

## God's Workmanship (Part 3)

### God's Direction

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I think that we have seen that God says very clearly one time in Ezekiel 36: 27 that He will *cause* us to walk in His law, or His instruction, giving certainly the impression that He is going to be exercising His creative powers to make us, channel us, into living a certain way of life. We also saw Proverbs 21:1, where it very clearly says that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and He turns it wherever He wishes." That particular verse shows us that God exercises His sovereignty over His creation in manipulating the political powers on earth to go in the direction that He wants them to go. That "the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, and He **turns** it wherever He wishes," just as the picture that is in that particular verse is like a person irrigating his crops, and he switches a gate in it to make the water flow in a direction that he wants it to go in order to irrigate a certain field that he wants it to go into. Well God does that with the heart of the king in order to bring about purposes of His plan.

So we see it applied individually, we see it applied to nations, that God is actively directing His creation to the conclusion of the purpose that **He** has in mind, and those activities include **working on us**. We need to see this very clearly that He is **actively** involved in our lives. He is **working** on us. In Ephesians 2, He clearly says that we, His children, are His workmanship, and that we are created for a specific purpose, and that is, *to bring forth good works*. What that verse gives us insight to seeing is that it is His **workmanship** that is the direct cause of our doing good works. We are being created in His image for the purpose of living life as He does in order that we can join with Him in perfect harmony in completing His further plans beyond the second resurrection.

Now Ephesians 2:8 also clearly shows that salvation occurred sometime in the indefinite past, and its effects are continuing at the time of Paul's writing. Therefore, whatever the Bible means by *salvation*, it is in reality a precursor to good works. Good works are the product of our union with Christ, because

He said that "without Me, you can do nothing," and until we are in union with Him, we can do **nothing** spiritually as it pertains to God's purpose in His Kingdom. Therefore, good works cannot be the cause of something, i.e. salvation, that occurred before they were ever brought forth by the Master Potter.

Brethren, what we tend to understand by the term *salvation* and *good works* is **not** exactly what God means. We have the tendency to think of salvation only as to what occurs at the **end**—that is, when we are resurrected and inherit the Kingdom of God. This indeed is partly true, but as we are seeing, the apostles wrote of salvation as something that happened in the indefinite past, before the good works were ever brought forth.

Turn with me to Psalm 74. This is a **wonderful** psalm in terms of what the church is going through right now. By *right now*, I mean the past ten years or so. We're just going to look at verse 12.

**Psalm 74:12** For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

"Working." What does that tell you? It tells you something that is in **progress**. If it was done, you would say "worked," see. *He is **working** salvation in the midst of the earth.* You can connect this with John 5:17. In John 5:17, Jesus said in reply to an accusation that was made against Him, because the Jews were accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath, He said, "My Father works hitherto, and **I** work." This is not a good translation in the *King James*. The word *hitherto* has a tendency to throw us. But it says in a modern translation, "My Father **is** working, and **I am working**"—present tense.

Now, what is God working? He is working salvation. That's what He is involved in. God is the Creator, and creation requires works in order to bring forth what is being created. And so He is **working**. It is a work in progress. Now we don't want to lose track of Ephesians 2:8, which definitely showed that salvation occurred sometime in the indefinite past, and that we were saved in the indefinite past, and that that salvation continued up to the time that the Apostle Paul wrote what he did there in Ephesians 2:8.

In order for us to understand salvation more accurately, we have to understand it as being the entire creative process, because we are saved from **more** than death. Now think, if you will, God's saving, rescuing, delivering Israel from their bondage in Egypt, that what He did there was the major event that He uses to picture to us **our** deliverance from this world, from Satan the Devil, and from death. Now think about that. Deliverance from Satan, deliverance from the world, and deliverance from death. We're beginning to see a progression here, and that's the way it was with Israel.

Let me ask you something, and this ought to be easily answered. When Israel was taken out of Egypt, was God done with His work then? Not at all. But they were at that point *saved* from their immediate bondage. But what happened in the wilderness? They all **died** in the wilderness, except for two men, and presumably their families—Joshua and Caleb. Everybody else died. Do you know why? Because Egypt never left the Israelites. Everywhere they went, they carried the world with them. They were not saved from Egypt in that sense, and the reason is because at that time it was not in God's purpose to deliver them from that spiritual bondage. He did deliver them so that there would be a type from their physical bondage to Egypt, but the spiritual bondage remained within them because God did not work to save them from it. Instead He left a 40-year long record of what happens to a people who are geographically separated from their captivity, but never spiritually separated from it.

