

One Heart



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Shepherd The Flock *Mike VonTungeln*



Mike VonTungeln attended Panhandle State University, Pepperdine University, Hawaii Pacific University. He holds a BS in Chemistry, MA in Education, and an MS in Information Systems. Mike has served as an elder for the Ridgecrest church of Christ since October, 2001.

In my forty or so years as a Christian, I have read lots of articles and heard lots of classes and sermons on the qualifications of elders but very few on the actual duties of elders. This article will examine New Testament passages directed specifically to elders. Hopefully, a later article will examine Old Testament passages directed to shepherds, and provide some suggestions on how to go about the elder's work. The scriptures quoted in this article will be from the American Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

In Acts 15, beginning with verse two, we read that the elders of the Jerusalem church were called up to help make a decision regarding whether or not Gentile converts were to be subject to the Law of Moses. Today, elders are called upon to decide questions of faith.

Unlike the elders in the Jerusalem church, today's elders are not directly guided by the Holy Spirit and cannot question the apostles directly. Today's elders must base all decisions on what is written in the scriptures. What the scriptures do or do not say on a given topic can often become a point of contention. This will be discussed later in the article.

In Act 20:28 Paul charges the elders from Ephesus to :

"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

First, he tells them to take heed unto themselves. The elders are to care for each other. Individual elders must remember that they are subject to the eldership.

What does it mean to feed the church? Letting scripture explain scripture, we read:

1 Corinthians 3:2 "I fed you with

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A Letter From a Student

By Frank R. Williams

In writing about the Oklahoma City of Biblical Studies, I have tried to convey the attitude and the desires of our students. However, it is generally expected that the Dean of students would have nothing but good words to write about the school and the students. A few weeks ago, I was grading homework papers, and inside the papers I found a letter from the student whose homework I was grading. He expresses the attitude and desires of our students far better than I ever could. The letter was unsolicited and is here used with his permission.

Sir,

I have been wanting to write this to you for some time now. Frank, I was raised in a Christian home and taught to believe in and love GOD. However, I was never taught how to study the Bible and was saturated in these survey type Bible classes. I would walk away from these classes not learning anything and sometimes feeling very frustrated and confused. I understood that it was my responsibility to learn but I did not know where to ever start. I want to thank you for teaching me how to study the Bible and how to read it with logic. Since I have started going to class there I have learned more about the word of GOD than I have in my whole adult life. I crave to want to learn more because you have taught me how to study. I am writing this with tears coming down my face because not only will I benefit from what you have taught me but my family will also because I will be able to lead them spiritually the way the LORD would have me to. My son will be light-years ahead of me when he is my age because of what I am learning now and I am so very grateful for that Frank. You are a role model and I really do appreciate you and all that you do.

Very Respectfully,

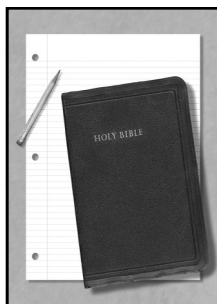
Jonathan L. Sumerlin

Jonathan is in the U.S. Air Force and is an instructor at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, OK.

As a teacher, Jonathan's words are the sweetest words I can hear, and it is true of all the other teachers at the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. Jon just happens to be in my class. It is this type of student that we are seeking to be part of the school.

To all those who help with the support of the school, here is what your support is being used for. We at the school, teachers and students, say: "Thank you!"

The Spring Classes have all been completed and more students have taken the classes for credit than ever before to my knowledge. This is something that I have worked on for the last few years. Students are now talking about graduating. The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies has not recently had a graduation event. The time is coming!



Doers of the Word

By Timothy Sparks

“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Jas. 1:22). In the immediate context, James defines doers of the word as those who “lay aside all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word” (v. 21). James further states, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (v. 25).

What is a dictionary definition of “doer”? According to Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary a “doer” is “one that takes an active part.” In athletics, a doer is one who actively participates to the best of his ability to compete. He trains with a passion because he is on a mission. A doer is not lazy, maintains a positive attitude, and contributes to the overall team effort. Now if we apply that to the body of Christ, a doer is one who takes an active part in following Christ. To ask “Who is a doer of the word?” is really the same as asking “Who is a Christian?” Both a doer of the word and a Christian is “one who follows Christ.” A follower of Christ is one who is going where Christ would go and is doing what Christ would do. Where would Jesus be going and what would Jesus be doing? Jesus came to preach the gospel (Mk. 1:38). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). If we are doers of the word, we will take an active part in leading others to Christ.

