

**Grace Bible Church
The Tree of Life
A Weekly Review
Week ending 01/23/11**

The Doctrine of the Riches of His Glory upon Vessels of Mercy.

We have begun to note what the word of God has to say concerning the subject of human vessels as it is portrayed in the Bible.

Point 1. First of all, the Bible uses vessels as a reference to the doctrine of election where the believer is said to be a chosen vessel unto God. Therefore, as a chosen vessel, Paul needed to be filled with Bible doctrine.

Now Saul [later changed to Paul], still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He {said,} "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, {here am} I, Lord." And the Lord {said} to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine," (Act 9:1-15)

However, the word *instrument* in the Greek is the nominative singular noun *skeous* which means a vessel, or an instrument.

**But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."
(Act 9:15-16)**

Notice that the calling of God in Act 9:15, revealed by the phrase *he is a chosen vessel of Mine*, included in verse 16.

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, and immediately he {began} to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." (Act 9:17-20)

Paul was only prepared to communicate the Gospel message because he knew the Christ, the Messiah, as He was revealed in the Old Testament.

Let's look at a few examples;

Jesus is unique among all people in history in that He is the fulfillment of centuries of Messianic prophecies, - which are found in the Old Testament of the Bible, that foretold His place of birth, details of His life, His mission, His nature, His death, and His resurrection. The prophecies are sometimes called “Messianic prophecies” because they refer to the Messiah, which means “anointed one” or “chosen one”. Some scholars estimate that there are more than 300 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament that refer to the Messiah (Jesus). Many people think of Bible prophecies as being predictions about the future. Strictly speaking, they are not predictions, rather they are promises from God. A prediction can be a guess, a prophecy is more than a guess, it is a revelation from God about the future. Some of these prophecies or promises are as follows:

We have the prophecy of certain events which took place around the Cross in Psa 22:6-8.

“But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see Me sneer at Me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit Yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, because He delights in Him.'” (Psa 22:6-8)

Totally fulfilled in Luke 23:35, And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, slaying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen one.”

The prophecy of His hands and feet being pierced in **Psa 22:16, For dogs have surrounded Me; a band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet.”**

Fulfilled throughout the Gospels when they nailed His hands and feet to the cross, Mat 27:31 and in Mar 15:24.

Mat 27:31, And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

Then there was the prophecy of casting lots for His garments.

Psa 22:18, “They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.”

Fulfilled in Mat 27:35, “And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots;”

The prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken. Psa 34:20, “He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken.”

Fulfilled in Joh 19:34-36, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'not a bone of Him shall be broken.'”

The prophecy of the false witnesses.

Psa 35:11, “Malicious witnesses rose up; they ask Me of things that I do not know.”

Fulfilled in Mar 14:57-58, And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, “We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'”

There is also the prophecy of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot.

Psa 41:9, “Even My close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me.”

Fulfilled in Luk 22:47-48 While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?”
The prophecy that they would offer The Lord Jesus Christ gall and vinegar.

Psa 69:21, “They also gave Me gall for My food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.”

Fulfilled in Mat 27:34, They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

The prophecy of the physical abuse and humiliation of Jesus.

Isa 50:6, “I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spiting.”

Fulfilled in Mat 26:67, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.”

The prophecy that He would come to die for our sins in order to save us,

Isa 53:5, But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

Fulfilled throughout the entire New Testament, as in **Rom 5:8**, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

The prophecy that He would be silent as He approached the cross.\

Isa 53:7, He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Fulfilled in Mar 15:4-5, And Pilate was questioning Him again, saying, “do You make no answer? See how many charges they bring against You! But Jesus made no further answer; so that Pilate was amazed.”

The prophecy of His crucifixion.

Isa 53:12, “And He was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.”

Fulfilled in Luk 23:33-34, And when they came to the place called the skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

The prophecy of the piercing of Jesus' side.

Zec 12:10, “They will look on Me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.”

