

Armando Rodriguez

The Divine Transition

Quick-Read

Epistles of Paul

THE DIVINE TRANSITION

Reflections

Armando Rodriguez

Covenant Publisher
Corpus Christi, Texas

Copyright 2015 by Armando Rodriguez
All Rights Reserved

(Revised 2/25/2016)

To my wife Teresa and children for their love and support

PREFACE

When I read the Bible, two things happen almost without exception. First, the book transforms itself into **a mirror** that causes me to see the vast difference between God as creator, and me as creature. A sense of mortality and a realization of my profound need for divine intervention grips me. God's transcendence causes me to daily reconsider the direction my life is taking and drives me to seek His face. I do not wallow in my weakness, failure or sin, but instead, I walk away from my sorrow and charge into His wonderful presence where I find joy unspeakable. The second thing that occurs is equally as miraculous. The Bible becomes **a window** that allows me to peer into God's heart and mind. Every day, I am met by the God who is relentless in His desire for self-disclosure. This ongoing revelation of His immanence has become my source of inspiration and what gives meaning and satisfaction to my life. In this review, I will address three questions. Question one deals with God's Self-Revelation. Questions two and three focus on God's revelation of us.

QUESTIONS

According to the 13 epistles of Paul ...

1. What does God reveal about Himself?
2. What does God reveal about our pre-conversion condition?
3. What does God reveal about our post-conversion condition?

CHAPTER ONE

God's Self-Revelation in the Epistles of Paul

(What does God reveal about Himself?)

CHAPTER TWO

Our Pre-Conversion Condition in the Epistles of Paul

(What was our condition before God walked into our awareness?)

CHAPTER THREE

Our Post-Conversion Condition in the Epistles of Paul

(What do we become after God befriends us?)

Appendix 1 – Salvation From Beginning to End

Appendix 2 - Definition of Terms

Appendix 3 - From What Have We Been Saved?

CHAPTER ONE

God's Self-Revelation in the Epistles of Paul

What does God reveal about Himself?

The letters of Paul introduce the reader to various characters. Human characters include men and women transformed by the power of God as well as those who have chosen to walk away from His love. We find created celestial beings as well. Among them are angels, demons and the devil. In this chapter, we will focus on Paul's three primary characters: Father-Son-Holy Spirit and their good intention toward us.

Paul's Vision of Father

According to Paul, **Father has CONCEIVED a wonderful plan.** He has clearly revealed His eternal power and Godhead to the human race. All day long, He has stretched out His hand inviting us to approach Him. His saving grace has appeared to all and He wills that we be saved. He bids us to come to the knowledge of the truth and desires to reward us with His fullness, joy and peace.

Paul indicates that when we approach Father in faith and come into relationship with Him, we are rescued out of one condition (**perdition**) and brought into a new state of being. (**salvation**) Father declares us innocent from our *guilt and penalty of sin*. (**justification**) When we believe, Father puts upon us His mark of ownership (**seal**) and brings us back to our former state of harmony (pre-fall condition) by restoring our right standing before Him. (**reconciliation**) Father has promised to set us apart for divine us and liberate us from the *power of sin*. (**sanctification**) He is ready to support, steady, fix, plant, make us complete and cause us to stand. (**establish**) At a future day, Father will save us from the *presence of sin* and grant us a body that is immortal, incorruptible and eternal. (**glorification**) (See Appendix 2)

Father is said to direct our heart into His love and offer us all things to freely enjoy. When we **obey** His command to repent and **surrender**, He forgives, delivers us from evil, translates us into the kingdom of His Son, opens our eyes, shines into our heart and grants us the full experiential knowledge of His will. When we **yield**, He provides us with a measure of faith. He empowers us to will and to do His good pleasure. When we **submit** to Him, He works in us mightily, makes us partakers of His inheritance, transforms us into a masterpiece and causes us to triumph. As we journey through life, Father supplies all our needs. Paul reveals Him not only as a teacher, but a writer who is recording a book on the tables of our heart. What is the title of Father's book?
- The Epistle of Christ.

Paul's Vision of the Son

According to Paul, **Jesus has ACCOMPLISHED the plan conceived by Father**. He has given Himself as a sacrifice, become our propitiation and has offered Himself a ransom for all. He searches our heart and invites us to draw near. His desire is to forgive our sins and failure. He has come into the world to save sinners and deliver them from the curse of the law as well as the wrath to come.

