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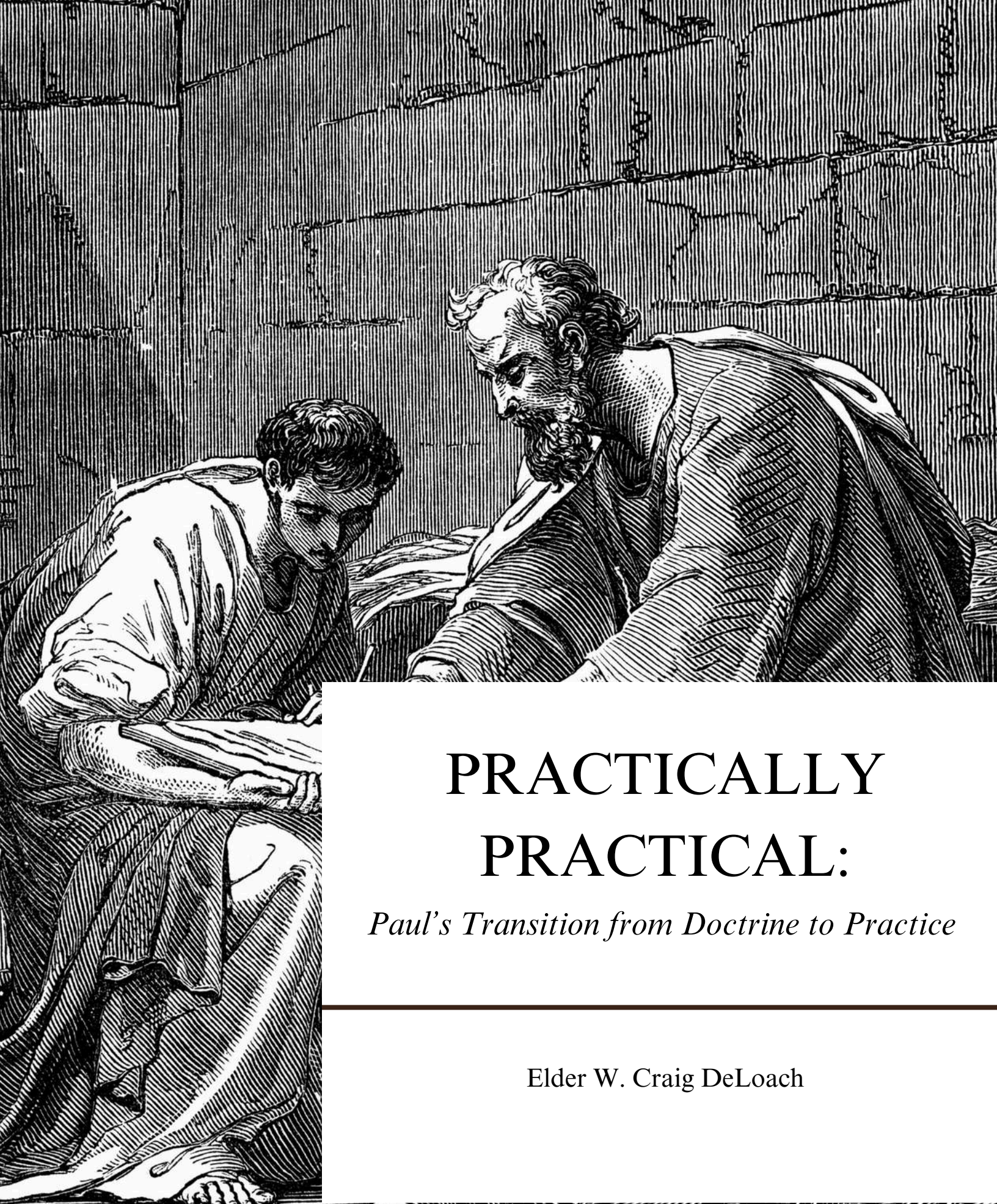


PRACTICALLY PRACTICAL:

Paul's Transition from Doctrine to Practice

Elder W. Craig DeLoach

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul has transitioned from his amazing declarations of the doctrines of our salvation in Jesus Christ. He begins this transition in Romans chapter 12. You will, no doubt, remember his detailed discourse on the movements of God regarding the salvation of His chosen people.

Paul began by giving his reader a hint when he addressed what he called "the power of God unto salvation." Of course, this power of God is "the gospel of Jesus Christ." Paul then adds a very important statement saying that this power is effective "to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (See Romans 1:16).

The apostle then gives the reason for this restriction with respect to the objects of God's salvation. He focuses the reader's attention in chapter 3 saying, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Verse 23). He has expounded upon this subject throughout chapters 1:18-3:21-22. It is there in chapter 3:21-22 that the apostle returns to his gospel message of hope where he says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe**: for there is no difference" (Bold added).

Throughout the apostle's discourse on the doctrines associated with the salvation of the elect, he concentrates on several major themes: the hopelessness of mankind under the curse of original sin, the sovereignty of God in providing the necessary relief, and the redemption that is achieved through the Son of God. In philosophy, these are referred to as a "universal negative" and a "necessary exception." The universal negative is easily seen in Romans 3:10. It is in this verse and those following where he writes, ". . . There is none righteous, no, not one." There are no exceptions to the universal effect of original sin. Thus, if any are to be saved, it requires a necessary exception. The necessary exception is revealed in

verses 21 and 22 of chapter 3. It is in that verse that the apostle changes his focus. He uses the word "but" to indicate this change: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ! Notice how Paul continues in verse 22 emphasizing the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ!

The balance of the apostle's discourse is replete with the wonderful doctrines of election and predestination with a foray into eschatology in chapter 11. He concludes with this amazing doxological statement:

> O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11:33-36).

PAUL'S RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

As the apostle leaves his doctrinal discourse behind, he turns his attention to what he refers to as a believer's "reasonable service." The concentration of this article will be on Romans 12:1-2.

> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The believer's response is extremely important to Paul. In fact, he has reduced himself to begging and pleading. The impetus for his emotional plea is

what he refers to as “the mercies of God.” The apostle realizes that everything done for the believer’s salvation is due to the “mercies of God.” Everything doctrinal he covered in his soteriological discourse is based upon the mercy of God for His chosen people.

When we look at the apostle’s letter to the church at Ephesus, we cannot avoid noticing how he fully acknowledges that “mercy” was/is the source of our deliverance from damnation, from condemnation. He expounds on this in Ephesians 2 where he writes,

> And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. **But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:1-9, Bold added).

Paul makes one of his strongest points when he acknowledges that we “were by nature children of wrath, even as others.” The only thing that makes a difference in us and others is the marvelous mercy and indescribable love God has toward and for the elect.

As recipients of the mercies of God, what shall we do? How shall we respond? Paul says we should present our bodies as living sacrifices. What does he mean by this? It appears that Paul has the Old Testament burnt offerings in mind here. Notice the sacrificial directives in Leviticus 1,

> If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male **without blemish**: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him (vss. 3-4, Bold added).

It is not difficult to see the parallel between the Old Testament texts and Paul's encouragement in Romans 12. As he continues his thought in chapter 12, he states that as "living sacrifices," we should be "holy, acceptable unto God." Remember, the Old Testament requirements for the burnt offering is that it should be "without blemish." This is easily understood to be a statement of holiness. The word "holy" means physically pure, morally blameless, ceremoniously consecrated.

The idea that the Old Testament offering "be a burnt sacrifice," and the New Testament idea that believers should "present your bodies a living sacrifice," gives us a unique parallel meaning. The burnt offering is the complete consumption of the animal upon the altar. As living sacrifices, Scripture acknowledges that God wants "all" of us, not just the part we are willing to give him. Notice Matthew 22:35-37 where we read,

> Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all** thy heart, and with **all** thy soul, and with **all** thy mind (Bold added).

After the apostle emphasizes that our living sacrifices should be holy, he immediately confirms that such a sacrifice would be "acceptable unto God" and, therefore, constitutes "your reasonable service." That is the appropriate response from one who is the recipient of the "mercies of God"! It only makes sense.

The apostle follows that in verse 2 stating, "And be not conformed to this

world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Paul warns us on the one hand and exhorts us on the other.

His warning has to do with being "conformed to this world." The word "conformed" is from the Greek *suschēmatizō*. This word tells us all that we need to know. It means "to conform one's self (one's mind and character) to another's pattern." The root word for *suschēmatizō* is *schēma* which means "external condition." Paul was writing the believers in Rome, but by extension, he is also writing to us. He is concerned with the believer's recognizability. He doesn't want them, or us for that matter, looking like something they are not. When he uses the word "world," he is not using the word *kosmos*, he is not referring to the physical earth, the planet. He is speaking of the culture of this present age in which we live; thus, he is using the Greek word *aion*, which is better translated "age." We are not to allow ourselves to be conformed to the pattern of "this super-sophisticated age" in which we live.

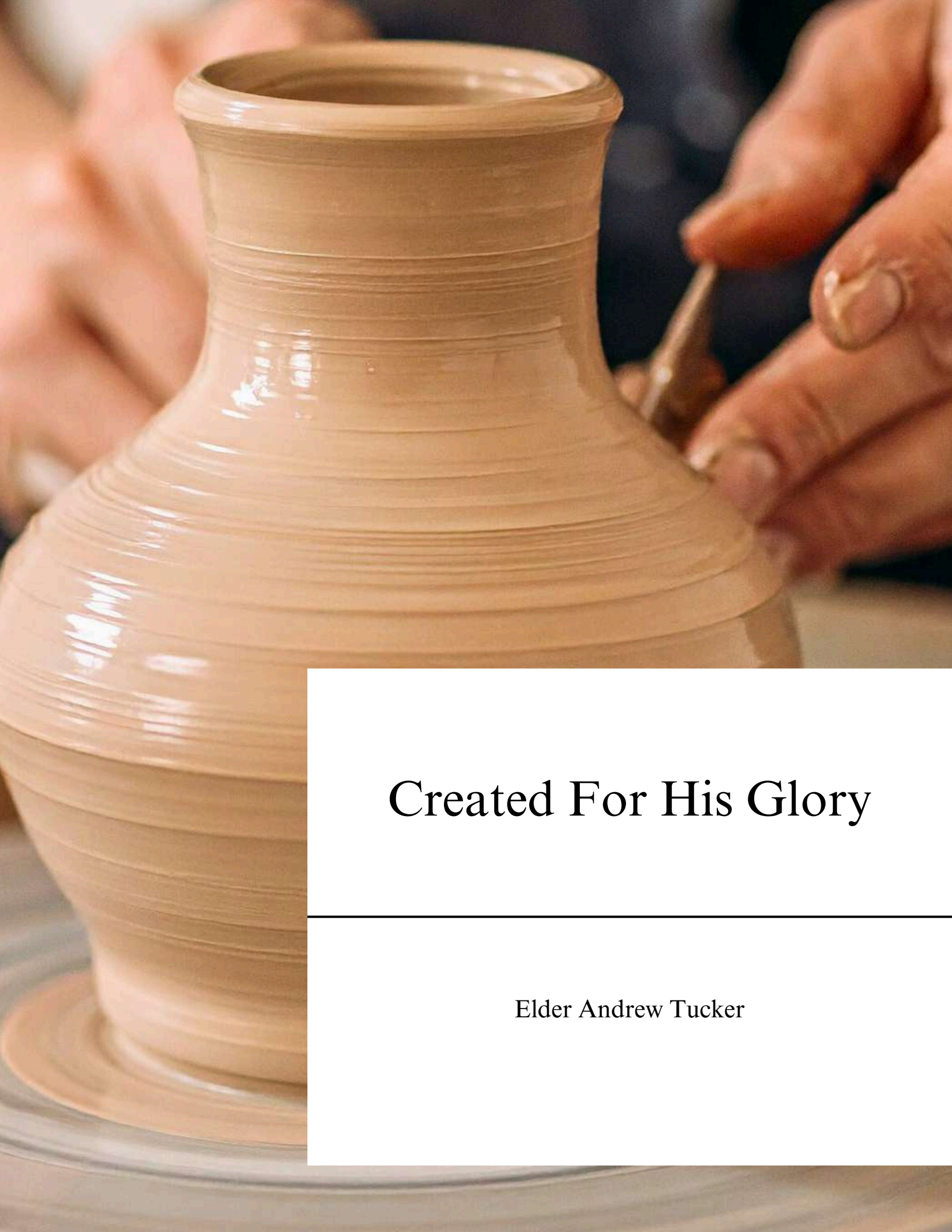
We are privileged to live in an unsurpassed technological age, and these technologies can be helpful in diverse ways. The problem is that these technologies can also be harmful in a myriad of ways also. Who could have ever dreamed that our cellphones would become handheld computers giving us immediate access to any Googled subject? Sadly, it is not necessary to Google any subject for the moral degeneracy of this present age to afflict our minds with its corrupt messaging! The perverted thinking of this age is constantly before us.