What God means by salvation then, in terms of His children, includes the entire process—meaning justification, sanctification, and glorification, because the process is not complete until glorification takes place, and **then** we can say *we are absolutely saved* .

Let's add to this what we tend to think of as *good works*, as any act of good done at any time in our lives. But what God means by *good works* is not even possible until He begins His creative spiritual process, because *good works* by God's definition, for His children, cannot be done until He gives us His spirit, and those works are then generated by and energized by His spirit. **Then** those works are fit for the Kingdom of God. So then, with the term *salvation*, our understanding of it has to be broadened, and with the term *good works*, it has to be narrowed in order to conform scripturally.

I'm going to give us a quick grammar lesson in verses where the word *saved* appears in English as an already accomplished task or fact. We have been kind of concentrating on Ephesians 2:8, but I'm going to show you that Ephesians 2:8 does not stand alone. The other times I have given you definitions, [there was] one was from *McClarens Commentary*. That was the first sermon. And then in the second sermon I gave you those definitions from English dictionaries so that we would see that the English, in terms of the perfect tense, agrees exactly with the Greek.

Now I'm going to give you from Zodhiates the definition that he has listed for these words that are translated *saved*, in a variety of verses. The first one is Ephesians 2:5, 8. Now listen to Zodhiates' definition of this grammatical tense. First of all, it's in the perfect tense, and he says, "It describes an action, or more correctly a process, that took place in the past, the results of which have continued to the present. It has no exact equivalent in English, but is usually translated by using the auxiliary verbs *had*, or *have*."

I'm going to give just one phrase that this appears in a different context. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you whole." "***Has made***" —in the past—"whole." The faith was a precursor to the act, and the faith occurred in the indefinite past, and as she stood before Christ she was now whole because of what happened in the past. It doesn't say how close it happened in time. It only happened in the past.

Let's turn to Luke 7:50, where again we see this phrase written in the perfect tense. It's a little bit different though. It's the perfect indicative.

**Luke 7:50** And he said to the woman, Your faith has **saved you**; go in peace.

This is the woman, "a sinner" as she was called, who knelt down at Jesus' feet, anointed them with oil, cried on them. Her tears dropped on His feet and she dried them with her hair. This one is in the perfect indicative tense. Zodhiates says, "It is in the indicative mood [that's a special meaning], and temporal [time] significance of the perfect tense is at its height; however, the context of the Greek may emphasize either the completeness of the action or the finished result."

In this particular verse, it is talking about the finished result. So it did happen. Her faith occurred in the indefinite past, but the emphasis is on the fact that she was now whole. What she had previously—faith—was the precursor to her being whole.

This next one is written in the present indicative.

**I Corinthians 15:1-2** "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which [the gospel, the message] also **you are saved.**"

Present tense. They were not in their graves. They were still alive, and when Paul wrote this, these people he considered **saved** already. Zodhiates says, "The present indicative asserts something which is occurring while the speaker is making the statement." *Already saved.*

Now, just as far as we have gone, we already see indications of salvation being a process. It's written of in the perfect tense—something that occurred in the indefinite past. It is written in the present tense as something that is occurring right at this moment while the apostle is writing.

This is kind of a beautiful one which I will not explain more of, but maybe use it in a sermon after this because it is beautiful.

**II Corinthians 2:14** Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ. . .

That's a key to what is going on. "Triumph in Christ!" We've already won!

**II Corinthians 2:14-15** . . . And makes manifest the savour [the fragrance] of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour [a sweet fragrance] of Christ, in them that **are** saved, and in them that perish.

This is a little bit different from I Corinthians 15:2. It is written in the present passive, and Zodhiates says, "Expresses continuous or repeated action. Since

in Greek the time of the action is represented by participles is relative to the main verb, the present participle is used to signify action that is contemporaneous with the leading verb." The leading verb there is *are* .

**Right now.** Those people were saved **right now**. If you want to put this down, I Corinthians 1:18 is written in the same way that II Corinthians 2:15 is—in the present passive.

**II Timothy 1:8-9** Be not you therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be you partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who **has saved** us, and called us.

That's kind of interesting. When did your calling take place? It took place in the past. That word *saved* is in exactly the same tense as the word *called*, and you readily admit that you were called in the past. Well, Paul was saying that you were saved in the past too.

