

“The SECRET” [to *mustērion*]

Studies in the later epistles of the apostle Paul

(No. 7 Continued from page 132)

CHAPTER 5

Turning to the name "*Melchizedek*" we seek to search and to discover more about our Lord's functions and office in His manifestation as High Priest *prior* to His incarnation in the flesh.

As indeed many commentaries and dictionaries point out, the name *Melchizedek* is a transliteration from the Hebrew *Malkiy-Tsedeq* (from *melek*: "king" or "royal", and *tsedeq*: "justice, rightness, righteousness"), and therefore meaning "King of righteousness".

Likewise regarding "King of Salem", it is commonly observed that *salēm* carries the meaning "peace" (from the Hebrew *shalem*, from the primitive root *shalam* which we recognize in the Jewish greeting "*Shalom*"), and that Salem may refer to the place where Melchizedek was king, thought to be the ancient (Jebusite) name for Jerusalem - *Strong/Thayer*.

Although the above is certainly correct, it hardly does justice to the Divine Author, our GREAT God, and what HE conveys in HIS Scriptures, therein that traditional commentaries completely - in our view - miss the truly important and amazing truths set forth.

To see this, we note first the highly unusual extended and heavy emphasis in the first part of Hebrews 7:1-4, corresponding to the heavy emphasis at the end of verse 7:3 [*Rotherham* emphasis]:

FOR [*gar*] ***“THIS Melchizedec,
King of Salem,
Priest of the Most High God”
Who “met” Abraham “returning from the slaughter of the kings”,
and “blessed” him;
To Whom also Abraham gave “a tenth part of all”;***

- first being by interpretation ‘King of righteousness’,
- and after that also “*King of Salem*”, which is ‘King of peace’;
- without father,
- without mother,
- without descent,
- having neither beginning of days,
- nor end of life;
- but having been likenessed off from the Son of the God

abideth a priest continually [quoting from Genesis 14:17 *et seq.*].

As can be seen, Paul - in his usual style - is dealing with a central matter inside (in effect) a paranthesis, first identifying the *subject* (Melchizedek) by a paraphrased and heavily emphasised longer quote from Genesis, before then dealing with matter at hand, namely the identification of Who is Melchizedek.

Having used the heavy emphasis for effect and identification, Paul thus says:

"**first** [*prōton*] [*men*; not translated] **being by interpretation** [*hermēneuō*] '**King of righteousness**',
and [*de*] **after that** [*epeita*] **also** [*kai*] "**King of Salem**", which is '**King of peace**'

NO commentary we are aware of examines this tremendously important text, because it is *here* in *this* text, that we find the key to gaining a much greater understanding of Melchizedek if we, humbly and diligently, search down the trail laid out by the Divine Author.

Consider the Greek which says:

"FIRST [*prōton men*] being BY INTERPRETATION [*hermēneuō*]...

AND [*de*] AFTER THAT [*epeita*; and note the emphasis]
ALSO [*kai*]..."

The Greek *prōton* means:

1. first in time or place
 - in any succession of things or persons
2. first in rank
 - influence, honour
 - chief, principal
3. first, at the first (*Strong/Thayer*);

[and note that "first" (i.e. without a noun, which we have in our text) means - according to *Thayer* - first absolutely and substantively];

epeita: "thereupon, thereafter, then, afterwards"; from *epi*: upon", and *eita*: adverb of time: "then, next, after that" - *Vine*;

The Greek *proton...epeita* is thus "used in enumeration of time and order (*Thayer*), or order alone" (which *Thayer* suggests is the case in Hebrews 7:2).

Bauer has the meaning as: "then, thereupon", used

(1) of time,

(2) to denote succession in enumerations -

- (a) together with indications of chronological sequence: *prōton...epeita*: "first...then"; "thereupon...then"; "First-fruits...then"; (*our emphasis*)
- (b) of succession alone".

Then we have "being **BY INTERPRETATION** [*hermēneuō*]..."

["...being by interpretation" is the Greek *hermēneuō*, which we previously examined in detail:

hermēneuō denotes "to explain, interpret" (English "hermeneutics") and is – according to *Vine* - used of explaining the meaning of words in a different language.

It occurs only 4 times in the New Testament:

John 9:7: "...the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation *hermēneuō*, "Sent"); literally: "is interpreted", or "is meaning").

John 1:42: "...Cephas which is by interpretation ("meaning") "A stone".

John 1:38: "They said unto Him: "Rabbi" (which is to say, being interpreted) "Master".

Hebr. 7:2: "Melchizedek..first being by interpretation [*hermēneuō*; literally: "being interpreted, or meaning"] King of righteousness" .

[**Erratum**: in our previous examination, we wrongly wrote as follows: "King of *Salem*, which is [*hermēneuō*; literally: "being interpreted, or meaning"] "King of peace"; We are at loss to explain how that happened! Likely our formatting program 'jumped' one line.

In any event: "...which is"... is plainly in the Greek *ho estin*, i.e. the neuter of the pronoun *hos*, together with the present indicative (third person singular) of *eimi*].

Thayer: "to explain in words, expound"; then "to interpret, *including* to translate what has been spoken or written in a foreign tongue into the vernacular".

Bauer: "explain, interpret" (*Bauer* noting that it also means simply "proclaim, discourse on", without the idea of interpreting).

We note that in each instance where *hermēneuō* is used, it denotes more than mere translation, but involves the explaining or expounding of a meaning, including providing the characteristics and sense.

Thus e.g. "Rabbi" (which is to say, being interpreted) "Master", is explained as meaning "Master".

This is in itself not obvious (hence the need for the explanation) because "Rabbi" derives from the Hebrew *rab*: "much, great, many" and is first used in Genesis 6:5: "... wickedness of man was great".

The second occurrence is Genesis 7:11: "the great deep"; hence also used of something particular great e.g. great teaching, i.e. "Master"].

