member of the Sanhedrin when he came to power, and murdered dozens of his political rivals, including three of his own sons. When he believed she was conspiring to decide his successor, Herod had his favorite wife executed as well as others in her family. A moral and political pragmatist, Herod might have felt it best not only to eliminate the newborns, but also any young child which might have been substituted for him. Overkill was part of Herod's methodology.

## Creating Inconsistencies

The question of the Wise Men to Herod was, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Had time lapsed, the logical question would have been, “Where is he that was born King of the Jews?”

Further, the Wise Men followed the star to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> They were then told by Herod to go to Bethlehem, just

five miles to the south. If the Wise Men came later, they would have had to have been redirected from Bethlehem to Nazareth, for that is where Joseph took Mary and Jesus after His dedication at forty days (Luke 2:39). No mention of such a redirection is made. Moreover, if the visit of the Wise Men was to a home in Nazareth, the warning to Joseph to flee Herod by going into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–15) makes little sense, as the slaughter was in Bethlehem and such travel by the holy family would have brought them closer to both the slaughter and Herod's center of power. Fleeing Nazareth far to the north to escape violence in Bethlehem makes no sense. The warning to Joseph to flee Herod must have come during their stay in Bethlehem.

## The Order of Events

Dr. Jones suggests the following order prevents inconsistencies and does complete justice to the gospel texts:

*First*, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. That night the shepherds were visited by an angel and went and saw Jesus in a manger. As soon as they left, they “made known abroad” what had happened to the amazement of all those who heard (Luke 2:6–18). Note that when the Wise Men visited Jerusalem not two hours away, no religious leader had any knowledge of what the shepherds “made known abroad.” Their only knowledge of the birth place of the Messiah was the prophecy of Micah 5:2. It is not possible that they remained ignorant of the

shepherd's accounts for two days, much less for two years.

*Second*, the Wise Men came to Jerusalem "when Jesus was born" (Matt. 2:1), not months or years later. Since the news of the shepherds had not yet traveled five miles, this was likely the day of the birth or the day after the shepherds' visit.

*Third*, the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem and found Jesus in a house (into which the holy family had presumably just relocated). Neither their names, their number, nor their races are given. The number "three" comes from the three gifts brought. The Wise Men then were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so "they departed into their own country another way" (Matt. 2:12). Had Jesus been much over forty days old, he would have been in Nazareth (Luke 2:39) and their homeward trip would not have taken them far to the south to Judaea. Once they determined not to return to Herod, return from Nazareth to Persia or any point east would not have necessitated any evasive change of course. If they were in Bethlehem, such evasion would have been very necessary and precarious enough (given Herod's known tendency to violence) to warrant mention.

*Fourth*, Joseph fled to Egypt with Mary and Jesus still a tender newborn. This makes the flight all that more remarkable.

*Fifth*, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21). This was likely done while en route to Egyptian territory.

*Sixth*, Herod died just days or weeks after his order to kill the children in Bethlehem was carried out. That Herod would commit such an atrocity when he knew his evil end was near is also in keeping with our knowledge of his character. We know he gave orders that, on his death, prominent Jews confined

in Jericho be put to death; he reasoned that if the people would not mourn for his passing, they would mourn because of it.<sup>3</sup> (The order was apparently not carried out.) Thus, all the events of Matthew 2:1–21 took place in a matter of weeks.

*Seventh*, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem by the time Jesus was forty days old in order to dedicate Jesus at the temple, where they saw Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:22–38). Immediately thereafter, Joseph takes the family to Nazareth in Galilee (Matt. 2:22–23; Luke 2:39–40) because Herod's son, Herod Archelaus, was unexpectedly given the throne by his father's will. Wisely, he refused to accept it until the emperor agreed. This gave Joseph time to go quietly back to Nazareth.

## Details Matter

Dr. Jones's chronology may not be the last word on the subject, but his work merits our respect for one reason. His is a critical examination of man's interpretation of the details of Scripture, not of Scripture itself, the authority, of which he presumes. It is the assumption of a time gap where none is required to which he objects, because such an unnecessary addition itself seems to conflict with Matthew 2:1 and causes inconsistencies in the sequence of events recorded in the gospels.

Historical details are important. All of Scripture is given within an historical context—names, places, historical reference points (known reigns and events), and witnesses are abundant in Scripture. If our assumptions change the sequence of events, we change the story. Assuming a time gap before the coming of the Wise Men may be a convenient way to explain some details, but it calls into question the accuracy of the Scripture itself which says they came "when Jesus was born." That one wrong idea then also confuses the sequence of

historical events.

A mistake about the timing of the Wise Men's visit does not change the doctrine of, say, the incarnation, but the same cannot be said of errors we may believe about other doctrines. Accommodation to evolution alters the basis of man's accountability to God and moves God to the position of, at best, a latecomer to the universe. Likewise, if we believe the truism that grace is opposed to law, then we have in one stroke both dismissed the law as an aspect of God's grace and justified the legitimacy of lawlessness in the name of grace.

In ways far more damaging to the integrity of the Word than the timing of the Wise Men, we have created a host of ways in which we shift the intent or change the meaning of Scripture. "That was for another dispensation" changes the Word of God. "That was a cultural custom, not law" changes a great deal. "That was a civil law, not a moral law" dismisses pages of Scripture. "The Bible never foresaw the church age, so that doesn't apply" changes the applicability of all of Scripture. "That's not loving" or "That's not spiritual" create abstract, self-defined concepts of love and spirituality that are wrongly used to reinterpret all of God's Word. We could go on and on, and, unfortunately, many self-professed Christians in and out of the pulpit do just that.

An old saying has it that a proof text without a context is a pretext. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to use God's Word as a pretext. Our calling is to read and obey the Word, not rationalize why it does not apply.

If we believe we are reason-driven then we will see the necessity of subjecting the Word to our mind, and every interpretation and rationalization we bring to it will be seen as legitimate.

*Continued on page 24*

# Faith Without Justice is Dead

Christopher J. Ortiz

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Proverbs 21:3



I wish I could report to you today that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is embracing and acting on its primary calling to restore justice to a world pervasively framed in unrighteousness. I cannot. And if my email inbox is any indication, the central questions on the heart of the average Christian still focus on how to celebrate the Sabbath; what church should he attend; can he eat pork; and who was the man of lawlessness in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians. Unless we're talking about unjust taxation, justice and judgment are far from his mind.

Yet Solomon wrote that "to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice," and this he said hundreds of years prior to the cross of Jesus Christ. In other words, he was still living in the time of sacrifice, priesthood, and holy days, but like his father, David, Solomon saw past the elaborate—and God-commanded—liturgy of his time. He understood that the ultimate expression of worship was a world restored to justice and righteous judgment.

## Justice More Than Sacrifice

In Proverbs 21:3, God clearly states that certain religious deeds are "more acceptable" than others—despite those others being the very liturgical functions He Himself required. Even during the Old Covenant, God desired justice more than the celebration of feasts and the offerings upon the altars. This is an important lesson for our time as most

contemporary church controversies center around liturgy, sacrament, or some other ecclesiocentric matter. In what sense have we surpassed the Pharisees?

If we must deal with a world that is established in wickedness, then it seems strange that justice would not be our emphasis. Yet a very strange ecclesiastical pietism—a carryover from Romanism—dominates too many churchmen with their belief that properly exercised liturgy will somehow result in very real changes in society. This is a similar faith to that found in many Charismatic churches that hold spiritual warfare meetings in an attempt to "pull down strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4) over a city. They neglect Paul's obvious meaning of "taking every thought captive" (v.5) as something achieved through Biblical preaching and correction, and instead retreat to ceremonies and spiritual disciplines.

Denominationalism has a similar premise. It's the idea that the more visible the institutional church, the more social clout it can exercise. Therefore, church planting becomes an imperial exercise for a particular group where progress is measured by how many new congregations are planted in a given year. This is not the type of visibility that God calls for, as Rushdoony so ably notes:

The visibility of the Church is not in its institutional presence, but in its fulfillment of its calling. When the Church truly fulfills her calling, the consequences are apparent in the diffusion and enforcement of God's law order, so

that every area of life is brought under the dominion of the triune God.<sup>1</sup>

Church progress—or church growth—should be measured by the decline of wickedness and the restoration of justice. The purpose of dominion is to restore godly justice in order that the world order might glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). Churches on every corner, or mass participation in liturgy, hardly give evidence to a restoration of justice. In fact, the average man is angered by the great pomp and visibility of the church. Why? Because for all the prowess of the institutional church, the world remains unjust—*faith without justice is dead*.

