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**"Preaching grace in the Dispensation of grace"
A Bible Study**

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HERE I STAND

BY RICHARD JORDAN

Most of you know that in recent days several charges have been leveled at me and our Pastoral Training Class in regard to the King James Bible and prayer. My views on both issues have been so distorted as not to be recognizable and thus I want to take this opportunity to state for you as clearly as I can my own convictions on these matters.

THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE

The current charges concerning a so-called "KJV inerrancy theory" are in reality little more than a ruse designed to draw attention away from the fact that these brethren do not believe the Bible actually exists today in anything more than what they term a "general sense." In other words, they do not believe the words of Scripture are now available; rather its message is all that now exists. Because I- and scores of others--agree with the Lord Jesus Christ that His "words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33), I have been denounced as a rabble rouser, a liar and a heretic teaching some "far out doctrine with "not one verse" to support my claims. Serious matters indeed!

For many years I have believed that the King James Bible is the Word of God for English speaking people. I came to Chicago with the clear understanding that I firmly held this conviction. I also understood that the ministry that brought me here was not designed to champion this cause. Since "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery' has long been the one great passion of my heart, I was willing to place my focus there and let others fight the Bible version battle. I did not and have not changed my conviction, however, about the KJV. I believed then and continue to believe now that the KJV is the Word of God for English speaking people. On that point, I have never wavered.

Over the past eight-plus years I have learned much which has broadened both my appreciation for the KJV and my ability to more properly and accurately defend it. Let me state as clearly as I can that I do not believe that the King James translators were inspired nor do I believe that the KJV is somehow not really a translation but a "word-f

or-word preservation of the original manuscripts." These are simply things invented by the critics: straw dummies, if you will.

The King James Version is just that—the King James Version. Look up the word "version" in a dictionary and you will find it means "a translation." No one denies or questions this. We recognize that to say the KJV is the word of God for English speaking people is to say that it is God's word translated into English. Nothing more and nothing less.

Let there be no mistake: I believe the KJV of the Bible is an accurate, reliable, authoritative translation of the providentially preserved Word of God. And this is where all the difficulties begin and end.

You see, the fundamental problem centers in the question of whether the Bible is indeed findable and knowable today in a particular and verbal sense; whether God not only originally write down particular words of His own choosing, but did He also preserve those very words through history to this day? Ask our critics exactly where the words God originally wrote down are to be found and they will deny even the possibility of finding those words.

My great sin has not been to believe that the words of God can only be "found in only one English translation." I have never believed that. No, my great sin has been to believe that the Word of God consists of the "words" referred to in passages like Luke 21:33, Matt. 5:18, Isa. 40:8; 49:18, etc. and that God has provided a process whereby those "words" can actually be located. Notice, for example, that the last verse just listed indicates those "words" will be preserved into and locatable by those in the kingdom age! Should they be any less available to us who live before that glorious day?

The bottom line is simply that I believe that the Word of God is knowable and findable in a particular sense and that that sense extends to the very words of the text. Friend, if "words" are not the issue, how then can the doctrine of the verbal (i.e., word-for-word) inspiration of the originals be anything but meaningless?

And don't be diverted by the question of variations in manuscripts. It is the path of faith to accept the Scriptures teaching as true even if we cannot confirm it all with our own finite experiences and senses at the moment. To deny the divine viewpoint because of limited human viewpoint is disastrous!

Furthermore: If it is the Scripture itself that is the inspired Word of God, wouldn't an accurate translation also be legitimately called the inspired Word of God? Isn't this the very basis for at least one of our critics often writing, 'God's inspired Word says' and then referring to or quoting KJV?

As to the reliability of KJV as a translation, I have often used the words of another: "We have in our hands, in the Authorized Version, a Bible so remarkably free from error that we can say of even this translation, 'This is the Bible....'"

I believe the KJV should not be changed or altered simply on the basis of private viewpoint--yours and mine not accepted. It should be honored for what it is, studied diligently by using all the study tools available (concordances, dictionaries, reference works, et.) and taught with confidence so that the authority of God's Word does God's work.

Those who attend Bible conferences, listen to tapes and read the writings of prominent grace preachers' can judge for themselves if there is an effort to discredit the KJV. For myself, I can only say that it troubles me to hear or read someone who themselves cannot translate, telling us how a verse should better be translated or pointing out supposed "mistakes" and "patent errors" in KJV. Too often they are just plain wrong because they assumed someone else they have read after is right or that their own research was adequate.

Remember: It is a serious matter to charge the Bible--in any language--with having a mistake in it. Before you follow someone who tells you your Bible has mistakes in it, you better find out if he has one that doesn't--and where it is!