Thus the 'interpretation' [*hermēneuō*] explains in context the true characteristic and meaning of word(s) employed.

Finally we have *men...de* in the text, with *men* "being a conjunctive particle (originally a form of *mēn*, "verily, truly," found in Hebrews 6:14), usually related to an adversative conjunction or particle, like *de*, in the following clause, which is placed in opposition to it - *Vine*.

We are now equipped to answer some important questions:

The Greek *prōton*, in our text, means first absolutely and substantively (since there is no noun), but is it first in (a) time, (b) place, (c) rank, or (d) by enumeration?

We can rule out (b) place (because the reference is to persons), and (c) rank

(because the references are to "King" of righteousness, and "King" of peace, both titles being ranked as "kings", i.e. of equal rank).

That leaves either *first* in time, or the *first* mentioned in an enumeration.

Because *epeita* is a composite of *epi* together with *eita*, which is an adverb of time, the working assumption is in any event, that *epeita* refers to time, rather than to enumeration.

To verify that, we turned to search all the 16 occurrences of *epeita*, confident that the answer be supplied by Scripture, because we are never disappointed when we thus "search".

The word *epeita* occurs as follows in Scripture:

"Then [*epeita*] the Pharisees and scribes asked Him "Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders...?" (Mark 7:5).

"Then [*epeita*] said he to another "And how much owest thou?... "(Luke 16:7).

"Then [*epeita*] after that saith He to His disciples "Let us go into Judaea again" (John 11:7).

"And God hath set some in the church, firstly [*prōton*] apostles, secondarily [*deuteros*] prophets, thirdly [*tritōs*] teachers, after that [*epeita*] miracles, then [*epeita*] gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues". (1 Cor. 12:28).

"After that [*epeita*] He was seen of...five hundred brethren at once...." (1 Cor 15:6).

"After that [*epeita*] He was seen of James; then [*eita*] of all the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:7).

"But every man in his own order: Christ the Firstfruits; afterward [*epeita*] they that are Christ's at His Coming". (1 Cor. 15:23).

"Howbeit that was not first [*prōton*] which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward [*epeita*] that which is spiritual" (1 Cor 15:46).

"Then [*epeita*] after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter..." (Galatians 1:18).

"Afterwards [*epeita*] I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Galatians 1:21).

"Then [*epeita*] fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem..." (Galatians 2:1).

"Then [*epeita*] we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air..."(1 Thessalonians 4:17).

"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first [*prōton*] being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that [*epeita*] also King of Salem, which is, King of peace" (Hebrews 7:2).

"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first [*proteros*: the comparative of *pro*, "before, aforetime," as being *definitely* antecedent to something else" - *Vine*]

for His own sins, and then [*epeita*] for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:27).

"But the wisdom that is from above is first [*prōton*] [*men* (not translated): "indeed"] pure, then [*epeita*] peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated..." (James 3:17).

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then [*epeita*] vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

It is clear that in the usage by the Divine Author, *epeita* (except maybe in the quote from 1. Corinthians 12:28) *always* refer to time.

[And 1. Cor. 12:28 is exceptional in having a completely clear enumeration: "first..., second..., third..., after that..., then...", i.e. listing eighth different spiritual gifts. Even then there is a time element, because "miracles" follows after apostles, prophets and teachers, both in ranking and, self-evidently, in time].

And that *epeita* must be understood to refer to time in our text in Hebrews 7:2, is further evidenced by the use of *men...de*, which places the *second* clause ("King of peace"), in opposition or contrast to the *first* clause ("King of righteousness"), which is not something done in an enumeration.

[In fact, Hebrews 7:2 is the only instance in the 16 *epeita* texts, where *men...de* occurs; for completeness' sake note that in James 3:17 is used *de...men*, correctly translated "but...indeed first pure...").

Thus our text in Hebrews 7:2 has the Scriptural and literal meaning as follows:

"THIS the Melchizedec...

..."**first** [*prōton men*] **being by interpretation** [*hermēneuō*]

‘KING of righteousness’,

and [*de*] **after that** [*epeita*: namely later in time (emphasized)] **also** [*kai*]

“KING of Salem”, which is ‘KING of peace’ "

This is an astonishing revelation about Melchizedek's offices and positions:

Melchizedek was first (in time, and absolutely and substantively) 'KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS'.

He subsequently ALSO became 'KING OF PEACE'.

Both of these titles - "*King of Righteousness*" and "*King of Peace*" - occur *nowhere* else in Scripture and thus belong exclusively to our Lord in His then High-Priestly manifestation as Melchizedec, expressing His particular offices, functions and titles according to the rank of Melchizedec.

"King of Righteousness" is, as noted before, the name *Melchizedek* as a transliteration from the Hebrew *Malkiy-Tsedeq* (from *melek*: "king" or "royal", and *tsedeq*: "justice, rightness, righteousness").

And to understand what this title and office implies, we must consider in some detail the meaning of that which man - in his fallen state - simply *cannot* provide, and does not have in *himself*, namely: righteousness.

[In Hebrew: *tsēdaqah* is used of "righteousness and justice, in respect of:

- righteousness (in government), and of judge, ruler, king; law; Davidic king Messiah;
- righteousness (used of *God's* attribute);
- righteousness (in a case or causes); righteousness, truthfulness (as ethically right);
- righteousness (as vindicated), justification, salvation *of God*; and prosperity (of people); and righteous acts"; – *Strong*] (*our emphasis*).

The root of *tsēdaqah* is *tsadaq*.

