

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

September 2005

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2) I pray that you are doing well. I just returned from a camp meeting in Colorado. It was a rich blessing. If you haven’t had a chance to attend one of our camp meetings, you don’t know what you are missing. I encourage you to come to the next one, which will be held in Florida from February 22-26, 2006. Please contact Ed Cyrus (813-426-5503) for more information. We do not have a Crossword Bible Study for you this month, but we will have one next month, Lord willing. I apologize for the delay in getting this issue to you. We have been very busy. This issue of *Present Truth* is the first print job to be printed on our new Heidelberg printing press. We are very thankful to God, as our old press was about worn out.

Getting to Know the God of the Bible

by Lynnford Beachy

(The following article is an edited transcript of a live radio broadcast hosted by Elder Willis Smith of God’s Word, God’s Way, in Cleveland, Ohio. *Editor*)

Elder Smith: Now this evening, brothers and sisters, we have a wonderful surprise for you. Today we received a surprise at church. We had service today, and we had Elder Lynnford Beachy come and speak for us all the way from West Virginia. He and his wife, Kendra, and their three children have been doing some traveling, right?

Lynnford: That’s right.

ES: They are returning from Minnesota and traveled through Michigan, and then here to Cleveland, Ohio. We just want to thank Elder Beachy for taking the time to stop here in Cleveland and share the Word of God with us. Brother Lynnford, we have known each other how long now?

L: It’s been about thirteen years, Elder Smith.

ES: Well, thirteen years.

L: That’s right.

ES: You’ll have to tell us a little bit about yourself. You have a ministry and newsletter in West Virginia, and you’re also part of a larger ministry. Would you like to kind of tell us a little bit about that?

L: Yes, I would. I’m Lynnford Beachy, as you said, and I work with Smyrna Gospel Ministries in Welch, West Virginia. We publish several different papers and booklets, and we have a free newsletter that we send out each month. It’s called *Present Truth*. We also have a website that you can visit, it is www.presenttruth.info. Check us out there

and you can sign up for our newsletters. Also, you can call or write to us. [Smyrna address given.] Please write us and let us know if you appreciate this program.

I want to thank you, Brother Willis, for having me on the program today. I would like to let our radio audience know that Elder Smith is really one of God’s children. He’s been a real blessing and an encouragement to me and to my family. I just praise the Lord for the work he is doing here.

ES: Amen. We thank the Lord for you, Brother. You’ve really been a great help to us here, being with us in Cleveland, Ohio. Today we are going to ask Elder Beachy if he would share something with us. I’ve heard him speak before, and I know from the way the Spirit has touched me, and lead me, that Elder Beachy is on course. So, tonight we are going to ask you to share whatever the Lord has placed on your heart. We want to hear it.

L: Okay. Praise the Lord! I know that God is very good and it’s good to be here today. I want to say hello to all the people listening to this program today.

What I would like to talk about today is the gospel. The gospel really is the central theme of the Bible. I would like to start in Romans chapter 1, verses 16 and 17, where the

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Word of God says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Now, Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and he explained why. “For it is the power of God unto salvation.” Paul explained what makes the gospel the power of God in verse 17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” So here Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed.” God’s righteousness is revealed in the gospel and that’s why it is the power of God unto salvation. When we understand and accept God’s righteousness, it is the power of God in our lives—it is God’s power.

Now, I would like us all to read Romans chapter 2, verse 4. Here it says, “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” God’s goodness is what leads us to repentance, and that’s why Paul could say this is the power of God unto salvation. This is the power that changes our lives, this is what gives us victory in our lives to overcome sin and whatever besets us.

I used to be on drugs and beset by all kinds of temptations and wickedness, but God delivered me from that. He gave me salvation and it was only His goodness that changed my life. When I realized that He really cares for me, that’s what changed my life. That’s what the gospel is all about—revealing that God loves us, that He cares for us, and that He is concerned about each one of us, individually.

Let’s turn to John 3, verse 16. This is one of the most well-known verses in the Bible. That is because it’s such a beautiful verse. I would like us to think about this for a minute. Jesus said, “For *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is how much God loves us, so much that He gave His only begotten Son.

Romans 8:32 says, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Here it demonstrates that God’s love was so great that He gave the most valuable possession He had—He gave up what meant more to Him than anything in the entire universe—He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. In 1 John chapter 4, verse 9, it says, “*In this was manifested the love of God toward us*, because that *God sent his only begotten Son into the world*, that we might live through him.” God’s love was manifested, friends, by Him giving His only begotten Son—sending Him into this world to die for our sins. And

it’s such a beautiful thought that it changed my life. And when we go back to John 3:16 it says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” Why this emphasis on God? Jesus talked about God so much and the Bible is full of an emphasis on God.