Paul offers the reader an answer to all of this confusion, saying, "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." What is this "renewing of your mind"? Transformed is from the Greek *metamorphoō*. This is where we get our English word "metamorphosis." As we are surely aware, it means to change into another form or transfigure. The best example of this is the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly. Scripturally, the best example is the transfiguration of Christ before

His disciples in Matthew 17. He was showing them His true identity. Listen to the text, “And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light” (Matthew 17:2).

CONCLUSION

Paul is pleading with the believers in Rome to offer themselves as “acceptable” living sacrifices to the God whose tender mercies had brought them out of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ. He then offers them two options: negative and positive. First, don’t fall prey to the ways of the world so that your true identity as a believer cannot be seen. Rather, he says, “but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” How is this accomplished? The reader doesn’t need to look far. The apostle gives the characteristics of a mature believer in verses 9-21 of chapter 12. If we would adopt these characteristics, what we are on the inside will be readily apparent on the outside.



Created For His Glory

Elder Andrew Tucker

Acts 4:13-17

(13) Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (14) And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. (15) But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, (16) Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. (17) But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

As we look at this particular text, I want to remind you, as I believe this scripture here reminds us, that we are created for the glory of God. We are created for Him; that He might shine, that He might be glorified, and that He might be lifted up. We can clearly see this great biblical truth on full display as we look to the text at hand.

It is here that we see one of Peter and John's confrontational encounters with the Sanhedrin; the ruling religious establishment of Israel within the first century.

Having just healed a man who had been born with some type of unannounced physical handicap, Peter and John began to preach that it was only through the power and person of Jesus Christ that the lame man had been made whole. As we begin this particular study, it is here that we see Peter and John confronted with threats and commands, so as to not preach in the name of Jesus Christ. Though this great and wondrous healing had taken place, the religious rulers sought to silence Peter and John's efforts to point others to both the Great Physician and the Redeemer of mankind.

Yet, despite the efforts of the religious rulers to silence the gospel and detract from the glorious work of the Lord through Peter and John, unbeknownst to them, their efforts merely declared the great truth of mankind's purpose; that all were made for the glory of God.

In Acts 4:13 we see Luke declare, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men.” Luke records the religious leaders’ view of Peter and John as being unlearned and ignorant men. In today’s vernacular, one might say “They realized they were not the brightest in the room,” or perhaps, “They weren't the sharpest crayons in the box.” The scripture declares that the religious leaders, “marveled” at the fact that Peter and John were merely simple Galileans who “had been with Jesus.”

We see that Peter and John were not what we would consider “learned men.” Now, that doesn't mean they were fools. It doesn't mean that they were ignorant in regards to having no knowledge at all. Instead, it simply means that they were, in the eyes of those around them, simple men with unremarkable backgrounds.

We know that Peter and John would go on to write multiple letters to the churches. So, though they are spoken of as being “unlearned and ignorant men,” they were not illiterate. The “ignorance” of which the religious leaders spoke revolved more around the fact that neither Peter nor John were trained in a rabbinical school of thought; being raised as men who studied the scriptures in a professional manner. Many of the members of the Sanhedrin, if not all, would have been trained from an early age to memorize and recite the Old Testament scriptures.

Paul would be the epitome of such a man, having been raised in such a manner. Compare, if you will, the educational background of Paul in contrast with that of Peter and John. In Acts 22:3, we see, regarding his own upbringing, Paul declare “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.” Paul, in comparison to individuals like Peter and John, would have had the upbringing that the religious leaders would have looked upon and said, “Well, clearly, we know he is learned. He is not ignorant of the scriptures. He was brought up knowing the law, and he is someone with authority to whom we could look up.”

Instead, the rulers of the day would have seen Peter and John as simple Galileans; “unlearned and ignorant men.” They would have seen them as simple fishermen, for that is what they were. In Matthew 4:18 & 21, the scripture declares, “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers… And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.”

Elsewhere in Acts 2:7-8, a similar statement is made regarding the disciples of Christ. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descends upon the early church, Luke records the reaction of the multicultural audience in their midst as such; “And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” In the eyes of the world, Peter, John, and a majority of the disciples of Christ would have been seen as simple and unremarkable.

On the day of Pentecost, when God poured out his Holy Spirit up on individuals like Peter and John, they began speaking in languages that they didn’t know. They were speaking in languages that they couldn’t have originally comprehend ed. These people who were present were amazed that they heard the gospel message in their own language.

Somewhat like the religious leaders in Acts 4, the large crowd in Acts 2 marvel at the fact that these seemingly simple disciples are able to do something so great and noteworthy. It is here then, that we see the beauty of God’s empowering of His people with the Holy Spirit. Peter and John could take no credit for the healing of the lame man in Acts 4.

Instead, we see that all credit, glory, and honor belong to the Lord Himself, who, through such simple men as Peter and John, healed a man in such a wondrous way. A truth that we as believers need to hold to and remember each

day, though perhaps a little cliche, is the fact that God does not call the qualified, but He qualifies the called.

