

Spiritual Blessings



Vol. 19 No.1
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Editorial

What Is Truth?

When the Lord Jesus was before Pilate, and told Pilate that He had come, among other things, to bear witness to the truth, Pilate's response was, "What is truth?". Depending on how one reads those words, it is possible to hear several undertones in Pilate's reply. Was it a cynical reply? Was he really interested in knowing the truth? Perhaps there was despair in his voice and heart. It is one of those things that we will have to wait to find out.

My purpose in quoting Pilate's question about truth is not to try to bring out what was in his mind, but rather to lead us into a consideration of God's truth in the Word He has given us. It is very true in the highest sense that Christ Himself is the Truth, but that is not my subject at the moment.

It is the position of the organisation behind this magazine that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God, and that they are the only basis for our faith and practice as we seek to walk worthily of our high calling in Christ Jesus. It follows inevitably that, if we would know how we are to walk in a worthy manner, then we

must know God's Word as thoroughly as we are able. If the Bible is God's revelation to tell us, among other things, the sort of people He wants us to be, how can we serve him properly, if we don't know that Bible?

It is almost an axiom of modern society that all truth is relative. This is one of the dangerous half-truths that the believer must deal with today. We may not be able to change the mind of someone who believes all truth is relative, but for the believer, there are some absolute truths that underpin, not only our faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, but also the revelation that God has given us in the Bible.

Without detracting from what I have just said about absolute truth, it is nevertheless correct to say that, even in Scripture, there is some relative truth. In other words there is more than one sort of truth in the Bible, and if we do not discriminate between them, I believe we will end up in confusion, which in turn must affect our walk and witness. So what do I mean when I say there is more than one sort of truth in Scripture?

I think that there are three categories of truth in the Bible. These are: basic truth; dispensational truth; and practical truth. Basic truth, sometimes called doctrinal truth, is truth that is indeed absolute, not changing, when, as century followed

century, God changed dispensations. Examples of basic truth are: revelations dealing with God and His being; the sinfulness of the whole human race; our need of a Saviour; the fact that Christ is the only Saviour and that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. There are more than these, of course.

But then there is what is called dispensational truth, that is, truth which is true in one part of God's dealing with mankind, but not in another. It is very easy to find examples of this type of truth. For example, under the law, Israel was commanded not to work on the Sabbath Day, but to keep it holy.cont. Pg 10

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The President's Word



Athol Walter

Meetings

Come along and meet with us! All meetings (except annual conf.) are free. All welcome.

Brisbane:

Alternate Sundays 10:00am
Redbank Plains High School.

Study Weekend:

June Long Weekend
June 11-13, 2005
(07) 3297 1981

Sydney:

3rd Sunday of each month.
Lunch 12:30pm.
Study 1:30pm.
Community Hall
104 Galston Rd
Hornsby Hts.
(02) 4996 4455

Newcastle:

Every Monday.
7:30pm
34 Aroona St
Edgeworth.
(02) 4950 6708

BBFA Annual Conference 2005

21st, 22nd, 23rd
October 2005 at
Camp Toukley.

Our new committee, elected during the conference in October last year, has taken up the reins of administration of the BBFA.

The main concerns at present are making this magazine as good as we possibly can, and finding ways to make our other avenues of witness, such as study conferences, more effective. We can look back over many years of prayerful thought and hard work by past committees to make our ministry not only successful, but God-glorifying, and the aim of the present team is to be worthy successors of those who have gone before.

When we were writing our constitution some thirty years ago, we were at pains to keep it as simple as possible, and to put rules in place that would prevent a single person, or clique, taking over and running the Fellowship as their personal fiefdom. Accordingly, no person can hold the same committee office for more than two consecutive three-year terms. This has worked well, not only preventing any dictatorships, but also ensuring fresh vision and new ideas. We thank the Lord for His guidance, and we continue to look to Him to lead us in His right ways in this next term.

We ask for your prayers as the committee meets from time to time to consider how best we may guard the Good Deposit of Truth entrusted to us, and make all see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery. To achieve these aims, we hold regular study meetings in several locations (see the list on this page), have an annual conference and several local conferences, and publish this magazine.

