

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE weekly teaching summary from THE WEEK ENDING: November 09, 1997

Tree of Life 11/09/97

THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

As the believer advances in the spiritual realm he will come to develop the ability to interpret contemporary history. That is, the believer will be capable of reading into the events which occur in his own life thereby recognizing what God's plan entails for him. In our exegesis of Philippians 1:19 we run into Paul's interpretation of the events in his life leading him to the confidence that God has more in store for him at this time than just imprisonment and death.

Philippians 1:19 (corrected translation) "**Indeed, I am convinced that this event shall turn out for my deliverance through your intercessory prayers and the logistical provision motivated by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.**"

This event being his imprisonment and all the opposition against him, and as noted in verses 12 through 18 the Philippians prayers, their large financial gift and the increase of witnessing going forth, and even the positive response to the gospel on the part of the Praetorian Guard. Paul knows that the believers at the church of Philippi are mature and led by God the Holy Spirit. Moreover, he knows that their prayers and large financial gift are divinely guided. Hence, Paul is able to look upon everything that has been happening in his life as an event that occurred by divine design for the ultimate glory of God, Isaiah 43:21; Revelation 4:11. With such an attitude, Paul allowed God to reveal God's plan for Paul's life through the events taking place, and then Paul had the faith to believe it in spite of all the obstacles involved! For those who accept this viewpoint of Theological interpretation of history and have enough faith to

see it in light of their own personal experience, there is reward! Paul considered the world around him to be in supreme contempt in terms of its supposed ability to control his destiny. He knew that the only One who controlled his destiny was the Lord Jesus Christ, Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17.

The difference between Paul and those who worry about events and circumstances in their life is that Paul understood and thoroughly believed that Jesus Christ controls history. Although it would be natural for Paul to consider the antagonism of his enemies as another aspect of his affliction, he rejoices in it because it stimulated prayer and financial support on his behalf from the Philippians. So, the confidence Paul expresses in his coming deliverance as seen in Philippians 1:19 is a perfect example of how a mature believer can recognize divine guidance in his life. The believer in spiritual adulthood today can do the same. You can look at events in your life and determine what kind of plan God has in store for you. If you can't that is a means that you need to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Daily dedication and devotion to the word of God is the only road to the super-grace interpretation of history. The more doctrine in your soul, the greater your confidence in life and the greater focus you will have in your place in history and in God's plan. To ascertain such confidence requires the development of your personal sense of destiny and your niche in life.

You have been hand chosen by God and there is a perfect place for you in His plan! Paul realizes after having received a huge amount of money from the Philippians that he was not going to die and that God had a plan for him for some time further. He knew God wasn't going to say *'here's an enormous sum of money but you're going to die next week.* Neither was this large financial offering God's way of saying to Paul that he wanted him to leave it to the Praetorian Guards. No, Paul understood clearly what all the events added up to... his deliverance, i.e., more time on earth to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. And, as we see in hind sight, Paul did live five or six more years and conducted his fourth and greatest missionary journey. Even though he missed the mark and fell into reversionism by going to Jerusalem against God's guidance which caused his imprisonment in the first place, he was now given another chance to do God's will. He was the apostle to the greatest empire ever in history, Rome! His evangelism in Rome was what made Rome great! What an honor to be a part of such a magnificent time of evangelism and greatness.

Through the doctrine in his soul Paul has come to understand the significance of the Roman Empire especially in light of the fact that God

has rejected Israel and the Roman Empire was now in view for the client nation status. We too, through the doctrine in our souls, can recognize the significance of the United States of America as a client nation to God...still.

A part of interpreting history is:

- 1) Knowing TLJC controls history directly through His divine power.
- 2) Knowing TLJC controls history indirectly through the laws of divine establishment.
- 3) Knowing TLJC controls history permissively in that he permits evil to run its course in history in order that the angelic conflict may be completed.

Paul knew emphatically that God was not opposing him, if God were opposing him or any one of us, there would be no doubt about it! When it is mere man who opposes us it can only serve to strengthen God's cause, 2Corinthians 13:10. If God wants a ministry or an individual destroyed it will be so! Paul knew without a doubt that even though he did not like what he was going through that it was for his best and that it advanced the greater status of God's plan, that's interpreting history!

What we need to ask ourselves is; *are the events in our life serving as God's purpose to hurt or destroy us or to simply wake us up thereby offering us purpose and direction in life?!* This requires doctrine in the soul of the believer in spiritual adulthood, that is what leads the believer to interpret events in life as guidance from God. The confident believer holds God accountable to His word and all that it promises! Paul was given another opportunity to make good on his life. We too are given that same opportunity each morning we wake up, Lam 3. But, most people take for granted not only today but tomorrow in that they fail to offer extreme effort in the spiritual life thinking those decisions can be dealt with on another day. Such is the way of human nature... procrastination rather than motivation.

During the next few years that Paul lives, his teachings, travels, and what he does changes history forever! No man ever had a greater impact on his generation and future generations than the apostle Paul with the exception of course of The Lord Jesus Christ. God has a plan that goes way beyond what we can even imagine but it requires faith, i.e., TRUST in Him. Not trust in your own ways or trust in the things you can see, but trust in the what the word of God declares to be so. Our time on this earth is precious in that in it we have the opportunity to glorify God (remember the purpose

for which we were created), and we also have the opportunity to work on our heavenly eternal status which is after all, our true citizenship.

So, verse 19 of Philippians 1 gives us insight into Paul's ability through doctrine in his soul to face the reality of contemporary events and interpret them accurately. And, both of these factors which allowed Paul to realize truth and become convinced of his deliverance were as follows:

a) The prayers of the Philippian congregation guided by God the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

b) The monetary offering made by the Philippian congregation also guided by God the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

Since the motivation for both were from God, Paul said The Lord Jesus Christ has put all of the things before him to interpret history. God also reveals why, you go through the things you go through and what their purpose is for your life... but most grow distracted and/or bitter with what God allows in their lives and so miss out completely on the guidance of God. Think of it, how can you say you accept the principle that the Lord Jesus Christ is in control of history and then worry or be anxious about anything?!?!? God has seen to all your logistics and every thing needed in your life in order for you to become great in His kingdom. What else is there? If God's peace or God's highest and best is not a reality in your life, it is due to one lacking ingredient...**your faith in the One who controls history.**

This concludes our exegesis of verse 19, we are now ready for the categorical doctrines which arise from this verse. Tapes available this week: 0190-121 The more doctrine you have, the greater becomes your capability to interpret contemporary history and to find your niche in life. 11-04-97

0190-122 The supergrace interpretation of history or how a mature believer can recognize divine guidance in their life. 11-05-97

0190-123 Paul's ability through doctrine in the soul causes him to face the reality of contemporary events.

0190-124 Paul's ability through doctrine in the soul causes him to face the reality of contemporary events.

11-06-97

0190-125 Doc: Of the Sustaining of the Universe.

11-07-97

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