[The Hebrew *tsadaq*, in its various forms, has the following meanings:

- to be just, be righteous; to have a just cause, be in the right, to be justified;
- to be just (of *God*)
- to be just, be righteous (in conduct and character);
- to be *put* or *made* right, be justified;
- justify, make to appear righteous, make someone righteous;
- to do or bring justice (in administering law);
- to declare righteous, justify;
- to justify, vindicate the cause of, save;
- to *make* righteous, turn to righteousness;
- to justify oneself; - *Strong*; (*our emphasis*);

Gesenius has *tsadaq* with the original meaning "to be right, straight", as a straight road or "stiff, rigid" – used of a lance. Hence: "true, sincere; to be just, righteous"].

Finally we have *tsaddiyq*, the adjective (from the same root: *tsadaq*);

[“just, righteous, including in government, in one’s cause and in conduct and character, as well as lawful, correct. Also: righteous as justified and vindicated by God” –*Strong*.

Gesenius: “used of a judge or a king who maintains right and dispenses justice: 2 Samuel 23:3; hence used very often of God as being a just Judge, both in punishing and in rewarding”] (*our emphasis*).

In the Greek, *dikaioσynē* is, in a broad sense, the "state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God, one who is *dikaioσ*".

[Thus *dikaïosynē* is "the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God; integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting;

in a narrower sense: justice or the virtue which gives each his due";

dikaïos is: "righteous, observing divine laws, and is in a wide sense: upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God; also used

- of him who is innocent, faultless, guiltless;
- of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life;
- used of only CHRIST truly;
- also used of him who is approved of or acceptable of God;
- used (*negatively*) of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves in their virtues, whether real or imagined";

used in a narrower sense, it is "rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them" (*Strong/Thayer*) (*our emphasis*)

"In the New Testament it [*dikaïos*] denotes "righteous," a state of being right, or right conduct, judged whether by the Divine standard, or according to human standards, of what is right. Said of God, it designates the perfect agreement between His nature and His acts (in which He is the standard for all men)" (*Vine*);

Hence *dikaïos* (often translated in the KJV by "just" or "justly", although "righteous" is often the better meaning) is used (according to *Vine*):

(1) in the broad sense, of persons:

(a) of God, (e.g. John 17:25; Romans 3:26; 1 John 1:9; 2:29; 3:7);

(b) of Christ, (e.g. Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1);

(c) of men, (Matthew 1:19; Luke 1:6; Romans 1:17; 2:13; 5:7);

(2) of things;

- blood (metaphorical) (Matthew 23:35);
- Christ's judgment (John 5:30);
- any circumstance, fact or deed (Matthew 20:4; Luke 12:57; Acts 4:19; Ephesians 6:1; Philippians 1:7; 4:8; Colossians 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:6);
- "the commandment" (the Law) (Romans 7:12);
- works (1 John 3:12);
- the ways of God (Revelation 15:3);

"justly, righteously, in accordance with what is right", is said:

(a) of God's judgment, in 1 Peter 2:23; and

(b) of men (Luk 23:41), "justly;" (1 Corinthians 15:34) in the RV i.e. "righteously" (in the KJV, "to righteousness") and 1 Thessalonians 2:10 (RV), "righteously" (in Titus 2:12).

Used as a noun or an adjective, i.e. right (not wrong) or rightly, *dikaïos* is translated "just, righteous, that which is in accordance with *dikē*" (i.e. "rule, right, justice");

[*Thayer* has the meaning of *dikē* as: "custom, usage right, just (probably from the obsolete *deiknyō* : "to show, expose to the eyes")" - *Strong/Thayer*].

Hence *dikaio*s is translated "right" in Matthew 20:4; Luke 12:57; Acts 4:19; Ephesians 6:1.

The RV has "right" in Philippians 1:7 and 2 Peter 1:13, whereas the KJV has "meet".

Similarly *dikaio*s is translated "righteous, righteously" (signifying "just" without prejudice or partiality) and is thus used, e.g.

- of the judgment of God (2 Thessalonians 1:5, 6);
- of His judgments (Revelation 16:7; 19:2);
- of His character as Judge (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 16:5);
- of His ways and doings (Revelation 15:3).

In 1 Corinthians 15:34 *dikaio*s is translated "righteously" in the RV, i.e. "(awake up) righteously", whereas the KJV has "(awake to) righteousness"

Finally, *Vine* notes that

(1) in Revelation 22:11 the best texts have *dikaio*synē "righteousness" with *poieō*, "to do" (and thus the RV: "let him do righteousness"); the KJV follows those which have the passive voice of *dikaioō* and renders it "let him be righteous", literally: "let him be made righteous" [which we believe, in context, to be the better meaning];

(2) *dikaiokrisia*, "righteous judgement" (*dikaio*s, and *krisis*), occurs in Romans 2:5.

Vine has this note about "Righteousness" (*dikaio*synē) (our excerpt, edit and emphasis):

"Righteousness...is "the character or quality of being right or just... It is used to denote an attribute of God, (e.g. Romans 3:5, the context of which shows that "the righteousness of God" means essentially the same as His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises).

Romans 3:25, 26 speaks of His "righteousness" as exhibited in the Death of Christ, which is sufficient to show men that God is neither indifferent to sin nor regards it lightly. On the contrary, it demonstrates that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His condemnation of sin;

...*dikaio*synē is found in the sayings of the Lord Jesus,

- (a) of whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God, (Matthew 5:6, 10, 20; John 16:8, 10);
- (b) whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man (Matthew 3:15; 21:32);
- (c) the sum total of the requirements of God (Matthew 6:33);
- (d) religious duties (Matthew 6:1); distinguished as almsgiving, man's duty to his neighbor (Matthew 6:2-4); prayer, his duty to God (Matthew 6:5-15); fasting, the duty of self-control (Matthew 6:16-18).

In the preaching of the Apostles recorded in Acts, the word has the same general meaning.

So also in James 1:20; 3:18, in both of Peter's epistles, 1 John and the Revelation. In 2 Peter 1:1, "the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" is the righteous dealing of God with sin and with sinners on the ground of the Death of Christ.

