



Star Over Bethlehem: A Snapshot of Dominion

by JAMES B. JORDAN

A great many things can be said about the star that guided the magi to Bethlehem when Jesus was born. One dimension of this phenomenon, often overlooked, takes its rise from Genesis 1:2, "... darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

The creation account presents God as building his Kingdom of Light in an environment of **uncursed** but primordial darkness. While not evil, darkness is undesirable, because it prevents the sight necessary for both dominion and judgment. Darkness, we are told, was **"over** the face of the deep," and this is a picture of dominion. It is as if darkness were a thing hovering over the world. Then comes the Spirit of God, Who also hovers over the world, again a picture of dominion: A vantage point on high enables the ruler to oversee his entire realm.

The work of God in Genesis 1 shows the progressive replacement of the dominion of darkness with the dominion of light. On Day 1, light is made

and called "good" (in contrast to darkness, which while not evil, is still not "good" *in this sense*). On Day 4, God placed lights in the firmament to take dominion over both day and night (v. 16), further replacing darkness with the dominion of **light-bearing** bodies. The assigning of the earth to the dominion of various creatures, culminating in man, takes up the rest of the week, and all of this is to be understood as a replacement of the dominion of darkness with that of various **life-and-light-bearers**. (Notice the language of w. 26-28: "rule **over**,")

We **have** here a visual picture of dominion: something high in the air over the earth. This picture recurs a number of times, most significantly in Deuteronomy 32:10-11, where the glory of God is said to hover over Israel in the wilderness. (Meredith Kline has discussed this in some detail in *Images of the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], pp. 13ff.) Since, however, man was made to be the preeminent symbol and image of God, **man** is seen to be placed on high, on the **Edenic** plateau, with dominion over all the earth.

Man rejected Godly dominion, and was cast from the heights of Eden. Since man gave the heights to Satan, that Lord of Darkness became the "prince of the powers of the air" from that time until the coming of the New Covenant. **All** the same, even during the Old Covenant God provided pictures of the coming dominion of the Son of Man. Noah and his family riding "above the face of the waters" during the Flood provides such an image, as do the raven and dove that flew over **the** waters while the earth was being re-created. Similarly, the placement of God's throne on the heights of **Mount Zion** provides a similar image.

The birth of Jesus Christ, however, was the beginning of the war against darkness, which now is seen as morally evil, and not simply as inadequate for dominion as in the original creation situation. According to John 1:5, "the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it." Thus, just as the Spirit hovered over **the water** in order to drive **back** the dominion of darkness over the **deep**, so Jesus repeatedly **walked on water** — the same visual image. Indeed, Jesus invites us to do

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the same (**Matt. 14:28 ff.**), an image of taking dominion over the new creation.

Paul reflects **on this** imagery in **Ephesians**. In a passage that has perplexed some commentators, Paul writes that we “were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord” (5:8). He does not say we formerly were *in* darkness and now are *in* light. His language is more direct, more symbolic. Formerly we were identified with darkness, and our dominion over the world was the dominion of Satanic darkness. Now, however, we are “sons of light,” and our dominion is that of light-bearers (note **all of Ephesians 5:8-14** and **Matthew 5:14**). Thus, Paul refers to Christians as stars (**Phil. 2:15**), and John refers particularly to elders as special stars (**Rev. 1-3**), while Jesus is the very Sun of

Righteousness (**Mal. 4:2**).*

Paul writes that Satan was the “prince of the power of the air” during the Old Covenant, hovering over the fallen world given temporarily into his power. Now, however, Jesus Christ has been raised on high and Satan has been cast down, and Paul says that God has “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him **in the heavenlies**” (**Eph. 2:2-6**). Thus, it is clear that **in the New Covenant, Christians are the princes and princesses of the power (authority) of the air**, hovering over the new world, given to us in Christ.

Wise men followed the star, knowing that it signified the coming of a **king (Matt. 2:1-12)**. Those who would be wise, and would participate in the heavenly dominion of Christ, imitate their example.

