



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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Volume IX
Issue 218

A Letter to a Pastor

A Study of I Timothy 4:9-11

by – Ted McDivitt

Hi Pastor,

Thanks for taking the time to explain your understanding of I Timothy 4:9-11. I'm glad we are able to talk openly and freely. I agree with your opening statement that "we can interpret Scriptures to say what we want them to say." This can be done on many different levels and subjects. I hope I am not guilty of this. As you read in my testimony, I did not always believe God was truly the "Savior of all men," but once these passages and others were pointed out to me, I couldn't argue against them.

ALBERT BARNES'S "ANSWER"

I know Albert Barnes was a respected theologian, but based on what I read of his notes on I Timothy 4:10, it is *my opinion* that he has really fallen short of what the verse is saying. Actually, I know this sounds harsh, but in order for him to make the verse mean something different from the way it naturally reads as it is found in our Bibles, he has to *add* words to the Scripture. I hope to show this later, but first it is probably good to have the Scripture reading fresh in our minds.

Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for, for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching (I Timothy 4: 9-11, Concordant Literal Translation).

In relation to the statement, "Who is the Savior of all men" Mr. Barnes says the following:

This must be understood as denoting that He is the Savior of all people in some sense which differs from what is immediately affirmed – "especially of those that believe." There is something pertaining to "them" in regard to salvation which does not pertain to "all men." It cannot mean that He brings all people to heaven, "especially" those who believe – for this would be nonsense. And if He brings all people actually to heaven, how can it be "especially" true that He does this in regard to those who believe? Does it mean that He saves others "without" believing? But this would be contrary to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures; see Mark 16:16. When, therefore, it is said that He "is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe," it must mean that there is a sense in which it is true that He may be called the Savior of all people, while, at the same time, it is "actually" true that those only are saved who believe. This may be true in two respects:

- (1) As He is the "Preserver" of the people (Job 7:20), for in this sense He may be said to "save" them from famine, and war, and peril – keeping them from day to day; compare Psalms 107:28.

(see **LETTER**, page 2083)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with
 - ... total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

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LETTER (continued from page 2081)

(2) As He has “provided” salvation for all people. He is thus their Savior – and may be called the common Savior of all; that is, He has confined the offer of salvation to no one class of people; He has not limited the atonement to one division of the human race; and He actually saves all who are willing to be saved by Him.

ALBERT BARNES’S ERRORS

The following is a list of errors that I see in Mr. Barnes’s interpretation of I Timothy 4:10:

1) “... bringing all people to heaven” is added to the context when, under divine inspiration, the apostle Paul leaves it out. The context is dealing with “salvation” – not “going to heaven.” This touches on another topic, but just to say now in brief, Paul is the only writer of Scripture who mentions “going to heaven.” I believe the Body of Christ which is the “church” and “complement” of Christ (Ephesians 1: 23) to whom Paul is writing, are the only ones who have the promise of a homeland in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

Many will be experiencing salvation on the earth when Christ returns to deliver His people Israel in the great affliction of the last days. There are various resurrections in the future, but not “everyone” is said to go to heaven, yet all will be saved. In the oncoming eons Christ will use some saints in the heavens and other saints on the earth toward the “goal” of heading up all in the heavens and all on the earth (Ephesians 1:9-11). Much more could be said about this work, but I only mention it now because Mr. Barnes added the thought of “going to heaven” to the context. The context is “salvation.”

2) Mr. Barnes asks, “Does it mean that he saves others ‘without’ believing?”

Philippians 2:10-11 states,

That in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and

*subterranean, and every tongue should be **acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord**, for the glory of God the Father (Concordant Literal Translation).*

Again, much could be written on this passage, but in relation to the above question, let me say this:

A) “*In the name of Jesus*” – I did a study on this phrase years ago and I discovered it is only used in contexts dealing with “salvation.”

B) “*Every knee bowing*” and “*every tongue acclaiming [confessing]*” that “*Jesus Christ is Lord*” can only be referring to those having the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:3). This context not only deals with all humanity, but also all spirit beings. Since it is only by the Holy Spirit that all in the celestials and terrestrial and subterranean are able to say, “*Lord is Jesus*” then wouldn’t they also be *believing* it?

C) The “*acclaiming*” in Philippians 2:11 is in the Greek middle voice, which means it isn’t a “forced confession” or “artificial,” but rather with the emotions from the heart, spontaneous with the whole man behind it.

D) I Timothy 2:3-6 –

*For this is good and acceptable to the sight of God our Savior: **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a **ransom for all, to be testified in due time** (King James Version).*

All men will be saved and will come unto the knowledge of the truth. The ransom of Christ for all will be testified in due time (not all at once). Paul writes, in Romans 1:16,

For not ashamed am I of the evangel, for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who is believing ... (Concordant Literal Translation).