"Word of righteousness" in Hebrews 5:13, is probably the gospel, and the Scriptures as containing the gospel, wherein is declared the righteousness of God in all its aspects.

This meaning of *dikaiosynē*: "right action", is frequent also in Paul's writings, as in all five of its occurrences in Romans 6; Ephesians 6:14, etc.
But for the most part he uses it of that gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into right relationship with God.

THIS righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man's own, or any other condition than that of faith in Christ.... The man who trusts in Christ becomes "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21), i.e. becomes in Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself.

Because Abraham accepted the Word of God, making it his own by that act of the mind and spirit which is called faith, and, as the sequel showed, submitting himself to its control, therefore God accepted him as one who fulfilled the whole of His requirements (Romans 4:3)....

"Righteousness" is not said to be imputed to the believer save in the sense that faith is imputed ("reckoned" is the better word) for righteousness.

It is clear that in Romans 4:6,11, "righteousness reckoned" must be understood in the light of the context, "faith reckoned for righteousness" (Romans 4:3, 5, 9, 22).
"For" in these places is *eis*, which does not mean "instead of", but "with a view to" [that is: implying purpose].

The faith thus exercised brings the soul into vital union with God in Christ, and inevitably produces righteousness of life, that is, conformity to the will of God.] *

* [From Notes on Galatians, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 246, 247].

Emphatically, the word "just [i.e. righteous]" is used in Ecclesiastes 7:20:

"For as for men, there is none **righteous** [*tsaddiyq*] in the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Rotherham).

As indeed quoted by and expanded on by the apostle Paul:

"....both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

As it is written:

*There is none **righteous** [*dikaios*] no, not one:*

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable;

there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [This last line is quoted from Psalm 14:1]

(Romans 3:9-12, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Even the most righteous of *men* – invariably – falls short of *true* righteousness.

Only our Lord Jesus Christ is TRULY *just*, as it is written:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:

behold, **thy King** cometh unto thee:

He **is just**, [*tsaddiyq*] and **having salvation** [*yasha*];
lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"
(Zechariah 9:9, KJV).

Note that in 2 Samuel 23 we have the last (and therefore particularly important) words by King David, who - being also a *prophet* - speaks *God's* words, as here stated specifically:

"The Spirit of the LORD [*Jehovah*] spake by me, and **His Word** * was in my tongue.
The God [*Elohim*] of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me:

He that ruleth over men [or "mankind"] **must be just**, *ruling in the fear of God* [*Elohim*"].
(2 Samuel 23:2-3, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*);

The heavy emphasis is upon this future Ideal King or Ruler of mankind, that He must be just [*tsaddiyq*] – and David is here speaking about the King of Kings, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

* [The emphasized "His Word" is the Hebrew *millah*, used about Royal or Divine decrees (as in Psalm 19:14; Daniel 3:22, 28)].

To be just is again - *by this Divine decree* – strongly connected with "*fear of God*" because

"He ...must be just, ruling in in the fear of God" –

even as it is also written: "*fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*".

And such fear and beginning of wisdom leads on to the further wisdom which justifies God, rather than justifying oneself.

[We find the phrase "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* [or *knowledge*], occurring altogether only 3 times in Scripture . In the English, they sound quite similar, but the Divine Author makes some very precise and important distinctions:

Psalm 111:10

"The fear [*yir'ah*] of the LORD [*Jehovah*] is the beginning [*re'shiyth*] of wisdom *chokmah*] a good understanding

[*sekel*: "prudence, insight, understanding"; the root is *sakal*:
"to look at, behold, prudent, circumspect, to attend, to turn the mind to" - *Gesenius*]

have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever".

Proverbs 1:7

"The fear [*yir'ah*] of the LORD [*Jehovah*] is the beginning [*re'shiyth*] of knowledge [*da'ath*]:
but fools despise wisdom [*chokmah*] and instruction".

Proverbs 9:10

"The fear [*yir'ah*] of the LORD [*Jehovah*] is the beginning [*tēchillah*] of wisdom [*chokmah*]:
and the knowledge [*da'ath*] of The Holy is understanding [*biynah*]".

The differences may be shown thus:

"The fear [yir'ah] of the LORD [Jēhovah] is the

...beginning [re'shiyth] of wisdom [chokmah]; a good understanding [sekel]...

...beginning [re'shiyth] of knowledge [da'ath]...fools despise wisdom [chokmah]...

...beginning [tēchillah] of wisdom [chokmah] and

knowledge [da'ath] of THE HOLY is understanding [biynah]".

We note that in the two first texts (Psalm 111 and Proverbs 1) "beginning" is *re'shiyth* (of either wisdom, or knowledge: *da'ath*), and Psalm 111 refers to understanding [*sekel*, (with the meaning above)].

The Hebrew *re'shiyt* means "beginning, best, chief, first (a) with regard to time, (b) with regard to dignity, from the root *ro'sh*: "head, top, summit), chief - whatever is highest or supreme, first and foremost, the beginning, commencement" (*Gesenius*). In Proverbs 9 "beginning" is *tēchillah*; and this is beginning of knowledge [*da'ath*] specifically "of The HOLY" - and THAT is understanding of a special kind: *biynah*.

The Hebrew *tēchillah* means "beginning, first, the first time, from the beginning" (*Strong*, likewise *Gesenius*); the root is *chalal* "to perforate, pierce through", hence: "loosen, lay open, give access to", and "begin" from the idea of opening (thus e.g. also "to profane", i.e. a sanctuary by gaining unlawful access)" - *Gesenius*.

Thus the underlying thought appears to be a "beginning", which involves the sense of "being pierced".

The Hebrew *biynah* means "understanding, discernment (from the root *biyn*: "to perceive, discern to understand, know (with the mind)" - *Strong*; "understanding, intelligence, insight" - *Gesenius*.

