

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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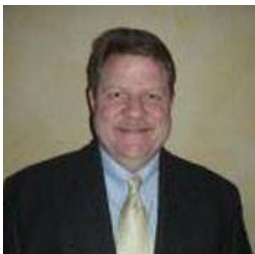
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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them sign up for their copy today. Use this link to join the mailing list. http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 . May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Weylan Deaver Falsifies His Daddy's Holy Spirit Baptism Doctrine (Part 2)¹

Daniel Denham

Parrish, Florida

WEYLAN DEAVER'S REVIEW OF THE WARREN BOOK

Now Mac's eldest son, Weylan, has added to his father's discomfiture over the subject – again, unknowingly, but quite effectively and even with his father's tacit approval no less. In fact, Weylan actually falsified his daddy's teaching before I did!

In October of 2012, Weylan wrote a review of Thomas B. Warren's book *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians* on behalf of the journal for the Warren Christian Apologetics Center. This review was reprinted in the October 10, 2013 online edition of the *Biblical Notes Quarterly*, which is operated jointly by both Mac and Weylan Deaver. It was obviously approved by Mac Deaver himself for republication in his own journal. Thus, in effect, Mac placed his own imprimatur on the observations of Weylan who gave Warren's book and Warren himself a glowing endorsement across the board. Mac by extension also endorsed the teaching of Warren in the book.

But what does that have to do with the falsification of the Deaver doctrine on Holy Spirit baptism? Before I answer that question, we should first note the review by Weylan. Please, read carefully the following:

Thomas B. Warren was a premier Christian philosopher of the twentieth century, and his influence in apologetics is still felt. More than a theologian and philosopher, he was a gospel preacher. And what happened when he turned his logician's mind to the subject of the church was a book titled *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians*.

In this case, the title really does say it all, and serves as the book's central thesis. Its focus is neither the existence of God, nor the deity

¹ PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This article is being reprinted by permission of the author, Mr. Howard Daniel Denham, and was first published in the *Defender* Publication by Michael Hatcher.

of Christ, but, rather, an all-out defense of the uniqueness of the Lord's church. It is an honor to review, in part because my grandfather, Roy C. Deaver, is one of the preachers to whom the book is dedicated.

As an accomplished debater, Warren knew the power of precision. His terms and propositions are sharply defined. His arguments are cogent and unambiguous. With a rare combination of facts, force and feeling, Warren demonstrates concern for souls while marshaling the muscle of Scripture to wield his thesis with the subtlety of a sledgehammer. Those used to hearing anemic religious claims may be shocked at his vigorous writing, ignited by his understanding of just how high the stakes are: Every reader will spend eternity in heaven or hell, based on his relationship to the church of the New Testament. Warren wrote to win souls, not to entertain.

The book is composed of eleven parts which are divided into thirty-seven brief chapters. It ranges over epistemology, ecclesiology and soteriology. Firing both barrels at the denominational concept of the church, Warren leaves it unable to give more than a dying gasp. With an arsenal of logic and hermeneutics, he operates as a biblical surgeon, severing denominational from divine doctrine, cutting away the cancer of religious creeds, exposing the healthy tissue of a body nourished by Jesus' blood because it is governed by naught but the simple New Testament.

Warren did not intend his thesis be refuted, and this affects the style with which he wrote. His arguments and analysis benefit from verbal precision, repetition, and the inclusion of numerous Scripture citations. Those same qualities can also be tedious (chapter 35 repeats much of chapter 26), but, in this case, with Warren treating a topic so vital to us all, we affirm unhesitatingly that the tedium is worth the trouble. This is not light reading before bedtime. Nor is it for the spiritually spineless who cannot abide the staunch claims of Scripture. But, for the reader truly interested in discovering or defending the church about which the apostles preached, then this book is a veritable tour de force on the composition and uncompromising stance of the church of Christ. Those who agree with Warren will applaud his contribution. Those who disagree will find

precious little with which to defend themselves against the relentless case he builds. None will have difficulty seeing exactly where he stands.

One should especially note the following statements (the bolding is mine for emphasis):

1. “Thomas B. Warren was a **premier Christian philosopher** of the twentieth century...”
2. “As an accomplished debater, Warren knew **the power of precision.**”
3. “His **terms and propositions** are **sharply defined.**”
4. “His **arguments** are **cogent and unambiguous.**”
5. “With a rare combination of **facts, force and feeling**, Warren demonstrates **concern for souls** while marshaling **the muscle of Scripture** to wield his thesis with the subtlety of a sledge-hammer.”
6. “Those used to hearing anemic religious claims may be shocked at his vigorous writing, ignited by his understanding of **just how high the stakes are: Every reader will spend eternity in heaven or hell, based on his relationship to the church of the New Testament.**”
7. “Warren wrote to **win souls, not to entertain.**”
8. “Firing both barrels **at the denominational concept of the church**, Warren leaves it unable to give more than **a dying gasp.**”
9. “With **an arsenal of logic and hermeneutics**, he operates as a biblical surgeon, **severing denominational from divine doctrine**, cutting away the cancer of religious creeds, exposing the healthy tissue of a body nourished by Jesus’ blood because it is governed by naught but the simple New Testament.”
10. “**Warren did not intend his thesis be refuted**, and this affects the style with which he wrote.”
11. “**His arguments and analysis benefit from verbal precision, repetition, and the inclusion of numerous Scripture citations.**”

12. “Those same qualities can also be tedious (chapter 35 repeats much of chapter 26), but, in this case, with Warren treating a topic so vital to us all, we affirm unhesitatingly that **the tedium is worth the trouble.**”
13. “This is **not light reading** before bedtime. **Nor is it for the spiritually spineless** who cannot abide **the staunch claims of Scripture.**”
14. “But, for the reader truly interested in discovering or defending the church...this book is a veritable tour de force **on the composition and uncompromising stance of the church of Christ.**”
15. “Those who **agree with Warren** will applaud his contribution.”
16. “Those who **disagree will find precious little with which to defend themselves** against the relentless case he builds.”
17. “None will have difficulty seeing **exactly where he stands.**”

I fully agree with Weylan’s assessment of Brother Warren’s book and of Warren himself. But Weylan’s ringing endorsement of that book sounds, in actuality, the death knell of the current Deaver doctrine on Spirit baptism. Those who hold to Deaver’s theory cannot continue to logically hold to Warren’s case which Weylan has so eloquently praised and eulogized. A significant part of the case pertains to the very argument that I posted earlier in this serial on the force of the phrase “in Christ” and its equivalents in adverbial, locative constructions.