Paul indicates that when we approach Jesus in faith and come into relationship with Him, we are rescued out of one condition (**perdition**) and brought into a new state of being. (**salvation**) Through the shedding of his blood, he has purchased and recovered us from the power of the enemy. (**redemption**) Along with Father, he also declares us innocent from our *guilt and the penalty of sin*. (**justification**) He is in the process of reinstating us to our former (pre-fall) condition of harmony and has restored our right standing with Father. (**reconciliation**) Along with Father, Jesus has promised to set us apart for divine use and rescue us from the *power of sin*. (**sanctification**) He will change us into a form that is resplendent with divine brightness (**transformation**), has agrees to fashion us according to his own image (**conformed**) and will rescue us from the *presence of sin* when we are raise up in the last day (**glorification**). (See Appendix 2)

When we **obey** his command to repent and **surrender**, we are set free. He bestows multiple gifts upon us. He guides our path and pours out upon us the Holy Spirit. When we come into union with him, everything falls into place; all things become new and he makes us complete. Along with Father, Jesus is our teacher. When we pray, Jesus is said to intercede for us.

Paul's Vision of the Holy Spirit

According to Paul, the **Holy Spirit is APPLYING** to our lives the **plan conceived by Father** and **accomplished by the Son**. He is making real what Father planned and His Son accomplished. He provides us with access to Father and pours out Father's love upon us.

Paul indicates that when we approach the Holy Spirit in faith and come into relationship with Him, He is not only ready to bring us to life, but empowers us. He is said to deposit a new nature into us. (**regeneration**) Along with Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is also prepared to declare us innocent from our *guilt and penalty of sin*. (**justification**) He desires to refresh, renovate and make changes in us for the better. (**renewal**) Along with Father and Son, he also promises to set us apart for divine use and rescue us from the *power of sin* (**sanctification**) (See Appendix 2)

When we **obey** His command to repent and **surrender**, He leads us and brings unity into our lives. When we **yield**, He searches out the deep things of God and unveils them to us.

When we **submit** to Him, He reveals those things God has freely given, produces fruit in us and proceeds to distribute wonderful ministry-gifts to us. Along with Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is our teacher. Along with Jesus, the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us according to Father's will when we pray.

The Indwelling of Father-Son-Holy Spirit

In his thirteen letters, Paul makes clear that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are now indwelling us. When we surrender our will, we become a dwelling place and habitation for the three main characters found in the writings of Paul.

We can now enjoy the presence of God: Father-Son-Holy Spirit. He is reaching out. Paul informs us that when we believe and receive Father's provision in Christ, we are then sealed with the Holy Spirit and receive salvation. (For a more detailed review of SALVATION, see Appendix 1)

God is not some old man sitting on a lofty throne waiting to beat us down when we fail. Paul draws a wonderful picture of Father-Son-Holy Spirit and provides a sketch of God's good intention and teaches us that when we surrender, Father-Son-Holy Spirit will **redeem, regenerate, justify, seal, reconcile, sanctify, transform, conform, establish, renew, and glorify us.**

In this chapter, we have briefly reviewed God's self-revelation in the epistles of Paul. In the next two chapters, we move on to God's revelation of us. Previous to God's intervention, what was our condition? After God steps into our awareness, who do we become? These two questions will be the focus of chapters 2 and 3.

CHAPTER TWO

OUR PRE-CONVERSION CONDITION

What was our condition before God walked into our awareness?

Paul outlines the **pre-conversion condition of the human race** by describing the state of our conscience, mind-heart, body, eyes, ears, mouth, lips, tongue, throat, belly and feet.

Before being rescued by Christ, we were said to reject the pleadings of the conscience. In fact, our conscience was defiled and seared with a hot iron that rendered it dead.

Our mind-heart was described as carnal, corrupt, and darkened. Paul informs us that it was defiled and sought only earthly things. Our mind and heart were not only enemies of God, but also in enmity with the human race. Our heart was veiled and unable to see the light of the gospel.

Paul states ... “we dishonored our bodies.”

Our eyes were darkened and blinded.

Our ears were itching.

Our mouth was full of cursing.

Our tongue uttered corrupt, filthy, foolish idle words and was obsessed with arguments and disputing.

Our lips spoke lies and practiced deceit.

Our throat was an open tomb.