Entrepreneurial Art

by GEORGE GRANT

An entrepreneur anticipates the future by developing innovative products and/or services that will shape market advances, expansions, or purifications. The entrepreneurial function is, thus, a priority aspect of healthy, growing cultures. Of late, most entrepreneurs have focused on the product development and distribution aspect of economy. In other words, they are primarily creative merchants, adept salesmen, and marketing experts. But down through the ages, such has not always been the case. A cursory glance at the history of capitalism reveals that, though a lion's share of the entrepreneurial function has been borne by salesmen, much of the load was apportioned to artisans and craftsmen as well.

Since Christians, functioning as they are within the parameters of the Dominion Covenant, have a vested interest in the growth and advance of culture, they should naturally be interested in harnessing any and every aspect of the entrepreneurial function. So why aren't they? Why have the arts been so flagrantly neglected?

John Quade, the Hollywood character actor, has said that, “The Christian who holds to the Scriptures as the foundation of **all** truth should, above all others, have the ability, the **means**, and the knowledge to express himself well and communicate the answers of Scripture to the problems of the world. With the Bible . . . in hand and the power of God's Spirit within . . . **he** should lead the world in every category of life, the media arts being no exception. Unfortunately,” he goes on to say, “such is definitely not **the case**. . . . Apparently the Christian media artist . . . is trying quite hard to make absolutely certain that no **one** ever accuses him of high quality, craftsmanship, of market leadership, and most certainly of **never** making a profit. . . .”

This must change. But in order for it to change, Christian artists must accept the awesome **responsibility** of being entrepreneurial functionaries.

Through the combination of research, development, technology, innovation, creativity, and vested capital, Christian artists must forge ahead to the cutting edge of communication and expression. They must catalyze the kind of progression in the arts that humanists, by virtue of their handicapped theology, cannot. They must capture the lead.

Art that is designed to be sheer entertainment tends to be ruled by the market. Expression is surrendered to formula. It is long on craftsmanship but short on innovation. Marketability and the profit motive shackle the creative impulse. The entrepreneurial function is ignored and the art is trivialized and stereotyped. Such is the plight of much pop art.

Art that is designed to be sheer propaganda tends to be ruled by an **integrityless** stiffness. Again, expression is surrendered to formula. Both craftsmanship and innovation are subdued. **Sloganeering** and ideological advocacy place the creative impulse under the bondage of communicative concerns. As a result, the entrepreneurial function is suppressed and the art is molested and emasculated. Such is the plight of much evangelical art.

Art that is designed to be sheer expression tends to be ruled by an arbitrary and ephemeral **eldritchness**. **Market** needs are scorned. Communication is eschewed. Standards are rejected. Craftsmanship is **unified** while innovation is the do-all and end-all. Thus, the creative impulse is released into a nether **realm** beyond human comprehension or appreciation. The entrepreneurial function is repudiated and the **art** is lost in a maze of **subjectivism**. Such is the plight of much modern “high” art.

By steering clear of these contemporary pitfalls,

the Christian artist has a unique opportunity to take the reins of power from the languishing modern art elite. The Christian artist has within his reach the ability to lead the cultural apparatus to an unheard of level of excellence and Biblical fidelity. By exercising entrepreneurial zeal, the Christian artist's dominion task becomes simply a matter of course. Once the sheer entertainment/sheer propaganda/sheer expression constraints have been exposed and excised, there is nothing that can

be mounted by the forces of monolithic humanism to stop Christian art's ascent to pre-eminence. It is manifest destiny.

(George Grant is one of the pastors of Believers Fellowship: Reformed Bible Church, Humble, Texas. This essay is a transcript from Rev. Grant's daily radio broadcast, "The Christian Worldview." For information concerning this program and how you might get it broadcast in your area write to The Christian Worldview, 410 South Ave. D, Humble, TX 77338.)

GENEVA PAPERS NO. 2 ISSUED

VAN TIL AND THE LIGONIER APOLOGETIC .

JOHN M. FRAME

Introduction

Classical Apologetics has been eagerly awaited. This book puts into systematic (and at least somewhat technical) form an apologetic approach of considerable interest, which up until now has been expressed primarily in popular writings and taped lectures. It is also notable for its critique of "presuppositionalism" (mainly in its Van Tillian form). This book is one of the most extensive critiques of Van Til to date,¹ and I think of all the critiques of Van Til this one shows the most thorough research and the most accurate interpretation.² In saying this, I should acknowledge a possible conflict of interest: The authors express indebtedness to me for correspondence between myself and Gerstner which "significantly sharpened our understanding of Vantillian apologetics."³ However, in commending these authors for their understanding of Van Til, I am not intending to commend myself. My contribution to their formulations was relatively small (and, as it turns out, not always understood and/or accepted). But Gerstner himself is a former student of Van Til and has (as I know from personal discussions) been mulling over Van Til's position for many years, with an intense interest and scholarly

• R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. x, 364. \$12.95).

