



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 36
Issue 884

“Ration” or “Wages”

(Romans 6:23)

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Objection has been raised to the rendering “the ration of Sin is death.” It is claimed that the usual rendering “wages” is more correct. What are the facts?



The first thing to be considered is, Which Greek word is best rendered wages? The word *misthos* is the only other word rendered “wages” in the *Authorized Version*. It is translated “reward” twenty-four times, “hire” thrice, and “wages” twice. A careful study will show that “reward” is hardly correct, for it is usually a remuneration for service. “Hire,” on the other hand, is too harsh. But “wages” always suits.

The next inquiry is, What is the difference between this word and *opsoonion*, the other word rendered “wages”? Two of its occurrences seem to show that this word is not correct. No one can read Paul’s epistles and fail to see that he did *not* work for wages. None of the ecclesias paid him a proper sum for his services to them. How, then, could he say, “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service” (II Corinthians 11:8)? How much nearer the facts to render it, “getting rations.” But the phrase “wages of Sin” (Romans 6:23) is still more objectionable. The context uses the figure “slaves of Sin.” Now slaves are not paid wages, in the literal accepted sense of the term. And Sin, we may be sure, is not an exceptionally generous slave owner. It does *not* pay wages. The sinner does not look for a future pay day. All he gets is present rations.

Again, let anyone read Paul’s defense in I Corinthians 9:1-7. Is he pleading for a salary? There we have three

comparisons. One who tends a flock gets *milk* from it. One who plants a vineyard gets *fruit*. Quite a good ration, milk and fruit. And the third figure should be in line. A soldier gets something to eat and drink also. In no case is a money payment in view. The apostle pleads only for rations, to enable him to work. The wages all wait until the future. He will receive them from the Lord, not from the saints.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 25, page 259 (1934)

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“The ration of Sin is death” (Romans 6:23). The slave of Sin receives *rations*, not *wages*. He is not hired but fed. The usual word for wages *misthos* is not used here, but one derived from the word *PROVISION opsoonion*. John the Baptist told the soldiers to be sufficed with their rations (Luke 3:14). Paul asks, “Who is warring with his own rations” (I Corinthians 9:7)? He received rations, not wages, for dispensing the evangel (II Corinthians 11:8). It is the continual allowance of food needed for sustenance, not the final reward for work. Sin, personified, deals out death right along to its slaves. It is not God Who pays wages for sin. Sin receives no *wages*, even from God, for it is not worthy of reward. Has not this misleading rendering led us totally astray here?

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I labored long under the impression that this passage sufficed to prove that the sins of men would be settled by their death. I did not realize that this practically did away with judgment. If their death, like an execution, is the penalty of their sins, then why should they be roused to be judged before the Great White Throne? And why should they suffer affliction and distress (Romans 2:9) if they have already received the wages of sin in their first death? Moreover, why should they die twice, not only before the judgment, but also in the second death? Is it not clear that neither of these deaths is the ‘wages’ or ‘penalty’ of sins, but that these are dealt with in the interval between them, not in death, but while they are in the resurrection of judgment?

This conclusion is put beyond question once we note the position of this passage in the book of Romans. Sins, judgment, and justification come before us in the first four chapters. Thereafter the subject is conciliation. The special context from which this phrase is taken does not deal with the sins of unbelievers, but with our slavery under Sin in the past and our freedom from Sin now, especially the fruit which we have in each case. What did we get for slaving for

Sin? Death. Now we slave for God and get life. The question of future judgment, or of sin’s penalty at the last, is not before us in this passage at all. We have misused it blindly in order to support a doctrine which has no scriptural basis.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 30, pages 58 (1939)

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Death, we are told, is the ration of Sin. Sin is a slaveholder, who pays no wages. All he gives is enough food to sustain his slaves. And what a diet it is! Poison! Death! That’s what the sinner gets for his efforts (Romans 6:23).

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 35, pages 223 (1944)

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It is not easy to escape from tradition. It is good to be seconded in new and revolutionary readings by impartial witnesses. We consider this a vast help to the

(see *WAGES*, page 7492)

Bible Student’s Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
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- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the Body of Christ (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);

– adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God’s storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “church,” “denomination,” “movement,” “organization,” “mission,” “creed,” “meeting,” “school,” “conference” or “fellowship.”

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For definitions of abbreviations/acronyms, see index after the [order form](#).

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Abraham's Magna Carta

by — Ray I. Psalmonds (1909-1984)

This is a brief consideration of the promises given to Abraham and where they are listed.

Romans 9:4-5

In Romans 9:4-5 the Lord enumerates Israel's privileges:

1. The adoption (heirs)
2. The glory (shekinah)
3. The covenants (all)
4. The giving of the Law (moral, constitutional, sacrificial)
5. The service of God (the priesthood)
6. The promises (all)
7. Whose are the fathers (of whom are the fathers).