James does not limit being a doer to specific individuals in the body of Christ but commands all members to “be doers of the word.” While it is true that you, as an individual, may be a doer of the word or that I may be a doer of the word, it is not enough for God’s people collectively to ride on the coattails of

certain spiritual individuals. God wants “a team effort.” We cannot sit idly by if we are to be doers of the word.

Surely we can agree that being doers of the word requires us to be doers just as the first century Christians were doers: “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42). They took an active part in teaching people about Jesus. For us to be doers, we must teach others the gospel of Jesus Christ. When Paul states, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient” (2 Tim. 2:24), surely he does not mean that one must just be able to teach, but does not have to teach. The Greek word Paul uses means “skilful in teaching” (BAGD, 191). To become skilled in teaching the Scriptures we must teach. However, we cannot teach the Scriptures if we do not know the Scriptures. We must study the Scriptures. There is an old saying, “You cannot teach what you do not know, and you cannot lead where you will not go!” If we wish to be doers of the word, we will do well to apply to our lives Paul’s instructions to Timothy: “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the teaching. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:15-16). We must be doers of the word!

Doers do not believe that we have to have a “leveling-off place” in terms of spirituality. Peter says, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). We can be pleasing to the Lord and a joy to others today. Be doers of the word!



OKLAHOMA CITY SCHOOL
of Biblical Studies

**What Can You Do to
Help Us “Teach Others
To Teach Others”
(2 Timothy 2:2)?**

milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able (to bear it): nay, not even now are ye able;'

Hebrews 5:12 "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food."

1 Peter 2:2, "as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation;"

The milk spoken of in these passages is teaching. To feed the flock is to provide sound teaching from God's word. The elders may do this themselves or they may do it through preachers and teachers whom they appoint.

In Acts 20:29-31 Paul goes on to state:

29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

Paul warns the elders to watch out for the grievous wolves and men arising from within their own number seeking to draw away disciples after themselves. Dealing with wolves is one of the hardest and most heart-wrenching tasks the elders are faced with.

In 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul writes,

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching."

From this passage we may understand that the authority of the elders to direct the local congregation is not limited to leadership by example.

In Titus 1:10, 11, after setting forth the qualifications of elders, Paul writes,

"10 For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

Here we read that elders have the charge of silencing false teachers, another difficult and often heart-wrenching task. However, if false teachers or teachers teaching error are confronted early and in a loving

manner, they may be precluded from becoming wolves attempting to ravage the congregation.

In James 5:14 we read,

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Here the elders are to pray for the sick and to anoint them with oil. We still pray for the sick, but what about the anointing with oil? Two of the commentators I consulted, Guy N. Woods, and James Burton Coffman believed that the anointing with oil was in conjunction with miraculous healing. The third commentator, James Sheerer believed that it might have been in conjunction with miraculous healing, or it might have been for purely medicinal purposes.

The final scripture we will examine is 1 Peter 5:1-3,

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Here, Peter admonishes the elders to be shepherds of God's flock, equates this to serving as overseers, and encourages them to lead by example.

What have we learned? By command, elders are charged to take heed to themselves, feed the church, be shepherds of God's flock, and serve as examples. The scriptures also imply that elders are to protect the congregation from wolves and false teachers, rule the congregation, (The NIV translates "rule well" in 1 Timothy 5:17 as "direct the affairs of the church."), teach, and pray for the sick.

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The Thief on the Cross

By Marion R. Fox

One of the favorite passages that people use to prove that baptism is not necessary for salvation is Luke 23:43. Is the thief a pattern for the salvation of people today?

Lk. 23:42 (KJV) And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.
43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Does Jesus Implicitly Teach That The Thief Was Saved?

What does it mean when Jesus said: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."? According to Psalms 16:10 (quoted in Acts 2:31), Jesus went to Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek cf. ASV). At His death, Jesus went to Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek), but we learn from Lk. 23:43 that Jesus went to Paradise. The evil rich man (Lk. 16:23) went to Hades and was in torment, therefore part of Hades is not Paradise. From this, we conclude that paradise is either the same as Hades, it contains Hades, or Hades contains Paradise. (Further study reveals that Hades [the abode of the dead] has two parts: torment [also called Tartarus – 2 Pet. 2:4] and paradise.)