If the evangel is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing, and all men are going to be saved (I Timothy 2:4; 4:10) then it *must be* that all men will be believing.

3) Mark 16:16-18 – We know that Scriptures properly understood do not contradict each other. It seems to me that this context anticipates Pentecost. The Lord's disciples were given the ability to speak in new languages and the signs that are mentioned in the context must have followed those that believed. Perhaps this will also be the case in the future near the time when the Lord returns to the earth to rule from His throne. Many teachers quote Mark 16:16 but fail to mention verses 17-18. I know some believe all of these signs are prevalent today, but I don't see these signs being applicable in the administration of the secret that was given to Paul to dispense (Ephesians 3:8-9).

The word for "condemned" or "damned" in Mark 16:16 is the Greek word *kata krino* which means "judge adversely." Even some at the Great White Throne will be *judged adversely* and will be thrown into the lake of fire which is the second death (Matthew 12:41-42; Revelation 20:13-15); but what happens to all of these people when death is abolished (I Corinthians 15:25-26)? The process of Christ abolishing death began at the cross. Eventually death will be swallowed up in Victory for everyone. Only then can God become "All in all" (I Corinthians 15:28, 54-55).

Mark 16:16 is not dealing with the final state of humanity because, in the context, death is still in existence. Death is the last enemy, and it will be abolished (I Corinthians 15:26, 56); but that abolition will not be complete until the last one held in the second death has been made immortal.

4) Mr. Barnes throws in a hinge word – "actually." Based on I Timothy 4:10 he says,

It must mean that there is a sense in which it is true that he may be called the Savior of all people, while at the same time, it is "actually" true that those only are saved who believe. This may be true in two respects.

A) The Savior in the sense of "**Preserver** of people" saving them from famine, war, etc.

B) In the sense Christ has "**provided** salvation for all people."

My response:

Because of the word "especially" in I Timothy 4:10, Mr. Barnes claims that Christ is "actually" the Savior "only" of those who believe. Is this really what the verse says? No! It clearly states that the living God **is** "*the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers.*" A Savior is one who saves. Yet I will admit there is significance with the word, "especially." The same Greek word is used in Galatians 6:10 and II Timothy 4:13.

Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith (Galatians 6:10, Concordant Literal Translation).

By this verse, are we to understand that we work "only" for the family of faith? No! We work for the good of all mankind, yet "specially" for the family of faith.

Paul tells Timothy,

When you come, bring the traveling cloak which I left in Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the vellums (II Timothy 4:13, Concordant Literal Translation).

Was Timothy "only" supposed to bring the vellums? No! He was to bring the cloak, the scrolls, and *especially* the vellums.

God is not "only" the Savior of those who believe, but is the "*Savior of all mankind, especially of believers.*"

ESPECIALLY OF BELIEVERS

Yet the question remains, "**What is the significance of the phrase, 'especially of believers'?**" Mr. Barnes misses the point completely when he says that Paul "here teaches

that salvation is 'actually' limited to those who believe." That is *not* what I Timothy 4:10 says at all. The following is the way I understand this phrase. I hope you at least give it sincere consideration.

Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also (Romans 8:30).

Ephesians 1:4 complements this, for there we learn that God has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. All whom He has chosen, He calls. When He calls us, we believe. Our faith is a gracious gift (Romans 12:3; Philippians 1:29). He has granted faith to some and saves some before others for a purpose. All who are granted faith are being called out and trained for important work in the oncoming eons under the headship of Christ (I Corinthians 6:3; Ephesians 1:9-11, 23; 2:5-7; Romans 8:19; Colossians 3:1-4). It is in this sense that Christ is *especially* the Savior of those who are believing. It certainly does *not* infer that He is not the Savior of the rest of humanity.

CHRIST THE "PRESERVER"?

Mr. Barnes suggests from I Timothy 4:10 that Christ could be the Savior in the sense that He is the "Preserver of people" from famine and war and peril, etc. Let's assume for a moment that this is what Paul meant. When we consider the world as a whole down through the centuries, it doesn't appear that Christ has done a very good job of saving man from these things. When has there been a time when humanity hasn't experienced one or more of these things?

CHRIST THE "POTENTIAL" SAVIOR?

Then Mr. Barnes "adds" the thought that Christ has "provided" salvation for all people. What Mr. Barnes is suggesting is that "we rely on the living God Who is the 'POTENTIAL' Savior of all mankind." The inspired Word of God does *not* say Christ is my *potential* Savior. Christ *is* the Savior of all mankind, and He is especially the Savior of those such as you and me who have been granted faith.

WHAT ABOUT THE UNBELIEVING?