Weylan has admitted above that Warren’s argumentation is **precise, cogent, and unambiguous.** It therefore does not suffer from any logical fallacies or imprecision in its use of terms. The very term “unambiguous” is a specific, universal denial of any ambiguity in argument from Tom Warren in the book. Brother Warren is therefore, according to Weylan’s review and Mac’s tacit endorsement of said review, not guilty of the fallacy of *ambiguity of amphiboly*, which is the basic charge that Mac has leveled against my argument posted in the first installment in this series of articles.

Weylan states clearly that Warren’s use of terms and his arguments entail “verbal precision” and are supported by “numerous Scripture citations,” with which Weylan obviously agrees as demonstrating the Biblical basis for Warren’s case in the thesis. In effect, Weylan has admitted that Warren taught the truth about each of the matters he discusses clearly, precisely, and without any

equivocation.

THOMAS B. WARREN'S ARGUMENT DECIMATES THE DEEVER DOCTRINE ON HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

On page 147 of his book, Tom Warren wrote:

The Bible teaches that *salvation is in Christ* (II Tim. 2:10). To be in Christ is to be in His church (Gal. 3:26-27; I Cor. 12:13; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; et al.). The Bible teaches that it is *impossible* for one to “*cross the line*” into *salvation* without “*crossing the line*” into *Christ*. The Bible also teaches that it is impossible for one to “*cross the line*” into Christ without “*crossing the line*” into the *church*. [Italics are his, HDD].

This is simply a statement of the same argument in other terms than what I used in showing the falsity of the teaching of Mac Deaver on present day Holy Spirit baptism as shown above. Brother Warren equated being “in Christ” with being “in the church,” the body of Christ. It will be observed also that he cited Ephesians 1:7 as a text involved in proving that precise point. Again, Weylan noted how precisely stated the arguments of Brother Warren are, and indeed he is correct in that, but he clearly failed to see that very point refutes his own father's and his teaching on present day Spirit baptism! When one receives the remission of sins, at that same, precise time he enters into the church (the kingdom, Matt. 16:18-19) becoming a child of God. Cleansing, as I have contended all along, then does not precede regeneration, but the two are simultaneous in nature. It is indeed “the washing that regenerates, even the renewing of the Holy Spirit” or “the washing produced by regeneration, even the renewing of the Holy Spirit” as Titus 3:5 affirms in the genitive chain it employs. Mac has never addressed that construction in the original text, and, I strongly suspect, he never shall. The Greek construction does not fit his theory, and he knows it.

But Warren is not done relative to the locative use of the phrase “in Christ” and its equivalents. He adds on pages 152-153:

(11) I know that *the Bible teaches* that when a man obeys the gospel (being baptized, as a penitent believer in Christ, in the name of Christ) he enters Christ and – at the very same moment (not *before* or

after) – becomes a child of God, becomes a Christian, becomes a member of the church of Christ (see: Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 2:41, 47; Eph. 2:13-16; cf. Acts 11:26; et al.). [Italics are his, HDD].

So, Warren affirmed that he knew that at the same precise point in time one receives the remission of sins he also enters into Christ and becomes a child of God, a Christian and a member of the church of Christ. That leaves no room for “the first a saint and then a Christian” theory of Mac Deaver. One becomes both a saint, one forgiven of sins, and a Christian at the exact same time. Thus, cleansing does not precede regeneration. They are simultaneous in nature, as I have consistently affirmed. It is astonishing that neither Mac nor Weylan have realized this simple fact affirmed by Thomas B. Warren in his precisely stated and argued book! I stand where Warren stood on the subject. Mac and Weylan have left that position in order to affirm their Spirit baptism heresy.

But the evidence of Warren against Mac Deaverism is not yet complete even here. He notes at the bottom of page 153:

(20) I know that *the Bible teaches* that salvation is in Christ
(II Tim. 2:10).

(21) I know that *the Bible teaches* that to be in Christ is to be in His
body, the church (see above). [Italics are his, HDD].

Warren showed no hesitancy, no vacillation, and no confusion on the matter. He clearly is affirming here the same basic point I have made in refuting the current teaching of Mac and Weylan Deaver on present day Holy Spirit baptism. It should also be noted that the comments thus far cited from Brother Warren were made in chapter 26, a chapter specifically cited by Weylan in his review as one that was well worth reading and studying along with chapter 35 which repeats much of the same basic argumentation. Obviously, Weylan did not pay attention to either chapter nearly as intently as he affirms he did, or else he was pandering to those who greatly respected the work of Brother Warren in the book and are in agreement with that work, as though he too were in full agreement, when in fact he is not. Maybe, he will tell us which was the case, if he ever determines to respond to this material.

Passionate in Compassion

Archie R. Green

Glenn Heights, Texas

Acts 17 records the account of the Apostle Paul entering the city of Athens and seeing it wholly given unto idol worship, for which he became “stirred in his spirit.” In the following chapter we are told that his emotions and conscience continued to be driven: “*And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ*” (Acts 18:5).¹ From these two reports one should be able to gather that Paul was a man that was passionate about what was right concerning the things that are of God, bothered by the lack of understanding with which man will sometimes find himself, and upon which he will sometimes act. He was compassionate for the eternal destination of others, so much so that he would not allow himself to pass on the opportunity to speak on God’s behalf (1 Cor. 4:17). As the occasion arose, he was ready to defend the truth using the doctrine of God as his guide (Phil. 1:17). It appears to me that Paul was not only sent, but also understood, and strove to accomplish the amazing mission given to all Christians, which is to seek and to save the lost (Mt. 28:18). From my own personal study it seems to me that since Paul was the type of person who could never forget the compassion shown to him by our almighty Father, he could never stop having compassion for those who were like he had been – an enemy of God, and detriment to themselves (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul had been forgiven of his sins toward God, but his actions were that of one who was indebted forever to a loyal master; one who did not have to set his captive free, but did so anyway. Praise God!

Do our neighbors, friends, relatives, co-workers and strangers we meet get the idea that we belong to Christ because of our deep compassion for lost souls? Paul spoke up for Christ wherever he was, and that reminds me of the prophet Jeremiah, who was compelled to speak of the mercy, kindness and judgment of God (Jer. 20:9). Paul had been moved to tears as he informed the Ephesian elders that he had to leave them and go on delivering the gospel message in other places, even if it meant his life. “*Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*” Acts 20:31

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

After obeying the gospel, Paul taught, mentored and lived the rest of his life in such a fervent fashion that no one could deny he was a child of God. Can we be accused of this same judgment? Or, are we just another person claiming to know Jesus, while our hearts are far from Him? Can we be spoken of as were those in Thessalonica, who *"...were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"* (1 Thes. 1:7-10)?