This one is written in the *aorist* participle - active. Zodhiates says, "Expresses simple action as opposed to continuous action." It's a little bit different from the others, in which *saved* was put in *an occurring right at that moment* sense. Here it is not that way. It's just simple action. It does not in itself indicate the time of the action; however when its relationship to the main verb is temporal, i.e. time, it usually signifies action **prior** to that of the main verb. In this case it simply indicates the reality of what has occurred without reference to time. As you can see, Ephesians 2:5, and 8 do not stand alone.

**Titus 3:5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

This is *aorist* indicative. Zodhiates says it expresses action that is not continuous. It does not specify the relative time of the action to the time of the speaking.

I'm going to give you another verse, and I'd like you to turn to it, because it is written in exactly the same text.

**I John 2:27** But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you. . .

That anointing is the receipt of God's holy spirit. Did you not receive God's holy spirit at sometime in the past?

**I John 2:27** But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him.

Nobody here doubts that they received the Holy Spirit at sometime in the indefinite past, and that is exactly the tense that Titus 3:5 uses in reference to salvation.

We'll look at one more. This is also in the *aorist* indicative.

**Romans 8:24** For we are saved by hope.

That's very clear. Brethren, there is nothing that I can do about those scriptures. The overwhelming majority of scriptures using the words *save*, or *saved*, which pertain to the converted person, are written in either the past, present, or perfect tenses. To balance things off, I'm going to give you a couple that are written in the future tense.

**Romans 5:9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, **we shall be saved** [future tense] by his life.

**I Corinthians 3:15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself **shall be saved**; yet so as by fire.

Again, in the future.

**I Timothy 2:15** Notwithstanding she **shall be saved** in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

There might be a couple more scriptures, but the Bible shows the possibility of the loss of salvation in a different way. So far to this point, I think that we have clearly seen that salvation—what God calls salvation for His children—is a process. It has a past, it has a present, and it has a future, and it is not wrong for a person to say *that they are saved*. But we'll keep refining this as we go along.

It says that God shows the possibility of the loss of salvation in a different way. Jude undoubtedly wrote this during a period of time when the church was under a great deal of stress. It may very well have been typical of what the Church of God is going through right now. It is in progress. It's scattered all over the place, and there's a great deal of persecution coming on God's people, especially from **within**.

**Jude 4** For there are certain men crept in [the church] unawares [stealthily], who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,  
...

Not that they particularly were picked out by God to do this, but rather that God prophesied that it would occur. A generality.

**Jude 4** . . . ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen to this from God's apostle.

**Jude 5** I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, . . .

Kind of giving the indication that maybe they had forgotten a thing or two.

**Jude 5** . . . how that the Lord, having **saved** the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward **destroyed them** . . .

Did they lose their salvation, as it were? Physically, yes. Now look at what caused the loss.

**Jude 5** . . . them that believed **not**.

Hang onto that, because that's going to be the item that determines salvation - grace and faith. And then another reminder:

**Jude 6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Did they lose out on what **could have been**? Yes. Now isn't the message here very clear, that it's possible for a person who **has** salvation to lose it—something that he had in the past is possible that it will slip from the person's grasp because he didn't have faith? Verse 7 - another illustration.

**Jude 7** Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example [for you and me of this very thing], suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Those cities will never be rebuilt. They will always be a reminder to those of faith, of the possibility of losing what had been so graciously and generously given to them, whether it be Israelite, whether it be angel, or whether it be Gentile.

Do you see what I mean? God shows in different ways that it is possible for a person who has something, to lose it. It's possible for a person who was saved by God to lose that salvation. I'm not preaching *once saved, always saved*, but I am preaching you the truth of what God says about these scriptures. Those scriptures are written in the perfect tense, in the present tense, and in the future tense, **that we have salvation in our grasp right now**. You **have it**—if, as we will see, things continue as they are.

For the Israelites who left Egypt, [could they] have completed the course? Yes, they could have, but they didn't. Do you think it's any wonder that Jesus said that "he that **endures** to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13)? That

is sobering. Well, God is very gracious, but He takes into account the value of what He has given to us and places the responsibility on our shoulders to yield to Him, and He carries us, as we're going to see, as we go along.

Did you ever stop to think of how many people died in the wilderness to make a sobering witness to you and me of the value of what we had given to us? God is so expansive in His generosity to His children that He made a witness of the death of well over a million people to sober us up.