My support for KJV does not come from some supposed extremist view, but rather from an appreciation for the text from which it is translated and a recognition that as a translation it is the fruit of a long and arduous process in the Protestant Church to produce an authoritative English translation--one which is clearly the result of the historic application of the process of providential preservation as taught in Scripture. Thus I say again, in the words of another: new have in our hands, in the Authorized Version, a Bible so remarkably free from error that we can say of even this translation, 'This is the Bible,'"

THE QUESTION OF PAULINE PRAYER

Prayer is an inter-dispensational principle in that all men in all ages are exhorted and privileged to pray. It is, however, also a dispensational issue in that they do not all pray for the same reasons nor have cause to expect the same results. All men in all dispensations pray but they do so in accordance with the instructions given to them for their particular dispensation.

Once again, speaking for myself, I do not believe that in the present dispensation the believer is to "pray only for spiritual things." In point of fact, I am not even sure what that is suppose to mean.

To the contrary: Paul's epistles clearly show that in the age of grace God Himself is vitally interested in every detail of our lives and invites us to bring them all to Him and leave them there, knowing that He will do His best of us--because He has already done His best for us: in Christ Jesus! Thus even our problems become productive and actually "work for us," as II Cor. 4:16-18 says.

In line with the nature of what God is doing today (i.e., forming a spiritual body of believers called the Body of Christ), Pauline Prayer naturally focuses on spiritual issues--but it never "overlooks" physical circumstances, situations and/or needs. Rather it provides the empowerment for the believer to properly respond to these "felt needs" and handle every detail of life for the glory of God. Romans 8:26-27 is clear that the indwelling Holy Spirit motivates and energizes by His power an effective prayer ministry that penetrates the deepest levels of human need.

There are definite "results"--spiritual, emotional and physical--which come as a response to this wonderful divine operating asset of "praying in the Spirit." Thus the writer feels that anyone who tells you that you cannot pray for everything that is on your heart is short-changing you just as surely as the one who tells you that God will give you anything you pray for is holding our false hopes and expectation to you.

The following from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson expresses our view of prayer so fully we simply reproduce it here with our hearty 'Amen' attached:

"It is a solemn thing to make unconditioned demands upon God. To the record of such prayers may often be added the solemn words: 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness unto their soul.' Hezekiah prayed in this way. He claimed a prolongation of his life and God granted his petition; and the added years gave him his son Manasseh, and the consequences of Manasseh's sin (that God 'would not pardon') still rest as a blight and a curse upon that nation!

"Such a prayer, I make bold to say, is unfitting to the Christian. How different the teaching of the Divine Spirit! It may be the life of husband or wife, or parent or child, that is in the balance: what then shall be the believer's attitude? To claim it, as Hezekiah did, and chance the awful risks which the answer may entail? Or 'by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,' to leave the request with God; and having thus left it all with Him, to trust His love and wisdom with the issue? It was thus the apostle prayed when he sought relief from that mysterious hindrance to his ministry; and the denial of his request, instead of bringing bitterness of soul, only served to teach him more of 'the power of Christ.'

"The prayer of the Pentecostal ages was like drawing cheques to be paid in coin over the counter. The prayer of the Christian dispensation--that of the life of faith is to make known our requests to God and to be at peace" (The Silence of God, pp.207-208).

Concerning the healing of the sick: If God does heal a sick-one, does He do so because we or they pray--or does He do so because it is His will to do so in the outworking of His purposes? It seems to me that in light of Phil. 4:6-7, the fundamental purpose of Pauline Prayer is not simply to make life easier for the believer but rather to set us at peace with His will, whatever it may be. This is the "something far better" with which our heavenly Father has replaced the healing program of former days.

A DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

BY RICHARD JORDAN

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9).

For us the decision to resign our position at Berean Bible Society on August 29, 1987 grew out of what we felt was a genuinely God-given burden that was carrying our ministry in a different direction. We are grateful for the eight-plus years there and trust our service was profitable to them and the Body of Christ in general. Now the time has come for us to move on to other things the Lord has been preparing us for.

Our message has not and will not change; we will never be diverted from "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery." There are a number of avenues through which we feel burdened to focus our future efforts and we want to share them with you. These are not the only areas of need, nor do we feel our contributions will be all sufficient or single-handed. We do, however want to give our friends some idea of where we will, by the grace of God, be moving in the days ahead. We list seven specific areas of opportunity:

I. The continuation and future expansion of our Pastoral Training Class. We are convinced that this class will make a major contribution to filling the need for strong grace pastors and teachers.

The key to the Pastoral Training Class is its curriculum base. The Apostle Paul insists that it is the "perfected saint" who is to do "the work of the ministry," and thus it only seems proper to allow Paul to set the pattern for this perfecting. It is on this point that traditional training has so often fallen short.

