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Salvation and the Kingdom of God

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Read the July 1, 2017 Commentary, "[Kingdom of God, Old Testament Sources](#)"

Then read the accompanying [Newsletter for July 2017](#)

Salvation and the Kingdom of God

One of the most misunderstood doctrines found in the New Testament revelation has confused the vast majority of Christian theologians and even Christian laity from the 2nd century AD, and even back into the 1st century on some occasions. It represents the major misunderstanding by those who want to be governed by the Word of God. Even those who love the Holy Scriptures and try to abide by their principles are often as confused as modern theologians concerning this matter.

It concerns the biblical teaching of the Kingdom of God and salvation. It is almost universally conceived among Bible believing Christians that the doctrine of the Kingdom of God and the doctrine of salvation are essentially the same thing. In no way is this true. The apostle Paul recognized the confusion that began to set in over this issue in his day. Paul, not long before he died, gave a stern admonition to the evangelist Timothy to adopt proper principles in understanding these teachings in the Word of God.

What he told Timothy was something all of us should heed because these Scriptures have come down to us today. If we want to understand how to interpret the Old or the New Testaments properly, we need to adopt the principles the apostle Paul gave to the evangelist Timothy.

Here is what Paul told Timothy (and you and me today) to do to understand the Word of God, because there are certain keys, useful methods, and ways of comprehending what the Word really means. In most cases, people avoid those principles. We need to adopt them because Paul encouraged everyone to do so to have a proper comprehension of God's Word. What Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:15 was this:

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Notice that phrase, "**rightly dividing the word of truth.**" "Rightly partitioning" is what it actually means in the Greek. It must be divided or partitioned into various segments so "**the word of truth**" may be understood. Note the adverb in front of "**dividing,**" it says, "**rightly dividing,**" not wrongly, but:

“... rightly dividing the word of truth. BUT shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.”

• **2 Timothy 2:16**

Paul shows there will be great deceptions being put out to the world at the end of the age. They will occur because people will not be **“rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”** Certain sections of this Scripture no more pertain to you and to me than to a tomcat. That is a fact. While all Scripture is for us, that is, for our understanding, certain sections of Scripture do not pertain to you or me.¹

Christ Jesus gave specific instructions to the apostles to do certain things. He only gave them the authority to do those things. He has not given you and me those authorities. Some people today think that any instruction in the Bible, whether in the Old or New Testaments, pertains (they say, in principle) to us today. That is not true. That is why Paul said we must, if we want to understand what the Bible is all about, rightly divide the Word of Truth. Paul said this in other areas as well.

A proper English translation of Philippians 1:9–10 clarifies the verse in Timothy:

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; [why?] That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”

• **Philippians 1:9–10, KJV**

Paul prayed for the Philippians that their love might increase **“more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.”** Certainly all of us today would want to grow in knowledge, and in matters of judgment. Then in verse 10, Paul gives the reason why: **“That you may approve things that are excellent,”** as the King James Version has it. What a mistranslation! In the margin of my Bible it says “that you may test [or prove] the things that differ” in the Word of God [not **“things that are excellent”**].

Why should this be done? What is the benefit? It is so that **“... you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.”** An increased knowledge and judgment would give them (as well as you and me today) a greater ability to properly test the things which differ. If we do not do so, teachings that should be separate will be mixed. Before you know it, some will be saying we ought to get on a ship, go to Nineveh in ancient Assyria and preach to them, even though they do not exist today. Do you see what I am getting at? This is the sort of thing Paul was talking about.

Mistakenly Combining Doctrines Creates Confusion

In Paul’s day there were people who combined doctrines together that were not to be mixed, like trying to mix oil with water. As far as God’s teachings are concerned, it should not be done. Oil will always come to the top if you have God’s Holy Spirit that governs you. Today the Word of God is still being mixed together when it should not be done. Nothing comes to the top, no one understands the result, and confusion results.

When it comes to the doctrine involving the Kingdom of God and the doctrine involving salvation — for you, me, for Israel, and for the world — they combined the two doctrines into a homogeneous mess, which should not be done. Even people in the 1st century AD were beginning to be confused over the issue. In the 2nd century more people were confused. By the time of the 4th century the doctrines of the Kingdom of God and salvation were inextricably mixed together. It continued down to the Protestant Reformation, and down to us today. It seems like almost all people today are doing the same thing: mixing the doctrines of the Kingdom of God with salvation, and the result is the greatest mess you can imagine.

They have sown seeds of absolute confusion so people are unable to separate the two doctrines from each other. The teachings of salvation have become so corrupt you cannot find a glimmer of it anymore. You can read certain Scriptures how people will be saved, how salvation is based upon grace and not upon any works

¹ Let me give one example of many. When God told Jonah to go to the ancient Ninevites and to preach repentance to them back in the 9th century BC, he did not mean that you and I have to go do the same. He said that to Jonah. In fact, those Assyrians almost 3,000 years ago no longer exist and neither does Jonah. We are not required to do Jonah’s task! *ELM*

— any works. The apostle Paul said, **“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”** (Ephesians 2:10), meaning the good works of the Bible, works humanity knows are good. We should be doing these, obviously, but salvation is not based upon those good works, nor on bad works.

