

“I WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR” - Part 3*A True Story told by Clyde Thompson***THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE****To the Dungeon**

The officials of the penitentiary finally gave up on me. There was an old morgue behind death row that they had abandoned. It was an old concrete building containing six slabs that they had used to put caskets on. They put a steel door on it and put plated bars over the door opening, which was about a foot square. All the light I had came through those bars. The small cell was sandwiched between two tall buildings, and about five hours a day was the only time I could see my hand before me.

All the time I was in that building, I was allowed only a pair of shorts. They were afraid if I had anything else I would hang myself. They wouldn't even let me have a light, running water, or anything else. I didn't even have a spoon to eat with, for they were afraid I would sharpen it and kill myself or somebody else. Did you ever have to eat chili with your fingers? I have! When you have just a little bucket of cold water to wash your hands with, and pour it over that chili grease and grime, you can rub your hands together all you want, but it won't come off.

A Haunted Existence

Man is the crowning glory of God's creation. God made man in His own likeness and in His own image, and that's why it is a sin to kill a man. It's not a sin to kill an animal. If you just go out and shoot a dog, that is not a sin; but if you kill a man, that's a sin. Why? Because man is made in the likeness and image of God.

There are eight people in their graves because I have lived, people who probably would be alive if I had not gotten them into trouble or killed them with my own hands. It is mighty sad to know that you're killed somebody and that you can't do anything about it as far as giving back that life. We teach that repentance involves restitution, and this is true insofar as it is possible. But if you've ever killed somebody, you can't restore that life.

The Lord knows that I would gladly take the place of any of those people in those graves if he could stand on earth and be a child of God; but I can't take their places. Then what is life for me? The mercy of God, the goodness and the blessing of God, that He showed to us through the blood of His Son. Sometimes we want to limit the power of the blood of Christ. And we say, "Oh, well, you can be forgiven of this sin or that sin, or some other sin, but the Lord just can't forgive this one." Beloved, if He can forgive one sin He can forgive them all, and if the blood of Christ is sufficient for one sin, it is sufficient for all sins. I didn't realize this at first.

In this isolation cell I had three steps to make from one end to the other, and I walked back and forth in there like a wild animal for five and one-half years. I wore holes in that concrete floor where I made the turn at each end (with my bare feet). My feet got as hard as rocks.

A Time For Reflection

After I was there two or three months, I asked the guard who brought my food if he would bring me a Bible. I knew they wouldn't give me anything else to read. He went to the warden and received permission to bring me a New Testament with Psalms. At the time I didn't think much about it. I just wanted something to read to keep from going mad in that place.

I had trouble reading it since I had only a fourth-grade education. The King James Version was quite difficult then, though now I love it since I have educated myself in it. Somewhere I'd heard that the Bible was a book of contradictions and so could not

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

SEEKING TRUE WORSHIPPERS

Text: _____

I. Seeking Worshippers with _____

Notes:

II. Seeking Worshippers with _____

Notes:

III. Seeking Worshippers with _____

Notes:

IV. Seeking Worshippers with _____

Notes:

THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Text: _____

I. Paul's _____ of the _____

Notes:

II. Paul's _____ of the _____

Notes:

III. Paul's _____ for the _____

Notes:

be the Word of God. Having nothing better to do, I decided I could prove that. So I started studying to prove the Bible was a book of contradictions.

The more I studied I, the more it convinced me that it was a book of truth and I was false. When I came to realize that this was actually the word of God and the only hope for man in this world, I repented in tears, on my knees day and night for months. I read the Bible and kept asking God if He could and would forgive a wretch like me, and take me and use me to His honor and glory. He did. I began to write articles for Christian papers—some of you may remember reading them many years ago. Christian friends would write me and send me literature, and I would take that literature and hand it to other people.

I wasn't a hippie, but I must have looked like one, because they only gave me a back and shave once a week. They would take me out of my cell and down a corridor where there were men on each side, and here they would bathe and shave me, and I would pass out literature. The guard was very lenient with me. He would let me talk fifteen or twenty minutes. It wasn't long until I had three fellows wanting to obey the gospel.

