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A Publication of Bible Doctrines To Live By

Fall 2021

Social Media

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

By Ev. Joel R. McGarvey

The following article is more cautionary than the normal Bible study. In this modern world in which we live, with all of its varied means of communication, great care must be taken, especially on the part the believer, to be accurate. This accuracy is especially true when sharing the Word of God; we **must** always weigh our comments against the Word of God **Rightly Divided**. To do otherwise could be spreading a false gospel or false hope.

Social media has been at the forefront of controversy ever since it became such a dominating force in society. What began as a cute way to exchange useful information between friends such as schedules, recipes, boy or girl friends, and what one had for dinner, has become, not only a source of personal information, but a giant conglomeration of information, ranging from the trivial to the national news.

However, social media can be a wonderful tool to spread and teach the Gospel of the Grace of God. In the tumultuous year of 2020, Bible Doctrines to Live By took to the airwaves, broadcasting, ***"The Bible Study Hour"*** and ***"Tuesday Bible Time"***. We were not the first to venture onto the social media route; 2020 saw an explosion of churches broadcasting their services to their congregations and beyond. In many ways the Church was never shut down throughout the so-called pandemic. Yes, some doors were closed and locked, but the Church was never silent and the Gospel was spread to an even greater audience than before.

While there is much to dislike, there are plenty of reasons to be involved, chief among them is the Gospel. The day may come, when the Gospel will be banned; this is the natural course of a sin-cursed world. Until then the voice of the Church must ring out loud and clear.

That being said, we, who take a mid-Acts, dispensational approach to Scripture, **must** take every advantage to spread the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God to as many as possible, and social media assists in that endeavor. It has been a real joy to scan the internet and see

how many have taken the steps to broadcast their studies to a hurting world. I have also been impressed by how many went on the air a year ago and are still broadcasting today. Why? Because they found a world-wide audience of people seeking spiritual truth. In our own broadcasts we have reached people all around the world with the Word of God Rightly Divided.

But that brings me to my real purpose in writing this article. If we are going to use social media to reach the lost, to spread the Gospel, to teach the Word of God Rightly Divided, then we must take great care not to share whatever comes along. As mid-Acts dispensationalists, we understand that not every promise in the Book is mine. We "Rightly Divide" between that which God addressed to the nation of Israel, and that which is given to the Church the Body of Christ. We recognize that the message given to the Apostle Paul for the Body of Christ was not given, or hinted at, in the so-called Old Testament. ***"How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.... And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ"*** (Eph. 3:3-5; 9). ***"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"*** (Col. 1:26-27). ***"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began"*** (Rom. 16:25). In each of the quoted passages, the Apostle Paul uses the term **"mystery"** in referring to the message he was proclaiming to the Body of Christ. The term

Christ Died for your Sins

The Need:

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)

"...there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12b)

The Result:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

God's Response:

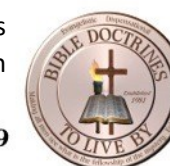
"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...." (Ephesians 1:7a)

Man's Response:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Believe it. Receive it. Have Eternal Life

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9



“mystery” means “a sacred secret” or “something unsearchable, untraceable.” As he states in the Ephesians passage, it was “**hid in God**”, not the prophesied Word of God. In other words, one cannot go back into the so-called Old Testament and find it. It is unknown. It was a sacred secret.

Sadly, I have seen so much posted on Facebook, by those who know what it means to rightly divide the Scriptures, that simply falls short and conveys a false message. Many of these, taken out of their context, may provide nice little bumper stickers, but are all written to the Nation of Israel, God’s people.

One verse that is very popular is 2 Chronicles 7:14. **“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”** I don’t believe too many days go by that this verse does not show up on Facebook. It is used with the National Day of Prayer, unrest on our streets, the growing immorality, and following a major national disaster as an indication of the need for repentance in America.