The Kingdom of God happens to be based upon good works and bad works. That is the truth. The Kingdom of God is not based upon grace, but salvation is based upon grace. When you do not separate these two into their proper constituents, into their proper position in the Scripture, then you will get mixed up. That is exactly what has happened in this world today. What we need to do is realize that the Kingdom of God and its doctrines are in one category, and salvation is in another category.

Paul said (as I have written often) we are **“in Christ”** and sitting with Him right now in the heavenlies in a legal sense. God has no second-born children, He only has firstborn children. He has only one “begotten” firstborn and that is Jesus Christ. Paul says that you and I are **“in Him,”** and if we are **“in Him”** we are sitting with Him on that throne in heaven at present in a symbolic sense, soon to be in an actual sense as far as the Father is concerned. When the Father sees Christ, He sees you.²

That is right. He sees you. He sees me. He sees all of us collectively, and He sees each of us individually, if we are Christians. He will finally give this salvation not only to you and to me, but through grace it will come to the whole world eventually. Let me tell you this, He will not give the Kingdom of God to everybody. In fact, the Kingdom of God was first designed for the Israelites. Jesus said:

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

• **Matthew 21:43**

He will leave them outside except for a bare remnant. The Kingdom of God can be missed out on, even by you and by me, but salvation has been secured by Jesus Christ through grace, and not through works, whether bad works or good works. That is the teaching of the New Testament.

The teachings about the Kingdom of God are based on works, yet even those are works God can and does inspire (the good works). At the same time you can miss out on the Kingdom of God by doing bad works. The Bible says it even in the latest books of Paul. He says we can miss out on the Kingdom of God, but in **no way** can we miss out on the grace of Christ Jesus and the power of God the Father by which all people will eventually be saved “in Christ.” That is absolutely the teaching of the Scripture.

If you mix together the teachings of the Kingdom of God with those involving salvation, you will corrupt the teaching of salvation and misunderstand what the Kingdom of God is all about. We must rightly divide the Word of God, as Paul said in a final admonition to Timothy, not long before Paul died in the city of Rome. He told the Philippians that we should try and test those things which differ: different teachings to different peoples at different times. Sometimes teaching goes to a whole group of people, like to Israel. Sometimes the teaching can go to a group of people like the Babylonians, sometimes only to one individual such as Nebuchadnezzar, to Paul, to Jonah, or whoever it might be. But the teachings about salvation eventually embrace the entire human race. The teachings of the Kingdom of God do not. We must recognize the vast difference.

The Kingdom of God is not a synonym for salvation. Those who inherit the Kingdom will be given salvation at the same time they inherit the Kingdom, but the two doctrines are very different as far as the Bible is concerned, and they are absolutely distinguished in the Scripture. Look at verses in Revelation to see how the doctrines of salvation and the Kingdom of God are distinguished in this important section of Scripture. The difference is easy to understand. Read what it says in Revelation:

“The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him [prior to Christ’s Second Coming]. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now is come [1] salvation,

² I am referring to ultimate salvation, us being in the very family of God sitting with Christ in the heavens next to the Father, as I have shown repeatedly. *ELM* Dr. Martin’s best presentation of the goal of salvation is in **“Chapter 27: ‘Our Inheritance’: The Family of God”** from his book [The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#). The entire book is free online. *DWS*

and [2] strength, and [3] **the kingdom of our God**, and [4] **the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**”

• **Revelation 12:9–10**

This is about 3½ years before the Second Coming of Christ back to earth when Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven. At that time processes will begin to bring [1] salvation on one hand, and [2] the kingdom of God on the other. The two are distinguished here. As I said before, anyone who inherits the Kingdom of God, which will take place at Christ’s Second Coming, that is the time of the resurrection from the dead. Obviously those resurrected will inherit immortality and salvation at the same time.

But there are others who will not come up in the first resurrection at that time. They will have to wait to a later time before they can inherit a salvation. The ones who inherit the Kingdom, however, at the Second Coming of Christ will also inherit salvation at the same time. The Kingdom and salvation are two different affairs altogether. We will see that as we proceed.

Evil in the Kingdom of God?

In fact, those in the Kingdom of God can still practice evil and be in the Kingdom of God.³ Do you know that when it comes to the Kingdom of God, Christ said it is possible for people to be in the Kingdom to do and be evil? In fact, evil people need to be removed from the Kingdom. If a person would look carefully at some of these teachings about the Kingdom, you could easily see it has nothing to do with salvation, which brings us perfection. Salvation is given by grace. Once you get into salvation, you will be a spiritual being. You will have God’s character given to you and as well as the composition of God,⁴ which is spiritual — spirit — but our spirit will be as tangible as flesh is to flesh now.

In Matthew chapter 13 we find that those in the Kingdom can still be evil, which is not possible if you have salvation. Matthew 13:24–30 is a parable Christ gave to the people concerning the Kingdom of God.⁵

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [weeds] among the wheat, and went his way.’”

• **Matthew 13:24–25**

The field is the Kingdom of God and here are tares or weeds within that Kingdom. That is what He said.