Here is a question for all to contemplate, "When was the last time you were moved to tears over the teaching of false doctrine, knowing that not only the teacher, but also those whom they have discipled could be ultimately lost, unless they are willing to repent?" (Acts 20:30). When was the last time your heart just seemed to stop, and you cried like a newborn when someone (not just a family member) resisted the true and perfect teaching of the Gospel (Acts 7:51)? If you have neither shed a tear, nor burned in your heart, can you honestly say that you are walking in the steps of Jesus, as you need to be? Paul once wrote these words, *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"* (1 Cor. 11:1). To tell people that you love them, and want to see them in Heaven one day, is one thing. To live and to teach, knowing that it will separate friends and family members alike, is to suffer for righteousness sake (1 Pet. 4:16). Those who have been stirred in their spirit will understand this; I truly hope you do, and I pray that I do as well. God Bless.



The screenshot shows the website [Churches of Christ.com](http://ChurchesofChrist.com). The navigation menu includes Home, Work of the Spring Congregation, Recommended Links, and Contact Us. Below the menu are links for Sermons, Articles, Debates, Spring CFTF Lectures, and World Wide Gospel Preaching. The main content area features a red banner for "Contending FOR THE Faith" with the text: "2014 Spring Contending For The Faith Lectures 'WHAT MUST A CHRISTIAN DO TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO CHRIST?' February 19—February 23, 2014 David P. Brown, Lectureship Director". At the bottom of the banner is a blue link that says "Click Here Watch The Lectures".

What is the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

Doug Post

Vernon, Connecticut

There are four phrases and concepts concerning the Holy Spirit that most folk recognize.

1. The “dwelling” of the Holy Spirit;
2. The “work” of the Holy Spirit;
3. The “baptism” of the Holy Spirit;
4. The “gift” of the Holy Spirit.

Each concept is distinct from the other. For instance, the “dwelling” of the Holy Spirit is neither the “work” of the Holy Spirit, or is it the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit, nor is it the “gift” of the Holy Spirit. NONE of these phrases and concepts mean the same thing. NONE of these phrases and concepts imply the same thing. NONE of these phrases and concepts are the same thing. The phrase (concept) we want to consider in this series of articles is the “gift of the Holy Spirit.”

There are only two places in the New Testament where the prepositional phrase “of the Holy Spirit” is located. One is located in Acts 2:38, and the other in Acts 10:45.

Acts 2:38 – “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”¹

Acts 10:45 – “And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

PROPOSITION:

The gift of the Holy Spirit was the gift of miraculous power, supplied by the Spirit to first century Christians, only.

1. The gift was not the Holy Spirit, Himself;
2. The gift was limited to the first century only;
3. The gift was limited to those chosen by the Spirit (not everyone had power);
4. The gift was never intended to be for all Christians for all times.

Since signs, wonders and miracles have ceased, the gift of the Holy Spirit (the gift of miraculous power) also ceased, no longer being a gift for Christians. Therefore, the gift of the Holy Spirit is not a gift for Christians, today.

The Spirit gave various miraculous gifts to first century Christians, which are enumerated in First Corinthians 12:1-14. They were given to Christians when the apostles laid their hands upon them (Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-6; Rom. 1:11). Here are some necessary facts to consider:

1. There are no longer apostles to administer these miraculous gifts to people by the laying on of their hands;
2. The purpose for the gift of miraculous power was simply for confirming the veracity of both the speaker and his message (Mk. 16:17-20; Heb.2:1-4);
3. The gospel has been confirmed, and certified as authentic, by the miracles;
4. The age of miracles (miraculous manifestations of the Spirit) are no longer being available, because their specific design and purpose have been fulfilled (1 Cor.13:8-13; Eph. 1:8-15; cf. Heb. 2:3-4; Mk. 16:20);
5. Therefore, the gift of the Holy Spirit no longer exists, never being intended for availability outside of the first century.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 2

Acts 2:1-4 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. [2] And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The day of Pentecost had finally come, and they were all together in one place. Who were “they”? The apostles, of course. We know this because, grammatically, “they” refers back to its antecedent, “apostles” (Acts 1:26). We are then told that they were all called “Galileans” (Acts 2:7), which was true of the apostles. Moreover, they were all men, since the word “each” (Acts 2:8) has a masculine suffix, which, translated literally, means “each man” (i.e., “...we hear each man in our in own language...” (Acts 2:6). From the context, then, we know that only the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, so being filled with the Holy Spirit is simply figurative language associated with miraculous power. In fact, the expression *πνεῦμα ἅγιος* (Lit, spirit holy, or holy spirit) is metonymy for “power.” For instance, Luke 24:49 says: “Behold I send the promise of My father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with POWER FROM ON HIGH.” This was what the Lord promised. Then, in Acts 1:4, we read: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.” This was what the Lord promised. Then, in the very next verse we read: “John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit [*πνευματι αγιω*] not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). The Bible provides us the meaning of the expression *πνεῦμα ἅγιος*. Both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-5 are speaking of the very same thing – the very same promise. In Luke 24:49 the “promise” is referred to as “power from on high.” In Acts 1:5, the very same “promise” is referred to as *πνευματι αγιω* (*πνεῦμα ἅγιος* – Holy Spirit).

Therefore, when we allow the Bible to define these terms for us, then the self-evident truth is that *πνεῦμα ἅγιος* is identical to, or equal to, power from on high. It is the very same promise! Therefore, to receive the Holy Spirit is to receive power, or to receive power was to receive the Holy Spirit.

(To be continued in the next issue of The Keys of the Kingdom.)

When You are Discouraged (Part 1)

Logan Summers

Midland, Texas

An old hymn we often sing contains the phrase “...when you are discouraged thinking all is lost...” What do we do when life comes at us with all sorts of heartaches, pains, discouragements, and afflictions? Whether they be loss, pain, or suffering, trials and difficulties can and will, at times, discourage all of us. How do we handle it? How do we get through those times of discouragement? I will tell you, first off, that there is no “quick fix.” Tylenol may help a headache, but there is no pill for a soul tormented by loss, betrayal, and hopelessness. We have no quick-fix, fast food, establishment that can heal those afflicted with these kinds of pain. The purpose of this writing is not to provide a “do this and you will fix it” article. I do not assume to know how much pain someone might be facing, and I do not know all the answers about how your problem may be remedied – or even if it can be remedied. God's Word, however, does provide us with many instructions about how to cope with discouragement. Contained in this article we will notice five actions that will enable you to better deal with the discouragements in your life.

Pray

“Pray about it” seems to be the number one answer to difficulties in life. In fact, it has sadly almost become trite to say. Whenever someone is sick or suffering, the common response is “pray about it,” or “I’ll pray for you.” Regardless, the truth is that prayer *can* help you work through hardships. Most people reading this already know that prayer is a good idea. What happens, unfortunately, is that our prayers are almost as short as that advice to “pray about it.” Often, our prayers last only as long as the last couple commercials before our television show distracts us, and the difficulties starts again. Prayer must be so much more than that! We read in Philippians 4:6, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*”¹ The bottom line is this: God hears every unspoken word, and sees every unseen wound, but He still wants us to pray! And, recognizing that God knows what we are going through, we often turn our prayers into a simple statement, such as, “Help me with my struggles, Amen.”