God doesn't always call individuals to do a great work for His name simply because they are the best in their field. He doesn't simply call people because He thinks, "They are the most qualified individual due to their credentials, so I suppose I have to use them for this task."

Instead, God, in spite of our failings, our ignorance, and our station, calls us, that He might be glorified. In Acts 4:16, we see the religious rulers declare that the fact that a miraculous wonder had been performed by such simple men was undeniable; "…What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." Peter and John never claimed to be great healers. They never claimed to be doctors. They simply claimed to know Jesus Christ the Lord. Though they were simple men, they were filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

It is here that we see God 's purpose for using simple men to do great things . God creates us for His glory, and in doing so, He often creates us to be lacking in many areas. He creates us in such a manner so as to make sure that where we are lacking, He is able to provide. It is in this that we can look to places such as 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, in which Paul states, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

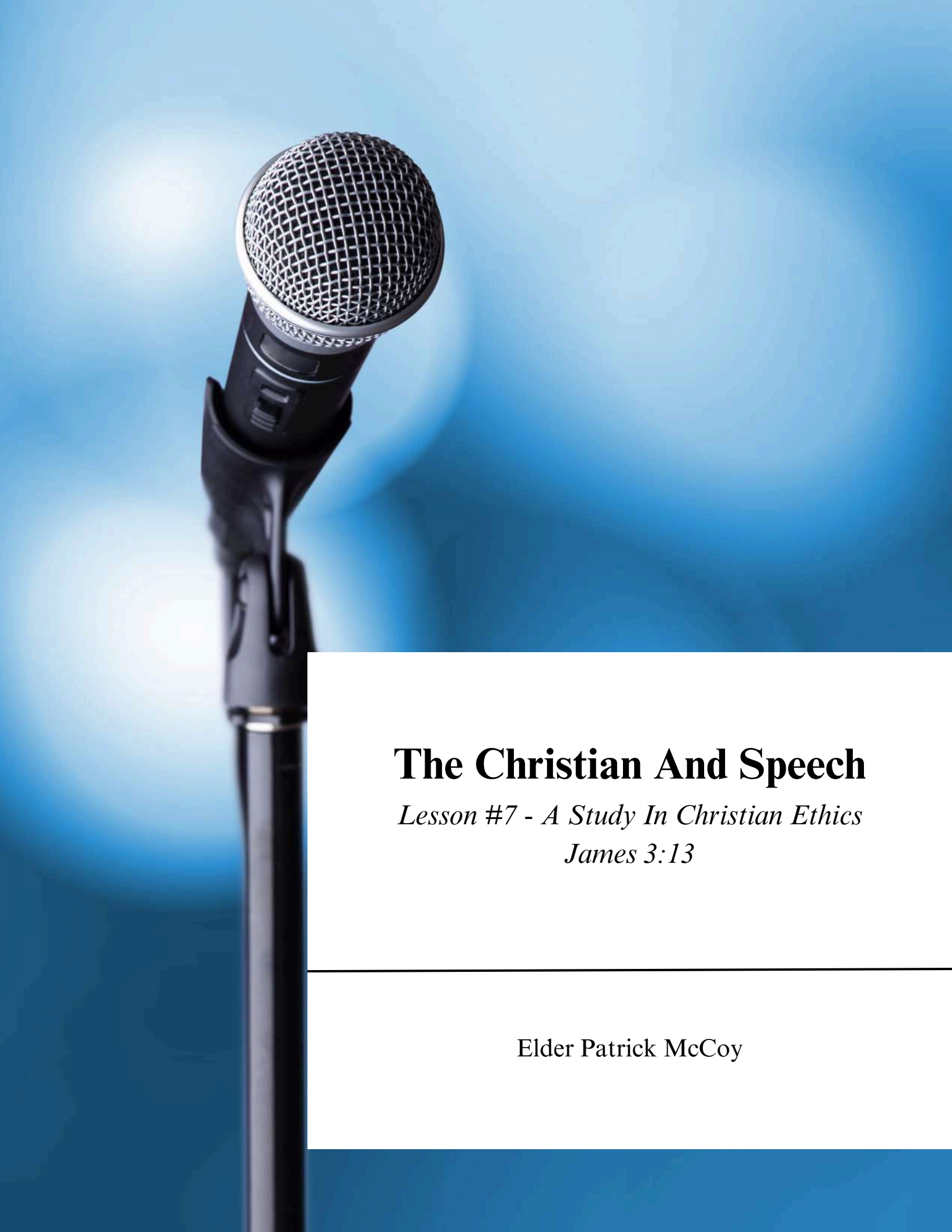
God used men like Peter and John who were not well known for their healing. God used people like Peter and John who were not scholars or rabbis or great studiers of the scriptures. God used them to point to a greater truth; that God is able to use any and all people for his glory. He didn't use them in order for

Peter and John to receive commendations, accolades, and praise, but so that people would see Peter and John and say "How can so foolish or so lowly of individuals do such a great thing?" In doing this, the answer always points back to the reality of the fact that Peter and John couldn't do so great a work in their own power, but in Christ they were able.

In God, we see unremarkable men and women perform undeniably wondrous works, so that He alone might receive honor, glory, and praise. The scriptures are filled with this great truth. Peter and John are great examples of the fact that God takes foolish and weak things and things, things that are despised by the world, and He glorifies Himself through them; that the world might not praise the vessel but that they would praise the Lord Himself. We see this expressed beautifully in places such as Psalm 8 :2, as the psalmist says, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." In other words, the psalmist here is saying, "God is able to use weak things of this world, such as infants and babies, that they might bring glory to His name." God is able to use something so small and something so weak and helpless in the eyes of the world so as to bring about great glory for His name.

Let us therefore take heed of so great a truth as is expressed in Paul's continued words in 1 Corinthians 1:31; "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." When things go well, and when things go right, let us not say "It's all about me. I did that. That was on my goodness, or my strength, or my wisdom." Instead, let us say "It is only by the work of the Lord. I couldn't have done that on my own. I couldn't have done anything on my own. I must trust in you."