“But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, ‘Sir, did not you sow good seed in your field? from whence then has it tares?’ He said unto them, ‘An enemy has done this.’”

• **Matthew 13:26–27**

Satan the Devil will spread those tares, at certain times in the Kingdom of God.

“The servants said unto him, ‘Will you then that we go and gather them up?’

But he said, ‘Nay; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

• **Matthew 13:29–30**

He goes on with other parables. Let me give you another in verses 47–48:

³ You cannot have salvation and practice evil. If you have salvation, you have made it. You have been perfected. You are then in the very family of God. Because you are in that family, you will be given a perfection. It is not a perfection of what you do or don’t do, it is a perfection of who you are. That is the same as with Christ Jesus and God the Father. *ELM*

⁴ Read my June 2008 Commentary, “God’s Body” introducing Dr. Martin’s article, The Bodily Composition of God. *DWS*

⁵ Matthew uses the phrase “**Kingdom of Heaven**.” Some of the parables in Matthew are in Mark where the phrase “Kingdom of God” is used. The Kingdom in Christ’s day was in heaven, but it was expected to come to earth from heaven.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven [God] is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”

• *Matthew 13:47–48*

Here also **“the bad”** are within the Kingdom of God.

“So shall it be at the end of the world [age] the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

• *Matthew 13:49–50*

“Gnashing of teeth” means great anger will be expressed. If you go to the interpretation of the wheat and the tares given in Matthew 13:36–42⁶ you find the same type of interpretation there given by Christ of how the angels were the reapers separating the weeds from the wheat.

Another that shows there that in the Kingdom of God there can actually be violence. Also, there can be warfare in the Kingdom of God. It happened in the past; Jesus said it can happen in the future:

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven [Kingdom of God] is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

• *Matthew 11:11–12*

Matthew says in chapters 11 and 13: (1) there can be violence in heaven; (2) there can be evil in heaven; and (3) there can be evil in the Kingdom of God. Until Satan the Devil and his angels are cast out of heaven there will be evil in the Kingdom of God in heaven. Believe it or not. That is the teaching of Christ Himself. You cannot say there is evil in salvation. In salvation the purity and the character of God is given to us. Do you think there is any evil there? Do you think there is any violence there? Do you think there are any tares there? No, but there can be tares in the Kingdom of God.

When the millennium comes, beginning when God sends Christ back to this earth, through the 1,000 year period Satan will not be around, but people will not be perfect during that time. There will be evil in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God means the time when God begins to rule here on the earth. If God rules in your life right now, it can be called a Kingdom of God to you, that is true, but as far as the advent or the inauguration of the prophesied Kingdom of God, it will come at Christ’s Second Advent. This is clear in Scripture where Paul refers to this principle that was well known to Jews in the 1st century:

“I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead [when?] at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out

⁶ Jesus explained the parable of the tares of Matthew 13:24–30 to His disciples privately in Matthew 13:36–42:

“Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, ‘Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.’

He answered and said unto them,

- **‘He that sows the good seed is the Son of man;**
- **The field is the world;**
- **the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but**
- **the tares are the children of the wicked one;**
- **The enemy that sowed them is the devil;**
- **the harvest is the end of the world [eon, age]; and**
- **the reapers are the angels.**
- **As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [eon, age].**

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

• 2 Timothy 4:1–2

That is what Paul told Timothy. He said the “appearing” of Christ will do two things, (1) bring the quickening **“of the dead at his appearing,”** and (2) it will make His Kingdom come to earth.

Jesus said to Pilate right before He was crucified in John 18:36:

“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.’”

Christ’s Kingdom will come to earth with His Second Coming, described in Revelation chapter 11, Christ’s Kingdom is God’s Kingdom. Its official inauguration is when the 7th angel sounds in heaven, **“there were great voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever [for the eons of the eons, or ages of the ages]’”** (Revelation 11:15). The kingdoms of this world (all of them), at the Second Coming, at the time the 7th angel sounds, all will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. Then the official Kingdom of God will appear on earth.

Salvation Is Limited In the Kingdom

Just because people after that time will be in the Kingdom of God for 1,000 years does not mean they will all have salvation during that time. No. People resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ, will be given salvation and clearly the right to enjoy the Kingdom of God, both on earth, and Paul said even in heaven. He clearly said the Kingdom would reach out even into all the heavens, including our physical universe.

Many people think the Kingdom of God is only on this earth. No, it reaches to embrace the entire universe. Paul did not say he would have an experience of the Kingdom here on this earth, though obviously he could come to earth after the resurrection and see what is going on anytime he pleases. As far as his reward is concerned, he said in the last things Paul wrote to Timothy:

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever [for the *eons* of the *eons*]. Amen.”

• 2 Timothy 4:18

The heavens will submit to the rule of God, as well as this earth. When this Kingdom of God takes place, it will be at Christ’s Second Coming, when the first resurrection will occur:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be [1] priests of God and of Christ, and [2] shall reign with him a thousand years.”