Whenever I comment on the post, I am usually met with comments such as, “Well there are principles that we can apply to our lives today.” The phrase, “My People” is equated to Christians (and I use that word in the broadest of terms to fit society’s definition) in America. Christians across the nation are called upon to humble themselves before God, seek His face, and turn from their wickedness. (Do we really need a National Day of Prayer? Shouldn’t we be in prayer for our nation and leaders every day? **“I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority...”** (1 Tim. 2:1-2a)) Are all those that gather and pray really “in Christ” or just “Christians”? Are we to be asking God to forgive us of our sin? Why did He shed His blood? **“In whom** (Christ) **we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins”** (Col. 1:14). This is true for all “in Christ”. For the believer it is not an ongoing process of confess for forgiveness. It is forever rest in the justification and the imputed righteousness that is found in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

We often hear that America is a “Christian nation,” yet many are little more than religious practitioners, with only a small percentage truly **in** Christ. With this in mind, it is “My people” who are to humble themselves, turn from their wickedness and pray. Are the ills of America brought about by the wickedness of those truly in Christ? I think not. But this must be the conclusion, when any verse, such as 2 Chronicles 7:14, is proposed to apply to America. If “My

people” is simply a principle that can apply to believers, then it must follow that it is the believers who must repent and turn from their wicked ways. Where is the principle?

The **wickedness** refers to the sin of Israel, their rejection and rebellion against their God. The word **“wickedness”** again is overwhelmingly found in God’s description of the children of Israel. A verse that illustrates this best may be, **“O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee”** (Jer. 4:14)? This is exactly what the writer of Chronicles is addressing to the nation and why they are suffering as they were. This is exactly what John was addressing, when he was inspired to write, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (1 Jn. 1:9). (This is another verse often used out of context.) The fact is that Christ has already paid the price of imputed sin in full at Calvary; all that remains today is to believe (1 Cor. 15:1-4). But the day will come (in the Tribulation) that Israel is going to have to face their “national sins” and in that day, when they humble themselves and repent, the Lord has promised He will hear from Heaven and heal their land and restore their glory.

Who are **“My people”**? The phrase is first used in Scripture as the Lord sends Moses into Egypt to deliver His people. **“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt...”** (Ex. 3:7). And again, **“...that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel out of Egypt”** (Ex. 3:10). Again, **“And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah...out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule My people Israel”** (Mt. 3:6). The Apostle Paul uses the phrase three times, twice in Romans 9 (v. 25, 26), as he spoke concerning the Nation of Israel, and once in 2 Corinthians 6:16, as he was quoting from the Old Testament. The phrase **“My people”** is never used to describe the present day Church, the Body of Christ; it is always used in reference to the Nation of Israel. Where is the principle?

My People	Israel	Not believers today
Land	Israel	Not America
Wickedness	Israel	Not believers today

Friends, social media can be a curse and a blessing depending upon how it is used; use it wisely. Do not get so wrapped up in the Facebook “facts” that you lose sight of the truth. Do not use it as a platform to spread your anger against others and hang out your family’s dirty laundry. But rather, use it to honor the Lord, to spread the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God. Through social media your audience is ultimately the world, a world that desperately

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DON'T MISS THESE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR BIBLE STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

Neither has God failed to tell people what they need to know to benefit from His acts of mercy (10:18-19). God has made His message known; it is humanity that has failed to appropriate His mercy (10:21). Instead, we have come up with our own way of righteousness, missing that God has always wanted us to trust Him (9:32).

We read that, at this time of Grace, he has decided to blind the unbelieving of Israel (11:7), temporarily setting aside the nation (11:15), so that He could extend mercy to all nations (11:30, 32). Israel, who rejoiced in being the recipients of His mercy in the past, needed to be equally joyfully in His decision to extend mercy to the Gentiles in this current Age of Grace. Did they trust Him to be merciful or not? Did they allow Him the authority to be the sovereign God or not? Paul also spends time assuring Israel that God is still extending mercy

to Israel today in that their blindness is partial – that they could still be saved today, if they came to God in His way of Grace, by acknowledging that Christ is Savior and that He did the work of redemption (10:9). He also assures them that God remains faithful – He will one day keep His promises to Israel (11:26).

Through all this dispensational and doctrinal truth, notice how these three chapters conclude: With vast praise of God (11:33-36).