The sinner might hate religion, but he longs for justice, and a restoration of justice is a powerful allurements to the Christian faith. As Rushdoony describes, man's cry for justice is basic to his nature:

However much he hates God, fallen man still echoes God's law. As a result, when fallen, sinful man faces the wrongs wrought by sin, everything within him cries out against it. The demand for justice was no less present in Rome, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and elsewhere than it is today. The cry for justice is as old as man. As God's creature, man cries out against injustice, and his being longs for a just order even as the plant seeks the sun.<sup>2</sup>

It's when the world can witness a just and holy order amongst God's people that they will learn of the superiority of God's law over all other systems of thought:

Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” Deuteronomy 4:6

### Christian Obstruction

Justice is more acceptable than sacrifice. The restoration of God’s order is more acceptable than the questionable laboring by men over the redefining of the doctrine of justification. Even a child could understand that one is justified so that one may go and make the world just. To do that, however, a theologian must forsake his obsession with the church and the academy and reorient himself to Kingdom labor:

It is a serious mistake to see theology as an academic exercise. The word *theology* means *God’s word*; it begins with the presupposition that Scripture is the word of God, and the duty of the theologian is to understand it and to apply it to every area of life and thought.<sup>3</sup>

The Scriptures are blueprints for justice and godly order, and in the portions that speak of justice, the Scriptures are plainspoken. There’s no need for debate when it comes to caring for widows and orphans—no need to parse any verbs in that instance.

So long as we place priority on anything other than a restoration of justice, we shall find ourselves *obstructing* God’s way. It’s not that other religious matters are without importance; it’s an issue of priority:

**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Matthew 23:23**

According to our Lord, the “weightier matters” (Gk. *barus*) of judgment, mercy, and faith are “more acceptable” than sacrifice. This was a double insult to the Pharisees, since our Lord first used the same word *barus* (grievous) in relation to the liturgical and ceremonial burdens placed on the people by Israel’s religious leaders:

**For they bind heavy burdens hard to bear [*barus*], and lay them on men’s shoulders... Matthew 23:4a**

The real *heavy burden* is the restoration of justice, not the liturgical details that identify and occupy each Christian sect. The Lord desires judgment, mercy, and faith. Without these, our faith is without works, and therefore dead.

### The Doctrine of Justice

The Biblical text is so replete with the subjects of justice, judgment, mercy, and righteousness—all synonymous terms—that I contend it should be its own doctrinal category, viz., the doctrine of justice. It should have a place among the creeds and confessions and be pushed forward as the defining characteristic of what it means to build the Kingdom and glorify God.

The opposite is also true. Without a doctrine of justice that is lived out by God’s people, we are not advancing the Kingdom. Even though our sacraments, liturgy, and organizations might be highly developed, we are not glorifying God in the complete sense if we are not working for a restoration of God’s order. Israel herself maintained an elaborate liturgy, but injustice reigned instead of righteousness—they were still a guilty and bloody people:

**For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust**

**in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. Isaiah 59:3–4 (emphasis added)**

Much of Israel’s history can be summarized in the first chapter of Isaiah where God rejects her sacrifices, priesthood, liturgy, and holy days because of her uncleanness and bloodiness. No doubt, the implication is that Israel trusted in her liturgical orders:

**Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me. I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Isaiah 1:13–15**

God offered her a solution, but it had little to do with organization, a new revelation, a change in the priesthood, or some other ecclesiastical adjustment. The solution was simple and the language was crafted with God’s typical summary of what His heart has always desired for His people:

**Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17**

For me, Isaiah 1:17 is the simple definition of what it means to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Anything less is “domination” not godly dominion. Anything less is a quest for power.

### The God-Kind of Fast

**Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that**

did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Isaiah 58:2

Israel thought they could garner a response from God due to their national fasting: “Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?” (Is. 58:3). They had chosen the wrong fast, because despite their acting as if they desired “the ordinances of justice,” they actually fasted “for strife and debate” (v. 4).

God’s purpose for fasting was for far more than abstinence. The doctrine of justice served as the thesis for what Israel’s fast should typify:

**Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6**

By destroying wickedness and ending oppression, God’s laws regarding fasting were fulfilled—this would be the direct result of an established justice. In fact, beyond fasting, God’s law in its totality is intended to restore order and justice. Israel attempted to humble herself with fasting but the end result was a continual *hiding from their own flesh* (v. 7), i.e., they hid themselves from the oppressed living among them. Faithfulness to God’s law should produce the opposite effect. Rushdoony describes it this way:

[T]he result of humility, and obedience to God’s law, is a morality that is God-shaped, a morality that leads to social and personal righteousness or justice.<sup>4</sup>

To “let the oppressed go free” is at the heart of the gospel, and it is good news to them that suffer under tyranny. Our Lord was anointed “to preach deliverance to the captives,” and “to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

In this sense, *true law keeping is “gospel” to the core* because it has—or should have—as its end, the restoration of justice. In fact, even the blessings listed at the end of Isaiah 58 are foreshadows of the Christian reconstructionist vision:

**Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. Isaiah 58:12**

Like the gospel, the fulfillment of the law leads to liberating the captives. However, the implementing of the law brings physical liberty—not simply the spiritual liberty touted by evangelicalism. It’s not enough to have a food pantry. We must “rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

In this sense, the law as it is newly expressed through the gospel is a law of liberty; or should I say, “the law that brings liberty.” Law and gospel work together bringing both spiritual liberty by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and social liberty by the theocratic reign of God’s people.

### **James and the Law of Liberty**

**So speak and so do, as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. James 2:12**

The above passage is actually the second instance in which James mentions the “law of liberty,” but in both cases the idea is similar: the law of liberty involves “doing.”

**But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:25**

And what is the end result of the doing of the law of liberty? It is the establishment of religion<sup>5</sup>—a pure and

undefiled religion:

**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. James 1:27**

Widows and orphans are the Biblical example of the necessity for justice, because they represent the weakest and often most oppressed members of any social order. And because the tendency of most societies is to favor the oppressor, remaining “unspotted from the world” means keeping one’s garment clean of partiality:

**My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. James 2:1**

The example James uses is that of church leaders showing preference to wealthy visitors in full knowledge that those very same people oppress the poor and the faithful—those whom God ordained to be “rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom” (2:5).

Partiality violates the “royal law” to “love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 8). The royal law is *the law of the king*, and the law of the King is what advances His reign. But without a more refined interpretation of how to love one’s neighbor, Christians will be ignorant of its application. James then expounds on the details of the royal law by citing the sixth and seventh commandments as examples of its direct application (v. 11).

### **Law and Gospel are for Liberty**

The church leaders to whom James writes could certainly claim to have faith, but his argument is that faith is useless without corresponding works of righteousness—works that bring justice:

**What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? James 2:14**

We cannot believe that James is in contradiction to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, and Rushdoony points out that James is not dismissing the theological discussion but is rather pointing out the end result of a limited faith:

James is *not* anti-theology; what he is against is the separation of theology from life, the reduction of faith to easy-believism, and the negation of action as the expression of faith. Neither valid faith nor valid works can be separated one from another. How can any man demonstrate a valid faith without works? Faith is shown by works.<sup>6</sup>

This is an accurate description of our present time, for our own generation has limited the faith to belief only without a corresponding application to every area of life. We believe in the gospel of liberty (Luke 4:18), but not in the law of liberty. We are anxious to liberate men's souls with gospel preaching, but we won't apply God's law to the larger social order to liberate their earthly lives. We have great church services and precise doctrine, but everywhere we look, we are fettered with statist chains.

Therefore, faith without works is dead, and the works James has in mind are the care of the oppressed and impoverished and the destruction of established wickedness. They are works that restore order. In short, they are works of justice. James can be better understood in our time if we said that *faith without justice is dead*.

## The Establishment of God's Throne and Our Rage of Righteousness

Works are faith in action, faith made manifest.<sup>7</sup>

James wrote that we were born of the word of truth so that "we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (1:18). For that reason, he goes on to

say, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (v. 19–20).