• Revelation 20:5–6

These verses are specific about when the Kingdom of God comes to earth. The first resurrection involves those of us who come up when Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom on earth and throughout the heavens. We will be part of the first resurrection to spiritual and immortal life. Those in the first resurrection **“shall reign with Him”** in the Kingdom of God. Let’s review Revelation 12:10:

“I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.”

You can see how salvation will be given us at the same time we inherit the Kingdom, but those who do not come up in the first resurrection will wait until the dispensation of the fullness of time before they come up to spiritual, immortal life. If they do not inherit the Kingdom, it will be some time later. They will not know anything about that because as soon as a person dies there is no consciousness in the grave. As soon as you die, you are instantly in the presence of God as far as your consciousness is concerned.

Paul says it is better to die, he thought, than to live in some cases (1 Corinthians 9:15), though death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). Yet he said, if I die I will be in the presence of God and Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 2:19). Paul will be instantaneously in God's presence, as far as he is concerned. Yet Paul died almost 2,000 years ago and he is not conscious right now, neither is Peter, neither is anyone else who died in Christ back then. They are all dead, in their graves until the Second Advent of Christ.

Those that do not come up in the Second Advent (the first resurrection) they will continue in unconsciousness until the very end, but as far as they are concerned, they will not realize the passage of time. They will blink their eyes, they die, and before they know it they open their eyes, take a breath, and they will be in the presence of God, no matter what time it is. That is what Paul said.⁷

The dead are very dead. I had the finest mother and father anyone could have. You could probably say the same thing. My parents were fine Christian people. They are in two graves in Exeter, California and not alive anywhere in heaven. Your relatives and friends are not either. They are waiting for the resurrection from the dead. As far as they were concerned, the moment they ceased living, when the spirit of life left them, they died and are waiting for the resurrection of the dead.

As far as their consciousness is concerned, they are like the thief on the tree with Christ. Jesus said, **"Today you shall be with me in paradise."** That was almost 2,000 years ago. That thief went right to the grave. He will not see a resurrection until the Second Coming of Christ. His consciousness will be resurrected at 3:00 in the afternoon on the day he died. He will have no knowledge of the passage of time. This is consistent throughout Scripture. When we come up at the Second Coming from the dead, salvation will be given to us (Revelation 12:10). Our salvation will be given to us at the same time we inherit the Kingdom of God. Those who do not inherit the Kingdom of God, those who do not come up in the first resurrection, will have to wait in their graves until a later time to experience their salvation.

How Long Will the Kingdom Last?

How long does this Kingdom phase last when you come up in the first resurrection? It says they will be as priests and kings and rule with Christ for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6, as well as 1:6 and 5:10). There will be a future time when Satan the Devil is loosed out his prison for a short time. Then another resurrection will occur, this time to physical life, not to spiritual life, and there will be a white throne judgment period, in which people will stand before God. (The spiritual resurrection of those being judged will come later.) Paul shows this in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. The Kingdom will be on this earth both during the 1,000-year "millennium" and after during the period known as the great white throne period.

You can experience those periods if you participate in the first resurrection at Christ's Second Coming. The Kingdom of God will last from the Second Coming of Christ, through the 1,000-year millennium, through the great white throne period, until Christ conquers all opposition to God in all creation. When that opposition ends and the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:22–28), there is no more death for human beings any more, then He will hand over the Kingdom to the Father. Christ will cease to rule over anyone from that time forward because He will not need to rule any more.

The Kingdom of God, as far as the family of God is concerned, does not need laws to rule it, believe it or not. No rules are necessary because we will be like God and we will not have rules governing our behavior. There will be, in one way of looking at it, all types of rules to obey, but we will automatically do righteousness, and when we do that, you do not need laws telling you to do so. See the point? People will miss this Kingdom phase if they are not in the first resurrection. The apostle Paul made this clear that people, even Christians

⁷ It is the craziest teaching on earth to say that as soon as you die you immediately go to heaven, stay there with Christ having a jolly time. That is what preachers are teaching. And what happens? When the Second Coming occurs, do you supposedly come back with Him and you see your body coming out of the grave? What do you do, jump into it or something like that? They cannot explain what happens; of course not, because they have the whole thing confused. They are not **"rightly dividing the word of truth"** (2 Timothy 2:15). They need to know what the truth is. *ELM*

today, if they do not do what God tells them to do when they know better, they can miss the Kingdom phase and the first resurrection. I do not think most of us have to fear that if we have proper principles in mind, but the potential is there. Paul says:

“Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

• *1 Corinthians 6:9–10*

That is a plain statement. He means those who practice those things deliberately. Not one of us can say we are not sinners in some way, but deliberately and with malice aforethought, that is what Paul means. A person who does these things, if he or she realizes that they are evil and should not do them, you should repent of them. If you do, you can be back in the grace of God. It is all a matter of attitude.

If you practice sin, if you relish in sin and revel in it. If you say, oh, it does not make any difference what I do. I will carry right on because I will be saved anyway. Many people are so silly, stupid in fact, to make that kind of analogy. They are combining Scriptures about salvation that show all will be saved, and mixing them with Kingdom passages which say, **“the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”** They say, oh well, I will get it anyway because salvation and the Kingdom are one in the same. They are not.