It is pleasing to receive messages of support and appreciation from readers in various parts of the world, and I hope you will continue to give us ever-necessary feedback. In our meetings, we regularly pray for all members of the Church which is His Body around the world, particularly those who find themselves having to stand alone without the benefit of a group of like-minded believers

around them. But our Lord is faithful, and as the words from an old Gospel song say, "His Blood has never failed me yet". Walk worthily!

Athol Walter.



Faith

&

Fact

That the Christian Faith is founded on historic facts is not as well appreciated by many believers as it should be. If the events recounted in Gospels and Acts did not happen, then our faith is groundless. C. H. Welch, speaking of the Resurrection, has this to say in his Introduction to his book "The Apostle of The Reconciliation":-

"What heart-moving doctrines arise out of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus! Yet we must keep prominently before us that the resurrection is not a beautiful, soul-stirring theory, but a fact of history as unsentimental and as unalterable as '1066 William the Conqueror'. Doctrines deduced from facts may change, but the facts themselves remain unaltered. The doctrines that arise out of them are only possible and practicable because the transaction is a fact of history.

Notice the way in which the apostle Paul establishes the fact of the resurrection of the Lord before he proceeds to deal with its effects. Having cited a whole series of witnesses (1 Cor. 15), he follows with a statement to the effect that if Christ be not risen from the dead, (1) then is our preaching vain, (2) your faith is vain, (3) we are found false witnesses of God, (4) ye are yet in your sins, and (5) they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."



The Importance of the Bible to the Believer (Part 3)

by John Hutton

God's Word Judges Us

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said...But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was anhungered, and they that were with him' (Matt. 12:2-3).

'The Pharisees also came unto him, And he answered them and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female' (Matt. 19:3-4).

'And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things...And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read...? (Matt. 21:15-16)

'And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came...Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner...?' (Matt. 21: 23 and 42)

'The same day came to him the Sadducees...Jesus answered and said unto them, 'ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures...have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God.....' (Matt. 22: 23, 29, 31).

In the above passages Christ is addressing some Pharisees, some Sadducees, some Scribes, the chief priests and some elders of Israel. It would be inconceivable that these people had never read the parts of Scripture that they were pointed to. These were Israelites who would have read the Scriptures over and over, but were condemned by the words 'haven't you read?'. They would have read the relevant Scriptures but did not hear what they had to say. They obviously did not have the ears to hear.

It has probably been the experience of most of us that a well-known passage of Scripture is being read, and suddenly the words of a verse jump off the page with a significance that it never had before. Our ears have just listened to what we have read.

In the day when 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God' (Romans 14:12) if we hear those words 'haven't you ever read' they will condemn us.

Bible study is a dangerous thing. At some stage or other, it may not be what is being said to us, it could be the next verse on from the one that we are being directed to, but sooner or later God will speak to us and we must react to that speaking. We can obey Him or be indifferent to Him. What if God points out that we are wrong in one of the things that we consider precious in our Christian walk. In the dispensation of Law there was a sacrifice for ignorance (Numbers 15), but there was never a sacrifice for indifference. When God speaks He expects a positive response, otherwise we will pay the sacrifice. Bible study has its dangerous side.

It is more common to approach God's word to confirm what we think we know than it is to say to God 'I am ignorant, teach me Lord and I correct those things and ideas that are wrong'.

'And take the...sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. 6:17).

The Bible is called the sword of the Spirit and is the only weapon that the believer is given but what do we do with it? How should we use it? The answer to those

questions is not covered in these articles.

Satan can use Scripture. That was demonstrated at the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Important verses to notice are 14 and 15 of 2 Cor. 11.

'And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...'

Contrary to popular opinion Satan does not present himself as a creature dressed in red, with horns and flames all around him. The believer, at least, should realise that he presents himself as an angel of light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness. Where do ministers of righteousness have the most influence? Surely not at the race-track or other places that could be considered to be unsavoury. Surely ministers of righteousness would be active in Christendom and therefore it would be reasonable to assume that they use at least some Scripture and that should be enough to put the believer on his or her guard.

