

Number 5 (1 - 5)

Copy of the "GRACE JOURNAL"

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

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"THE REJOICE OF MY HEART"

BY RICHARD JORDAN

So great were the depths of Jeremiah's despondency over the utter failure of his beloved nation that he has become known as "the weeping prophet." Indeed, he says of himself:

"MINE EYE RUNNETH DOWN WITH RIVERS OF WATER for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

"MINE EYE TRICKLETH DOWN, AND CEASETH NOT, WITHOUT ANY INTERMISSION.

"MINE EYE AFFECTETH MINE HEART because of all the daughters of my city" ([Lam. 3:48,49, 51](#)).

At one point his anguished cry rings out:

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" ([Jer.9:1](#)).

Jeremiah had made abundantly clear the reason God's anger was kindled against the nation:

"YOUR INIQUITIES have turned away these things, and YOUR SINS HAVE WITHOLDEN GOOD THINGS FROM YOU" ([Jer. 5:25](#)).

"THOU HAS FORSAKEN ME, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: THEREFORE WLL I STRETCH OUT MY HAND AGAINST THEE, AND DESTROY THEE; I am weary with repenting" ([Jer. 15:6](#)).

Yet Israel had refused to respond God's warnings and now judgment was to be executed against her. Jeremiah laments sadly:

"My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war" ([Jer.4:1-9](#)).

Little wonder, then, that he wept sorely and was heavy hearted as he saw the threatened captivity closing in upon his nation.

And not only had the nation forsaken God, but they had turned on His prophet, and he laments, "know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke" ([Jer.15:15](#)).

Thus it is out of the depths of crushing circumstances that Jeremiah cries: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou has borne me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! . . .everyone of them doth curse me. . .I sat alone because of Thy hand. . .Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refused to be healed? Wilt Thou be altogether unto me as a liar and as waters that fail?"

THE REJOICING HEART

It is touching to note that in the midst of his great despair he was driven to God and His Word for relief:

"THY WORDS WERE FOUND, AND I DID EAT THEM; AND THY WORD WAS UNTO ME THE JOY AND REJOICING OF MINE HEART: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts" ([Jer. 15:16](#)).

The words of God to us always brings "Joy and rejoicing" when they are found! On another occasion when "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people" and "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" the result was that "all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. . .because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" ([Neh. 8:5-13](#)). And it is this context that we are told: "The joy of the Lord is your strength!"

You will notice that Jeremiah found the words of God-not by accident, however, for truth, like treasure, must be sought. He sought and found them. There is no easy route to truth. Rather we must be willing to "seek her as silver and search for her as for hid treasure" ([Prov.2:4](#)). Only as we apply ourselves diligently to the study of God's Word can we know God's words to us. Thus Paul exhorts Timothy, and us:

"STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([2 Tim.2:15](#)).

If we are unwilling to pay the price here, the joy which follows can never be ours!

Not only did Jeremiah find God's words but he also ate them. He was not content simply to have God's words, rather he devoured them-as one who had long fasted! Grand truth this: It is not enough that these words are heard, understood, believed, remembered or even admired-- they must be assimilated, as it were, in order to provide the needed spiritual nourishment and strength.

This is the plain meaning of Psalm [1 19:1 1](#):

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

As we give ourselves to the regular and careful intake of sound doctrine from the Word of God we are building into our lives resources which will enable us to successfully handle the details of life for the glory of God.

Little wonder, then, that the "word" discovered and consumed, brought such spiritual revival to Jeremiah's heart! And we must not overlook the ground of Jeremiah's "Joy and rejoicing"--"for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts."

It was in being reminded that he and his nation were so identified with God as to be called by His name (see Isa. 43:1,-7 for the full import of this) that turned his depression and despair into rejoicing and hope! Though they were enduring "troublesome times" at the moment, God was not finished with them yet ! Thus he was to be faithful to his commission, knowing that the hope for the future was secure in the promises of God.

A LESSON FOR US

How this should speak to the heart of believers today--to us who have been made "one with Him" in a far higher way than Jeremiah ever dreamed possible; to us who have the completed Word of God as a present possession--especially to us who have a rightly divided Word and the unsearchable riches of His grace to proclaim!

Paul seems to echo Jeremiah's words as he writes:

"REJOICE IN THE LORD always: and again I say, Rejoice" ([Phil.4:4](#)).

For the believer today, everything centers "in the Lord." We have been "crucified with Christ" ([Gal. 2:20](#)), "buried with Him" ([Col. 2:12](#)), "raised with Him" ([Col. 3:1](#)), enthroned with Him ([Eph. 2:6](#)) and one day we will be "caught up together" to be eternally "glorified together" with Him ([1 Thess. 4:17](#), [Rom. 8:17](#))! Truly we have been made "one with Christ" "so much so that we are said to be "members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" ([Eph.5:30](#)).

Just as Jeremiah's difficulties and despair were turned into 'Joy and rejoicing" as he contemplated God's purpose for his nation, so it is that we today can rejoice together as

members of Christ's body, knowing that we are "complete in Christ," having been made one with Him. "Finally, my brethren, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT" ([Eph. 6:10](#)).

WE SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES

By Richard Jordan

"search the Scriptures. . ." ([John 5:39](#)).

"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read" ([Isa.34:16](#)).

Yes, we searched even the Hebrew and Greek texts and found that the Scriptures themselves quite clearly teach that translations of the Word of God are necessary and legitimate as well as authoritative and conclusive in the receptor language.

Scriptural examples of this fact are so abundant that we feel hard pressed just which to use in our limited space. The following is only a small sampling of what searching the Scriptures will reveal:

When Moses confronted Pharaoh in [Exodus 5:1,2](#), is there any question that they conversed in Pharaoh's language (i.e., in Egyptian)? If so, what actually was written down in the book of Exodus was a translation--a "divinely inspired" translation from Egyptian into Hebrew!