If you inherit the Kingdom of God at the Second Advent of Christ, you will be given salvation, that is true. You will be given the character of God. You will be given the bodily composition of God. You will be given the family name of God. You will be in the Kingdom of God, but you will be in the family of God. You will have salvation.

But ... if you practice these types of sins openly, deliberately, with malice aforethought, and without conscience on these matters and do not see the necessity of repenting when you do these things, like everyone should, if you go and say the heck with it, and keep on sinning, you will not make the first resurrection or the Kingdom of God. Paul says they **“shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”** Some might say that was before Paul had complete knowledge of the truth. It was written to the Corinthians in about 55 AD, but what about in Ephesians when he taught more truth? Surely, that does not apply there. Yes it does. It says it clearly in Ephesians chapter 5:

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becoming saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.⁸ Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be you not therefore partakers with them.”

• *Ephesians 5:3–7*

He goes on to say other things about this matter. These are admonitions from the apostle Paul. They are not coming from me; I am telling what Paul wrote. Those people give up, go into revelry of sin, and have no conscience. All of us sin, but if you know you sinned, and you repent of sin, and have an attitude of wanting and trying to do right, you will be able to inherit the Kingdom of God. Do you want to inherit it? One of the biggest keys of whether you will or not, is whether you really want to inherit it. If you say, yes, I want to, then you will be about your Father’s business to get there. He can give you the power, authority and the will to do it, because it will be His will.

When you put the whole thing together, you find that God will help you more than you can possibly

⁸ The phrase **“the kingdom of Christ and of God”** can be translated, **“the kingdom of Messiah and of God.”** See my article **“Christ and Messiah”** which tells that every usage of “Christ” should be read in terms of what “Messiah” means (then and now!) with all its implications. My later article **“The Gospel of Messiah”** discusses the preaching of that Gospel and Kingdom. DWS

realize. You must have the proper attitude, which God wants you to have. Now there is “free will” all right, and that “will” is governed by God the Father and Christ Jesus, I guarantee you that. At the same time that “will” has to be expressed toward righteousness. You have to want to be in the Kingdom of God. Do you want to be in the first resurrection? I do. Most people want to be in it. I believe I will be there, without the slightest doubt. You should feel the same. That does not mean you go out and start deliberately, absolutely, with malice aforethought, doing things Paul said to the Corinthians and the Ephesians not to do.

Salvation is a different thing. You might miss out on the first resurrection. There will not be many, but some people will say I want nothing to do with that Kingdom of God. They sometimes have a spirit of rebellion for all types of reasons. If they do, God will not resurrect a person at Christ’s Second Coming and let a person be in that attitude. There will have to be changes.⁹

God’s Building

We have this doctrine made clear by the apostle Paul several places in Scripture. One of the two areas you see this is in 1 Corinthians 3:9–15. Paul talks about a building of God with a foundation, a superstructure on top, and then a roof. A house, a palace, a temple, whatever, all start with a foundation. In 1 Corinthians 3:9 Paul gives the illustration of building a house. He says we **“are God’s building”** that starts, with a foundation. Verse 10:

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Jesus Christ is the foundation to this building of God. Paul goes on: **“Now if any man build upon this foundation [1] gold, silver, precious stones, [2] wood, hay, stubble ...”** (1 Corinthians 3:12). Note the difference. The first three are valuables, or the second three are non-precious and vulnerable to fire. All are on the foundation, which is Christ. The foundation is perfect, secure, but the walls are made up of either enduring precious metals and stones, or made up of perishable wood, hay, and stubble. He goes on with the illustration and talks about man’s work, work that each of us do:

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try [test] every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

• **1 Corinthians 3:13–15**

Yet Paul is saying the man will be saved, finally. True. This person will have salvation even if he builds with wood, hay, or stubble, because when fire comes, wood will burn, hay will burn quicker, and stubble quicker yet. The gold, the silver, and the precious stones will stand the heat. If you have built here and now with gold, silver, and precious stones atop the foundation of Christ, that foundation is secure, no question.

⁹ There is a period every one of us will go through after our resurrection to spiritual existence. We will need to learn how to live as spiritual beings. It will take some time to do so, and we will have to unlearn habits and God will help us. This will be after the resurrection. That is right, even after the resurrection of the dead; God is not through with us yet in learning. We all will require a learning process to comprehend as much as Jesus Christ Himself does about the universe. It will take time. That experience will be in the years after the first resurrection. We will be given the opportunity to see God and Christ in action as they change the kingdoms of this world into God’s own Kingdom lasting for 1,000 years, and you will be there to see it. You also will be there to see the great white throne judgment and learn how God does things through Christ Jesus. We will have a part in all of that — if we come up in the first resurrection, if we inherit the Kingdom of God along with salvation.

Paul and Christ Jesus said we should all want to inherit the Kingdom of God. We, if we are alive, will be changed to immortality. Christians who are dead will be resurrected to receive their reward. First, the reward is the Kingdom of God, but they will also be given salvation. Others who do not come up at Christ’s Second Coming will not inherit the Kingdom, but they will inherit salvation later, as guaranteed to the human race through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for them. *ELM*

Building with such costly items requires “works.” If you build the superstructure, the roof, and other areas with those precious items, no harm will occur when the fire comes. Your reward will be secure.