So, Romans chapters 9 – 11 can certainly tell us the position of Israel in this current Dispensation of Grace, but these chapters equally speak of an all-knowing Sovereign that acts justly, righteously, and mercifully. The next time we think we have a few pointers for God in how to run things or we think we have God all figured out, remember, we are not called to analyze Him or defend Him. We are called to trust Him and praise Him. He will never disappoint.



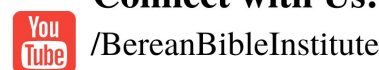
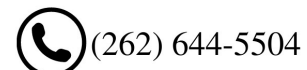
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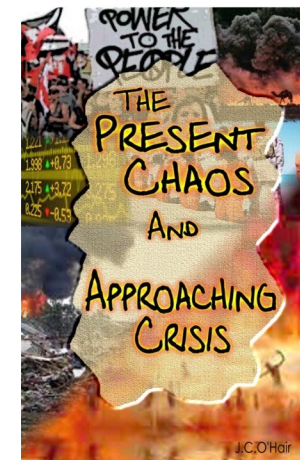
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needs Jesus Christ. ***“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering [love and patience] and doctrine”*** (2 Tim. 4:2). ***“See then that ye walk circumspectly (carefully), not as fools (the lost) but as wise”*** (Eph. 5:15).

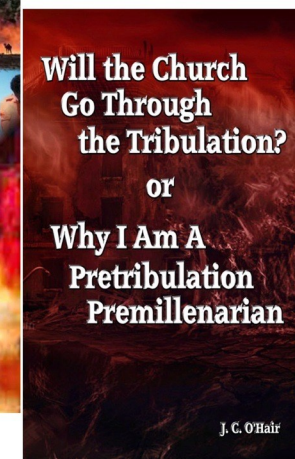
Finally, if you are going to pass along challenges based upon the Word of God, take extra care to do so

properly; ***Rightly Divide the Word of Truth*** (2 Tim. 2:15). Don't pass along messages and promises, no matter how pleasant or good they may sound that are not promised to the present day Church, the Body of Christ. Be involved; the world needs to hear the truth of Scripture; it needs to hear the truth of the Gospel. Be smart and pass along the Gospel that the world needs to hear. That will only be accomplished when we learn to Rightly Divide the Word of Truth. ✚

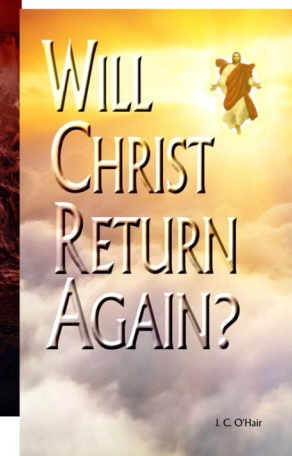
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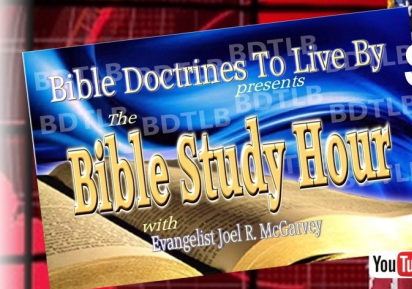
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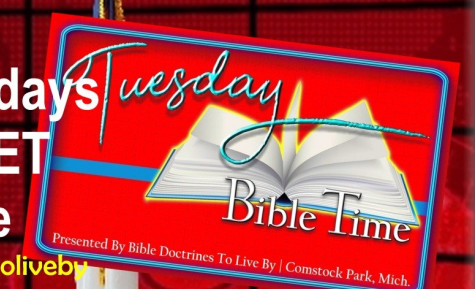
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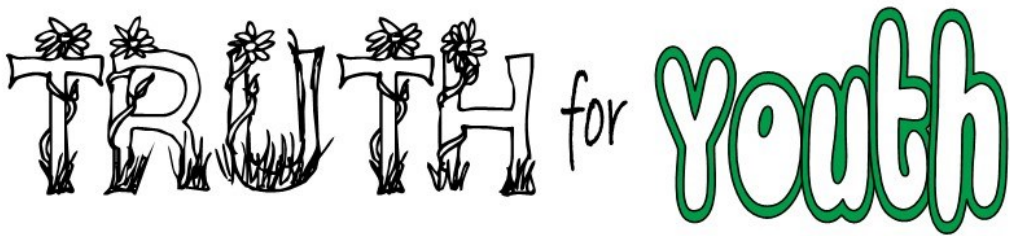
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Volume 4, Number 4.

