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The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIX
Issue 463

Through What Kind of Glasses Do You Read God's Word?

Part 1 of 2

by — Peter Meye (The Netherlands)

Before we carefully think about the things that matter most in life, it is very useful and even essential to begin with certain principles. Such principles fulfill the role of a foundation and will no doubt help us to think in an orderly manner so that there will come about a good and flexible structure, in which all of the elements are logically interrelated. In this way, necessary adjustments (if any) can relatively easily be given a place, taking account of the consequences thereof. Such principles I intend to elaborate upon, below:



“If there is a God, and He is the Creator of everything, then mustn't He have a purpose for that creation?” Then, in advance, He would have ready a *plan* (of action) to reach that goal. This plan really should include *everything*, even *before* the implementation of anything (thus, before the text in Genesis 1:1!), right?

ONE GOD: OUT OF WHICH IS ALL

There is ONE God. Everything is out of Him. He is the Creator of everything. “Everything” refers to ALL! An enumeration, perhaps unnecessarily:

- time and space (universe) and everything that is in it
- the whole earth and all that is in it
- all living creatures (visible and invisible)
- all that is good and all that is evil
- all circumstances

People think continuously. We cannot stop thinking – and we are permitted to think. More importantly, it is just very good to think logically.

If we think logically, then we will soon ask ourselves,

Before its implementation, the entire *plan* was laid forth in the Word (Greek, *logos*; John 1:1). Here, we recognize the word *logos* with which this can then also be described, thus, Emblem or Image (Colossians 1:15).

We're speaking about a *blueprint*, an original (Greek, *archē*) of creation (Revelation 3:14).

This Original is also the effulgence of God's glory and the Emblem of Who God, Himself, is (Hebrews 1:3)!

It is on the basis of this *Logos* (Word) therefore, that God has created *everything* (John 1:3)!

It is the same Word that, many thousands of years later, became flesh (*i.e.*, human), the Human Who was given the name of Jesus! Is not this intense and beautiful?

If all of this is true, then it cannot be otherwise than that the inconceivably great and mighty God wants

(see GLASSES, page 4107) ↗

Bible Student's Notebook™

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
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- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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GLASSES (continued from front page)

to make Himself known to His creation. Why? Because He, above all else, is love! It is love that is the essence of His personality. He wants His creation to know Him, even very intimately.

Why is that? Think about it and look around you!

We are witnessing not only evil, but also what is good. Most of us know the principle and concept of family: parents who love their children unconditionally, and children who return this love, and boldly, without any hesitancy, draw close to their parents for everything. In addition, children, also, do not, for a moment, think about tomorrow; they have no worries, at all!

Obviously, we are, here, talking about a normal state of affairs.

Who do you think invented this concept? Would it not be a type, a figure or reference to the real concept? If God created everything, then He has also made this principle!

Why? Because a normal loving family is a picture of the love God has for His creation. The main role of God is that of Father. When God will have achieved His purpose with all of His creation (also called the work of His hands, *cf.* Psalm 102:25), then will this role be fully fulfilled and be a glorious reality.

**GOD:
MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN**

As mentioned earlier, it can – in light of the previous starting-point principle – not be otherwise than that God wants to make Himself known to His creation. How does He do that?

God makes Himself known to His creation through His Word. As mentioned before, God's Word became man. It is Jesus Christ and no one else! If you have "seen" Him, then you have seen God the Father (John 14:9).

But how do you see Him? In fact, the question is, *How* do you get to know Him?

We get to know Jesus Christ, as well as God the Father, through His Word, namely, His written Word!

Thanks to the written Word, we get to know the incarnate Word also, and through it also who God really is and what His plan is with all of creation!

He certainly could have used other means to make Himself known, such as through images (visions, dreams, etc.) or spoken words (whispers). Yet God chose the written Word.

Why? Because it's the best way. What could be better than to give a message that is clear and concrete, black-and-white, verifiable, for the benefit of the recipient of that message?

This mode of communication does have an important consequence! To learn who God is, what His plan is for His creation and how He will achieve His objective, it is important to study patiently:

- what really is written,
- exactly how it is formulated,
- to whom it is addressed,
- in and for what time it is recorded.

All of this implies certain traits in a student, such as patience, much thought and willingness to meditate, analyzing and making connections, having a critical attitude and not shying away from boring word-studies, so that the real meaning of words will be discovered.

"What, then, is God's Word?" you may ask. God's Word consists of a library of 66¹ books that are written by about 40 people during a period of time of more than 4000 years!

These writings concern the revelations that God makes about Himself, whereby everything refers to the *subject* of His plan with the creation: His Son, Jesus Christ! He is the One Who really makes God known! ►

1. On the number of books in the Scriptures, I definitely believe that either: (1) the 5 books of the Psalms should be counted separately (giving us a total of 70 books), and/or (2) some of the Prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures should be counted as one book, so that the Hebrew books total up to 22 which adds up to 49 books (7x7) together with the Greek Scriptures! You can vividly imagine that, knowing how structured our Father works, I cannot accept that there are 66 books in Gods Scripture. That's simply not how God operates!

These revelations were gradually given, through time, from the beginning of creation until Paul, the apostle, to whom the last and highest revelations were revealed!

It is of great and relevant importance to be conscious of that fact. All of these writings are directly inspired by God through His spirit. The languages used for this are Hebrew (with a bit of Aramaic) and Greek.