Moses writes:

**Deuteronomy 2:14-15** And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD SWARE unto them, for indeed the hand of the LORD WAS against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.

What made God so angry? Their lack of faith. He said "Go up and take over the land" at the end of the second year, and they refused to go up. They refused to heed the admonitions of Joshua and Caleb *that it was a **good** land. Yes, the people are good, but the Lord is with us. He can destroy them. What do we have to fear?* But their lack of faith held them back.

It says in Numbers 1:46 that there were 603,550 men that were counted age 20 and above. Now if you add to that an equal number of women, divide by the number of days in 38 years, you will come to the figure of 87 graves per day that they had to dig. If you divide by the number of days in 40 years, it still comes out to 85 per day. Eighty-five people a day were buried in their graves because they lost their grip on the salvation that God had given them. That witness was made by God for **you**—for us to realize for us to be sober about our responsibility, because we have received something far more precious than they ever even dreamed of.

Let's go to II Peter as I continue to show you that the apostles wrote of the possibility of losing the wonderful thing—the salvation that we have been given, and it's already in our grasp.

**II Peter 2:20-22** For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them . . .

Notice—in the past tense.

**II Peter 2:22** . . . But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Quoting the proverb there. That in turn is another very plain and clear warning to you and me about people who had knowledge of their Lord and Savior, came out of the world, because they escaped the pollution of the world. Then they turned back to it again because they found it attractive, and now Peter said they would have been better off never to even have known it. You look at the entire context, and the people that he is talking about were the false teachers who were within the church, and denying the Lord that bought them.

One of the keys to understanding the book of Hebrews is to have knowledge that it was written to a group of people who were backsliding—people who were slipping, drifting away:

**Hebrews 2:1** Therefore **we** [meaning Christians] ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

That's pretty clear, but that is directed to those to whom Paul is writing—and that was a group of Hebrew Christians. As a result, the book contains a series of warnings. As a matter of fact there are five very strong, I would say arguably, the strongest warnings in the entire Bible about falling away.

We're going to look at some of these very quickly. This gets my vote as the strongest warning in the entire Bible. Whoever wrote this was romping and stomping at this time.

**Hebrews 10:26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth . . .

It's truth that sets free. It is truth that gives salvation.

**Hebrews 10:26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth . . .

Here come the most sobering words in the entire Bible . . .

**Hebrews 10:26 there remains no more sacrifice for sins.**

We cannot be forgiven. When somebody has reached that point, they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and **God will not forgive**. They have **lost** it. Now I want you to understand that the apostle Paul, or whoever wrote this book, did not feel—it was his judgment, that these people had not lost it yet, but they were slipping away. They were being carried away by the tide of influence that was coming from the world. But that's why he wrote the book. He could see them slipping away. The tide was taking them out, and they were sitting in the boat practically, I guess, doing nothing except watching it drift away from the shore.

**Hebrews 10:27** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, . . .

What does that remind you of? That's the Lake of Fire.

**Hebrews 10:27-31** . . . which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of

grace? For we know him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a **fearful** thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

How much plainer can it get, that we can lose it? We can lose what we now possess—salvation. That is **not** *once saved, always saved*. The *once saved, always saved* doctrine said there are no conditions once you come under the blood of Jesus Christ. And so this is the end for those who have apostatized—those whose lives are characterized by keeping on sinning. Christ's sacrifice does not cover people who keep on sinning. It covers those who repent. I'm going to twist it a little bit. It covers those who are yielding to His workmanship. Do you know what they're doing because they're yielding? By God's spirit, they are producing good works.

Let's go back to Hebrews 6. Everyone of us ought to understand this. Verse 1 sets the stage.

**Hebrews 6:1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

**Hebrews 6:4-6** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

A precursor of what Paul said in Hebrews 10, saying virtually the same thing. So, *if they fall away* means, *if they fall away from Christianity by leaving it*. You might remember when I was earlier expounding Ephesians 2:8, that when it is written in the perfect tense it is assuming that if their lives continue as they were, the peoples' salvation was secure. Now what these verses in Hebrews emphasize is the impossibility of making a second beginning. It's one calling to a person. Therefore, slipping back is dangerous indeed. I mentioned earlier that Paul did not consider these people, even

though they had slipped considerably, had fallen away. He therefore did not consider that forgiveness was impossible. Therefore, revival from a state of slipping is possible, but it also indicates that our initial repentance and forgiveness is a unique, never to occur again event, as far as we are concerned. One to a customer. It's too precious to let it just flutter away through inactivity, through unbelief. In Hebrews 3:12 is another one of those warnings.