Our belly was made a god and we lived to eat.

Our feet, swift to shed blood, walked according to the course of this age.

Our pre-conversion condition was a source of bad news. Before God’s intervention, we were said to be in Adam and defined as an old man. We walked in the flesh and were governed by an old nature that was under the spell of the human will. Our mind was fallen and we were considered vessels of dishonor. We were slaves to sin and declared dead to God. Appointed to wrath,

we lived under a curse and awaited a sentence of eternal death. Alienated from the life of God, we sowed seed to the flesh and brought forth its rotting fruit. We were said to be blind, deaf, poor, perishing, empty and foolish. We were citizens of the kingdom of Satan. We were known as evil workers and lovers of self. Under condemnation, we were rendered unprofitable sinners, and were led by old thought patterns. We lived in defeat and were weighed down by a spirit of fear.

According to the epistles of Paul, this was our condition before God stepped in to rescue us. All things became new when God, in His great love and mercy, stooped down to pluck us out of the raging sea of our perilous condition. God was moved to positive action on our behalf.

CHAPTER THREE

OUR POST-CONVERSION CONDITION

What do we become after God befriends us?

Paul also outlines our **new post-conversion condition** by describing the state of our conscience, mind-heart, body, eyes, ears, mouth, lips, tongue, throat, belly and feet.

From the moment we surrender to God's wonder-working power, we enter a new state of being and are moved in new directions. After God begins His work in us, our new state of being is described as follows:

Our conscience is called good and commended to men. Our mind-heart becomes spiritual and is said to seek heavenly things. It is described as pure. The heart becomes enlightened, is filled with love and those veils that kept out the light of the gospel are removed.

Paul states ... "our bodies now glorify God."

Our eyes are enlightened and our vision is clear.

Our ears have regained their ability to hear the voice of God.

Our mouth now boasts in God.

Our lips utter blessing and words of grace.

Our tongue is single, utters wholesome words, declares wisdom, speaks the gospel and practices faith by speaking in love.

Our throat has become a fountain of life.

Our belly now eats to live.

Our feet transport the good news as we walk in the Spirit.

Now that God has intervened, we are said to be in Christ and are defined as new beings. We possess a new nature and walk in the Spirit. We do the will of God, possess the mind of Christ and are now vessels of honor. We are slaves of righteousness, have been appointed to salvation and now possess eternal life. We have become light and are now reaping blessing. We sow seed to the Spirit

and bear fruit to life. We now see and hear God. We have become citizens of the kingdom of God, lovers of God, and have good news to share. We are justified and called saints. We are saved, profitable and rich. We have been filled with his fullness and our mind is being renewed. We walk in victory and are now wise in Christ. We are fellow workers of God and have received a Spirit of power.

Paul provides us with a wonderful **BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURE** of the human condition by using the members of our body as a reference point. Our pre-conversion condition serves as the black background upon which God paints the beautiful picture of His new creation in us.

Bring it All Together

By combining these two pictures drawn by Paul, we are able to clearly see the miraculous **TRANSITION** that has occurred as a result of God's intervention. Paul describes the believer's experience as he outlines the stages of the salvation process. By bringing together every reference (in Paul's epistles) that deals with God's activity, we are able to appreciate the wonders that God has, is and will perform in us to secure our full salvation.

Paul states, "If any man be in Christ, he is **a new creation**. **Old** things have **passed** away. Behold, **all** things have **become new**."

According to this passage, God desires to transition us out of **OUR OLDNESS** and into **HIS NEWNESS**. As you review the table below, keep in mind that God is ready and willing to usher us into **HIS BEST**.

In his letters, Paul provides a contrast. Again, he uses words to draw a before and after picture of the divine transition we experience when we receive God's provision. Take a look at the list.

