



WHEAT: Where Did It Come From?

This is speaking of the domesticated wheat, and it originates where you would expect it to since the Bible says the ark of Noah landed in the mountains of Ararat (Urartu in Sumerian, the first written language which also appeared in this general area). These mountains are upstream on the tributaries to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and it was on these smaller rivers that wheat first appears as a domesticated crop. This crop helped make civilization, that is large cities, possible. ~

The story of wheat is extremely interesting. According to Wikipedia, "Wheat originated in the area known as the Fertile Crescent in Western Asia. The genetic relation-

ships between wild and domesticated populations of both einkorn and emmer wheat indicate that the most likely site of domestication is near Diyarbakir in Turkey."

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Why the Gospel Is God's Power Unto Salvation



By R.L. Whiteside

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Rom. 1:16a).

In many sermons and articles emphasis is placed on "the" before "power," as if it were the deciding word in this sentence, whereas it is not in the Greek text. It seems odd that we should emphasize a word that Paul could have used at that place, but did

not. Perhaps Paul's emphasis may better be seen by reading as follows: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power unto salvation." Paul emphasizes the idea that the gospel is God's power for saving men—not his creative power, but his saving

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power; not the power by which he created man, but the power by which he saves men. If men are saved at all, God must do it; and if God saves man, he does it by his own power—by his power for saving man. Paul affirms that His power for saving man is the gospel. That cuts off any other power or means for regenerating, or saving, man.

If, then, you would contribute anything toward saving men, bring God's power to bear on them. You are only an agent that God would use in bringing to bear on men his power for saving them. He would not have you to mix or dilute his power, nor to obstruct its full flow. You may enhance your standing with men by flattery, cajolery, and intrigue, and by such small talk and conduct, succeed in baptizing some that you would not otherwise baptize; but all such converts have you in mind rather than the Lord. They have fallen in love with you and your power to attract people instead of falling in love with the Lord and his power to save, and they will not be worth a fig in any effort the church makes till they come around again. Any preacher should be ashamed of himself for making such converts, for he has impressed himself, instead of the Lord, on the hearts of his converts.

"For our exhortation is not of error, nor uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of

man, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ" (1 Thess. 2:3-6).

Paul used no flattery and practiced no deceit; he was not trying to build up a big admiration society. Flattery may be effectually used to cover up the speaker's covetousness, but it accomplishes nothing in the salvation of people. Only the gospel is God's power to save, and on that the preacher should rely.

"And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

But why is the gospel God's power to save? Paul assigns the reason: "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith" (Rom. 1:17). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, because in it is revealed a righteousness by faith in order to faith. Why this is true will be clearly seen, if we get a clear view of Paul's use of the phrase, "the righteousness of God." By this expression, he does not refer to the righteousness of God as a person. That attribute of God had been known of old, for it had

clearly been revealed in the law. "The righteousness of God" may refer either to God's plan of righteousness or to the righteousness to which we attain through that plan. "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:3). Paul did not mean that the Jews were ignorant of the fact that God is a righteous being, nor that they were trying to prove themselves to be righteous. The righteousness of God was something to which they could subject themselves and to which they had not brought themselves into subjection. They were ignorant of the gospel, God's plan of righteousness, and were going about to establish a plan of their own. Hence, they had not submitted to the gospel—God's plan of righteousness. The righteousness to which we attain through this plan of righteousness is referred to by Paul as "the righteousness . . . of faith" (Rom. 10:6).

There are only two conceivable ways by which men can be righteous. If a man were to live absolutely perfect, he would be righteous in his own right and by his own works; but no mere man has ever been righteous by the perfection of his own works—all have sinned. As all are unrighteous, and as only the righteous can be saved, what hope is there for any man?

Some plan must be adopted by which guilty sinners can be made righteous, or there is no hope. God has graciously provided that plan. In the gospel, God's plan of righteousness, provision is made for the cleansing and the forgiveness of the sinner. The blood of

Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Sins are forgiven, guilt from sin is removed; and the person thus cleansed stands in God's sight as if he never had sinned. He is righteous, and this righteousness is attained to by faith.

The denominational idea, expressed in their creeds and standard works, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner, while the sinner's corruption still remains with him, makes God's plan of righteousness weak and ineffective. The creed makers would have us believe that the sinner is not only made righteous, but is only, in some mystical way, clothed with the clean garments of Christ's righteousness, and made to appear clean, though beneath these borrowed garments he is still filthy and sinful. The marvel is that any one could ever believe such perversion. It makes the gospel a very ineffective cleansing agent, discredits the blood of Christ, and puts God in an unfavorable light, for it represents him as counting the filthy man as clean simply because he has dressed him up in clean clothes. No, the gospel is not so ineffective as that; neither does God carry on such a pretense as they would have us believe.

There are two ways for your handkerchief to be clean: one is, for it never to be soiled; the other is, for it, having become soiled, to be carried through a process of cleansing and made clean. Not that the cleanliness of the washerwoman is imputed to it, but she has carried it through a process of cleansing that makes it as clean as if it had never been soiled. The abuse and wear you gave it may have weakened its

fabric, but it is clean. Just so with man. If he never became soiled with sin, he would be clean; but since he has become soiled by sin, our Lord can take him through a process of cleansing that makes him as clean as if he never had sinned. The fabric of his moral nature may be weakened by sin, but he is clean; and, like the handkerchief, he may become soiled again, but that does not destroy the fact that he was once made clean and righteous.

Because the gospel thus cleanses from sin and makes us righteous, it is the power of God unto salvation. That is the reason which Paul assigns; and if it did not thus make sinners righteous, we see not how it could be God's

power to save. On our part, this righteousness is attained by a living faith. Not only so, but the fact that it does provide a way for guilty men to become righteous is an inducement for sin-burdened men to believe. Hence, I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power to save man; and it is God's power of save man because it is God's way of making men righteous by faith. This plan of righteousness by faith is revealed that men may believe. ~

Editor's note: I didn't know brother Whiteside (he died in 1951, four years after I was born), but I sure wish I had. Were he still alive, I'd like to sit at his feet for as long as he would want to preach. Preach on, brother!

