

Sunday, March 22, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 167 Sonship Edification: Discerning the Post-Blades Sonship Landscape

### **Introduction/Review**

- In Lesson 166 we concluded our survey of the evolution of Sonship Edification (SE) in the writings of Keith R. Blades by considering the *Enjoy the Bible Quarterlies (EBQs)* from 2007 to 2009.
- In this final lesson on SE, I want to accomplish the following:
  - Look at the events leading up to Keith’s death in July 2010
  - Prove that Blades himself never publicly taught that Proverbs 1 served as a Table of Contents for Paul’s epistles prior to his death; as far as I have been able to discern. Whereas, Newbold is on record for teaching it well before Keith’s death in July 2010.
  - Ascertain where Newbold was in the sonship curriculum when Keith died in 2010. We will also seek to determine what this might mean for how much of the curriculum these two men discussed before Keith passed away.

### **The Death of Keith R. Blades**

- In Lesson 166 we noted that there had been no *EBQ* published during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 on account of Keith’s health. The *EBQ* from the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2009 updated the periodical’s readers on Keith’s health status. It was on account of his health that no 1<sup>st</sup> quarter issue had been produced.
  - “We want to express our sincere appreciation for all of the kind cards, notes, email, and inquiries that we have received over the past while regarding Keith’s health in view of his heart condition and recent coronary procedure.
 

. . . Due to Keith’s situation we did not attempt to publish a first quarter edition of the ETB Quarterly. And even though he has some life-style adjustments to make, and also has a few complications that need to be dealt with, with this second quarter edition we hope to resume publishing the Quarterly on our regular schedule.” (Blades, *EBQ* 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2009, 2)
- After this point, Keith’s health seems have deteriorated fast. The very next and final issue of the *EBQ* from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2009 reported the following regarding Keith’s health.
  - “At the time of this writing Keith is recovering from surgery for colon cancer. He underwent a complete colectomy and ileostomy.

During surgery a second active cancer was found in the upper portion of the small intestine, but it was not able to be completely removed. In addition subsequent pathologies have indicated that cancer is also present in at least one other system.

So he has now been turned over to oncology for a full and thorough assessment of the nature of the cancers and their stages of development. He will then be given a prognosis of their activities and effects, along with a determination of treatment options.” (Blades, *EBQ* 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009, 2)

- Within a year, Brother Blades went home to be with the Lord. Keith R. Blades died on July 4, 2010.

### **The Table of Contents in Proverbs One**

- As my review and collation of the *EBQs* came to a close, I realized that Keith never stated in print (in the *EBQ* or anywhere else to my knowledge) that Proverbs One serves as a Table of Contents or curriculum overlay for Paul’s epistles. While Keith does clearly connect various aspects of SE curriculum with the book of Proverbs in the *EBQs*, the connection between Proverbs One and Paul’s epistles is never EXPLICITLY made. *EBQs* that contain clear connections between the book of Proverbs and SE include the following (please follow the links below to the *EBQs* and the corresponding Lesson to review the details of each point of contact between Proverbs and Paul’s Epistles in the writings of Blades.):
  - [1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2002](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 163](#))
  - [3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2006](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 165](#))
  - [4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2006](#), Page 6 (See [Lesson 165](#))
  - [2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2007](#), Page 5 (See [Lesson 166](#))
  - [3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007](#), Page 4 (See [Lesson 166](#))
- At this time, and to the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of any publicly released audio/visual resources on which Keith can be found teaching the concept that Proverbs One serves as a Table of Contents for Paul’s epistles. In summation, Keith R. Blades does not appear to have EXPLICITLY taught this concept in any format, written or otherwise, prior to his death in 2010. Mark Newbold, Pastor of Triangle Bible Church in Raleigh, North Carolina appears to have been the one to PUBLICLY ARTICULATE this concept.
- Upon realizing this, my first question was whether or not this was an example of an SE concept that Newbold introduced into the SE thought stream after the death of Blades? After investigating the matter I have concluded that the answer is no. Newbold traveled to Strathmore, Alberta Canada in April 2010 (prior to Keith’s death) to teach at a [Sonship Conference](#). At this meeting, Newbold taught three lessons on “The Sonship Curriculum” which included a discussion of the “Table of Contents” as well as Levels I, II, and III of the curriculum. The audio from this meeting is available on the Triangle Bible Church (TBC) webpage by following the link

above. This of course means that Newbold was in Keith's back yard just months prior to his death teaching the Table of Contents aspects of SE.