**BEFORE
CONVERSION
WORD-PICTURE**

**AFTER
CONVERSION
WORD-PICTURE**

Bad News	Good News
In Adam	In Christ
Old Man	New Man
Old Nature	New Nature
Slave to Sin	Slave of Righteousness
Dead	Alive
Sinner	Saint
Poor	Rich
Foolish	Wise in Christ
Evil Worker	Fellow Worker with God
Walk in the Flesh	Walk in the Spirit
Will of Man	Will of God
Fallen, Futile Mind	The Mind of Christ
Vessel of Dishonor	Vessel of Honor
Darkness	Light
Appointed to Wrath	Appointed to Salvation
Cursed	Blessed
Eternal Death	Eternal Life
Alienated	Reconciled
Fruit to Death	Fruit to Life
Sow unto the Flesh	Sow unto the Spirit
Blind	See
Deaf	Hear
Lover of Self	Lover of God
Condemnation	Justification
Wrath of God	Love of God
Unprofitable	Profitable
Perishing	Saved
Emptiness	Fullness
Old Thoughts	Renewed Mind
Life of Defeat	Walk in Victory
Spirit of Fear	Spirit of Power

As we review the contrast above, it becomes evident that God has an awesome plan for us. Before God's intervention, our situation was characterized by bad news, but now we enjoy good news. We were once dead, but have been brought back to life. We used to belong to Adam's race, but now we are in Christ. We were old beings who possessed an old nature, but now we are new beings in possession of divine life. We were slaves to sin, but are now servants of righteousness. We were poor, foolish, sinners, but are now known as rich, wise saints. We walked in the flesh as evil workers, but now walk in the Spirit and are known as fellow workers with God.

In the past, we were led by human will. Our mind was fallen and futile. Now we are governed by the will of God and possess the mind of Christ. Previously known as vessels of dishonor, we are now declared to be vessels of honor. We lived in darkness, but now we are light. Once appointed to wrath, now we are heirs of salvation. We were under a curse, but now enjoy showers of blessing. Previously under an eternal death sentence, now we enjoy eternal life on this side of death. Alienated from God and bearing fruit to death, we are now reconciled to Him and bear fruit to life. We used to sow to the flesh, but now we sow to the Spirit. We were blind, deaf, lovers of self, but now we see God, hear His voice and are known as lovers of God. We were condemned and under the wrath of God; now we are justified and the love of God embraces us. We were unprofitable, perishing and empty, but now we are profitable, safe and enjoy His fullness. Previously occupied with old thoughts, our mind is now being renewed. We lived in defeat, but now walk in victory. We were in bondage to fear, but now possess a spirit of power.

What an awesome transition. My prayer is that every fiber of our being would become permeated with this truth. Our life would be transformed into a great adventure. The word dull and dreary would forever disappear from the human experience. In the previous two chapters, we focused on God's revelation of our pre and post conversion condition. God reveals that we are to become His new creation. Without a doubt, He has good intentions toward us. Paul makes clear that when we surrender to God's activity, we will be rescued from God's wrath, curse, terror, severity, vengeance and judgment. He will deliver us from the power of darkness, the lie, rejection, eternal death,

condemnation, trespasses, sins, transgression, loneliness, foolishness, rebellion, ignorance, tribulation, anguish and self-righteousness. **(See Appendix 3)** Now that we have become recipients of His wealth, what outcome should we expect to see? What new actions, attitudes and behaviors will become evident in us as a result of receiving God's unsearchable riches? God not only desires that we receive blessing, but that it flow through us as well. God wants the blessings of heaven to flow in-through us.

APPENDIX 1

SALVATION FROM BEGINNING TO END

What is salvation? The word salvation is a general term that includes redemption, regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. Salvation is an accomplished fact, as well as a present and future process. While speaking about the salvation of the believer, Paul indicates that we are saved, are being saved and will be saved. Salvation refers to the act of being delivered out of one state and then moved into another. It is the process by which God rescues us out of one condition and brings us into a new state of being.

Redemption is the basis of our salvation and points to the fact of ownership. The plan for redemption was born in eternity past when Father conceived a plan. Jesus Christ was sent to die for the sins of the world. His death not only provided for the cancellation of sin, but also purchased the human race. Jesus Christ purchased us by the payment of blood. He secured our redemption without any participation on our part.

Regeneration is prerequisite to Justification. It lays a foundation. Due to the fact that the human race has died in Adam, it is not able to perceive its desperate need for salvation nor is it able to come to Christ. Regeneration brings to life the sinner and empowers him to respond by faith. Regeneration, as an act of the Holy Spirit transfers a new nature to those who believe, repent and receive forgiveness.

Justification deals with the legal side of our salvation. When the Holy Spirit awakens us by infusing into us a new nature (regeneration), we are then empowered to exercise faith. The word Justification means to declare righteous. On the positive side, forgiveness cancels out our debt of sin and transforms our guilt into innocence. On the negative side, forgiveness appeases God's wrath due to our violations of His law (sins).