Let God receive all glory, all honor, and all praise. For He is truly the one who works in and through us, that He might be lifted up and exalted. Let us therefore seek to simply say, like the saints of old, "Not I, but Christ!"



The Christian And Speech

Lesson #7 - A Study In Christian Ethics

James 3:13

Elder Patrick McCoy

James 3:13

(13) Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

The Power Of Words

I love you, you're important to me, thank you so much, how can I repay you, you look really nice today, I like your new haircut, great job, this place wouldn't be the same without you, I'm proud of you, you are irreplaceable, will you marry me, we're having a baby.

I hate you, you disgust me, I wish you had never been born, I wish I were dead, you make me sick, I want a divorce, nobody cares about you, I'll never speak to you again.

I want to talk about the power of words. Words shape and define our lives. Words reveal the faith we have in our life.

Mark 11:12-24

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. And when even was come, he went out of the city. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the

roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Jesus did not speak AT the tree, He spoke TO the tree. Every day we speak TO different things in our life…what are we saying? Here Jesus taught us a valuable lesson not only about words, but about a principle of faith that is associated with our words. But our words reveal what is in our hearts.

We color our lives with the words we use…

<u>James 3:2-18</u>

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man

and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

There are at least four effects our words have on our lives.

1. OUR WORDS CAN DIRECT US AND OTHERS IN LIFE: BITS AND RUDDERS!

What is the purpose of a bit in a horse's mouth and a rudder on a ship?

What principles for life do we apply to ourselves?

Many people think, if the tongue has such influence maybe it's best to say nothing. Not talk at all, be silent. [A man joined the Trappist monastery. For three years he was given a probation period where he was not to speak at all, but at the end of each year he could say two words. The first year at the end he said, "Bed hard." At end of the second year he said, "Food cold." At the end of the third year he's about had it. He comes in and says, "I quit". The head priest says, "That doesn't surprise me. All you've done is complain since you got here."]

2. OUR WORDS CAN DESTROY US AND OTHERS:

Our words can be devastating to others: Once the word is gone forth from your mouth it is too late. I believe that is why James says that we are to be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger. In other words, engage your mind before you engage your mouth. Warning: Watch Your Words. The tongue is in a wet place, and it can easily slip.

The following story illustrates how a lose tongue can harm others. There is a story of a woman in an Indian village who maliciously gossiped about another lady and her family in the village. One day she found out that she was wrong about this lady and her family and had a change of heart. She went to the village's wise man and asked how she could take back all the wrong she had done. The wise man told her to go home and kill her chickens and pluck their feathers and put them into a bag. After this she was to go back and see the wise man again, but on her way back she was to scatter all the feathers she had plucked from the chickens.

The lady did as she was told. When she got back to the man, he told her, "now go back and pick up all the feathers that you have scattered." The woman was astonished at such a command and said, "By now the wind has carried the feathers through out the village and beyond." The wise man then told her, and so it is with your careless words. They are like the feathers scattered in the wind. You cannot retrieve them. "With that the woman left with a broken heart because of the words she had spoken, went her way determined from that day forward to watch her words.

Read the following passages and discuss them together.

<u>Proverbs 18:21</u>
Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

<u>Job 19:2</u>
How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?
(Another translation says "How long will you torment me and crush me with words.")

<u>Ephesians 4:29-30</u>
Let no corrupt (unwholesome) *communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying (building up) that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

Paul is saying when we use words that tear people down rather than building them up we are grieving The Holy Spirit of God. God is not pleased with our words because they are not building up the body of Christ.

We need to pray the prayer of the Psalmist.

Psalm 19:14
Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.

3. OUR WORDS DISPLAY WHO WE ARE AND WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS:

Read Luke 6:45 and discuss.

Luke 6:45
A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

What's in the well will come out in the water. What's in the tree will come out in the fruit.

4. OUR WORDS CAN DELIGHT OTHERS:

Proverbs 25:11
A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

In other words, a good word spoken at the right time is better than golden apples in a silver basket. Our words can refresh and encourage someone that is discouraged and ready to give up and quit. Words can give new life to a dead relationship. The Greek definition for encourage is "one who puts courage IN the heart of another"

How important are our words?

James 3:1-13

(13) Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us. What God's word is telling us is that we must get rid of anything that will hinder us from entering into the presence of God.

Your Words Will Be Judged

Matthew 12:36-37

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

In Isaiah 57: 19a God says, "I create the fruit of the lips;" That tells us that the words that come out of our mouths will bear fruit.

Proverbs 18:20-21

What comes out of our mouth can and will either bring blessings or cursing. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

All fruit has to be grown. Fruit does not just happen; it is a deliberate act, whether it is the fruit of our garden or fruit that one might find growing wild in the woods. All fruit began by first sowing a seed.

The words that come out of our mouth will either help cultivate the fruit of the spirit or they will grow the works of the flesh.

Mathew 15:11

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Our words will either bring us closer to the presence of God or they will drive us away from His presence.

James 3:9-10

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

1 John 4:20

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Bitter waters and sweet waters do not come from the same fountain. We cannot destroy God's creation with our lips one moment and then attempt to worship Him with the same lips the next minute.

What type of fruit do our lips bear?

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.

Proverbs 6:17, 19

A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,... A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

1 Corinthians 10:10-11

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

As we read the account of Israel in the wilderness one of the things that we learn is that God's anger was kindled when the people murmured and complained against everything He tried to do for them. It was their murmuring and complaining that

kept almost one whole generation out of the land of promise. If the fruit of your lips is murmuring and complaining you are keeping yourself from God's presence and God's blessings.

Leviticus 19:16
Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour; I am the Lord.

Gossip is a sin.

Proverbs 11:13
A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Proverbs 18:8
The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 26:20
Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

What should the fruit of our lips be?

Hebrews 13:15
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

1 Peter 1:15
But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Colossians 4:6
Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Philippians 1:27

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

How important are our words?

What type of fruit have your lips been bearing?

CONCLUSION

There is so much the Bible has to say on this subject that I cannot even scratch the surface in this lesson. We have forgotten just how important our words are. Those in the world around us think nothing of the words they speak. May we think before we speak.

