

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

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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/keysofthekingdom/?page\\_id=1316](http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316) . May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

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# Weylan Deaver Falsifies His Daddy's Holy Spirit Baptism Doctrine (Part 3)<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Denham

Parrish, Florida

## FURTHER EVIDENCE FROM WARREN

In chapter 35 of Thomas B. Warren's book *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and the Only Christians*, the discomfiture for Mac Deaverism on Spirit baptism becomes even more acute, as Brother Warren sets out his case in more detail relative to the locative use of the phrase "in Christ" and its equivalents. On page 204, he notes:

There are those today who claim that the Bible teaches there are *Christians* who are *not* members of the *church of Christ*. But I have no hesitation in affirming that the *Bible teaches* that *every* person who is a *Christian* is a member of the church of Christ. This means, obviously, that I am affirming that the *Bible teaches* that there are *no* Christians who are *not* members of the church of Christ. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The *saved* are those who have been *reconciled* unto God, and those who have been reconciled unto God are members of the *body* (church) of Christ (Eph. 2:13-18). The matter is really just that simple, but in the light of the importance of the matter, let us say a bit more about it. [Italics are his, HDD].

It will be observed that Warren has affirmed that to be "in Christ" is to be in the body of Christ. He has also affirmed that the body of Christ is the church of Christ. He affirms elsewhere that the church of Christ is also the same institution known as the kingdom of God. He affirmed that when one enters into Christ he instantly becomes a child of God, a Christian, and a member of the body of Christ, which is the church. He just as clearly has affirmed also that salvation is only "in Christ" and thus in His spiritual body, the church. Among the texts he has utilized are Ephesians 1:7 which teaches that forgiveness is in Christ and Acts 2:38, which text shows that forgiveness is received by virtue of baptism in

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

water for that very purpose. He has equated receiving the remission of sin with being saved. This is the same argument that I have made in falsifying the Mac Deaver doctrine of present day Holy Spirit baptism, which Mac claimed was too imprecise. But Weylan with Mac's tacit approval has endorsed Warren's argumentation, which is the exact same thing I have presented, as being precise, cogent, and unambiguous. Do I hear the dying gasp of the Deaver doctrine coming across the prairie from Sheffield, TX?

Yes, indeed, Thomas B. Warren knew "the power of precision," which is why I made an argument falsifying Mac's Spirit baptism heresy *using the same argument* that Warren made against the errors of Rubel Shelly and his compatriots, which is the historical background for his book. The argument refutes a lot of false doctrines, including the current teaching of Mac and Weylan Deaver on Holy Spirit baptism. Mac and Weylan simply have not grasped that fact, as yet.

Brother Warren is still not done in making his case, and so immediately adds:

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 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. (204). [Italics his, HDD].

On pages 208-209 he states that he is, among other things, affirming the following:

(11) 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.

(12) that *the Bible teaches* that the church of Christ is the body of Christ.

(13) that *the Bible teaches* that the body of Christ is the church of Christ.

(14) that *the Bible teaches* that there is *one* body.

(15) that *the Bible teaches* that there is *only* one body with God's approval.

(16) that *the Bible teaches* that there is *one* – and *only* one church – of which God approves (that is, the church for which Jesus died and shed His blood – the church which He purchased with His own blood.

(17) that *the Bible teaches* that every saved person now living on earth is a member of the church of Christ.

(18) that *the Bible teaches* that reconciliation unto God is in the one body, the one church (the church of Christ).

(19) that *the Bible teaches* that since no one can be saved apart from the shed blood of Jesus Christ and that, since the church has been purchased by the blood of Christ, **no one living today can be saved from his sins without becoming a member of the church of Christ.**

(20) that *the Bible teaches* that salvation is in Christ.

(21) that *the Bible teaches* that to be in Christ is to be in His body, the church. [Italics are his, but bolding is mine. HDD].

Warren affirmed that salvation from sin entailed one becoming a child of God and entering into the church “at the very same moment (not *before* or *after*).” He stated precisely that “no one living today can be saved from his sins” – that refers to cleansing, forgiveness of sins – “without becoming a member of the church of Christ.” That refers to regeneration – to becoming a child of God, a Christian. The two actions – cleansing and regeneration – occur then simultaneously, according to the teaching of Thomas B. Warren, which teaching Weylan Deaver with his daddy's tacit permission endorsed as precise, cogent, and unambiguous.

## **WARREN ON BAPTISM**

On pages 81-82 in chapter 16, Brother Warren describes what occurs in the process of salvation and especially in water baptism. He writes:

One must *hear* the word, he must *believe*, he must *repent*, he must *confess* Jesus as Lord, and he must be *baptized*. It is at *this* point of his obedience that man obtains or receives the remission of his sins. The believer is to be baptized “*unto the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). He is to be baptized that his sins may be washed away (Acts 22:16). He is to be baptized in order to enter Christ (where salvation is, II Tim. 2:10, where he becomes a *new* creature, II Cor. 5:17), Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26,27. This fact having been clearly established, wherever (in the New Covenant) a believer is spoken of being saved, that believer must be understood as being a *baptized* believer (Mark 16:16). [Italics are his, HDD].

Then in a conclusion to the chapter, he is emphatic:

Let no man claim God’s promised blessing of salvation until he has obeyed the Gospel (Rom. 6:17,18; II Thess. 1:7-9). Let no believer claim remission of sins before he has been baptized into Christ. To do so is to delude oneself (Matt. 7:21; Prov. 16:25).

Brother Warren viewed the process of baptism as a seamless act in which one is simultaneously cleansed of his sins and regenerated as a new creature, a child of God in the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt of that from his book.

## **A CHILD OF GOD OR A CHILD OF THE DEVIL**

Warren also argued quite cogently that every accountable person is either a child of the devil or a child of God. That argument is a strong disjunctive and does not admit of a third category as envisioned by Mac Deaver, when he contends that between these two categories is a third which entails individuals who are saints (and thus no longer alien sinners or children of the devil) but not yet Christians (and thus not yet children of God). Deaver’s contention was necessitated by two things in his current belief system: (1) his assumption that cleansing precedes and is distinct from regeneration; and (2) an effort to avoid the obviously false conclusion that there must be a direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart of the alien sinner (child of the devil) to regenerate him. As we have already seen, Warren refutes the first point – the assumption that cleansing precedes regeneration and is distinct from it – by showing that at the very moment one is cleansed he becomes a child of God and so is regenerated.

In chapter 17, Warren, writing on “God’s law of inclusion” relative to who is a child of God, makes the following observation:

2. *God’s law of inclusion briefly explained.* Every person who has reached the age of accountability is either a *child of God* or a *child of the devil* (cf.: Eph. 2:1-3; Gal. 3:26-27; John 1:11-13). An “*alien sinner*” is one who is still a child of the devil; he has not yet become a child of God. The alien sinner comes into *fellowship* with God at that point in his life when he actually becomes a child of God – *not* merely when he *thinks* he has become a child of God. (85) [Italics are his, HDD].

There is no third category which lies between one being a child of the devil and a child of God, according to this argument by Thomas B. Warren. It is false then to conclude, according to this argument, that one first becomes a saint and then a Christian. Rather one becomes a saint and a Christian at the same exact point in time, because all New Testament saints are Christians, i.e., children of God. It is absurd to affirm that an accountable human being on earth today can be a saint under New Testament law without being a child of God also. Yet, that is what Mac Deaver is precisely affirming, contrary to the teaching of Warren, which teaching has been implicitly endorsed by Mac’s eldest son, Weylan Deaver.