Through Jesus Christ, God has introduced a new humanity into the world. This is an incredible truth that should humble us. To hear that God has called us as first fruits of His new creation should inspire us to be *swift to hear and slow to speak*. We are to be swift to hear the law that brings liberty and learn to speak that word to a world in need of reconstruction. Anything less will "not produce the righteousness of God," and that is what we are to be seeking:

**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ... Matthew 6:33**

To seek the Kingdom and His righteousness equates to faith in action, and faith in action is justice in action. Whether it is faith, knowledge, wisdom, or understanding, they all result in justice and godly judgment:

**To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity. Proverbs 1:2–3**

The center of all things is the throne of God (Rev. 22:1), and from the throne of God comes justice and mercy. Therefore, as James states, our faith must lead to acts of mercy, justice, and judgment. If we are not passionate about the restoration of justice, we cannot claim we are passionate about either God's reign or His throne:

**Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Psalm 89:14**

**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,**

**upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:7**

And so God condemns the wicked rulers who perpetually judge in favor of the ungodly against the widow and the orphan. This is why James is direct in his admonishment against showing partiality to the wealthy—he accuses the church leaders of becoming "judges with evil thoughts" (James 2:4). Surely, James has Psalm 82 in mind:

**God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. Psalm 82:1–4**

God sought to reverse the order of history by introducing a new creation of godly rulers—a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9)—through the advent of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This eternal purpose was revealed as a Kingdom of salvation and safety because it would be established upon justice and judgment with a King whose very name would be righteousness:

**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5–6, emphasis added**

Justice and righteousness are a great calling from God, but too much of

the faith being taught has little to do with these tenets. So long as we speak more of politicians and economics than justice for the widow and orphan, our religion is impure, power-driven, and materialistic.

We lack a rage of righteousness that seeks to overturn the establishment of wickedness in our present social order. We must first believe and embrace our calling to dominion and then understand that the objective is liberty, not political power. We are here to make the world right through the power of the Holy Spirit, the sword of gospel preaching, and the legislative storehouse of God's law. We preach to make men spiritually free, but we apply God's law to free them in history, and the freedom they need is from the oppression of wicked rulers.

### Are Your Eyes a Flame of Fire?

Christ rides the white horse in history in order to conquer (Rev. 6:2), and the imagery of the book of Revelation is meant to encourage us to conquer in His name. If you want to understand the type of "attitude" you should take towards your role in history, I'll leave you with this uncompromising description of the attitude and action of the One you call Lord:

**Now I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth**

**goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Revelation 19:11–16**

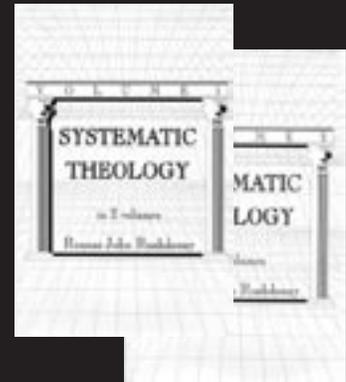
He strikes the nations because they are unjust, and He grants us faith that we might establish His righteousness. To place our focus too much upon the ecclesiastical and the liturgical—without a corresponding emphasis upon justice—leads to a dead faith. We are like a body without the spirit:

**For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James 2:26**

Let us then truly *pass from death unto life*, for our life and spirit are found in our works of righteousness. The present world order is in need of the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10), because its sinful wages have brought death (Rom. 6:23). If faith without works (justice) is dead, then faith *with* justice is life. 🇺🇸

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# The Woman of the House: A Covenantal Voice of Victory

Andrea Schwartz



When I was a young girl, I would spend a lot of time daydreaming about my future. With a bent for acting, I would envision myself as one of the five nominees for an Academy Award. Interestingly, I never pictured myself winning the award for “Best Actress.” Rather, I always was the proud recipient of the “Best Supporting Actress” award. I liked the idea of being in a supporting role, that character that enhanced the main actor’s performance. In the many plays and musicals I participated in during high school, I quickly learned that my greatest satisfaction did not come from holding “center stage.” I was drawn to the role of director or producer—the person who worked behind the scenes to manage and assist others in their performances.

I assumed that these were preferences peculiar to me as an individual. But after becoming a student of the Bible, I realized that these attributes were a major aspect of God’s original design of women in their participation in the dominion mandate. Eve was given to Adam to assist him in his calling under God and to help him in a supportive role, not take center stage. When Adam described Eve as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, he was responding to the most perfect gift he could imagine—a counterpart who completed him and strengthened him in the work God called him to do.

Thus, when God felt that Adam had proved himself by his obedience and by his responsibility, He “caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs (or, ‘took from the side of him’) ... and ... made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh...” This is a magnificent statement; and part of it is almost untranslatable because the word translated “this is now” is an idiom in the Hebrew which has meaning comparable to what we mean when we say, ‘I’ve got the beat. This is the rhythm of the music, the rhythm of my life that I have been waiting for.’ “Bone of my bone” means ‘the structure of my life.’ The skeleton is the structure of the body, that which supports the body; the body would be like that of a jellyfish without the skeleton. Adam says, “She is bone of my bones” (“The structure of my being is the structure of her being”). “Flesh of my flesh” (“The very life of me is the life of her; I find myself, I realize myself in terms of her”).<sup>1</sup>

In today’s world, there is a decided push for women to prepare for careers outside the home as though that would be a step up for them. Beware of those who wish to destroy the covenant family by marketing such lies to young girls and women. “You can be anything you want to be” is a refrain pounded into their psyches. Additionally, there is a concentrated effort to depict romance and mutual attraction as the basis for lasting marital bliss. This and more serve to sever the woman of the house from her position of confidant and adviser to

her husband, and caregiver and teacher of her children. This tactic and strategy of the enemies of God has delivered a significant blow to the family.

From a Biblical standpoint, a woman completes a man and assists him as he fulfills the call God places on his life. It cannot be stressed enough that a man’s call and success is actually the calling and success of his family in terms of the dominion mandate. This can easily become male-centered if we limit the woman’s role to assisting her husband in his vocation. Rushdoony points out,

This brings up a very significant point, one very central to our time. From this, the first marriage, we have a pattern established which is to be the pattern of all marriage: since the woman is to be a help meet to the man in terms of his calling, mixed marriages religiously are from the Biblical perspective wrong. A Christian should not marry an unbeliever or one of another religion because a Christian to fulfill himself in terms of his calling must marry someone who is ‘a help as before him,’ someone who mirrors that which he is. How can the woman be that mirror and have the community that comes from being the reflected image of the man if her background is so different from that which his is? They must have a *common faith*, or, according to the law of God, it is not a valid marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Proverbs 31 gives a thorough job description of how a virtuous woman goes about fulfilling her calling under God in the major role of supporting her husband and family. As the manager of the household, she is intimately

involved in the concerns of all members and, truly, is the glue that holds the family together.

Why is this worthy woman described as more precious than rubies? Because a worthy woman knows the law of God and applies it to every area of her life<sup>3</sup> and thought. That is the only reason she can self-consciously do good and not evil to her husband all the days of her life. What's more, this covenantal woman rejoices in the future because she knows God's Word and thoroughly believes the promises for obedience it contains (Deut. 28:1–14). Because daily she has her hands on the pulse of future generations, she can convey with her words and actions the victorious life that faithfulness produces. In short, dislodge the woman of the house from her God-given domain and the major covenantal voice proclaiming God's victory is silenced.

### Regarding Her Husband

Proverbs 18:22 states, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” This has much more significance than being a sexual partner and the bearer of a man's children. A wife's role involves managing her household so that her husband can pursue his calling and be an active member of the community at large. There is a particular freedom that a man has when he knows that his wife is making wise decisions with budgeting his income and caring for the children. In addition, when a wife concerns herself with educating her children and teaching them to behave well, a husband is not only freed from anxiety and worry about his family, but the witness of a well-disciplined family attests to his leadership skills.

Yet in today's world, the feminist mindset has claimed the high ground asserting that women need to unshackle themselves from domineering men.

Rushdoony observes,

[I]n our culture most churches, because of their theology, expect God to serve man. Is it surprising, then, that women expect men to serve them? The whole world is turned upside-down. When you have men expecting God to serve them and women expecting men to serve them, you have social collapse.<sup>4</sup>

Social collapse is what we are witnessing today. Modern novels, movies, and television have hijacked covenantal marriage and turned it into the culmination of physical attraction. In addition, with the feminist perspective having shoved its way into all aspects of the culture, *real men* are depicted as buffoons or cads, with their primary focus centered on satisfying their sexual urges. Those who have ordered their lives on solid, Scriptural principles are often the object of persecution and prejudice in the workplace. As hard as this is to endure at times, the support of a godly wife and family enables the righteous to stand.