In closing, Mr. Barnes asks, "**What evidence is there that the great mass of mankind die believing on the Son of God?**"

My response:

None! I'm sure the vast majority of mankind go to their graves as unbelievers. At resurrection all of us – believers and unbelievers – are going to be judged for our works (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12). Christ as the only Righteous Judge will judge accordingly. Some will be judged more adversely than others. Some at the Great White Throne judgment will be thrown into the lake of fire which is the second death; but Scripture tells us that death will someday be abolished. Only then does God's goal of His creation become a reality. Only then does God "*become All in all.*" Only then will He receive His due in thanksgiving and blessing. To bless Him is the greatest act of righteousness of which His creatures are capable, and this will indeed come to pass when death, the final enemy is abolished. Through the blood of His cross, all will be reconciled to Him – whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Colossians 1:20). Amen!

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Pastor, when you suggested that Israel was to be a blessing to others, and this to be after they entered the promised land, I couldn't help think about our situation today in this administration of grace. We as members in the Body of Christ are promised a homeland in the heavens (Philippians 3:20). Yet we also know we shall be judging the world and angels and will be displaying the transcendent riches of God's grace in the oncoming eons (I Corinthians 6:2-3; Ephesians 2:7). We as members in the Body of Christ are said to be the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:23). We are going to be unveiled as sons of God at resurrection or after the rapture (Romans 8:19-23). We have such a lofty calling that even now we are *seated among the celestials* in God's sight (Ephesians 2:6). ▶

All of this “work” is why God is calling some out today. Not everyone has been designated beforehand by God for this purpose; but just as Israel was chosen to be God’s people, and as such to be a blessing to all others, so we as members of Christ’s Body are to be involved in His great redemptive work that continues through the oncoming eons, long after we have entered into our “promised land” in the heavens.

I couldn’t help but bring this up in the class. I knew it flew over most people’s heads, but we are entreated to meditate on our expectation and calling in the Lord. I also know we aren’t to sit back and do nothing now, but by us grasping more of our expectation in Christ and the calling to which we have been called (Ephesians 4:1), the more earnestly we will serve Him in the meantime.

This is what I was sharing briefly with Bob between services. I asked him if he knew what we would be doing in heaven. He said “our work will be done.” But this is far from the truth. Just as I said a good leader needs to have a preparation time, so we need to be prepared for our ministry after we go to our homeland in the heavens. We will be important instruments under the headship of Christ that will bring glory to God for all the generations of the eon of the eons (Ephesians 3:21)!

Many are blinded to some of these things because of the faulty translating of the Greek words *aion* and *aionios*. The phrase “eternal life” or “life everlasting” robs us from grasping God’s purpose in granting us “*eonian life*” just as the term “everlasting God” robs us from grasping the significance of Him as the “*eonian God*.” However, though this topic is related, I think I have rambled on enough for one letter, so I will stop here – but, pastor, I hope you will give some thought to what I have written. I don’t know what God has in store for us in the near future, but I thank Him for the relationship that we have had.

THE DATING OF THE FOUR “GOSPELS”

Hey, on that note, I just had one final thought. I think all four gospels were written shortly

after Christ ascended. I know I’m going against “traditional teaching” on this, but here are my reasons for believing this:

- 1) In I Timothy 5:18, Paul is quoting Luke’s account (Luke 10:7). Paul prefaces this by writing, “... *for the Scripture is saying.*” Paul is about to quote from *Scripture*, not just something he has heard. “*A threshing ox you shall not be muzzling,*” is found in Deuteronomy 25:4, but the next phrase, “*Worthy is the worker of his wages*” is only found in Luke 10:7. Therefore, the gospel of Luke had to have been written before Paul wrote I Timothy.
- 2) Luke’s opening sentence in his gospel is evidence that at least two of the other accounts were written before he wrote this.
- 3) In I Corinthians 15:4 Christ’s death, entombment and resurrection on the third day were according to the Scriptures. Notice that “*Scriptures*” is plural. This is at least two. This has to be the four gospels because nowhere but the gospels are these events specifically mentioned.
- 4) In Acts 17:3 Paul opened up the Scriptures to the Thessalonians to show them that the Christ must suffer and rise from the dead and that “*This one is the Christ – Jesus Whom I am announcing to you.*” The first part of this could have been from the Hebrew Scriptures, but the part about Jesus being the Christ could only have come from the four gospels (John 20:30-31).
- 5) It only makes sense that these men would write details of Christ’s life and death soon after He ascended. This was such a spectacular event. Why would they have waited for so many years to, “all of a sudden,” record what they witnessed? It also is quite possible that the order in which they were written is the order they are found in our Bibles, especially when we consider Luke’s opening sentence.