A Study Of Joel

Part 12

Elder Sam Bennett

The text for this message is Joel 3:9-17. We have been nibbling away at this book for some time now. Let us briefly review what we have learned so far. There is no definite time period given. Joel may have been a contemporary of Elijah, some 870 years before the birth of Christ, or he may have been a contemporary of Nehemiah, 450 years before the birth of Christ, or he may have lived during some period in between. As concerns prophecy in general, it may be a fore-telling of future events or it may be a forth-telling of current events, relative to the time of the prophet. We find both in this short prophecy of Joel. In the first half of this book, it appears Joel is explaining current events to his original audience. Israel had been disobedient and walked away from God. We cannot pinpoint a time in Israel's history when this was unique. It is a problem Israel dealt with continually. From as early as the Exodus from Egypt, to as late as the return from Babylon, Israel and Judah had a habit of wandering away from God. During Joel's day, Israel was devastated by an all-consuming plague of locusts. Wave after wave of locusts had destroyed every green growing thing throughout the land. True desperation had set into the hearts and minds of all the people. No one was unaffected by these locusts which had left nothing but destruction in their wake. Even the flocks and the herds looked at the barren pasture lands wondering where they would graze. The bark of the fruit trees had been chewed to the white. The vines were destroyed. The grains had been consumed, and all the grass of the fields had been mowed down to the dirt. There would be no food for anyone. There would be no new wine. Worship would be interrupted because the priests would not have the elements necessary for the prescribed sacrifices. Joel reminded the people that it was God who had sent the locusts. He had done so to get their attention. He had done so to refocus them.

He had done so the remind them that they were forgetting Who He Was. As a loving Father of errant children, Jehovah had chastised Israel with His locusts. Joel spoke for the LORD, prescribing the conditions by which Israel must repent. From chapter one verse 13 to chapter two verse 17, Joel speaks Jehovah's expectations to Israel. In one of the most piercing admonitions in all of Scripture, we read: ***"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With***

fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So, rend your heart, and not your garments;"

Joel tells Israel that their repentance must be genuine. Their hearts should indeed be broken because of what they have done. If I might paraphrase what Joel was saying, "be broken-hearted over your sin. God does want to see you make an outward show of it. Let your disgust and disappointment over your disobedience drive you to make a real change in your behavior.

In the next section of chapter 2, verses 17 through 27, we see God restored what the locusts had destroyed. Importantly, we see that Jehovah did this for His own Name's sake. He reminds them that He is the One, True, and Living God, and that they are His people.

In verse 28, we pick up on what most people most often view as prophecy. It is here that Joel begins to speak of future events. Again, I remind you that these events are future from Joel's perspective. From our perspective, 2000 years after the first coming of Jesus, some of that prophetic word has been fulfilled and some is yet future. We cannot and must not blame Joel. Last week we used the illustration of standing on a mountain and seeing other mountains. This may give us some idea as to how Joel saw these future events. While standing on one mountain and seeing other mountains in the distance, we can see multiple peaks. We may be able to see that one mountain is behind another, but we cannot accurately gauge just how far apart the other mountains are. This may be how Joel understood the future events of which he spoke.

We know that the first part of Joel's prophetic future began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts chapter two, Peter quotes Joel and tells those present that what they are witnessing is that which the prophet spoke. Unfortunately, too many people are satisfied with Peter's explanation and assume that Joel's prophecy is completely fulfilled. They never bother reading Joel for themselves. Little do they know that there is a third chapter, and that only a

portion of Joel's prophecy has come to pass. There is a latter portion that is still yet future even to us today. Chapter three begins to speak of end-times. What is to come is not like what came before. Previously, the people of God had strayed, and disobey, and God chastised them to bring them back to Himself. What is coming is not chastisement on wayward children, but rather God's judgment on His enemies. The first three verses of chapter three are the basis for God's judgment. This coming judgment is in direct response to what God's enemies have done to God's people. There is coming a day when all nations will be gathered by God into the Valley of Jehoshaphat for the purpose of God's verdict. Two weeks ago, we noted that there had been a good king named Jehoshaphat who had ruled over Judah. However, there was not a geographical landmark on any map in antiquity that was named Jehoshaphat. We should understand that this valley is not named after that Judean king. The literal translation of the valley of Jehoshaphat is the valley where Jehovah will judge.

In the last installment of this series, we studied Joel chapter three, verses four through eight. In that lesson, we observed that this passage may be compared to a lawsuit. Verses four through six spells out the charges against the nations. Verses seven and eight are Jehovah's judgment on the nations. One important principle that we noted was that God's judgment always perfectly matches the sin. Some commentators have stated that the judgment of God is precisely matched to the nature of the sin against God. As the nations have done to God's people, so will God repay them for what they have done. And while we are studying these things, let us remember these two key points:

1. It is God's judgment, not man's
2. God's judgment is final. There will be no appeals. This is not chastisement; it is eternal punishment.

With these introductory thoughts in mind, I invite your attention to our text.

Joel 3:9-17

(9) Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: (10) Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. (11) Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. (12) Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. (13) Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. (14) Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (15) The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. (16) The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. (17) So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

Sometimes, our English translations make it unnecessarily difficult to know where the right break is. I think it wise to see verse 17 as the dividing line in this chapter.

There is one note of observation that may be helpful to our understanding of this passage. There is an interesting change of voice in these verses. At times, it appears that Joel is speaking the words of Jehovah that he has been given. At other times, it appears that Joel is providing some commentary on what Jehovah has said. I will do my best to make those distinctions as we move through this passage. Verses 9 and 10 appear to be Jehovah speaking. Verse 11 appears to be Joel speaking.

Joel has been given this message to proclaim to the nations: "***Prepare for war!***" The fight is about to be joined. God's enemies have been trampling on God's people, and there is about to be retaliation. Some may have understood that there was a war going on already. Some may have thought that there has already been much fighting. So far, we have read the charges against the nations. We have read Jehovah's judgment against the nations. Now, we are about to see that Jehovah's judgment will be carried out. It will be carried out in God's time, according to His schedule, and on His terms. We may need to ask, "Who is it that should prepare for war?"