This inspiration of God through His Spirit has resulted in an incredibly logical and structured unit of revelation, in which no word is redundant or too insignificant. It never contradicts itself, and everything supports and strengthens the message. Hence, due to this knowledge and fact, we speak of “the holy Scripture.”

In the course of time, these original texts were translated, divided into chapters and verses, etc. However, none of these *translations* are inspired by God, so they, sometimes, contain very painful, big mistakes, imperfections, blunders and even fraud! It is important to know and acknowledge this.

Now we will go back to the original Scriptures. As human beings, we are strongly inclined to see everything from our relative perspective. Quite understandable! Therefore, it is difficult for man to understand, let alone, believe, that the aforementioned library – known as the “Bible” (not my favorite word) – actually is God's Word.

Therefore, I would like to refer to a few aspects which, for me, are the undeniable proof that this really concerns God's Word.

GOD'S WORD SAYS EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS IT TO SAY

We assume that God is omnipotent, without limitation, and consequently, very awe-inspiring. We also assume that it *must* be logical that He wants His creation to know Him, because He is love.

He is easily able to ensure that His Word says exactly what He wants it to say to us, whenever and in what context He wants to do this. He is able also to ensure that each word is carefully selected in such a way that it creates a wealth of riches, which is impossible for man to have devised.

Guess what? God has arranged it exactly that way!

PURE LANGUAGES CHOSEN

Also, the languages in which God's Word has been recorded have been carefully chosen: Hebrew (with a small part Aramaic) and Greek.

Why precisely those languages? Because they were known as pure languages. This means that every word in these languages can have only one main meaning (as opposed to impure languages, *e.g.* Western). A word can be used in various ways, but the basic meaning remains the same.

Have I already mentioned that God is careful? Perhaps indirectly; but, yes, He is incredibly careful!



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NO PUNCTUATION, CHAPTERS OR VERSES

In the original writings which together constitute Scripture (God's Word), no punctuation marks occur. Also, there is no division into chapters and/or verses. Punctuation marks and chapter and verse divisions are made by people in their translations, and these are based on their own insights and traditions.

This seems to be a trivial argument until you find out that, in these cases, the meaning of a sentence or passage may change quite significantly. Also with respect to this, because of these personal insights, many unnecessary misunderstandings have arisen which also have led to false conclusions, statements and insights. Of course, it should be clear that these types of misunderstandings will be limited to a minimum once we realize this fact.

NOT FLATTERING FOR MANKIND

When you read the Word of God, you will quickly notice that its contents are not particularly flattering for mankind. It abounds in failed human attempts to please God on their own and in their own way, and

always results in much evil and misery, pain and sorrow – in short, in structural failure!

Suppose that the original Scriptures had been devised and recorded by people: then I can assure you that the content would be very flattering for mankind. People always tend to present themselves more beautifully than they really are, don't they?

PERFECT HARMONY

Remember, God's Word is written by about 40 people, 100% inspired by that same all-powerful and all-wise God over a period of more than 4000 years.

Considering all of this, in the entire library there is not even one text that contradicts another. More than that, the texts turn out to be strengthening each other, because they refer directly or indirectly to each other! Humanly speaking, how is that possible? What is the chance of that? That is incalculable! Check it out for yourself and show me where there is a contradiction. Think of it as a challenge.

You surely will find *apparent* contradictions, but they are expressly apparent and have a deliberate, tem- ►



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porary nature. When you search in the translated texts you will also find contradictions, but they arose on account of pollution during the translation of the text.

VERY PURE WORD

Let's look at what is written about the words that God uses in His Word. What do you think, for instance, of the following text:

The words of Yahweh are clean, silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Psalm 12:6).

Or this one:

Your word is very pure and your servant loves it (Psalm 119:140).

Quite logical, isn't it? As the words of God (His time-name is Yahweh) are purified seven times, then they certainly may be called "very refined," right?

In short, it is important to study the Word of God with that mindset, an attitude of being conscious that *every word* is carefully chosen and thus no single word in it is recorded without a reason!

In brief, study with attention, always taking into account the original word and its significance.

SPIRIT WORDS

Some time ago, it was slowly becoming more and more clear to me that words do not just consist of letters, but that they really mean something and, therefore, should be regarded as – *spirit!*

Indeed, words are spirit! You know, yourself: Words can cause us to feel both happy as well as unhappy and hurting-with-injury. Everyone has been there, so it's certainly recognizable.

The Spirit is that which is vivifying. The flesh is not benefiting anything. The declarations which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (John 6:63).

ONLY THROUGH HIS WORD

I myself grew up in an environment where the Word of God was considered as part of the process of getting to know God better. However, another part was, for example, formed by experiences: experiencing God in your life, "prophecies" that were spoken, "revelations" that were given, etc.

Probably everyone knows that 7% of all communication is verbal and, consequently, 93% non-verbal. This means that we, as people, especially base our learning process on non-verbal communications. We identify, observe, add impressions and perceptions together. Often times we draw conclusions unconsciously, and so we come to the formation of our puzzle: our image of God, of man and of the world.

Well, I've always been an analytical thinker, so I also thought much about this way of getting to know God better. In this I often felt pretty insecure, especially because the experiences were not *reliable* to me. Also, because much information came from people, I never knew for sure if it really was 100% God who "spoke" in what they said. Does that sound somewhat logical?

Now you will better understand how happy and relieved I was when I discovered and came to believe that, at this time, God speaks *only* through His Word! Why? Because in it, according to Colossians 1:25, it is made clear that God's Word is complete!

Of which I [Paul] became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God.

(To be continued.)



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