The basic format for most (if not all) Bible Institute, College and Seminary curriculum is that of Systematic Theology has its root in the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages and is basically founded on human viewpoint, representing man's own systematizing of his knowledge of God, His works and working. But recognizing this as a fatal flaw in Protestant attempting to get "back to the Bible" is only a part of the solution. How to remedy the flaw; this has proven elusive. It seems to us that it is just at this point that we of the grace movement can make a special contribution.

When we recognize the distinctive ministry and message committed by our Lord to the Apostle Paul we are on the road to the proper answer, for, as C. I. Scofield so rightly said, "In his (Paul) writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the church. And Paul is careful to set forth in his epistles a design, a pattern for the edification of the believer is to be instructed in and oriented to grace and its operation in the dispensation of grace.

It is this Pauline design for the edification of the believer which forms the basic element for the curriculum of our Training Class. We feel very strongly that the formula for training men according to this Pauline pattern is a good, scriptural one and is a key to raising up men to preach the truth committed to our trust. Thus we want to make every effort to see that the Class continues, is improved and even expanded in its out reach. We need men who are trained to clearly preach and teach the rightly divided Word with power and conviction!

2. Along with the above goes a commitment to the local church. Paul's epistles make it abundantly clear that the local church is God's primary vehicle for carrying on His work today. We strongly oppose denominationalism and any form of professionalism-professional church operators are too much a blight on the grace movement already. Yet we are convinced that a renewed emphasis on the importance and place of the local church is an absolute necessity if the grace movement is to once again truly move forward.

Evangelism and edification are most effectively carried on through the local church and as more and more men are trained for the ministry we will certainly see a renewed emphasis on establishing strong, distinctively grace churches. Happily our audio and video tapes are already being used effectively in this area. There is much more to be done.

3. The publication and distribution of quality grace oriented Sunday school and youth work material. If there is any area sadly lacking in grace circles it is this. If we expect to pass our faith on to our children we simply must make progress in these areas. There are a number of local churches making real headway in this area and, by the grace of God, we hope to help.

4. The production of salvation and Bible teaching tracts, booklets and books. The written ministries of J. C. O'Hair, Charles F. Baker, C. R. Stam and others have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of clear grace literature. There is a constant need for more literature focusing on rightly dividing the word of truth and grace living principles.

5. The sponsorship of Bible conferences where the Bible is expounded clearly and powerfully. Such conferences, whether regional or in local churches, have already proven very effective tools for helping people see the distinctives of grace as well as promoting fellowship among grace believers in various areas. Evangelism, edification, fellowship, unity, testimony-these are a few benefits reaped from such conferences.

6. The expanded use of media, including the production of radio and hopefully television programs. In today's technology mad world it will become more and more important to use this technology to reach the masses. These vehicles can be very effective tools for the cause of Christ. We have already had several inquiries about radio and hope to have our own program on line shortly. Do pray for this. We are also continuing to expand our audio and video ministries.

7. The publication of a Bible Study and news monthly emphasizing the dispensational and doctrinal distinctives of grace with a special focus on grace living principles. You have in your hands our first edition and we trust you enjoy it as well as future issues. If you benefit from this publication please pass it on. We want to get the Word of God out to as many as we can. Feel free to send us names of others who would like to receive The Grace Journal.

THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS

Long before the birth of the lord Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaiah prophesied about his coming, listing five descriptive titles for Him:

"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 Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace" (Isa. 9:6).

Wonderful: In every way He was and still is wonderful. Perhaps He is most wonderful in that He knows all about us-every sordid detail-and yet loves us still! Indeed, Paul declares, "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal.2:20).

Counselor: Psychological methods come and go but Jesus Christ is still the true Counselor. It is He who teaches us how to live, how to walk righteously, how to face tomorrow. We "have heard Him and have been taught by Him" (Eph.4:21).

The Mighty God: Yes, Jesus Christ is God-"the mighty God!" There are those who deny this scriptural truth, claiming that Jesus Christ is a mighty God but not the almighty God. This assertion, however, is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture: Look, for example, at Isaiah 45:23 and see that every knee will bow to Jehovah; then turn to Philippians 2:9-11 where we are told that every knee will bow to Jesus Christ. And remember: "My glory will I not give to another" (Isa.42:8). Jesus Christ is none other than Jehovah God in human flesh.

The Everlasting Father: This shows that Christ created all things; He is the originator of all. "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God . . . all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth . . ." (Col. 1:16).

The Prince of Peace: If only our political leaders would get this ! When Jesus Christ returns to this earth "the government shall be upon His shoulder." He will rule with complete justice and peace, true "peace on earth," will be the result.

He also give a peace of which the world knows nothing- "peace with God." In amazing grace God offers abundant peace to the guilty through Christ- "even the forgiveness of

sins according to the riches of His grace," and says to every guilt ridden soul, "Now the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing."

This is the Christ of the Bible. Is He your Christ? If not, trust Him as your Saviour today and you will receive the greatest gift of all - "the gift of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."