**Hebrews 3:12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief . . .

Paul says that's **evil**. That's what the Israelites lost out on. They didn't believe God. Paul said it's evil.

**Hebrews 3:12-13** . . . in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Now listen to this verse.

**Hebrews 3:14** - For we are made partakers of Christ, **if** we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.

There's a condition for salvation. Not *once saved, always saved, even* though those verses are written the way they are. A little bit later on we'll go through why they're written the way they are. It's for your benefit that they're written the way they are. That word **if** certainly indicates the possibility of falling away. Let's go right on into chapter 4.

**Hebrews 4:1** Let us therefore **fear** . . .

Let us be extremely careful.

**Hebrews 4:1-2** . . . lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

So don't be complacent. There's real danger that the promise to enter into His Kingdom still stands. Now the parallel to what Paul wrote here—the parallel to you and me is that just being *in the church*—the equivalent there was the Israelites who were *in the wilderness*. They were *in the congregation in the wilderness*. So the parallel to you and me is that just being *in the church* doesn't mean the promise of being *in His rest* is fulfilled. *Rest* means more than being in the church. Being in the church is just the beginning. A very very important part of our lives. So the *rest* that he is speaking of here still lies ahead of us in the Kingdom of God. What we have here in the church is just a tiny foreshadow of what is yet to come.

I'm going to show you an awesome scripture back in the book of Isaiah. To me, it's awesome in terms of being **pregnant** with encouragement.

**Isaiah 46:1** Bel bows down, Nebo stoops. . . .

They were the major gods of Babylon.

**Isaiah 46:1-2** . . . Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle; your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Now listen to this contrast.

**Isaiah 46:3-5** Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are **borne** [meaning carried] by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: [By whom? God.] And even to your old age **I am he**; and even to hoar hairs [when our hair becomes gray] **I will carry you**. I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and **will deliver you**. To whom will you liken **me** . . . ?

Do you know what He's saying there? He's pointing the finger at us and says, "You name Me one god who can do what I'm going to do, and am doing right at this moment. **I will never fail you**," He says. Do you see what this says? **We have no excuse** for not remaining faithful. The burden of salvation

is on **Him**. Did He not say that He carried Israel on eagle's wings? What an awesome promise. "**I will bear you.**"

One of the major flaws in this world's Christianity revolves around the concept of works. They keep misapplying it as solely an attempt to get salvation, when works are not encouraged by God for that purpose at all. God encourages works, but He doesn't encourage them for salvation. They have an entirely different purpose.

Salvation is written of in the way it is - perfect tense, past tense, present tense, future tense, in order to be an encouragement in the sense that we are fully aware that the burden of salvation is primarily on God—and **He never fails**. Salvation is something He **gives** by His grace. Brethren, if we had to work for salvation, nobody would make it. Nobody, unless God lowered the standards to where anybody could make it, simply by saying "I believe in Jesus Christ." Does that sound familiar? That's what this world's salvation is.

But what is the standard? The standard is so high, it's out of sight. It's *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*, and Almighty God, the Creator, is fully confident that He can bring us—each and every one of us—to the standard that in His judgment is acceptable to Him. Did not Jesus say in John 17:12 that He had not lost a single one of those that had been given to Him, except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled?

Well here's another tremendous verse that we need to take into consideration in our judgment. It's in Jeremiah 29. Again you need to think of this in terms of the church. It's scattered. You might as well say we're in captivity in the world.

**Jeremiah 29:10** For thus says the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

We wonder if we'll ever get back together again in this scattered condition. But I'll tell you, this scattering is **good** for us. We needed it badly. We would have been lost for sure if He had not scattered us and made us think about where we stand in relation to Him. It made us think about our salvation, not

just think that we had it made because we were *in the church*, and we were going to ride Mr. Armstrong's coat tails right into the Kingdom of God. Now look at verse 11.

**Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Now we're going to translate this into modern English. This comes out of the *Revised Standard Version*. Remember I said earlier, leading into this, that the standard is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and that Almighty God the Creator is confident that He can bring us—each and every one of us—to the standard, that in His judgment, is acceptable to Him. What God said through Jeremiah is this:

**Jeremiah 29:11 (RSV)** For I **know** the plans that I have for **you**, says the Lord. Plans for your welfare, and not for evil, to give you a **future** in His Kingdom, and a hope.