In 1954, Tom Warren engaged in a written debate with E.C. Fuqua on the subject of divorce and remarriage in which debate Fuqua affirmed that alien sinners (non-Christians) were not amenable to the law of Christ (the New Testament). In arguing his case against Fuqua’s error, Warren presented a version of this same strong disjunctive argument excluding a third category. He argued that all accountable persons are either “in the world” (in the sense, they are of the world and still in sin) or “in the church.” There is no middle ground. There is no half-way point. The law of excluded middle holds that one is either a Christian or not a Christian. He cannot be both in the same sense, at the same time, and in all of the same relationships. Otherwise one would be affirming a self-contradiction, if he contended that a person is a Christian and yet not a Christian at the same time under such conditions. The law of non-contradiction, upon which the law of excluded middle is based, will simply not permit both propositions to be true in that way. As Warren, in making certain observations concerning Fuqua’s own teaching relative to salvation and applying that teaching to divorce and remarriage, notes:

In my last article, I used *Fuqua's very own argument* to show that one remains *in the World* until *baptized into Christ*. I will here repeat a part of that argument. Remember, I am quoting from *E.C. Fuqua* (and giving my "Amen" to it): "To be *in* the world is to be *out* of Christ – out of the family of God. To be in the church is to be *out* of the World – saved from the destiny of the World. The line of demarcation is crossed in baptism, for we are 'baptized *into*' the Church (which is the body of Christ); and baptism has the significance to taking a person *out* of one condition and *into* another. In baptism we die to the world; are then 'buried in baptism,' and from that burial raised to walk in the new life in Christ. (Rom. 6:1-5; Col. 2:12). Therefore, until one is 'baptized into Christ' he is still in the World – and lost." (Nov., 1953, p.2 of the *Vindicator*). Now, Bro. Fuqua, you wrote the truth in November, 1953! It was a *bitter pill* for sectarians on the plan of salvation and worship and it is a *bitter pill for you on "marriage."* Fuqua, you ought to be a "man" and renounce what you wrote here if you insist on holding your *present* position. *You cannot hold to both!* We are either in the world or in the church! (73-74). [Italics are his, HDD].

Ironically, brethren, Mac Deaver, as Warren does here, has argued the same point on marriage in Mac's own debates with various false teachers who have affirmed that alien sinners are not amenable to the law of Christ. But he has done in reverse on the subject of salvation the same thing that Fuqua did on marriage to try to extricate himself from his own self-created dilemma. He invented a third category between one being in or of the world and being in Christ or the church. In each case the new category was devised to avoid the obvious. As Warren called upon Fuqua to be a "man" and renounce his error on marriage, we now call upon Mac Deaver to be a "man" and renounce his error on salvation. He needs to give up the false doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism as necessary to one's salvation. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot affirm there are only two categories relative to marriage as to accountability and so on, but three relative to salvation. He is caught in a vivid and vicious self-contradiction. He either needs to give up his current error on Holy Spirit baptism or else apologize to those whom he has debated on the subject of divorce and remarriage.

## CONCLUSION

Thomas B. Warren, who was indeed precise in his writing of this book, is directly at odds with the teaching of Mac and Weylan Deaver, as well as Glenn Jobe and Marlin Kilpatrick, in this matter. Weylan's endorsement of the book shows that they either have not realized the self-contradiction in which they find themselves or they do not care anything about their logical plight and desire only to spread their theories at all cost, even if it means recognizing the work of a beloved and deceased mentor who would be appalled at where they really are in their teaching today on these very matters.

We call upon Mac and Weylan Deaver, as well as their followers, to repent of their false teachings and come back to the firm ground their mentor, Thomas B. Warren, held when he wrote this great book with such "power of precision," as Weylan himself noted. It is certainly the case, brethren, that Thomas B. Warren did not hold – and never did hold as a Gospel preacher – the doctrine of present day Holy Spirit baptism for salvation. He rejected it firmly. His book does not affirm it, but rather implicitly refutes it. Weylan Deaver's own endorsement of Warren's book just as implicitly falsifies his father's false doctrine, whether Weylan will admit it or not. It also does so with the tacit approval of Mac Deaver himself, whether Mac will admit it or not.

Sad it is when two men, Mac and Weylan Deaver, who were once known for their command of logic, must be lectured by a former student in the same field of their father and grandfather respectively on matters that they ought to know so well and indeed formerly did! I pray that they will return to the truth and give up the absurd, self-contradictory position in which they have placed themselves.

### Endnotes

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# The First Principles (Part 4)

## *The Message*

**Jim Miller**

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Last month we looked at the word of God, and we established that His word is like an instruction manual for our lives. This month we want to look at the message, itself.

From the very beginning we see the hand of God working in all things. We see the creation and how God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, giving them all they needed. We see the fall of man, in which the serpent deceived man and sin, coming into the picture, separated man from the Creator. This is where the “message” of Gods word begins. From that time, forward to today, the message serves as our guide to get back to God, and back into the relationship He desires for us to have with Him.

Far too often, when teaching or studying the first principles, I think we over look the Old Testament. God, from the time man fell from grace, has had a plan to redeem us. Though we are no longer under the law given to the Jews, it is important to understand that even then, the plan of salvation was set in motion and would be fulfilled in Christ. Through the prophecy of men chosen by God we see the coming of our Savior. What love and mercy has been bestowed upon man that God would plan to redeem us unto himself! Now we are not going to get into a long study of the Old Testament and all the evidence given of this plan. I urge you, however, to read it and learn just how much God loves us and cares for us.

As Christians, we, today, are under the New Covenant, or Testament, of Christ, who fulfilled the prophecy of the Old testament. His life and teachings from that point forward guide men back to a right relationship with the Father. Through the Apostles teachings, through the Holy Spirit, “...*according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*”<sup>1</sup> (2 Pet. 1:3).

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

The message is known as the Gospel. Thayer defines the word “Gospel” in this way:

*“...the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God...the glad tidings of salvation through Christ...the proclamation of the grace of God manifest and pledged in Christ.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Message/Gospel teaches that people who accept the word are saved and counted as children of God, and that all who gladly receive the word are added by Christ to the church (Acts 2:41,47; 1 Jn. 3:1-3). We also learn that those who do not obey the gospel will receive the fiery vengeance of God (2 Thes. 1:6-10).

We learn that this message is to be the whole counsel of God, and that it is to be taught and preached to all, so that the “babes” in Christ may be edified and led to observe all things that Christ has commanded (Mt. 28:18-20). Consider what the faithful proclamation of the message does. It leads sinners to believe and obey the basic first principles, and it leads to the proper training of these same people to become elders, preachers, teachers, and other useful members of the church. This teaching and preaching of the whole counsel of God is directly related to our spiritual growth and strength. The world, through this message, is to understand how to become members of the body (church), and thus they may become fellow heirs and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

## **The Message Started**

In Acts 2:14, we read that “*Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them*” the gospel of Christ. We are then told that those who heard this message were cut, or pricked, in their heart; we might call it “convicted,” today. And, just as we should do when we hear this message, the question was asked, “*What shall we do?*” Peter, in the message, goes on to explain, “*...repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*” (Acts 2:38), and that “*...they that gladly received his*

<sup>2</sup> Thayer, J. (n.d.). Thayer's Greek Lexicon. BibleSoft.

*word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41).*

Folks, you need to understand that the message that was given then, is the same message that we are given, today, which we, also, are to deliver now, some two thousand years later. This message will never change . We are not to add to it, nor are we to take away from it. We read of the consequences if we do.

*“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:19).*

At this point we can now see the importance of the message. It is the backbone of our beliefs. It is, in fact, the only way to learn how to obtain salvation.

As I stated at the beginning of this series, we want to go a bit further than the standard way of teaching these first principles. It is my hope that you are enjoying (and, most of all, learning) from these articles. I want you to be able to teach these principle to others.

This series is far from over, and I believe it is needed more today than any other time in history. Man has always strayed from the truth to seek his own, and today it is as bad – if not worse – than ever. So, till we meet again, may God bless and keep you.



The image is a screenshot of a website banner. At the top, it says "Churches of Christ.com" in a white serif font on a dark blue background. Below this is a navigation menu with links: "Home", "Work of the Spring Congregation", "Recommended Links", and "Contact Us". Underneath the navigation menu are several smaller links: "Sermons", "Articles", "Debates", "Spring CFTF Lectures", and "World Wide Gospel Preaching". The main content of the banner features the "Contending FOR THE Faith" logo in red and black. Below the logo, it reads "2014 Spring Contending For The Faith Lectures" and "“WHAT MUST A CHRISTIAN DO TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO CHRIST?”". It also includes the dates "February 19—February 23, 2014" and the name "David P. Brown, Lectureship Director". At the bottom of the banner, there is a blue link that says "Click Here Watch The Lectures".