We are specifically told that in [Acts 22:1-21](#) Paul spoke to his Jewish audience "in the Hebrew tongue" ([Acts 21:40](#)) and yet if you search the Greek text itself you will discover that Luke recorded his address in Greek. In other words, Luke's written record is a translation at this point-- one he made "by inspiration."

Thus we see that the Holy Spirit seems to have no problem translating from one language to another in an accurate and reliable manner--nor does He place warnings at these points that these are "only translations." Such Scriptural testimony to the fact that accurate translations are authoritative and conclusive is so abundant it is remarkable that anyone could miss it.

Our Lord also had no evident difficulty understanding the legitimacy and authority of translations. In fact, the first occurrence of the term "the scriptures" in our New Testament comes from His lips in [Matthew 21:42](#) where he quotes [Psalms 118:22,23](#). If the reader will take the time he can verify the fact that this quote is not given in Hebrew. Yet the Lord asked His hearers, "Did ye never read in the scriptures." Christ called the translation He quoted from scripture. How can there be any objection, then, to applying this word to a translation?

Furthermore: our Lord felt translations could be absolutely authoritative and reliable. This can hardly be questioned in light of His own use of them in such passages as [John 10:34-36](#), where He makes His point depend on a single word, or [John 8:58](#) and [Matt. 22:31](#), where His argument is based on the tense of the verbs in the translation His hearers had in their hands and could read--and thus "search and see."

The Apostle Paul evidenced no disagreement with his Savior on this point for in [Gal.3:16](#) we see him resting significant doctrinal arguments simply on the number of a single noun! In fact, we have been unable to find our Lord or any of the New Testament writers even once questioning the translation of the Scripture they possessed. Rather they always quote it in such a way as to endorse it--even down to its very words and grammatical structure, as the above examples demonstrate. Clearly: they consider God's word to still be His word when translated. We may not fully understand this or be able to answer all the questions that may arise--but we cannot deny this obvious Scriptural fact.

We should also make a point for those who worry about a so-called "word-for-word preservation of the originals." Searching the Scriptures on this subject demonstrates that in Scriptural translations sometimes words are changed and even paraphrases are made but the meaning is the same and both are authoritative and conclusive.

Take just two comparisons as examples: Compare [Matt. 1:23](#) with [Isa. 7: 14](#) and [John 19:36](#) with [Psa. 34:20](#). Did the Holy Spirit violate inspiration when He failed to translate these verses from the Old Testament into the New Testament in a "word-for-word" fashion? Of course not--both testaments are equally inspired. Does this practice mean, then, that God preserves only basic thoughts? Does it thus deny verbal inspiration? Indeed not! Rather it gives a further example that God's words are still His words when translated -- language limitations notwithstanding.

What then is this "ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY" doctrine we are hearing so much about? Surely it is nothing more than UNBELIEF based on the wisdom of men, on human speculation, reasoning and conclusions drawn from sources other than the Word of God.

We have read what men say about the Bible and what it says about itself--we have chosen to believe the latter. After searching the Scriptures we more confidently than ever can say that the King James Version of the Bible--the Reformation text and translation delivered to us by our Protestant forefathers--is the Word of God for English speaking people.

DIOTREPES:

A Challenge For Our Times

It is one thing to go to war against heresy. It is another thing altogether to go to war against a Christian brother. John, the apostle closest to the heart of our Lord, knew the pangs his brethren could inflict. He wrote:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence [be number one] among them, receiveth us not.

"Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" ([3 John 9, 10](#)).

Sound familiar? Unfortunately, Diotrephes is still present in our midst! It is a good thing the original Diotrephes did not possess a printing press and mailing list or he would have smeared Christ's favorite Apostle in his "religious gazette!"

As one writer points out, one of the sad results of Diotrephes' attitude was that instead of viewing other men of God as co-workers in the cause of Christ, he considered them potential rivals, suspecting their mere presence as a threat. Thus he not only spurned the Apostle John but others too, men who might have joined him in proclaiming the truth and bringing blessing to others, even going so far as to excommunicate those who had welcomed such brethren into their homes (v.5, 10). The Apostle John denounced this attitude, saying, "We ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth" (v. 8).

Beloved, let us not follow this type of leadership. It bears all the earmarks of carnality. [Gal.5:19-21](#) lists among the works of the flesh "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions. . .envying murders." All these have to do with fighting. Immediately following this is a better way-- "the fruit of the Spirit," which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

My friend, where do you stand? Do you look to men? Do you argue with your friends as to which leader is the greatest "saber rattler" of the faith? Are you, in effect, saying, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos"? Do you eagerly await the next edition of "Religious Rumors" to read the latest "scoop" on some brother in Christ? Do you delight in a brother or sister's heart being crushed through the poison pen of a carnal leader? Do you accept the man-made labels placed upon men simply because an irate leader misbrands them? Do you simply repeat what others are saying without thinking through the implications?

Strife, bitterness, envy and hatred are not Spirit-instilled qualities. Let God Himself speak: ". . .for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" ([1 Cor.3:3](#)). Multitudes within our ranks feel there is something drastically wrong with the attitudes of many present-day leaders. May we follow the Apostle Paul and not Diotrephes and thus do that which is genuinely worthy of the Lord whom we all seek to serve:

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

"FULFIL YE MY JOY, THAT YE BE LIKEMINDED, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING OF ONE ACCORD, OF ONE MIND.

"LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH STRIFE OR VAINGLORY; BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHER BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.

"LOOK NOT EVERY MAN ON HIS OWN THINGS, BUT EVERY MAN ALSO ON THE THINGS OF OTHERS" ([Phil.2:1-4](#)).