God is the only One, along with the Son, who knows exactly to what end He is creating each of us. We only know generally. Paul says *we look through a glass darkly*. The apostle John said that it does not yet appear what we shall be. But God knows specifically, and He judges without respect to persons, with the end toward which He is creating each one of us in mind.

I said to those of you here about Mr. Farah's sermonette. This is where it fits. Jesus Christ is the author and **finisher** of our faith. He finishes what He starts. He gets the job done. Who can stand in the way of the Lord? All we have to do, brethren, is give Him a chance. We think that is so hard. Well, He'll work—**cause** us to yield to Him. Whatever it takes. If it takes the Tribulation to beat this pride out of us so that we'll yield to Him—He will do it for our good.

That's why I said it was **good** that the church has been scattered, because He put the 2 x 4 upside the head, and He has whacked us one good to make us **think** about what we have in our grasp. Because if we don't stop to think about it, the world and all its influences will just wash us away, and we'll be

lost through it. So He blew us apart to make us think about what we have, and to see what we're going to do with it, so that this relationship with Him is made complete. That's where salvation lies. With **Him!** He's the author. He's the finisher. He knows where He is headed with us. We look through a glass darkly, and so because we look through a glass darkly, we have to live by faith. We've got to trust Him.

Now let's go back to Exodus 6. I want you to see the confidence that rings from God, that He is able to complete what He starts.

**Exodus 6:2-8** And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name YAHWEH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, **I am the LORD**, and I **will** bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I **will** rid you out of their bondage, and I **will** redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I **will** take you to me for a people, and I **will** be to you a God: and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I **will** bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I **will** give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

Who can stand before Him? Does He have the ability? Does He have the power? Does He have the wisdom to complete what He sets out to do? He says, *I appear, I established, I heard, I remembered. I will bring you out. I will rid you of their bondage. I will redeem you. I will take you for a people. You shall know that I am God, and I will bring you into the land. I will give it to you.* Are you beginning to get some kind of an idea why they wrote of salvation in the past tense? They had faith in it, that what God says He will do, **He will do**. It was as good as done, if they would just live by faith, and yield.

Let's go to another place. Let's look at one in the New Testament. Everybody ought to know this.

**Romans 8:28** And we know [Do we know this?] that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Two conditions there for those for whom everything works good. They have to love God, and they have to be *the called*. Now if those conditions are met .

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**Romans 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son [There's the goal.], that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

In other words, Christ is not the only one who is in the Kingdom of the Father. God is opening it up to many more. To those who are called, and those who love God.

**Romans 8:30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

That hasn't even happened yet! But how confident God is!

**Romans 8:31-39** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For your sake, we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors [we triumph] through him that loved us. For

I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Brethren, the burden of salvation is on God. It is He who is working salvation, and His object is good works so that we can be in His image in His Kingdom. In regard to those works, God predestined, before the foundation of the world, the kinds of works that He wanted from His children generally. Thus there will be similarities in character in all of God's children. But from that point on, the similarities become less distinct, because God is not producing cookie-cutter children. God likens His family to a body—a human body—and each part of the body, though it bears a similarity with all others in supporting the wholeness and the work of the body, doesn't perform the same specific function within the body; thus there are specific works God is emphasizing within each of us to add to the perfection of His body.

God places people in the body as it pleases Him. Aren't you glad that He put the hand on the end of the arm, rather than sticking out of your head? Aren't you glad that your feet and your toes are where they are? This is the analogy that Paul is drawing on here. Everything in the body is perfectly placed to support the function that God has given it to carry out, to be the vehicle—the temple of His Holy Spirit—in order that the purpose of God, in creating Himself, or re-creating Himself in us, can be carried out.

In like manner, God is placing people into His family—into His Kingdom—as it pleases Him, and not everybody is called to exactly the same function. And so God gives gifts in order for people to carry out their function toward which God is creating them. I feel, personally, that the path that He is taking each of us in our Christian life has very much to do with what He is preparing us for in His Kingdom. And so the experiences that we go through will have a similarity, but they will also be different because of the end that He has in mind for each of us.

I think that we have reached the place where it's going to be good to stop. We've reached the time, and a good place in my sermon, so this transmission for today is complete.