God's Word directs woman to function as the reflected image of man who was created in the image of God. This reflected image—his mirror image—allows him to find himself, not only in relationship to God but in terms of a woman.<sup>5</sup> As a result, his union with her enhances his life. Rushdoony points out:

It does make a difference in the character of man when they become married. Insurance statistics bear this out: a young man pays a very high insurance as a driver until he marries; then it drops because he has assumed responsibility, he has become stable, and he has, so to speak, found himself. At least this is true in sufficiently large numbers of cases to make a marked difference in insurance statistics.<sup>6</sup>

While the supportive assistance of the woman of the house has a positive impact on her husband, much of our

cultural trouble today stems from the fact that there are too few men capable of serving as elders and leaders in their field of work. This leadership vacuum centers around unqualified men in terms of character and their Biblical illiteracy. As men and nations have relegated God's law to the distant past and proclaimed an age of grace apart from law, the entire framework for godly dominion falls apart, for lack of boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

One of the ancient boundaries that has been moved is the distinct roles God gives to the man and to the woman. When these roles are confused or merged, society suffers. Rushdoony states,

The family (fatherhood) is an important part of the man's calling, but it is not the central part. The family is central to the woman: her responsibility under God is her husband and then the family. Man's responsibility is broader: it is in terms of his work and his total calling under God. The family is a *part* of his responsibility but by no means his total responsibility; his goal is set in terms of his work, which he must view under God.<sup>8</sup>

### Regarding Her Children

A mother loves her children, but this love should never be at the expense of stewardship for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. While a mother's love is very personal, she must never place her emotional and familial attachment above God's calling for her children. Mothers in general, and Christian homeschooling mothers in particular, need to view their children objectively, taking into consideration the talents, gifts, and inclinations that manifest themselves under their guidance and supervision. This means that the woman of the house needs to be about the business of education—in all spheres of life. She needs to focus on rearing strong,

confident, God-fearing individuals who will uncompromisingly take their place in adulthood, ready, willing and eager to proclaim the crown rights of Jesus Christ.

Although a mother does not produce salvation in her children, she must comprehensively teach her children that apart from Christ, there is no salvation. However, she needs to tie in the concept of salvation with victory to transmit the future orientation of the total deliverance Christ procured for His people.

Rushdoony explains,

The Greek word salvation, *soteria*, means deliverance, preservation, victory, and health, and it refers to material and temporal deliverance, as well as personal, national, temporal and eternal triumph. The Biblical doctrine of salvation is so clearly one of victory, that it must be emphatically stated that *salvation is not escape...*<sup>9</sup>

The goal of a Christian education is to prepare children for the victory that is theirs in Christ Jesus. Rather than attempting to escape the culture, covenant children should be taught that their inheritance through Christ mandates them to reign in life.

Children are a God-given inheritance for our conquest of the world for Christ. They are a means of subduing the earth and exercising dominion under the Lord. If we give our children to state or private schools which are not systematically Christian in all their curriculum, we are then giving the future to God's enemies, and He will hold us accountable for laying waste our heritage. We thus must have Christian schools and Christian homeschools for the Lord's children. *We* are commanded to "bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the LORD" (Eph. 6:4). This is a necessary step for that great consummation of God's will, announced beforehand for us in Revelation 11:15:

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.<sup>10</sup>

The Bible could not be clearer that God plans for His covenant people to reign on the earth. Thus, a fundamental aspect of the woman of the house's role in conveying this truth is to focus on communicating to her children their royal status under God.

Man was called to dominion (Gen. 1:26–28); he was called to establish his reign over the world under God. ... Christ... by His grace and the gift of righteousness, enables man to *reign in life*, i.e., in this life or world, and to "reign through righteousness unto eternal life," i.e., in the life to come ... Christ's redemption means man's reign in time and in eternity. Very plainly, salvation means reigning. The rebellious slave is established in kingship. We are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37) in Christ, because we are also kings. We cannot understand the full meaning of salvation if we separate it from the fact of *reigning*. Paul's multiple use of the word "reign" in Romans 5:17 and 21 makes clear the centrality of reigning in the doctrine of redemption. To defer the fact of reigning to the other world is a Manichean separation of the world into two alien realms, one (the material) surrendered to one god, and the other (spiritual) reserved for the other god. The hostility of many to the idea of victory in the material world is evidence of Manichean leanings. St. Paul is emphatic: we "reign in life." The Biblical doctrine of salvation requires it.<sup>11</sup>

We live in a world that does not bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ and that offers up many counterfeit religions. Sadly, this is also true within the church as many gravitate toward worldly perspectives and solutions. That is why it is imperative for the woman of the house to know and understand the law of God in all its subtleties, while impart-

ing discernment along with knowledge and understanding. A Christian household should look categorically different from its pagan counterpart because of a Scriptural vision for victory. Those who have the assurance of salvation are confident and triumphant people.

When St. Paul declared, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), he meant that, because salvation is entirely the work of the sovereign and omnipotent God, the proclamation of that good news could cause him neither shame nor embarrassment. His gospel was not the uncertain and possible work of an impotent or struggling god, but the absolute and certain work of the eternal, triune, and omnipotent Maker of heaven and earth. To preach such a certainty would bring Paul no shame or embarrassment: God's saving power is sure.<sup>12</sup>

The woman of the house has a pivotal role with each new member who comes into the family. Since she is preparing a future ambassador, soldier, and joint-heir with Christ, she should instill in the child an attitude and emphasis of personal responsibility. A whining and complaining child is not to be tolerated. Correction should be immediate and an uncompromising effort must be exerted to help the child gain self-discipline, with God's grace, and achieve victory over his sinful tendencies. This swims against the tide of the escapism that is so prevalent in modern culture as parents dote on children rather than call them to a high standard.

Rushdoony explains,

[The] pagan concepts thus cannot offer salvation, not only because they have no God nor universe in which full and assured victory is possible, but also because they have a defective view of man and sin. In paganism, man seeks an escape from his problems, or a retirement into sensual bliss from the world's work

and responsibility. By failing to recognize his rebellion against the sovereign God as his essential problem as well as his sin, pagan man wants not salvation but escape. To admit the real problem, his sin, is to admit that there is no way of escape, only the way of salvation through God's regenerating grace.

Moreover, the failure of paganism to offer salvation is not accidental. It is a part of the pagan refusal to understand; it is a willful rejection of the truth of God.<sup>13</sup>

The worthy woman described in Proverbs 31 is future oriented, believing wholeheartedly that salvation means victory. She can reach out to the poor and needy because she knows she has something of eternal value to offer them. She is not afraid of a bleak economic forecast because she knows that the sovereign God delights in giving His children good things. Strength and honor are her clothing because she lives in the environment of God's law. She can rejoice in time to come. In short, she is uniquely positioned to offer her husband and children a safe haven where God's law is paramount and God's victory proclaimed. 🏠

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1. Elizabeth Fellersen, Editor, *Toward a Christian Marriage* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1972), 15.

2. Ibid.

3. The training of daughters should focus on the Biblical underpinnings of all aspects of life so that even from an early age, they are trained to do good to their husbands years before they actually meet. Dressing modestly and behaving honorably guarantees stepping into marriage without anything that would bring dishonor to their husband and new

family.

4. Fellersen, 14.

5. It was never God's intent that the man would fulfill his dominion calling alone. God was waiting for Adam to establish himself in his calling before giving him a helper. God apparently wanted Adam to appreciate his need for a perfect counterpart—something he did not have with the animals.

6. Fellersen, 14.

7. Pastor Mike O'Donovan of the Rock of Liberty Church in Fort Worth, TX observes that the world without God's law governing it is like a river without banks. Without banks, it ceases to be a river and instead you have a flood.

8. Fellersen, Ibid., 16.

9. R. J. Rushdoony, *Salvation and Godly Rule* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1983] 2004), 1

10. R. J. Rushdoony, *In His Service: The Christian Calling to Charity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009), 20.

11. R.J. Rushdoony, *Salvation and Godly Rule*, 620.

12. Ibid., 9–10.

13. Ibid., 5–6.

**If you or someone you know has ever struggled with understanding the philosophy of Cornelius Van Til, this book is for you.**



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# Augustine: Foundational Thinker, Part I\*

Rebecca Morecraft



On November 13, A.D. 354, on the cusp of the dying Roman Empire during the reign of Constantius II, Aurelius Augustine was born. His mother, Monica, was a Christian, and his father, most likely a Berber born in Numidia, was a pagan named Patricius. His hometown, Tagaste, was “nothing more than a somewhat pleasant county-seat for farms and great estates,”<sup>1</sup> in what is now Algeria in North Africa. This small town had a thin veneer of Roman culture but national Berber traditions were still strong.

