



Sunday, June 29, 2014 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

# ROMANS Part 28

Chapter 3:24-26 (again)



**Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood, for a display of His righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God), toward the display of His righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus.**

*What is “propitiation”? How did God “pass over” sins before? What made Him want to do something different in the current era? Why must our Justifier be just?*

These were the exciting questions I left you with the last time I wrote to you about Romans. Today I will answer the first of these queries, both to my satisfaction and to yours.

If you do not yet think these questions are exciting, give me time to show you. I am not talking about the kind of excitement that Price is Right contestants display upon winning new cars or trips to the Orient. Excitement, in my book, means inner peace. If I cannot find peace in these words, how can I expect you to find it? If I do not find help for living through Paul’s bombastic yet inspired dictations, how can I expect you to live and think better *after* reading my words than before reading them? Why are any of us here, if not to realize more of God and gain the wisdom belonging to ease and even joy in the midst of this crooked, evil eon? If there is no satisfaction in the writer (as he expounds upon these words), neither can the reader be gratified.

## HOW TO READ SCRIPTURE

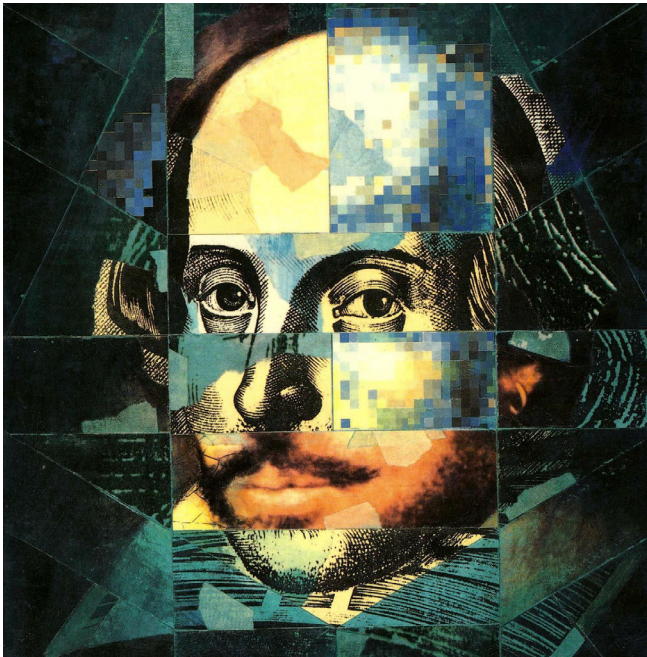
I recommend to you the same Scripture-reading technique I employ: I “lift” the words from their pages (I mull them over in my mind), turning them every which way until the writer’s intention (to bless me) fits the missing place inside me, created by God to be filled by the particular word. I dare the Scripture writer’s words to heal me. I am a tough customer. God knows I intend to get my money’s worth from His famous book. In the case of Romans, I dare Paul to justify his enthusiasm; just why is the man pacing his room, speaking as fast as his thoughts come, dictating without pause to his trusted scribe Tertius? Every word counts for something. I test the words against my joy. As selfish as this sounds (I realize more and more that Scripture is supposed to make us feel good), my joy is the litmus test of truth.

If the words at first seem so convoluted, so complex, or so vague that I am scratching my head rather than breathing sighs of relief or laughing, I will poke and probe the words again until they produce the ad-

vertised result. God intended, through Paul, to comfort rather than confuse me. The letter to the Romans is revelation, not riddle. This separates Paul's letters from all other portions of Scripture.

### HERE COMES THE SUN

Elsewhere in His Word, God speaks in parables, riddles and puzzles. In the old days, God rarely said anything directly. Have you noticed this? I think part of the reason was to contrast His disclosures of old with the later revelations through Paul. Back in those days, God spoke like Shakespeare. He seems more Poet than



Revelator to me. Shakespeare always got my goat for his inability to stay focused and make a point. It's not that God suffers disability in this department, but that He has chosen to gradually reveal Himself: first darkness, then light through the mist and fog, then blinding sunshine.