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

Spending time in prayer, speaking to God about our struggles, our fears, our pain is important, because it helps us focus on Him more, and that makes our relationship with Him stronger! Consider the example of Jesus in Matthew 26:37ff. He was specific in His prayer. He desired for there to be another way, but His ultimate desire was to do what God wanted Him to do. He spent time in prayer (Mt. 26:40; cf. Lk. 6:12).

Prayer contains a three-fold opportunity:

1. First, to come before the Almighty and tell Him our struggles. He is our Heavenly Father and cares for us.
2. Second, it is a time to focus on Him and realize that He is so much more and so much more powerful than anything we could go through on earth (Rom. 8:31-39).
3. Third, prayer is an opportunity for the Christian to make sure He is right with God. Some struggles in life do come as a result of our sin and disobedience (Heb. 12:6).

Prayer can bring comfort because we are speaking to our Heavenly Father, who loves us, and knows so much about the things that hurt us; and, we know He is listening. Let us all give prayer the place it deserves in our lives (1 Thes. 5:17; Mt. 7:7-8) and give God the proper respect He deserves in our prayer. It will help us as we bear up under the burdens we have.

Focus on Truth

It can be hard to focus on anything with some of the struggles we have, but it is important to keep in mind what we KNOW to be true. When handling discouragement, it is important to keep these two truths in mind:

1. **God does love me.** *“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 Jn. 4:9-10). Although we can go through struggles that seem so unbearable, so much so that we might rather sleep on a bed of hot coals than to face them, we must never forget that God does love us. In fact, in Romans 8:31-32, Paul gives us this line of reasoning! God has already given us His absolute best – no

higher gift, no greater gift, can He give than in His giving His only Son to die for us! Since He has given us so much already, He isn't going to just give up on us! It is in this context that Paul would say in Romans 8:35-39 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'* Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. **Jesus has overcome the world** (Jn. 16:33). We know that Jesus had many sorrows (Isa. 53:3). He was rejected by some of his family for a time – His own people – and even his own disciples struggled to follow Him. He mourned over Jerusalem and felt pain for all the people of the world, ultimately taking their sin upon Himself so that we would not have to bear it. Then, following death, He rose again! He overcame the world, overcame death, and is now sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:25-33)! He truly is our Great High Priest (Heb. 4:15)! If you are struggling, Satan can really use this time to attack your faith; don't rely on yourself alone to defeat him; trust in Christ, and in His power. Trust in His word. It is through Him we are able to hold on (Phil. 4:13).

Next month we will explore three more actions that will help us manage discouragement.

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**DEDICATED TO REFUTING THE
FALSE DOCTRINES OF MAN**

If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Understand What Thou Readest?

Scott D. Crawford

Clay, Alabama

Oops! The universal code for “Well, I didn’t mean to do that!” How many of us haven’t had to say an “oops” every now and then, or something that might be described as more...colorful? We make mistakes. We drop the ball. We stand with a ripped grocery sack in our hand and watch, almost in slow motion, as the cans of corn and green beans roll across a parking lot. We walk thru the office, completely engrossed with our own business, and run into a co-worker carrying an armful of papers – papers which flutter to the floor in a classic Looney Tunes moment.

Making mistakes isn’t really the problem, because we all make them, and we all will continue to do so – it’s a fact of life. We are only human, and therefore we produce error. The real problem isn’t making mistakes; the problem is not realizing the mistakes, and then failing to fix them. In the spirit of that simple truth, we would like to take the time to examine some mistakes we can make while interpreting the Bible; well, maybe not (nudge, nudge) US, but other people (wink, wink) for sure! Surely, the most important book in history deserves our utmost when trying to find understanding and application in our own lives. So, let’s take a few moments and look at some problems we might encounter as we seek understanding from the Scriptures.

A staple in the field of hermeneutics and exegesis is the text book written by D. R. Dungan, and in the third chapter, under the title, “The Things that Hinder,” the mistake is identified of using the Bible to prove doctrines.¹ This is nothing new; in fact, even the Jews of the first century used the Scriptures to prove a doctrine known to be wrong. As recorded in Mark 7:10-13, Jesus confronted the Pharisees and scribes for their improper use of the Scriptures in order to relieve a person of the responsibility of honoring their father and mother. By making the support that would have been given “Corban” – a gift to God – they nullified the command of God. By doing this they were “*making the word of God of no effect*”² through the traditions that they had handed down. (Mk. 7:13). In our vernacular, we might say, “a text without context is a pretext for a proof text.” In other words, we shouldn’t go to the Scriptures to prove what we assume is true.

¹ D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics; A Text-book* (Delight, Gospel Light Publishing Co., 1888), 39.

² All Bible quotations are taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

The Bible isn't a book that should be used to prove our pet doctrines; it is the doctrine by which we should prove ourselves.

Professor Dungan identified several problems that can occur in both hermeneutics and exegesis, yet before we leave him, there's one other mistake some people make when handling the Word of God. The root of this mistake is grounded in Paul's instructions to Timothy, when he wrote, "*for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers*" (2 Tim. 4:3). As the applause grows louder, and wallets get fatter, the desire to please the world becomes a hindrance to correctly interpreting the Scriptures.³ "*Speak to us smooth things*" (Isa. 30:10) becomes the cry, and in sadness we find too many that answer that cry.

Another thought to be considered is bound into understanding of the *historical-cultural* context of a passage.⁴ When we don't appreciate the historical and cultural background of a passage, then the full meaning of that passage can be difficult to discern. In what might be an obvious consideration, Lockhart noted that when a writer writes, what is written is first and foremost intended for a contemporary audience.⁵ A very simple example of this can be found in Matthew 28, when the chief priests bribed the guards at the tomb of Jesus to say the disciples came and stole the body by night – as the guards slept! When the chief priests said "*we will make you secure*" (Mt. 28:14), what they really meant was "*we will keep you from being put to death,*" which would have been the outcome of a Roman guard caught sleeping on the job. In the Old Testament it was the custom that brides would carefully veil their faces from the bridegroom, which explains why Rebekah jumped from the camel and covered herself when Isaac approached (Gen. 24:64-65), and why Jacob was so easily deceived by Laban (Gen. 29:23-25). What that means for us can be summed up by this thought: *if the original audience wouldn't have understood our interpretation, then our interpretation is likely on the wrong track.* We cannot divorce our interpretation of a Scriptural passage from the *historical-cultural* context, without losing foundational understanding. It can't be stressed enough how a rule such as this should be applied to apocalyptic literature, such as that found in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation.