We are told to 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

The NIV translates that verse, 'Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth'.

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What is Right Division?

by Richard Snowden

This article is a reprint of a booklet that Richard wrote just over 10 years ago, to introduce interested believers to the subject of Right Division. 'Right Division' is part of the jargon of Dispensationalists, based, of course, on Paul's instruction in 2 Tim. 2:15. This article will help those who are not familiar with the term to understand just what is meant by 'Right Division' or 'rightly dividing the Word of Truth'.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15

There are many Christians who are really keen to be acceptable (*approved*) to God, and use this verse to encourage them to do their best (*study*) to use the Word of God correctly for guiding their daily lives. I am one who does this.

The Word of God says much about itself. Deut. 8:3 – "man...lives...by every word of the Lord." Psalm 119:105 – "Thy word is a lamp." Psalm 110:130 – "The entrance of thy words giveth light."

Many other passages tell us that the Scriptures are for our guidance.

Some of the most recently written instructions from God about His Word were written by Paul towards the end of his ministry, to Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (fully equipped), thoroughly furnished (fitted out like a new house, or a brand new car ready for use) unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

And of course, our text verse that we are considering.

Rightly Dividing? What does it mean? We believe that the Holy

Spirit is saying, through Paul, that although all Scripture is for us, it is not all about us. That is, not all of it is about Christians living in the world today. In other words, we must correctly apportion Scripture so that we apply to ourselves only what should apply to us. Most Christian Churches go along with this to a certain extent.

For example, we don't have animal sacrifices today because (1) Christ was the perfect sacrifice, and (2) those instructions were given to Israel. We don't go to the synagogue on the Sabbath (seventh day) as the Lord Jesus did. We don't do it today because we accept that it is not written about us, although we can learn from the typology.

Also, most of us don't follow Christ's instructions by only having one coat (Luke 9:3) and by not going to Gentiles (Matt. 10:5). Nor do we wash each others' feet, as the Lord commanded at the 'last supper'! (John 13:14, 15) We manage to rationalize these things as not being for us today.

So we all, to a certain extent, try to 'rightly divide' the Word of God. But we need to fully decide which parts of the Bible should apply to our lives today. And that is what we, as Christians trying to "study – do our best – to be approved", believe we have done. Let's look at how we all can work out what part of the Scriptures we should apply to ourselves today. [N.B. Please look up the references given to see for yourself what they say. Check the context.]

In looking at our lives as they are now, do we in the Gentile world live like the Jews did? The O. T. clearly shows how God chose and dealt with the Jews, Israel, separately, as a nation, apart from all other (Gentile) nations. Exod. 6:4-8, 19:4-6, Numb. 23:9, 2 Sam. 7:23, Isa. 43:1, 3, 9, 10.

(Actually, if you can accept the Bible as a book written mainly by Jews, mainly about Jews, then you are well on the path to understanding what we are saying.)

Throughout the first part of the Bible, we see that God says He will bless all non-Jews, the Gentiles, through His chosen nation (Gen. 12:1-3, 22:8-18, Isa. 49:6, 60:3), and that Gentiles can ONLY be blessed THROUGH Israel. But as we progress through Scripture, we see in Ephesians and Colossians that there is no more dividing wall, that God will bless Jew and Gentile EQUALLY together (Eph. 2:11-22, 3:6. Col. 3:11), and that Gentiles can be blessed SEPARATELY from Israel (Eph. 3:1, 8, Col. 1:27). God says that this dividing wall, which was an actual physical barrier in the Temple, is now gone!

Please note that this change, this lack of difference between Jew and Gentile, is not just because Christ died for the sins of the world, because in Acts, after Christ died, we still see Paul going very much to the Jew first. In fact, Paul still kept the Jewish customs, still kept the Law, for years after the death and resurrection of the Lord (Acts 21:24, 28:17). So WHAT

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changed in the relationship between Jew and Gentile, and WHEN did it change?

To understand this change, we must look at accepting the fact that God has dealt differently with man in different ages. For example, God had a different relationship with Adam and Eve after they fell, than that which He had with them before they sinned. God expected one sort of behaviour from Israel before the Law, and another afterwards. Before Christ died, the Law was pre-eminent: after Christ died, grace. Again, God dealt differently with man at this different time.