# Hermeneutics – The Basics (Part 1)

**Devin Dean**

Corner, Alabama

Last month we considered the terms “hermeneutics” (the science of interpretation), “exegesis” (to read out), and “eisegesis” (to read in), which form the basis of this subject. What then are some basic “rules” that we can use to have a proper hermeneutical approach (a desire to read out of God’s word—to determine what it says) to the Scriptures?

## **The Bible is a book that can be read and understood.**

One great fallacy that many men have is that it takes something special—some “enlightenment”—in order to understand the Bible. About this, D.R. Dungan gives a logical argument in his book after he succinctly states that “the Bible [is] to be used as other books.”<sup>1</sup> What does he mean? How do we apply this to our own approach to the Scriptures?

The God that inspired the Bible is all-knowing, all-powerful, and simply put, the Creator of man. As such, He would have to know how to communicate to His creation in a way that His creation would be able to understand. The issue, then, cannot be with God if man fails to understand a passage; if one takes such a position, he has already denied God and His attributes.

Dungan goes on to state: “God does not inspire the interpretation.”<sup>2</sup> This deals with man’s thought that the Holy Spirit must still direct man in his understanding of Scripture. In so doing, man denies, again, the power and knowledge of God! God created man. God, then, knows exactly what man can and cannot understand. If one could not understand it without God’s direct assistance, then why would God have wasted the time in recording it? If man cannot understand what God has placed into His written record without God’s own personal guidance, then there is no need for the written record at all! Logically, then, with the existence of the written record, there is an expectation of the author that His audience can understand what is written, without the author having to explain it again. With this thought, then, what are some things that would help us in understanding the word, beyond using the Bible, as one

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<sup>1</sup> Dungan, D.R. *Hermeneutics: A Text-Book*. Delight, AR: Gospel Light, n.d. pp. 1-2. Print.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

does with any other book (that is, with an expectation to understand it)?

## Common Sense

Concerning this, Dungan states that “this is so self-evident that to present it further would be to waste time.”<sup>3</sup> He is correct, and yet how many men today refuse this very tool in understanding what their Creator has stated to them? Many today refuse to apply common sense to the Scriptures. They, as Dungan explained, “...forget that God gave this book to the common people, that He has filled it with the experiences of men, and that its writers have spoken to us not only of the things that constantly surround us, but in the language which a plain people can the most easily understand.”<sup>4</sup> What do all these words mean? Simply put, it takes work to misunderstand the Bible! Now, men can have a misunderstanding based on incomplete knowledge that, when studied, will be corrected according to the Bible, itself; but, to misunderstand the Bible takes work!

Here an example may suffice to help us understand how much work it takes to misunderstand the Bible. First, a non-biblical example:

*A person must be at least 16 years of age and have a driver's license to drive. A person who is not at least 16 years of age cannot drive.*

Now consider an argument from this: As the license is not referenced on the negative side (that is, on the side that denies one the right to drive), we clearly see from this statement that the license has no actual bearing on one's driving.

Ask yourself, using common sense, based on using words just as you would use any other words, with an expectation to understand what is said, does the argument even make sense? Of course not!

Now apply this to the Scriptures and consider how hard man has to work to deny the simple truth. Jesus stated in Mark 16:16, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”<sup>5</sup> Without discussing the power and force of the grammar of this statement by Jesus, just asking yourself in a common sense fashion, having that expectation of actually

<sup>3</sup> Dungan, D.R. Hermeneutics: A Text-Book. Delight, AR: Gospel Light, n.d. p.12. Print.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* pp. 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

understanding what He (God in the flesh) stated, what, then, is (at least for this verse) required for salvation?

Notice now how hard some men work to deny the simple fact of what Jesus said:

“It should be noted that this negative statement does not include a reference to baptism, making it clear that what saves a person is living faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

This same author then makes a plea to Ephesians 2:8, and instead of a common sense approach, taking both passages together, he makes the following statement:

“If baptism were necessary for salvation, Ephesians 2:8 and many other verses should have been translated ‘ye are saved through faith and baptism.’”<sup>7</sup>

He concludes by stating:

“Baptism is a distinct act of obedience apart from salvation. This is clarified by the order in which the words ‘believe’ and ‘baptize’ occur in the text...”<sup>8</sup>

Consider all of that work done to deny what Jesus clearly said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mk. 16:16). Now, applying the basics discussed here (expecting to understand what is said, and applying common sense), what did Jesus say, and what can one “interpret” from it?

At a minimum, belief (faith), and baptism, are absolute necessities in order to reach the point of salvation. Other verses may add requirements in addition to these, but without a verse specifically stating one of these conditions is not required, then this verse cannot be negated. Is it any different than the earlier cited example of the 16 year old and driving?

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6 Zodhiates, Spiros. The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible: King James Version, Zodhaites' Original and Complete System of Bible Study ... Red Letter Rev. ed. Place of Publication Not Identified: World Bible :, 1991. Print.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

## 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 (reading into), which is hard to do, but is a choice each makes when approaching Scripture, one can come to the proper exegesis (reading out) of Scripture. May each endeavor to put aside preconceived notions, beliefs, thoughts, and opinions, and with determination, approach Scripture for guidance that comes from the Almighty!

Apply the basics of hermeneutics; when you go to study the Scriptures, go to them intending to understand them with common sense!

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).

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# The Dangers of Realized Eschatology: A Recent Perversion (Part 4)

**Eric Farrior**

Freeport, Florida

## Introduction and an Opening Word<sup>1</sup>

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 2nd Coming of Christ

Since our friends believe all has been fulfilled in A.D. 70, they affirm that Jesus already came again, and He did so in judgment upon Jerusalem. I certainly don't deny some usage of certain phrases to be references to judgments upon nations, for instance:

*“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty”<sup>2</sup> (Isa. 13:6 - Judgment upon Babylon).*

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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 Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

*“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mt. 24:13-14 - Judgment upon Jerusalem).*

However, to assume a phrase (or one very similar) has the exact same meaning every time, or speaks of the exact same event, despite the context, is a mistake! For example, the phrase *“laid hands on them”* (or one very similar) is used regarding:

1. Divine healing (Lk. 4:40);
2. Arrest for preaching (Acts 4:3);
3. Apostles imparting spiritual gifts (Acts 8:17);
4. In commendation (Acts 13:3).

The context **MUST** be considered! This is all part of *“handling aright the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15b).

The truth is this: Jesus came literally one time, and will do so **AGAIN**; notice:

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn. 14:1-3).*

Some contend that this is a reference to the church (1 Tim. 3:15), and they make valid points; yet, Christ will still return for it! (1 Thes. 4:17, 1 Cor. 15:24).

Abraham told the servants that he and Isaac would go worship and *“come again”* (Gen. 22:5). In both contexts, this phrase is identical; it is speaking of a literal return.

*“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without*

*sin unto salvation*" (Heb. 9:27-28).

From this, notice the following:

1. Men die ONCE;
2. Jesus was offered ONCE;
3. He will appear the SECOND TIME.

This Greek word ὀπτάνομαι "be seen," is used in the following verses:

1. Acts 1:3 ("being seen");
2. Acts 2:3 ("appeared");
3. Acts 2:17 ("shall see");
4. Acts 7:2 ("God appeared to Abraham");
5. Acts 9:17 (Jesus "appearing" to Saul);
6. Acts 13:31 ("was seen" [regarding His resurrection, by the way]);
7. 1 Cor .15:5-8 (regarding Jesus' appearances after His resurrection).

Thus, the Lord APPEARED once; He was surely seen while living on this earth, and He will APPEAR again!

*"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).*

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have SEEN Him go into heaven (v11).

Seems pretty clear to me!

# A Gift for Father

**Cloyd B. Frock, Jr.**

Parsons, Kansas

The story is told of a little girl who confided in a friend that she was going to buy her father a beautiful necktie that she had seen one day while shopping with her mother. Her friend asked her, "Where will you get the money to buy your daddy's present?" The little girl quickly replied, "Daddy will give me the money." The little girl's friend considered this response, and asked, "Doesn't that mean your daddy will be buying his own birthday present?" The little girl thought about it for a moment, and answered, "I don't think so...Daddy always gives me money to buy his presents."

Of course, the fact that the little girl's father provided her the money to purchase a birthday present for him does not mean that he wouldn't enthusiastically appreciate his daughter's gift. And, isn't it likewise with our heavenly Father?