3 D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics; A Text-book* (Delight, Gospel Light Publishing Co., 1888), 36-37

4 J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 100.

5 Clinton Lockhart, *Principles of interpretation* (Des Moines: The Christian Index Publishing Co., 1901), 90.

Grant R. Osborne, in his work, “The Hermeneutical Spiral,” considers components of theological construction, and rightly points out that “the church down the street has learned a different set of doctrines.”⁶ Therefore, we must not only be careful to understand the times when the Scriptures were written, but also to examine how tradition touches our understanding of the Bible. When speaking of tradition our minds almost automatically turn to the Roman Catholic magisterium, but almost everyone has a set of beliefs and practices that have developed over the course of time, and could easily be called “tradition.”

Have you ever thought about the Invitation Song?

What comes to your mind when someone suggests changing the assembly time?

Have you ever met someone who suggested meeting in a home instead of a building?

These are, of course, obvious points of tradition, and yet some would fight tooth and nail to maintain the consistency – the familiarity – of their worship. The trick is to remember that we shouldn’t appeal to traditions to validate a belief, but that traditions are only valid to the extent that they adhere to Scriptural truth.⁷

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

There is a final mistake that some make, and this may really be the worst mistake of all: Never become so lax as to let someone else tell you what the Scriptures mean!

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

We have a responsibility to learn how to use the Scriptures, so that we can, in turn, teach the Scriptures.

⁶ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 291.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 291.

What is Hermeneutics?

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Hermeneutics—it is one of those “scary” words. It is a word that is often avoided and frowned upon in religion. Many claim that hermeneutics is something peculiar and unused, rejected with the statement, “That is only your interpretation!” With these thoughts we begin a series about this most needed and profound subject: Hermeneutics.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS RELATED TO HERMENEUTICS

HERMENEUTICS: “the science of interpretation.”¹ The definition sounds simple enough, but there are many that do not understand this definition and what the true implications of the definition are. When one hears the statement, “That is only your interpretation!” there is a direct rejection of this very definition. When one defines the definition some clear implications are noted:

- Science: many definitions are available, but note the following three:
 - “2. systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation.”²
 - “4. systematized knowledge in general.”³
 - “5. knowledge, as of facts or principles; knowledge gained by systematic study.”⁴
- Interpretation:
 - “the act of interpreting”⁵
 - Interpret: “to give or provide the meaning of; explain; explicate; elucidate.”⁶

1 "hermeneutics." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hermeneutics>>.

2 "science." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/science>>.

3 ibid.

4 ibid.

5 "interpretation." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/interpretation>>.

6 "interpret." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/interpret>>.

What is the importance of all of this defining? True hermeneutics—not man’s misplaced, misused, and misunderstood methods—is a systematic application of rules, principles, and knowledge applied to Scriptures in order that one can understand what another actually said or wrote. Hermeneutics when properly defined and applied cannot be as so many claimed, “That is only your interpretation!”

EXEGESIS: A closely related term to hermeneutics is this word, “exegesis.”

- “critical explanation or interpretation of a text or portion of a text, especially of the Bible.”⁷
- Critical:
 - “the act or art of analyzing and evaluating or judging the quality of a literary or artistic work, musical performance, art exhibit, dramatic production, etc.”⁸
 - “any of various methods of studying texts or documents for the purpose of dating or reconstructing them, evaluating their authenticity, analyzing their content or style, etc.”⁹
 - “investigation of the text, origin, etc., of literary documents, especially Biblical ones.”¹⁰
- The etymology of “exegesis”:
n.
1610s, from Greek *exegesis* "explanation, interpretation," from *exegeisthai* "explain, interpret," from *ex* "out" (see *ex-* (2)) + *hegeisthai* "to lead, guide," from PIE root **sag-*. Related: *Exegetical*.¹¹

One can easily see then that when hermeneutics and exegesis are properly employed—that is using the rules, principles, and knowledge applied to Scripture in order to explain (“to lead, guide”) in a critical (systematic method of the application of rules, principles, and knowledge) way one will not have his

7 "exegesis." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/exegesis>>.

8 "criticism." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/criticism>>.

9 *ibid.*

10 *ibid.*

11 "exegesis." Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper. Web. 28 Aug. 2014. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=exegesis&allowed_in_frame=0>.

own interpretation, but rather one will be lead to what God said!

EISEGESIS: Another closely related word which is the actual practice of many in their approach to Scripture.

- “an interpretation, especially of Scripture, that expresses the interpreter's own ideas, bias, or the like, rather than the meaning of the text.”¹²
- “the interpretation of a text, esp a biblical text, using one's own ideas”¹³
- The etymology of “eisegesis”:
n.
the reading of one's own ideas into scripture, 1878, from Greek *eis* "in, into" + ending from exegesis.¹⁴

When one then makes the following claim, “That is only your interpretation!,” they are asserting that one is reading into the Scripture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HERMENEUTICS

When one begins to understand the meanings behind the words and the usages, it becomes clear why there is much confusion in the world today regarding what the Bible says. There are many today that allege Christianity is an “elastic” religion, that practice a hermeneutic that is eisegesis (reading into the Scriptures) rather than exegesis (reading out of the Scriptures). Many will pick and choose the passages they want, making “logical arguments” to support their choices:

- Claiming doctrine (teaching) and gospel (the good news) are not equal.
- Claiming that logical reasoning cannot be applied to Scripture—that if the Bible does not explicitly state it then it does not apply to us.
- Claiming that certain books are not “law”—that is the epistles (Acts-

12 "eisegesis." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/eisegesis>>.

13 "eisegesis." Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. HarperCollins Publishers. 28 Aug. 2014. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/eisegesis>>.

14 "eisegesis." Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper. Web. 28 Aug. 2014. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=eisegesis&allowed_in_frame=0>.

Revelation) are simply “love letters” to the churches and were never meant to serve as a “pattern” for all Christians.

Consider then what the Bible actually says (apply exegesis rather than eisegesis) as we begin this series on hermeneutics and its application to Scripture:

1) The Bible makes doctrine and gospel equal!

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).¹⁵

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

2) The Bible demands logical reasoning:

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

“And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand” (Mat. 15:10).

3) The epistles according to Scripture are Scripture:

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

The epistles were those things of which the Comforter reminded the apostles.

15 All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

Consider what Paul told Timothy concerning those things:

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

“But thou hast fully known my doctrine...” (2 Tim. 3:10).

A SUMMATION

Hermeneutics, that systemized practice of analyzing Scripture to explain what the writer of a passage already penned does not produce one’s interpretation, but rather the One’s actual meanings. If one avoids eisegesis, a hard to accomplish, but a choice each makes when approaching Scripture, one can come to the proper exegesis of Scripture. May each endeavor to put aside preconceived notions, beliefs, thoughts, and opinions and with determination approach Scripture for guidance, leading that comes from the Almighty!