I would like us to read Jeremiah chapter 9, verses 23 and 24. Here the Word of God says, “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” So, here God tells us that we should glory in this, and this is the only thing we have to glory in, Brother Willis. The only thing we have to glory in is that we know and understand the Lord—that He is good, that He is just. He wants us to understand and know Him. You know, friends, that’s why Jesus came to this earth, to reveal what God is like.

Let’s turn to 1 John chapter 5 and read verse 20. The Word of God says, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding.” This understanding, that is so important to have, Jesus came to give to us “that we may know him that is true.” He came to reveal Him that is true, “and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” And then he says, “This is the true God, and eternal life.” So, friends, Jesus came to give us an understanding that we may know Him that is true. We are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. “Him that is true” is the Father. Jesus came to reveal His Father. That’s what the Word of God tells us here; we are in Him that is true, which is the Father, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. We are in the Father and the Son.

Now let’s look at what Jesus said about His Father. Let’s turn to John chapter 17 and, starting at verse 1 it says, “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” So, Jesus was praying to His Father, and this is one of the last prayers He gave before His disciples, and He’s giving them a lesson as well. But here He prays to His Father, lifts up His eyes to heaven, saying, “Father.” Then He said, in verse 3, “And this is life eternal.” Now whatever He says next must be very important, isn’t that right?

ES: Amen, it sure is.

L: This is life eternal, this is important, “that they might know thee.” Who are we supposed to know? He goes on, “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” So, Jesus said, “This is life eternal that they might know thee,” the Father. He was talking to His Father, praying to His Father. So, Jesus referred to His Father as “the only true God.”

ES: Amen.

L: Now, when it says “*only* true God,” how many does that eliminate? How many others does that eliminate, Brother Willis?

ES: *All* others.

L: All others, that’s right. There is only one true God. When He says there is only one, He is referring to only one person. And this one Person, He tells us, is His Father. He is talking to his Father and about His Father, and He calls Him, “the only true God.” His Father is the only true God according to Jesus Himself. Now let’s see if this theme is consistent through Christ’s ministry.

Let’s turn to John chapter 4. We know the story well, about when Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. We’ll just cut in on the conversation here in the middle of verse 22. Jesus said to her, “Ye worship ye know not what.” Now let me ask you, “Was that a compliment?”

ES: Not at all!

L: That was not a compliment at all. Jesus was rebuking this woman for worshipping something she did not know. But then He goes on, “we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth.” So, here Jesus said *true* worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. And he goes on to say, “The Father seeketh such to worship him.” Then He says, “God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Now, when He is referring to someone he calls “God,” who is He talking about?

ES: His Father!

L: Obviously! He’s talking about His Father. He says the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is His Father, that’s what Jesus was saying here.

ES: Literal.

L: His literal Father, that’s right. Now, let’s turn to Mark chapter 12. Let’s notice something here: the Bible tells us “there is one God.” It says this specifically seven times in the King James Version of the Bible. There are seven places where it says “one God,” that direct quote. Those seven places are in Malachi 2:10, Mark 12:32, Romans 3:30, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, and James 2:19. That’s every single verse in the Bible that says there is “one God,” that uses that exact phrase. And I would encourage you to read those verses, check them out! We will read a few of them today.

The first one we would like to look at is Mark 12, and we know this story somewhat well so we won’t cover the whole thing, but in verse 28 it says, “And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together,

and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him which is the first commandment of all?” So, the scribe came to Jesus wanting to know, “What is the first commandment of all?” Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.” That wasn’t the end of it but He saw it necessary to bring that out to start with; that the Lord is one—there is only one Lord. And then He said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.” Going back to the gospel—the gospel is what reveals the righteousness of God. This is what reveals it, and when we understand the righteousness of God, the goodness of God, it leads us to repentance. It naturally draws us to Him. Here he says we should love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our minds. John tells us how this takes place.

In 1 John chapter 4, verses 16 and 17, it tells us, “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect...” I would just like to stop there. When he says, “Herein is our love made perfect,” he is referring to the statement he just made—knowing and believing the love that God has to us. And it says, “Herein is our love made perfect.” Our love for God is made perfect by knowing and believing God’s love for us. That’s what Jesus called the first and the greatest commandment. It is to love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. If you love God that way, your love for God has been made perfect. And that will only happen if we know and believe God’s love for us. John also said that “We love him, because He first loved us.” As we see God’s love for us, our love for God is going to grow. It’s going to be enhanced. Jesus said that we need to first know there is one God and then we are to love Him with all our hearts.

It’s not only knowing that there is one God, it’s also knowing his character—knowing what He is like. This is the real gospel, revealing God’s righteousness. Back in Mark 12, verse 31, it says, “And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” Now, notice how this scribe replied. He said, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.” Here this scribe says, “There is one God; and there is none other but he.” This scribe was one of the Jewish leaders. And when a Jewish man said “God,” who was he talking about? Who did they refer to as God?

ES: They were talking about the Father.