Peter wrote, in Second Peter 1:3, "*...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...*" Whatever we have to give to Him, necessarily came from Him! There is nothing – *absolutely nothing* – that we can possibly give to God that He does not FIRST give to us. Consider what the Psalmist had to say:

*"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters" (Ps. 24:1-2); "...Every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. 'If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.'" (Ps. 50:10-12).*

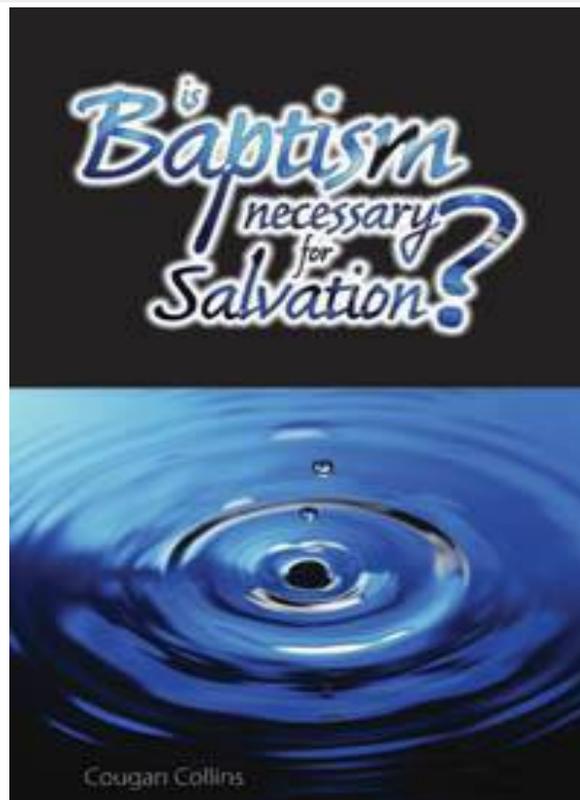
Furthermore, consider the words of the apostle Paul in First Corinthians 16:1-2, "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper...*" and, in Second Corinthians 9:7 we read, "*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*"

When we meet on the first day of each week, and give back to God a portion of that which He has given to us. He has *at least* as much appreciation in it as that little girl's daddy would in receiving from his little girl a birthday present purchased with money that had come out of his own pocket.

Imagine, however, a ridiculous scenario in which that little girl asks for some money from her father to buy him a present, but then gives her gift to him begrudgingly; how much will her father appreciate *that* gift? Likewise, our heavenly Father appreciates our weekly financial “gift” to Him, but only to the extent that we give it with a cheerful heart (2 Cor. 9:7).

Let us delight our heavenly Father every “first day of the week” by cheerfully giving back to him just a portion of that which he has generously given to us.

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# Some Things I Learned As a Child

**Archie R. Green**

Glenn Heights, Texas

As a very small child I was given an introduction to God. I was told that He was The Creator. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”*<sup>1</sup> (Gen. 1:1). He had created me and not the other way around. He was not “the man upstairs,” but our Heavenly Father, having all power and justice residing within His hands (Acts 17:24-25). I was taught of man’s disobedience through His son, Adam, and the weakness of the man’s wife, Eve. In an instant, man had descended into sin and death for lacking trust in Him who had sustained them! We were taught that man was cast out of Eden, and if we did not desire to have ourselves cast out in a like manner, we should mind our “P’s and Q’s” (to this day, I still do not know what that truly means). We were taught of God’s generosity and kindness in saving mankind through the actions of the man, Noah. *“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he”* (Gen. 6:22). He had commissioned him to build an ark, and to house those that would be saved from the destruction of sinful man (no rock monsters; sorry). Because of his obedience, God saved Noah and his household. As time moved on, we also learned how God had planned to build a house through Israel, and father Abraham. *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee...”* (Gen. 12:1). He and his wife, Sarai, were to have a child late in life, and that adolescent would be used to test Abram and his love for God. *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”* (Rom. 4:3). Then, along came Moses...the deliverer. Raised in the house of Pharaoh, fashioned by the will of God to have all, and then given the choice to maintain sin for a season, or leave it all and receive the blessings of heaven. *“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt”* (Ex. 3:10). I was told that oft times in the lives of men, God will require of them to choose God, and the task that He has set before them (Isa. 6:8). Israel received their liberation by the hand of God by the spreading of innocent blood, and they were set upon the road to Canaan. *“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt”*

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

(Ex. 12:13). Many more childhood years were spent recounting Israel's thanklessness towards God's grace, as they seemingly continued to complain day by day. We learned about the giving of the Law, and acknowledged that Jehovah God is One God. Even the error of Moses in Numbers 20:12, as well as the forty year trek because of disbelief, which should have only taken a few weeks; and, there were many more accounts: of Israel, Saul, David, Solomon, Joshua, Ruth, Rahab, Jonah, Samson, the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets, etc. All of them clearly taught. All of them brilliantly illustrated. All of them dogmatically assured that they were Biblical truths that cannot be usurped.

Then we came to Jesus. What an amazing tale of sorrow, pain and woe. Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:4). The one sent from Heaven, who would take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). A promise that was from the beginning (Gen. 3:18). We lingered on the miracles, wonders and the signs (Acts 2:22). We loitered over His temptation in the mount (Mt. 4:1-11). There was a constant barrage concerning His character that was thrown at us to learn, which included His giving, compassionate, servile and humble nature. We were encouraged to mimic Him in all these areas. We labored repeatedly over the passion scene, so that little boys and girls would never forget the image of the Savior, dying in our place. We learned that everyone deserted Him, and that His cross was carried by another (Mt. 27:32). We even learned that He overcame the grave, having put away sin and death for all mankind (1 Cor. 15:57). They taught us all very early in life that this same Jesus went back to Heaven, and is now sitting with His Father on the Throne of Grace. We were even schooled on the fact that one day, maybe even one day soon, He would come again to take all of us to Heaven, forever (Jn. 14:3). Those were just some of the many things I learned as a child.

B...U...T... When I became a young adult, I read my own Bible, and realized that not a single soul in my grand, denominational, family ever once told me – I was not saved. Yes, they had told me that I was a child of God, but they never explained how. The Scriptures proved that I was not. They had even said, by a show of hands, that I would make a great candidate for baptism, because I was in a good family and had done no major wrongs; that this baptism was to show that I WAS ALREADY SAVED, and was ready to JOIN this church by my believing in God and by being a good person. Clear Bible teaching easily drained this thought away. NO ONE, and I mean no one, ever taught me that the CHURCH was the body of Christ, and that one only entered in by hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized by the authority of Christ. Yes, being baptized was to have my sins removed (Acts 22:16)! The Bible taught

me that baptism WAS ESSENTIAL, and through that action, God, and only God, added me to the church – the beautiful Bride of Christ. The one that God’s only begotten Son died for on that cross, which we learned so much (but not enough) about. I couldn’t be voted in or out! They also never expressed the need to “be faithful unto death” (Rev. 2:10). Why should they? There was nothing that could “*separate me from the love of God,*” right? And, finally, no one cared enough to share with me that Christ would only raise the household of faith unto Heaven in that last day (Eph. 5:23)!

I appreciate the limited views and knowledge shared with me as a child. It actually led me on the path to seek truth...all truth (Phil. 1:18). But, I MUST be more grateful for the knowledge and the complete teaching I received much later in life by those who love God dearly, and desire men to be saved by the whole counsel (Acts 20:27). And, I pray you do as well. It is the only way. God Bless.

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# Understand What Thou Readest? (Part 2)

**Scott D. Crawford**

Clay, Alabama

Last month we examined what might be called *general errors* made when attempting to understand (hermeneutics) and interpretation (exegesis) of the Scriptures. Errors like using the Bible to prove a pet doctrine, failing to understand the historical and cultural context, or even not taking the time to understand the mistakes we might make. This month we'll be looking at more specific errors that can be made during the process of *hermeneutics*.

