

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

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# Contents

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<i>Our Staff</i>	<i>Pg: 3</i>
<i>The Word Of God</i>	<i>Jim Miller Pg: 6</i>
<i>The Book Of Romans Pt:8</i>	<i>Eric Farrior Pg: 10</i>
<i>Nero Pt: 11</i>	<i>Tim Bench Pg: 13</i>
<i>Elders—Their Crucial Role</i>	<i>Dub McClish Pg: 22</i>
<i>Learning To Give An Answer Pt: 10</i>	<i>John Mabrey Pg: 26</i>
<i>“Deaverism” (Finis Part A)</i>	<i>Doug Post Pg: 31</i>
<i>Review of Robert Waters’ Teaching on Adultery Part: 2</i>	<i>Howard Denham Pg: 35</i>

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## *Our Writing Staff*



**Jim Miller**

Jim Miller: Preacher at the Gray, church of Christ semi -retired, publisher, writer, editor. A member of the Lords church since 1985. Preached in NC, TN, Ky, and Maine. Two years Co-hosting Bible Talk Radio. Owner of Keys Of The Kingdom magazine and website.



**Tim Bench**

Tim Bench: Member at Hillcrest Church of Christ, Abilene TX. 1990 graduate of Abilene Christian University. Speaker, teacher at numerous churches in and around Abilene and West Texas.



**John Maybrey**

John P. Mabrey: Preacher at the Hilham Church of Christ, Hilham, TN since July 2007. Has been a guest of the Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN) "Bible Round Table." Attended Freed Hardeman University for two years.



**Eric Farrior**

Eric Farrior: Gospel Preacher for the church of Christ in Freeport, Florida for the past 3 years. I have one daughter, Jaeda. It is my privilege to preach and teach the word of God in Freeport and have various other opportunities to do so through the use of the internet.



**Dub McClish**

H. W. (Dub) McClish: Preached first sermon in June 1954 at Boise, Idaho, at age 16. After 35 years of work as local preacher in 5 states (the last 12 years of which were with the Pearl St. Congregation, Denton, TX), began work under oversight of Pearl Street elders in 1992, devoting time to combined works of Gospel meetings, mission trips, and lectureships and to writing and editing sound Biblical materials.



**Doug Post**

Doug Post: Has been in full time ministry for 15 years, preaching in Indiana and Connecticut. Received his BA in Communications, UCONN; MA in Biblical Studies, Southern Christian University; New Testament Theology and New Testament Greek, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Theological University of America. Doug is married to Debbie, his wife of 22 years.

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto: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/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page\\_id=1316](http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page_id=1316) . May God Bless You. Jim and the StaffChanges

## **Evangelist Needed**

There is a real need for a good man willing to start a new work out in Washington State. This preacher would need to be self supporting to start out. There is a couple already in the town of Ellensburg who would like to see the Lord's church established there that will be sound and follow the scripture. This will be a daunting task as the churches around the area have gone into apostasy. If you believe you are up to such a challenge please use the contact information below for more in site and information.

Thank you  
Jim Miller

### ***Contact Information***

**Chuck Verkist, 906 East 2nd ave. Ellensburg, Wa. 98926  
(509) 925-2593 or [cverkist@kvalley.com](mailto:cverkist@kvalley.com)**

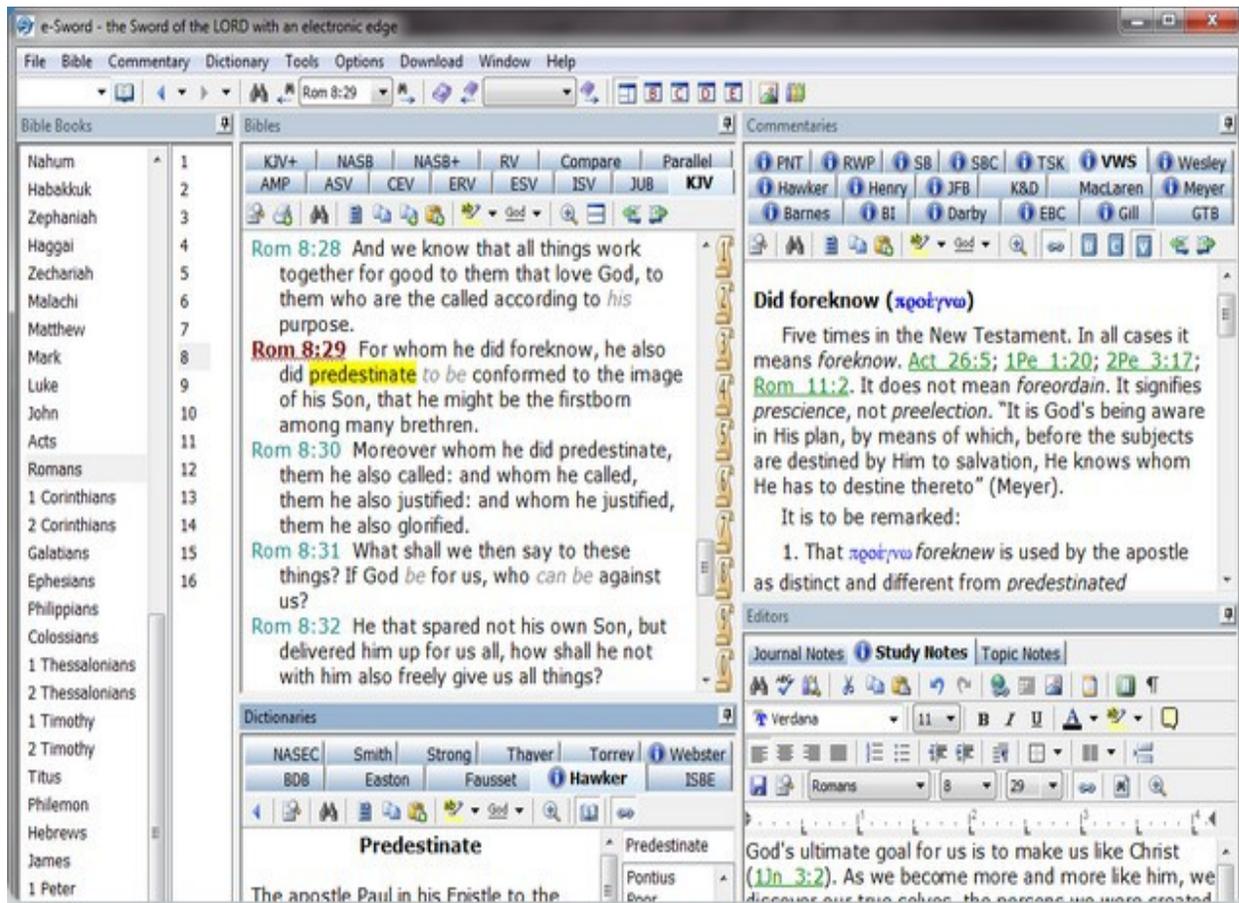
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# The Word Of God

By Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine

*1Timothy 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.*

From this short verse we learn several things that are important to remember,

(A) Watch your life and doctrine closely-they are inseparable.

(B) 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 can not be separated from the life you live.

(C) 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 you must live it be the example of what you believe.