The final importance is shown in the following written by D.R. Dungan:

And it is at once objected that if the Bible is of God, it should be so plain that no one could misunderstand it; that, if God could give us such a book, and would not, He was certainly to blame. But if He would, but could not, He is not perfect in wisdom or ability to execute. This logic is not good.¹⁶

God has given us the word, that Word is understandable, yet as Dungan again notes: “It is reasonable, therefore, that He should make it necessary to study His word.”¹⁷

As this series of articles concerning hermeneutics goes forward let us center our thoughts always on Scripture:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

¹⁶ Dungan, D.R. Hermeneutics: A Text-Book. Delight, AR: Gospel Light, n.d. pp. 1-2. Print.

¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 2.

Once Saved, Always Saved?

Cougan Collins

Lone Grove, Oklahoma

Some teach that once you are saved, you are always saved. While this is a comforting thought, it is not true, because the New Testament clearly teaches that we can lose our salvation and fall from God's grace. For example, if we choose not to abide in Christ, we will be cast out:

John 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."¹

The writer of Hebrews describes Christians who have fallen away because of sin, and how they will face the judgment of God:

Hebrews 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6] if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Peter says that Christians can lose their salvation, and when they do, they will be in a worse position than before they were saved:

2 Peter 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

We are warned throughout the New Testament that we can fall:

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Hebrews 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God;

Finally, Paul plainly states that we can fall from God's grace:

Galatians 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Clearly, the New Testament teaches that once saved, always saved, is not true. Therefore, becoming a Christian does not seal our salvation, because it requires living faithfully to God until the day we die. As Jesus said in Revelation 2:10 *“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

This is why Paul describes living the Christian life as running a race and competing according to the rules in:

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. [25] And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. [26] Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. [27] But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Some in the religious world would have you believe you have already won the race at the same time you begin it, which we know is impossible. Every race, including the Christian race, has a beginning and an end. Of course, the great news about the Christian race is that when we continue to run and we make it across the finish line, we all receive the reward of heaven. While this takes discipline, we can and should be confident that as long we keep moving forward

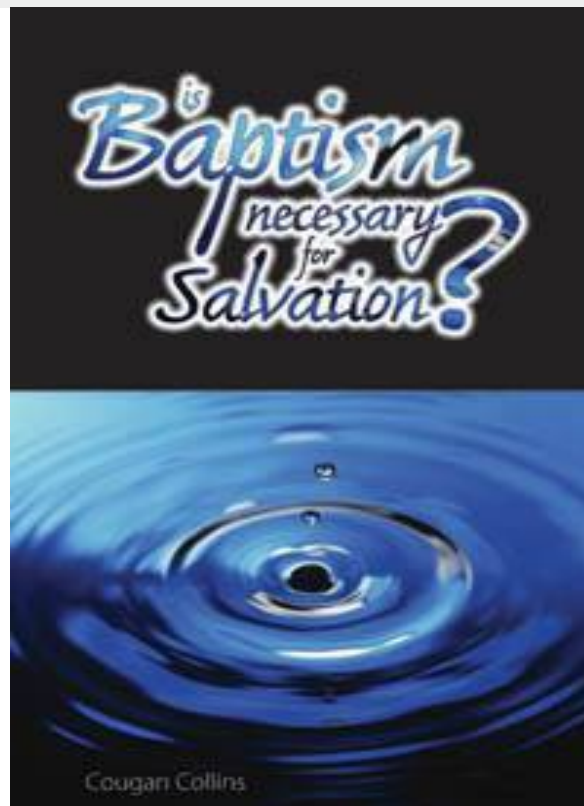
in our Christianity, heaven will be our home.

Think about this, if once saved, always saved, were true, then we could become a Christian, start living a life of sin, and still be saved. That would be like saying we can get a job and do whatever we want, including not working, yet we will never get fired, and we will always receive a paycheck, no matter what. We all know this is not going to happen, so let us stop deceiving ourselves with a false hope. Instead, let us fight the good fight of faith, as Paul did, till the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:7).

Let us never stop fighting the good fight of faith by keeping sin out of our lives as we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven. Yes, living the Christian life is challenging, but heaven is worth it. So, do not ever allow yourself to believe the false doctrine of once saved, always saved.

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What is Truth? (Part 4)

Robert Alexander

DeFuniak Springs, Florida

Thus far, in our consideration of the question posed by Pilate in John 18:38, “What is truth?”¹ we have examined the true definition of truth, the declaration of truth as manifested in the pages of Holy Writ, and the design of truth. As we conclude this series of studies, we turn our attention now to the distinctiveness of truth.

Distinction of Truth

To better understand and appreciate what is to be discussed, let us first define what is meant by the term “distinction.” The word itself is a noun meaning “*the act of separating or distinguishing.*”² Truth is separate and apart from that which is not true. Truth can be distinguished from falsehoods. Truth can be ascertained (cf. Jn. 8:32). Truth can be believed (Rom. 10:17). Truth can be obeyed (1 Pet. 1:22).

God has given to mankind His distinctive word. It is distinctive because it is from God and not from man (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). It is distinctive because it is inerrant (Jn. 10:35). It is distinctive in that it was given for a specific purpose: to reveal God’s will, His plan if you will, for mankind. It is distinctive in that it is the truth which can make men free (Jn. 8:32).

The distinctiveness of truth is borne out when it is heard, believed and obeyed. It makes one a “distinct” or “peculiar” person (1 Pet. 2:5,9) from the world, in that they become a Christian, having been washed, sanctified and justified through the blood of the Lamb (1 Cor. 6:11) by faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:12). Further, when one lives in accordance to the truth of God’s word, they remain a distinct person from the rest of the world (Rom. 12:2; Jas. 1:27). The result of obeying – initially and continually – the distinct truth of God’s word is a home in heaven with God in eternity (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).

1 All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

2 “Distinction,” Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, Electronic Edition, e-Sword

The honest and diligent student of God's word rightly understands that the aforementioned principles set forth in the word of God are true, because they recognize that the doctrine (gospel) of Christ is distinct from the doctrines of men (Jn. 6:68; 2 Jn. 9; Gal. 1:6-9). This fact is demonstrated in a variety of ways:

First, the Gospel plan of salvation, as set forth in the NT, consisting of hearing and believing (Rom. 10:17), repenting of sin (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30), confession of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37) and baptism into Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4), is distinct from the plans of men (i.e. "faith alone" or "grace alone," neither of which are Biblical concepts).

Second, God's pattern for worship as set forth in the NT is distinct from man's plans. Man avers that mechanical instruments of music are permitted in worship, whereas the NT authorizes no such practice (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15). Man avers that the Lord's Supper may be observed monthly, quarterly or even yearly, but God's word says that Christians are to observe it every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). These are only two examples of man's thoughts regarding worship as contrasted with the truth of God's word. Men everywhere must remember that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9), and that it is man who must abide by God's authoritative standard, His word.