If you build with wood, hay, and stubble, those “works” and reward will burn up, but the man still will be saved. Why? Because he has a firm foundation of Jesus Christ and upon that foundation God Himself can build a superstructure to last.

Man’s works need to be good. Paul says to the Corinthians, now that you know the truth, work and build a proper superstructure upon the foundation of Christ. The foundation can never be moved. We should all be thankful for that. The superstructure, if made out of good works, will receive good reward. That is what Paul’s illustration tells us. The wood, hay, and stubble represent works that will be burnt up; you will lose your reward, and not come up in the Kingdom of God. However, you **“shall be saved”** as Paul says.

Some people do not like that. They do not want people to be saved if they are not doing good. Paul did not like people not doing good, but we need much help from God to be able to do good. That is why we need to be asking daily for God to give us the mind and character to do the proper things, and to have the proper attitude on these things, so we may build with the strength God gives us through His Spirit, to build a superstructure of good works, with gold, silver, and precious stones. When He comes with flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8), if that is so, then our superstructure will stand above the secure foundation. Those building with wood, hay, and stubble, they still have Christ as their foundation, but they are building with material which is combustible. If they are doing that, they will suffer loss at the Second Coming because their works will be burnt up.

That is the illustration Paul is using. He said, you **“shall be saved.”** It would be a shame if those works were burnt up, obviously. We want that they will not be burnt up. You should have no fear along those lines, if you have a reasonable amount of proper attitude toward Christ and His Word, and toward your neighbor. If we have the proper attitude and make mistakes, if we get on our knees to help us straighten up and do right, if we have that attitude, you will be able to stand. The fire will not hurt your superstructure.

Paul said the people **“shall be saved.”** Paul then discussed a man who was in open fornication. He had his father’s wife (his stepmother). He either married or lived with her. He did this in the open and the apostle Paul was upset about it. Read what Paul said about this man in 1 Corinthians 5:1–5. He went after the flesh, so Paul said for the *ekklesia* to hand him **“unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,”** Paul said. The man was to suffer much loss.

The man would be saved in **“the day of the Lord Jesus.”** Salvation is guaranteed through Christ through grace, not of works, either good works or bad. Many do not understand that concept. Salvation is not from our works but through God by the works of Christ. It is guaranteed. The Kingdom of God is different. It is based on works. Yet even those works come from God the Father through Christ, as I will show. Yes, we have a lot of help indeed, even in good works. At the same time, you can miss out from the Kingdom.

The apostle Paul said of the fornicating man in Corinthians, to deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so he would die. At the same time, Paul said that his spirit may be saved (1 Corinthians 5:5). There was no question his spirit would be saved, because that is guaranteed through the principle of salvation through grace, which Paul presents in Corinthians and Romans.

Thankfully, this man in Second Corinthians repented and Paul said go to him because I do not want him to be over-sorrowful, help him out, I am paraphrasing. He saw the consequences of his bad works and he decided to change his way of living. Paul was pleased with that, but he was strong about the man needing to repent or he would lose his rewards.

There can be many difficulties if you are out of contact with God in this life. How many of us have had trouble after trouble if we know we are not in contact with the principles of God. It happens to all of us occasionally. Note the example of this man and how he changed; he was back in the grace of God, building that superstructure with gold, silver, and precious stones. He will be in the first resurrection, inheriting the Kingdom of God along with salvation.

Every person has to experience certain things: believe Christ, repent, you must do all of those things, but even those come to us through grace. We read in the Bible about the principles of our works that salvation

seems to require. Our works are not required. Even the works we do are given to us by grace through God.

Salvation along with all its parameters have nothing to do with our physical works. Salvation comes directly from God. All things come from God, and salvation itself is absolutely secure. Christ Jesus came into the world to save the world, and He will save every one of us, but He did not come into the world to give everybody the Kingdom of God in His Second Coming. That is different.

Salvation by Grace — for All

Look at some verses that refer to salvation through grace, and how it reaches the entirety of the world. It even reaches to embrace all intelligent beings in the entirety of creation. That is what the final teaching of Paul through the Holy Spirit reveals. It is most beautiful to realize this. The grace of God through Christ that reaches out with salvation is something wonderful, it is something beautiful, it is something glorious. When God sets out through Christ to save the world, both individually and collectively, let me tell you, They will accomplish it. They will do it under Their power, not your power, not my power.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

• *John 3:16–17*

When it says “**the world**,” it means all of it. Go to John chapter 6. Jesus is speaking again:

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That you also have seen me, and believe not.

All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which has sent me, that of all which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting [*eonian*, age-lasting] life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

• *John 6:35–40*

He says that “**all that the father gives me I will lose**” not one. How many people in the world has God the Father given to Christ? He was given the whole world; He was given everybody.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever [for the age]: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

• *John 6:51*

That does not mean part, but the whole world, reiterating this same thought again.