Let's start with the error of *over allegorizing*. In essence, an allegory is an extended metaphor, such as, the armor of a Christian (Eph. 6:11-17), Jesus, the good shepherd (John 10:1-16), or the natural and wild olive trees (Rom. 10:16-24). When we consider an allegory, parable or metaphor, it is an error to demand, or force, more areas of comparison than "those intended by the original author."<sup>1</sup> When speaking about the allegory of the olive trees, Dungan notes that some describe every aspect of a tree: trunk, bark, leaves and roots, and then demand something to answer each aspect. It is in this method that "parables and types are interpreted to death."<sup>2</sup>

Before we stray too far from D. R. Dungan, it may be helpful to consider another statement he makes: "If we say that all the apostles were inspired, then all that they have said concerning any one thing must be true."<sup>3</sup> This may seem elementary on the surface, but it speaks for a holistic approach to the Scriptures, and not what might be considered a *cherry-picking* approach. This means we cannot take what Paul says about salvation in Christ without the deeds of the law, and fail to consider what James says about the need for obedience to the faith. A person cannot firmly hold the words of Paul that salvation is by faith (Eph. 2:8), and not also firmly hold the words of Peter that baptism also saves us (1 Pet. 3:21).

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1 A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1963), 231.

2 D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics: a Text-book* (Delight: Gospel Light Pub. Co., 1888), 266.

3 *ibid*, 182.

Next is an error that you will just love to say: parallelomania. The basic problem with parallelomania happens when scholars “adduce ‘parallels’ of questionable worth.”<sup>4</sup> Parallelomania, at least conceptual parallelomania, occurs when individuals with advanced specialized training in a field seek to relate the Bible to their discipline. These people mean well, to be sure, but they think they have “a much firmer grasp of Scripture than they do; and the result is frequently appalling nonsense.”<sup>5</sup>

In the book, “The Hermeneutical Spiral,” Osborne points out a number of fallacies related to semantics – two seem especially helpful if recognized. First is *misuse of subsequent meaning*;<sup>6</sup> this relates to the mistake of applying a contemporary meaning into the Biblical material. This is even more evident when doing a word study. Have you ever heard a sermon about the gospel being the “dynamite” of God? The word “power,” in Romans 1:16, is the word from which we get “dynamite,” but should we be equating the power of the gospel with the destructive power of a stick of dynamite? Following quickly on the heels of misusing subsequent meanings is the *one-meaning fallacy*.<sup>7</sup> This refers to the mistake of assigning the same understanding to a Greek or Hebrew word every time that word occurs. An example would be the Greek word σάρξ, “flesh.” This word is translated “flesh” in Matthew 24:12, John 1:14, Romans 8:13, and Jude 7, but in each case there is a different understanding. In Matthew we understand this to mean “no person,” in John the meaning is “became a human,” in Romans it refers to living according to a “sinful nature,” and in Jude we understand it to mean “sexual immorality.” Both of these errors force us to consider not only the literal meaning of a word, but also the metaphorical use of a word (i.e., context).

Before moving away from the one-meaning fallacy it might be appropriate to mention another aspect of the same problem. At times, English is more compact in word usage than Greek, so we often use one word that expresses an idea that in Greek is expressed by using several different words. A classic example would be the conversation between Jesus and Peter on the beach, as recorded in John 21:15-19. Each time the word “love” is recorded in English, there are really two words being used in Greek to express the term idea. Knowing the difference can

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4 D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 43.

5 *ibid*, 136.

6 Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 71.

7 *ibid*, 72.

help add a layer of understanding that may have been missed, not to mention a deeper empathy for Peter's distress.

Another problem often faced might be called an *explicit only fallacy*. This occurs when people make the claim that only what is explicitly stated in the Scriptures is binding on people today. When someone holds to an explicit only doctrine, they, in essence, remove the use of logic from understanding the Scriptures. We look at John 3:16 and say "whosoever" means ME; yet, if the explicit only doctrine is true, then no person living today – or in any age, for that matter – can claim "eternal life," since no living person is specifically named in the Scriptures. In other words, we must deduce the truthfulness that ME is implied in John 3:16, and that this must be the case since the conclusion is guaranteed by the truthfulness of the Scriptures.<sup>8</sup>

It is the sincere hope of all who write for *The Keys of the Kingdom* that what is written spurs further study and understanding. Yet, there is the distinct possibility that as we increase in knowledge and confidence we may become *theological bullies*. First Peter 3:15 holds two very important instructions for Christians today. First, we must always be ready to give an answer for what we believe, the hope that is in us. Sadly, from the position of teacher, some belittle, degrade, and intimidate, which is the reason for the second admonition by Peter – "with meekness and fear." As with Peter, Paul makes a similar plea in Ephesians 4:15 that Christians should speak "the truth in love." Errant or inappropriate doctrine should always be faced with strength and confidence; yet, both Paul and Peter "urged restraint, politeness, and good-will when approaching those with contrary views."<sup>9</sup> If these passages teach us anything, it is that we should understand that it isn't enough to speak the truth, or to make a defense; how we speak to others matters as much as the subject we are discussing.

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8 George F. Beals, *How Implication Binds and Silence Forbids*, (Ann Arbor: PC Publications, 1998), 14.

9 Duane Warden, *Truth for Today Commentary: 1 & 2 Peter and Jude*, (Searcy: Resource Publications, 2009), 176.

# What is the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 2)

**Doug Post**

Vernon, Connecticut

In last month's issue, we considered the proposition, "The gift of the Holy Spirit was the gift of miraculous power, supplied by the Spirit to first century Christians, only, and we begun our contextual analysis of Acts 2 in support of our proposition. This month, we pick up in that analysis:

## CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 2 (Continued from Part 1)

The apostles were the only ones promised to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8, 2:1-4). To be baptized in the Holy Spirit simply meant to be overwhelmed with miraculous power from the Holy Spirit. No other person on earth received such complete miraculous power as did the apostles. Anyone claiming modern day baptism in the Holy Spirit is lying!

*Acts 2:5-11 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. [6] And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. [7] Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, [11] Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.<sup>1</sup>*

As stated in our previous installment, those who had gathered in Jerusalem were from different regions, speaking different languages. The apostles were able to speak in foreign languages by the power of the Holy Spirit, preaching the gospel to all of them. They could not have done so without the power given them by the Spirit. They had never studied or learned those languages before, yet they were able to speak in those respective languages, which the people could understand

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

concerning what the apostles were teaching. This could only be done by the power of the Spirit.

*Acts 2:12-16 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" [13] Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." [14] But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. [15] For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. [16] But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...*

Putting an end to all of the assertions, allegations and speculations, Peter stood up and said, "THIS is THAT." The "this" was what the crowd had just witnessed, about which they were amazed, seeing those 12 Galileans speaking languages that they had never before studied. The term "Galileans" was derogatory, meant as an insult. The region of Galilee was a "blue collar" area, where the unsophisticated and uneducated folk were known to work and reside. The crowd, therefore, was aware that this was truly an amazing event, seeing these unsophisticated and uneducated men speaking in languages the people knew that they had never before studied. Moreover, they were speaking with knowledge, wisdom and authority. So, it was only natural for them to ask, "What could this mean?" On the other hand, the "that" was the promise of the prophet Joel, which is exactly what Peter referenced, saying "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." It is within this setting that Peter refers to Joel 2:28-32, using the main points of the passage for his great Pentecost sermon. The main points of Joel's promise relate to miraculous power and/or the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and salvation. Peter uses this promise of Joel as the impetus for what he is about to preach to the Jews gathered together for Pentecost.

*Acts 2:17-18 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out of My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*

According to Peter's application of Joel, the "last days" were now beginning in

their presence, marking the beginning of the Christian dispensation, following the removal of the Mosaic Law – the Old Covenant (Law of Moses) – which had been taken out of the way by Jesus Christ at the cross, making way for the New Covenant (the gospel), where both Jew and Gentile could share together in spiritual fellowship on the basis of Christ’s shed blood, becoming members, together, in His one body, the church (Eph. 2, 4; Col. 2).