Third, God's pattern for how one is to live in this present world is distinctive from man's ideas. Man says once saved, always saved. God says otherwise (Rom. 6:1). God's word says man must live holy in this world (1 Pet. 1:15-16). This involves keeping oneself unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27), which is accomplished by living the "transformed" life (Rom. 12:2). It is possible as a child of God to sin and to be eternally lost (Acts 8:21ff; Gal. 5:4). This is why God instructs His people to live a certain way. To live like the world is to live a life of conformity to the world, and thus live a life that is displeasing to God.

Fourth, the pattern/platform/identity of the church which belongs to Christ is distinct from the “churches” of men. Man says “one church is as good as another,” but the word of God says otherwise. There is only ONE church, which is the body of Christ, of which He is the Savior (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23). There is only ONE way into the church, and that is through Christ, by being baptized INTO Christ and His death (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). The “one” church of the NT was established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). When men obey the truth, they are added by the Lord to this same church, not to some denomination. Further, the church, in its Scriptural organization, consists of an eldership (a plurality of men who meet the Scriptural qualifications set forth in First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, rather than a “one man pastoral system,” which the denominational world employs), deacons (a plurality of men who also must meet the Scriptural qualifications set forth in First Timothy 3:8-13), evangelists/preachers, and the rest of the membership.

Understanding the principles set forth, it is incumbent upon all men to make the distinction between the truth and error/lies. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test—RA] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (1 Jn. 4:1). All must try, test or prove what they hear, believe and even teach, because it is possible (as demonstrated throughout God’s word and by the religious division that is prevalent today) to hear, believe, obey and teach a lie (Gen. 3:1ff). One cannot be saved while “caught in a lie.” One can be, and will be, saved when they hear, believe and obey the truth.

Conclusion

In this series of studies regarding truth, we have defined what truth is, so let us abide by it. We have shown the designation of truth, so let us respect it. We have shown the declaration of truth, so let us comply with it. We have noted the distinction between the truth and the doctrines of men, so let us accept and obey nothing but the truth. What is truth? It is that objective standard which has been given unto us by divine revelation, delivered by Holy Spirit guided men in the form of the written word, which we call the Bible.

The First Principles (Part 3)

The Word of God

Jim Miller

City, State

This month we continue our looking at the word of God. In previous articles, we learned that traditions and creeds of man have no place in our worship, and that they make vain our worship of God, and to God. More can be learned by studying the Scriptures concerning how to please God, and to live the Christian life. Let's look at First Timothy for a moment:

1 Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.¹

From this short verse we learn several things that are important to remember, which include the following:

1. Watch your life and doctrine closely; they are inseparable.
2. Ask yourself which is more important, life or doctrine? Your answer should be “neither.” Just as an airplane with only one wing cannot fly, the doctrine you live by cannot be separated from the life you live.
3. Why is it so important to learn and to teach and to live the right doctrine? To save yourself and those who hear you. You must not only teach the proper doctrine, but also you must live it, and be the example of what you believe.

Many people go wrong, or miss the boat, so to speak, by listening to men preach and teach, while failing to study for themselves. How can you know that what is being taught is right, if you do not study for yourself? Perhaps the best example of this is when Paul and Silas were sent to Berea:

Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. [11] These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in

¹ All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Not only are we given examples, but also we are told what to do in no uncertain terms.

2 Timothy_2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

This is the only way to know whether or not what you are being taught is truly God's word. So, be sure to check what religious leaders say, and be sure to read and study the Bible every day, which is my challenge to you!

Your Bible is God's instruction manual for how to live and be pleasing to Him. It is the path you follow to enter an eternal home with Him when our time on this earth is through. We must also note here that it is not enough to just sit in the pew and hear the word proclaimed; we must act, also. We must put these principles into action daily. Read what James says about this:

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

In these verses we learn the following:

1. The Word of God is a mirror; what we see in that mirror should be a reflection of what God would have us to be and to do.
2. Do not forget what you see; we must remember that the reflection we want to view is that of a doer, and not just a hearer, only. We must, after learning what to do, be diligent to “do what it says.”

Finally, we need to understand “WHY.” Far too often we forget the principles of basic study. We do not treat the Bible like we treat other books for some reason.

But, just as you would with, say, a spy novel, or a text book, you have to always be asking the questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. So, let's now consider the "WHY" of the word. Look at what is stated in the book of John:

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

This is by far, in my mind, the most important reason why we study the Bible. His word will judge us; our eternal home depends upon how we follow the word of God. We all have a decision to make: Will we live by the Bible, or will we live by our feelings, traditions, needs, etc.? Will we study to show ourself approved? Will we be as the Bareans? Will we be able to tell whether or not the preacher, or teacher, is telling us what is right, and whether or not they are properly applying God's word? Will we be able to spread the Gospel in a way that others can understand it? Will we be doers, and not just hearers?

As we look into the word of God, we see all that He wants us to be. We learn proper attitudes. We are better equipped to handle the slings and arrows used against us. We become teachers, so that others can come to know the saving grace of God. We are better able to stand against the whiles of the devil.

God's word give us the ways and means to live godly lives. Remember, always, the words of Paul:

Romans_1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Finally, I leave you with these additional words from Paul, and pray that you will open God's word and study it for yourself:

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. [11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. [13] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand

in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; [15] And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [16] Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Next month we will move on to the next principle in our series. Till then, I urge you to study and reread the last few articles, and give serious thought to what God would have you do.

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The Dangers of Realized Eschatology: A Recent Perversion (Part 3)

Eric Farrior

Freeport, Florida

Introduction and an Opening Word¹

A fairly recent doctrine advocated by false teachers such as Max King and Don Preston is the doctrine of Realized Eschatology. Eschatology is the study of final things, thus “realized eschatology” means the belief that all final things have been realized, or come to pass. It saddens me to think that once faithful brethren have fallen into this error.

This lesson is designed to inform and combat such error. This lesson is not designed for good brethren who affirm the early date for the writing of the book of Revelation. Brethren such as Foy Wallace, Bill Cline and Franklin Camp held the early date view of Revelation, yet they never advocated what full Preterists teach. Nor is this lesson designed for good brethren who view that some or most of the N.T. Scriptures have been fulfilled. Nay, this is for the extreme belief that ALL has been fulfilled.

The Judgment

Our Realized Eschatology (RE) friends affirm that the judgment day spoken of in the NT is always a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, not a future event for all of mankind. Thus, they affirm that the day of Judgment is already past. Yet scripture teaches a universal judgment, of righteous and wicked in ONE day!