Where many people go wrong or miss the boat so to speak is that they listen to men preach and teach but they fail to study. How can you know 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. Look at Acts 17:10-11.

*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.*

*Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in 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 we are told to do so in no uncertain terms.

*2Timothy\_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 you will know whether what your being taught as Gods word is the truth or not. So, (A) Must check what religious leaders say and (B) Your

challenge is to: Read and study the Bible every day!

The Bible you use to study is Gods 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 at this point 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.*

*James 1:23 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:*

*James 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*James 1:25 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 that.....

(A) 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 do.

(B) Do not forget what you see. We must remember that the reflection we want to view is that of a doer not just a hearer only and we must after learning what to do be diligent to “do what it says”.

Finally, we need to understand the “WHY”, far to often we forget the principles of basic study. We do not treat the Bible like we do other books for some reason. But just as you would with say a spy novel or text book you have to always be asking the who, what, when, where, why, and how. So now we are at 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. The

Word will judge us, Our eternal home depends upon how we follow the word of God. We all have a decision to make. Will I live by the Bible or my feelings, traditions, needs, etc.? Will I study to show myself approved? Will I be as the Bareans? Will I be able to tell when the preacher or teacher is telling me the right things and proper applications from the word? Will I be able to spread the Gospel in a way others can understand it? Will I be a doer and not just a hearer?

As we look into the word of God we see all that He wants us to be. We learn the proper attitude. 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.

The 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.*

I leave you with these words from Paul and pray you will open the word and study it for yourself.....

*Eph 6:10-17 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. 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. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

*Foot Note: Unless otherwise noted all scriptural references are from the KJV Bible*

## Church Websites

*If you or your church needs a website to further the Lords work in your area contact me I can make it affordable for just about anyone. See some of my work by following these links.*

<http://thescripturecache.com>

<http://graychurchofchrist.com>

<http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom>

<http://falsedoctrinesofman.com>

Contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto:jfmiller61@gmail.com)

### Preachers For Pulpits



*Cloyd Frock*

Cloyd's Facebook Page offers a great resource for preachers seeking churches and churches needing preachers. Use the link below to visit his page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/466657760042906/>

# Outline of the Book of Romans Part 8

Eric Farris  
Freeport, Florida

Romans chapter 9 begins to shift the view to the nation of Israel. Paul, by inspiration, is still speaking to the saints in Rome (1:7), but he is now speaking about his physical nation. He certifies that his concern about his nation was genuine. In fact, it was of such a nature that he says he would have suffered the punishment of being lost, if it would save them (vv. 1-3). This has to be understood as simply a figure of speech to emphasize his concern for them, for Paul's love for the Lord who died for him would not have allowed rebellion (cf. Jn. 14:15). We know assuredly that the nation of Israel is the 'who' of this, because they are his kinsman "according to the flesh" (cf. Phil. 3:4-5). Paul held the covenant that God had (past tense- cf. Col. 2:14-17, Heb. 8) with this nation in high regard. He speaks of the covenants, glory, adoption, "giving of the law" (v4, so much for the false claim that all were amenable to the Law given at Sinai! cf. Deut. 5:2-15) that this nation was privileged with. This nation would be the "womb" thru which Jesus would come into the world (v5, cf. Heb. 7:14). Notice an important point made here: *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* (Rom. 9:6-8)

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel- Notice that this phrase is connected specifically to "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect". The word of God and submission to it separates those that please God from those who do not (cf. Heb. 11:6, Heb. 10:38). There were many who were of the lineage of Jacob who were not "God's people" simply because they rejected God's teaching and rebelled against Him. The "Israel" that is spoken of in the first clause of v6 (in an approved sense) is the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), those being the faithful to God under the New Covenant, the church of Christ (Acts 2:38-47); thus not all of the physical nation of Israel were saved, only the obedient (Mt. 7:21ff). Isaac and Ishmael are now used to emphasize this comparison. Ishmael was of the physical lineage of Abraham, but were not children "of promise", for ONLY Isaac and His lineage would be such (cf. Gen. 17:19,21). They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God... This is the exact same thing that Jesus taught to Nicodemus in John chapter 3. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and knew full well that he was physically born into a

covenant people; yet Jesus taught that MORE was needed! A spiritual birth was required for entry into the New Covenant (so much for the gospel accounts being “old testament teaching”!) and that is exactly what Paul is teaching here!

Therefore the folks that advocate that the physical nation of Israel are the people of God today have themselves at odds with New Testament teaching, especially in light of what we will see in chapter 10 (these folks need saving! cf. 10:1-4)! *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. (Rom. 9:11-16)*

In the text above (Rom. 9:11-16), Paul does not teach that God shows partiality on some folks, regardless of what they do... Nor does it teach that God hates some folks for no reason. God’s sovereignty is in view here, but His reaction to man is based upon man’s reaction to His law (cf. Is. 59:1-2, 1 Jn. 3:4). God did not hate Esau, He disapproved of the actions (or lack thereof) of his posterity (cf. Mal. 1:2-3). They were rebellious, notice: *For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen (Mal. 1:11-14).* It MUST be understood that God is merciful (in a spiritual sense) ONLY to the obedient (Mt. 7:21, Heb. 5:9, 11:6), for those are “whom” God wills to be merciful to! The manner in which God “hardened” the heart of Pharaoh was by plaguing Egypt. God did not “harden” Pharaoh, Pharaoh hardened himself as a reaction to God’s judgment (cf. Exod. 8:15). He could have chosen to simply comply with God’s will, but he did not! God does not FORCE folks to disobey Him (cf. Ezek. 33:10-11, 2 Pet. 3:9)!

The fact that God never intended for the nation of Israel to be His exclusive people is obvious from the sum of biblical teaching (cf. Lk. 4:25-27) and that is exactly what Paul explains in Rom. 9:24-27. Gentiles would be part of this “flock” (Jn. 10:16), they would be called “into the same body” (Eph. 2:1-16)

It is interesting that the gentiles “attained” to what the jews sought, yet failed to obtain (v30). That is because the gentiles obeyed the gospel of Jesus (cf. Acts 10) and were “purified by faith” (Acts 25:9, 1 Pet. 1:22-23); while the jews were rebellious to the message of Jesus and salvation in His church (Acts 28:31, cf. 2:41,47). Keep this , as well as v31 in mind as we get to chapter 10:1-4.... Paul will say in 10:3 that they were trying to “establish their own righteousness” (that is, by attempting to keep the law of Moses) and were willfully ignorant of the righteousness of God (the gospel of Jesus- cf. Rom. 1:16-17). Verses 32-33 support the conclusion that we have drawn, for without belief in and compliance with the will of Jesus the Christ, salvation will come to no man!

(All scripture from the KJV unless otherwise noted)

## Nero (Part 11)

Tim Bench  
Abilene, Texas

“...in the Book of Revelations, as often in mystical literature, a number is credited with special powers. There are other numbers in that fantastic vision of the Apocalypse: four Horsemen, seven Trumpets, 24 Elders, and so on -- the familiar small numbers of ritual. Not so 666, which hardly occurs elsewhere in Scripture. The Revelation text draws particular attention to that number: “`here is wisdom”, “`the number of a man” -- hinting at some secret code, the hidden ID number of the Devil, the final hint that would unmask him if only we knew where and how to look.