I wrote to a preacher in Dallas and asked him to come down and baptize these three men. He came and the warden came around and got me and the three men and they were baptized. They had built a new chapel in the Walls Unit since they baptized me. In the old chapel they had a baptistery, but when they built the new one they conveniently forgot the baptistery. So they didn't have a place in the Walls to baptize anybody. Somebody remembered this old deep bathtub around on death row and suggested we use it.

We went down the corridor of death row where men were waiting to be executed and where I had been waiting once. There I saw these three men buried with the Lord in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. I was there to greet them and to say a prayer for them when they came out of that old bathtub where I supposedly took my last bath. You think that wasn't a thrill to me? It sure was! A number of people were baptized in that bathtub, too.

I continued to study the word of God. They finally let me begin to get other things in there to study, and they even let me have a light in the place; finally they put running water in there, too. They just fixed me up to stay! Well, I had turned back to the Lord and I didn't care any more about my freedom. I already had changed my attitude toward man, and it wasn't too hard to get this hatred of people out of my heart.

-continued

THE BOOK OF LIBERTY

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). With those words, Paul sums up the general purpose for which he penned yet his fourth epistle thus far, to the church located in the region of Galatia. There is a relief that comes with liberty whether it be from foreign rule, an addiction, or some other stronghold. And, generally speaking, liberty is something to which man attains. However, at certain periods of history it is evident that men have forsaken liberty for bondage, and such was the case in Galatia. The only question is, in what were they entangled.

As early as Genesis 17:10, God had commanded the men of Abraham’s seed to separate and distinguish themselves with a physical sign. The Lord told Abraham, *“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised.”* This circumcision, intended as temporary means of separation, came to be a symbol of pride among the Jews and they looked down their nose at anybody who did not likewise conform. Thus through history from its first mention onward, the Jews recognized the necessity of circumcision, but likewise gloried in it. As the New Testament unfolded and Christ’s will was revealed, circumcision was not a part of it, but still it remained a contentious issue with the Jews. Therefore as the gospel was preached and souls were saved, they were separated from the world by God, but on occasion non-Jewish converts were shunned because they had not submitted to circumcision. This is exactly the issue seen to have arisen in Galatia.

In Acts 13-14, while on their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas had traveled through the four major cities of Galatia, preached the gospel, converted souls, and established the church in those locations. However, upon their departure, Acts 15 reveals how the doctrine of the circumcision came to be the issue it was. *“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved”* (Acts 15:1). Therefore, though the pure truth was first revealed to them, quickly thereafter it was polluted into perversion by false, Judaizing teachers. Paul then felt it necessary to write to these brethren in hopes of resolving this perversion before it became a major problem that would damage the church near disrepair.

First, in Galatians 1, Paul addresses the Galatians their rejection of truth in general. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ”* (Galatians 1:6-7). From the pure gospel they had been deceived into accepting an imitation of the gospel, but Paul identifies that imitation as nothing more than perversion. There was absolutely no justification for accepting this perversion, regardless even of who delivered it. He went on to say, *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”* (Galatians 1:8). The gospel they had first heard and obeyed was the revealed and sufficient will of God, and to it and it alone were they to submit (Galatians 1:11-24).

Second, in Galatians 2-4, Paul went on to specifically address the doctrine of the circumcision and its relation to the Old Testament law only. The circumcision was an integral part of God’s will to the children of Israel under the Mosaic economy, illustrated by the events of Exodus 4:24-26. However, Paul stresses that wherein the circumcision identified an individual as being of the physical seed of Abraham and thus heirs of his promise, it is now obedient faith that identifies one as being of Abraham’s seed and heirs of his promise (Galatians 3:1-14). The Old Testament, and specifically the doctrine of the circumcision, is identified as a law of bondage from which man has been set free through Christ, the source of liberty. His conclusion about the matter is, *“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love”* (Galatians 5:6).

In the final two chapters of the book of Galatians, Paul encourages the brethren unto faithful living. Compared and contrasted are the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit and concluded is the fact that the abundant life is not found in circumcision or in uncircumcision, for it did not and does not matter, but the abundant life is found in Christ Jesus (Galatians 6:15).

The book of Galatians reveals a marvelous blessing available to every single man and woman on the face of the earth: that man can enjoy liberty in Christ. Not only did He provide liberty from the bondage of the law, but likewise is liberty provided from the bondage of sin. That freedom can be enjoyed today and throughout eternity, but only through Jesus Christ, the liberator of man.

-Andy Brewer