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up [in crucifixion] from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

• *John 12:31–32*

In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul reemphasized the theme of which people will be saved (not go into the Kingdom of God in the first resurrection, but those who will eventually be saved). He starts with a pronoun “Who” and that is God:

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

• *1 Timothy 2:4–6*

Every person who ever lived not only will be saved, but they will come to a knowledge of the truth. All will be included. In the King James Version it says **“to be testified in due time.”** In the Greek it says, **“to be a testimony in his own time periods.”** Or as another translation puts it, **“in his own strategic time periods.”** That is right; Paul wrote that all men would finally be saved. All will come to a complete and thorough understanding of the Word of God. All will know what salvation is about, but they receive that understanding at different times. The testimony of what God has done through Christ Jesus is made known in specific strategic periods.

We in the first resurrection will experience the glorious Kingdom of God: the age of the millennium, the age of the great white throne judgment, and even beyond. Others will not experience that, but all people will be saved at some time in the future, as Paul says in Ephesians 1:10. All will eventually receive salvation, not on their own but by what Christ Jesus does for them through the Holy Spirit working in their lives.

Here is a promise that all men will be saved. When it says all, it does not mean all sorts of men, it means **“all men.”** Look at 1 Timothy 4:10, **“... we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.”** There is no question about those who believe being saved. **“All men”** includes all those who do not believe right now. They will become believers. That will happen when God opens their minds in the future, the time periods Paul talked about in chapter 2 when all men will finally come to a full knowledge of the truth and reach salvation.

The apostle John understood the universality of the salvation God will give to mankind:

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

• 1 John 2:1–2

Everyone’s sins will be dealt with, and in fact, they already have been dealt with on the tree of crucifixion.

The apostle Paul also shows that all people will share, one of these days, in the salvation that God will give. **“For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead”** (2 Corinthians 5:14). Who died? Christ Jesus. For how many did He die? He **“died for all.”** If He died for all, then all were reckoned as dead — all.

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

[What is that ministry?] **To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”**

• 2 Corinthians 5:19

As far as God is concerned through Christ, He put all the sins of the world on His back, and as far as the world is concerned, relative to salvation (not the Kingdom of God) there is now nothing on their records, because they have been cleansed by Christ Jesus. All people have died because Christ died for all, not only Christians, everyone, the whole world as John says. If He died for all, then all are reckoned as dead. That is why Paul could say that God is not imputing their trespasses to us. Not only to us who are Christians, we know that, but unto them, the world. It is unto us the word of reconciliation:

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.”

• 2 Corinthians 5:20

In other words, if God has reconciled Himself to all mankind by taking care of their sins, then mankind should be told. Paul says we are ambassadors to tell mankind it is time for mankind to be reconciled to God.

One day it will be finished. **“For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** (2 Corinthians 5:21). It reaches out to embrace everyone in the world.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

• *Hebrews 2:9*

“Taste death” for every person. He did not say for a few. He did not say only for Christians, or just for some. He is raising up now to understand His truth. Paul says **“for every man”**

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

• *Hebrews 2:10*

The captain, the pioneer, the leader of the salvation, was made perfect by His death on the tree. He will reach out with his arms to embrace every man ever born, or will be born. That is what it says. I believe what it says concerning salvation because something that comes by grace involves no works whatsoever. Salvation is something of no works by us. If you want to inherit the Kingdom of God, works are involved. Even those works are inspired of God. The entire world will be saved through Christ Jesus. Paul wrote:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

• *Romans 5:12*

When it says **“all men”** here, all have indeed sinned, have they not? Certainly. Later Paul will exempt Christ, who did not sin. Everyone else has sinned since Adam sinned.

“(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come [Christ]. ...

For if by one man’s offence [by Adam] death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation [from Adam’s offense]; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift [of righteousness] came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

• *Romans 5:13–14, 17–20*

All Creation Reconciled

Adam sinned and all other people sinned **“in Adam.”** With Christ, all men will come to justification through a righteousness. It not only involves human beings, it actually reaches out to bring into the orbit of reconciliation the entirety of intelligent beings throughout the universe. Look at the first chapter of Ephesians, one of the Mystery epistles, giving the final teachings of Paul around 63 AD.

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he [Christ] has purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times [in the future] he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven[s], and which are on earth; even in him.”

• *Ephesians 1:9–10*

That means all beings throughout creation will be brought into a reconciled state coming together as one. It also will come through Christ’s works. In Colossians, a companion to Ephesians, Paul says:

“Who [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they

be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers [the angelic creatures]: **all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.**"

• *Colossians 1:15–19*

Now notice the important verse 20 that speaks of all the things being created by Christ Jesus:

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

• *Colossians 1:20*

That reaches to bring everyone into the orbit of salvation. God will do it through His power, through His authority, by His work, and He will put it into the minds of people to understand the whole truth. He will give people the will power to change their life which He will bring to pass finally to come to a salvation state where their characters are as perfect as God's, where their bodily composition is the same as Christ Jesus and where their family relationship to God is the same as everybody else's relationship with Him.