- Further investigation reveals that Newbold had been teaching all three of the following concepts for years before Keith passed away in July 2010: 1) Proverbs One Table of Contents, 2) Proverbs One Curriculum Overlay/Map for Paul's Epistles, and 3) Three Levels of Sonship.
- In his notes on [Romans 5](#) and [Romans 6](#), Newbold talks about the Three Levels of sonship. According to my calculations, Newbold was in Romans 5 in 2005 and in Romans 6 in 2006 (see below for a fuller treatment of dating Newbold's teaching ministry).
  - "But later on, **as we get out into the second and third courses or levels of our sonship education**, it's not going to take near that much explanation - i.e., you're not going to have 5 times the statement of (:5) to get it to effectually work within us - in fact, in some places the word "love" won't have to be used!" (Newbold, [Romans 5:1-21](#), 70)
  - "And (even though the same kind of terminology isn't used) we will come to see that God has designed the power of grace to still abound even more in our exaltation - which is why when you get to Level II sonship edification you get terminology like "the riches of his grace" (see Eph. 1:7-8)." (Newbold, [Romans 6:1-13](#), 30)
- The "Table of Contents" concept shows up in Newbold's notes on Romans 7 for the first time in 2007. On page 23 of his notes on [Romans 6:14-7:25](#) one reads the following:
  - "**Prov. 1 - The basic table of contents of the curriculum for sonship education and sonship edification. Yet while the basic structure or skeleton of the table of contents is the same for a Father to properly educate a son in either program**—the doctrinal information—or the packages of doctrine that is given for a son's education in Proverbs is not in keeping with God's designed purpose for the particular business or vocation He is in with His son who is the "one new man" or the "new creature" of the church, the body of Christ, today." (Newbold, [Romans 6:14-7:25](#), 23)
  - "In fact, the truth of the matter is, **that near the end of Level I of sonship education**, you begin to learn some things, and be taught some things that are designed to enable you to understand and appreciate how angels think!" (Newbold, [Romans 6:14-7:25](#), 24)
- Sometime in late 2006 or the first half of 2007, before Newbold began teaching on Romans 8:14-15 on Sunday, June 17, 2007, he taught on [Romans 8:1-13](#). It is here that talk of the Table of Contents in Proverbs really heats up and is fully flushed out.
  - "And you're going to see that all matches up perfectly and wonderfully to your own education as we would expect it to, if this is the format for a Father/son education!"

So we've come to recognize that what we're being given here is in all reality (not in theory) a TABLE OF CONTENTS for the book of Proverbs, in verses 2-6." (Newbold, [Romans 8:1-13](#), 269)

- "RECAP: SONSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM (Table of Contents):
- (Proverbs 1:2-6)
  - LEVEL I = vs. 2 and vs. 3
    - Phase 1 = (:2)
      - Part 1 = To know wisdom and instruction; (:2a)
      - Part 2 = to perceive the words of understanding; (:2b)
    - Phase 2 = (:3) To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
  - LEVEL II = vs. 4
    - Phase 1 = To give subtilty to the simple, (:4a)
    - Phase 2 = to the young man knowledge and discretion. (:4b)
  - LEVEL III = vs. 5 and vs. 6
    - Phase 1 = (:5a)
      - Part 1 = A wise man will hear, (:5a1)
      - Part 2 = and will increase learning; (:5a2) –
    - Phase 2 = (:5b-6)
      - Part 1 = and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: (:5b)
      - Part 2 = To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. (:6)" (Newbold, [Romans 8:1-13](#), 289-290)
- We could go further with our documentation here but there is no need. The following three aspects of SE were all being taught by Newbold by 2007 some three years before Keith passed away in July 2010: 1) Proverbs One Table of Contents; 2) Proverbs One Curriculum Overlay/Map for Paul's Epistles; and 3) Three Levels of Sonship.
- While Keith himself never wrote or taught publicly on these subjects it is beyond doubt that they were part of the subject matter that was discussed in the private phone conversations between Newbold and Blades. There is no way that Newbold would have been out publicly teaching an aspect of SE without Keith's knowledge and/or approval.
- What this highlights is that Newbold's public teaching of SE in his assembly was far out pacing the rate at which Keith was writing about SE in the *EBQs*. In other words, Newbold was teaching SE related subjects during the time frame between 2001 and 2010 that Keith had not written about during that same time period in the *EBQ*.