¹ Its only rival in this respect is James Daane, *A Theology of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); but that book is limited in its focus to Van Til's doctrine of common grace, and it shows much less understanding of Van Til's thought than the volume under review.

² I will indicate that in this book also there is much, and serious, misunderstanding of Van Til but these authors are much closer to the truth about him than his earlier critics, such as the *Calvin Forum* group (see Van Til, *The Defence of the Faith* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955] 4ff.) or the critics in *Jerusalem and Athens* (ed. E. Geehan; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967).

³ P. x of the book's preface. Cf. also the slightly extravagant comment on p. 299.

Above is the first page of the second of the *New Geneva Papers*, which has already been mailed to subscribers. It is a definitive reply to the book *Classical Apologetics*, a defense of supposedly mainstream apologetics against the "encroachments" of Vantillianism. This 20-page essay was published in the *Westminster Theological Journal* in 1985, and by arrangement with them and with Professor Frame, we are able to offer it to you.

Frame's essay is particularly important in that he answers many criticisms levelled against presuppositional apologetics by those who have not understood it. No one interested

in Christian philosophy can afford to ignore this article.

Geneva Ministries' price for Frame's essay is \$3.00, postpaid. Ask for "Frame on Ligonier." It is not too late, however, to subscribe to the first twelve issues of *The New Geneva Papers*. Subscription price is \$30.00, and since single copies will vary in price from \$3.00 to \$4.50, those who subscribe will enjoy at least a \$10.00 savings.

(*New Geneva Papers* No. 1, James B. Jordan's "Christian Piety: Deformed and Reformed," sells for \$4.00. New subscribers will receive both Jordan's and Frame's essays, as well as the next ten in this series.)

Statutes of Limitation

by RAY R. SUTTON

Christians sometimes offend one another. **Correction:** Christians *often* give offense, **accidentally** or **intentionally**. You know, there are those situations where we say or do something and didn't mean it, or lash out in an unguarded moment. I've observed as a Pastor that it usually takes longer to heal the breach than most care to admit, or are willing to live with. Christians tend to think that asking forgiveness makes things "the way they were." After all, the Bible talks about how to resolve a conflict (**Matt. 5:23 ff.**).

But anyone who has tried to heal a "strained" relationship has discovered that forgiveness is sometimes easier to obtain than regaining the closeness of the friendship itself. I don't mean "regain" in the sense that the people are not friends again, but just the fact that the friendship is not as warm. This bothers Christians, often making them question whether true forgiveness has taken place. It is this hidden effect of a ruptured friendship that I'm addressing in this article.

Let's take **kind** of an extreme example to lay out the problem. Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice have been longstanding Christian friends. The two couples spend a lot of time with each other, even go on vacations together. Bob **and** Ted have even been in business together. One day, Carol confesses to her husband, Bob, that she is in love with Ted and having an **affair** with him. Bob is devastated and goes to his pastor the next day. The Pastor reads **Matt. 18:15ff.** to him and agrees to help, if necessary, **re-**store Carol and Ted.

By the grace of God, Ted and Carol respond and agree their behavior is sinful. Both confess their sin, ask the forgiveness of their spouses and friends, and repent. Weeks **later**, the pastor finds himself having to counsel the **innocent** partners. What's the problem? Bob admits that he has **for-**given Ted but he doesn't want to be around him anymore. He is even thinking about going to another church in town. Then there is his wife, Carol. He has forgiven her but he doesn't feel the same way as he did before. Things are a little **cool** around the house. The Pastor asks him if he's bitter. Bob candidly admits that he has a hard time with Ted, but he is really not bitter. Things are just strained and just don't "feel" right. He's uncomfortable and doesn't know why.

Is Bob's concern legitimate? Is Bob in sin? Has he failed to forgive his wife and friend? Should everything have returned to normal, the "way it

was" before the offense, **when everyone made up?** I say "no" to all of these questions.