How, then, can we know for sure how God wants to deal with us now? Can we know how He wants us to behave today? Is God wanting to bless us Gentiles (and I wasn't born a Jew, were you?) through Israel now, or not? If there really is a change in the God-ordained relationship between Jew and Gentile, again the question, WHEN did it change?

Many Christians accept that we live in the current "church age", as most call it, but are not completely sure when it began. Did it begin when Christ died? Or when He arose? When He ascended? When the Holy Spirit poured out power from on high in Jerusalem (Acts 2)? This one seems to be the common belief. Or did our age of grace begin when Peter, a Jew, went with great difficulty to some Gentiles (Acts 10)? Or was it when Paul said, "We turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46) When did this age really begin?

As a Bible student, I believe the Word of God teaches that the age in which we now live began about A.D. 60-70, the time

recorded at the end of the Book of Acts.

Acts 28:26-28 records Paul, after discussion with the leading Jews in Rome, speaking very sharply and saying, in effect, "The Jewish nation will not see or hear or believe God's message, so they are set aside, and now the Gentiles are God's primary concern". Shortly after this, the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, Israel was dispersed, and the Jews have been off the centre stage of the world until recent years. Note that this setting aside of God's Chosen People is only for a time, because Israel WILL fully return to its rightful place in the earth's affairs, very much fulfilling God's overall plan for the ages.

So we believe that this change in the God-ordained relationship between Jews and the Gentiles took place at the time of the events recorded at the end of the Book of Acts. And the change that took place? We Gentiles can now have a different relationship with our God. We can have fellowship in our OWN right, rather than having to be blessed through Israel.

One reason for believing this is because Paul's later writings – those epistles written after the end of the Acts time-span – contain a particular new revelation, which Paul said had been hidden throughout the ages (Eph 3:9). This mystery ['secret' is a better translation] in Eph. 3:3-9 says that what God was now revealing through Paul, was that the Gentiles should be 'joint-heirs' (verse 6), and no longer needed Israel as a channel of blessing by God. Colossians 1:26, 27 should also be checked.

This fact of the Gentiles' new position had NEVER BEFORE

been revealed, not in the O.T., not in the Gospels, not in the Acts, and not in epistles written during the Acts period. So this new revelation must be something significant.

In addition to this new revelation, other changes appear in these later seven epistles of Paul. Paul wrote 14 letters in all (including Hebrews), seven of them were penned during Acts, and seven after. [Note God's numerics in the TWO sets of sevens. 2 = difference, 7 = spiritual perfection!] These later ones are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

As you read through the Book of Acts, you cannot help but notice the major emphasis on Jewish aspects, and this is reflected in the earlier epistles of Paul. It is also seen in the seven epistles (note the number 7 again!) written by the other (Israelite) apostles. This prominence (of Jewish things) virtually disappears in the later words of Paul, indicating that he had indeed taken God's salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28), as the apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). And wouldn't you agree that for many centuries, God's salvation has been heard by the Gentile nations, far, far more than by Israel?

So from this evidence, and other facts in the Bible, which we haven't time or space to present here, it would appear that we Gentiles do indeed live in a different age or 'dispensation' (another good rendition of the Greek word 'oikonomia' is

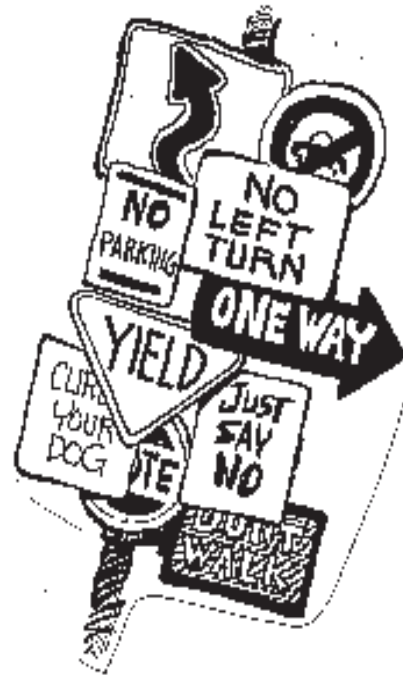
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Which Path?