An admission that the thief was saved does not prove that baptism is not essential for salvation (after the cross). It cannot be proven that the thief was not baptized (of John's baptism) prior to the events of Luke 23:43. Many Jews were baptized of John's baptism (Mt. 3:5-6). John baptized multitudes (Lk. 3:7). All the people (a hyperbole) were baptized by John (Lk. 7:29).

The words (of Lk. 23:43) were spoken before Jesus died (before the Great Commission was given to the apostles) and before the Great Commission baptism went into effect (Mt. 28:18-20, Mk. 16:15-16, etc.).

When did the Law of Moses end and the New Covenant begin? Jesus took it away by His blood (Col. 2:13-14). A very important question is: Did the New Covenant begin the moment that Jesus died, or did it begin when the New Covenant was revealed (Acts 2)? How could people be responsible to a law that had not yet been revealed? It is apparent that the New Testament went into effect with the preaching of the apostles

(under The Great Commission [Isa. 2:2-4]).

If the New Covenant went into effect in Acts 2, then the thief died under the Law of Moses. (If the thief died under the Law of Moses, then his salvation is not a pattern for us today.) If we claim that we can be saved by the means that the thief was saved, we must: (1) Express words of comfort to Jesus while He is upon the cross (not possible today), (2) Hear the words from the mouth of Jesus (not possible today), and (3) Be under the Law of Moses (no one has been under the Law of Moses since Acts 2). In short, we cannot duplicate the conditions under which the thief was forgiven. Since we cannot duplicate these conditions, the thief is not a pattern for the salvation of 21st Century people.

Hermeneutical Principles Involved in Answering These Questions

The first hermeneutical principle is to ask: "Who is being spoken to?" Clearly, Jesus is only making this promise to the thief. No passage can be found that makes these same conditions universally binding conditions for salvation. The wording of Luke 23:43 does not make this promise universal.

The second hermeneutical principle is to ask: "What dispensation was the one being spoken to living under?" (Obviously he was under the Law of Moses, not the New Testament.) A failure to apply this hermeneutical principle has led to a number of doctrinal errors.

God is No Respector of Persons (Acts 10:34)

Peter clearly stated this principle in Acts 10:34. Other passages teach this principle (both explicitly and implicitly). If God saved people by different means, He would be a respector of persons. God is good and having respect of persons is not good (Pro. 24:23). There is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11). It is a sin to have respect of persons (Jas. 2:9).

Even God cannot disannul His promises and laws (Gal. 3:15-17). If God cannot disannul His covenant,

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then even God cannot change his conditions of salvation for the Children of Israel until they were given a New Covenant. The Law of Moses brought remission of sins (Lev. 4:20, 26, etc. - we recognize that it was still contingent upon the blood of Christ).

Some ask questions like: "What about passages that teach that Jesus had the power to arbitrarily forgive sins? (cf. Mk. 2:10, Lk. 7:48, 19:9, etc.)" In response to this question we note: (1) If Jesus gave forgiveness in ways different than the Law of Moses (while the Law was in effect), he would be a respecter of persons. (2) If Jesus gave forgiveness in ways different than the Law of Moses (while the Law was in effect), he would be violating the Law of God. (Remember no true prophet taught anything contrary to the Scriptures that the people possessed [Deut. 13:5]). Jesus came to reveal the will of God (Jn. 6:38) and much of what He taught only applied after the cross.

A Consideration of the Baptism of John

John's baptism was preached by both John, Jesus, and the apostles – before the cross. After the cross the apostles preached The Great Commission baptism.

What was the purpose of John's baptism? John's baptism was for remission of sins (Mk. 1:4 and Lk. 3:3). The Holy Spirit used the same words: *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν* (unto remission of sins – ASV or for remission of sins - KJV), in Mk. 1:4, Lk. 3:3, Mt. 26:28, and Acts 2:38. We cannot reject the fact that John's baptism promised remission of sins in Mk. 1:4 and Lk. 3:3 without rejecting the same point in Mt. 26:28 (the blood was shed for remission of sins) and Acts 2:38 (the Great Commission baptism was for remission of sins). John's preaching (and therefore his baptism) was also designed to prepare the way of the Lord (the way of Jesus – Mk. 1:3 and Lk. 3:4).