Bible commentator John Gill writes that this could be a challenge to Jehovah's enemies, or it could be a call to service for Jehovah's people. Some modern-day theologians believe it is both. We have seen times in the Old Testament when God has brought judgment on His enemies. In His promise of Canaan Land to Abraham, God said that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete. 400 years later, the descendants of Abraham, under the leadership of Joshua, wage war against the inhabitants of the land. God used Israel as instruments of His judgment against the Amorites. So, it very well could mean that this warning to prepare for war is a general call to all, to include God's enemies as well as God's people.

O. Palmer Robertson takes the position that this summons is addressed to the nations who are the enemies of God's people, and it is a summons for them to appear for judgment. It is called a holy war. It is 'holy' because Jehovah Himself instigates this war to demonstrate His holiness. If you recall from Joshua, when the army of Israel was used by God to purge the Promised Land, whole cities were devoted to destruction. That is the same sense of this coming war. No one, none of the enemies of Jehovah will be excused. No one will be to dodge this draft, as it were.

The initial call is to those who are familiar with fighting. Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. Those who have been instrumental in the fighting against God's people are being called to

muster. However, they are not the only ones who are guilty of sins against God. All the people of the nations are summoned to join in this battle. The farmers of the fields, the dressers of the vines, and those who would not be the first to fight are called to prepare for this war. Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I am strong.' No one, none of the enemies of Jehovah will be excused. Dr. Robertson writes, "God does not summon people to judgment when they decide they are adequately prepared with a defense for their actions. The nations of the world are being mocked by this encouragement to arm themselves. Even the weak and sickly among them are not exempt. But their most valiant efforts will hardly be able to withstand the Lord's judgments. His righteous assessments will prevail over all human resistance. Judgment comes when the Judge is ready. The rich fool in Jesus' parable made a great mistake by failing to reckon with fact that 'this very night' the Lord might summon him to judgment. Men must stand ready at all times to appear before the Lord and receive justice from his hand."[1]

Verse 11 appears to be the voice of Joel, commenting on this call to war. Again, the call is given in imperative form. It is something that must be done. It is not optional. Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. And then there is the curious clause at the end. Joel says, "Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD." It seems as though Joel is calling upon Jehovah to send an army of angels. Our 20th and 21st century view of angels is not what the Bible describes. We often think of cherubs as winged babies in diapers. After all, certain advertisers have convinced us through Television commercials and product packaging that this is how angels appear. They are benevolent, cute, and even cuddly. That is a false idea.

Look at any appearance of angels in the Bible. How many times did angel messengers begin their message with, "Do not be afraid." Why would they begin to speak that way? Because, an angel of the Lord in the presence of a mere mortal human being is a frightening event. Angels of the Lord are mighty and powerful beings. They exist in a different realm. They are sanctified in the presence of the

throne of God. And they are warriors. Recall Daniel's vision in Daniel 10:4-14.

> *Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore, I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."*

Joel desires that God would send an overwhelming force to stand against Jehovah's enemies in this holy war in the valley of decision. It occurs to me that Joel has been given a glimpse of what John saw. One commentator suggested that Joel is telling us that we should read Revelation. If Joel is calling on God to send an army of angels from heaven, who must lead them? In Revelation 19:11-16, John gives us his description of this yet future event:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

In the valley of decision on the Day of the LORD, it will be Jesus bringing the final judgment on the nations.

In verses 12 and 13 the prophet is not commenting on what he has seen or heard. Here Joel resumes speaking the words given to him from Jehovah, "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow—For their wickedness is great." A sickle is used to mow down stalks of wheat and barley. It is cut off at ground level so that only stubble remains in the field. The entire plant is cut down. But the harvest does not happen until the crop is ripe for the harvest. A full winepress is filled with ripened grapes. Again, they are harvested when the time is right. A winepress is just what it sounds like. Great weights are used to press down on the grapes to extract the juice to make wine. Sometimes, a mechanical press is used, and when a mechanical press is not available, people would walk on the grapes, stomping on them, breaking the skin and the pulp to extract all of the juice from them. This harvest speaks of a great abundance, because the vats used to catch the juice pressed from the grapes are overflowing. This imagery of harvest, and a complete harvest at that, is used to show: 1) the abundance of wickedness in the world, 2) God will address this problem of

wickedness at the proper time, 3) there will be no escape for any of God's enemies, 4) God will completely harvest all of them, such that there will be no more wickedness when His judgment is executed.

In verses 14 through 16, Joel is commenting on the things he has seen, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" It is a scene of chaos. All of the enemies of Jehovah are gathered together. Not only Men of war, prepared for battle, but also the weak and feeble and frail who thought they would not be called to the fight. Joel cannot count them all. He understands that the number is great. They have been gathered from all nations, and throughout history, now assembled in this valley of decision to face the judgment of God. Please do not misunderstand. It is not called the valley of decision because it is where people will be given one final opportunity to make a decision about whom they will serve. No, they made their decisions long before this moment. A more accurate translation might be the valley of the verdict. This valley of decision is so called because the decision of the Lord will be announced here. The charges have been brought. The judgment has been decided. The sentence will now be announced. The decision will be heard. For a third time in this book of Joel, we encounter the phrase the Day of the LORD. The first was in verse 15 of chapter one, ***Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty***. It is included in the call for Israel to repent. Israel knew the LORD. They were His special people, and He was their God. He had demonstrated His omnipotence in sending the locusts to call these wayward people back to Himself.