Romans 15:8

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.

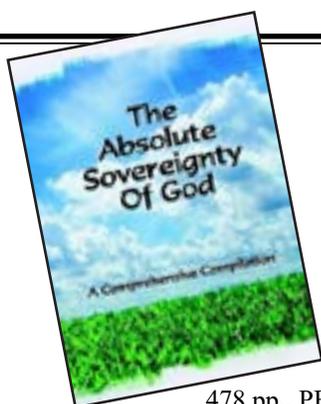
The Fathers and the Promises are enumerated in the Book of Genesis:

1. A great nation (12:2)
2. I will bless thee (12:2)
3. Make thy name great (12:2)
4. Bless them that bless thee (12:3)

5. Curse them that curse thee (12:3)
6. In thee all families blessed (12:3)
7. Thy seed, given the land (12:7; *cp.* Deuteronomy 4:32-40)
8. All the land ... to thee ... thy seed (13:15)
9. Thy seed as the dust of the earth (13:16)
10. The stars ... so shall thy seed be (15:5)
11. My covenant between Me and thee and multiply thee (17:2)
12. Father of many nations (17:4)
13. Make thee exceeding fruitful (17:6)
14. Make nations of thee (17:6)
15. Kings come out of thee (17:6)
16. Be a God unto thee and thy seed (17:7)
17. Bless and multiply thy seed (22:17)
18. Thy seed shall possess ... enemies (22:17)
19. In thy seed all nations ... blessed (22:18)

In Romans we see that the cosmos (world) was given to Abraham and his seed as an inheritance (4:13). In 4:16 these same promises to Israel and the Gentiles of Abraham's faith are affirmed. In Hebrews God deals with the Heavenly portion of Abraham's promises (*cp.* 11:8-10). Concerning the promise of a better country, see Hebrews 11:14-16. See the Book of Galatians, particularly chapter three, concerning the above promises to Abraham.

Abraham was given circumcision. Circumcision was a *token mark of death* that prefigured the Great Sacrifice for sins. Associated with the giving of circumci-



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sion was the giving to Abraham and his seed the Priesthood, the place of Sacrifice, the service of Mediation.

Circumcision was a grim reminder that the claim of being Abraham's seed must be substantiated by having the faith of Abraham and not trusting to mere fleshly ties alone. This does not set aside the fact that the Israelite enjoyed by birth a unique covenant relationship with God not enjoyed by the Gentile nations. Their Israelitish birth and circumcision placed them in the position of having a legal mandate on God, on the promises, on the land, and on the inheritance.

WAGES (continued from page 7490)

understanding of the book of Romans. It would be good if we should have similar confirmation of our rendering "the *ration* of sin," instead of "the *wages* of sin" (Romans 6:23) for this change is far more vital than it appears to be. The false idea that men die for what they *do* is based on this text, even though the context is not concerned with what we do, but what we *are*. Take away the inference based on the false rendering "wages" and the way is opened to believe the uniform testimony of the Scriptures.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 30, pages 276 (1939)

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Sin, in Scripture, is represented as a great Slaveholder. He does not pay "wages," as our [KJ] version puts it (Romans 6:23). Who ever heard of a *slave* getting wages? He deals out *rations*. Sin's ration is death.

— *Scripture Research*
Volume 1 Number 2 (1964)

(edited)

BSN

Psalmonds was an associate of [Russell H. Schaefer](#) (1919-1999), [Howard N. Bunce](#) (1879-1954), Robert A. Hadden, and [William B. Hallman](#) (1903-1985).

TOPICS:

Major: Abraham; Covenants; Israel
Minor: Circumcision; Gentiles

The sting of death is sin. Sin, fully consummated, is bringing forth death (James 1:15). Only in the case of criminals, is death the result of a judicial decree, yet, even then, it is at the hand of man and not of God.

The fact that the believer and the unbeliever share alike in the first death ought to be sufficient proof that it is not, in any sense, a judicial infliction on God's part. The saint is assured of immunity from all judgment, yet he does not escape the first death.

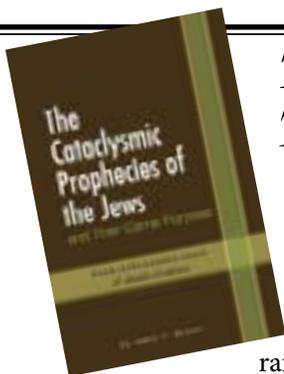
— *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 13, pages 256-257 (1922)

(abridged excerpts)

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TOPICS:

Major: Rations; Romans 6:23; Substitution; Wages
Minor: Death; Judgment; Sin



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by – James T. Burson

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under "Burson."