L: They were talking about the Father, but we are not going to guess at this. We’re going to let the Bible answer

this question for itself. Let's turn to John chapter 8, verse 54. We will read this to remove any doubt whatsoever in this conversation. Jesus said, "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God." This is Jesus speaking here. He's talking to the Jewish leaders, and He says, "It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God." So, when a Jewish man used the word "God," he was referring to Jesus' Father, and Jesus knew it. This proves it right here. Jesus said so Himself, that the Jews refer to His Father as "God."

Now, when we go back to Mark 12, verse 32, this Jewish man said, "There is one God; and there is none other but he." Jesus knew exactly who he was talking about—He knew he was talking about His Father. To a Jew, the fact that there is one God is such an integral part of their religion. The Shema, which was quoted earlier by Jesus, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord," is quoted twice every day by the Jewish people. It's part of their everyday recitations. This phrase is so important to them because there were so many polytheistic religions around them, and even to this day the Jews are very adamant that there is only one God. They understand this God to be only one Person, and Jesus identified this one Person to be His Father.

Now, notice, this Jew just answered and said there is one God and none other but He. "When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." (Verse 34) Remember, when Jesus met the woman at the well He said, "Ye worship ye know not what." That was not a compliment at all. Instead, it was a rebuke. But here, this Jewish man says there is one God, and none other but He. Jesus knew that he was talking about His Father. He knew it! Jesus took no time whatsoever to correct him or to try to change his mind. He left him in his understanding that there is one God, the Father. Instead of rebuking him in any way, He complimented him and said, "Thou are not far from the kingdom of God. You answered well. Good job."

James does a similar thing. The book of James was written to Jewish people, and in James chapter 2, verse 19, he says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." So, here James is commenting on the Jews' belief that there is one God. "That's good," he said, "You believe that there is one God, that's great! You know, the devils know it too." Just believing that there is one God is not enough. We must also be in submission to the one true God. You need to know God's love, know His character, know the gospel of Jesus Christ, that He came and died for our sins. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins. It is a very important point to know that there

is one God, because it helps enable you to know His love. That one God is the Father, and the scribe said that there is none other but He.

It's important to note the pronouns used in the Bible. When it says "he," or "him," or "I," it's always referring to one Person. I've noticed this about Jesus. When He refers to Himself, He always uses singular personal pronouns; "I," "me," etc. When He's referring to His Father, He always says "He" or "Him," but when He refers to both He and His Father, He always uses plural pronouns such as "us," "we" or "our." Let's just look at an example in John. Here is an example of where He used the words "we" and "our." John 14, verse 23 says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." You notice He is referring to Himself and His Father, and when He does that He uses the plural pronouns "we" and "our." He does that over and over again in John 17.

Let's read verse 21. Jesus is still praying here, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." When Jesus referred to both Himself and His Father He referred to them as "us." Then He says, "That the world may believe that thou hast sent **me**." Now He says, "me." He's talking about Himself, the one person who was sent to die for our sins. Now, in verse 22, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Again, He is referring to Himself and His Father, and He used the plural pronoun "we." That is important when we go back to Mark 12, where the scribe said, "There is one God; and there is none other but **he**." This scribe was referring to only one Person as the "one God," and he goes on and says, "There is none other," there is only one.

That is an interesting point because Paul does the same thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 8. We want to start at verse 4. Paul says, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." This is the same phraseology here, "none other but one." Then he continues, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many)." There are many things in the Bible called god. Men are even called "gods" in both the Old and New Testaments. Angels are called "god" and, of course, false gods are called "god," using the same word to refer to them. But now Paul goes on, in verse 6: "But to us [Christians] there is but **one** God, the Father,..." Notice that to us there is but "one God," and he doesn't stop there, he explains and describes who he is talking about, "the Father," and he leaves it there. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things,

and we in him.” Then he says, “And [there is] one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” So we have one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, and we find this consistent throughout the New Testament, the ministry of Christ, and the ministry of the apostles. They referred to God as the Father over and over again.

I would like us to notice something in John chapter 10, verse 30. This is a somewhat well-known verse and sometimes it has been used in a way that is confusing. This has caused some people to misunderstand it. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” Now, the Modelist, or Jesus only, gets ahold of this verse and says, “The Father and the Son are only one person.” But if you will look at the verse again you’ll notice that the word “person” is completely missing from the verse. He did not say, “I and my Father are one person.” He said, “I and my Father are one.” A Trinitarian gets ahold of this verse and says, “I and my Father are one God.” But, notice, Elder Smith, the verse does not say, “I and my Father are one God.” It simply says, “I and my Father are one.” He leaves it there!