Augustine was probably of swarthy complexion, not very tall, and physically frail. “A stomach ailment almost killed him when he was a boy and a terrible fever (perhaps malaria) brought him close to death again when he was in his 20’s. He did survive for 76 years but throughout his life he was plagued with asthma, a bad stomach, insomnia, and recurrent fevers. His weak lungs were a factor in his decision to give up teaching when he was still a young man (though this did not stop him from preaching at length without benefit of microphone for forty years in his cathedral church at Hippo). When he was 56 exhaustion did force him to take time off in the country, but he continued his preaching and teaching and writing thereafter till shortly before his death 20 years later.”<sup>2</sup>

His mother steadfastly taught Augustine the basic principles of Christianity in his childhood although he held them in reserve while wasting his youth in decadent living. And yet, he admits that even in his rebellion against its stat-

utes, the Bible was always a holy book of divine authority to him, beckoning with its promises, condemning with its threats. According to his own testimony, “he had already with his mother’s milk sucked in and preserved the name of the Saviour so intensely that nothing could really delight him later that was deprived of this name. (‘Confessions,’ III,4,8)”<sup>3</sup> The key phrase in this admission is that “nothing could *really* delight him.” Eventually that early claim on his life and heart could no longer be denied when, in the providence of God, he abandoned *the world that is passing away, and also its lusts* (1 John 2:17) and submitted to the claims of Christ, confessing Him as Lord and Savior.

Dear reader, the God of Augustine is also your Creator-God, and as such, has a prior claim on your life just as He did on this man of old times. I entreat you to avoid the bright but empty promises of sin, remembering that only Christ and obedience to His commandments will bring you fulfillment and satisfaction. Let Augustine’s testimony to the pain of a life of rebellion against God’s law convince you to avoid that kind of life at all cost and commit yourself at an early age to serving King Jesus.

From his youth Augustine had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. His father was proud of his son’s intellect and made sacrifices to give him an extensive education. He was trained as a rhetorician, which profession he practiced at Tagaste and Carthage, North Africa, Rome and Milan until his conversion in A.D. 386. The ideal rhetorician (a creation of the ancient Greeks) was a man

who had mastered language and classical literature, and who could entertain by his rhetoric and oratory. Augustine’s ability to enthrall his audience with his rhetorical abilities led him to become prideful and to doubt his mother’s simple faith. He learned to rely instead on his own abilities and talents, exulting in the praise of men. Pride always leads to destruction and it was only the grace of God that led Augustine through the maze of his own puffed-up vanity and that of false teachers he respected, to The Truth.

In his young adulthood he was infatuated with various heresies. He was first swayed by a popular heresy called Manichaeism which was not only a heresy, but originally a rival religion. It was created by a man named Mani, a Persian who lived in the third century A.D., who believed he had received special revelations from God that taught the existence of two rival gods, the god of light and spirit, and the god of darkness and matter. Good and evil are not moral positions, Mani declared, rather they are states of being. Each person has the “essence” of these two rival “gods”—of good and evil—within himself. Salvation, Mani taught, consists in siding with one or the other god.

The defining mark of Manichaeism as a heresy is that it defines the issues confronting man, not as a moral antithesis, but as an antithesis of being. If the antithesis is moral, someone clearly needs changing. Christianity insists on the necessity of conversion. When a man is born again, he is not another being; he is the same man but with a new heart, with a spirit of faith and obedience, not

\*Once again, I am indebted to my husband, Rev. Joe Morecraft, III, for much of the background information of this article.

of rebellion and disobedience.<sup>4</sup>

When he finally was convinced of its error, Augustine began refuting Manichaeism as vigorously as he had promoted it. He sought to strike at its root by disputing it on every level of thought and philosophy. His approach involved discussing its flawed beliefs in "... the nature of God and His relation to the world, the nature of the world, the nature of man, and the problem of good and evil. Augustine's method is one of raising irreconcilable either/or's for his opponents, and of [then] establishing his own doctrine [and position]..."<sup>5</sup>

Augustine pointed out that the Bible does not present us with two gods in endless conflict; nor does it teach that matter is evil and only spirit is good. Instead, the Bible teaches us of one true God who made everything and who made everything good—both matter and spirit. (*And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.* Gen. 1:31 NAS) For in Christianity, as R. J. Rushdoony states, "[S]alvation is by Christ's atonement and by His regenerating work within us. From being rebels against God, we become members of Christ's new humanity. This conversion makes us a new creation in the moral, not the metaphysical sense."<sup>6</sup>

God used Augustine's refutation of the Manicheans as a necessary phase in his pathway to conversion. Augustine later confessed to God concerning this period in his life: "Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee ... I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace."<sup>7</sup>

Sadly, Augustine's bout with Manichaeism did not cure him entirely from dabbling in heresies. He also struggled with Neoplatonism, A.D. 385.

Although Augustine saw the emptiness and error of Manichaeism, in his early years he continued to hold to a dualistic worldview because of the influence of

Neo-Platonism on his thinking. (The Neo-Platonism of Plotinus held that the material/physical is inferior to the spiritual/heavenly.) Although after his conversion and as he matured as a Christian thinker he saw the unbiblical nature of Neo-Platonism ... Augustine never completely escaped its influence on his thinking, but its influence on him diminished with the passage of time.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee comments further on the influence of Neoplatonism on Augustine's thinking:

A remnant of neo-Platonism is seen in his apparent elevation of the spiritual above the material: the soul is vastly superior to the body...

Yet, notwithstanding all this, Augustine's philosophy is still basically molded according to the Biblical religious basic motive of creation-fall-recreation—if his philosophy did have some non-Christian elements in it—rationalism and irrationalism, it was certainly not his intention ... And Augustine's later true successors, the Reformers in general and Calvin in particular, would intentionally try to remove these non-Christian elements and develop an exclusively Biblical life and world view.<sup>9</sup>

A brief outline of Augustine's Christian life: He was converted to Christ in A.D. 386 and spent much of A.D. 387 studying philosophy and the Bible in Cassiciacum. He was baptized in A.D. 387 and stayed in Rome briefly, returning to his hometown, Tagaste, in the autumn of A.D. 388 where he established a Christian retreat center for himself and his friends. In A.D. 391, he was dramatically forced into ordination as a presbyter at Hippo and five years later was promoted to bishop, A.D. 396. Thus he became a Christian at age 32, a priest at 36 and a bishop at 41.

His conversion can be told only in Augustine's own moving words in a

prayer from his *Confessions*:

There was a little garden next to our lodging of which we had use ... Thither the tumult of my heart drove me, where no one could interrupt the fierce quarrel which I was waging with myself, until it should reach the issue known to Thee but not to me ... Thus was I sick and tormented, reproaching myself more bitterly than ever, twisting and writhing in my chain, until it should be entirely broken, since now it held me but slightly—though it held me yet ... And I kept saying in my heart, "O, let it be now! Let it be now!" And as I spoke I almost resolved—I almost did it, but I did it not ... So when searching reflection had drawn out from the hidden depths all my misery and piled it up in the sight of my heart, a great tempest broke over me, bearing with it a great flood of tears ... And I went further off ... and flung myself at random under a fig tree there and gave free vent to my tears; and the flood of my eyes broke forth, an acceptable sacrifice to Thee. And not indeed in these words, but to this purport, I cried to Thee incessantly, "But Thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord? Wilt Thou be angry forever? O remember not against us our iniquities of old!" I felt myself held by them; I raised sorrowful cries, "How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now, why not this instant, end my wickedness?"

I was speaking thus and weeping in the bitterest contrition of heart, when lo, I heard a voice, I know not whether of boy or girl, saying in a chant and repeating over and over: Take and read, Take and read [in Latin, *Tolle Lege!*]. At once with changed countenance I began most intently to think whether there was any kind of game in which children chanted such a thing, but I could not recall ever hearing it. I choked back the rush of tears and rose, interpreting it no otherwise than as a divine command to me to open the book and read whatever passage I first lighted upon.—So I returned quickly

to the place where Alypius [Augustine's friend] was sitting, for I had laid down the volume of the apostle there when I left him. I seized it, opened it, and read in silence the passage on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." No further did I wish to read: nor was there need. Instantly, as I reached the end of this sentence, it was as if the light of peace was poured into my heart and all the shades of doubt faded away ... For Thou didst convert me to Thyself in such a manner that I sought never a wife nor any hope of this world—taking my stand on that Rule of Faith on which Thou didst reveal me to my mother so many years before.<sup>10</sup>

What human factors led to Augustine's conversion? We find several strands which God wove together to bind Augustine to Himself. Primarily, God worked through the prayers and tears of his mother who continually begged God to show him the emptiness of the false philosophies that intrigued him, both in his studies and acquaintances. She also prayed that he would realize as futile his attempts at true contentment pursued by his immoral lifestyle. He was greatly affected as well by the eloquent and powerful preaching of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and led to deep reflection about the state of his soul through conversations with his friends, Simplicianus and Theodorus.