John's baptism had other requirements for the remission of sins. First, John required that they repent (both before being baptized and after being baptized – in the event that they sinned after they were baptized [Mk. 1:4 and Lk. 3:3]). Second, John's baptism also required that they believe on the Messiah (the Christ) after they were baptized (Acts 19:4). We know that no one actually received remission of sins until the blood of Jesus was shed (Mt. 26:28). This passage (Acts 19:4) reveals

that they had to accept Jesus as the Messiah to have remission of sins.

Other Things Implicitly Taught Regarding the Thief on the Cross

Let us consider some things implicitly taught regarding the thief on the cross and some others in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. First, no person could be saved who rejected the counsel of God (Lk. 7:30). Had the thief or those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, etc. rejected the counsel of God? Clearly, if they had not rejected the counsel of God, they must have been baptized of John's baptism. If they rejected the counsel of God, and Jesus saved them, then He was a respecter of persons not to save the others also without John's baptism. (If this were true, then rejecting the counsel of God is not such a bad thing.)

Second, the thief had obviously heard the preaching of either: John, Jesus, or Jesus' disciples. The thief knew that Jesus was sinless (Lk. 23:41). The thief knew of the kingdom of God (Lk. 23:42). The thief called Jesus "Lord" (Lk. 23:42). The thief both repented (Lk. 23:41) and demonstrated that he believed Jesus to be the Christ. Therefore he fulfilled one of the requirements of Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 and the requirement of Acts 19:4. If he had been baptized, then he had fulfilled all of John's requirements for remission of sins.

Logical Arguments Relating to the Thief on the Cross

Here we introduce a series of logical arguments that demonstrate (by implication) that the thief and those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, etc. were baptized of John's baptism. First, let us consider some questions that clarify my arguments:

Did Jesus sin? Answer: No (1 Pet. 2:22).

Did Jesus violate the Law of Moses? Answer: No (1 Pet. 2:22).

Did the Law of Moses provide for remission of sins? Answer: Yes (Lev. 4:20, 26, etc.).

Did John the baptist promise remission of sins? Answer: Yes (Mk. 1:4 and Lk. 3:30).

Was there any actual remission of sins before the

cross? Answer: No (Heb. 10:4 and 11).

Was there actual remission of sins by means of John's baptism before the cross? Answer: No (Heb. 10:4, 11, and Acts 19:4).

Second let us consider some syllogistic arguments that prove that those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. were baptized. My first argument is based upon the righteous nature of God.

If God is righteous, then God will judge all by the same standard.

God is righteous.

God will judge all by the same standard.

Now we will include this conclusion in another argument.

If God will judge all by the same standard, then those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. will be judged by the same standard as other Jews.

God will judge all by the same standard.

Those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. will be judged by the same standard as other Jews.

My second argument is based upon the conclusion of this first argument.

If Jesus forgave the sins of those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. by another standard other than he forgave other Jews, then Jesus will not judge those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. by the same standard as other Jews.

Jesus will judge those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. by the same standard as other Jews.

Jesus did not forgive sins of those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. by another standard other than he forgave other Jews

My third argument contains some additional notes that help to clarify this argument: (1) All Jews before the cross were under the Law of Moses and (2) The baptism of John (including the baptism administered by Jesus before the cross) was only in effect after the cross. This baptism ceased to be practiced after the cross because it required belief in the Messiah after the baptism. This baptism was replaced by The Great Commission baptism (which required belief in the Christ before baptism).

Logical Argument Set Forth by Calvinists

Many Calvinists make the following argument (in logical form) to support their claim that baptism is not essential to one's salvation. Their main argument is:

If God is righteous and He saved by faith without baptism in Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc., then God will save others by faith without baptism.

God is righteous and He saved by faith without baptism in Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc.

God will save others by faith without baptism.

When we apply transposition (contraposition) to their first premise we obtain the following premise:

If God will not save others by faith without baptism, then either God is not righteous or God will not save by faith without baptism.

God is righteous. (Axiomatic)

God will not save others by faith without baptism. (This means that those of Mk. 2:10, Lk. 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. were not saved without the baptism of John.)

Clearly, the Scriptures implicitly teach that those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. were baptized of John's baptism.