Your Bible will help you in
your daily walk -
and your Bible will also
help you solve this puzzle.

*Look up Psalm 119:105, and
then find the right path
through the maze by drawing
a continuous line, in any
direction through the letters.*

Write Psalm 119:105 here:



N T O I Y C A
H N A P M H C U I
O R N F T W
I O G H N G
T I C R E S
P L A S T
I A T D E
O E J B N
T Y F E A
M O X E T
L O T K S P
P X V I P K J
S A T A M K U
A D I L B G Z D
N O R P W X P Q M
Z F K O N U O L R O
Y B E F W J K L M
D O G R S P Q
A C U T

The Importance of the Bible to the Believer

The Greek word for 'rightly divide' is 'orthotomeo' and comes from the words 'ortho', right, and 'temno', to cut. 'Ortho' is used in the English words 'orthodox' and 'orthodontist'. When we visit the orthodontist we want to have our teeth made right, usually by straightening them.

The word 'tomeo' forms part of the English words 'appendectomy' and 'vasectomy'. Both procedures involve cutting. The reader will know of many similar words. The Greek word for 'handle' is 'pseelaphao' and is used in Luke 24:39 and 1 John 1:1. 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have'. 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked

upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life'.

The word for 'use' is 'kraomai' and is used in 1 Cor. 9:12. 'If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ'.

The word for 'rightly divide' is 'orthotomeo'. The word for cut' is 'temno'. The word for 'handle' is 'pseelaphao' and the word for 'use' is 'kraomai'. The reader can decide for himself or herself what the meaning of 'orthotomeo' is. Whatever is the meaning, it is of vital importance to the believer, because if we do not 'rightly divide' or 'correctly handle' the Word of God we will be workmen that need to be ashamed and in the words of the parable will never hear the words 'Well done!

You are workman of mine that I am not ashamed of'. As in all things concerning our walk as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, God never impinges on the precious gift of having a free will. The Bible, God's Word, is important to the believer. It reveals God to us, in a way that we can at least have some comprehension of Him, and our attitude to the Bible is a personal decision - one that we have to make for ourselves.

In conclusion, the first doctrine of the Salvation Army is worth taking note of. "We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice".

As far as our walk is concerned, God's Word will judge our walk.

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'administration') from those Christians of the Acts period.

The Americans tend to talk of their presidency in terms such as the "Kennedy Administration" for example. We know that this simply means a period of time during which certain things happen.

When a new president is elected, the new administration starts doing things the way it wants. It changes SOME rules for living to suit itself, while the basic laws stay the same. In the same manner, as we said before, God changes SOME of the rules of His dealings with man when He changes the dispensation or administration.

Back then to our earlier question. How do we decide which parts of the Bible apply primarily to our

lives today, and how can we know for sure how God wants us to behave today? I believe we can find these rules and instructions for this age in the parts of the Bible written during this age - the later epistles of Paul we have been discussing.

Just as all Christians would agree that the O.T. laws on sacrifice and eating habits etc., are not about us and our behaviour before God, so we believe that these epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon, are special areas of Scripture that better explain for us what our actions should be before God today. However, as Christian Bible students wanting to 'rightly divide', we can also study the WHOLE Bible as being for us and for our learning (2 Tim. 3:16 - ALL Scripture), but we should prefer only these most recent writings as being about us,

Dispensational Basics

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in primarily telling us how to live as Gentiles in this present world.

But why accept my word? Read through the ACT(S)ivities of the early believers. Note how often the words "Israel", "Jew first" etc. appear. Then read through these later letters from Paul, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any differences. He wants you to see for yourself and make up your own mind. Decide for yourself, praying "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know the hope of His calling (for you), and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints". (Eph. 1:17-18).

I pray this for you, too.
Richard Snowden

Christ Our Surety

Reprinted from the Berean Expositor,
Vol. 1, p. 49 By Charles Welch.