We then note that *biynah* occurs in e.g. the following texts:

- "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or Who hath given understanding [*biynah*] to the heart?" (Job 38:36).
- "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding [*biynah*]" (Proverbs 3:5).
- "Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding [*biynah*]" (1Chronicles 22:12).
- "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon HIM, the spirit of wisdom and understanding[*biynah*] the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:2).

"O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding[*biynah*]" (Daniel 9:22)

Do not these texts

- referring to "inward parts" and the "heart";
- confirming that understanding must be "given" by the Lord (and in Daniels case, by an angel sent for this purpose);
- confirming that such understanding is *not* our own, to lean on;
- referring to our Lord, however, possessing such understanding;

do they not tell us, that this "beginning" ("being pierced") of such wisdom and knowledge of The HOLY, which is "understanding" in the same sense as these texts, MUST come from outside: from "above", namely by the Lord providing.

And does not this immediately bring to our mind, what is specifically stated in Hebrews 4:11-13, about the WORD of GOD:

"**FOR** the Word of God is **quick**

[old English; literally: "**living** [zaō] is the Word of God"]

and powerful [*energēs*: "in work, effectual"; Darby: "operative"; ASV: "active"] and sharper [*tomōteros*: the only occurrence in the NT]

than any [*pas*: any whatsoever]

two-edged sword

[*distomos*: literally "two-mouthed" sword (*dis*: "twice" and *stoma*: "a mouth");

[used only 3 times in the New Testament and only about this sword here in Hebrews 4:12 and in Revelation 1:16 and 2:12. The Lord Jesus Christ has *this* sword.

In the Septuagint (LXX) the word is used in Judges 3:16: "a dagger which had two edges"; Psalms 149:6: "a two-edged sword in their hand" and Proverbs 5:4: "sharp as a two-edged sword".

Do NOT be deceived into thinking that this is '*figurative language*'.

This sword – the Word of God manifested in this sentient form – is both *living* and *real*, and its actions and capabilities are *real*].

piercing

[*dūkneomai*: "to go through, penetrate" (*dia*: "through"; *ikneomaia*: "to go") is used of the power of the Word of God, in "piercing" - *Vine*. The only occurrence in the New Testament.

Used in the Septuagint (LXX) in Exodus 26:28:

"And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end" – *ASV*].

even to the dividing asunder

[*merismos* (*meros*: "a part"): "a division, partition" (incl. "a distribution" – hence "gifts" in Hebrews 2:4), and "a separation so far as to cleave asunder or separate" – *Thayer*, here in Hebrews 4:12.

The only 2 occurrences in the New Testament].

of soul [*psychē*], and

spirit [*pneuma*], and

of the joints [*harmos*: only here in the NT]

and marrow [*myelos*: only here in NT],

and is a discerner

[*kritikos*: "discerner, "able to judge"; *kritēs* is "a judge" ("one who passes or arrogates to himself, judgment on anything" - *Thayer*).

According to *Vine*: *kritikos* signifies "that which relates to judging (*krinō*, "to judge"), fit for, or skilled in, judging" (English "critical"), found in Hebrews 4:12, of the Word of God as

"quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (literally "critical of, etc."), i.e., discriminating and passing judgment on the thoughts and feelings.

This is the only occurrence in the New Testament.

Note again how this is a *real* and *living*, *sentient* capability of the Word of God].

of the thoughts and intents of the heart [*kardia*].

We therefore think that the reason for the different words used by the Holy Spirit in Proverbs 9:10, is that we are thereby taught that the *particular* wisdom and knowledge, which results in a more true and *deeper* understanding of THE HOLY, such wisdom and knowledge arises from the inward parts and the heart of man being pierced through by the Word of God, resulting in a deeper, truer and all-pervading sense of faith-full fear of the absoluteness of Almighty God's HOLINESS].

It is highly *instructive*, that

- "righteousness" *used* to be "rightwisness" in Old English *combining* the concepts of "wisdom" and "right";
- and that righteous was "right-wise".

[According to *Vine*, "rightwisness" in Old English "clearly expresses the meaning of *dikaioynē*".

This important Scriptural connection between "right" and "wisdom" is now lost to the English reader; the dictionaries inform us that the word is now "obsolete". Language - like *all* other things pertaining to human wisdom and endeavors - is inevitably debased and downgraded over time].

Hence *this* passage (1 Corinthians 1:30, KJV):

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom * and **righteousness** [*dikaioynē*] and sanctification, and redemption"

reads as follows in Tyndale's New Testament (1526):

"Christ Iesu which of God is made vnto vs wysdome
and also **rightewesnes** and saunctifyinge and redempcion";

and, likewise, in the Wycliffe Bible (1395):

"Crist Jhesu, which is maad of God to vs wisdom, and **riytwisnesse**..."

* [The Greek reads: "Who became... Wisdom from God";
similarly NIV has: "Christ Jesus, Who has become for us Wisdom from God"].

The apostle Paul, here in 1 Corinthians, then goes on to say in verse 31:

“THAT [Greek *hina*: "in order that"] according as it is written, “*He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 1:31, KJV).

Paul is quoting from and summarizing Jeremiah 9:23-24:

“Thus saith the LORD, “*Let **not** the wise man glory in **his** wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:*

*BUT let him that glorieth glory in this, that **he understandeth and knoweth ME**,
that I Am the LORD
Which exercise lovingkindness, judgment,
and righteousness, [tsēdaqah; LXX: dikaiosynē] in the earth:
for in these things **I delight**”,
saith the LORD”.*

[And regarding seeking *that* we “understandeth and knoweth ME”: this is surely *why* we have the written Word (2 Tim. 3:15), and the living “Word” (John 1:18)].

The wisdom, which *understands and knows* the Lord, and which is even our Lord Jesus Christ Who – from God – became *our* Wisdom and “rightwisness”, *this* wisdom arises from “*a broken heart*” and a “*contrite spirit*” - and leads a man to condemn himself.