Fulfilled in Joh 19:34, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.”

A part of it will be fulfilled in Rev 1:7, Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, and immediately he {began} to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and {who} had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this {Jesus} is the Christ. (Act 9:17-22)

Here is a case of isagogics, the historical setting of the passage, and categorical doctrine, the theology developed from combining Scripture with Scripture. Somewhere, between verses 22 and verse 23, we have 3 years of preparation where Paul learned and lived the principle of not putting the cart before the horse.

**For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
(Gal 1:11-12)**

Paul had an hostile past. Saul was breathing down the necks of the Lord's disciples, and out for the kill. Paul went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to go to Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the faith, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem. Paul had an hostile past. Paul is trying to tell them not to grab people by the collar and try to jerk them into the kingdom of God.

Before his salvation Paul was very hostile to the church. The moment that he heard the gospel he responded. God didn't try to persuade him. God simply gave him the facts and he responded to them and welcomed them with open arms as a host would welcome an honored guest.

All that is required is to make the information clear and people will respond. This is true concerning salvation and it's also true after salvation, in learning, living, and loving the spiritual life,

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (Col 2:6)

And how did you receive Christ Jesus?

by grace, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. (Gal 1:14)

Notice the description of religion - ancestral tradition is the criterion.\

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (Gal 1:15-16)

On his way to Damascus, Paul (then Saul) he was dazed by a blinding flash of light and As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?"

Act 9:5, "Who are you, Master?" "I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. and I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next."

Notice after salvation.....what?

You need to be told what to do and how to do it.

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (Gal 1:15-16)

Notice, the purpose: "To reveal his Son in me." This was God's purpose for Paul, this is God's purpose for every believer. It is God's purpose to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in every Christian -

Gal 4:19, My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you-- (Gal 4:19)

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (Eph 3:16-18)

On the basis of my intense concentration and confident expectation [a personal sense of destiny] that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but with all confidence, Christ shall even now [in time] as always [in eternity] be glorified in my body, whether by life or by death. For me, living is Christ, likewise dying is profit. (Phi 1:20-21)

As long as we remain on this earth Christ is to be revealed in us by the filling of the Spirit. This is the purpose for Paul, this is the purpose for every believer. Therefore, in order for Christ to be revealed in me I must be filled with the Spirit, I must know how to be filled with the Spirit.

Therefore a principle: No one can fulfill the divine purpose in time apart from a knowledge of Bible doctrine; the filling of the Spirit.\

Paul is going to give a defense of his theological training. There was no theological seminary then so he had to get his training directly from God.

Immediately I conferred not or did not consult with flesh and blood is a good way to start the Christian life and it is a good way to live it. Paul didn't confer with anyone. Flesh and blood refers to any member of the human race.

Paul's theological training, of which the Galatians have been the recipients, came directly from God. He went through a very tough theological school out in Arabia. **Gal 1:17-18, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.**

Paul's visit into Arabia took place between Acts 9:22 and verse 23. He was out there for several years and there God revealed to him the information which became the content of his messages. Here he learned his doctrine, out in the desert just as Moses did. Paul has probably been saved by this time up to thirteen or fourteen years, and he is still

unknown. No man can have a successful ministry without preparation. He must go unknown in that preparation. David, watching the sheep out in the Judean hills was unknown. God brought him forth at the right time. Joseph in prison was unknown. God brought him forth at the right time. Elijah was for many years unknown. At the right time God brought him into Israel. For a number of years now Paul has been unknown -

Gal 1:22-23....And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." And they were glorifying God because of me.

Notice it was the message that Paul was first known by, not the man.

Where did Paul go and why?

Well, first of all, we note the principle of doctrine: A vessel is no good when it's empty.

A vessel is only usable when it's filled. Before Paul could be a usable vessel, he had to be filled with the right doctrine. We never fulfill the plan of God designed for us in eternity past until we become filled vessels, until we contain maximum doctrine in our souls.