

Eleutheros Newsletter

March 2020

News of Interest

Updates on Eleutheros book offerings:

All books are now available in paperback and eBook. This includes *The Ramifications of Our Salvation*, *Bible Translations: A Closer Look*, *Spiritual Gifts Verse by Verse: A Commentary on [I Corinthians 12-14](#)*, and *A Portrait of Jesus*.

Check out all these book offerings at the website: www.eleutherosbooks.com

Soon a fifth book will become available as an eBook: *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

Work is in progress on another book entitled *19th Century Influences on 21st Century Christianity*.

Continuing Thoughts on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

[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](#)).

[II Timothy 2:18](#). *Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

In the preceding verses Paul emphasizes diligence in learning correct doctrine ([I Timothy 2:14-17](#)). The word translated “study” in verse 15 is from the Greek verb *spoudazo* which means “to be diligent.”

If there were two things Paul dedicated himself to do, they would include evangelism and correct doctrine.

In verses 16-17 he commands Timothy, *“But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus.”*

Paul wrote about Hymenaeus in [I Timothy 1:19-20](#). *“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”*

Paul speaks of “delivering unto Satan” in [I Corinthians 5:5](#). In that context he was dealing with awful sin in Corinth. “It is commonly reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.”

His advice, when the church was gathered together ([I Corinthians 5:4](#)), was to excommunicate those who had committed such sin “for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” ([I Corinthians 5:5](#)).

The purpose of disallowing one into the fellowship of a church (“delivering over unto Satan”) was not to be “holier than thou,” but rather that “the spirit may be saved” and that the offender “may learn not to blaspheme.”

Apparently Hymenaeus and Philetus had taught that some believers had already been resurrected, leaving others behind. This is contrary to what Paul wrote in [I Thessalonians 4:13-18](#). The Lord will gather every believer, whether living or in a grave, to Himself in a moment and at the same time so that they can be with Him forever!

Paul would not allow the incorrect doctrine that Hymenaeus and Philetus taught. They perverted the central truth of the Gospel, the resurrection.

Hebrews 6:2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Earlier in this epistle the author declares “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teaches you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” ([Hebrews 5:10-14](#)).

The recipients of Hebrews had not learned much so there was a need to review simple matters.

“Of the doctrine of baptisms” does not mean specifically Christian baptism in this epistle (see [9:10](#) and also [Mark 7:4](#)). It is a reference to ablutions or immersions such as the mystery religions and the Jewish cults required for initiation, proselytes, and worshippers. Some of the disciples of John the Baptist had disputes with the Jews over purification ([John 3:25](#); see also [Acts 19:2-3](#)).

“The laying on of hands” was a common sign: of blessing ([Matthew 19:13](#)), of healing ([Mark 7:32](#)), in the choice of the first deacons ([Acts 8:17f](#); [19:6](#)), in separation for a special task ([Acts 13:3](#)), in ordination ([I Timothy 4:14](#); [5:22](#); [II Timothy 1:6](#)). Prayer accompanied this laying on of hands as a symbol.

“*The resurrection of the dead*” (both of the just and unjust mentioned in [John 5:29](#) and [Acts 24:15](#)) is a basic truth that all should easily understand and believe. Everyone who names the name of Christ and believes in Him may need *further* instruction about their upcoming resurrection and eternal life in heaven with Jesus, but the basic facts are sometimes misunderstood or even perverted. This truth is vital and needs to be proclaimed often!

Hebrews 11:19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

The reference here is to Abraham and his son Isaac ([11:17](#)). God commanded that he “*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*”

Abraham, now well over one hundred years old, had learned to trust God completely and planned to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice.

As he approached the mountain, he “saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, *and come again to you*” ([Genesis 22:5](#)).

This verse, along with [Hebrews 11:19](#), is an indication that Abraham was so close to God that he believed his son would die on the altar but would be resurrected.

God had promised him, “*I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered*” ([Genesis 14:16](#)).

When God made this promise, all there was to Abraham’s seed was himself and his wife Sarah. When God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac, all there was to Abraham’s seed was himself, his wife, and his son.

Keep in mind that none of the books of the Bible had been written in Abraham’s day! All he had was God’s promise and God’s command, yet he believed in resurrections *based on nothing beside what God promised and commanded*. Genuine faith has no problem trusting that Jesus rose and we who believe will rise also! We now have the revelation of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. What excuse can we offer to God for not believing!?

In Abraham’s case, God provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice ([Genesis 22:13](#)). In our case, God has provided His only Son as a substitute sacrifice ([Isaiah 53:5-6](#) and many other verses!)

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