



The ENJOY THE BIBLE

Quarterly

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Questions and Answers

Our annual issue devoted to Questions and Answers. The following selections have been edited to either conserve space, ensure clarity, and/or remove any personal information.

Genesis 4:3-8

What was going on with Cain? Why didn't he respond like Abel? Why didn't God accept his offering? What did God mean when He said, "sin lieth at the door"? And what is "the way of Cain" spoken of in the New Testament?

Based upon what is set forth later on in Hebrews 11 regarding Abel and Cain, (and it is interesting to note that much more is said regarding these two later on in God's program with Israel than is initially related in Genesis 4), my understanding is this: As Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,..." "By faith" is the key issue here, for as Romans 10:17, along with Hebrews 11, make clear, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Hence Abel responded positively to what he had heard God say. Yet the same verse by its wording makes it evident that Cain had also heard what God said. (In addition, based upon the rhetorical nature of the question God asked Cain at the beginning of Genesis 4:7, it is evident that God had already clearly made known to Cain what he was to do when he knew he didn't do well, and that Cain himself knew this to be the case.) So on the basis of this, I am persuaded that God had told both Abel and Cain that if they "doest well" they would be accepted, but if not, then the issue was for them to bring the animal sacrifice.

They both, therefore, knew what it meant to "doest well" in God's sight or not. And they both individually knew how God wanted them to respond when they knew that they did not "doest well." Abel, knowing that he did not "doest well" by nature, believed what God said and brought the sacrifice that God had specified. Cain, however, did not believe what God had said.

Now I am persuaded that not only did Cain not believe that he was guilty in God's sight, but he actually thought himself to be suitably righteous. Hence he not only did not bring the animal sacrifice, but he brought an offering of the work of his own hands as a tiller of the ground. Howbeit as Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him,..." Cain, therefore, clearly did not respond in faith at all to what God had said, and hence he did not please God at all. Cain's blatant unbelief is why God had no respect unto his offering.

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Gospel Clichés

This is the third of four articles dealing with the issue of perverting "the gospel of Christ" by means of misleading and erroneous Gospel clichés. For a fuller examination of this matter, see the author's booklet, *The Gospel of God's Grace: Make It Clear! Make It Plain!* from which these articles are taken. For a proper introduction to these articles, see the First Quarter 2001 edition of the *Enjoy The Bible Quarterly*.

Perverting The Gospel of Christ by Telling Someone to "Make Jesus The Lord Of Your Life."

Faith by nature is non-meritorious and excludes the issue of one's works. Having faith in someone is the issue of placing your trust, confidence, or reliance in that person and not in yourself. Believing in someone is the issue of being fully persuaded regarding the sufficiency of that person's merits and strength, and depending upon him and his merits instead of yourself and your own merits. Therefore in believing in someone, you trust that person and depend upon him and his doings for what you need, and you don't offer any efforts of your own. For this reason, having faith in someone by its very nature excludes one's own works in any manner or form. Faith places full confidence and dependence upon the works of another for you.

Wherefore, when God declares in the gospel of Christ that He is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," this is what He is talking about. "Believing in Jesus" is the issue of placing your complete trust, confidence, or dependence upon Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross for your salvation, and not trusting in any works you can do. It is the issue of having "faith in his blood." That is, having complete confidence and dependence upon the merits of Christ's shed

Dear Friends of EBM,

From time to time folks contact us to ask if we know of anyone on our mailing list who might live close to them, and if so if we would give them the contact information. In view of this, along with recent concerns folks have about privacy, we want to briefly state our policy on this matter. Our mailing lists, along with any and all personal contact information that we possess, are private. We do not release this information to others, nor use it ourselves in any way that is inconsistent with individual privacy or the ministries of EBM. Therefore when we receive any request for such information, we let the person(s) making the request know that it is not our policy to release that information. The only condition under which we will release your contact information is if you yourself expressly request that we make it known to others. Otherwise we treat your personal information as strictly confidential.

Now this being said, one of the ministries of EBM is *GraceOnline*; an Internet directory listing of many like-minded Grace folks and churches from all over, who have voluntarily listed their names and/or contact information. So if you are wondering whether we might know of any Grace folks or Grace church that might be close to you, *GraceOnline* is the place to look. With folks submitting listings frequently, it is worthwhile to visit *GraceOnline* on a regular basis.