Because he has understood first his fallen state, and that he is utterly lost – and *then* understood that *only* as someone with “a crushed and lowly spirit” (Rotherham), will the Holy God dwell with him:

“For thus saith **the High and Lofty One * that inhabiteth eternity**, WHOSE Name is **Holy**, **I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones**” (Isaiah 57:15, KJV).

* [same words as in Isaiah 6:1 of the vision of God attended by the Seraphim].

We can only obtain such “a crushed and lowly spirit” through the work of God; HE has to do it.

We cannot do it ourselves. This was learned by:

the son (in the parable told by our Lord) who was lost, and confessed:

“*Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee. No longer am I worthy to be called a son of thine...*”
(Luke 15:21; Rotherham);

- the brothers of Joseph:

“*...how shall we justify ourselves, when [or since] God Himself hath found out the inequity of thy servants?*”
(Genesis 44:16; Rotherham);

- King David:
"I have sinned against the Lord"
 (2 Samuel 12:13, KJV);
- The prophet Isaiah:
"Woe is me! For I am undone [or lost]; because I am a man of unclean lips"
 (Isaiah 6:5, KJV);
- Daniel:
"my honour hath been turned in me to corruption"
 (Daniel 10:8, Young's Literal Translation);
- The apostle Peter:
"he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8, KJV);

AND it was learned by Job: *"I am vile"; "I abhor myself"; "I repent in dust and ashes"*

(Job: 40:4; 42:6, KJV) (As further set forth in our "Gethsemane" book; q.v.)

As it is written:

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

(James 5:11, KJV).

"The *end* [Greek: *telos*] of the Lord" in respect of Job was exactly to bring about that state of Job, *which would allow God to impart to Job God's OWN righteousness*, i.e. making Job righteous – which can *only* be achieved thorough Christ Jesus becoming our righteousness from God.

[Greek: *telos*; "the fulfillment or completion of any thing, i.e. its end or issue [Latin: *effectus*]. It denotes strictly...the arrival of a complete or perfect [state]" – *Bullinger*.

In each of the cases above the *means* whereby the Lord brought about that they ended up with "a contrite spirit" included:

- Famines (in the case of the son in the parable, and Joseph's brethren);
- A glorious vision of the Lord (in the case of Isaiah, Daniel and Job);
- The parable told by the prophet Nathan, cutting the heart of King David;
- A wonderful miracle by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the case of Simon Peter].

Job therefore, and *before* he obtains this wisdom, poses this central question to which he does not have the real answer:

"How shall mortal man be just [tsadaq] with God?" (9:2)

[Though not part of our purpose, it must be said that "man's wisdom" often believes the answer to be: through *religion*, i.e. the attempt by man to become righteous through morality, ordinances or rules for holy living.

Man is fallen. So what *can* man do? This is the endeavor of religion – man should do *something*!

What that something may be, depends -of course- on which religion, or sect, or tradition, or establishment man belongs to. Whichever it is, it *will* tell man something he must *do* to obtain righteousness with God.

Similarly, Job's three friends tried to reason out the answer from human experience, tradition or merit. *God* judged their efforts to be "darkened counsels by words without knowledge", and "foolishness" (Job 38:2, 42:8)].

By *contrast* the Scriptures tell us:

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers **the Father** seeks.

God is Spirit, and His worshipers MUST worship ***in spirit and in truth***." (John 4:23-24, KJV).

"Then said they unto Him, "WHAT SHALL WE DO, that we might work the works of God?"
Jesus answered and said unto them,

"This is the work of God, that YE **BELIEVE on HIM Whom He hath sent".**
(John 6:28-29, KJV).

"NO man can come to Me, EXCEPT the Father Which hath sent Me, DRAW HIM:
and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets [literally: "standeth written"]:

"And they shall be all taught of God".

Every man *therefore* that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto ME".
(John 6:44-45, KJV).

[Our Lord here quotes from Isaiah and references Jeremiah:

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" (Isaiah 54:13, KJV);

"...I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor..., saying, *Know the LORD*: for they shall *all know* Me,...saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more".
(Jeremiah 31:33-34, KJV)].

Righteousness can only come *from God* and through knowing HIM; and *that* only through the belief in our God and Saviour, even our Lord Jesus Christ – because HE is the One Who achieved redemption for us, who have all sinned and come short of God's glory.

As Paul makes abundantly clear in Romans, chapter 3:

"But NOW the righteousness OF GOD without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Even **the righteousness OF GOD** which is by **faith OF Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe:

for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Being justified freely by HIS grace THROUGH the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation THROUGH FAITH IN His blood,

to declare HIS righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, THROUGH the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time HIS righteousness: that HE might be just, and The JUSTIFIER of him which believeth in Jesus."

(Romans 3:21-26, KJV).

[Differing translations of Verse 22 have sown considerable confusion:

"Even the righteousness OF GOD which is by faith OF Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe".

We are here quoting from the KJV.

However, several major versions have "by faith IN Jesus Christ" (e.g. RV, RSV, ASV, NIV, Holman, Coverdale, Rotherham, NASB, NKJV).

Is it Christ's faith or faithfulness here? – or is it the believer's faith in Christ?

The issue is the genitive: Jesus Christ's faith or faithfulness (*pisteōs* has both meanings); whether it means faith or faithfulness "of Christ", or faith "in" Christ.

We have no doubt that Paul refers to the faith or faithfulness OF our Lord Jesus Christ (and not the believer's faith in Christ) because:

1. In our view it more accurately reflects the Greek: The text is literally:

"*Dikaiosynē de Theou dia pisteōs Iesou Christou eis pantas tous pisteuontas*"
"Righteousness and of God through faith Jesus Christ's unto all the [ones] believing"

(namely "God's righteousness through Christ's faith (faithfulness)" unto all believing, i.e. referring back to this whole statement).