Conclusion

Some denominational people want to be saved in the manner that the thief on the cross was saved. It is evident that he lived and died under the Law of Moses which ended with the coming of the New Testament. Some members of the Lord's church have claimed that Jesus had the right to arbitrarily forgive sins. It is evident that even God cannot violate His own law; therefore Jesus was limited to the Scriptures when He forgave sin.

It is evident that those of Mark 2:10, Luke 7:48, 19:9, 23:43, etc. were baptized of John's baptism and they received their guarantee of remission of sins when they accepted that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) and fulfilled the requirements set forth by John the baptist.



Preachers' Methods: Study of the Scriptures (2)

by J.W. McGarvey (1829-1911) taken from lectures on "Preachers' Methods"

The study of the Bible by books is involved, to a large extent, in the method of study just named, and especially is this true of the historical books. But a man may acquire a good knowledge of events recorded in a historical book without having studied the book as a book--without, in other words, having given attention to the specific design of the book, as to the plan on which it is constructed. No one understands a book until he has done this. And in regard to the books which are not historical, while the student of sacred history may have gleaned the facts mentioned in these, and may have given the book itself and the author of it their proper place in the procession of biblical events, he may as yet have learned very little of what the book contains. When we have gleaned, for example, the historical facts embodied in the book of Job, in the Psalms, in Proverbs, in any of the prophets or in any of the epistles, how much remains that is yet to be learned? How much, too, that is, if possible, of more importance than the facts--matter to which the facts sustain only such a relation as does the scaffold to the building, or the golden framework to the gem which glitters within its embrace. In order to reach and gather this rich fruitage of Bible knowledge, every single book in the Bible must be made, in the course of a preacher's life, a subject of minute and patient study.

The method of studying a single book is simple and obvious. It requires that we first obtain a general conception of its design and its contents. This is obtained by reading it for that special purpose.

This prepares the way for the second step, which is to ascertain the general divisions of the book, together with the aim and contents of each. When this is accomplished the framework of the book, showing the plan on which it is constructed, is distinctly before the mind, and we are prepared for the more minute examination of its particular parts. While reading it for these purposes, we will usually have formed some acquaintance with its historical connections, such as the time and circumstances under which it was written, and the influences at work upon the mind of the author. Next follows an exegetical study of every part by sentences and paragraphs. Much of this information can be obtained by reading an introduction to the book, but this is to obtain information at second hand

-- a process never to be adopted by a student except when the original sources are beyond his reach. Read introductions after you have studied the books and not before. Thus read, they may correct or modify your own conclusions, but read in advance they may mislead you and at best you are not able to judge of their correctness.

In addition to the study of Bible books separately, many of them should be studied in groups, according to their subject-matter, or the time of their composition. For example, the books containing the scattered statutes of the Mosaic law are a group by themselves; the prophets before the captivity, the prophets of the captivity, and the prophets after the captivity are three other groups. In the New Testament the four Gospels are a group having common subject-matter, and yet John's Gospel, if grouped according to time, would stand with his three epistles and the Apocalypse, as the latest writings of the New Testament. In like manner the apostolic Epistles should be studied in groups according to the time of their composition. Only in this way can we have before our minds the state of society which was before the minds of the writers, and possess the key to the vivid appreciation of these writings which these circumstances alone can furnish.

The study of the Scriptures by topics is the third method which I have named. While prosecuting the methods already mentioned, a general knowledge of leading topics will have been obtained; but the preacher should never be satisfied with a general knowledge of any topic treated in the Bible. Detached pieces of information are never satisfying, and they are very likely to prove misleading. Complete, systematic and exact information is what our calling demands, and this we must as soon as possible acquire.

I know of no method by which such a knowledge of topics can be acquired less laborious than the following: First, by means of your recollection from former readings, and by use of your Concordance, gather up all the passages which treat of the subject in hand, or which throw any light upon it. Second, classify these passages according to the different branches of the subject with which they are connected. The branches of the subject are often known in a general way before the investigation begins. They have come into notice by inquiries of your own mind, or they have been made familiar by religious controversy. When the di-

visions thus suggested are but a part, the passages themselves will suggest the remainder, so that there will seldom appear any difficulty in completely classifying the collected passages and obtaining exhaustive subdivisions of the topic. The next step is to arrange the thoughts and facts under each branch of the subject in some natural order of sequence, and thus obtain a systematic view of it as it stands in the Scriptures. Finally, the parts must be studied with reference to one another and the whole; and the whole must be studied with reference to all its parts. When this is done you are prepared, and not till then, to write or speak on the subject or any of its parts with the assurance of one who understands fully what he proposes to say.