Time cannot be **reversed** and things are never **"the way the were"** in any situation. To shoot for that goal is **unrealistic**. But what about the **"strained feelings"** when offenses **shatter** friendships. It **normally** takes time to recover emotionally, physically (depending on the level of intensity), and spiritually. Is this kind of thinking Biblical? Yes!

It is the principle of *statutes of limitations* on the effects of sin. Clarification: I know a phrase like "statute of limitation" calls to mind the legal concept that there is a limit to the chargeability of a person. One cannot be held legally guilty of certain crimes indefinitely. Normally, the limitation is seven years. Rather, I **am** referring to the Biblical idea that a person was considered unclean for a **limited** time, even after he had confessed his sin and had been ritually forgiven.

For example, if someone touched a dead animal or person he was unclean until he was sprinkled with the waters of purification (Nu. **19:11ff.**). But the text says that even after being sprinkled he will be clean **"by evening"** (Nu. **19:19**). In other words, he was forgiven, but there was a period of time allowed after the cleansing, 'until evening.'

I believe this provides an important principle. There is a statute of limitation on the *effect* of sin, meaning it takes *time* to heal the emotional and other *side-effects*. It is not a matter of whether a person has been forgiven by Christ or by the one offended. One is forgiven in Christ the moment he repents. But there is nothing wrong with recognizing that certain situations and sins take "time" to recover from. There is nothing wrong with feeling uncomfortable, with taking a period to stay away from each other and let the effects of the sin subside. There is a need for time to run its course; time does have a healing effect.

It seems to me that many Christians fail to recognize the *statute of limitations* principle. I've seen them time and again try to force people together who are strained. Pushing and probing don't change anything. Too often, the unjust conclusion is drawn that **someone is still in sin**. Maybe, but too many times the limitation period on the *effects* of their sin simply needs to be allowed to come. The fact is, the limitation may not come until both offended and offending parties are in heaven, before the throne of the Lord.

The New Heavens and Earth

by DAVID CHILTON

In his Second Epistle, St. Peter spoke of the **Old Covenant order**, with the world organized around the central sanctuary in Jerusalem, as “the present heavens and earth” (2 Pet. 3:7). As we noted in the previous study, the apostle’s language has considerable Biblical warrant (see, e.g., Isa. 51:15-16; Jer. 4:23-31). This had **been true from the beginning**: Moses described Israel’s salvation in the wilderness in terms of the Spirit of God hovering over a waste (Deut. 32:10-11; cf. Gen. 1:2). In the Exodus, as at the original creation, God divided light and darkness (Ex. 14:20), divided the waters from the waters to bring forth the dry land (Ex. 14:21-22), and planted His people in His holy mountain (Ex. 15:17). Israel was thus an image of Creation, a redemptive recapitulation of the making of heaven and earth.

In the first century A.D., however, Israel became a harlot, completely apostate from the true religion, yet **claiming** faithfulness to the Covenant. As such, it posed the greatest threat to the future of the early Church. St. Peter, writing to encourage his fellow Christians to remain faithful to the Gospel, reminded them that they were living in “the last days” of the Old Covenant order, and that soon “the present heavens and earth”—the universe of the Old Covenant world-order, now dominated by apostate Judaism—would be destroyed in the Holocaust of A.D. 70 (2 Pet. 3:1-14). The land and its works would be burned up; the Old Covenant “heavens” would “pass away with a **roar**,” and the “elements” would be destroyed (3:10)—not the atomic structure of the physical universe, but the **principles** of Old Covenant worship (cf. the use of **elements** in Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20; Heb. 5:12). John Owen, the great Puritan pastor and theologian, summarizes the apostle’s message: “The heavens and earth that God himself planted—the sun, moon, and stars of the **judaical** polity and church—the whole old world of worship and **worshippers**, that stand out in their obstinacy against the Lord Christ—shall be sensibly dissolved and destroyed” (Works, Vol. 9, p. 135).