Try to imagine Shakespeare broadcasting the traffic report or the weather at the local news station of his day. Instead of simply saying, "Mostly sunny with temperatures in the high '70's" the Bard of Avon would pose a delicate query and then rhapsodize upon the meteorological conditions in the following manner:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate: Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date: Sometime too hot the eye

of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; And every fair from fair sometime declines.

Before Shakespeare could even get to the five-day forecast (which would end up being a play the size of "Hamlet"), most people would have flipped over to a classic rock station.

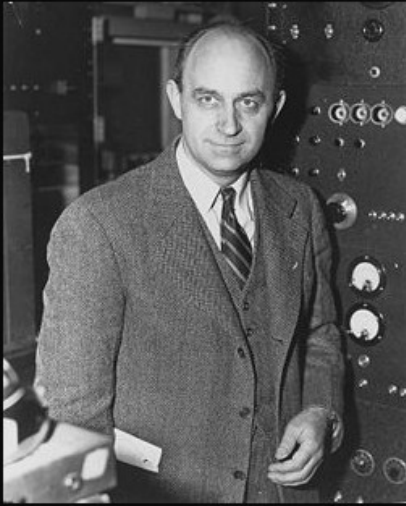
With Paul, God changes His approach. He's no longer hiding behind word-clouds and "gold complexion dimm'd." With Paul, God drops the literary extravagancies and gets to the point. (Paul is still the master of the parenthetical insertion, of course.) Paul turns our heads to face the sun with open, unblinking eyes. With Paul, God grabs us by the collective shirt collar and pulls us to eye level—to the level of *His* eyes.

Knowing this, I will poke, jab and scratch (and you should, too) every word, sentence and paragraph of Paul until the happy scent wafts from the page. Thus, I treat Scripture like a God-version of "scratch and sniff." My advice to you is to just keep scratching and sniffing these words until something smells good, because it will. God tried these words seven times until they produce scents via scratching. There must be meaning here that produces joy, otherwise Paul would not have written. I am confident that every single word in Paul's letters leads to peace with God and easier exhalations—otherwise the apostle would not have bothered. Paul had neither the time nor the energy for superfluous chatter. This is especially true here in Romans, which I remind you is the "Magna Carta" of our faith.

### "GOD PURPOSED"

**"[Christ Jesus], Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter" (Romans 3:25).**

I will unfold his awful word, "propitiatory," in a moment. Why is it awful? I suppose I can tell you. It's awful because it's theological. I never trust any word over five syllables, and I especially do not trust words hijacked and held hostage by the Christian religion for inclusion in their voluminous "Christianese" dictionaries. They will hurl these words like darts to confuse, belittle and cow you, all in the name of enlightening you. Ha. They themselves grope in the dark. Professing themselves to be teachers, they would rather veil than release what God would make known. This is unpreventable, as knowledge evades them. To them, these are theological terms only: "Justification"; "Reconcili-



Before I came here I was confused about this subject. Having listened to your lecture I am still confused. But on a higher level.

(Enrico Fermi)

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ation”; “Propitiation”; “Atonement.” Touting these words at themselves and among themselves lends them a faux intelligence. Christians and their beloved authors struggle defining these terms; God’s simplicity evades them. With them, there is no “scratch and sniff” revelation, only theological obfuscation. Ah—thus comes another word I hate: “theological.” (I love the word “obfuscation,” however.) *“Theological?” Do you happen to mean “stuff that has to do with God?” Then why not simply say so?*

“Always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits.” —William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*.