Genesis 43:1-10, and 44:18-34.

Our readers are doubtless familiar with the passages referred to above, and it is our intention to examine them with regard to their typical teaching. The action of Israel with regard to their Messiah is foreshadowed in this historic incident, for Stephen in Acts 7:51, referring to Israel as “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, who always resist the Holy Ghost, as their fathers did,” says “The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him and at the *second time* Joseph was made known to his brethren’ (Acts 7:9-13).

Heb. 9:28 tells us that Christ will appear the *second time* without sin unto salvation. When the Lord Jesus comes again, “they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn,” even as Joseph’s brethren did when they realized that they were in the presence of one who had been so ill-treated at their hands. We do not desire, however, to emphasize the prophetic type so much, as to draw attention to one of the sublimer truths of the doctrine of atonement which is hereby typified, viz.:-

The Suretyship of Christ.

“I will be surety for him” (Gen. 43:9). What is the meaning of a surety? The Hebrew word (translated surety) comes from a word meaning ‘to mix’. At first sight, this may not appear to throw much light upon the subject, but we believe it will as we examine one or two passages of Scripture. The Hebrew word for ‘evening’ is literally ‘the mixture’, for then the light and darkness appear to mingle together. The same word

supplies us with the “woof” (Lev. 13:48 etc.) in weaving, the threads which are ‘intermixed’ with the warp in the production of the cloth. It further comes to mean ‘To mix or engage with others in trading’ and hence in turn comes to mean, ‘A place for such intercourse – a market’.

This helps us to see that the great underlying principle of suretyship is to become so identified, or interwoven, with the cause of another as to be treated in his room or stead, to be responsible for his debts and failures, to make good his deficiencies, in short, to fulfil to the letter, the wonderful doctrine enshrined in the theological term:-

Substitution.

This responsibility is further emphasized by the words of Judah, “Of my hand thou shalt require him.” For illustration, read Gen. 31:39, “That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I *bear the loss* of it; of my hand didst thou *require* it.” See also 2 Sam. 4:11. Judah further amplifies this by saying that should he fail in execution of his suretyship, “then let me bear the blame for ever”. The word rendered ‘blame’ is translated ‘sin’ 165 times in the Old Testament. Hence, looking beyond Judah to the anti-type, we see that if Christ our Surety failed in His work, He must be still bearing sin – a dreadful thought – but, blessed be God, this is effectually disposed of by the resurrection, for “He was delivered because of our offences, and raised again because of our justifying” (Rom. 4:25). “Sin hath no more dominion over Him.” The substitutionary character of the

surety is further emphasized in Gen. 44:33, “Let thy servant abide instead of the lad”. Precious word ‘instead’. “That One who knew no sin was made sin (and a sin offering) *for us* (or *on our behalf*), with the object that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ dying in my stead, and raised from the dead, is pledge of:-

Irreversible Salvation.

Gen. 44:34 gives a word which enables us to see that the step downward for heaven’s glory to earth’s shame taken by the Lord Jesus when He made our cause His own, is to be followed by a step upward from earth’s shame to heaven’s glory *with Him*. He who identified Himself with our sorrows has identified us with His joys. Oh, the wonder of it all! Truly, “by grace are ye saved”; truly (as one has put it), “the saved are in for favour”. Listen to Judah, but think of Christ, as he says, “How shall I ascend up to *my father*, and the lad be not *with me*?” How can Christ, who suffered, died and rose again, ever be satisfied until those for whom He became surety are safely by His side in the Father’s home?

“*With me.*” When we contemplate our ruin, our fall, our sin, our doom; what grace, what love, that He, the spotless, peerless Son of God should come down and identify Himself “with me”! When we contemplate His glory, His fulness, His holiness, the wonders of the heavenly home, the light of His glorious throne, the nearness to the Father, what transcendent grace and

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What Is Truth?

Was it taken seriously? Most certainly. In Numbers 15 we read of a man who was found gathering sticks for his fire on the Sabbath Day. They took him to Moses, who asked the Lord what action should be taken. The Lord told Moses that all the congregation had to stone the offender to death, which they did. The Lord was certainly serious about the Law. But not one of us would consider it right to stone someone to death now because they had gathered sticks and lit a fire on the Sabbath Day. It was true for that dispensation, but not for this present one.