This is a laborious process. It is one which only the few have the industry to pursue; but the few who do pursue it are the masters in Israel, they are the teachers of teachers; while those who lack this industry must remain contented with very imperfect knowledge, and must obtain their knowledge in the main at second-hand. I suppose myself to be addressing men who wish to rank with the former of these two classes. It may be well to add, however, that a young preacher, in the beginning of his ministry must necessarily discuss some subject before he can have had time and opportunity for this exhaustive study; but all such should remember that this necessity is one of the disabilities of inexperience which must be put away as soon as possible.

In the last place, I am to speak of studying the Scriptures devotionally. The preacher who has not a devotional spirit, lacks the chief elements of power with the people both in the pulpit and out of it. He is utterly incapable of cultivating a devotional spirit in his hearers; and without this the entire service of the church becomes an empty form. No man who is to lead the people in the way of life can afford to neglect this element of the Christian character, this source of religious enjoyment, this element of pulpit power. Apart from frequent prayer and much meditation, there is no way to cultivate this spirit except by the thoughtful reading of those portions of Scripture which are especially designed to awaken devotional sentiments. The preacher, therefore, should study these portions a great deal. They should be in his hand every day.

When we speak of devotional parts of the Scriptures, the mind turns at once to the book of Psalms; for in it are collected the richest poetic effusions of pious hearts throughout the period of Jewish inspiration, from Moses to the poets of Babylonian captivity.

But only a certain portion of these is well adapted to the cultivation of devotion. Some of them are descriptive, some didactic, and a few are vindictive, giving utterance to that sentiment of the Mosaic law which allowed the demand of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By frequent reading of all the Psalms, the preacher will make himself acquainted with those which contain pure devotional feeling according to the Christian standard, and these should be his sources of inspiration.

But besides the Psalms, there are many passages in Job, in Ecclesiastes, in Proverbs, in the prophets, and even in the historical books of the Old Testament, the study of which lifts up the soul to the loftiest sentiments, while in the New Testament, which contains not a single book of poetry, there are passages in the Gospel, in Acts, in the Epistles, and in the Apocalypse, fully equal to the sublimest poetry for filling the soul with every holy emotion. The preacher, while studying the Scriptures historically, by books and by topics, will have found all these passages. He should mark them as he discovers them, and should subsequently revert to them, for devotional reading until both their contents and their places in the book became familiar to him.

In order to the best effect upon our hearts, our devotional study should not consist in a mere dreamy reading of the parts referred to; for in this way the impression made is likely to be shallow and transitory. We should study these passages exegetically, searching into the significance of every figure employed, and trying to paint before imagination's eye every image projected by the writer. If we read, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," we do not feel full force of the metaphor until we learn all about the work of a Palestine shepherd, as it is alluded to throughout this Psalm, and as it is literally described by Jesus in the tenth chapter of John. So of all the metaphors, tropes and historical allusions throughout the poetry of the Bible.

But the best effects of devotional study will still lie beyond our reach, if we do not commit many of these inspiring passages to memory, so that we can meditate upon them in the night watches, call them up amid our labors and our journeyings, and make them subjects of conversation when the Bible is not at hand. It is in this way that the word of God is to dwell in us richly in all wisdom. If you will inquire you will find it almost universally true of men and women eminent for piety, that their Memories were vast storehouses for the most precious portions of God's Holy Book. ...



WORD STUDIES

Hell & Hades: Vague Translation vs. Transliteration

by Benjamin J. Williams

One common criticism of older translations is the translation of the Greek word ᾠδης (*hades*) as “hell.” A simple example would come from the King James translation of the Pentecost sermon:

Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thayer defines this Greek word as:

- 1) name Hades or Pluto, the god of the lower regions
- 2) Orcus, the nether world, the realm of the dead
- 3) later use of this word: the grave, death, hell

Strong explains that the Greek term etymologically comes from the negative alpha prefix and the root word εἶδω which means to know, perceive, or see. Literally, the term meant a place not seen or unknown. In secular Greek literature, the term is used to describe the place of the dead in Greek mythology. It was neither punitive nor paradise. It was simply the unseen realm. Strong suggests that the term is “properly unseen, that is, ‘Hades’ or the place (state) of departed souls: - grave, hell.”