2. The word *eis* ("unto") implies *purpose*. The purpose in context is God's purpose through Christ.

Also the immediate context both before and after is God's righteousness through Christ manifested. It seems odd that Paul should then switch the focus from Christ to the believer, in mid-argument.

3. We have the *same* genitive in the very next chapter: *pisteōs Abraam* (4:16) where it is clearly the faith OF Abraham, and not the faith IN Abraham.

4. We have the *same* genitive concerning the *same* subject in Philippians 3:

"...that I may win Christ, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ [*dia pisteōs Christou*], the righteousness which is of God by faith:

"Faith (faithfulness) OF Jesus Christ" is the reading of e.g. both Young's and Green's Literal Translations, Darby, KJV and 21st Century KJV, Douay-Rheims (1899 American Version), the Webster Bible, the Peshitta-Lamsa Translation, as well as most older versions: Wycliffe (1395), Tyndale (1525), Bishop's Bible (1568), Geneva Bible (1587) and Wesley's New Testament (1755).

Common English Bible: "through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ";

The Complete Jewish Bible has: "through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah";

NIV, Holman, Lexham English Bible, and Today's New International Version all translate "IN Jesus Christ, but also have the margin-note: "Or: *through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ*".

"How shall mortal man be just with God?"

In essence the answer – which Job and his friends did not have – is that given by Paul: by *faith* in GOD's righteousness.

Such faith "sees" and acknowledges "*with a broken heart and a contrite spirit*", that all (including one self) are "sinful men", "unclean", and "have sinned" in the sight and presence of Holy and Almighty God:

- "For as for men, there is none **righteous** in the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"
- "...both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written:
*There is none **righteous**, no, not one:
There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*".

Such faith directs itself unto the Lord and worships HIM "*in spirit and in truth*".

And that includes believing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when HE says, when asked what should "we do?"

"This is the work of God, that ye **believe on HIM
Whom He hath sent**".

Believing "on HIM" is believing on a Person – Someone; not something. Hence for that belief to be true and strong, we must *know* that Person. We must (through "*the power of God*") know Him personally in our hearts, and we must know what He says, i.e. His words and actions, and what God says about Him, i.e. God's words and actions pertaining to our Lord Jesus Christ.

For that purpose – for *God* to bring that knowledge to *us* - "the Scriptures *testify*... of ME".

Such faith then looks unto God, namely "...I the **LORD**."

And there is **no** God else beside Me;
A just [*tsaddiyq*] **God and a Saviour**, there is **none** beside Me.
Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
For I am God, and there is **none** else..."
(Isaiah 45:21, KJV).

Such faith – looking unto God - then petitions and cries to the Lord for HIM to do something:

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold Wondrous things out of Thy law."

[“open” is “unveil”; “behold” is “discern; see clearly”] (Psalm 119:18, KJV).

Such faith trusts in what our Lord says the *Father* will do – and marks carefully what our Lord says in that regard:

“NO man can come to Me, EXCEPT the Father Which hath sent Me, DRAW HIM....
....Every man that THEREFORE hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto ME”.
(John 6:44-45, KJV)

Our Lord also tells us that we “*shall be all taught of God*”.

And how shall we hear and learn of the Father? How shall we be taught?
Through the testimony of His Word – the testimony of *God Himself*:

“God’s testimony is greater [*than human testimony*] because it is the testimony of God, which He has given about His Son.
Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony.

Whoever does **not** believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because they have not believed **the testimony God has given about His Son**.

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son”.
(1 John 5: 9-11, NIV).

Like the apostle Paul, we similarly seek to *receive* that which is of the utmost importance to *us*:

“For I passed on to you as most important **what I also received**:
that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”
(1.Cor.15: 3-4, Holman; *emphasis Rotherham*).

We hear and learn of the Father and we are taught of God, when we read His Word.

As a consequence we will, when we examine His Scriptures, come to believe:

“... the Berean Jews...examined the Scriptures every day...As a result, many of them believed....”
(Acts 17: 10-12, NIV).

Thereby the Father draws us so we come to HIM: our Lord and God, even our Savior Jesus Christ – and we get to *know* Him because

“the Scriptures *testify*... of ME”.

THIS is the revelation from God which wisdom declares - and thus our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Wisdom.

Until we have this knowledge, we will neither condemn ourselves – nor justify God.

All, if they have eyes to see, can perceive the *works* of God; they are plain to all.

But God's *ways* are secret and hidden and can only be known by His revelation to those who belong to Him through believing on His Son.

Those who believe, they accept God's testimony; and God then opens their eyes so they *can see* the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“He *made* known His ways unto Moses...”

By contrast, He *only* made known: “...His acts unto the children of Israel”
(Psalm 103:7, KJV)

[“ways”; Hebrew: *derek*: “way, road, distance, journey, manner, path, direction”
(*Strong*)

Gesenius notes that when used of God, it means *His course of action*]

The Hebrew *derek* is also used in Proverbs chapter 8, which sets forth Wisdom personified.

Wisdom there speaks to *mankind* [*adam*: sons of earth]: “*Unto you, O men, I call!*” (Proverbs 8:4).

In Proverbs 8:22, we then have:

“The LORD possessed Me in the Beginning of His way [*derek*], **before** His works of old.”

[“Possessed” translates the Hebrew *qanah* meaning: “to get, acquire, obtain buy, possess” and of God: “originating”; “redeeming [His people]” (*Strong*)]
Strong also includes “creation; creating” as meanings of *qanah*.

However, *Gesenius* specifically *rejects* this meaning, and notes the original sense of *qanah*: “to erect, set upright”; hence: “to found” (as in founding or setting the foundations of the earth); also “acquire for oneself, buy, obtain”.

The *Companion Bible* a.o. notes: “possessed” i.e “acquired”, implying a definitive act, as “constituted”].