In fact we probably do know just what wisdom the author of Revelations intended to convey with that number. Yes, it's Roman, and it's numerals, but the numerals aren't Roman. The Roman is the emperor Nero; the numerals are letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each letter has a numerical value: Aleph is 1, Beth is 2, and so on until 10, then count by tens till 100, then by hundreds till we run out of letters. Nero Caesar in Hebrew is NeRON QeiSaR; adding up the letters we get “`the number of the man”, 666.

This kind of numerical signature is called gematria, and is still used in Hebrew and Arabic. But it's notoriously malleable: as you can imagine, almost any claim can be supported with gematria if you look hard enough... So, coming back to the Number of the Beast, how do we know that, of all the things that could add to 666, it's Nero that was meant?

We can never know beyond all doubt, but there's fairly good evidence. It made sense for an early Christian to represent Nero, and the pagan and powerful Empire that Nero stood for, as the Beast. It also made sense to use the code of gematria. If you write plainly that Nero and Rome are doing the Devil's work, then you're an enemy combatant, and the Roman legal code had no Bill of Rights. But give only the number, and you have plausible deniability: maybe the gematria is just a coincidence, and you were really hinting at the Pope or Roman numerals or whatever, or honestly reporting a mystic prophecy of the far future. So far, that's not a lot, even for circumstantial evidence.

But the really suggestive hint is that the oldest manuscripts don't agree on the

number: some have 616 instead. It's much harder to concoct an explanation that fits both numbers, and only one of the proposed interpretations of the Number of the Beast accounts for both: Nero. Remember it was NeRON QeiSaR in Hebrew. But the final N of NeRON is optional: the name can also be rendered NeRO, subtracting the letter N [Nun] and its value of 50 to get -- 616.

from "Morning Prayers talk", Thursday, 14 October 2004, "The Numerology of the Beast", [www.math.harvard.edu](http://www.math.harvard.edu).

From "'666' in the book of Revelation" at [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org)...

"...scholars who believe that the Book of Revelation refers to historical people and events argue that the number represents [the Roman Emperor] Nero. In Hebrew gematria, every letter has a corresponding number. Summing these numbers gives a numeric value to a word or name. In Hebrew, "Nero Caesar" is spelled " נרון קסר", pronounced "Neron Qe[i]sar". Adding the corresponding values yields 666, as shown:

Resh	Samekh	Qoph	Nun	Vav	Resh	Nun
200	60	100	50	6	200	50

Was John offering a coded message to early Christians, warning them of the persecutions Nero would inflict upon them?

(for additional analysis of the possible Nero-"gematria" linkage, see "The Mark of the Beast at [www.ecclesia.org](http://www.ecclesia.org), "Gematria" at [www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), etc.

"...transforming names into numbers (*gematria*) was common in antiquity. For example, in the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* Roman historian Suetonius identifies Nero by a numerical designation equal to a nefarious deed. This numerical equality (isopsephism) is encapsulated in the phrase: "Count the numerical values of the letters in Nero's name, and in 'murdered his own mother' and you will find their sum is the same." In Greek the numerical value of the letters in Nero's name (Greek: Nevrrwn, English transliteration: Neron) totaled 1,005, as did the numbers in the phrase murdered his own mother. This ancient numerical cryptogram reflected the widespread knowledge that Nero had killed his own mother.

Finally, while “Nero” in Greek totaled 1,005, the reader of John’s letter familiar with the Hebrew language could recognize that the Greek spelling of “Nero Caesar” transliterated into Hebrew equals 666. Moreover, the presence in some ancient manuscripts of a variation in which 666 is rendered 616 lends further credence to Nero as the intended referent. The Hebrew transliteration of the Latin spelling of “Nero Caesar” totals 616, just as the Hebrew transliteration of the Greek, which includes an additional letter (Greek: “n”=50, English transliteration: “n”=50), renders 666. Thus, two seemingly unrelated numbers lead you to the same doorstep—that of a beast named Nero Caesar. Twenty-first-century believers, like their first-century counterparts, can be absolutely certain that 666 is the number of Nero’s name and that Nero is the beast who ravaged the bride of Christ in a historical milieu that included three and a half years of persecution. In the end, Peter and Paul themselves were persecuted and put to death at the hands of this Beast”.

From “What is the Meaning of 666?” by the Christian Research Institute.

“Nero’s infamous character merits the title of “beast applied to him by the seer of the Apocalypse (v.1). Revelation 13:1-6 gives the generic background of the beast, which is the roman empire of the first century, The seven heads correspond to the seven hills of Rome, while the ten horns allude to the Caesars of the first century, however one may number them (v.1). The blasphemous worship demanded by the beast distinctly reminds one of the imperial cult of the first century, and the war the beast wages on the saints cannot help but recall the intense persecutions Nero, and later Domitian, inflicted on Christians because they did not worship Caesar. Nero’s persecution of Christians from November AD 64 to June AD 68 could account, in part, for the forty-two months (or 3 ½ years) of oppression mentioned in Rev. 13:5. The reference in Revelation 13:11-15 to the beast of the land securing worship for the beast from the sea (Rome was across the sea from the place of the writing of the Apocalypse, Asia Minor) reminds one of the local priests of the imperial cult in Asia Minor whose task was to compel the people to offer a sacrifice to Caesar and proclaim him Lord. Megalomaniac that he was, Nero had coins minted in which he was called “almighty God” and “Savior.” Nero’s portrait also appears on coins as the god Apollo playing a lyre.

While earlier emperors were proclaimed deities upon their deaths, Nero abandons all reserve and demanded divine honors while still alive (as did also Caligula before him, AD 37-41). Those who worshipped the emperor received a certificate or mark of approval – *charagma*, the same word used in Revelation

13:16. Furthermore, in the reign of Emperor Decius (AD 249-251), those who did not possess the certificate of sacrifice to Caesar could not pursue trades, a prohibition that conceivably goes back to Nero, reminding one of Revelation 13:17”

From “Doomsday Delusions” by C. Martin Pate and Calvin Haynes, pages 41-42.

“Luis De Alcazar (1554-1613) wrote a commentary called Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse, which ran to some 900 pages. In it he proposed that it all of Revelation applied to the era of pagan Rome and the first six centuries of Christianity. According to Alcazar (or Alcasar):

- 1) Revelation chapters 1-11 describes the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.
- 2) Revelation chapters 12 - 19 were the overthrow of Roman paganism and the conversion of the empire to the Church.
- 3) Revelation 20 describe the final persecutions by Antichrist, who is identified as Cæsar Nero (54-68 A.D.), and judgment.
- 4) Revelation 21 -22 describe the triumph of the New Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic Church.”

From “The Purpose and Origins of Preterism” at [www.preterist-preterism.com](http://www.preterist-preterism.com).

A few final opinions on Nero from historians of his era....