- 6) Paul’s evangel is based on the record of the

(See **LETTER**, last page)

He Is

by – Aaron Locker

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:3-4).

For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, specially of those who believe (I Timothy 4:10).

I am a photographer. It's something that I am very passionate about and, although I'm not as good at photography as I would like to be, I am persistent. I am a photographer of nature, and it sure would be nice someday to be the photographer of all nature. However, I know that I am physically incapable of performing such an extensive feat, so I will have to find sufficiency in being the photographer of only some nature.

What does this all mean? This means that I am a photographer of some nature because I photograph some nature. If I did not photograph some nature, I would not be a photographer of some nature and inversely, if I was not a photographer of some nature; that would mean I didn't photograph some nature.

I am the photographer of a very small part of nature and even though I will to be the photographer of all nature, I am only human and do not possess the necessary power to carry out my will to photograph all nature. I also wish I was better at being a photographer, but since I am only human; the best I can do is to be persistent with my photography inside my capabilities.

God is a Savior. It is something that He is very passionate about and, thankfully, He is as good at saving as He would like to be because He is all-good and all-powerful. Nonetheless, He is still persistent. God is the Savior of men and He wills to be the Savior of all men. Thankfully, God is physically capable of performing such an extensive feat, so He will never have to find sufficiency in being the Savior of only some men.

What does this all mean? This means that God is the Savior of all men because He saves all men. If He did not save all men, He would not be the Savior of all men and, inversely, if He was not the Savior of all men, that would mean He did not save all men. He is *not* the Savior of a very small part of men, because He wills to save all men and, since He is God, He possesses the necessary power to carry out His will to save all men. God does not simply "wish He was better at being a Savior," because God is infinitely capable and eternally loving. So, when God persists inside His capabilities, the **only** possible outcome is that He fulfills His will of saving all men.

As you can see, the first section describes my will and my inability to perform it because I am only human. In the second section we can see that because God is God and not Aaron Locker, God is able to perform His will. God is not only willing and able to be the Savior of all men, He already **is** the Savior of all men. It is finished. There is nothing we can do about it. We sometimes try to apply our shortcomings as humans to God; but be it not so.

Some would advocate that I Timothy 4:10 suggests that God is some sort of passive Savior; a Savior that offers His hand to drowning humanity but requires man to extend his own hand to be saved. This defies the definition of Savior. God is not a *would-be* Savior; He **is** the Savior of all men. He doesn't *only try* to be the Savior of all men; He **is** the Savior of all men. He does not *suggest* that all men *allow* Him to be their Savior; He **is** the Savior of all men. He either is or He isn't.

The Bible says "**HE IS.**"

four gospels as they record the information of God's Son, namely His death, entombment and resurrection. Therefore, it makes sense to me that these gospels would have been written and in circulation before Paul began his ministry in Acts 13, or at the very least, before he began writing in Acts 18.

Okay, I am finished. No hurry to respond to any of this pastor, but if and when you have time, I'd

like for us to continue discussing these things of consequence.

Yours in Christ,

Ted McDivitt
Cortland, OH

(Read Ted's testimony – *My Change in Beliefs* – of coming to rejoice in the ultimate salvation of all, in BSN #148.)



You have such a way with words and expressing things very well!!! I just loved this *Daily Email Goodie*; it spoke to my heart! – **CO**

You have a gift of reducing things to their elements so that folks can understand them. Simple points, simple questions, but profound truth ... I appreciate more and more every day your labors on the behalf of the body of Christ. You just methodically and patiently, and without fanfare, keep going. – **OH**

I appreciate the Daily Email Goodies being

sent to me. It is so nice to be able to come to the library and read and study emails from you. – **IL**

I thank God for you Clyde. – **MI**

Wow! I never thought of the church that way! I have been looking for a home church for a little while. This information has really helped me! – **MO**

Your *Daily Email Goodies* on II Timothy were awesome, thanks for the good work on Scripture. – **TX**

All the accountability in Scripture is linked to God, not to other brothers and sisters. When we hold one another accountable, we are really usurping God's place. It's why we end up hurting one another so deeply.

Wayne Jacobson
So You Don't Want To Go To Church Anymore
(2006) pages 44, 45

God's incredible handiwork, which is often called "nature," is in reality displaying His nature and goodness. The wonders of creation, which beg awe and thankfulness, are God's continual advertising campaign designed to alert people to both His existence and His beneficence.

John Schoenheit
One Lord and One God, (2000) page 33

Sadly, there are those who would have us love Christ for protecting us from God, instead of leading us to God – the one home of safety. They imagine justice and love dwelling in eternal opposition in the bosom of eternal unity.

George MacDonald
(1824 - 1905)