In this context, the phrase “last days” does not necessarily refer to the Christian dispensation, which certainly began on that Pentecost day, and in which we currently are (that is, up to this year, 2014, and forward). Rather, it refers to the last days of the arrangement of the Jewish nation and its structure as they, then, knew it. Jesus made a prophetic promise concerning the destruction of the temple during His ministry, declaring that not only would the temple be destroyed, but also, “*not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down*” (Mt. 24:1-2). The Jewish people, as a formal, theocratic nation, came to a violent end in 70 A.D., with the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. With the destruction of the temple, so also the records of the lineage of its people. One’s lineage played a significant role in the formation and preservation of the culture of the Jews, because they were a “tribal” nation. The necessary proof of one’s ancestry from one’s particular tribe was now gone forever. The records of their genealogy were vital in connecting the Jews to their historical past. Without these records, tribal identification and verification became an impossibility. How could a man serve as a priest if he could not verify his lineage; whether or not he was actually from the tribe of Levi, especially since only men from the tribe of Levi could rightfully serve as priest? Their vital tie to their heritage, as well as their identity as a people, had been divinely severed by God.

Peter continues quoting Joel where God says, “*I will pour out of My Spirit.*” While the NKJV rightly translates the verse, most translations neglect the little word ἀπό, which means “from” or “away from.” When used in the Genitive Case (Genitive of Source) ἀπό always means “away from” the source, which is why it is known as the “case of separation.” Therefore, what the verse literally says is “*I will pour out from (away from) My Spirit.*” Here the Spirit is named as the source from which God would pour something out. This, then, is the genitive of source case. The text DOES NOT say “*I will pour out My Spirit.*” On the contrary, it says, “*I will pour out ἀπό (from, away from, of) My Spirit*” (ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου). The preposition ἀπό used with the genitive is an ablatival genitive marker.

*“ἀπό’ has the primary sense of ‘off,’ ‘away,’ ‘from,’ ‘having properly the notion of being apart, the being separated by an interval of distance...”<sup>2</sup>*

Again, and it cannot be stressed enough: God is not saying He would pour out His Spirit. He is saying He would pour OUT FROM His Spirit. Something would be poured out FROM His Spirit (the source). Therefore, the phrases in Acts 2:17, 18, should read (respectively): “...*I will pour out from My Spirit*” (2:17) and “*I will pour out from My Spirit*” (2:18).

Just what, exactly, would God pour out? The same passage tells us: “*on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall PROPHECY, Your young men shall see VISIONS, Your old men shall dream DREAMS. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out of My Spirit in those days; And they shall PROPHECY.*” The “*all flesh*” has to be limited by the context. How do we know? Because “*all flesh*” does not mean upon animals (1 Cor. 15:39). Nor does it mean upon the entire world, or all people (i.e., for the world is comprised of sinners, unbelievers – the lost!) Therefore, “*all flesh*” is directly related to both Jew and Gentile (see Acts 2:39, which will be addressed shortly). We do know, however, that “*all flesh*” includes, “*Your sons and your daughters*”; “*Your young men*”; “*Your old men*”; and, “*My menservants*” and “*My maidservants.*” We know, therefore, that the promise of miraculous ability was for more than just the apostles, who had just been baptized in the Holy Spirit based upon the promise of Jesus. Joel’s promise of miraculous ability was for young and old, male and female, free or slave, Jew and Gentile. No distinction is made with regard to the giving of miraculous power that would come OUT FROM the Spirit.

The miraculous ability that was promised consisted of prophesy, visions, and dreams. We can readily see that individuals of the early church had miraculous abilities (1 Cor. 11-14; Eph. 4:8-15; cf. Acts 21:9-10; Gal. 3:5; Rom. 1:11; Acts 8:13-19), and miraculous power was distributed as Acts 2:17-18 declares – to young and old, men and women, free or slave, Jew and Gentile. The promise of miraculous power is the foundation of Joel’s promise. Therefore, we must understand, going forward, that the promise here is about miraculous power coming OUT FROM the Holy Spirit. This is the promise Peter is both quoting, and applying, on the Day of Pentecost.

Certain phrases such as “poured out,” “fallen upon,” or “shed forth” are metaphors (figures of speech) describing how first century folk received

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, G. (n.d.). A Treatise on the Greek Prepositions, and on the Cases of Nouns with which These are Used (p. 174).

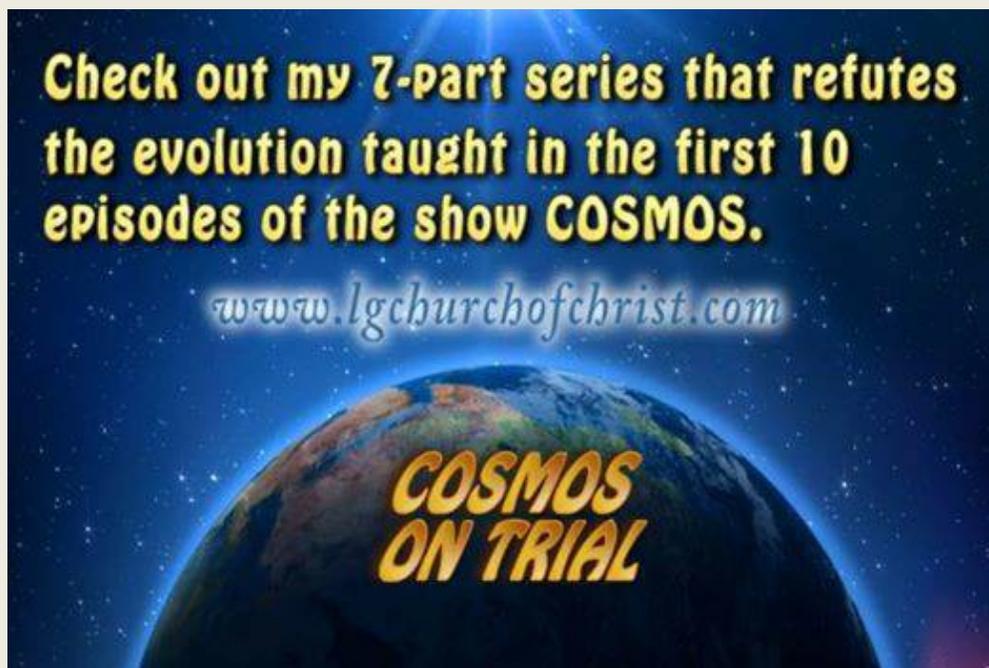
miraculous power from the Spirit. We also note that the phrase “poured out” is equivalent to “fell upon” (Acts 10:44-45) and “fallen upon” (Acts 8:16), describing the reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 8:17).

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# Phoebe: A “Deaconess”? (Part 1)

**Tim Bench**

Abilene, Texas

The character, identity, and role of “Phoebe” from the Book of Romans has for many years spawned a plethora of discussions on an array of topics; these typically center around the role(s) that Phoebe, and women in general, filled in the first century church and, subsequently, the roles women are to fill in today’s church, as well. Discussions regarding Phoebe are often specifically centered around the moniker “deaconess,” assigned to her in Romans 16:1 in several translations of the Bible (multiple other translations use differing wording than “deaconess”).

The purpose of this brief study is to analyze specifics on what the New Testament tells us that the role of women within churches is to be; thus, we will attempt to ascertain whether or not “deaconess” is an accurate descriptor for Phoebe. Broader questions for discussion might include the following:

1. Are women allowed, as per New Testament instruction, to hold leadership roles within the modern church (i.e. a “deacon-level role)?
2. Was Phoebe a female “deacon” in the first century church?
3. Has this term garnered support over the past few years as more and more denominations have allowed women to acquire leadership roles in churches?
4. Where does the term “deaconess” even come from, and is it Biblical?

Scholars, theologians, church historians, and the like are often divided on this issue. Some hold the position that “deaconesses” are authorized in the New Testament, while others argue that it is questionable, and still others suggest that there is no authority in the New Testament for deaconesses. Acceptance of the role of “deaconess” often serves as the basis for an ever-expanding list of “acceptable” roles for women in modern churches; if a woman can serve as a “deaconess,” after all, what would prevent her from serving as an elder, or even

preacher?

As with all things, the scriptures are sufficient to address these questions and to instruct us in righteousness, so that we might be “*furnished completely unto every good work*”<sup>1</sup> (2 Tim. 3:16-17). A calm and deliberate study of the Bible on this, or any other issue, will also allow us to avoid all-too-common modern vitriol when discussing gender-based topics, such as those which argue that “restrictions on women serving in the church were only cultural for the times,” or “restrictions on women in churches are just sexist and legalistic.”

## Various Brotherhood Views

Perhaps a bit surprisingly, over the years there have been prominent church of Christ writers, historians, and preachers – some very well known – who have differed on this “deaconess” issue.