- 1) Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD), ““Marcus Agrippa is said to have been born in this manner [i.e., breech position], almost the solitary instance of a successful career among all those so born – although he too is deemed to have paid the penalty which his irregular birth foretold, by a youth made unhappy by lameness, a lifetime passed amidst watiare and ever exposed to the approach of death, by the misfortune caused to the world by his whole progeny but especially due to his two daughters who became the mothers of the emperors Gaius Caligula and Domitius Nero, the two firebrands of mankind. . . . Nero also, who was emperor shortly before and whose entire rule showed him the enemy of mankind”, Natural History, 7:45.
- 2) Suetonius (70-160 AD); “neither discrimination or moderation were employed in putting to death whosoever he pleased on any pretext whatever.”
- 3) Eusebius, “Nero was the first of the emperors who showed himself an

enemy of the divine religion.” 7

- 4) Apollonius of Tyana, “In my travels, which have been wider than ever man yet accomplished, I have seen many, many wild beasts of Arabia and India; but this beast, that is commonly called a Tyrant, I know not how many heads it has, nor if it be crooked of claw, and armed with horrible fangs. . . . And of wild beasts you cannot say that they were ever known to eat their own mothers, but Nero has gorged himself on this diet”. 18

Descriptors such as “sociopath”, “lunatic”, etc. are tossed around carelessly nowadays, but Nero perhaps epitomized these terms better than anyone in Roman history. It was these character flaws which have interwoven him so tightly into world history, and more importantly, Biblical history, as well. Despite Nero’s best efforts to destroy the “fledgling” religion, he could not... Christianity would ultimately spread across the globe, and evil despots such as Nero are now largely ignored, and forgotten about completely by many.

We have no idea today what actual and bona fide “persecution” is like; it is preposterous to compare ANY of our modern-day “persecutions” in the US to those of these years of horror. First-century Christians, under the maniacal rule of Nero, certainly knew what actual “persecution” meant...We have not seen our families captured, or tortured, or sold off into slavery, or tossed into a gladiatorial coliseum to be ripped apart and devoured by wild animals. We have not witnessed friends flayed and crucified, to satisfy the lunatic whims of a psychopathic madman. We have not been forced to worship in secret and in hiding, while a nefarious government decrees that I address earthly rulers as “Lord” or as a god. We have not seen sexual slavery. We have not witnessed church members beheaded, or crucified upside-down, or tortured. All of these examples, as bizarre and ludicrous as they may sound, were commonplace during the reign of Nero and the Roman Empire.

Let us also never lose sight of the carnage and devastation one madman can wreck upon a society, as well as a religion. More importantly, let us never lose sight or appreciation of the freedoms which we have today...we are still able to worship the most holy God as we see fit, a blessing that millions both throughout history as well as in our current world do not share. We often take freedoms such as this for granted. But as has been documented, freedom to worship has certainly NOT been a constant throughout the history of the past 2000 years. Nero and his reign of terror is but one of many historical examples of Christianity threatened, affected, and devastated by the whims of tyranny, but never defeated.

“When Nero uttered the words “Qualis artifex pereo,” he gave not only his own interpretation of his life, he also revealed one great secret of its ghastly failure.

It may be admitted that Nero had a certain artistic enthusiasm, a real ambition to excel. He painted with some skill, he composed verses not without a certain grace. In spite of serious natural defects, he took endless pains to acquire the technique of a singer. Far into the night he would sit in rapt enthusiasm listening to the effects of Terpnus, and trying to copy them. His artistic tour in Greece, which lowered him so much in the eyes of the West, was really inspired by the passion to find a sympathetic audience which he could not find at Rome. And, in spite of his arrogance and vanity, he had a wholesome deference for the artistic judgment of Greece.

Yet it is very striking that in the records of his reign, the most damning accusation is that he disgraced the purple by exhibitions on the stage. His songs to the lyre, his impersonation of the parturient Canace or the mad Hercules, did as much to cause his overthrow as his murders of Britannicus and Agrippina....”

from “ROMAN SOCIETY FROM “NERO TO MARCUS AURELIUS”, BY SAMUEL DILL, M.A., “HON. LITT.D. DUBLIN, HON. LL.D. EDINBURGH, HON. FELLOW AND LATE TUTOR, C.C.C., OXFORD; PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN QUEEN’S COLLEGE, BELFAST; “AUTHOR OF “ROMAN SOCIETY IN THE LAST CENTURY OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE”, 1925, page 19.

“No one can be worse than Nero...He personified evil about as well as anyone can personify evil”.

from “Emperor Nero” by [Hank Hanegraaff](http://www.preteristarchive.com) at [www.preteristarchive.com](http://www.preteristarchive.com).

“Traditions about Nero furnished a basis, amongst other things, for reflecting upon and formulating ideals of government free from tyranny and lawlessness: Nero's violent end even furnished warrant for armed revolt against secular and religious tyrants”.

From “CHAPTER 22. Nero in Jewish and Christian Tradition from the First Century to the Reformation”, [www.blackwellreference.com](http://www.blackwellreference.com).

1-see Tacitus, Annals XII.66, Cassius Dio, Roman History LXI.34, Suetonius, The Lives of Twelve Caesars, Life of Claudius, page 44, and Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews XX.8.1.

- 2-Church History, Volume 1, by Everett Ferguson, page 46.
- 3--Suetonius, The Lives of Twelve Caesars Life of Nero 10, 21, 33, and Tacitus, Annals XVI.4; Life of Vitellius 11.
- 4-“The Domus Aurea and the Roman architectural revolution” by Larry Ball.
- 5-“The Golden House of Nero” by Axel Boethius.
- 6-“Nero’s pleasure dome” by Alasdair Palmer, 2-12-2007 London Sunday Times.
- 7- [www.ecclesia.org](http://www.ecclesia.org)., “The Mark of the Beast” by Richard Anthony.
- 8- “There are actually 4 historical traditions for the dating of Revelation: during Claudius, or Nero, or Domitian, or Trajan. However, there is only scant and indirect historical evidence for a large scale Domitian persecution., as noted by several credible scholars. There was both Emperor and Empire worship prior and during Nero's reign. The very name "Caesar" evoked "worship" which is one reason the common Jews despised Rome”, Doug Post, Tolland, CT Church of Christ, 2-5-2015.
- 9- Comments from Doug Post of Tolland County church of Christ conducted via email on 2-6-2015. Comments from Howard Daniel Denham of Truth Bible Institute conducted via email on 2-5-2015.
- 10- Augustine of Hippo, *City of God* .XX.19.3.
- 11-“Sibylline Oracles” 5.361–376, 8.68–72, 8.531–157.
- 12-“ Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died II”. Lactantius.
- 13- “Backgrounds of Early Christianity”, Dr. Everett Ferguson, Abilene Christian University, page 35.
- 14- “Church History: Volume 1” by Everett Ferguson, page 46.
- 15-”The quality of Nero's actual performances is also overwhelmingly derided. Dio (62.6.4) has Boudicca declare that the Romans are slaves to a lyre-player, and a poor one at that. Dio further reports (61.20.2) that Nero had 'but a slight and indistinct voice, (brachu kai melan) so that he moved his audience to tears and laughter at once'. Suetonius reports (Nero 20.1) that Nero's voice was weak

and husky (*exiguae vocis et fuscae*). Juvenal mentions (8.225) Nero's horrid or unseemly singing (*foedo cantu*). These claims of a weak and indistinct voice are offset by Suetonius who, immediately after stating Nero's voice was weak, records (Nero 20.2) that at Neapolis Nero promised the crowd he would 'ring out something good and loud,' (*aliquid se sufferti tinniturum*). Tacitus reports (Ann. 15.33) that Nero regarded the Juvenalia as too small for his ample voice (*tantae voci*). These claims of amplitude may be taken as empty boasts. Dio also records (63.20.5) the exclamations of Nero's (sycophantic) audiences: 'Divine Voice' (*hiera phone*) and 'Blessed are they that hear thee' (*makarioi oi sou akouontes*). Likewise Tacitus records (Ann. 16.22) that sacrifices were made to the emperor's 'celestial voice' (*caelesti voce*). We also have descriptions of Nero's conduct during competitions – he even indulged in sledging (see Dio 63.9.2).”, from “Performing Nero” by Murray Dahm.