Young reader, whose opinions matter most to you? To whom do you really listen? Beware of allowing the high praise of men to lead you to vanity. Beware of high-sounding words taught as "the truth" that may lead you away from the true faith, "*once delivered to the saints.*" Test the spirits to see if they are from God by testing every opinion of man against the Word of God. Even great men with good intentions are

capable of leading themselves and others astray when they begin inventing new methodologies and proclaiming as truth the ideas of men. Remember, too, that "*life is a vapor*"—only what is done for Christ will last through eternity. Even the mighty Roman Empire fell.

In A.D. 410, Alaric and the Visigoths sacked Rome but Augustine continued to serve as bishop at Hippo until his death August 28, A.D. 430, during the reign of Theodosius II.

A year later, Hippo was evacuated and partly burned by the Vandals. Yet ... Augustine's library escaped destruction and thus enabled Possidius to compile a full list of his works and write his *Life of Augustine*. In 475, a young Romulus Augustulus was made emperor of the Empire, but an empire reduced to a very small amount of territory. Completely ruined, it could no longer fulfill its engagements to its army, whereupon the troops [mostly barbarians], elected as their head Odoacer, a Germanic leader. He was proclaimed emperor in 476 and the Roman Empire was no more. [During the time of the Romans, North Africa was a fertile agricultural area known as 'the bread-basket' of the Roman Empire., R.M.] All of the riches that had belonged to North Africa were to dwindle during the Vandal occupation and after the arrival of the Turks and Arabs these riches were to disappear entirely, giving place to arid mountains and desert brush, with only traces of the old roads, cities and monuments still to be seen along the coast.<sup>11</sup>

Why consider such a small man who lived so long ago primarily in a small area of North Africa and Rome?

Augustine's physical world was far smaller than the whole of the Roman Empire. Apart from a few years in Italy in the 380's, he lived his life chiefly in three places: Tagaste, Hippo, and Carthage. His trips elsewhere in North Africa were few and limited. Though his words traveled widely, his spatial

limitations are important to remember, not least because they kept him chiefly in the more urbanized and coastal north of Africa, away from the high plains and the frontier, away from the districts where a rougher form of life and perhaps a more native form of religion held sway.<sup>12</sup>

As you young people read about Augustine, remember that, whether you are large or small of stature, whether you look impressive or not, faithfulness to your calling in life is what matters. Augustine, like Athanasius, the other great African we have studied, wasn't impressive in appearance; but his study of the Scriptures and application of them to all of life has impacted the thinking of men and helped shaped culture for over a thousand years! In another article, we'll look at some of his most famous writings and how they have influenced theology, philosophy, the establishment of Biblical families and churches, individual holiness, and nearly all facets of Western culture.

Augustine was a man, and as such, he was not perfect nor were his writings without error. But because he attempted to "think God's thoughts after Him," he has contributed more than probably any man in human history to Christianity and Western civilization.

Wherever men discuss the meaning of good and evil, or human love and the love of God, or the nature of justice, or the unity of the Church and the relations of Church and State, the argument often turns on references to Augustine's thought. Why is this so? In part the answer is that a reading of St. Augustine belongs to the discovery of our own intellectual and spiritual ancestry. It was he who in the fourth century gave to Western civilization the formative ideas which have guided it for centuries—Whoever would know the structural ideas of the Christian tradition and Western philosophy which have shaped our minds for fifteen

centuries must know Augustine.<sup>13</sup>

Another man has said that “[W]ithout Augustine there would have been no Western civilization . . . If anything . . . Western civilization is a comment on Augustine.”<sup>14</sup> But Augustine would not have desired any praise. His Savior, who Himself was not impressive to look on and who never traveled more than a few miles from home in the region of Galilee, consumed Augustine’s thoughts and life.

Possidius, a friend, student and co-worker of Augustine, wrote a *Life of Augustine*, explaining his literary activity, his labors for peace and unity in the church, and his transformational education of the clergy. Possidius “. . . also paints for us a touchingly sincere portrait of the personality of his beloved master and enables us to see him at his daily work, submerged under superabundant labors, but always able to lift his heart to God, and already enjoying his rest with Him even in the midst of the clangor of the warfare he was ever waging for His Church and His truth.”<sup>15</sup> He says of Augustine:

Alike at home and in the Church, he gave himself unstintedly to teaching and preaching the word of salvation with all confidence, in opposition to the heresies prevalent in Africa . . . to the unspeakable admiration and delight of the Christians who as far as in them lay spread abroad his words.—But I think that those could profit more from him who could hear and see him speaking as he stood in the church, especially if they were not ignorant of his walk among men. For he was not merely a learned scribe in the kingdom of heaven, bringing out of his treasury things new and old, and one of those merchantmen who, having found a pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it; but he was also of those to whom it is written, “So speak and so do,” and of whom the Saviour says,

“Whosoever shall do and teach men thus, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>16</sup>

[In part two of our series on Augustine, we’ll share portions of an excellent book on his life, *Son of Tears*, by Henry Coray. Maybe you can find this book and read, in novel form, more details from the life of the great Augustine.]

Becky Morecraft is thankful to be married to Dr. Joe Morecraft, pastor of Chalcedon Presbyterian Church in Cumming, GA. They have been married for 39 years and have four children and seven grandchildren. Becky loves to sing with her sister, Judy Rogers, to read and write. She is grateful to her parents and grandparents for teaching her to love the Lord at an early age and to appreciate her heritage.

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# Are the “Death Panels” for Real?

Lee Duigon

“[W]e know that if this white-coated authority whose chosen vocation is curing and healing is the one opening your mind to hospice and palliative care, we’ve nudged you ever so slightly toward letting go.”<sup>1</sup>—Charles Krauthammer

“But it could be manslaughter, not murder. It’s not necessarily murder. But it doesn’t bother me what you call it. I know what it is. This could never be a crime in any society which deems itself enlightened.”<sup>2</sup>—Jack Kevorkian

“All they that hate me love death.”—Proverbs 8:36



Sarah Palin struck a nerve this summer when she said, on her Facebook page:

“The America I know and love is not one in which my parents or my baby with Down Syndrome will have to stand in front of Obama’s ‘death panel’ so his bureaucrats can decide, based on a subjective judgment of their ‘level of productivity in society,’ whether they are worthy of health care. Such a system is downright evil.”<sup>3</sup>

Does the House of Representatives “health care reform bill,” HR 3200, really propose government “death panels” that would decide who should live and who should die?

The bill’s backers heatedly deny the charge; critics just as heatedly affirm it. Meanwhile, in August, the Senate Finance Committee removed all “end-of-life provisions” from the Senate’s version of the bill, “to avoid unintended consequences.”<sup>4</sup>

Before we report on the criticisms, let us be clear about the subject under discussion—HR 3200, 1,017 pages long in the online version certified by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. All quotations from the bill are from this source.<sup>5</sup>

Specifically, we are looking at Subtitle C, Section 1233, “Advance

Care Planning Consultation,” pages 424–430.

“[A]dvance care planning consultation’ means a consultation between the individual and a practitioner ... regarding advance care planning, if ... the individual involved has not had such a consultation within the last five years.” (p. 425)

The consultation is to include “advance directives, including living wills and durable power of attorney, and their uses” (p. 425).

—Also, “An explanation by the practitioner of the continuum of end-of-life services ... including palliative care and hospice...” (p. 425).

—And, “the reasons why the development of such an order is beneficial to the individual and the individual’s family and the reasons why such an order [for end-of-life counseling] should be updated periodically as the health of the individual changes” (p. 426).

## Who Decides?

Involved in a patient’s end-of-life care decisions, says the bill, shall be “representatives from emergency medical services, emergency department physicians or nurses, *state long-term care association, state surveyors, agency responsible for senior services, state department of health, state hospital association, state bar association, and state hospice association*”

(pp. 427–428). We have emphasized those bodies that are agencies of the government.

Orders for treatment—or for limitation, or termination, of treatment—are to be signed “by a physician ... or another health care professional (*as specified by the Secretary ...*)” (p. 429, emphasis added). “The Secretary” denotes the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, currently the ethically-challenged Kathleen Sibelius.

There is, of course, much more. The reader is encouraged to consult the text and see for himself.

There is no specific mention made of “death panels.” What we do have is:

—Mandatory end-of-life counseling (“advance care planning consultation”), at least once every five years, for everyone over a certain age or in a certain state of health: to wit, the elderly and the infirm.

—Patient-practitioner discussions are to cover the whole “continuum of end-of-life services,” but we are not told whether that “continuum” includes assisted suicide or any form of euthanasia. Certainly these are not specifically excluded.