## The Post-Blades Sonship Frontier

- One question that has surfaced multiple times throughout the course of our studies on SE is where was Newbold with respect to the SE curriculum when Keith died? Related questions include:
  - What aspects of SE is Blades responsible for as opposed to Newbold and vice versa?
  - How much of the SE curriculum had Blades and Newbold discussed and/or established before Keith died?
  - At what point has or will Newbold exhaust the material he discussed with Keith and be forced to proceed through the rest of the curriculum on his own?
  
- While I believe the information required to answer these questions exists on the audio recordings of the phone conversations between Blades and Newbold, they are not at this time being made available for public consumption and scrutiny. Therefore, in their absence, one is left to piece together a chronology based upon those aspects of the historical records that are available.
  
- Mark Newbold, began teaching Sonship Orientation (Romans 8:14-15) on Sunday, June 17, 2007 with lesson #1597. This is the first dated lesson in the audio archives of Triangle Bible Church. All messages in the Romans series prior to this date (6/17/07) are numbered but not dated. The following is a list of the lesson numbers and totals for each category, as well as date ranges for all datable categories as of Wednesday, March 18, 2015. Please note: items in italics in the following list indicate numbered but undated lessons.
  - *Romans 4 (#1045-1163)—118 Lessons*
  - *Romans 5 (#1164-1350)—186 Lessons*
  - *Romans 6 (#1351-1445)—94 Lessons*
  - *Romans 7 (#1446-1547)—101 Lessons*
  - *Romans 8:1-13 (#1548-1896)—48 Lessons*
  
  - Romans 8:14-15 (#1597-1773)—176 Lessons                      6/07 through 7/08
  - Romans 8:16-39 (#1774-1989)—215 Lessons                      7/08 through 9/09
  - Romans 9:1-5 (#1990-2007)—17 Lessons                              10/09 through 11/09
  - Short Survey of Israel (#2008-2101)—93 Lessons                      11/09 through 7/10
  - Romans 9-11 (#2102-2175)—73 Lessons                              7/10 through 12/10
  - Romans 12:1-2 (#2176-2208)—32 Lessons                              1/11 through 3/11
  - Romans 12:3ff (#2209-2792)—583 Lessons                              3/16/11 to present
  
- Beginning with the commencement of Sonship Orientation on 6/17/07 (#1597) and working forward (using the datable lessons listed above), I have been able to plot Newbold's progression through the sonship curriculum on a series of calendars. Doing so reveals that Newbold was near the end (within two weeks) of the 93 part study title "Short Survey of Israel" when Blades passed away on July 4, 2010. This of course means that everything from Romans 9-11 on was taught

without the benefit of Blades' tutelage. Once again, given the unknown nature of the recorded phone conversations between Blades and Newbold, it is impossible to know for sure how much of the content brought forth under the banner of SE since Blades' departing was discussed beforehand and how much of it Newbold (himself) is responsible for.

- Given the fact that 2008 is the first year for which assembling an accurate teaching calendar is possible (started dating the Lesson in June 2007), I was able to average how many lessons a year Newbold taught between 2008 and 2013. Over the five years in question (2008-2013) Newbold taught an average of 162 lessons per year. The totals from 2014 were not included in this average because Newbold inexplicably took a two month "sabbatical" for all of September and October 2014. At this time I am not aware of the reason for the sabbatical, consequently, any reason I might give would be pure speculation at this point.
- Using Newbold's five year average of 162 lessons per year (based upon the math, I have no reason to believe that this was different before June 2007) and his lesson numbering system, it is possible to speculate backwards from June 2007 and get an approximate understanding of where Newbold would have been in the curriculum the previous June.
  - June 2006—Lesson #1435 (Romans 6)
  - June 2005—Lesson #1273 (Romans 5)
  - June 2004—Lesson #1111 (Romans 4)
  - June 2003—Lesson #949 (Romans 3)
- There is no audio available on the Triangle Bible Church webpage for Romans 1 through 3. Regarding Romans 1 and 2, Newbold has included the following note:
  - "A note from Pastor Mark Newbold:
 