16-”... Nero had for years made a fool of himself by publicly playing the lyre and singing before, literally, command performances”, from “Persecution in the Early Church: A Gallery of the Persecuting Emperors” by Mark Galli, Christianity Today, 1990, Issue 27.

17-Nero's “theatrics” would ultimately be one of the factors leading to open rebellion against his rule....as per Vindex, “I have seen him. . . in the circle of the theatre, that is, in the orchestra, sometimes holding the lyre and dressed in loose tunic and buskins, and again wearing highsoled shoes and masks. I have often heard him sing, play the herald, and act in tragedies... Will anyone, then, style such a person Caesar and emperor and Augustus? Never. Let no one abuse those sacred titles Therefore rise now at length against him”, from “Nero: The Artist, the Athlete and His Downfall John Mouratidis, Visiting Lecturer of Physical Education, McGill University, Journal of Sport History, Spring 1985.

18-“Philostratus, Life of Apollonius”, Cited in John A. T Robinson, Redating the New Testament, p. 235.

19-”Tacitus, *Annals* XIV.8

20-”Nero: By Suetonius”, *The Twelve Caesars* – translated by Robert Graves.

21-Some argue today that Christians were merely punished by Nero after the fire, not necessarily killed. See “Demythologizing Christianity’s Most Cherished Moment: Nero and the Christians, Part Two” By Hrafnkell Haraldsson, [www.politicsusa.com](http://www.politicsusa.com)....”...we are not without evidence from the Pagan Roman camp for this event as it is described for us by both Suetonius (born c. 70) and Tacitus (born c. 56), who both grew up in the post-fire Rome, as well as by Dio,

writing later. These accounts all have a common (anti-Neronian) source, perhaps Fabius Rusticus. We also have some later sources, which appear to be based on these accounts but which do not qualify as independent witnesses in themselves. All Christian witnesses date from a much later period....it is important that we look first to what our biographer Suetonius has to say. In his Life of Nero he says “punishment” by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, “adherents of a new and dangerous superstition.” Note that no executions or tortures are mentioned, despite Suetonius’ well known appetite for salacious rumor-mongering. Christian tradition has it that both Peter and Paul died in the persecution along with 977 other Christians”. See also “The Myth of Christian Persecution, 3-20-2013 Huffington Post, by “Candida Moss, Author, 'The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom' and Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity and the University of Notre Dame”....”If Nero did target Christians after the great fire of Rome in 64 C.E. -- and the are good reasons for thinking he did not -- his treatment of them stemmed less from a desire to harm Christians than it did from his need to deflect blame from himself. Ancient Romans who spread the story about Nero saw his actions as contemptible and unjust.”

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# ELDERS—THEIR CRUCIAL ROLE

By Dub McClish

Denton, Texas

When the Lord Jesus returned to the Father, He first entrusted the church to the apostles (Mat. 16:18–19; John 14:16–18), who had the responsibility of receiving the revealed Word (John 16:13) and delivering it faithfully. This Word was not only the Gospel to be given to the lost world for its salvation. It was the constitution—the law of Christ—for His church. While the apostles lived, the church was under these inspired ambassadors of Prince Immanuel (2 Cor. 5:20). However, just as the Lord in His flesh would not be with His disciples indefinitely, neither would the apostles.

They left behind that perfected Word which is fully capable (without any direct Divine intervention or assistance) of perfecting the saints who will yield themselves to it (2 Tim. 3:16–17). However, the Head of the church also entrusted her to other human hands upon the departure of the apostles. This grave responsibility would not be to one man or to a small council in some geographical global headquarters, but rather to a small group of men on the local level of His church—men in every congregation of His people. These men He denominated “elders,” “bishops,” “pastors.”

These men must meet stringent inspired qualifications before being given charge of the congregation (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9). It is their sacred duty first to engage in self-examination, then in congregational-examination (Acts 20:28). Their responsibility is two-fold: (1) They are to feed/tend/ nourish the church so that she might develop spiritually to the extent of her potential, all the while maintaining personal purity (Acts 20:28b; Tit. 1:9b; 1 Pet. 5:2). (2) Equally important, they are to protect her from evil men and their damnable doctrines (Acts. 20:29–31; Tit. 1:9b–11).

The losses to liberalism the church has experienced over the past few decades could not or would not have occurred had not numerous elders (and some entire elderships) been guilty of serious dereliction of duty. It is not our intent to place upon these men a burden greater than they can or should bear or to discourage any from becoming elders. However, it still remains a crystal-clear conclusion that, had elders led, bishops overseen, and pastors shepherded as they should have, the church would not be in such throes of apostasy as we see on every hand.

Elderships are God’s wall of defense for His church—accountable for

congregational welfare and safety—and are directly responsible to God for that which is taught in the classrooms, the pulpit, the church bulletin, and all other teaching media they supply. They need not do all of the teaching personally (impossible even in an average-size congregation), but **they must know what is being taught**. This knowledge includes the material that is used and that which is taught in the Bible classes. Also, elders need to know that the teachers are both morally and doctrinally sound. They must do this by personal interview, written questionnaire, or some other means, or be guilty of grave neglect. They dare not merely **assume** that all is well in these matters. It is their business as overseers and pastors to find out—to know.

Hundreds of congregations have been lost to error in the last forty-five years, likely never to be reclaimed for the Truth. Misguided preachers and professors have led the departure, but who has enabled them to do so? One group above all others must be blamed—elderships in the local congregations who went to sleep on their watches. We stress again—the role of these men has been (and continues to be) absolutely pivotal to the health and welfare of the church of Christ. Bishops, more than any others, had (and have) both the opportunity and obligation to build up the churches, to prevent false doctrine and practice, and to oppose and expose them if they appear. Weak, ignorant, overly-benevolent, or sometimes outright liberal elders have allowed compromising preachers (and often under-taught and over-zealous “youth directors”) to continue to spew out their errors and promote their innovations, when these men should have been sent packing long before.

Elders are supposed to be “mouth-stoppers” of such men (Tit. 1:9–11), but sadly, many of them are “mouth-supporters” of them. They have kept corrupt preachers in their pulpits till they converted much of the church (and sometimes the elders). (Ironically, it is the man who is determined to preach only and all of the Bible without fear or favor who is most often run out of town by misguided elders nowadays.) Many elderships have become so numbers-happy that they are willing to allow almost anything to be taught or practiced if it will draw the crowds or keep certain ones (and their money) from leaving. Now most of those elderships would not think of inviting in and supporting any **besides** such religious wolves, further devouring the flock. Consequently, in many places (and especially in the larger metropolitan areas) the church is drowning in a sea of error.