Now, I would like us to notice something in John 17, verse 22. We just read this, but we will read it again just to refresh our memory. Jesus said, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, **even as we are one.**” So, here Jesus says that His disciples can be one in the same way that He and His Father are one. In the very same way the Father and Son are one, He says that you and I, all of us, everyone listening to this presentation today, can be one. Does that mean we are going to become one *person*? Obviously not! Are we all going to become one *God*? Obviously not! What He is saying is, we can be united by partaking of the same Spirit. Having the Spirit of God dwelling and living in us is what makes us one. We become *united*; we begin working together for the same goals, to spread the gospel.

ES: We are in agreement.

L: We are in agreement, and that’s the way the Father and the Son are one. I want us to notice something back in John chapter 10. This is very interesting. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” Now notice what happened next. Verse 31 says, “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.” The Jews didn’t like Jesus claiming to be one with God. Jesus answered, “Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” (Verses 32, 33) Now, notice what happened here. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” The Jews got very angry, and took up stones to kill Him. When asked why they were going to do this, they answered and said, “Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” They misunderstood

what Jesus said; they understood Jesus to be saying that He and His Father are one God. They took His statement as if He were claiming to be God Himself, and the Jews didn’t like that. So the Jews said we are going to stone you because you are a man and you are claiming to be God.

Now, notice how Jesus answered. This is very important! In verse 34, Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” So, here He’s saying the Bible says “ye are gods,” talking about men. Jesus reasoned, “If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Verses 35, 36)

What we see here is Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” The Jews took up stones. They were angry, and said, “We are going to stone you because you are claiming to be God.” Jesus said, “Wait a minute! That’s not what I said. I didn’t say I was *God*. All I said is I am *the Son of God*.” Now, is Jesus telling us the truth?

ES: Yes, He was.

L: Jesus *is* the truth! He is the way, the truth and the life. He will not lie to us, and He tells us He is the Son of God.

I’d like us to turn over to Matthew chapter 16. Jesus said that He is the Son of God. You’ll see here how much emphasis He placed upon this fact—this truth. In Matthew 16, starting at verse 13, it says, “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” He’s asking His disciples, “Who do other people say that I am? Who is this person? What is His *identity*?” That was the question. They answered, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” They said, “Well, some people just think you’re a man. You’re just a prophet, a good man, but nothing more than a man. That is who you are according to a lot of people.”

Jesus asked, in verse 15, “But whom say ye that I am?” He was saying, “You, my disciples who have been with me all this time, who do *you* say that I am?” You know Peter was that outspoken disciple who always had to speak out. In verse 16, Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” When Jesus heard this, He was excited and exclaimed, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Verse 17) Jesus said that man did not reveal this to Peter. This was straight from God Himself. He revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus was so excited, He said, in verse 18, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Now, friends, was Jesus

referring to Peter as the rock upon which He would build His church?

ES: No, He was referring to what Peter said.

L: That's right! Peter's declaration of faith. He said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." What Peter said was not revealed by flesh and blood but by the Father in heaven. Jesus continues His thought by saying, "The declaration you just made is so important I'm going to build my church upon this truth." And He says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it!" This is so important that the gates of hell cannot, and will not, prevail against it.

I would like us to turn to John chapter 20, verses 30 and 31. John also placed a great deal of emphasis on this fact that Jesus is the Son of God. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book." He did too many things to be recorded in this book but, He says, "These are written, *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*" So, here John says, "The reason I wrote this book, the gospel of John, was that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is the point that I am trying to get across to you, that Jesus is the Son of God. That by believing this you can have eternal life through His name." Isn't that precious!

Let's turn now to 1 John chapter 5, verses 4 and 5. I know we are reading a lot of scriptures here.

ES: We want to hear from God.

L: Amen. Praise the Lord!

ES: And the Bible is the Word of God, so, Brother, bring it on.

L: Amen. Let God be true and every man a liar.

ES: Amen.

L: Don't believe anything I say, because I may not be telling you the truth, but check everything out by the Word of God.

ES: You *can* believe what you read.

L: That's right! When I'm reading the Bible you can believe it.

ES: That's where our faith lies. That's where it's at.

L: Okay, 1 John, now, chapter 5, and we want to read verses 4 and 5. It says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." We can overcome the world, friends, and this is the victory, even our faith. Well, faith in what? Faith in anything? No! There is a particular faith that He says we need to have. In verse 5 John continues to explain, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

ES: Yes, Amen.

L: So, here it is, friends, believing that Jesus is the Son of God is the key that will enable us to overcome the world. And Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." (Matthew 10:22) We can overcome the world, friends. Jesus overcame the world, and He's given us the victory. He says that we can overcome if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. You know, that is very similar to what Jesus said in John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He didn't give His friend, He didn't give His companion, He didn't give a man or an angel, He gave His only begotten Son. He says, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ever lasting life." The identity of Jesus Christ is so important to us! He is the only begotten Son of God. This is how God's love was revealed and manifested, by Him sending His only begotten Son into this world to die for our sins.

