

Let Justice Roll Down  
 Pastor Sam Richards  
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**7 For those who turn justice into wormwood,  
 And [a]throw righteousness to the earth.”**

**8 He who made the Pleiades and Orion,**

God created the seasons (summer and winter) and as he controls our seasons, he controls our climate and can change that climate at will. And changes deep darkness into morning,

**[b]Who also darkens day *into* night,**

This accentuates God's power to bring life out of death! As in resurrection.

**Who calls for the waters of the sea**

**And pours them out on the surface of the earth,**

This could allude to the Deluge, or to the gift of rainfall.,Both meaning are apt.

**The Lord is His name.**

**9 It is He who makes destruction flash upon the strong,  
 So that destruction comes upon the fortress.**

Footnotes

- a. Amos 5:7 Lit *they have thrown*
- b. Amos 5:8 Lit *And He darkened*

**24 But let justice roll out like waters,  
 And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

The question I have for us is this: are we walking in our anointing?

This ties in with Galatia's 1:15: **But when he who had set me apart before I was born was pleased to reveal his Son in me—in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles** . . . in a crucial manner. Why? Because if we were all to become Christlike, justice, love, peace and freedom would come into being; they would be our reality as lived. But, one might object, we're not all Christlike. Yes, precisely. And the remedy for that is for those who know Christ, who live in Christ, to spread the gospel while the Holy Spirit does the work of transformation necessary for us to become Christlike. Now this will not come about in the political order (through laws, regulation and court action). There is no magical social remedy—no adequate redress of grievances and no act of Congress that can render us more just, or equitable. Anti-racism can't by its own premises offer a solution! There is neither time, nor opportunity if racism is innate, and irreversible for any race (white, or black, or other). It takes a change of soul which only divine agency can orchestrate (**You must be born again.**) And by change of soul, I mean a radical transformation of disposition and, as a result of that, character and the thought ways of the human mind. It is not beyond

imagination, and it is not beyond realization because a prime example of its occurrence is right in front of us. By the grace of God Saul was remade and he became Paul through a process of spiritual metamorphosis.

Something on a par with a frog egg becoming a tadpole and that tadpole become a frog is in view—or, as the life cycle of a butterfly typifies. An irreversible sequence of life changes in morphology—something similar to the life cycle of a human being: elderly adult persons do not reverse gears and re-enter their earlier stages of life; it is one way and irrepetible, or unrepeatable. Each person has in this life one shot only . . . we should make it count to the glory of God and not for personal vain-glory!

Because education is the sacred cow of entry into wealth and power in our day, it is important to point out that education, *per se*, does not make anyone moral, just or righteous. It actually doesn't make anyone successful either; not any more than the color of one's skin! Two of the preeminent men in Scripture, both Moses and Paul were murderers—which is to say, they had evil dispositions and corrupt morals. Education did not render them good, or better . . . they were simply better educated sinners. Pursuing the moral redemption of an individual, or of a nation should not depend (and it doesn't) on education. Unless the moral flaw is redeemed, what education produces is literate felons and prospective criminals who can read and write. Do not construe my words as an attack on education! What I am calling into question is the cultural use to which education tends to be put. Many people invest in children and education because as they say, "They are our future." Absolutely not. This is idolatry! No, our hope is in the transformative power of God, working through the Holy Spirit, rendering the ungodly into Christians. Every Christian ought to be godly, at the very least. ***The Lord is our future***, God holds the future—it is not in our hands despite our mistaken inspirations for education.

*Not only can God make godly leaders out of murderers, we are completely dependent on his willingness to do so.* If God were to vacate the personal transformation business, our prospects both as church and as a nation would be grim indeed. Leaving justice up to us is like boarding a fox in a hen house!

Some of the same folks who believe, mistakenly, that our future depends on our educational system also believe social justice can be obtained through education. That is also misplaced. Amos' cry 24 **But let justice roll out like waters, And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream** was rooted deeply in divine denunciation of Israel's religious apostasy—as I said above, idolatry. **Turning justice to wormwood** means perverting justice, in practice, in judgments into a thing so bitter and distasteful that no one wants *that kind of justice, the kind that typically seeps out of godlessness*, the dregs of greed, avarice, vice and thievery. Oh, yes, it came through the courts, but the courts were corrupt, full of bribery and oppression. Any justice that is not sourced in God is not a justice worth obtaining. There's lots of wormwood where the justice

system is politicized and those who are “out of power” are subjected to the whims of those, momentarily, in power. Some confuse justice with revenge and retribution and they forge the basics such as **Justice is mine, I will repay.** (Det. 32:35 or as cited Romans 5:19).