Elders must practice a zero-tolerance policy toward any and all religious error. Many churches have been undermined by and lost to various erroneous “isms” advocated by brethren through the years because elders were either inattentive,

apathetic, ignorant, or cowardly—or a combination thereof. The current monster of liberalism in the church could have been killed aborning had elders been informed, alert, and strong enough to allow it no place at all in their respective congregations. Instead, in hundreds of cases it was tolerated in its earliest manifestations as merely a harmless “different approach.” Many elders (and preachers) boast that they do not know what is “going on” in the church and that they do not want to know. Their congregations are paying the price for such folly.

One who claims to be a Gospel preacher has no excuse for perverting the Gospel and will be damned eternally for so doing (Gal. 1:6–9). However, we reiterate, the ultimate blame for the rampant apostasy in the church must be laid at the feet of elders. They could (and should) have denied rotten preachers the pulpits and support they gave and are giving them. **It was their business to do this —“the buck” stops with them!**

Many elders who are sound in the faith still seem to be in a state of denial relative to their pivotal role—they just do not seem to “get it.” Some otherwise conservative elderships seem to see no inconsistency in inviting a false teacher for a Gospel meeting or workshop of some sort (“We won’t let him teach error while he’s here”) or in publishing in the church bulletin an article written by such a man. Likewise, they will allow programs to be announced from the pulpit, on bulletin boards, and through the church bulletin on which false teachers are featured, which simply gives the unworthy teacher undeserved credibility and implied endorsement.

We should contemplate with shame and sorrow how few elderships ever lead their congregations in withdrawing from erring, impenitent members. It is evident that elders have all too often been willing to wink at immorality and sinful divisive behavior, as well as false doctrine, rather than deal Scripturally with it. This neglect has resulted in severely weakened churches in some cases and in apostasy of the entire congregation in many others. Elders fail miserably if they are unwilling to lead the church boldly in its Divine mandate to withdraw from those who will not repent of their impurity of life or teaching (1 Cor. 5:1–13; 2 The. 3:6; Tit. 3:10; et al.).

There is no greater or more demanding work in the entire world than that of serving as an elder/bishop/pastor in the Lord’s church. However, the greater the potential for good if one serves well, the greater the potential for harm if one fails. We unhesitatingly commend the many faithful elders of past and present—they deserve much honor. There is likely not a more thankless task than is theirs.

It has been this writer's great delight and encouragement to work with several such righteous shepherds over the years and to serve in this capacity. Let us encourage such worthy men, and let us pray that in His providence the God of Heaven will raise up more great men for this great work.

Preachers, elders, deacons, and all other members are precious to the Lord and important for the church to be what He desires. However, the elders in any congregation occupy a crucial position more than any others. The Lord appointed them to nurture and to keep His church pure. The congregation is a reflection of its eldership more than of any other element or factor. If elders fail at the point of tending the flock, particularly at the point of providing it with sound teaching and protecting it from error, they fail utterly, and so will the congregation they oversee.

### **Endnote**

All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

**[Note:** I wrote this MS and it originally appeared as an "Editorial Perspective" in the February 2000 issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, of which I was editor at the time.]

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## Learning to Give an Answer (10)

John P. Mabrey  
Hilham, Tennessee

*Service.* We have just completed covering our responsibilities in worship unto God, but, are these all that we are responsible for as Christians? What does the Bible say? Well, the Bible tells us (Christians) that we have other responsibilities in addition to worship. Keeping in mind that *worship* and *service* are two separate and distinct actions, let us go on to see what our responsibilities are in the church where **service** is concerned. I do not propose to compile a complete listing, but these are some that I pray will help us all, as Christians, to give an answer to others as to why we do what we do.

**Teaching.** Now, some of you may be saying at this point: “If God intended me to be a teacher, why didn’t he leave me that in a “job description? Well, the fact is, he did. Turn to Second Timothy 2:24-26 and read: “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will.*” Did you notice the word “apt” in that passage? The word “apt” means “able.” Therefore, the “servant of the Lord” (Christian) must be “able” to teach. I know this is not a popular concept within the Lord’s church, but this is a Christian’s responsibility to do so.

**Study.** Many of us can quote the familiar passage in Second Timothy 2:15 which says: “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Did you notice that word “workman” in that verse? The word “workman” is synonymous with the word “servant.” One of the best ways that we can prove ourselves to be worthy servants of our Lord is to study the word of God. This is really the only way that we can fulfill the objectives of this entire study of “*learning to give an answer.*” We cannot very well give an answer to people if we do not know what the inspired word of God says.

**Example.** When Paul wrote to the Roman brethren, he exhorted them to be an example of all they said and did. In Romans 12:1-2 he wrote, “*I beseech you*

*therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* To the young preacher Timothy, Paul wrote: *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* (I Tim. 4:12)

The best way to teach someone how to live a Christian life is to show them how it is done. We can preach and teach all day long with words, but if our lives do not reflect the same message that we are teaching, then it is all in vain, because we have become hypocrites. Jesus said in the “sermon on the mount,” *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.”* (Matt. 7:13-14) If we are to be the light of the world, then we must be different from the world. A light stands out in darkness. If we are part of the darkness of the world, then we blend into that same darkness; we do not stand out at all. If we, as salt, lose our saving (preserving) power, what good are we to the Lord in his church? We must dare to be different!

Since we, as Christians are in service to God, and the agency through which we work is the church (the body of which Christ is the head), therefore it becomes necessary to discuss the “mission and greatness of the church.”

One of the purposes of this lesson is to encourage each Christian to work in all areas of Christian service. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians in First Corinthians 15:58 *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

As to the sub-title of this lesson (mission and greatness of the church) let us discuss the latter first. What makes the church so great?

### **The church in it's greatness.**

First of all, let us define “the church.” The most simple definition of the Lord's church can be found in the scripture in Acts 2:47—*“Praising God, and having favour with all the people, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* From this verse we can verify what we have already discussed under the title of CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, that the church is the body of the

saved. The saved are within the church and there are no saved individuals outside the church. The church is made up of those individuals that are saved *from* sin; that is having received “remission of sins” as we can read in Acts 2:38—*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” Yes we are saved *from* sin, but we are saved *for* service to Christ. This becomes evident in First Thessalonians 1:9—*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.*” So we can plainly see that all Christians (church members) are saved *for* service to God.

The “church” is the “eklesia.” Now, don’t let that word scare you. Let us break it down into simplicity. “Eklesia” is from “ek”, which means “out of”, and “klesis” which means “a calling.” Simply put, the church is the result of a “calling out” making the church the “called out.” It has two basic applications to companies of Christians. First, it applies to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era. (Matt. 16:18) *And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Jesus of course is talking about the church as the entirety of all Christians throughout the world.

In the singular number however, the “church” refers to what we call the “local congregation” as can be seen in Matthew 18:17—*And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*” The “local church” or “congregation” concept can also be seen in Acts 20:28 whereby elders were appointed over each congregation. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” Also in First Corinthians 1:2 which says, *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*” We can then see that the word “church” is not just referring to all the saints all over the world, but the word is also used to designate a company (large or small) of professed obedient believers. We can see this concept plainly in the book of *Revelation* when John was instructed to write that book. *Saying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the first and the last, and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia...*” (Rev. 1:11)

The “church” at Corinth was to abound in the Lord’s work. The Lord has not left us “wandering in the wilderness” when it comes to what is expected of us as Christians. He has left us an abundance of work to be done and we are to “abound” in doing it. So, what is to be done? As Christians, what is our mission?