There is also the example of circumcision, a rite instituted at the Lord's command. But what does Paul say in Galatians 5:2? "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." We know he was speaking particularly to Jewish believers in those Acts days who were trying to impose circumcision, and indeed the whole Mosaic law, on Gentile converts. Paul's message was quite succinct. "If you put yourself back under the Law, you disqualify yourself from Christ." Why, Paul? Things have changed. As most of our readers will know, it is one of the primary aims of our witness to teach just what is the right truth for today, to understand which rules, in which part of Scripture, are specifically to us.

Finally, there is practical truth. Once we have tested some Scriptural statement to see if it is actually truth for today – this is what is meant by rightly dividing the Word of Truth – and we are sure that indeed it does apply

to us, then it becomes practical truth that must govern what we believe and do. Another way of saying this is that while all Scripture is FOR us, not all Scripture is about us or to us. We cannot take any passage of Scripture at random, and apply it to ourselves without first putting it through the test of right division.

One of the problems we face continually in both our study meetings and in this magazine, is trying to meet the very different needs of those to whom we minister. Some readers are very advanced in their knowledge and understanding of Scripture, while others are quite new to God's Word. And others are at various stages in between. So, as editor, I intend to have articles dealing with the three areas of truth I have mentioned, in each issue, and also will try to address the needs of beginners as well as the more advanced. John Hutton's short series on "The Importance of the Bible for the Believer" fits into the category of Biblical Basics, so that is a good start.

I would appreciate your comments as we go along. If there is a particular subject you would like dealt with, then drop me a line, and while I make no promises, we will do our best. All those associated with this ministry pray that the Lord will use it to bring people to a knowledge of the Lord's saving grace and power, and to deepen the understanding of God's wonderful Word for many. The reason we pray this is not only that we may all come to know more, but that as we increase in our knowledge of God's wonderful ways and Word, that we as people, will be made more

conformable to the Image of His Son, so that all the praise and glory will be to our glorious Lord and Head.

Athol Walter, Editor.

Christ Our Surety *cont from pg 9*

unspeakable mercy do we find in the Scripture which tells that, sinful by nature as we are, we shall one day reach the fruition of redemption by finding ourselves placed securely for all eternity "with Him".

Let it be repeated and emphasized unremittingly that all is of grace, that He hath "saved us and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before age-times" (2 Tim. 1:9). There are some who are so spiritual (?) that the doctrine of the atoning blood is repulsive to them. We can but pity them. In the sight of God that blood is "precious". On the pages of Scripture, we discover that through that precious blood we have peace; we are justified; we are saved from wrath. We know Him, our great Surety, not only as the One who died, but as the One who was raised from the dead to die no more. Still for us He lives; still for us He intercedes; soon for us He is coming. Soon we shall be with Him.

May those who read these words be led fully to realize the blessedness of the truth contained in the type before us, and unflinchingly and unfalteringly hold fast the truth of *Christ our Surety*.

The Book About The Seed

What do you think the Bible is about? There are quite a few possible answers to that question. If you study the Bible at all seriously you will learn about: history – but it is not just a history book; geography – but it is not just a geography book; languages – but it is not a language text book; ancient peoples – but it is not just about how nations developed. That list could be added to, but it is sufficient to make the point that anyone who studies the Bible will automatically acquire quite a broad education along the way. In the final analysis, however, the Bible is about the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15). In John 5:39 we read of the Lord saying to religious leaders of Israel, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life.”

Paul says in Eph. 3:4,5 that the mystery or secret of Christ has been progressively revealed throughout the generations, and I would like to list a few Scripture passages (without much comment) to show the truth of that statement.

Gen.3:15 is the first hint in Scripture about the One who was to come to right the wrong caused by Adam’s sin. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Next is Gen.12:3, which reads: “... and in thee (Abraham) shall all families of the earth be blessed”.