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (Jn. 5:28-29).²

1 Editor's Note: Due to space limitations, the editors have broken the original manuscript into multiple parts, to be continued monthly until completed. It should be noted, in order to maintain consistency, the editors will reprint the introductory material (Introduction and an Opening Word) prior to each new monthly segment.

2 All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

Who was Paul speaking to above? I wonder what “judgment” Solomon spoke of in these texts:

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment (Ecc. 11:9).

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Was he warning them of the destruction of Jerusalem?

What kind of judgment was Jesus speaking of in this text?

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Mt. 5:21-22).

It involved hell (gehenna) fire!

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

Now, why would Paul speak to these gentiles about the judgment of Judaism hundreds of miles away? If all men everywhere had to repent, BECAUSE of this

day of judgment, then this judgment would involve all men everywhere! If not, why not?

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment (2 Pet. 2:4).

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (2 Pet. 2:9).

What would the destruction of Jerusalem have to do with angels being sent to Tartarus to await judgment?

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“Peering into eternity”

Tim Bench

Abilene, Texas

For two weeks, I had experienced a burning sensation in my upper throat, and I was convinced that I was simply suffering another bout of acid reflux and heartburn, issues I had faced on and off for several years. A visit to my local doctor confirmed that of which I was already certain: acid reflux, go home, take some Roloids, and you will be fine.

My discomfort, however, continued on and off for several more days. Friday night, the pain was constant, and sleeping was near impossible. Early Saturday morning I awoke with a slight burning sensation down both of my arms, which extended into my chest. Grudgingly, I headed to the nearby hospital emergency room, and upon arrival, having described my symptoms to the medical staff on duty, I was immediately moved to a holding room, where various tests were to be administered. My blood pressure was dangerously high.

In my next conscious moment, I began to panic, noticing that several nurses and doctors were pinning me forcibly down upon a steel bed. I was afraid. I did not know specifically why this was happening, until one of the doctors informed me that I had gone into cardiac arrest, and that I would be wheeled into heart surgery within a matter of minutes. Unconscious, the staff had resorted to electrical shocks to my chest to revive me, and if I had not experienced my “episode” within the confines of an emergency room, I would surely not be writing about this today.

I stared at the ceiling as people furiously buzzed all around, hooking cables to my arms, connecting me to electrical machinery, and I began to realize just how close to death I was, and had come. All that separated me from death was a nurse with electrical shock paddles. As I watched those people scrambling to save me, the thoughts of my own mortality began to strike me for the first time.

If today was to be my last day upon this earth, how would my life be judged? Had I forgiven others who had wronged me? Had I repented and made amends to people whom I had wronged? Had I done everything within my power to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world? What had been the focus and passion of my life? Was it Jesus Christ and His word, or was it the ways of the

world? Most importantly, and likewise the most important question any of us could ever ask ourselves, was I, this very day, prepared to stand before God and give an account of my life on this earth?

My answers were as follows: No, I had not forgiven others as I should. No, I had not properly made amends to those I had wronged along the way. I certainly could have done more to spread the Gospel, instead of spending so much of my life absorbed in my own hobbies and selfish pursuits. And, much to my shame, I was afraid, knowing full well that I was not prepared to face eternity, and not prepared to meet God.

All of us, every one of us here today, every person upon this earth, every person who ever will be on this earth, have an inescapable and imminent rendezvous with death. It is not a pleasant subject, to be sure, but there can be no more important message for Christians to keep in mind. Each and every one of us, whether it be 20 years, or 20 minutes, will leave this world, and we will face judgment day.

If this very day, your soul was required of you, would you be prepared to stand before Almighty God and give an account of your life, or would you fearfully realize that you had left so much undone? None of us can ever “earn” heaven; we will never be good enough, or moral enough, or sinless enough, and God’s grace will be our only bridge to eternal salvation (Eph. 2:9); but, if today were to be your last day, would those “undone” things and unconfessed sins separate you from God? There can be no more important question for any of us to ever ponder. Will you hear God say “*Thou good and faithful servant*”¹ (Mt. 25:21,23), or will you hear God say, “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*” (Mt. 7:23)? If you cannot answer that question definitively, this is your day, your opportunity, perhaps your last opportunity, to make things right.

Life is a vapor, and all of us are one breath, one heartbeat, away from meeting our maker. If today, there is a burden upon your heart, a sin for which you need to repent, a wrong that needs to be corrected, do not assume that you will have next week, or next month, or next year, to make things right. You are guaranteed nothing, and you are guaranteed no certainty as to the length of your physical life. Today, make your life right with God. Today, confront and confess that sin, which has caused you to stumble so many times along the way. Today, because there may not be tomorrow. Go to that person with whom you have quarreled,

1 All Bible quotations are taken from the KJV, unless otherwise stated.

and forgive them...Today. Let each and every one of us reconcile with God to the best of our ability, and throw ourselves fully into our dedication and zeal for the work we have taken upon ourselves, so that as we stand on the precipice between this world and the next, we will not, as I did in that hospital room, feel fear, contemplating all of the things remaining unresolved and unsettled, and feeling shame over those things left undone. You can feel secure in the knowledge that, indeed, this world is only a temporary home, and that an eternal home, and oneness with God, is assured.

Are you certain of your salvation this very day? As I laid upon that cold hospital bed, I was not certain. I did not feel calmness; I did not feel warmth; I did not feel Christ-like acceptance of my fate. Instead, I felt cold numbness. My accomplishments, as I could think of them, were insignificant and trivial, while my failures seemed overwhelming and awesome. All of the missed opportunities to evangelize came to my mind, as did all of the paths not taken. I wanted one more day, and one more Sunday, and one more chance to serve and dedicate and reconcile myself to God, to thank Him for His mercy. The clock did not strike midnight on me in that hospital room, and I have that most precious, and most priceless gift God can ever grant me – another day.

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away.

1 Peter 1:24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass, wherewith, and the flower thereof falleth away.

If today is to be your day on that gurney, what would be the innermost thoughts that you would have? Acceptance? Peace? Absolute faith in your relationship with God, so that whatever comes your way, you stand prepared? Or, would it be shame? Guilt? Remorse? Fearfulness? If any of these would apply to you, I implore you, each and every person reading this, to seize this day that God has made, and reaffirm, reestablish, and rededicate yourself to God's absolute service.

Whatever that barrier may be, whatever that stumblingblock may be, whatever stands as a barrier between you and God, rid yourself of it this very day. Whatever your need may be, be it baptism, be it prayers, be it reconciliation with

a brother or sister in Christ, be it family struggles, job difficulties, strained or even failed relationships, the vile stain of unrepentant sin – make today the day you unburden yourself, and come on bended knee to your Lord, who loves you more than you can possibly imagine. Come, for you may never have another chance. None of us may.

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