

## ***Eleutheros Newsletter***

January 2020

### **News of Interest**

In recent days Eleutheros Books has come into contact with a Christian gentleman from Irving Texas named Craig Speck. Craig is interested in helping churches and Christian ministries that are involved with bus ministries or are considering such an outreach. He has books and videos on this subject and is willing to share what he has with all who contact him.

If you would like to learn more, here is his contact information:

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### ***Continuing Thoughts on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ***

**[Ephesians 1:19-20](#)**. *And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.*

Paul never got over the fact that he was saved by God's grace and granted an apostleship. He was thrilled to win souls to His Savior and endeavored to do that at every opportunity.

He recognized that salvation is a great miracle. God's miracles express His great power. Creation would be an obvious example. When God saves a soul, however, it took great creativity, power, holiness and amazing love!

Paul acutely recognized that man's salvation would not be possible without the resurrection of our Savior. He also expressed great reverence for the power God

demonstrated when He rose Jesus from the dead: “according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”

The Father has granted that Jesus, having finished the work He gave Him to do, is now “at His own right hand in the heavenly places” ([Ephesians 1:19-20](#)).

**[Colossians 1:18](#)**. *And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.*

In [Colossians 1](#) Paul gives glory to the Father and the Son for making believers “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” ([1:12](#)), “deliverance from the power of darkness” ([1:13](#)), “redemption through His blood” ([1:14](#)), the creation of all things ([1:16](#)), and the headship of Jesus Christ ([1:18](#)).

Jesus’ leadership is over the entire church, the body of believers from all over the world throughout the ages since the church began in the first century. “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” ([Ephesians 2:18-20](#)).

Jesus is first in the spiritual realm as He is in nature ([verses 18-20](#))! The phrase “firstborn from the dead” is the justification for His having preeminence in all things!

**[Colossians 2:12](#)**. *Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead.*

Paul is here dealing with the matter of baptism in much the same way as he did in Romans 6. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” ([Romans 6:11-12](#)).

In the symbol of baptism, the resurrection to new life in Christ is pictured with an allusion to Christ’s own resurrection and to our final resurrection. Paul does not mean to say that the new life in Christ is caused or created by the act of baptism. God had the power to raise His Son from the dead and He has the power also to give us new life in Christ by faith.

**[1 Thessalonians 1:10](#)**. *And to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

In [verse 9](#) Paul reminded the Thessalonian church that they had “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” Their past was one of sin and idolatry. Their present goal was to serve God.

Verse 10 discusses their expectation for a “wrath free” future based on the resurrection of their Savior Jesus Christ.

There are two reasonable ways to interpret the phrase “wrath to come.”

The most obvious deliverance is the eternal punishment in hell that awaits those who have rejected Christ and His offer of eternal life. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about this in his second epistle to the church. “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of power” ([II Thessalonians 1:8-9](#)).

It is also quite possible that the church was concerned about the tribulation period that begins very soon after the rapture of the church. Some there in Thessalonica seemed to believe that the Lord would receive His own after this “time of Jacob’s trouble” ([Jeremiah 30:7,18](#)). This period is described in considerable detail in [Revelation 5-18](#). It lasts for seven years.

Antichrist rules the earth during the second half of the tribulation period ([Revelation 13:5](#)). His “Babylonian” system will be destroyed ([Revelation 18](#)) and our Lord will return to cast Satan and the false prophet “alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” ([Revelation 19:20](#)).

Jesus will then rule on the earth for “a thousand years” ([Revelation 20:4-6](#)).

True believers will be delivered from both the eternal punishment of hell and the horrors of the tribulation period. Paul declared that Jesus’ resurrection has “delivered us from the wrath to come” ([I Thessalonians 1:10](#)).

**[I Thessalonians 4:14-17](#)**. *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so, shall we ever be with the Lord.*

This is the blessed hope of the believer. One day, when the Father determines the time is right, Jesus will come to meet His own in the air, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

The word “if” in verse 14 is much better translated “since.” The promise is for those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus. We know that He is coming again for us. When He does return there will be a massive resurrection of the dead followed quickly by a catching up of those who are alive at His coming. What a meeting “in the air”!

This glorious event should be distinguished from the Lord's return to reign on the earth for a thousand-year period ("the millennium," discussed earlier).

The promise is eternal: "and so shall we ever be with the Lord"!

**[II Timothy 1:10](#)**. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*

In the previous verse Paul writes, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

God the Father planned salvation by offering a holy calling that was not based on any good thing in anyone's life. He did this sovereignly ("according to His own purpose") before He created the universe.

His planning also included the "appearing of our Savior," the God-man Jesus Christ Who has *abolished* death! He is able to do this because of His resurrection power.

This is the central theme of Paul. "...and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Jesus is the death of death and the Gospel is the message!

**[II Timothy 2:8](#)**. *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.*

Paul had ministered with Timothy and trained him to be a teacher/trainer of Christian leaders. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Part of the training was an understanding of the humanity of our Savior ("of the seed of David). Our Savior rose bodily because He is a man as well as God.

Paul reminded Timothy that the resurrection is the central theme of the Gospel ("according to my Gospel").

In addition, Paul explained that he was currently suffering in prison because of his eagerness to present the Gospel message. "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound" (**[II Timothy 2:9](#)**). He commanded Timothy to be of like mind. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (**[II Timothy 2:3](#)**; see also **[II Timothy 2:11](#)**).

We will continue these thoughts on the resurrection of our Savior in next month's newsletter.