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Now specifically regarding what God said to Cain in Genesis 4:7, my understanding is that first of all God reproved Cain's negative response of unbelief. This He did by His three rhetorical questions set forth in verse 6-7a. Again, Cain knew what God had said about being accepted and about the sacrifice to be brought and offered if he did not "doest well." When God did not have respect unto Cain's offering and he became "very wroth, and his countenance fell," his wrath and fallen countenance were the result of his wounded pride, for he thought himself righteous.

Hence when God said unto Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Genesis 4:6-7a), I am persuaded that He that "searcheth the hearts and triest the reins," and "declareth unto man what is his thought," and that "leadeth to repentance," was making known unto Cain the thoughts that were in him and was leading him to repentance. And indeed what Cain needed to do was to repent of his erroneous thinking.

In connection with this God goes on to say unto him in the rest of verse 7, "and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." When God says to Cain that "sin lieth at the door," He is talking about the fact that the sacrifice for sin that Cain could offer "lieth at the door" right there in front of Cain, so to speak. [Note: I am persuaded that this "door" was specifically the very "door" of the garden of Eden where the Cherubims were, along with the flaming sword that kept "the way of the tree of life." This same basic set up also existed later on with the tabernacle, at the "door" of which the animals were brought. There the animal was identified as the bringer's substitute, receiving the bringer's sinful identification, and as such being made sin for him. It all took place at the "door:"]

Hence I am persuaded that the same situation existed at the "door" of the garden. And as such, with God leading Cain unto repentance and in saying to him that "sin lieth at the door," He was telling him that the animal that would be the willing substitute-bearer of his sin, and made sin for him, was lying right there at the door where he was standing.

And the animal truly was willing. Hence God said to Cain, "And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Cain, however, disdainfully hardened his heart to God's words and refused to change his mind.

Yet Cain also did more than this. He also pursued a hate laden course of action that was both generated and fueled by his highly offended pride. In hate he lashed out at God's counsel and mercy, bringing it to bear upon Abel as he murdered him. And with Cain, the Adversary established the first of three particular negative responses to the word of God, which when progressively followed result in the followers becoming completely Satan-like.

As such Cain became the founder, so to speak, of "the way of Cain," which was later on followed by Israel's vain religious leadership after they hardened their hearts to "the counsel of God against themselves" contained in "the gospel of the kingdom." They too thought themselves righteous, rejected "the counsel of God against themselves," and despised the mercy of God shown to them. In so doing, they pursued the same hate laden course of action generated and fueled by their highly offended pride. In hate they lashed out at the righteous remnant of Israel. And this "way" will yet be followed again by Israel's apostate leadership when Israel's program is resumed. It will be trodden again by the "ungodly men" ordained to the "condemnation" spoken about by Jude in his epistle.

Matthew 27:52-53

Why were "the graves...opened," and why does it say that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after (Christ's) resurrection"?

My understanding is that this was done as a manifest token of the Lord's successfulness in having functioned as Israel's Redeemer, and in doing so fulfilling the first mandate of the Davidic Covenant. In particular that first mandate had as one of its components the issue of the Redeemer providing for the fulfillment of what was declared, for example, in Hosea 13:14. There God said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

In accordance with the significance and meaning of His name "Jehovah," God Himself would become Israel's Redeemer. And the Davidic Covenant, with its provision for David's Lord to become David's son, is the mechanical means for the implementation of God's "Jehovah-ness." Specifically the first mandate of the Davidic Covenant called for the Lord to function as Israel's kinsman-Re-

deemer, and thereby to provide for all the aspects of redemption that Israel needed, including redeeming them from death.

Now in view of the fact that the Lord through His own death and victorious resurrection succeeded with the aspect of redemption that would “redeem them from death”; and in view of the fact that the saints of Israel wouldn’t actually be receiving the full benefits of it until the first resurrection; my understanding is that the event of Matthew 27:52-53 served as both a manifest token to them of the Lord’s successful redemptive work spoken about in Hosea 13, as well as an earnest of the resurrection to come for all the saints of Israel at the first resurrection.

The doctrine of redemption (as set forth in the Law) does provide for such a thing as a token to be given in connection with redemption. The token signifies to all concerned the fact that the redemption has been accomplished, and that it is legal and indisputable. [Note: Interestingly enough a token can even be given preceding redemption to signify who the redeemer is, which is something the Lord also gave when He entered into Jerusalem before going to the cross.]