Since Proverbs 8:22 obviously (and as specifically noted also by *Gesenius*) speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ – here with His title of “Wisdom” – the translation in the KJV may not immediately be easy to understand.

Most of the versions follow the KJV, or the literal Hebrew:

“Jehovah possessed Me -- the Beginning of His way, Before His works since then” (Young).

However, some versions translate – more correctly in our view - in context:

Rotherham: “Yahweh [*Jehovah*] had constituted Me the Beginning of His way”

Wycliffe: “The Lord wielded Me in the Beginning of His ways”

Bishop's Bible: “The Lorde Him Selfe had Me in possession in the Beginning of His ways”

Knowledge of God and the consequent understanding of man's utterly fallen and hopeless state, comes from the Lord Himself.

HE does that work in the form of "*wisdom that is from above*" (James 3:17).

We see in James, chapter 3, that this wisdom "*from above*" is contrasted with wisdom which "*descendeth not*" from above, but which is:

- "*earthly* [Greek: *epigeios*];
- "*sensual*" or "*natural*" [*psuchikos*]
- "*devilish*" [*literally*: "demoniacal"; Greek: *daimoniōdēs*] (verse 15)

[The word *psuchikos*: "belonging to the *psuchē*, soul" (as the lower part of the immaterial in man), "natural, physical," describes the man in Adam and what pertains to him (set in contrast to *pneumatikos*, "spiritual", 1 Corinthians 2:14; 15:44 (twice), 46 (in the latter used as a noun);

James 3:15: "sensual" (the RV margin has "natural" or "animal"), here relating perhaps more especially to the mind, a wisdom in accordance with, or springing from, the corrupt desires and affections" - *Vine*; so in Jude 1:19:

"How that they told you there
should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.
These be they who separate themselves, sensual [*psuchikos*] having not the Spirit".
(Jude 1:18-19, KJV).

The word *epigeios* ("earthly") is in itself a neutral word; the context determines whether "*earthly*" or "*things in/on (or pertaining to) earth*" are referred to in a positive or negative (contrasting) or neutral (descriptive) sense.

The only six other references to *epigeios* in the New Testament are the following:

John 3:12: "If I have told you [positively] *earthly things*, and ye believe not...how..."

Philippians 3:19: "Whose end is destruction...who mind *earthly things*".

Colossians 3:2: "Set your affection on things above, not on *things on the earth*"

Philippians 2:10:" that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow....*things in earth*..."

Similarly neutral: 1 Corinthians 15:40: "celestial bodies...and bodies *terrestrial*"

Similarly 2 Corinthians 5:1:"...if our *earthly* house of this tabernacle were dissolved..."

Elihu, one of God's great Teacher-Messenger as set forth in the book of Job, imparts such wisdom "*from above*".

He essentially shows Job that *such wisdom* consists in man, when in front of God, acknowledging in his heart that he is there as a sinner – and justifies GOD as the *only* One through Whom man may be cleansed and *made* righteous – (or "*right-wise*", as in the older English versions)

God Himself teaches King David the same wisdom, when He has David saying in Psalm 51:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies **blot out my transgressions**.
Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and **cleanse** me from my sin.

FOR I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Against THEE, THEE ONLY, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight:
that THOU mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, Thou desirest **truth in the inward parts**: [cfr: "*worship in spirit and truth*"; John 4:24]
and in the hidden part THOU shalt make me to know WISDOM".
(Psalm 51:1-6, KJV).

Again, God Himself teaches Job the same, namely that it is HE, Jehovah,

"Who has **put Wisdom** in the inward parts; and **Understanding given** to the heart"
(Job 38:36, KJV).

And our Lord Jesus Christ:

"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, "*Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*".

But Wisdom is justified of her children" [similarly in Luke 7:35] (Matthew 11:19, KJV).

The Lord here refers to Himself as Wisdom personified – because He is the Wisdom of God; as indeed the apostle Paul confirms to us in 1 Corinthians:

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks:

Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God".

(1 Corinthians 1:23-24, KJV).

Likewise:

"But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us **wisdom**, and **righteousness, and sanctification**, and **redemption**:

THUS our Lord Jesus Christ IS the Wisdom of God, HE Whom God had constituted the Beginning of God's ways.

We will subsequently be exploring how this breathtaking truth influence our understanding of the other breathtaking truth, that Melchizedek was first (in time, and absolutely and substantially):

"KING of RIGHTEOUSNESS ".

Let us end this chapter by quoting this wonderful and deeply insightful devotional by *Oswald Chambers*: “My utmost for His Highest” (1935)

"I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4)

"The death of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment in history of the very mind and intent of God. There is no place for seeing Jesus Christ as a martyr. His death was not something that happened to Him— something that might have been prevented. His death was the very reason He came.

Never build your case for forgiveness on the idea that God is our Father and He will forgive us because He loves us. That contradicts the revealed truth of God in Jesus Christ. It makes the Cross unnecessary, and the redemption “much ado about nothing.”

God forgives sin only because of the death of Christ. God could forgive people in no other way than by the death of His Son, and Jesus is exalted as Savior because of His death. “We see Jesus...*for the suffering of death* crowned with glory and honor...”(Hebrews 2:9).

The greatest note of triumph ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was that sounded on the Cross of Christ— *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30). That is the final word in the redemption of humankind.

Anything that lessens or completely obliterates the holiness of God, through a false view of His love, contradicts the truth of God as revealed by Jesus Christ.

Never allow yourself to believe that Jesus Christ stands with us, and against God, out of pity and compassion, or that He became a curse for us out of sympathy for us.

Jesus Christ became a curse for us by divine decree.

Our part in realizing the tremendous meaning of His curse is the conviction of sin.

Conviction is given to us as a gift of shame and repentance; it is the great mercy of God.

Jesus Christ hates the sin in people, and Calvary is the measure of His hatred".

(Continued in our next)

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