Tolbert Fanning provided an excellent example:

*“In the primitive churches there were also deaconesses, as Phoebe—the servant-deaconess in Cenchreae.”*<sup>2</sup>

*“The Sisters, beyond all question, were as legitimately deacons as the brethren. Paul said, ‘I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who is a deacon/servant of the church at Cenchrea.’ The Apostle, not only recommended the brethren at Rome to receive her as a deacon of her church as becomes saints, but to ‘assist her in whatsoever business she had need of them...’ The ministering to the Savior by these Galilean women (Mt 27:55) evinced the strongest faith and an earnestness of life seldom witnessed. They were deacons, or ministers, to Jesus Christ in the most expressive way.”*<sup>3</sup>

Moses Lard penned the following:

*“Phoebe was a servant of the church in Cenchrea. This much is actually asserted. Was she appointed to the service by the church, or did she assume it of herself? The question is not material. For*

1 All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

2 “Church Officers, No.3: Deacons,” Gospel Advocate, 1859, p. 83.

3 “The Church of Christ in History, No. 8,” Religious Historian, December 1873, p. 357

*whether she assumed the service of her own accord or was appointed to it, she performed it with the Apostle's sanction. This stamps it right... I am therefore of the opinion that Phoebe was a deaconess in the official sense of that word.*"<sup>4</sup>

Not surprisingly, in an issue of "Faith Matters," the bulletin from Woodmont Hills Church, Rubel Shelly:

*"In closing his epistle to the Romans, Paul sent personal greetings to several people who had been 'a great help' to him; there are eight women named in Romans 16:1-16. The first one named was the person who appears to have carried the epistle to Rome for him, 'Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea.' The word 'servant' is the Greek term in feminine form that is used of deacons in the New Testament literature. Many biblical scholars believe there was a female order of deacons in the first century. Among those in our own heritage who have subscribed to this view are Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Moses Lard, and Robert Milligan."*

C. G. Caldwell, Sr., had this to say on the matter:

*"...the fact remains that much work of the church is dependent upon women; and it is a fact well-known to preachers, elders, and all observant Christians that, generally speaking, the women of the church are more actively interested, more faithful to duty, and more deeply spiritual than most men. The work they do is usually done promptly and efficiently, while we are often prone to neglect, postpone, and sometimes shamefully ignore important duties and responsibilities which are ours. In my rather lengthy experience as a gospel preacher, the help and encouragement I have received from the good women of the church, has succored and sustained me through many trying and discouraging experiences. Whether we call them 'deaconesses' or 'servants,' or whether we refer to them simply as 'sisters,' there is much and lasting good they can do, and have done in generations past, for the promotion and advancement of the cause of Christ."*<sup>5</sup>

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4 Lard, M. (n.d.). A Commentary on Romans (p. 451). Delight, AR.: Gospel Light Publishing Company.

5 "The Divine Organization Of The Church", C. G. Caldwell, Sr., 11-7-1957, Gospel Guardian.

Here is what James Burton Coffman offered on the subject:

*“But isn't Phoebe called a deaconess (Romans 16:1)? Yes, indeed; but policemen are also called deacons of God (Romans 13:4), the Greek word being the same in both cases (except for the gender)...In this connection, it is proper to note that if Paul had meant these women to be installed as 'deaconesses' he certainly knew the word and would have referred to them in this passage by their proper title. The New Testament word 'apostle' is used in its both official and limited sense and also in a secondary and more general sense when applied to men like Barnabas and Silas, who were not, strictly speaking, 'apostles.' The view here is that 'deaconess' as applied to Phoebe, in the same manner, does not mean that she was officially a deacon in the church of the Lord. It should always be remembered that deaconess translates the Greek word for 'servant,' and that, for centuries, the translators have rendered the word "deacon" only when the official church office was meant. But in the case of Romans 13:4 and Romans 16:1, they usually rendered it 'servant.' That is the way the KJV renders both places; and the gratuitous injection of the official title DEACON into Romans 16:1 in some subsequent versions is absolutely incorrect and misleading.*

*If churches were commanded to appoint women deacons, where is the record of it, either in the New Testament or in the custom of the historical church? When women deacons are appointed, they are appointed without divine authority and with no adequate list of qualifications to serve as guidelines for their appointment. If 1 Timothy 3:11 is to be construed as the standard for appointing women deacons, why, it may be inquired, did Paul list fifteen qualifications for elders, and four for so-called deaconesses? Such a view simply does not make sense.”<sup>6</sup>*

David Duester provided the following thoughts:

*“Paul’s usage of the phrase, 'our sister,' identifies the way in which Phoebe is addressed. She is identified as a member of the church in Cenchrea. She is then referred to as a 'servant' identifying the work she extended to the church where she was an active, caring member.*

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<sup>6</sup> Coffman, J. (n.d.). 1 Timothy overview - James Burton Coffman Commentaries on the Bible.

*Being a 'servant of the church' no more implies that one is a formal appointee than the expression does in Colossians 1:25, where Paul is said to be the church's servant. To select a person for a certain work does not necessarily make him an officer in the common acceptation of the term any more than selecting a song leader makes him an appointed deacon of the congregation. Likewise, selecting certain women to attend certain duties does not make them deaconesses in the official sense which many conclude.”<sup>7</sup>*

And, finally, from Howard Daniel Denham, from the “Truth Bible Institute,” provided the following insight:

*“All together some form of diakonos is used 30 times. The only passage in which it is translated by some as 'deaconess' is indeed Romans 16:1, because it stands in the feminine gender. However, that alone does not justify the translation of 'deaconess.' There is an assumption made by some that in the first century there was a specific office for such women. The evidence is woefully weak, and insufficient to force a meaning not demanded by either the word itself or its context here. The term diakonos had both a generic and specific meaning, as many terms frequently possessed. The generic meaning of 'servant' or 'minister' (with the idea being that found in Matthew 20:26), derived from the etymological root meaning of 'one who serves tables,' is the most common one in the Greek testament, and without doubt is the best idea involved in the Romans 16:1 text.”*

Differing viewpoints exist OUTSIDE the church of Christ, as well. From a Methodist's viewpoint we read:

*“In the apostolic age, some grave and pious women were appointed deaconesses in every church. It was their office, not to teach publicly, but to visit the sick, the women in particular, and to minister to them both in their temporal and spiritual necessities.”<sup>8</sup>*

I find it rather unfortunate that Wesley chose to use the word “office” in his statement, for Paul is not stressing office but service...

<sup>7</sup> Duester, D. (n.d.). "What does the Bible say about Deaconesses?" <<http://www.ourgoodfight.com>>.

<sup>8</sup> Wesley, J. (n.d.). The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Vol. 10, p. 161).

From the “Catholic Encyclopedia” we read the following:

*“We can not be sure that any formal recognition of deaconesses as an institution of consecrated women aiding the clergy is to be found in the New Testament. There is indeed the mention of Phebe (Rom., xvi, 1), who is called diakonos, but this may simply mean, as the Vulgate renders it, that she was 'in the ministry [i.e. service] of the Church,' without implying any official status.”*

And, finally, from William Barclay:

*"Sometimes she is called a deaconess, but it is not likely that she held what might be called an official position in the Church."<sup>9</sup>*

It becomes clear very quickly that this topic has been a substantive issue for many years.

In next month's installment we will proceed to analyze the text and seek to determine the truth, according to the Bible, concerning Pheobe.

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<sup>9</sup> Barclay, W. (n.d.). The Letter to the Romans. In *The Daily Study Bible Series* (p. 207).



## SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

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# God is There for You

**Cougan Collins**

Lone Grove, Oklahoma

It is easy to get caught up in living life. Like everyone else in this world, we wake up, go to work, take care of the house, go to school, etc. We can become so focused on the joys and sorrows of this life that we tend to forget about God and what He can do for us. As Christians, we must be careful not to allow the weeds and the thorns of this world to choke us out and keep us from God.

I want you to think about the last three days of your life. In the last three days, how focused have you been on God and living for Him? Have you been a good example? Have you taken time to read God's Word? Have you looked for opportunities to glorify God, or have you only looked for opportunities to glorify yourself?