According to the account in Matthew 27, when these saints “came out of the graves after (the Lord’s) resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many,” it was the last of three particular manifest tokens concerning the successfulness of the Lord’s redemptive work. The first is the rending of the veil of the temple; the second is the quaking of the earth, with the rending of the rocks, and the actual opening of the graves; and the third is the arising of these saints out of the graves and going into the holy city after the Lord’s resurrection. Through these three specific manifest tokens the particular issues of the Lord’s redemption that pertained to sin and death were signified to have been successfully accomplished.

Acts 3:19

What do “the times of refreshing” spoken about in Acts 3:19 refer to?

The “times of refreshing” that Peter speaks about in Acts 3:19 refers to the final installment in God’s program with Israel, during which God will deliver Israel from all of their oppressions and afflictions, and avenge His cause with them on this earth. That final installment in Israel’s program concludes with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel, as Peter states in Acts 3:20-21, to usher in “the times of restitution of all things,” which includes the establishment of God’s kingdom on this earth, as the earth is then taken back from Satan’s usurped domination and restored to its original design and purpose.

“Refreshing” is the issue of relief after fatigue or suffering. It involves experiencing activities that relieve fatigue, and that invigorate and enliven, after having experienced afflictions, depression, grief, sorrow, hardship, and the like. And this is exactly what Israel’s history has been for the most part all along, and especially so since the time they became Satan’s “lawful captive” beginning with the Assyrian/Babylonian captivities. The prophets that God raised up at the time when Israel became Satan’s “lawful captive,” (like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.), have much to say about Israel’s sufferings as Satan’s captive.

However these prophets also have much to say about the final installment in God’s program with Israel during which the Lord will have ‘His day’ and will avenge His cause with Israel. During the Lord’s day Israel will experience activities from the Lord that will relieve their fatigue and deliver them from their afflictions, hardships, sorrows, and the like. (See, for example, Isaiah 25:1-26:11)

In connection with this, all of this prophesied relieve from their hardships and afflictions was declared by God to Israel to be “the refreshing,” just as is stated in Isaiah 28:12. In addition this “refreshing” was given a specified time at which it would be occurring in God’s program with Israel, and this was set forth to Israel on the time schedules that God gave to them regarding the outworking of the remainder of His program with them.

Now as the Gospel accounts relate, when God raised up John the Baptist to be the “voice crying in the wilderness” and the forerunner of Christ, He raised him up to begin to proclaim to Israel the “comfort” (Isaiah 40:1-11) that was near “at hand” for them. And it indeed was “at hand” for the time schedule was ticking down, so to speak, and that prophesied final installment in the program was drawing nigh. In connection with this, at John’s birth the Holy Ghost had his father prophesy what is set forth in Luke 1:67-75ff about the refreshing that was coming.

This good news of “the refreshing,” however, was not received by Israel, just as God foretold in Isaiah 28:11. Instead of receiving it, “they would not hear.” They rejected not only John the Baptist, but Christ as well, just as the Gospel accounts set forth. However God gave to Israel an extension of His mercy and forbearance following the rejection of Christ, (as was also prophesied about), and He gave “repentance to Israel” during the time described by the opening chapters of the book of Acts.

It is this further gracious opportunity for Israel to repent that Peter is operating under and is setting forth the details of in Acts 3. God’s program with Israel had by that time advanced on to the point “when the times of refreshing” were going to soon come “from the presence of the Lord.” Therefore if the people of Israel didn’t “repent” and “be converted, that (their) sins may be blotted out,” then “when the times of refreshing” came they would not experience the refreshing. Instead they would be counted among those of rebellious Israel, who as Peter goes on to describe in verses 22-23 would end up being “destroyed from among the people.”

Again, “the times of refreshing” is the final installment in God’s program with Israel during which the Lord will have ‘His day’ and refresh Israel by delivering them from all of their afflictions, hardships, sorrows, sufferings, and the like, and will avenge His cause with them on the earth.

Of course, “the times of refreshing” in God’s program with Israel, (as well as “the times of restitution of all things”),

have yet to transpire because God has temporarily suspended His program and dealings with Israel. This God did when after concluding the extension of mercy and forbearance to Israel, instead of beginning the final installment to Israel's program, He raised up Paul as a brand new apostle, just as is recorded in Acts 9. And as God has Paul teach us in his epistles, He has temporarily suspended His program with Israel and has brought in an unprophesied dispensation of His grace for us Gentiles in accordance with "the mystery of Christ."