—Government officials and bureaucrats, on up to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, are to be in on decisions involving patient care or termination of care.

“It’s surely not a death panel,” wrote Charles Krauthammer. “But it is subtle pressure applied by society through your doctor. And when you include it in a healthcare reform whose major object is to bend the cost curve downward, you have to be a fool or a knave to deny that it’s intended to gently point you in a certain direction, toward the corner of the sick room where stands a ghostly figure, scythe in hand, offering release.”<sup>6</sup>

## Is the Stage Already Set?

Other critics speak more forcefully.

Dr. Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Conference, told Chalcedon, “The persons serving on those end-of-life consulting panels will be trained by the government—professionally trained to manipulate people into agreeing to die.” But the whole bill, he said, is “horrible.”

“Unlike some of the Congressmen, I’ve read it,” Dr. Land said. “From Page One to Page 1,000, it is filled with a utilitarian philosophy. It’s all about the government intruding between patient and doctor.”

He added, “If Obamacare [HR 3200] becomes law, the vast majority of Americans will lead shorter lives filled with more pain and suffering.”

Jerri Ward, an Austin pro-life attorney, participated in a state-appointed “advance directive coalition” in 2006–2007. The panel was seeking consensus on how to reform Texas laws regulating end-of-life procedures—a consensus which was not achieved, she said.

“The state is already set for the kind of ‘end-of-life planning’ that we see in HR 3200,” she said. “Patients’ children and surrogates will be going to those counseling sessions, and we’ll wind up pressuring elderly people to remove feeding tubes, stop medication, etc.

“What I mainly see in my work with patients is hospitals running

roughshod over families, manipulating families, playing family members off against each other, to terminate a patient’s treatment.”

Why? To save money, Ms. Ward said: and it will be done on a larger scale, she warned, if anything like HR 3200 becomes law.

Her experiences on the “advance directive” panel—serving with hospital administrators, doctors and nurses, social workers, a “medical ethicist” from Planned Parenthood—have not left her with a rosy view of health care reform.

“Every time I went into that meeting room, I felt like I was confronting evil,” she said. “I saw the face of evil in their utilitarian mind-set.”

## The Push for Euthanasia

Dr. Gene Rudd, senior vice president of the Christian Medical and Dental Association, wrote recently on the CMDA’s website:

“To meet the cost pressures of this massive government-funded program, we can expect assisted suicide to be presented as a major economic solution. This process begins subtly under HR 3200 ...”<sup>7</sup>

“Before Christ,” Dr. Rudd told Chalcedon, “hospitals did not exist. It was the followers of Christ who understood that Christ reached out and touched the leper, and invested Himself in the health needs of people all around him. Every life is sacred, and must be treated so. For us to create a health care system that didn’t do that would be immoral. The current proposals before Congress are not acceptable.”

Dr. Rudd found the language of Section 1233 especially troubling.

“Making the counseling sessions ‘mandatory’ is the first red flag,” he said. “It’s very wise for doctors to have this kind of counseling with patients, but it should not be mandatory.”

HR 3200 puts “far too much

decision-making power in the hands of Health and Human Services,” he said.

Perhaps what makes the health care bill so alarming to so many people is that there is, indeed, a growing sense that our nation’s opinion-leaders are increasingly receptive to euthanasia as the solution to spiraling health care costs.

“The death of a teenager is a greater tragedy than the death of an 85-year-old,” wrote Peter Singer, in defense of health care rationing, for the *New York Times Magazine* this summer.<sup>8</sup> Singer, a professor of ethics at Princeton University, is best known as the founder of the “animal liberation” movement. But he has long been an enthusiastic advocate of euthanasia.

Jack Kevorkian, the “Death Doctor,” received a very long prison sentence for helping his patients to commit suicide. However, it is beginning to look like the opinion-leaders of the Western world are catching up to him in their “enlightenment.”

In the United Kingdom, where “universal health care” has been in place for years, euthanasia’s advocates are more outspoken.

Baroness Warnock, supposedly Britain’s leading medical ethicist, raised hackles last year when she said, “If you’re demented, you’re wasting people’s lives—your family’s lives—and you’re wasting the resources of the National Health Services.”<sup>9</sup> The 84-year-old baroness said certain patients have “a duty to die” and that she hoped people would be “licensed to put others down” if they are unable to look after themselves.<sup>10</sup>

It should not be imagined that Peter Singer and Lady Warnock are the only opinion-leaders saying such things.

## Rationing Health Care

Critics of HR 3200 also claim the legislation would lead inevitably to the rationing of medical care, with the rationing decisions made by government

bureaucrats.

“I lived in England, under socialized medicine, for three years,” Richard Land said, “and it’s horrible. I knew people in England who died, who wouldn’t have died in America, thanks to National Health. This bill [HR 3200] is modeled after the British system. It means late diagnosis, late treatment, and a higher death rate for Americans.”

The Telegraph reported a recent example of such rationing.<sup>11</sup> “Tens of thousands with chronic back pain will be forced to live in agony after a decision to slash the number of painkilling injections covered on the NHS, doctors have warned,” wrote health correspondent Laura Donnelly.

Why take away these patients’ painkillers? Because doing so is expected to save the NHS 33 million pounds, cutting back from more than 60,000 treatments of steroid injections a year to just 3,000, the Telegraph reported.

The decision was made by the National Health Service’s “drug rationing watchdog” agency—the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence, acronymed NICE. The irony of this acronym will not be lost on C. S. Lewis fans. In his novel, *That Hideous Strength*, the villain is a satanic cabal disguised as a scientific body, the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments—NICE. We are amazed that an agency responsible for withholding medical treatment from suffering patients would claim to have anything to do with “clinical excellence.”

### Can It Be Done Politically?

As if opening the door to medical rationing and euthanasia were not enough to damn HR 3200, the bill may also establish public funding for abortions and force doctors and nurses with religious objections to abortion to participate in abortions, Dr. Gene Rudd warned.

Even so, he said, some kind of legislation to improve health care in America might be acceptable.

“We do need to make some changes—but not sweeping changes,” he said, “in which we sweep away the whole foundation. So let’s make incremental changes, as needed. After all, the needy cannot go unattended.

“Government can be involved in health care. But if that government has a worldview that is against Scripture, then, no—it cannot be involved.

“Power corrupts. When you give power without accountability, or principles to guide those who exercise that power, there is great potential for corruption. If the government has a worldview in which power is an end in itself, then the government has to stay out of health care—absolutely.”

Richard Land said, “In a country as wealthy as ours, we ought to provide a basic standard of health care for every citizen.” But he hedged this statement with several caveats.

“Let’s face it,” he said, “a single-player, NHS-type health care system has been the Holy Grail for liberals for the last fifty years.

“Democrats, however, have fundamentally misread the 2008 election results as a mandate to turn us into a statist, neo-socialist society. And now the American people are revolting against this rampant statism, and the people in Washington are stunned and shocked. They can’t believe what they’re hearing at all those town hall meetings.”

Dr. Land said he has been in private conversations with many so-called Blue Dog Democrats in Congress.

“The leaders in Congress have threatened to push this thing through with Democratic votes alone,” he said, “but I don’t think they can. There are too many Blue Dogs who could never be re-elected in 2010 if they voted

for this. But even if they did push it through, before something of this magnitude could be implemented, it could be stopped by the new Congress.”

But if anything like HR 3200 were to become law, he said, then “Many people who aborted their babies, years ago, will find themselves being pressured to die before their natural time.”

Ironic, isn’t it, that if the approximately fifty million babies aborted in America since *Roe v. Wade* had been allowed to live, millions of them now would be working and generating wealth in a country supposedly concerned with becoming unable to pay for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and health care?

### The Proper Role of the State

“Health care reform” is another example of what Richard Land called “liberals looking upon the state as a replacement for God.”

R. J. Rushdoony, in *Thy Kingdom Come*, wrote of what the state and the civil government ought to be, according to Scripture:

The state has a duty to serve God, to be Christian, to be a part of God’s kingdom, or else it shall be judged by Him. The state is declared in Romans 13 to be a ministry, the ministry of justice and social order . . . every area of life is strictly limited in its scope by the word of God. The state as civil government is strictly limited in that, *first*, it is under God and must administer justice in faithfulness to His word. *Second*, the state cannot assume as its own those areas which are properly the spheres of the home, school, church, art, economics, or anything else. *Third*, the state cannot limit the individual’s freedom to work out the divine mandate for man as God’s image-bearer. *Fourth*, the authority of the state is at all times ministerial, or delegated from God, not creative or independent. When the state becomes messianic in its claims and tries to usher

in paradise, it has done so by declaring itself to be a god and by making itself the source of law and authority ... It is man's attempt to be God and create his own new world.<sup>12</sup>

In light of Rushdoony's observations, the critics of HR 3200 do not go far enough in their criticism.