Owen offers two further reasons (“of many that might be insisted on from the text,” he says) for adopting the A.D. 70 interpretation of 2 Peter 3 (ibid., pp. 134f). First, he observes, “whatever is here mentioned was to have its particular influence on the men of that generation.” St. Peter is especially concerned that the first-century believers remember the apostolic warnings about “the last days” (v. 2-3); Jewish scoffers, clearly familiar with the Biblical prophecies of judgment, refuse to heed the warnings (v. 3-5); Peter’s readers are exhorted to live holy lives in the light of this imminent judgment (v. 11, 14): and it is **these** early Christians who

are repeatedly mentioned as actively “looking for and hastening” the judgment (v. 12, 13, 14). It is precisely the **nearness of the approaching conflagration** that Peter cites as a motive to diligence in godly living.

Secondly, Owen cites verse 13: “**But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.**” Owen asks: “**What is** that promise? Where may we find it? Why, we have it in the very words and letter, Isaiah 65:17. Now, when shall this be that God will create these ‘new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness’? **Saith** Peter, ‘It shall be after the coming of the Lord, after that judgment and destruction of ungodly men, who obey not the gospel, that I foretell.’ But now it is evident, from this place of Isaiah, with chapter 66:21-22, that this is a prophecy of gospel times only; **and** that the planting of these new heavens is nothing but the creation of gospel ordinances, to endure forever. The same thing is so expressed in Hebrews 12:26-28.”

Owen is right on target, asking the question that so many expositors fail to ask: **Where** had God promised to bring “new heavens and a new earth”? The answer, as Owen correctly states, is in Isaiah 65 and 66—passages that clearly prophesy the period of the Gospel, brought in by the work of Christ. According to Isaiah, this New Creation cannot be the eternal state, since it contains birth and death, building and planting (65:20-23). The “new heavens and earth” promised to the Church comprise the age of the Gospel’s triumph, when **all** mankind will come to bow down before the **Lord** (66:22-23). St. Peter’s encouragement to the Church of his day was to be patient, to wait for God’s judgment to destroy those who are persecuting the faith and impeding its progress. Once the Lord comes to destroy the scaffolding of the Old Covenant structure, the New Covenant Temple will be left in its place, and the victorious march of the Church will be unstoppable. The world will be converted; the earth’s treasures will be brought into the City of God, as the Paradise Mandate (Gen. 1:27-28; Matt. 28:18-20) is consummated (Rev. 21:1-27).

This is why the apostles constantly affirmed that the age of consummation had already been implemented by the resurrection and ascension of Christ, who poured out the Holy Spirit. St. Paul, writing of the redeemed individual, says that “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). St. John, recording his vision of the redeemed culture, says the same thing. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . The first things have passed away. . . . Behold, I am **making all things new**” (Rev. 21:1-5). The **writer**

to the Hebrews comforts his first-century readers with the assurance that they have arrived at "the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22); even as the old "heaven and earth" were being shaken to rubble, the early Christians were "receiving a Kingdom which cannot be shaken," the eternal Kingdom of God brought in by His Son (Heb. 12:26-28).

Once the old had been swept away, St. Peter declared, the Age of Christ would be fully established, an era "in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13). The distinguishing characteristic of the

new age, in stark contrast to what preceded it, would be **righteousness - increasing righteousness**, as the Gospel would be set free in its **mission to the nations**. There have been many battles throughout Church history, of course, and many battles lie ahead. But these must not blind us to the very real progress that the Gospel has made and continues to make in the world. The New World Order of the Lord Jesus Christ has arrived; and, according to God's promise, the saving knowledge of Him will fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

The Doctrine of the Word of God

(No. 7)

by JOHN M. FRAME

(Professor Frame teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. These outlines are from his course on the Doctrine of the Word of God. Prof. Frame has graciously consented to our making these notes available to a wider audience through *The Geneva Review*. They are not to be regarded as a published work, but as notes on a "work in progress.") . . .

(I. Concept of the Word of God

- A. Powerful
- B. Meaningful
- C. Self-expression

4. An implication of the fact that God's Word is His self-expression is that "Word" is an "attribute" of God. We are exploring this fact in this section.)
- c. The identity of "word" with God's essence does not make, e. g. the Bible necessary to God's being.
 - i. It is necessary to God's being that he *speak*; **without his speech he** would not be God. .
 - ii. The eternal inter-trinitarian communication is necessary to the divine being, as are all other aspects of the **ontological** inter-Trinitarian life.
 - iii. It is not, however, necessary to God's being that he speak **to creatures**. If it were, then creatures themselves would be necessary to God, and he would be dependent upon them.
 - iv. Speaking to creatures, then, is a *free* act of God, not determined by his nature as such. Similarly, creation itself is a free act, and God's knowledge of creation is a "free knowledge." (Cf., again, the various theological texts on the Doctrine of God - the distinction between God's necessary and free will, and **the** distinction between God's necessary and free knowledge.)