ES: But didn't He send Himself in another person? I mean, wasn't He God changed into His Son? We hear that all the time.

L: Well, that's a good question, Elder Smith. But you know, the Bible is very clear that Jesus is the Son of God. In fact, the Bible refers to Jesus as the Son of God forty-seven times. Several times He's called the "child" of God or the "holy Child" of God. He is God's Son, He's not God Himself. He is God's own Son.

Now, I know there are places in the Bible that say that Jesus is God. I would like us to look at those for just a moment. Jesus is God! Praise the Lord! That is definitely true, that's what the Word of God says. Yet, when it makes these statements it does not disqualify the fact that Jesus Christ said the only true God is His Father. The Father is the only true God. And Paul says, "To us there is but one God, the Father." Every single time the Bible says there is "one God," it's referring to the Father—every time, without exception. You can read these verses for yourself. If you have a pen, just write them down. They are: Malachi 2:10; Mark 12:32 (which we read); Romans 3:30, 1 Corinthians 8:6 (which we also read); Ephesians 4:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, and James 2:19 (which we also read). You'll find, each and every time, when it says there is "one God," it's referring to only one Person—one Person only, and that Person is the Father.

Now, let us read John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And he continues, "The same was in the beginning with God." (Verse 2) Here he's talking about someone who was in the beginning with God. And who was this? He is referred to as the "Word." And in verse 14 he explains further, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So,

the Word is the only begotten of the Father. That's who this Word is, not just the sound of God's voice. That's not why He's called the "Word." He's also called the "wisdom of God." This doesn't mean that's all He is. Sure, He is the "wisdom of God," but He is much more than that. He is the Word of God, but He is much more than that. He is the only begotten Son of God. So, this Word of God, the only begotten Son, was in the beginning with God. Now, when it says here that He was with someone does that mean He was alone? No! You can't be *with* someone and alone at the same time. The Word, Jesus Christ, was *with* someone. He was *with* another Person. He was *with* His own Father. He was *with* God. "The same was in the beginning *with* God."

John says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Everything that was ever made was made by Christ, or through Christ. Just hold your finger there and we will read Ephesians chapter 3, verse 9, which tells us the same thing. It says, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Who created all things?

ES: Jesus Christ, the Word.

L: It says here that God created all things by Jesus Christ—through Jesus Christ. We find that again in Hebrews chapter 1, verses, 1 and 2. It says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." So, Christ was there with His Father when this world was created. Before everything was created, before any creation was ever in existence, Christ was there. The Son of God was there *with* His Father. He wasn't alone, nor was the Father alone. The Father and the Son were *together*, and that's why they said let "us" make man. God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image after *our* likeness." God, the Father, was not alone. He was *with* His Son.

Many people get confused here because it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So, they say, "Wait a minute here. John says the Word was *with* God, and in the next breathe he says the Word *is* God." So, was He the same Person He was with? Obviously not! That would put the Scriptures at opposition to themselves. That wouldn't make sense. When John says the Word was God, he's saying, the Word was God just like His Father. He was divine just like His Father. Because the Father is divine, fully divine, the Son naturally would be fully divine. That's what the Word of God is telling us here. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God [His Father], and the Word was

God [just like His Father]." The Word was divine just like His Father. That's what the Word of God says. Anybody who knows Greek can check this out for himself.

John says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." That word "God" there has the article "the," the definite article "the," indicating, in Greek, that it's referring to a specific Person. Like if I refer to you, Elder Smith, as "the human." I'm referring to a specific person; a human being. But then, the second time the word "God" is used it says "And the Word was God." When that word "God" is used there, the definite article is missing; indicating that the word "God" here is used as an adjective to describe His nature. This would be like me talking about you, Brother Smith, saying, "Brother Smith is human." I just used the word "human" to describe your nature, not to refer to a specific person. It only makes sense here too, that the Word was *with* a Person, God the Father, and this Word, Jesus Christ the Son of God, was also God like His Father. He was divine just like His Father is divine.

The same thought is reiterated in Proverbs chapter 8. In verse one it says, "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" So here, wisdom is speaking, and in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 24 it says, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Christ is the wisdom of God, and He is speaking here. Now, don't get confused by the fact that it says "her," "put forth *her* voice," as if this was talking about a female person. No, that's not the case. In Hebrew nouns have masculine, feminine or neuter genders, similar to many languages, such as Spanish. This table that we are sitting by is called "la mesa" in Spanish, that's feminine. Yet the car that we came in is "el carro," which is masculine, but we know that this table is not an actual female, nor is the car an actual male person. The same is true in Proverbs chapter 8, but what we notice here is this isn't just some intellectual wisdom talking because, as we go on, we find that verse 8 says, "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them." Wisdom here has a mouth and can speak.