In order to stand before God, it is not enough to be forgiven. We must be righteous. Forgiveness does not make us righteous. The only righteous person

to ever walk the earth is Jesus. Though he was tempted at every point, He was without sin. He fulfilled God's law. The only way to stand before God is to secure the righteousness of Christ. Justification transfers that righteousness to us. When we believe, not only are we forgiven and delivered from the wrath of God, but we also receive the righteousness that delivers us from the curse of God and allows us to enjoy God's presence

Paul mentions that when we are justified, the Holy Spirit also **seals** us by putting God's stamp of approval upon us. The seal guarantees that God will complete the work He has begun in us. Justification also **reconciles** or restores us to the former state of harmony enjoyed by Adam in the garden. Through justification, we are rescued from the guilt and penalty of sin (the wrath and curse of God)

Sanctification deals with the experimental side of our salvation. It is defined as the act of setting something aside as holy. Several words in the writings of Paul describe the process. Those words include the process of being transformed, conformed, established and renewed. **Transformation** describes the process of being changed into another form. Being **conformed** deals with the act of being changed into the image of Christ (the other form). Being **established** speaks to the process of being made complete in Christ. Being **renewed** refers to the act of being renovated for the better. Sanctification speaks of being restored to the glory enjoyed prior to the fall of the human race. The experience of sanctification is a process that continues until the day that we move out of time and into eternity. Through sanctification, we are rescued from the power of sin and experience change from one degree of glory into another. We do not know what we shall be, but we shall be like Him.

Glorification is the last step in the process of our salvation. It involves the transition out of time and into eternity. It includes both the experience of resurrection as well as the receipt of a glorified body. Paul states the resurrection of the dead came by Christ and that we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. Paul indicates that Father will raise our mortal bodies. The epistles of Paul also provide us with insight regarding the type of body we will receive. Our body will be changed and fashioned according to His glorious body. It will be spiritual and immortal. Our old body will be raised in

incorruption, glory and power. We will enjoy eternal life. Through glorification, we are eternally rescued from the presence of sin. The image of God is fully restored in us and we will enjoy the glory of God forever.

Salvation is of God from beginning to end. (See Appendix 2) Paul summarizes this when he states,

“Being confident of this very thing, that he that has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that called you who also will do it.”

APPENDIX 2

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Redeem: To purchase by payment of a price, to recover from the power of another

Regenerate: The receipt of a new nature (divine life)

Justify: To declare innocent from the guilt and penalty of sin, a legal act in which an alien righteousness is imputed or credited to another (Legal Side of Salvation)

Seal: God's seal of ownership, a legal signature that guarantees the promise of what is sealed

Reconcile: To bring back to a former state of harmony – to restore right standing with God

Sanctify: Set apart as holy, to rescue from the power of sin. (Experiential Side of Salvation)

Transform: Change into another form, resplendent with a divine brightness

Conform: To be fashioned according to the image of Christ

Establish: Support that fixes, plants down, strengthens – to be made complete

Renew: To make fresh, renovate, completely change for the better

Glorify: To rescue from presence of sin – the receipt of a new body

APPENDIX 3

From What Have We Been Saved?

The wrath of God	Eternal Death	Judgment
The Curse	Condemnation	Foolishness
The Terror of the Lord	Damnation	Rebellion
The Severity of God	Trespasses, Sin and Sins	Ignorance
The Power of Darkness	Transgression	Tribulation
The Lie	Vengeance	Anguish
Rejection	Loneliness	Self-Righteousness

The words above outline those things from which we are saved when we come into relationship with God.

OTHER BOOKS AND QUICK READS

BOOKS

The Narratives of Christ (Gospel)
Is God Speaking? (Minor Prophets)
God's Life-Changing Curriculum (An Agent of Change)
Worship (In the New Testament)

QUICK-READS

The Authority of the Believer
Transforming Power
Redeemed from the Curse (Entitled to the Blessing)
Emotional Intelligence (Models: A Brief Review)
Why He Came
The Kingdom (13 Parables)
Divine Transition
Divine Expectation
Unclaimed Wealth
Times of Refreshing
Unlocking God's Diary
The House of James
The Will of God (In James)
The Pure Gospel (Galatians)
Paul's Vision of God (Ephesians)
The Journey

For a free book, send me an email:
arrodriguez1new@gmail.com