Justice comes from the being, the essence, the person and purposes of God. And justice comes through the processes of transformation—such as is the case with Paul: **But when he who had set me apart before I was born was pleased to reveal his Son in me.** God is in charge and he works through those he has a. prepared beforehand and b. graciously chosen to reveal himself to. Implanting, as it were, a principle of life in them which was nonexistent before its season. Again, we err when we think that this transformation bit is limited to the unusual, the exceptional and the few. This is one of the for everyone things—meaning every believer is uniquely shaped and molded for the exact moment and circumstances he finds himself in! **Fearfully and wonderfully made** fits exactly with **set me apart before I was born** and that has implications for you personally and for the cause of justice in the world. Your conversion is *freighted with potential* for conversion because God’s rule is brought about through personal transformation and not political imposition. Once God’s rule is established within, our flight from authority and struggle with obedience (submission) should subside greatly if not end entirely. God makes his subjects willing and they make their obedience happy.

What Paul suffered for the sake of Christ’s name *metamorphosed*/or marbleized him! A “spiritual” substance of a harder sort, and of a finer grain and of immensely more workability came forth from the perils, persecutions, dangers and deliverances. His life was an amazing work of grace—the changes in his disposition, the effects in his character, and the whole trajectory of his life astonished others quite as much as the gospel which he was given to preach. Your life is waiting to be transformed into one like his! Indeed your life is better suited for our times than his!

Paul’s life, as well as his words, revealed God to those who would, by faith, so receive it. And he became a father to millions of those whom God drew to himself through the proclamation of Christ that Paul labored to accomplish. This is your future if you will enter into it. Saul was, initially, a later day Haman, the arch-villain of the book of Esther, who, as a vengeful Amalekite sought to avenge himself by annihilating the Jewish nation. Your past villainy is irrelevant! Not disqualifying. The book of Esther celebrates the deliverance of Israel from this tribal hatred through the courage of Esther **who was born for such a time as this.** (Esther 4:14) The church is facing equally ferocious threats of annihilation—if we survive the self-destruction of shaping our lives after the likes of this world

And, once that is pointed out, we exclaim, “Of course, and Paul was born for such a time as the incarnation! He was **the chosen instrument of God for the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles, kings and the people of Israel.** When Paul alludes to ministry of Jeremiah (**Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.** Jer. 1:5), he has in mind his being **an apostle to the**

**Gentiles** (Gal. 1:16). And this by the plan, purpose and foreknowledge of God! Set apart before birth, for work to be undertaken in adulthood! If I am not mistaken your name is on this job application! Are you his? Entirely?

We really must stop self-excluding ourselves. You have the credentials and the capability, and you have the calling. Will you respond to the call? And if you say, yes, do not expect thanks or reward from the world—unless they be born again, they are not into it.

Paul was a murderer like Moses before him. And what is most alarming for those who believe that education is the way of salvation—and there are many in our day who are trusting in that!—is that both men were highly-educated. Education is no guarantee of morality, goodness, or excellence of character. Furthermore, both men evidenced terrible dispositions that God had to process out of them, both men were angry men, who struggled with rage and violence. Gritty, not refined; coarse rock, not marble. They both needed the sobering effects of suffering, sin and failure and they both needed to be purified before they could be of as much use to God as they turned out to be. Both were humbled and then exalted. The brightest and the best still want the disciplinary touch of God which, thank God, God is ever willing to supply. Grace is an equipping and empowering force which, when applied to the sandstone of our lives, can produce transformation (work *metamorphosis*) as well as revealing, on the way, or through that process, the kind of God who loves us, and calls us to serve him in all our ways. Galatians records the metamorphic process by which Paul became a saint.

God is not done making saints, or spiritual marble! This should be very encouraging to us. Implantation works where reformation falters and culture falls short. Ask for your new disposition . . . ask for it now, today.

I am dismayed by the number of preachers who put out their suggestions such as “God may not have set us apart from the womb, as he did with Paul and Jeremiah—that day and age is over.” It is very clear to me that this is untrue and a profound source of discouragement—low expectations.

God is still calling forth, raising up, anointing and equipping his servants, and not just their talents . . . and not even for service in the church. There is a whole world that needs to be reached, we have not yet fulfilled the calling to be a blessing to all nations as God promised in his covenant, and purposed in his setting aside to a people called by his name. God is no less radical in his approach to the salvation of lost sinners than he was when he sent his Son to lay down his life for them. So many are ignorant of, or isolated from the truth of the gospel and that is why God appoints other people to creatively and imaginatively undertake the work of proclamation. Perhaps there is one or two within the sound of my voice!

Building up the saints, yes, but declaring the truth to those who are called and are awaiting the word! The warm breath of redeeming love! As we seek the disposition in us that was in Jesus, others will see and be drawn to him to the glory of the Father.

**Amen**