It is the dispensation of God's grace to us Gentiles that is presently in effect. And for as long as it remains in effect, Israel's "fulness" remains in abeyance, just as Romans 9-11 teaches. However when God concludes this present dispensation, He will then resume and fulfill His program and dealings with Israel. They will then have their prophesied "times of refreshing" followed by "the times of restitution of all things."

II Corinthians 6:7

What is the significance of Paul's expression "on the right hand and on the left" in II Corinthians 6:7?

Briefly put, in view of previous uses of the expression, for example, in Isaiah 54:3 and Zechariah 12:6 I understand the expression to mean 'in all directions; on all sides; round about; etc.' In Isaiah 54 the reason redeemed Israel is told to "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations;...." is "For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

When Israel breaks forth "on the right hand and on the left" she is going to expand round about, in all directions round about, and hence needs to enlarge the place of her tent and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations to accommodate the expanded inheritance of land, cities, etc. Likewise in Zechariah 12:6 in the Lord's day of wrath and of avenging His cause with Israel upon their enemies surrounding them, it says "they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and

Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem." Israel will be surrounded by her enemies in that day, as verse 2 states; but she shall "devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left." She, therefore, will be victorious over all her enemies surrounding her.

I, therefore, take it that when Paul says in II Corinthians 6:7, "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," that he is using the expression in much the same way.

Specifically my understanding is that Paul is referring to what his response is to the issue of being beset on all sides in this present evil world with temptations to participate in its unrighteousness and works of darkness. And his response is

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one of being vigilant in connection with this, and being on guard against succumbing to any such temptations. He is exceedingly zealous for standing true to who he is "in Christ" in this present evil world, and for putting righteousness on display.

In doing so, Paul is acting in perfect accordance with what he said earlier on in Romans 13:11-14, where he had said, "...: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Paul, therefore, is doing that very thing. He has "put on the armour of light" in contrast to "the works of darkness." And commensurate with "casting off the works of darkness" in abhorrence

of them, he is indeed walking "honestly as in the day" with "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." He is vigilantly standing for who he is "in Christ," and living righteously in the midst of all the unrighteousness surrounding him.

Now this, (as Paul sets forth in the overall context of II Corinthians 6:3-10), is one of the things that should "approve" him as a minister of God. And in doing this it should give these Corinthian saints "somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart," as these who did so found fault with Paul and were critical of him, trying to seduce the Corinthians away from him.

II Timothy 2:15

Don't you think that the expression "rightly dividing the word of truth" in II Timothy 2:15 might be a poor translation, if not a mistaken translation, of what Paul is saying? After all Timothy didn't have the whole Bible to "divide." I think maybe the new translations have it correct, because I just don't see where the idea of "dividing" could come from.

First of all, I disagree with the notion that Timothy did not have a completed Bible, or enough of a completed Bible. I am persuaded that he did. It is evident to me from Paul's epistles that the various churches of the Gentiles not only had copies of what we commonly call the Old Testament Scriptures, but in particular as Paul's epistles were written they were copied and distributed to them. And this occurred naturally enough also with the Scriptures of the circumcision apostles to the remnant of Israel. So that by the time Paul's ministry was coming to its conclusion, (as indicated with the writing of II Timothy), a completed Bible was understood and appreciated for what it was. And as such "all scripture" was described by Paul as in existence, what it was, its role, etc. So, as I understand it, Timothy had a completed Bible and knew it. He had "the word of truth" in its entirety.

Now with regards to the legitimacy and accuracy of the expression "rightly dividing the word of truth," I understand that in view of God having two distinct and different programs recorded on the pages of His word, a clear cut division

is exactly what needs to be made in “the word of truth.” And with this being the case, this is where the issue of “rightly dividing” comes from, and is exactly what Paul had in mind and said.

Briefly put, the legitimacy of us needing to make a real division in the Bible is something that we should well understand from what God’s word teaches long before we ever come to the things Paul sets forth and teaches in II Timothy. Paul’s previous epistles, (along with Genesis through Acts preceding them), have made it abundantly clear that God has two distinct and different programs in His overall plan and purpose. The first being God’s covenanted program with this earth and His nation Israel, which He has both spoken about and has been engaged in the outworking of since the world began. The other program, however, pertains to the heavenly places and the revelation of “the mystery of Christ,” which was “kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest” by means of God revealing it to the apostle Paul. It involves God’s “new creature,” the church the body of Christ, that He is forming now in this present dispensation of His grace.