It will reach out to bring to this family relationship all intelligent beings in creation. That is what Paul is teaching. This is what salvation is all about. This is not the Kingdom of God, this is salvation of the dispensation of the fullness of times because Christ must reign over the Kingdom until all His enemies are put under His feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Then Christ will hand the Kingdom over to the Father as it says in 1 Corinthians 15:28, that all things will be God, and God will be all things. What a marvelous conclusion. In Philippians, also Paul shows the full scope of salvation.

"Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

• *Philippians 2:9–12*

Yes, he wants people to obey. Yes, at the name of Jesus one day every knee will bow, things on earth, in heaven, and even under the earth (under the seas, meaning the angels in the underworld). All will confess Christ and bow the knee to Him **"to the glory of God."**¹⁰

Note there are works involved in salvation after all, **"Work out your own salvation."** Yet I told you it was grace. I want to show what that work is. The next verse explains: **"For it is God which works in you both [1] to will and [2] to do of his good pleasure"** (Philippians 2:13). The fact that you "will" to be a Christian is something given to you by God. The fact that you do things to please God, even in the physical works that you do, are inspired by God — all the works you do. The work of salvation is carried out by one man, God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. There is where the work comes in. The work that you do is a reflection of His work. It is not work you do on your own, it is a work inspired by God. **"For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."**

All Israel are destined to be saved as well, as all people are. Romans chapter 11 expresses it marvelously.

"... blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, 'There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall

¹⁰ This sentiment is very similar to what David wrote in Psalm 66:1–4 where God is worshipped and His work praised. Every time the word "confess" or its cognates are used in the Hebrew or the Greek, in any form, noun or verb, it always shows that the confession comes from the heart, in sincerity, and is given willingly. Confession comes from a contrite heart, not being forced to confess. In all contexts of the Old and the New Testaments, it shows a willingness of the personalities to do so. This will be done for the glory of God. All creatures will want to bow their knee. All. And all will want to confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God. *ELM*

turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

• *Romans 11:25–27, quoting Isaiah 59:20*

“**All Israel shall be saved.**” One Israelite named Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and committed suicide. Judgment came upon him and he was handed over to Satan the Devil for the destruction of the flesh. He will not come up in the first resurrection, yet all Israel is destined to be saved. That is God’s Word, “**this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.**” He will take away the sins of Judas also; he will bow the knee and confess Jesus Christ as Lord because he will want to do so.¹¹

The vast majority of people will not inherit the Kingdom of God. As far as they are concerned, after they die they will come up in their resurrection, a long time in the future. Yet as far as they are concerned, immediately after their eyes closed in death, instantaneously they will be in the midst of their judgment. They will not experience time passing; there is no perception of time while dead. Paul goes on:

“**As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as you in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!**

For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counsellor? Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For [1] of him, and [2] through him, and [3] to him [toward him], are all things: to whom be glory for ever [*eon*, for the age]. Amen.”

• *Romans 11:28–36*

Everything was made for Him. Everything exists through Him. Everything is destined to go back to Him for the reconciliation of the entire creation of God. That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why it comes by grace and not by our works. Works are involved, but the works were by Jesus Christ. The works He does now, and all the works you do now, are inspired by God the Father through His Spirit to allow you to do them.

The will you have to accept Jesus Christ is something given to you by a miracle from God. It is not something you do on your own. It is something God gave you and me. We ought to be thankful for it. Once He gives that to us, He expects us to walk as proper children with the power, the authority, and the knowledge that we have. We should want to be in the first resurrection. We should want to inherit the Kingdom of God. If we do not want to inherit the Kingdom, and we turn aside (some few will do that) we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Some turn away. I suppose Judas Iscariot was one. There are others. “**By the which** [or “by whose”] **will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... For by one offering he has perfected for ever** [continually] **them that are sanctified**” (Hebrews 10:10, 14).¹²

If you show a proper attitude toward God in wanting to do His will, and repenting of the sins that come into your life, and wanting to do the right things and wanting to be there in the first resurrection, you can be guaranteed through Christ Jesus, you will be there. Keep that attitude in a proper way. That is what I have to

¹¹ When God opens Judas’ mind, He will give him the will and ability to perform exactly as you and I do. In the dispensation of the fullness of times, Judas will be saved (as all will be), but he will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Those who inherit the Kingdom will also be resurrected from the dead and changed to immortality at Christ’s Coming. *ELM*

¹² According to Paul, people are perfected continually by the sacrifice of Christ, but they can lose out if, as in Hebrews 10:26, people begin to sin willfully. What are some of their sins? They “**have trodden under foot the Son of God; and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and have done despite unto the Spirit of grace**” (verse 10:29). Paul goes on to say vengeance belongs to God, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God (verses 10:30–31). Though a person might not come up in the first resurrection and will miss the Kingdom, still it says in Hebrews 10:14, “**by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified.**” It is a fearful thing to deliberately say, I will be saved, what difference does it make? I will do as I please. *ELM*

do, that is what you have to do. If we do so, we will get the great reward, not only of salvation, but of the Kingdom of God itself. I want to be in that Kingdom of God. I bet you do too.

Ernest L. Martin, January 1990
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