What has legislation like this to do with administering justice and preserving social order? By "justice" we mean no such inane hypocrisy as "social justice," but plain, old, everyday justice—the state's duty to protect its citizens from evildoers and punish convicted criminals. Taking care of the sick has always been the province of families, churches, and the medical profession.

"Health care reform" envisions a vast government takeover of a major sector of America's economy. The state shall be assuming responsibilities that do not belong to it, Biblically or constitutionally. In doing so, it would be further limiting individual freedom, replacing it with bureaucratic mandates.

HR 3200 glaringly reflects the messianic pretensions of the welfare state. This is not authority delegated to the state by God: it is, as Rushdoony clearly saw, the state pretending to be a god.

By their fruits you shall know them. Government health care has been an abject failure in one country after another. Ask anyone in England who suffers from chronic back pain and now cannot get treatment for it.

Why, then, should anyone want to follow the example of those countries?

None of the critics we spoke to brought up the obvious objection that the federal government is already too big, too corrupt, too wasteful and inefficient, too powerful, and too intrusive; and that rather than being made bigger, costlier, more corrupt, more wasteful, more powerful, and more intrusive, our elected representatives should concen-

trate on chopping it down to a size more conformable to the Bible and the Constitution. We should be shrinking the government, not growing it.

Perhaps there are those in Congress fool enough to think that government health care will succeed in America, even though it has failed everywhere else. But there must be other promoters of this project who, knowing it will make our health care system worse and not better, nevertheless press on—because their real intent is to increase the power of the state. In their incessant promotion of euthanasia, assisted suicide, sodomy, and abortion, they show themselves, in the words of King Solomon, to "love death." From their kind may the Lord deliver us. 🙏

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for the Chalcedon Report. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and a published novelist.

1. [http://townhall.com/columnists/CharlesKrauthammer/2009/08/21/lets\\_be\\_honest\\_about\\_death\\_counseling](http://townhall.com/columnists/CharlesKrauthammer/2009/08/21/lets_be_honest_about_death_counseling)
2. <http://www.quotesandpoem.com/quotes/listquotes/author/Jack-Kevorkian>
3. [http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=113851103434](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=113851103434)
4. <http://hotair.com/archives/2009/08/13/breaking-finance-committee-drops-death-panel-provisions/>
5. [http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press\\_111/20090714/aahca.pdf](http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090714/aahca.pdf)
6. Krauthammer, op. cit.
7. "News & Views," Aug. 5, 2009, on <http://www.cmda.org/>
8. Peter Singer, "Why We Must Ration Health Care," *New York Times Magazine*, July 15, 2009.
9. [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2983652/Baroness-Warnock-Dementia-sufferers-may-have-a-duty.html?source=EMC-new\\_19092008](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2983652/Baroness-Warnock-Dementia-sufferers-may-have-a-duty.html?source=EMC-new_19092008)
10. Ibid.
11. "Patients forced to live in agony after NHS refuses to pay for painkilling injec-

tions," by Laura Donnelly, Health Correspondent: [Telegraph.co.uk](http://Telegraph.co.uk), Aug. 2, 2009.  
12. R. J. Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, (1970) 2001), 191.

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*Rushdoony ... Wise Men? cont. from page 7*

If, however, we see ourselves as faith-driven, we will see the Word as our authority, and given for our edification in obedience. If we are wise men, we will see the difference. 🙏

1. Floyd Nolan Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007).
2. The Wise Men were likely educated Gentile converts or Jews of Persia (not astrologers, astronomers, magicians, or mystics) who looked for the Messiah. The star they followed moved so it was a miraculous manifestation, not a star, comet, or conjunction.
3. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s. v. "Herod."

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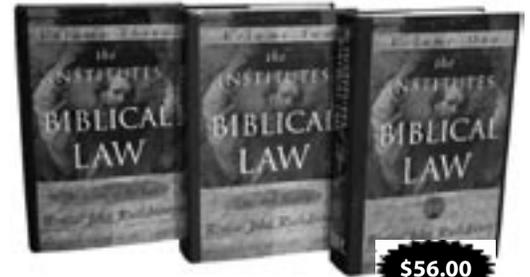
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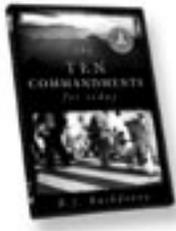
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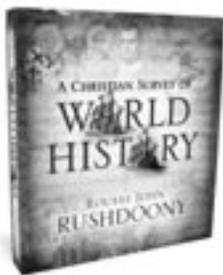
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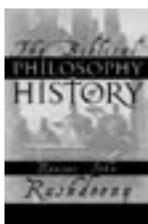
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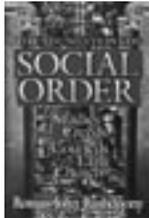
## Church History



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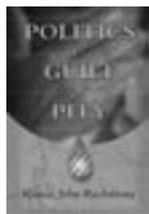
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By R.J. Rushdoony. Subtitled *A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity*.

Neoplatonism is a Greek philosophical assumption about the world. It views that which is form or spirit (such as mind) as good and that which is physical (flesh) as evil. But Scripture says all of man fell into sin, not just his flesh. The first sin was the desire to be as god, determining good and evil apart from God (Gen. 3:5). Neoplatonism presents man's dilemma as a metaphysical one, whereas Scripture presents it as a moral problem. Basing Christianity on this false Neoplatonic idea will always shift the faith from the Biblical perspective. The ascetic quest sought to take refuge from sins of the flesh but failed to address the reality of sins of the heart and mind. In the name of humility, the ascetics manifested arrogance and pride. This pagan idea of spirituality entered the church and is the basis of some chronic problems in Western civilization.

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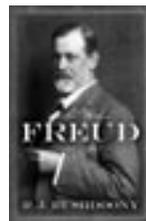


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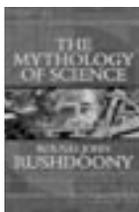


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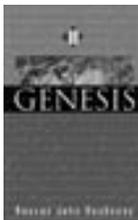


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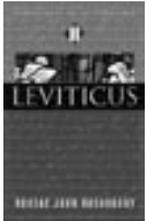


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Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ, the exodus is now a glorious ascent into the justice and dominion of the everlasting Kingdom of God. Therefore, if we are to better understand the gracious provisions made for us in the "promised land" of the New Covenant, a thorough examination into the historic path of Israel as described in the book of Exodus is essential. It is to this end that this volume was written.

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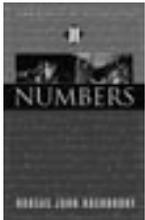
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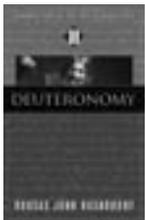
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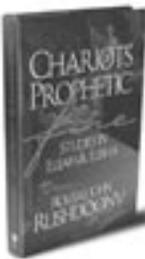
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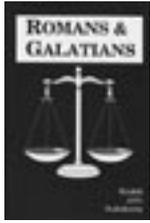
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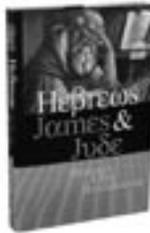
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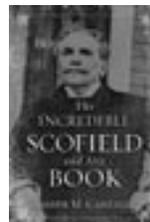


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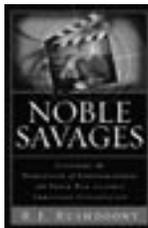
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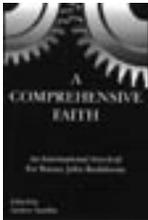
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## A Comprehensive Faith

Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe

Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Owen Fourie, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Joseph McAuliffe, Andrea Schwartz, David Estrada-Herrero, Stephen Perks, Ian Hodge, and Colonel V. Doner. Also included is a forward by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony. This book was produced as a "top-secret" project by Friends of Chalcedon and donated to Ross House Books. It is sure to be a collector's item one day.

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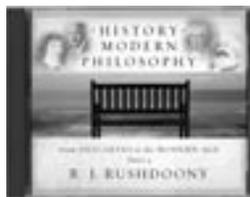
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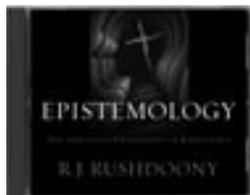
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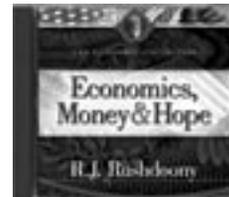
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