It was during the time when I was teaching Romans chapters 1 and 2 that I came to understand and appreciate God's word 'rightly divided' as well as many other issues about the apostle Paul, "the mystery," this dispensation of grace, the King James Bible, and so forth. Wherefore a great transition was taking place in my ministry. So then, to avoid confusion and corrupted doctrine, the lessons taught in Romans 1 and 2 will not be made available.

The purpose of these pages is to offer past lessons that we feel are worth archiving for future reference and the serious study of the word of God." ([Click here](#) to read note at the top of the page.)
- Despite the fact that there are no audio recordings offered for Romans 3 on the [Triangle Bible Church website](#), there are two sets of printed notes that have been made available. One set appears to be a scanned PDF document of Newbold's typed notes and contains handwritten marginal notations. A second set of PDF notes appears much more polished, lacks the marginal notes, and include notes for Romans 4.

- Set 1: [Romans 3 P. 1-39](#) & [Romans 3 P. 40-212](#)
  - Set 2: [Romans Chapters 3-4](#)
- The notes titled [Romans 3 P.40-212](#) include a smattering of sonship terminology.
    - Sonship—11 times
    - Sonship Edification—4 times
    - Sonship Privilege—2 times
    - Sonship Discipline—1 time
    - Sense & Sequence—3 times
- The notes titled Romans Chapters 3-4 include the use of the following sonship language and are not completely identical to the previous set noted above.
    - Sonship—6 times
    - Sonship Edification—3 times
    - Sonship Doctrine (contained in Proverbs 1-9)—1 time
    - Sonship Issue—1 time
    - Sense & Sequence—6 times
- All this proves that as far back as 2003, when Newbold was in Romans 3, he was being influenced by Blades and was beginning to teach rudimentary SE concepts. Over time, as we have already demonstrated, this would grow to become the focus of Newbold's entire ministry.
- These observations regarding Newbold's teaching of SE concepts in his notes on Romans 3 in 2003 coincide nicely with the following general timeline we presented in Lessons [145](#) and [162](#). SE concepts show up in the notes of Newbold in 2003 at precisely the same time he says that Blades began to teach him everything he knows about SE.
    - Exact date uncertain—Newbold learns right division and purchases Blades' book *Satan and His Plan of Evil* on recommendation. Enclosed was a pamphlet listing of Blades' tapes. Newbold orders the tape "The Battle on the Cross" and is so impressed with Blades' teaching that he orders Blades' entire audio library with assistance from Triangle Bible Church. (Triangle Bible Church Audio #[2094](#), 7/11/2010)
    - 2000—Newbold begins emailing Keith Blades with questions (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
    - 2001—Newbold begins phoning Keith Blades and recording the conversations (TBC Audio #[2094](#))
    - 2003—Newbold asks Blades to teach him everything he knows about SE (TBC Audio #[2094](#))

## Conclusion

- SE is a recent theological system to develop within the Grace Movement over that past fifteen years.
- Where the SE movement is ultimately heading is uncertain at this point and is anybody's guess. Will it fizzle and die out or grow and spread? Only time will tell.
- Supporters of SE have a strong presence on the internet and utilize websites such as YouTube effectively to spread their message. Moreover, social media websites such as Facebook have been utilized effectively to spread the message of SE.
- What is certain is that Keith R. Blades was the fountainhead of the position and that Mark Newbold was his primary understudy. Beyond the *EBQ*, Newbold became the primary champion of SE and advanced the position far further via his local church ministry than Blades had in print prior to his death in July 2010. Others, such as Mike McDaniel, have followed Newbold closely, in some cases even copying his notes verbatim, in their enunciation of SE. It is clear that the ministry of Triangle Bible Church has become a prime conduit through which many have been exposed to the theological system of SE.
- For other sonship teachers, for example David Winston Bush who has written extensively on the subject in his "Sonship Stablishment Series" of books, it is more difficult to determine where the roots of his exposure to SE reside.