SECURE in **CHRIST**

When you value something you put it in a safe place. You put your money in a bank. The bank puts it in a safe. You lock the door when you leave the house. You put your toys in a place where they will not get lost. When we trust in Jesus Christ, God gives us eternal life in Heaven. This is the most valuable thing that we have. Once we are saved we can NEVER lose our salvation. We are secure in Christ. This means that we are saved and will be with God forever. He will never lose us.

Write the number beside the verse in the space in front of the word the Bible uses to remind us that we are safe in Christ.

Complete

This means we are fully saved.

Sealed

The Holy Spirit proves we are saved.

Loved

NOTHING will ever separate us from God.

Hope

We're promised we will be in Heaven someday.

1. Titus 1:2 "In hope of eternal life, which God...promised...."

2. Colossians 1:13 "...you are complete in Him..."

3. Ephesians 1:13 "...after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

4. Romans 8:13 "...shall be able to separate us from the Lord of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

ANSWERS: 2-Complete; 3-Sealed; 4-Loved; 1-Hope

Our **GOD** is an **AWESOME GOD**

By Pastor Matt Ritchey

After over a decade and a half of preaching sermons four times a week, I had yet to tackle a study of the book of Romans. I had taught studies on every other one of Paul's epistles, as well as Old Testament studies from Genesis to Isaiah, most of the Minor Prophets, two of the Gospels, and all of the Kingdom epistles. So what was my apprehension with Romans? Well, it intimidated me. Not only is it a long book, the depth of the truths can be overwhelming. Besides, what would I do when I reached the much debated chapters of nine through eleven?

I am happy to report that I have finally rolled up my sleeves and delved into a study of Romans. Though the truths are still deep with more information packed in its pages than I could ever hope to detail, my personal study of Romans has been enriching and fulfilling as I endeavor to put together sermons on the book of Romans. (You can see the results by visiting "Bible Doctrines to Live By" on YouTube and finding the "Romans" playlist.) Even further, I am finally tackling those weighty chapters of nine, ten, and eleven.

Offentimes the default Bible study mode of Grace believers is to be on the lookout for contrasts between Kingdom and Mystery, Law and Grace. Obviously, this is an important mode of Bible study, but not when it is our only reason for studying the scriptures. When we come to Romans 9-11, the dispensational aspect is front and center; in fact, you will not understand these chapters unless you acknowledge their dispensational nature. However, if I would have approached these chapters by only searching for contrasts, I would have missed an important truth of Romans 9 - 11. I would have talked about Israel being set aside for a season until the Dispensation of Grace is completed without seeing the

chapters are filled with the truth that God is faithful and trustworthy, even when we do not fully understand. Let's take some space to appreciate this aspect of Romans 9-11.

After reminding them that God chose to use Jacob instead of Esau, Romans 9:14 asks and answers an important question: "*Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*" Do you think the descendants of Esau (the Edomites) had trouble accepting this act of God? Maybe, but my response as an Edomite would be to acknowledge that God is right in what He does. Are there things in our life we have trouble accepting? Are there truths we struggle to reconcile? We need to acknowledge a righteous God.

Do you think the Israelites selfishly boasted in being of the lineage of Jacob? I know many of them did, because the Bible tells me so. Jesus spent much of His earthly ministry attempting to get the physical family members of Jacob to see that their bloodline did not automatically prepare them for the eternal kingdom, for they had to be (spiritually) reborn. It was not because Jacob was deserving that the Lord used Him (9:16), for he was chosen before he was born (9:11). When we recognize our unworthiness, the goodness of God shines through.

A theme that is established quickly in these chapters is that God is the only one in a position to make these life-changing and world-altering decisions. Therefore, "*He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will harden those He hardens*" (9:15,18). The creation, including humans, is not a position to question the Sovereign; plus, we do not have access to the necessary information, so why do we try? We have to know that our God reserves the right to make the decisions that are needed without our input and He can act upon those decisions justly and righteously.