

Eleutheros Newsletter

February 2020

News of Interest

In recent days Eleutheros Books has made contact with Dr. Anthony Ponceti, a true servant of Jesus Christ. He is working to have the Spanish translation of *The Ramifications of Our Salvation* to be printed and then distributed to believers in over 200 churches in Honduras. Please pray for this important outreach ministry!

Check out these videos from Eleutheros Books!

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Continued Thoughts on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Galatians 1:1. *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead).*

Among the obstacles Paul faced in his ministry was the question of his apostolicity. There were people who opposed him for two reasons: 1. He was not one of the original twelve apostles. 2. He preached Jesus as crucified, buried, and risen again.

These opponents to the Gospel are generally referred to as “Judaizers.” Paul dealt with them especially in his epistle to the Galatians and his second epistle to the Corinthians. These Judaizers preached a false Gospel (“another Gospel”—[Galatians 1:6](#)), trying to merge faith in Christ with works. The dependence on works included circumcision, obedience to the Old Testament Law, and adherence to many of the man-made regulations of first century Judaism.

Paul’s response to the Judaizers was very strong: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” ([Galatians 1:8-9](#)).

Paul was saved while journeying to Damascus to persecute Christians there.

“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he

trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” ([Acts 9:3-6](#)).

Soon Paul entered the house of Ananias. The Lord said to him, “Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” ([Acts 9:15-16](#)).

This was a confirmation that Paul was granted apostleship and commissioned to preach the Gospel.

Paul had seen the risen Lord and received a call to evangelize both Jews and Gentiles. These were the requirements for apostleship: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not apostle unto others, yea doubtless I am to you: for the deal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” ([1 Corinthians 9:1-2](#)).

Notice how Paul writes in [Galatians 1:1](#). He received his apostleship “not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead.” His position was ordained by God the Father Who allowed him to see His resurrected Son.

No doubt Paul received great gifts to serve the Lord as an apostle. He needed every one of those gifts to carry on the ministry God called him to perform.

The resurrection of our Lord was key to his call and the primary message he presented to lost souls.

[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.

[I 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](#)).

We will continue these thoughts on the resurrection of Jesus Christ in next month’s Eleutheros newsletter.