In verse one of chapter 2, we read Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: God once again calls Israel to pay attention and realize that there is no escape. His chastisement is upon all of them. These are different compared to verse 14 of chapter three. This day of the LORD is not chastisement day, but judgment day. The noise of the multitudes will be hushed by a great sign. ***The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness***. If there is no sun and no moon giving light and the stars

grow dim, darkness will fall on the day of the LORD in the valley of decision. It will be a dark day when the final decision of Jehovah is announced. In three separate passages in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus spoke of those who would be cast into outer darkness, where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Let us return to our text, at verse 16, ***The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake***; The noise of the multitudes in the valley of decision will not overcome the voice of Jehovah. When Jehovah roars, it will be unmistakable. It will be inescapable. The voice of Jehovah roaring from Zion will be such that the ground beneath our feet and the skies above our heads will shake. The voice of God will reverberate throughout all of creation. All will hear, and tremble at the power of almighty God. The announcement of the final verdict will silence all dissent. No one will be able to stand against verdict, and no appeals will be heard. As if the roar of the voice of Jehovah from Jerusalem is not deafening enough, the silence that follows will also be deafening as the verdict of eternal damnation begins to settle into the minds of the guilty. The sickle will be put in, the wicked will be mowed down like grass, and they will be trampled like grapes in the winepress of God's wrath. It will be a terrible scene. It is not anything we will want to see, except to know that our most Holy God executes His wrath with righteous judgment to the glory of His grace. Perhaps we will not see it at all. Perhaps God's promise of protection will shield our eyes from that terrible scene. The last part of verse 16 says, But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel. We who are saved by the grace of the God Father through faith in God the Son will be sheltered from the execution of His judgment against the nations.

The true Israel of God, the sheep of His pasture will be separated from the goats. The difference is Jesus. Those who have been bought by His blood are safe in the shelter of Jehovah. The judgment of God against the sins of His people has been satisfied on the cross of Calvary. The spotless Lamb of God absorbed the wrath that our sins deserve. He paid the price for our eternal souls, and we belong to Him. He will keep us in His strength and shelter us from the wrath that is to come.

Verse 17 assures us that there will be a great separation. When the final judgment has been announced and carried out, the children of God will never again be harassed by the wickedness of the enemies of God. It will be for our good. It will be for His glory. This word is given for our hope and assurance. Once again, Joel relents from comment, and the voice of Jehovah speaks, "***So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.***" We read an even clearer picture in chapter 22 of the Revelation, verse one through five:

> *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

There is coming a day, it is the Day of the LORD. Wars and striving will cease. Believers will meet Jesus face to face with joy and gladness. May the Lord bless us to live daily with anticipation for a brighter future, when there is no more violence, no more lying, no more theft, no more slavery, no more sin, and we will be in the presence of His glory forever.

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1 O. Palmer Robertson, Prophet of the coming Day of the Lord, *The book of Joel simply explained*, pg. 111, © 1995 O. Palmer Robertson. EP BOOKS (Evangelical Press), Unit C, Tomlinson Road, Leyland, England, PR25 2DY www.epbooks.org

News, Events, & Updates

2026 PRIMITIVE BAPTIST FOUNDATION MEETING

WHEN:

April 28, 2026

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Union Grove Church
6370 Chestnut Ridge Rd,
Winchester, TN 37398

www.progressivepb.org

SING INTO SPRING 3

Sponsored by Music Workshop &
Hosted by Tifton Primitive Baptist Church

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends in Christ,

Sing into Spring 3 will convene at Tifton Primitive Baptist Church on ***Friday night, April 24 and Saturday, April 25***. Our first Sing into Spring was in Central Georgia, the second in North Georgia, and the third will be in South Georgia. We hope and pray that those of you in the area will come and join us as we follow the teachings of our Lord and Savior: "*I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations*" (Psalm 108:3).

Sing into Spring 3 is a two-day event. On Friday night, April 24 at 6:00, we will enjoy an old-time sing. Make a list of your favorite hymns, and we will sing as many as we can in the designated time. Brother Dale Simms from Ramah PBC will be our very capable song leader for the night. Tifton Church has graciously agreed to serve light refreshments after the sing so that we can continue our service with a sweet time of fellowship, getting to know our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Saturday morning will begin at 9:00 at Tifton Church once again. The day will be divided into several sessions: Simple Ideas for Churches Who Have No Choirs, Getting the Best Out of Your Voice, and A Closer Look at the Hymnal. We will break for lunch at 11:45, provided by Music Workshop. Finally, as a highlight of the day, Brother Vernon Eckleberry will be our special guest. He will present a very interesting power point program: *Singing Our Faith*.

As you can see, there is something for everyone. Please come and join us as we look for ways to improve ourselves in service to our Lord. You do not have to register ahead. There is no registration fee. If you feel led, we would appreciate a small love offering to Music Workshop. We look forward to seeing you and all your brothers and sisters at Tifton Primitive Baptist Church on Friday, April 24 at 6:00 PM and Saturday, April 25 at 9:00 AM as we Sing into Spring 3. We pray the Lord will be in our midst and bless us with joyful hearts and voices.

Hope to see you soon! – Music Workshop Board

Tifton Primitive Baptist Church, 403 Tift Avenue, Tifton, GA 31794

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STATEMENT OF FAITH

In accord with the historical position of the Primitive Baptists, the editors of The Banner-Herald subscribe to the scriptural principles stated in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. The following is an abbreviated statement upon that confession.

- We Believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, inspired and inerrant, and the only rule of faith and practice.

- We Believe in the only true and living God. That there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three agree in one, are coequal, coeternal, and coexistent.

- We Believe in the total depravity of the entire human family; that is, sin pollutes man's faculties - his heart, mind, and will - and he is unable to recover himself from his lost and ruined estate.

- We Believe in particular, eternal, and unconditional election, the effectual calling of the elect, and the final perseverance of the saints.

- We Believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the only Savior and Redeemer, and that Salvation is by His grace alone.

- We Believe that believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ. We Believe the only baptism taught and recognized in the Bible is immersion. We Believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of our Lord's death and should be regularly observed in the church. We Believe that the washing of the saint's feet is an example of humility and service to be observed by the church.

- We Believe that no minister has the right to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper but such as are called by God and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.

- We Believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust; that the just shall be raised, changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, to dwell in heaven forever, soul and body reunited; and, that the unjust shall be raised, soul, and body reunited, and consigned to punishment in hell forever.