#### GOD SENT CHRIST ON PURPOSE

The point now is that God purposed Christ for a task. He sent Him on purpose to do something for us. It seems a simple point, but begs contemplation. The word “purpose” comforts me. First of all, I love that it’s only two syllables. I next enjoy the comfort of knowing that God forever acts with intent. (The opposite of “intent” is “accident.”) Nothing from the Throneroom ever descends earthward without intent. Nothing. Not one bug, breeze, or belligerent dictator arrives here apart from the Deity’s premeditated and unflinching resolve. Thank God. We need this knowledge because of how random things look. We must walk by faith here, and not by perception. If we ogle the world with untrained eyes, all we will see is chaos. Everything looks like it’s flapping in the wind and near disintegration. But no. Nothing that exists, exists without

direction, function, point—not even the worst thing imaginable, which was the crucifixion of Christ.

Here are several verses employing this comforting word, “purpose.” Scratch and sniff these verses until pleasant odors emerge. (When you get to the word “purpose,” scratch extra hard and stick your nose as close to the page/monitor as possible; God loves your daring inquisitiveness):

► “Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, who are called according to the purpose that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son.” —Romans 8:28-29

► “Suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace.” —2 Timothy 1:9

► “In Him, in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will.” —Ephesians 1:11

► “To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” —Ephesians 3:8-11.



Now return to our main text, “Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood.”

The coming of Christ was not a reaction of God to unforeseen sin. From the beginning, Christ was God’s intent. As you have heard me say many times, sin did not predate Christ, that is, Christ was not God’s answer to sin. Rather, sin was God’s answer to a yet undisclosed

**“Sin was God’s answer to a yet undisclosed Love.”**

Love existing in God from the beginning. None could have known God’s love and deliverance apart from the necessary

foils of disruption and death. Thus, He creates these (disruption and death; Isaiah 45:7), to pave the way for That which dwelt in Him the whole time: Christ. Thus, Christ predates sin. He was slain from before the disruption of the world, “... the precious blood of Christ ... foreknown, indeed, before the disruption of the world, yet manifested in the last times because of you, who through Him are believing in God” (1 Peter 1:19-20).

## PROPITIATION

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* calls Christ Jesus, “a Propitiatory shelter” (Romans 3:25), but puts “shelter” in lightface type—the word does not appear in the original Greek text. Literally, the verse reads, “Christ Jesus, Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory.” The word “shelter” is added to help with the sense, and it does. As I will show, “propitiatory” simply means, “sheltering.” I wish the CLNT had simply said “sheltering,” as in, “Christ Jesus, Whom God purposed for a Sheltering, through faith in His blood.” If I were them, I would have put “Sheltering” in dark-face type (for the Greek word *hilasterion*) and done away with the extra word. Who the heck needs “Propitiatory”? It obfuscates rather than illuminates.

The Hebrew equivalent of *hilasterion* is *kaphar*. God so badly wants for us a clear understanding of this important word that He first employs it in a simple, Sunday-school manner, that is, He paints a word picture. It’s His way of introducing us to what would later be hijacked by Christianity and touted as a “theological concept,” but what would in reality be a simple, comforting revelation about how God protects us from bad things, through Christ.

## NOAH “PROPITIATED” THE ARK

Here is Genesis 6:14—

Make for yourself an ark of sulphur wood; with nests shall you make the ark, and you will shelter (*kaphar*) it from the inside and from the outside with a sheltering (*kaphar*) coat.

This is the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament*. Where the Concordant Version has “shelter,” the King James has “pitch,” as in,

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch (*kaphar*) it within and without with pitch (*kaphar*).



This is where the theological term “propitiation” comes from. (Do you hear the root word there, namely, “pitch”?) The five-syllable word is, in my opinion, unnecessary. Noah never thought to “propitiate” the ark. All he wanted to do was waterproof the damn thing so that it wouldn’t sink. For that, he used the product of a tree.