To solidify this meaning of the term, we are blessed by the fact that this verse is a quotation from the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10). In the Psalms, the Hebrew word *sheol* is used. Brown *et al.* define this word as:

- 1) *sheol*, underworld, grave, hell, pit: a) the underworld, b) Sheol - the OT designation for the abode of the dead ...

The reason for this discussion is in confusion of the modern usage of the word English word “hell”. The common modern understanding of the English word “hell” is a lake of fire, synonymous with the second death (Rev. 21:8). However odd as it may seem, this definition is not always reflected as the first definition in even modern English dictionaries. For example, Meriam-Websters Online Dictionary offers the following as the first two definitions of “hell”:

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English; akin to Old English *helan* to conceal, Old High German *helan*, Latin *celare*, Greek *kalyptein*

Date: before 12th century

1 a (1) : a nether world in which the dead continue

to exist : *hades* (2) : the nether realm of the devil and the demons in which the damned suffer everlasting punishment ...

2 a : a place or state of misery, torment, or wickedness ... b : a place or state of turmoil or destruction ... c : a severe scolding; also : flak, grief ... d : unrestrained fun or sportiveness ... especially to suggest action on impulse or without a serious motive ... e : an extremely unpleasant and often inescapable situation ...

To this day, dictionaries associate the term “hell” with an unseen realm of the dead, specifically associated with Hades. Second to that, the term is associated with the abode of the Devil and everlasting punishment.

So, what is the proper way to deal with this Greek term? The answer diverges along two schools of thought. The older translators tried to find a suitable English word to match up with the Greek term in question. Finding few English equivalents to “the unseen realm of the dead”, they opted for the nearest term, “hell.” Modern translators, intent on improving on this vague translation, have transliterated the term, taking the Greek letters to create a new English word — Hades. Like gopher wood, behemoth, or leviathan, we are left with novel new words to replace older vague words! It sounds better, but in terms of translation, is a little like cheating.

So, while the English transliteration “Hades” may be a little less confusing to modern ears, cut the old translators a little slack the next time you read the word “hell.” No one has done any better to find a legitimate English word in 400 years!

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Course Schedule for Fall '10

August 17 - December 7

1st Quarter: August 17 — October 5

2nd Quarter: October 12 — December 7

No classes November 23 for Fall Break

| 1st Quarter | Introductory Courses | Upper Division Courses |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1st Period 6:30-8:30 PM* | 1 & 2 Peter Frank R. Williams | Galatians Marion R. Fox |
| 2nd Period 8:30-9:15 PM | Genesis Mike VonTungeln | Advanced Greek Marion R. Fox |
| 2nd Quarter | Introductory Courses | Upper Division Courses |
| 1st Period 6:30-8:30 PM* | Church History (1850-1906) Frank R. Williams | Philippians Marion R. Fox |
| 2nd Period 8:30-9:15 PM | Genesis Mike VonTungeln | Advanced Greek Marion R. Fox |

*Dinner Break offered from 7:15-7:45 PM



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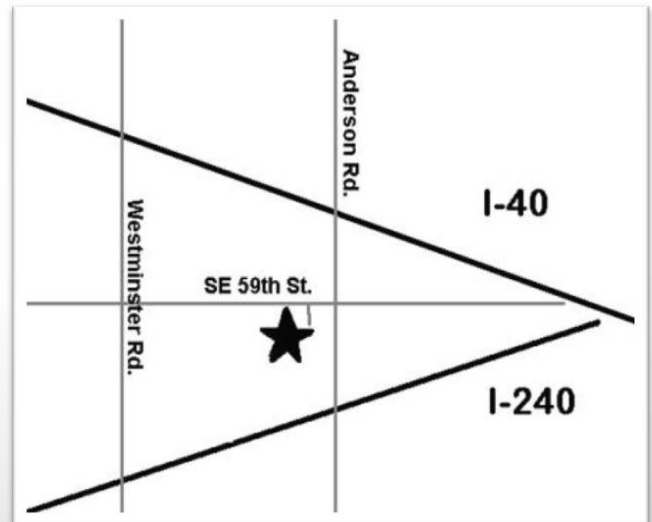
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