Editor's Desk

Our “Louisiana Purchase”

Over the years, our various family units have had pets here at the Abbey. We have had some precious little creatures entrusted to our care. They have brought us much joy, and of course heavy sorrow in their deaths.

We have some very wonderful cats in our different households, but we have not had a dog since the passing of our beloved cocker spaniel mix Lacy in 2007.¹ For a long time, with all of the grandkids around (6 of our 7 are here at the present), it seemed important to me that they have a dog.

We have always adopted strays, and last year during the process of searching for another spaniel mix, COVID hit. With more people home, and in turn also looking for shelter animals, it began to look as though another spaniel was not realistic. After a year and a half of looking, a local newspaper article told of dogs being rescued from hurricane Laura's flooding in Louisiana and how they were being relocated to animal shelters in the north. Our county shelter was cooperating with this effort by bringing small groups of them at a time to our area.

When the second group arrived, we decided the time had come – so we completed an application and went

1. Read about Lacy, her death, and a general look at animals in Scripture in the editorial of *Bible Student's Notebook* #106.

to adopt. The shelter manager told us of a dog with a sweet disposition that she thought would be a perfect fit for our family. When we first met the pup, she came right over and laid by our feet, rolling over for a belly rub. Needless to say, she immediately stole our hearts. She was not the spaniel that I had envisioned that we would acquire – the best guess is that she is a Sheprador (German Shepherd and Labrador Retriever mix). Our granddaughter Izzy named her Zoey. Janma and some of the grandkids like to affectionately call her “Zoe-Zoe,” while I call her “Zoey girl.” We adopted her in October, and now she is quite settled in as a beloved family member.

Sometimes dogs are referred to as “man's best friend,” while the adage “Dogs are man's best friend because they wag their tails instead of the tongues,” always brings a smile to my face.



Granddaughters Melora and Izzy with Zoey on the day we got her from the shelter.

Zoey can often be found on the floor by my desk,

(see *EDITORIAL*, last page)



136 pp, PB

Comfort and Vision

by — Frederick William Davis (1879-1926)

This is “a collection of spiritual sermons by our lamented friend, F. W. Davis, late of Cheltenham, England. It is a fitting memorial of his broad and loving spirit and deep insight into the Word of Truth.” — A.E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*

See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”



Tidbits of Truth #23

"Tidbits" is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

Mark of the Beast

[To D.R.:] For the decades that I have monitored Christian thought, "the Mark of the Beast" has been endlessly "identified" by prophetic prognosticators.¹ Regardless of whatever it may be, it will not be implemented during the current, unprophesied, Secret Administration.² This mark is limited in scope to the Book of Revelation,³ and therefore to the Jewish prophetic time during which it occurs.

As for the COVID vaccines, I have dear friends, and Body members, who have and have not taken them. This is an individual health risk assessment as to which – the virus or the vaccine – poses the greater risk. One is certainly not ceremonially "unclean" for having taken it, as this status was applicable only during times of Israel's dispensational standing as the divinely favored nation.

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The Full Christ

His allotment among the saints (Ephesians 1:18, CV).

[Excerpt:] We have Christ – a full Christ – Image of the Invisible God, Splendor of His glory. We need, the church needs, the universe needs ALL that God has made Him to be. And all that Christ is, and has, is here [in Ephesians] for us in faith. We have Christ,

1. [Editor:] For more information, see:
 - [Prophetic Obsession in an Unprophesied Administration](#): A Collection of Works Concerning the Nature of Unfulfilled Prophecy (see [order form](#) under "Compilations").
2. [Editor:] For a detailed study of this subject see the comprehensive work:
 - *The Administration of the Secret* (see [order form](#) under "Compilations").
3. [Editor:] For a brief look at this theme, see:
 - The Book of Revelation: A Jewish Book, Tidbits of Truth #14, [Bible Student's Notebook #871](#), page 7386.

and we have the Church – a completed Church, a Body without a missing member, not a single gap in its ranks – all completed in the *Plērōma* of Christ their Saviour and Head. A full Christ; a completed church; and an entire creation. Grace has first come down in and through Christ to the church; then through the church into creation; and now it returns in the form of glory through the church to Christ, and through Christ to God.

Theology views creation as God's speculation which makes an eternal torture-house, or else an eternal tomb, out of a portion of His Universe. It would seem to be the inevitable cost of any gamble. But this verse would rather show that God's investment in creation will yield Him large returns in destiny when the incense of glory beyond glory ascends from Christ, Creation and the Church in the eon of the eons.