Now right from Romans, (with its opening declaration concerning Paul’s distinctive apostleship and message to the nations; and then especially in chapters 9-11 where it teaches us about God temporarily suspending His program with Israel in connection with bringing in this unpropheied dispensation of His grace to us Gentiles), Paul makes the reality of these two distinct and different programs plain and clear. He makes sure we understand that in connection with his apostleship, gospel, and doctrine, (and the incorporation of it into God’s written word; “the word of truth”), there is an outright ‘division’ that now exists in the Bible. A ‘division’ in accordance with the portion of God’s word that pertains to His program and dealings with Israel, and the portion that pertains to God’s program and dealings in this present dispensation of His grace.

Furthermore, long before we doctrinally arrive at II Timothy 2:15, Paul also teaches us right from Romans about Satan’s policy of evil in this present dis-

persation of grace. He teaches us in detail how that this policy of evil works to produce doctrinal confusion, uncertainty, and corruption in Christians’ minds by fervently working to blur in their thinking (if not obliterate) the distinction that exists between God’s program with Israel and His program today with us, His “new creature.” Paul teaches us how that this policy of evil works to homogenize, so to speak, God’s two programs. In so doing the Adversary works to get it so that Christians fail to clearly understand and appreciate the distinctive nature of this present dispensation of grace. He works to make it so that Christians walk foolishly by endeavoring to operate upon a combination of instructions, doctrines, promises, provi-

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sions, and the like, that come from both God’s program with Israel and His program in this present dispensation. And, as Paul teaches, Satan must do this in order to succeed with the objectives that he wants to achieve in his policy of evil against God and us in this dispensation. Indeed, Satan himself has a very clear understanding of the importance and the need that there is for us to be “rightly dividing the word of truth.” Hence the vigorous activities of his policy of evil to prevent Christians from doing so. In fact, unfortunately Satan has a clearer understanding of how needful it is to be “rightly dividing the word of truth” than most Christians have.

Again, doctrinally speaking, in view of the fact that from Romans on Paul sets forth the clear distinction between God’s program with Israel and His program with us in this present dispensation of grace; and in view of the clear cut distinction that exists between the portions

of God’s word pertaining to each; and in view of Paul’s teaching on the working of Satan’s policy of evil to blur, obliterate, or deny, any such distinction; in view of all this, by the time we doctrinally arrive at II Timothy we are well aware of the fact that a clear cut division needs to be made in the Bible. And if it is not made, it plays right into the hands of Satan’s policy of evil.

Therefore, if we have been accomplishing our “godly edifying which is in faith” that has been provided for us from Romans 1:1 right up until II Timothy, by the time we arrive at II Timothy we already know the need to be “rightly dividing the word of truth.” Doctrinally speaking, the concept is not only already an undeniably clear reality to us, but also an absolute necessity as well.

Moreover, with I Timothy having doctrinally just set forth in detail what to expect from the operational tactics of Satan’s policy of evil in a local church, (especially the forceful attack upon the truth of Paul’s distinctive apostleship, doctrine, and example; along with the intimidating issue of the reproach and shame that will be brought to bear upon any and all Christians and churches that stand for it), it is all the more expected that when we begin to deal with II Timothy that Paul will underscore in no uncertain terms the need to make the clear cut division in the Bible that needs to be made in order to thwart the success of the policy of evil against us. And this is just what Paul does when in the context of dealing with the power of the policy of evil, he says to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”

Therefore, doctrinally speaking, the legitimacy and truthfulness of the expression “rightly dividing the word of truth” is clearly established by God long before we arrive at II Timothy. The need for it is an inescapable reality in view of God’s two distinct programs, and doing it is an absolute necessity, if one is to avoid cooperating with the policy of evil.

— K. R. Blades

(Clichés from page 1)

blood to provide for and effect your salvation. It is the issue of being fully persuaded that when He died for you as your substitute Redeemer He did all the work necessary to accomplish your salvation. This is what “believing in Jesus” means. This is what faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s Savior means.

Unfortunately, though, this issue of faith in Jesus Christ as God’s sole requirement for salvation all too often is not made plain and clear. Rather, it is muddled up by terminology and phraseology that not only does not accurately convey what faith in Christ is, but that actually perverts the issue and turns faith into works.

The following example falls into this category. By using such an expression God’s requirement for salvation is misstated, and “another gospel” is preached instead of the gospel of justification by grace through faith without works.