Now, look at verse 17. Wisdom says, "I love them that love me;" and that has to be a person. Intellectual wisdom can't love anything. This has to be a person, and we know this is Christ because He is the Wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30) He says, "When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (Verses 24, 25) Now, Elder Smith, that term "brought forth," in the King James Version, sometimes can be confusing because it can have many different meanings. But when you look back at the Hebrew we find that this word actually means "to be born." This word is in the Pual form, and in that form it

only means to be born. That's the only thing it can mean, and it's only used four times in the Bible in the Pual form. (Job 15:7; Psalm 51:5; & Proverbs 8:24, 25) Every single time it refers to birth. And that's one reason why, if you have a New International Version you can read it for yourself, it says, "Before the hills I was given birth." So, someone here claims to have been born before the hills, before anything was created. Now who could that be?

ES: Only Christ.

L: Could this be referring to any man? Was there any man born before the hills? Absolutely not! What about angels? They existed before the hills—before this earth was created—yet they weren't born. Angels were created. This could only be referring to one Person, and one Person, only. This is the only *begotten* Son of God. He is the only Person who was begotten before the hills. He goes on in verse 30, saying, "Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." This gives us a picture of a Son who is the delight of His Father. I have a son, and I can see the reason why the Father can delight in His Son. So Jesus Christ definitely is the begotten, the only begotten Son of God.

I would like to just notice a few witnesses to this fact. Let's look at Proverbs 30, verse 4. It says here, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" They knew, even back when Proverbs was written, that God had a Son. What did the Father say at Christ's baptism? "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) The Father Himself, who cannot lie, says, "This is my Son." In John 10:36 Jesus said, "I said I am the Son of God." Who is Jesus? The Son of God. He said so Himself. The Father and the Son both give that same testimony. You will find it over and over again throughout the gospels that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. That's what the Scriptures teach.

Let's turn to 1 John chapter 5, verses 9 & 10. It says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." Just as I mentioned earlier, the Father Himself says that Jesus is His Son. The witness of God is the greatest witness. "For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." If we do not believe what God says about His Son then we're making God a liar. That's a serious charge isn't it, friends? We need to believe what God says about His Son. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and, as I mentioned earlier, the Bible uses the term "Son of God" for Christ forty-seven times. Forty-seven times He's

called the Son of God. Several times He's called the "first-born." Several times He's called the "only begotten." Several times He's called God's "holy Child." He is definitely God's Son, and this is so important because God's love is revealed by what He gave for us. He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. If we don't understand who Jesus is then we can't understand God's love.


The Bible is clear! God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That is good news, friends, and the Bible says that this is the power of God unto salvation. This is how we are saved. This is how we are given life and converted. We are given life because God gave His own Son to die for our sins. That is good news, friends. I just want to encourage each of us to get to know God. We need to know who He is. We need to know what He has given for us. And we need to understand His love for us because this is what gives us the victory to overcome sin. This is what gives us victory to overcome the world. This is knowing God and knowing His Son, Jesus Christ.

ES: Knowing that this is His literal Son, not a play, not a role that they are playing, but that it was truly God's only begotten Son, born in heaven and then sent to this world to be born of a woman.

L: Amen.

ES: We really thank you for your study here tonight. We'd like to get your addresses again, your web site, and all the information you can give where a person can get in touch with you and get all the free information that they would desire to have.

L: Amen. Thank you Pastor Smith. I would encourage everyone to write to us and request the book *God's Love on Trial*. Request that book because it will explain these things in much more detail than what I have mentioned tonight, and it will also give some good history on it. [Contact information given.]

ES: Brothers and sisters, if you didn't get any of that you may call us here at God's Word, God's Way. You can reach us at 216-271-9045. Brothers and sisters, we admonish you to get into the Word of God and study like never before. But in all of your studies remember to study God's Word, God's Way. May the Lord bless you real good. 

(If you would like to receive a recorded version of the radio program from which this article was taken, please contact us and request the tape entitled, "Getting to Know God—Live Radio Broadcast." You can hear Willis Smith on 1220 AM and 1440 AM, Sabbath evenings, from 8:00-9:00 p.m. EST, and again on Sunday evenings, from 9:00-9:30 p.m. EST. Your prayers for this outreach are very much appreciated. You can contact Willis at God's Word—God's Way, PO Box 94054, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. You may call him at: 216-271-9045. Editor

WAGGONER ON ROMANS — THE GOSPEL IN PAUL'S GREAT LETTER (PART 2)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

(We are continuing a series of articles commenting on Paul's epistle to the Romans. We pray that you will be blessed by these articles. *Editor*)

The first seven verses of the first chapter of Romans are the salutation. No uninspired letter ever embraced so much in its greeting as this one. The apostle was so overflowing with the love of God that he could not write a letter without covering almost the whole gospel in the salutation. The next eight verses may well be summarized in the words "debtor to all," for they show the completeness of the apostle's devotedness to others.