— Alan Burns (1884-1929)
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 11 (1920)

Filling the Redemptive Gap

[Excerpt:] We are Christ's Body, the fullness, or *Plērōma*, which rounds out the universe completely. Hitherto redemption had provided for the recovery of only Earth's lost blessings. Heaven, where sin started, was not, it seemed, to be reached by the work of the cross. A segment of the Universe was still unfilled. The "church which is His Body" fills the gap. Thus, it is "the fullness that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23).

— A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 2 (1910)

Bringing Home His Wandered Children

[Excerpt:] Away with the thought that God could have been a perfect, an adorable creator, doing anything less than He has done for His children! ... The idea

that God would be God all the same, as glorious as He needed to be, had He not taken upon Himself the divine toil of bringing home His wandered children, had He done nothing to seek and save the lost, is false as “hell.” Lying for God could go no farther. As if the idea of God admitted of His being less than He is, less than perfect, less than All-in-all, less than Jesus Christ! Less than love absolute, less than entire unselfishness! ...

It will be answered that we have fallen, and God is thereby freed from any obligation, if any ever were. It is but another lie. No amount of wrongdoing in a child can ever free a parent from the divine necessity of doing all He can to deliver His child.

— George MacDonald (1824–1905)
Unspoken Sermons, “The Voice of Job”
(Originally published in three series in 1867,
1885 and 1889 in London by Longmans, Green
& Co.)

“Debt” or “Rations”?

[To D.R.:] Much confusion is brought about by the erroneous doctrine of the supposed “substitutionary”⁴ death of Christ. It took me many years of study to break free from its gripping paradigm. Its flaw affects so many other related doctrines. Death is not sin’s “penalty,” and thus, as a result, Christ did not pay that “penalty.” It is reflected in the hymn’s lyrics,

I had a debt I could not pay,
He paid the debt He did not owe.

Such an idea as this sets God and Christ at odds on Calvary: Christ is the victim of wrath at the hands of an angry deity. Nothing could be further from the truth; for there, instead of hiding His face from the Son, “*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

One place that we often get the “debt” idea is supposedly from Romans 6:23. However, instead of death being sin’s “penalty” – producing a “debt” – Paul presents death as being a “wage.”

4. For more on the erroneous idea of substitution, see:
– [Doctrine of Substitution: An Erroneous Teaching](#) (see [order form](#) under “Compilations.”)

For the *wages* of sin is death (KJV).

Paul did not say “*the debt of sin is death.*” “Debt” and “wages” are quite opposite ideas.

The Greek word translated “wages” here is ὀψώνιον (*opsōnion*), meaning “rations for a soldier” (SEC, G3800), “a soldier’s pay, allowance, that part of the soldier’s support given in place of pay, i.e., rations” (TGL). The *Concordant Version* renders it more appropriately,

For the *ration* of Sin is death.

Regarding the distorted idea of death as a “penalty,” George L. Rogers (1869-1947) aptly wrote,

Ration refers to the poor provision made for the sustenance of slaves.⁵

A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) also writes,

The context uses the figure “*slaves* of Sin.” Now slaves are not paid wages, in the literal accepted sense of the term. And Sin, we may be sure, is not an exceptionally generous slave owner. It does *not* pay wages. The sinner does not look for a future pay day. All he gets is present *rations*.⁶

Thus, when “*Christ died for our sins*” (I Corinthians 15:3), He did not do so as a substitute, making payment for our debt, but in union He joined us in the darkness of our rations, so that we could join Him in the glory of His resurrection.⁷

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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TOPICS:

Major: [Mark of the Beast:] Mark of the Beast; Revelation, Book of; [Filling the Redemptive Gap:] Plērōma; [The Full Christ:] Plērōma; [Bringing Home His Wandered Children:] Father; Salvation of All; [“Debt” or “Rations”?] Rations; Substitution; Wages

5. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 24, page 160 (1933).

6. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 25, page 259 (1934).

7. For more on the contrast of “wages” and “rations” see the lead article by A.E. Knoch in this issue of the *Bible Student’s Notebook*.

EDITORIAL (continued from page 7493)

just as Lacy usually was so many years ago. Looking down at Zoey I am often reminded of the endearing pictures of E.W. Bullinger's office, where one can so easily spot his beloved dog, Kaffie.



Bullinger's study and his dog Kaffie.

In fact, of the 16 personal pictures of Bullinger and/

or his office that Juanita Carey was able to acquire from family members during the research for her book [E.W. Bullinger: A Biography](#), six of them have dogs in them.

Clyde

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
The Pilkington Abbey
Paint, PA

TOPICS:

Major: Zoey (dog)

Minor: Kaffie (Bullinger's dog); Pets



Critical Lexicon & Concordance to the English & Greek New Testament

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

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