“MAKE JESUS THE LORD OF YOUR LIFE” — This misstatement of God’s requirement for salvation is often used as the gospel appeal by ones who preach what is called Lordship salvation. Lordship salvation is the designation given to the preaching that says that Jesus Christ must be made the Lord of one’s life, in every area of one’s life, if a person is going to be saved. The teaching is that there is no salvation if Jesus Christ isn’t the Lord of one’s life, and has one’s obedience and surrender of will in every area of life.

However this misstatement is guilty of the same mistake as other misstatements we have considered, which is to confuse an issue of Christian service to God with the issue of how a person gets saved and becomes a Christian in the first place.

It should be painfully obvious that making Jesus Christ Lord of one’s life is an issue that God exhorts and urges Christians to do. That’s what passages such as Romans 6-8; 12:1-2ff; Ephesians 4:17ff and many others exhort us to do as ones whom God has already justified and sanctified by His grace in response to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. After trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and being justified by faith, God

teaches us and exhorts us to make Jesus the Lord of our lives. He exhorts us to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service.” But a person can only present his body a “living sacrifice” if he has first been put to death in Christ, just as Romans 6 teaches. Therefore, making Jesus the Lord of one’s life is an issue only for saved people. God never tells the unsaved to do it or try it. It is impossible for them to do it at all. This is because it can’t be done if God Himself has not first justified, reconciled, and sanctified a person by His grace.

Again, making Jesus the Lord of one’s life is a Christian service issue and not a salvation issue at all. Surrendering one’s will to Jesus as Lord and allowing Him to control the details of one’s life is what the life of good works that God created us unto in Christ Jesus is all about. A person has to be God’s “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” before he can make Jesus the Lord of his life. A person can only “serve the Lord Christ” when first he has been made a servant of Christ by the creative activity of God. This creative activity of God takes place when the Holy Spirit regenerates us and places us into Christ. Then, and only then, can a person make Jesus the Lord of his life. Making Him Lord, though, is not how God saves us at all. It isn’t the issue of faith in Christ as Savior at all.

Confusing the issues of discipleship and service with the separate and preliminary issue of salvation is one of the most common ways in which the gospel of Christ is perverted and “another gospel” ends up being produced. Also it is so subtly deceiving because God’s own word is used to produce the perversion. Verses and passages that are dealing with discipleship and service are taken out of their contexts, and they are used as if they were talking about how to be justified unto eternal life. Hence, God’s word is made to sound as if it stipulated salvation on the basis of making Jesus the Lord of one’s life, and the like. But in reality God is being misquoted and misrepresented, and He is being made to say something He never said. Through unscrupulous and deceit-

ful Bible handling the gospel of God’s grace is libeled, and the unsaved are deceived and blinded to the truth of the gospel. And it is all to the advancement of the policy of evil against the gospel.

Sometimes it is said in response to this that “If Jesus isn’t Lord of all, then He isn’t Lord at all.” The implication in connection with this is that one cannot receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior without making Him the Lord of one’s life. But this is a subterfuge of semantics and simply is not true. Jesus Christ is Lord, and Lord of all, whether anyone ever makes Him Lord of their lives or not. Jesus Christ is Lord by virtue of being God. His Lordship is part of His God-ness. In fact, as Philippians 2:9-11 declares, Jesus is going to be acknowledged and confessed to be Lord “to the glory of God the Father” even by ones who never get saved and end up being cast into the lake of fire for ever. They are going to be cast there because Jesus Christ is Lord, and as Lord He judges them worthy of everlasting punishment. However, why they end up there isn’t because they didn’t make Him the Lord of their lives. It is because they never responded to Him as their Savior in view of Him having died on the cross as their substitute Redeemer. They rejected His work on the cross for them and were enemies of the cross of Christ.

Once again, God’s sole requirement for justification unto eternal life is faith alone in Christ alone as your all-sufficient Savior. Your works cannot be, and will not be, counted for righteousness. As Romans 3:26 says, in view of “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” God is “the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Have you honestly believed in Jesus as your all-sufficient Savior? If not, why not do so right now. God will see your faith, and He will do exactly what “the gospel of Christ” says; He will justify you unto eternal life, counting your faith for righteousness. — K. R. Blades

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***Our thanks to those
who faithfully help in
supporting this
ministry!***
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“rightly dividing the word of truth” II Timothy 2:15

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