Let us read them carefully, and not be content with one reading:

Romans 1:8-15

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was **let** [hindered] hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

A Great Contrast—In the days of the apostle Paul the faith of the church in Rome was spoken of throughout all the world. Faith means obedience; for faith is counted for righteousness, and God never counts a thing so unless it is so. Faith "worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6) And this work is a "work of faith." (1 Thessalonians 1:3) Faith also means humility, as is shown by the words of the prophet, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4) The upright man is the just man; the man whose soul is lifted up is not upright or just; but the just man is such because of his faith; therefore only the man whose soul is not lifted up has faith. The Roman brethren, therefore, in the days of Paul, were humble.

But it is far different now. An instance is given by the *Catholic Times* of June 15, 1894. The pope had said,

"We gave authority to the bishops of the Syrian rite to meet in synod at Mossul," and had commended the "very faithful submission" of those bishops and had ratified the election of the patriarch by "Our Apostolic authority." An Anglican paper had expressed surprise, saying, "Is this a free union of equal churches, or is it submission to one supreme and monarchical head?" To which the *Catholic Times* replies: "It is not a free union of equal churches, but it is submission to one supreme and monarchical head.... To our Anglican pleader we say, You are not really surprised. You know well what Rome claims and always will claim, obedience. That claim is now, if it ever was, before the world."

But that claim was not before the world in the days of Paul. In those days it was the church in Rome; now it is the Church of Rome. The church in Rome was famous for its humility, and its obedience to God. The Church of Rome is famous for its haughty assumption of the power of God, and for its demand for obedience to itself.

Praying without Ceasing—The apostle exhorted the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17) He did not exhort others to do that which he did not do himself, for he told the Romans that without ceasing he made mention of them always in his prayers. It is not to be supposed that the apostle had the brethren at Rome on his mind every waking hour of the day, for in that case he could not have thought of anything else. No man can be consciously in prayer every moment, but all can continue "instant in prayer," or, as Young translates it, "in the prayer persevering." (Romans 12:12)

This is in harmony with what the Saviour said, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," or grow weary. (Luke 18:1) In the parable that follows, the unjust judge complains of the "continual coming" of the poor widow. That is an illustration of praying without ceasing. It is not that we are to be every moment in conscious prayer, for then important duties would be neglected, but it is that we should not grow weary of praying.

A Man of Prayer—This is what Paul was. He made mention of the Romans in all his prayers. To the Corinthians he wrote, "I thank my God always on your behalf." (1 Corinthians 1:4) To the Colossians, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." (Colossians 1:3) Still more

emphatically he wrote to the Philippians, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." (Philippians 1:3, 4) Again to the Thessalonians, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith," etc. (1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3) And further, "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." (1 Thessalonians 3:10) To his beloved son in the faith he wrote, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." (2 Timothy 1:3)

"Rejoice Evermore"—The secret of this is to "pray without ceasing." (See 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 17.) The apostle Paul prayed for others so much that he had no time to worry about himself. He had never seen the Romans, yet he prayed for them as earnestly as for the churches that he had raised up. Recounting his labors and sufferings, he adds that they are "beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." (2 Corinthians 11:28)

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing"—He fulfilled the law of Christ by bearing the burdens of others. Thus it was that he was able to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ suffered on the cross for others, but it was "for the joy that was set before him." (Hebrews 12:2) They who are wholly devoted to others, share the joy of their Lord, and can rejoice in him.

"A Prosperous Journey"—Paul prayed earnestly that he might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to visit Rome. Read the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts, and you will learn just what kind of journey he had. Most people would say that it was not a prosperous journey. Yet we do not hear any complaint from Paul; and who can say that he did not have a prosperous trip? "All things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28) Therefore it must have been prosperous. It is well for us to consider these things.

We are apt to look at matters from a wrong side. When we learn to look at them as God looks at them, we shall find that things that we regard as disastrous are prosperous. How much mourning we might save if we always remembered that God knows much better than we do how our prayers should be answered!

Spiritual Gifts—When Christ "ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Ephesians 4:8) These gifts were the gifts of the Spirit, for he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I

go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7) And Peter said on the day of Pentecost: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:32)

These gifts are thus described: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Established by Spiritual Gifts—"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." What is the profit? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12, 13)

The gifts of the Spirit must accompany the Spirit. As soon as the early disciples received the Spirit in accordance with the promise, they received the gifts. One of the gifts, speaking with new tongues, was manifested that very day. It follows, therefore, that the absence of the gifts of the Spirit in any marked degree in the church, is evidence of the absence of the Spirit, not entirely, of course, but to the extent that God has promised it.

The Spirit was to abide with the disciples forever, and therefore the gifts of the Spirit must be manifest in the true church until the second coming of the Lord. As before stated, the absence of any very marked manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit is evidence of the absence of the fullness of the Spirit; and that is the secret of the weakness of the church, and the great divisions that exist. Spiritual gifts establish the church; therefore the church that does not have those gifts can not be established.