The nations that developed from Noah’s sons rebelled against God at Babel. God’s response was to choose one man, Abraham, and promise him that he would become a great nation and in him all families of the earth should be blessed.

Gen. 49:10 tells us that ‘the sceptre shall not depart from Judah’. One nation chosen, now one tribe in the nation.

Now a jump to Isaiah’s prophecy. Ch. 7:14 reads, “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and shall call His name Immanuel.” These words undoubtedly had a first fulfillment soon after Isaiah delivered them, but we know, with the benefit of hindsight and fulfilled prophecy, that the words applied ultimately to the Messiah.

“For unto us
a child is born,
unto us a son is
given: and the
government shall
be upon his
shoulder; and his
name shall be
called ...
the mighty God ...”
Isa. 61:1-4.

Isa. 9:6 is also very pertinent. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called... the mighty God...” Isa. 61:1-4. Please look these verses up. The Lord quoted the first verse and one sentence of this chapter when starting His ministry, and amazed the congregation by saying, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”. (Luke 4:21) Now turn to Micah 5:2. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.” This one was used by King Herod when he tried to stamp out this rival to his throne. I can well imagine that Zechariah 9:9 would have caused the Jewish scholars of old a few headaches. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation...” No problems for them in those words. But the passage continues, “... lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” Can you imagine the confusion that would cause? How could their mighty, conquering Messiah-King come in such a lowly way as riding on a donkey? We know that He did exactly that.

There are many other ‘Messianic’ references scattered throughout the Old Testament, but the ones given should be sufficient to show that indeed, the Bible is the Book about the Seed, and that the mystery of Christ was revealed slowly over the centuries.

A One-Day Bible Conference

An Invitation to Our NSW Readers

15th May 2005

The BBFA is conducting a day-long Bible Study conference on SUNDAY, 15th. MAY 2005 at HORNSBY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY HALL 104 Galston Rd Hornsby Heights. Three sessions: 10am; 11:30am; 2:15pm. Hall open by 9:30am. Various speakers will present Bible studies honouring the Lord and His Word. Come and join us for a time of rich, warm fellowship. Tea/coffee available all day. Bring something to share for lunch. You will be warmly welcomed. No pressure exerted to join anything. Phone Athol Walter, 4996 4455, for any further details required.

Annual Conference 21-23rd October 2005

We invite all readers to set aside these dates this year and join us for this wonderful opportunity to meet together to study God's Word. Ample room for families and children. All meals, accommodation plus fun activities are provided for the young and young at heart. Camp Toukley is located on the beautiful Central Coast of NSW.

JOIN US!

Spiritual Blessings

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Visit our Web Site:

www.spiritualblessings.org.au

Articles which honour The Lord Christ Jesus, and acknowledge the principle of right division will be considered for publication. All articles are accepted on the basis that they may be used as the BBFA sees fit unless otherwise requested by the author.

The interpretation of Scripture by various authors is not necessarily the one held by the majority of the Fellowship.

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1. Full Inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. The Deity of Christ.
3. All sufficiency of Christ's One Sacrifice.
4. The Bible study principle of right division.

The BBFA Committee:

President: Athol Walter.
V-President: John Hutton.
Treasurer: Sue Hall.
Secretary: Margaret Abbott.
Committee members: Frank Haegler, Robin Ward,
Neville Ward.

Bored spending Monday evenings in front of the TV?

We would love to see those readers of Spiritual Blessings who may or may not attend regular fellowship services in the Newcastle region and who are interested in Bible study, or simply have questions they have not been able to find answers to. Our group is non-denominational and dedicated to searching out the Truth in Scripture and worshipping together. We meet in comfortable, casual, relaxed surroundings each Monday evening at 7.30pm at Edgeworth, Newcastle NSW (see address Pg. 2).

Interested but uncomfortable about showing up alone?

Then pick up the phone and call Athol on
4996 4455, Sue on 4995 6068
or David on 4950 6708..

We also have groups in Brisbane and Sydney that regularly meet so please check Pg. 2 for details and phone if you would like more information.

Visit our web site:

[**www.spiritualblessings.org.au**](http://www.spiritualblessings.org.au)



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