- v. Therefore, the Bible, together with all the divine speech to and about creatures, is *free speech*, speech not necessary to the divine being.
- vi. Nevertheless, it is the product of the divine *faculty* of speech, the divine word, which is always united to God himself. Thus the words of the Bible are never separated from God himself.
- d. The Word, of course, is not God's only attribute. We are not saying that God is "word," rather than righteousness, wisdom, etc.
- e. Since God is word, all of his being is *expressed*. As Van Til says, God is fully self-conscious. He is not ignorant of the depths of his own being, but is fully rational. What he is and does, he expresses, and *vice-versa*. Of course, there is much that he does not express **to us**.
- f. Where God is, the word is, and *vice-versa*.
 - i. Don't demand an encounter with God while by-passing the word.
 - ii. Remember that when you hear or read the word, even carelessly, you are involved with the living God! You must not trivialize. The word is *living* and *powerful*.
- g. The word is always *divine*. It is God himself, expressing himself.
 - i. *Contra* liberalism, the word is never something *merely* human, merely **creaturely**.
 - ii. *Contra* some church fathers, **Platonizing** philosophers, and **Dooyeweerdians**, the word is never something *in between* divinity and humanity. It is never semi-divine or **semi-creaturely**. It is not merely a "boundary" between creator and creature. There is no halfway house between creator and creature, between Lord and servant. Everything that is not God is subject to him as creature. The word performs all the acts and has **all** the attributes (the character, the nature) of God himself.

- iii. Thus, again, when we read Scripture we must read it in the fear and awe of one entering the holy place of God.
- iv. Does this teaching justify **bibliolatry, worship of the book?**
 - (A) No, for the Bible as such is not necessary to God's being (above, c).
 - (B) No, for the paper and ink of our Bibles are not divine, nor are they the word. They are the created media by which the word comes to us.
 - (C) Nor do we worship the word which comes to us *in* and *by* the Bible as if a new sanctuary had been established between the covers of our book. It is true that the presence of the word (the tables of the law) contributed to the holiness of Israel's sanctuary (the ark). But there is no similar sanctuary in New Testament worship. Christ, the New Covenant Temple, is in heaven.
 - (D) No, for we are never called to worship some attribute of God in distinction from

- God himself. Worship is directed toward the person of God, and to his attributes (his word) only as aspects of his person.
- (E) Nevertheless, it is possible (especially for evangelical) to be *too* sensitive about the charge of **bibliolatry**. We must never forget that since Scripture is God's word, we are expected to respond to it as to the personal voice of God-in obedience, reverence, awe. If this appears **bibliolatrous** to some, we must not shrink from it on that account.
- (F) Some would **define bibliolatry** as any unconditional obedience to any word uttered in space and time. On that **definition**, evangelical are, and ought to be **bibliolaters**. But that definition is false. It would condemn something which Scripture requires. It presupposes an unscriptural concept of idolatry. The second commandment was a word uttered in space and time, and it demands unconditional obedience.

1918

reviewed by JAMES B. JORDAN

Horton Foote, author of the screenplay for the wonderful film *Tender Mercies*, has done it again, in the movie *1918*. *1918* did not receive wide distribution – in fact, I don't think it was ever released to theaters at all, but it is now available in video stores.

Like *Tender Mercies*, *1918* is about death. Whether Foote is a practicing Christian or not, I don't know. *Tender Mercies*, however, was based on John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Thus, the wind represents the Spirit of God in *Tender Mercies*, and those who are born again find that often they don't know where they are going, yet they continue to have faith. At the end of the movie, recent convert Mac Sledge says, "I don't understand," but he works to hoe up the weeds from his garden, a reborn Adam in a new life.

Similarly, *1918* takes its cue from Isaiah 40:6-8, "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever." Thus, the imagery of grass and flowers abounds in this beautiful film. The central charac-

ter wants to put a monument on his father's grave, but he does not know where he is buried. The play asks: Does it really matter?