## WHAT IS PITCH?

The Oxford Dictionary, defines pitch as,

1. A tenacious resinous substance of a black or brown colour, hard when cold, becoming a thick viscid semi-liquid when heated; obtained as a residuum from the boiling or distillation of tar, also from the distillation of turpentine; used to stop the seams of ships after caulking, to protect wood from moisture, and for other purposes.

Webster’s Dictionary elaborates:

1. A thick tenacious substance, the juice of a species of pine or fir called *abies picea*, obtained by incision from the bark of the tree... 2. The resin of pine, or turpentine, inspissated; used in caulking ships and paying the sides and bottom.

Pitch is tenacious. It is black, thick, and never surrenders its protective properties. Archaeologists have found ancient ships still pitched, still resistant through long ages to surrounding seas.

Moses' parents mixed pitch to waterproof the basket carrying their son downriver toward Pharaoh's daughter and ultimate safety. Here is Exodus 2:1-4—

A man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. The woman became pregnant and bore a son, and she saw him, that he was a goodly child; so she secluded him three months. When she could no longer seclude him, then she took for him an ark of papyrus, daubed it with asphalt and with pitch (*kaphar*) and placed the boy in it; then she placed it in the weeds on the shore of the waterway. And his sister stationed herself afar, to know what might be done to him.

### CHRIST IS OUR SHELTER

As pitch sheltered both Noah and his family, as well as baby Moses from death-dealing water, so does Christ shelter us from the consequences of sin and death. Sin would seep into our souls, even as the sea would sink Noah's boat and destroy those whom God intended to save. Yet the sea was not allowed. God rebuffed it! It was prevented in its intentions by a stiff, tenacious substance fit to withstand it at every joint, to withhold it at every possible point of entry.

Thus also, Christ. God placed us in the midst of an evil con, metaphorically upon the treacherous seas of this world, seas threatening us from without and within. Within, we are beset with doubts and fears; we cry for our disability to please God, to love our families, to do good to our enemies, to exercise the many gifts granted us by Him. We are beset from without by satanic accusations that we are never good enough, never worthy enough, ever unfit to live before the righteous gaze of God.

The answer to every accusation, without and within, is Christ. He is the God-appointed Shelter both from ourselves, and from external accusers. The sea surrounding Noah, by nature, sought every crack, every weakness of the chosen vessel. Yet every crack in that vessel had been sealed with the miraculous substance inherent in wood. Likewise, the "propitiation" for us—Christ upon the wood of the cross—seals every weak place within us, even those places He Himself cut into us. Think about this: He makes our weakness to keep us humble, but then He protects these weaknesses, keeping them from destroying us. Though our weaknesses are necessary, He at the same

time keeps them from discouraging us beyond measure. To produce the miracle of imposed yet beneficent flaws, God smears us without and within with Christ, the only Shelter able to keep us properly afloat upon the turmoil, but never beneath it.

We have never been so safe. Rains come—we are sheltered. Cold descends—we are sheltered. Doubts wrack from within—we are sheltered. Sin drives us to our knees—we are sheltered. Fears haunt our sleep—we are sheltered. Think of the apostle John at the last supper, resting his head upon the bosom of his Christ. *That* is shelter.



*That* is a port in this storm called life. *That* is the protection of a mother gathering her small child into her arms, assuring it that, as long as she lives, no harm will come.

Christ is ever alive. Our Shelter from every storm is alive and can never die. He will never let us go. The pitch sealing the ark and the basket of Moses is but dimly analogous of the *living* Shelter protecting us every moment from all harm. If trials do come, it is not for seeping past the pitch—for nothing can do that. It is due to a loving Father bringing us only that which ultimately strengthens us and drives us in deeper worship to His feet. For, "all things work together for good for those who are loving God and called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Rest in the shelter of the One Who will never leave you nor forsake you. God purposed Him for this task. Nothing pleases God more than to see you resting in the high, dry nests of the "Ark"—His Son, Christ Jesus.

"God purposed Him for a Sheltering, through faith in His blood." —MZ

*(To be continued ...)*