Who May Have the Spirit? Whoever asks for it with earnest desire. (See Luke 11:13.) The Spirit has already been poured out, and God has never withdrawn the gift; it only needs that Christians should ask and accept.

“I Am Debtor”—That was the keynote of Paul’s life, and it was the secret of his success. Nowadays we hear of men saying, “The world owes me a living.” But Paul considered that he owed himself to the world. And yet he received nothing from the world but stripes and abuse. Even that which he had received before Christ found him was a total loss. But Christ had found him, and given himself to him, so that he could say, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

As Christ’s life was his life, and Christ gave himself for the world, Paul necessarily became a debtor to the whole world. This has been the case of every man who has been a servant of the Lord. “David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.” (Acts 13:36) “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28)

Personal Labor—There is a foolish notion prevalent that ordinary labor is degrading, especially to a minister of the gospel. It is not all the fault of the ministers themselves, but largely the fault of the foolish people about them. They think that a minister must always be faultlessly attired, and that he must never soil his hands with ordinary manual labor. Such ideas were never gained from the Bible. Christ himself was a carpenter, yet many professed followers of him would be shocked if they should see their minister sawing and planing boards, or digging in the ground, or carrying parcels.

There is a false dignity altogether too prevalent, which is utterly opposed to the spirit of the gospel. Paul was not ashamed nor afraid to labor. And this he did not merely occasionally, but day after day while he was engaged in preaching. (See Acts 18:3, 4) He said, “These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” (Acts 20:34) He was speaking to the leaders of the church when he said, “I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Verse 35)

Paul’s Example—“Neither did we eat any man’s bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.” (2 Thessalonians 3:8) “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.” (2 Corinthians 12:15) “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent.” (2 Corinthians 11:23) “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10)

The grace of God is manifest in service for others. The grace of Christ led him to give himself for us, and to take upon himself the form and condition of a servant. Therefore he who has the most of the grace of Christ will labor the most. He will not shun work, even though it be the most menial service. Christ went to the lowest depths for the sake of man; therefore he who thinks that any service is beneath him, is altogether too high for association with Christ.

Gospel Liberty—Gospel liberty is the liberty that God gives men through the gospel. It expresses His idea of freedom. It is the freedom seen in nature and in all the works of His hands. It is the freedom of the winds, blowing where they list; it is the freedom of the flowers, scattered everywhere through wood and meadow; it is the freedom of the birds, soaring unrestrained through the heavens; the freedom of the sunbeam, shooting from its parent orb and playing on cloud and mountain top; the freedom of the celestial orbs, sweeping ceaselessly on through infinite space. This is the freedom which flows out from the great Creator through all his works.

Tasting Freedom Now—It is sin that has produced what is narrow and contracted and circumscribed, that has erected boundary lines, and made men stingy and niggardly. But sin is to be removed, and then perfect liberty will be realized once more in every part of creation. Even now this freedom may be tasted, by having sin removed from the heart. To enjoy this freedom through eternity is the glorious privilege now offered in the gospel to all men. Who that claims to love liberty can let this opportunity pass unimproved?

We have covered the introduction to the main body of the epistle. The first seven verses are the salutation; the next eight treat of personal matters concerning the apostle and the brethren in Rome, the fifteenth verse being the link which unites the introduction to the directly doctrinal portion of the epistle.

Let the reader note carefully the verses referred to, and he will readily see that this is not an arbitrary division, but that it plainly appears. If in reading any chapter, one will note the different topics touched upon, and the change from one subject to another, he will be surprised to find how much easier it is to grasp the contents of the chapter, and to hold them in mind. The reason why so many people find it difficult to recall what they read in the Bible, is that they try to remember it in bulk, without giving special thought to the details.

In expressing his desire to meet with the Roman brethren, the apostle declared himself to be debtor to both Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, and therefore ready to preach the gospel even in Rome, the capital of the world. The fifteenth verse, and the expression, “preach the gospel,” give the keynote to the whole of the epistle, for the apostle glides from this naturally into his theme. Accordingly, we have next, The Gospel Defined—Romans 1:16, 17. [\(To be continued\)](#)

(This article was taken from a series of articles printed in *The Signs of the Times* from October, 1895 through September, 1896. Some editing has been done for this publication. *Editor*)

A New Secretary

Esther McDaniel has been serving as my secretary for several years now and has done an exceptional job. However, her work with orphans in Africa has taken more and more of her time, and she is no longer able to keep up with my work, so it was necessary for her to resign.

The Lord has opened the doors to allow Ruth Ranieri to move here from Minnesota to help as my secretary. Ruth has been helping for the last few months, and she has been doing a great job. When you write to us, you will likely receive a letter from Ruth. Please be patient with us as we struggle to catch up with my past correspondence. *Editor*

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