That is the question we shall attempt to answer next month, Lord willing.

*\*All scripture references are taken from the KJV unless otherwise noted.*

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# **“DEAVERISM” (Finis Part A)**

## **Refuting Mac Deaver’s False Teaching On The Work of the Holy Spirit**

*Doug Post*  
*Salisbury, Maryland*

As we bring this current series to a close, we will be addressing Mac Deaver’s fourth proposition which is as follows: **"The Scriptures teach that when a person becomes a Christian he is baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit."**

The Greek word βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo) means to dip, submerge, immerse, or overwhelm. The idea of being baptized in the Spirit means to be overwhelmed in or with the Holy Spirit. But that still does not exactly explain for us its meaning. Does it mean to be baptized in the Person of the Holy Spirit, as the word picture of one being immersed in water brings to mind, or does it mean to be overwhelmed or covered by the Spirit in some fashion?

Mac Deaver argues that a person is first baptized in water and then baptized in the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God (the church). But that idea is nowhere found in John 3:5: **“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”** The word picture presented for us is not in keeping with the idea of being “baptized” IN or into spirit either. Being baptized refers to an action, and one that is said to be in spirit. This is vastly different than the word picture of being born OUT FROM spirit, don’t you think? In fact, both word pictures painted for us are the exact opposite.

The literal rendering is one must be born *“out of/from water”* and *“out of/from spirit.”* Note, there is no definite article in front of the word “spirit.” There is also no reference to the means by which this is all done. This, then, ought to be seen as a “red flag” in approaching the text and understanding its meaning. The phrase *pneuma hagion* (lit. spirit holy) is found 44 times in the New Testament. Not having the definite article emphasizes that which is given or imparted by the Holy Spirit, rather than on the Person of the Holy Spirit. The gift or thing given by the Holy Spirit is that which is emphasized.

For instance, in Luke 24:49, Jesus said: **“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye**

**be endued with power from on high.**” Here we see that the promise of the Father had to do with “**power**” (miraculous power) the apostles would receive. Jesus then identifies or clarifies what this “power” is in Acts 1<sup>4-5</sup>:

**“And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me: For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”**

Here is the same “**promise of the Father**” as in Luke 24:49 by which they would be “**endued**” or “**clothed**” with power from on high. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told them “**Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.**” The power came upon them when the Holy Spirit came upon them, BUT the “**power**” is what they received. They did not receive the Person of the Holy Spirit but that which He gave them – “**power.**”

As the book of Acts begins, Luke writes:

**“<sup>2</sup>Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: <sup>3</sup>To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:2-3).**

Here we note Jesus had given commandments to His apostles to go and preach what He taught them, and through the Spirit. (cf. Matt.28:19-20; John 16:13; Acts 1:8). Actually, in Acts 1:2 the phrase is still *hagiau pneumatos* and is still anarthrous. Reference is on what was given and not to the Giver. Additionally, we note that Luke said “**after that, he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.**” After what? After the day He ascended back to the Father, of course. Remember, Jesus promised His apostles in John chapters 14, 15, and 16, to send them another *paraklēton* (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7), a legal term meaning “summoned or to called to one’s side.” It stands for a legal advisor or assistant, a counselor, or advocate. This *paraklēton* would speak on behalf the apostles, and by inspiration, through the apostles, providing direct revelation and words to speak to the people. We also learn that the apostles were given power to confirm what they taught, through miracles (Mark 16:17-20; Heb.2:3-4). Therefore, we see that our Lord had given the apostles a certain body of teaching or commandments (quite simply, the gospel) through *hagiau pneumatos*. The

emphasis once again is on what they received – miraculous power – and NOT on the Person of the Holy Spirit. The focus is on the power given to the apostles to speak by inspiration and confirm the Word. What Jesus promised the apostles throughout the book of John (John 7:38-39, 14-16, 20:22) is simply called “**the promise of the Father**” (Acts 1:4; cf. Luke 24:49) and being “**baptized in the Holy Spirit.**”

In the phrase “**baptized in the Holy Spirit**” we find the phrase *pneuma hagion*. It is literally “**baptized in spirit holy.**” Again, without the definite article, “holy spirit” emphasizes that thing that is given. In this case, they were immersed or overwhelmed in the power given them. Then in Acts 2:4 we are told: “**And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**” They were all filled with *pneuma hagiou*. This phrase identifies that which they were filled with, namely the gift and not the Giver.

Do not capitalize *pneuma hagion* or add a definite article in that phrase because they simply do not belong there. The second occurrence of the word “spirit” in Acts 2:4 does refer to the Holy Spirit, BUT it was this Spirit that GAVE them utterance, empowering them. He is behind what He gave them, but the emphasis is upon the power given them the moment *tou hagiou pneumatos* (the Holy Spirit) came upon them (Acts 1:8).

Luke 11:13 and Matthew 7:11 are parallel verses. But the use of metonymy is employed as we shall see when we compare them:

**“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).**

**“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts (NIV) to them that ask him?” (Matt.7:11).**

Luke says the Father would give *hagion pneuma* (no def. article) while Matthew says the Father would give “**good gifts**” or “**good things.**” When we harmonize the two passages together, we understand would be given them and or what they would receive? They received “good gifts,” of course. But, these good gifts would come from the Spirit or *hagion pneuma*. Here, then, we need to put the lower case letters on the phrase – holy spirit – because in the case of this metonymy, the emphasis is placed on the gift given, and not the Giver, the Person of the

Holy Spirit. To give the *hagion pneuma* was to give good gifts or blessings.

In John 20:22, Jesus “**breathed**” on His disciples and said: “**Receive ye *hagion pneuma*.**” Again, no definite article. It is not the Person of the Holy Spirit intended by the phrase. In verse 21, Jesus said: “as the Father sent me, so I send you.” In verse 23, He said: “whosoever that ye retain, they are retained.” The statement of Jesus is literally, “Receive ye spirit holy.” What Jesus said and did (in breathing on them) symbolized the divine commission to the apostles to go preach as seen in the context. Jesus was commissioning them while He was with them but they would not receive *hagion pneuma* – **power from the Spirit** – the moment they were endued or clothed with power from on high, which is synonymous with “**when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.**”

Now we come back to the context of John 3:5 to look at verses 6 and 7. Jesus said: “**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**” These verses illustrate what we have been discussing concerning the phrase *hagion pneuma* and the absence of the definite article. Here we find that there is a definite article before the first instance of flesh but not the second. The same is true that everyone who is born of the spirit is spirit. John uses the phrase “**the flesh**” which focuses on the physical body, which easy enough to grasp. Then John uses the phrase “the spirit” to focus on the spiritual birth. However, what does John mean by using “the spirit”? We can go ahead and put an upper case “S” on the FIRST occurrence of *pneuma* and a lower case “s” on the SECOND *pneuma*. There is something definite about the first *pneuma* but not the second. The very fact that Christians are made and or brought forth (begotten) by the Word of God (James 1:18) and/or begotten by the incorruptible seed or Word (1 Pet.1:23), we see that this is again metonymy. That which is born of Word of God - **THE FAITH** – or the teachings from the “**Spirit,**” is now “**spirit.**”

The new birth places one in the family of God (Acts 2:47), just as they responded to the inspired preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost. Those who obeyed his message (the gospel) were born again, made new, and begotten by the Word of God. Therefore, being born of the Spirit is being born anew and the new birth is accomplished by water as well as the Spirit; producing a new spirit or a spiritual person, which is indicated by the use of the SECOND anarthrous *pneuma* in the verse. The Greek text of John 3:5 and the context, both immediate and remote, neither teaches Holy Spirit baptism or implies it. In our next article we will address for whom the baptism in the Spirit was meant. Mac insists it was for all people. We will also address whether Mac is teaching one or two baptisms. Stay tuned.