The year, of course, is 1918. There is war in Europe, and men are dying. Simultaneously, there is an epidemic of influenza in Texas, and men are dying. While religious truth is much more in the background in this film, compared with *Tender Mercies*, the point is still made by one character that God has brought these judgments to pass because men no longer worship Him. As mysteriously as it came, the plague departs, and the central character recovers consciousness the same day as the war ends in Europe. The boys come home from war, babies are born, and life takes up again. The central character returns to his occupation: *cleaning the clothing of men*.

I don't want to give away the plot. Suffice it to say that the play is a study in character, as various persons respond to these events. Though a serious film, strong language is the only offensive element, and it is kept to a minimum, much less than in *Tender Mercies*. (The movie is unrated, but is cleaner than most of what is on network television these days.) Christians are in a unique position to benefit from this movie, which is another masterpiece from one of today's finest playwrights.

An Outline of the Book of Malachi

by JAMES B. JORDAN

The **prophecy of Malachi is structured chiastically. That is, it has a "Chinese box" structure, so that ideas are enclosed within one another according to the form A B C D C B A.** This structure is commonly found in Biblical passages.

In Malachi, the center of the structure is the discussion of God's marriage to His people, and the Seed (Jesus Christ) who was to be born of that union. Since Malachi's prophecy is very much in view during the Christmas season, we offer the following outline as a reading guide. It was originally designed to go along with my lectures on Malachi. Those interested can order these six tapes for \$19.00 +\$1.00 postage. Ask for "Jordan on Malachi," and make payment to Geneva Ministries.

A. **Protological** separation: covenant election 1:2-5

1. Destruction of the wicked
2. Fear of God among the nation

B. Contempt of privilege: worship: sacramental 1:6-14

1. You don't show fear 1:6
2. You present defiled sacrifices 1:7-9
 3. You are not "accepted; God is not pleased with you 1:10
 - 3'. The nations will be accepted 1:11
- 4'. You present defiled sacrifices 1:12-14a
- 5'. The nations fear God 1:14b

C. **Protological** messengers of the covenant 2:1-9

1. Curse coming on priests 2:1-3
2. The covenant with Levi 2:4-5
 3. Instruction from Levi 2:6
 - 3'. Levi's descendants **should** instruct 2:7
- 2'. They have corrupted the covenant with Levi 2:8
- 1'. Present curses are only a foretaste 2:9

D. Marital covenant-bond in the Spirit 2:10-16

1. Treachery to the covenant 2:10-11
2. Punishment: cut off from Seed to come 2:12
3. Tears of the abused deafen the Lord's ears 2:13
- 3'. The Lord as Witness to mm. **riage** covenant 2:14
- 2'. The coming Seed and covenant faithfulness 2:15
- 1'. Treachery and God's hatred of it 2:16

C'. **Eschatological** Messenger of the covenant 2:17-3:6

1. The justice of God 2:17
2. The coming Messenger 3:1
 3. **Refinement** of the priests 3:2-3
 - 3'. Refined **sacrifices**; God **will be** pleased (cf. **B.3.**) 3:4
 - 2'. God's drawing near 3:5
 - 1'. Unchanging justice of God 3:6

B? Contempt of privilege: worship: tithes and words 3:7-16

1. Return to me 3:7
 - a. Stop robbing Me 3:8
 - b. Curse and blessing: put Me to a true test 3:9-12
2. Speak properly of Me 3:13
 - a. Speaking against God 3:14
 - b. Curse and blessing reversed; false testing of God 3:15
- 2'. **Faithful** speak truly concerning God 3:16a
- 1'. Faithful return (remember) God 3:16b (showed fear, cf. **B.1.**)

A'. **Eschatological** separation: judgment 3:17-4:6

1. Destruction of the wicked
2. Salvation of the faithful

Redemption by GEORGE HERBERT

Having been tenant long to a rich lord,
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold
And make a suit unto him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancel to old.

In heaven at his manor I him sought;
They told me there that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought

Long since on earth, to take possession.

I straight returned, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts;
In cities, theaters, gardens, parks, and courts;
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of thieves and murderers; there I him espied,
Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, and died.

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