Sometimes we need to sit down and take a break from life and consider if we are doing the right things, and to see if our priorities are straight. As Paul said in Second Corinthians 13:5, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified.*"<sup>1</sup> There is certainly nothing wrong with living life in general, but when we make it our priority, and we push God further and further away, then we are setting ourselves up for failure.

The children of Israel struggled with having the right priority, but I want you to notice an excerpt from Isaiah about how God encouraged and reminded them that He is there for them and, could do great things for them.

**Isaiah 41:8** *"But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. [9] You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: [10] Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' [11] "Behold, all those who were incensed against you Shall be ashamed*

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

*and disgraced; They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish. [12] You shall seek them and not find them -- Those who contended with you. Those who war against you Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing. [13] For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.' [14] "Fear not, you worm Jacob, You men of Israel! I will help you," says the LORD And your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*

This chapter continues on, talking about what God will do for His people. We need to be reminded of this same principle because God loves us, too. If He did not, He certainly would not have given us His Son, just so He could live like us and be crucified as the perfect sacrifice, so we could be reconciled to God.

Every person who turns to God by obeying His plan of salvation becomes part of the new Israel, which includes Jews and Gentiles alike. All Christians are God's chosen people. We are His servants, and He is our Master. He will never leave us nor forsake us because we belong to Him. Since God is with us, we should not become discouraged about what happens in life. If we put our trust in God, He will sustain us, and we can draw strength from Him. As Paul said in Philippians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

I want you to notice verse 13 from Isaiah one more time: *"For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'" (Isa. 41:13).* I love this verse because it shows how compassionate our God is, as He is pictured as holding our right hand and telling us not to fear, because He is with us. God truly is our Redeemer. So, let us never forget that God is always there for us, and that we are a priority to Him. In the same manner, we should always make God the number one priority in our lives. As Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

I want to close with these encouraging words from Paul, in Romans 8:38-39, *"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."*

# Biblical Exegesis (Part 1)

**Robert Alexander**

DeFuniak Springs, Florida

The term exegesis is a word that very few Christians are familiar with; but, whether they realize it or not, has played a significant role not only in their conversion, but also in their continuing faithfulness to the Lord. Exegesis is a concept that all Christians should be concerned with (especially preachers of the gospel of Christ) because it deals with how one comes to a proper, and even better, understanding of God's word, and how one makes the proper application of God's word to his life. In this series of articles we will look at the necessity of exegesis, the definition of exegesis (what it is; what it is not; and, how it differs from, and relates to, hermeneutics), the perversion of exegesis (eisegesis, and how it is committed), and the implementation of exegesis (methods, tools and attitudes that are necessary).

## The Necessity of Exegesis

First, Biblical exegesis is necessary because God demands that His word be preached. Christ commanded His disciples, as well as Christians today, to “*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*”<sup>1</sup> (Mk. 16:15). The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (2 Tim. 4:2). The Greek word translated “preach” in both texts is “κηρύσσω,” and is defined as “*to publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done; used of the proclamation of the gospel and matters pertaining to it.*”<sup>2</sup> Further, the “proclamation” God requires involves a specific message, with a specific content, and that content is His word (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:27). Yet, in order to proclaim the word of God to others, there must first be an understanding of God's word.

Second, Biblical exegesis is necessary because God's word must be understood. Scott Crawford has an excellent article titled “Understandest What Thou Readest?” elsewhere in this edition of *The Keys of the Kingdom*, and I encourage you to read his article in connection with this particular point. How can the hearer understand God's word if the proclaimer doesn't understand God's word properly? The answer is: they cannot. Thus, in order for the preaching to be

1 All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

2 Thayer, Joseph H. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament electronic edition, e-Sword

accomplished that God requires, the teacher/preacher, himself, must first understand what God has communicated. This is critical because God has affirmed that one can understand His word – that which is *the truth* and, and that which makes men free (Jn. 8:32), but only when it has been heard, believed (Rom. 10:17), and obeyed.

Third, Biblical exegesis is necessary because God demands that His word be “*handled aright*”. Paul exhorted Timothy to “*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright (rightly dividing—KJV) the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15 - ASV). The phrase “*handling aright*” or “*rightly dividing*” is from the Greek word “ὀρθοτομοῦντα” (the present and active participle of “ὀρθοτομέω”), and is defined as to “*cut straight, to proceed on straight paths, hold a straight course, to make straight and smooth, to handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly.*”<sup>3</sup> The principle stated here might be illustrated in the form of a farmer plowing straight furrows in the field, or a tent maker making straight cuts through cloth, or a mason making straight cuts in stone.<sup>4</sup> To go off course is to injure that material with which one is working. Contextually, to stray from the straight teaching of God’s word is to “veer off course” and “injure” or “pervert” the Scriptures. From this verse there are several facts to be gleaned in connection with the topic of exegesis as it relates directly to “*handling aright the word of truth.*”

1. The salvation of one’s soul is dependent upon being found approved by God.
2. Being approved of God is an urgent matter (which involves giving diligence, which is the thrust of the Greek word “σπουδάζω” translated in the ASV as “give diligence,” yet in practical matter the translation “study” by the KJV is certainly included in being a diligent workman).
3. One presents himself or herself approved unto God by measuring, or examining, themselves in light of God’s will (His word). Thus, in order to do so, one must know what is His will, and then make proper application thereof.
4. In order to be presented unto God, and approved of God, one must “handle aright” the word of truth, which necessitates proper exegesis. The context of this particular verse makes the need for proper exegesis even

<sup>3</sup> Thayer, Joseph H. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament electronic edition, e-Sword

<sup>4</sup> Robertson, A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament electronic edition, e-sword

more paramount:

- The need to keep in mind the fundamentals of the faith, which involves grace, the resurrection, Christian living, etc. (v. 2-14);
  - The problem of error; the reality of those who “wrest the Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:16), and who teach “profane babblings” (false doctrine), exemplified by the false teachings of Hymenaeus and Philetus (v. 17-18), who had led some away from Christ (that is, led them away from their faith, overthrowing it (v. 18) by giving heed to such heretical teachings. Instead of handling aright the word of truth (properly exegeting the Scriptures), Hymenaeus and Alexander perverted (or eisegeted) the Scriptures to the detriment of their own souls, as well as the souls of those who heard and believed their lies.
5. Handling aright (or rightly dividing) the word of truth involves work (effort). The word “workman” is translated from the Greek “ἐργάτης,” which signifies “*a workman or laborer.*”<sup>5</sup> Necessary and proper Biblical exegesis does not just happen. It takes real effort on the part of the student of God’s word.
  6. Handling aright the word of truth, when accomplished, results in one turning not “*aside to the right hand or to the left*” (2 Kgs. 22:2). In handling aright the Scriptures, one will not veer off into “liberalism” (the left) or into “anti-ism” (the right). Thus, one who handles aright the word of truth through proper exegesis will not teach anything other than the pure, unadulterated word of God.

A great problem plaguing the Lord’s church today is a lack of exegetical preaching and teaching, which has led (and will continue leading) to departures from the faith, and a lack of Scriptural knowledge in the body of Christ (including preachers). As a result, the same spiritual condition that was manifested in the days of the prophet Hosea, when God, through the prophet, lamented: “*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge*” (Hosea 4:6), is manifested today.

Fourth, Biblical exegesis is necessary because we must be ready to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15). The phrase “be ready” in this particular verse affirms the necessity of proper preparation. One cannot give just an “off the top of the head” answer to Biblical questions. One must give a proper, Scriptural answer. This

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<sup>5</sup> Thayer, Joseph H. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament electronic edition, e-Sword

takes an understanding of what God has said regarding the question asked, and this involves study of God's word, which necessitates – yet again – proper exegesis. One who fails to engage in proper study, which necessitates exegesis, will not be able to give the right answer, which is to say, the Scriptural answer. Certainly, this verse and its phrasing makes it crystal clear that ALL Christians must do exegetical work to an extent in order to be able to answer the questions that may be asked of them.

It is my fervent prayer that the four reasons discussed above, regarding the necessity of proper exegesis of God's word, has convinced you, the reader, of the need to engage in it yourself. It is not enough to know what a passage says, but one must know what it means in order to make the proper application. Understanding the necessity of exegesis, we will move forward in seeking to define what exactly it is that we are dealing with when we talk about Biblical exegesis.

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