## *Review of Robert Waters' Teaching on Adultery Part II*

Howard Denham

- I. Robert appeals in his article on the meaning of adultery to the writings of Foy E. Wallace Jr. on MDR in *The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State* (p. 42). But the same problems that Robert has with the text, Wallace also had and did not really address. Robert quotes Wallace as writing: “The word adultery in New Testament usage does not necessarily refer to the sinful physical [sexual] act, it is not restricted to the one way of violating the bond. In the four passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke the term adultery is given the sense of ignoring the bond, of which a man is guilty who formally puts away his wife unjustifiably and regards himself unhitched” (p. 2).
  1. That Foy Wallace held the view that adultery here was “the sense of ignoring the bond” does not prove anything, other than that brother Wallace could be guilty of drawing the wrong conclusions as well from the use of the term in the Scriptures.
  2. Further, Robert does not give all that Foy Wallace said on the matter. Why? May it possibly be because to do so would have undermined his own position? Why does he attempt to make it appear that Wallace was in agreement with his position on MDR? This special pleading by Waters seems to be a common fallacy on his part.
  3. Notice what Wallace, picking up where Robert left off, also said on the subject: “The passages in Matthew 19, Mark 10, and Luke 16 discuss hypothetically the man who manifests this view [which view? Clearly, the view held by the man that he is “unhitched”! HDD] by marrying again. His sin of adultery consisted in treating the original contract as null and void when it was not. The phrase ‘put away’ in the verses means to formally divorce, not merely to ‘send away,’ or separate, and he thereby assumed the bond to be wholly dissolved [You mean it’s not?! HDD]. The guilt [from what? HDD] consisted in the formal assertion of freedom which God declared ‘from the beginning’ to be nonexistent, a guilt that remained unaffected by any sequel, other than the exception which the Lord specified. Accordingly, by adultery Jesus meant the attempt to dissolve the indissoluble [what was that? HDD]; but its current meaning is rather the act that dissolves it, and in this way the common usage falls short of the teaching of Christ” (*The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State*, p.42).

4. You mean that Wallace believed that the marriage bond was still intact despite the civil divorce not for fornication? You mean that he held that the Matthew 19:6 marriage bond was “indissoluble” except divorce is obtained on the grounds of fornication? Why did not Robert Waters tell us these things? Could it be that such information would be quite inconvenient for his own views of the texts in question? Could it be that he realized that what would prove too much would prove nothing? Yea, verily!
5. In the very next paragraph, Wallace states: “Fifth: The scriptural permanence of wedlock, reaffirmed by Jesus, stands on the premise that the one sinful act alone can sever the bond sealed by the divine sanction and hallowed by the divine decree. God joins and God sunders – and ‘what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.’ If any other party chooses to marry one who has broken the bond, he or she takes the responsibility of union with one who is guilty of what the Lord sets forth as the one great sin, a case of guiltiness in the realm of moral conduct that stands between the individual and God” (pp. 42-43). Why did Robert not cite this as well? Clearly, Wallace would not agree with Robert’s doctrine, despite Robert’s attempt to co-opt his writings here for his purposes!
6. Robert then not only expresses disdain for the acknowledged scholarship that deals with the meaning of words on a regular basis because of their disagreement with his novel views, but misrepresents even this one source he tries to co-opt as agreeing with him!
7. Again, brother Wallace is not the standard, even though he was right on some things in the matter (e.g., the relative indissolubility of the Matthew 19:6 marriage bond) and despite the fact that he was a great Bible student and scholar. [NOTE: Brother Wallace, interestingly, affirmed in his views on MDR, like James D. Bales, that alien sinners were not amenable to the marriage law of Christ (a view expressed in an ill-conceived letter often celebrated by the likes of brethren Bales, Olan Hicks, and Dan Billingsly in support of their own doctrines), but contradicted himself in affirming on the contrary that alien sinners were amenable to the law of Christ relative to texts pertaining to the civil state, serving in the military or police force, and such like! Brother Wallace was either not aware of this self-contradiction between his views on MDR and those on civil government or else thought little of it, despite its obvious significance relative to the Gospel of Christ and the amenability of alien sinners thereto. Astonishingly, it is a work that Waters cites from Wallace in support of his

own speculations on the former subject but which deals principally with the latter! This causes us to wonder if brother Waters is willing to accept the same self-contradictory views as Wallace on these matters as well. In fact, much of brother Wallace's views on MDR seem to have been in a state of flux up until his death. Some of his earlier statements on MDR appear to be directly at odds with the letter to Bales.]

- II. Waters then turns to John 8:4, which deals with the woman taken in adultery. He then says, "For many, this passage confirms the traditional definition of adultery. It appears that this woman was caught having sex with a married man or, more likely, she was married to another. This Scripture further defines adultery. The idea that having sex with someone not your spouse is an adulterous act has merit. Indeed, when a married woman cheats on her husband she is committing adultery, i.e., she is breaking the vows she has made to her husband. Ezekiel 16:38" ("Biblical Definition of Adultery," pp. 2, 3).
1. Thus, Waters attempts to make the sexual act of adultery in John 8:4 really to be simply the breaking of the marriage vows and not the sex act itself!
  2. Given this approach, if a woman tells a lie to her husband it is adultery, or if she refuses to be submissive to her husband it is adultery! If she even talks surly to him, then she commits adultery. If he strongly desires to be the pinochle playing partner of a woman other than his wife in a game of pinochle, because she happens to be the better pinochle player then he too commits adultery. If he covets the other woman's pinochle prowess then he commits adultery just as if he went to bed with her and had sexual relations, according to this foolishness! Can you believe it?! And based on brother Water's abuse of the phrase "break wedlock" in Ezekiel 16:38 and such like, he implies that the man in coveting the card playing abilities of the other woman implicitly severs the marriage bond and puts away his lawful spouse who just happens to be less endowed with card playing skill! But, don't worry, Robert allows both parties to divorce and remarry at will anyway, so they can go on changing card playing partners and committing adultery thereby at will. Next week it may be an over-heated game of wist, followed by a rousing game of canasta, or maybe even a passionate game of hearts in which the only hearts actually exchanged are in the cards. Never mind the temptations implicit in bridge and rummy! The nonsense goes on ad infinitum.
  3. Thus, Robert is compelled to redefine everything and be absolutely silly in doing so!

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