

## Be a Berean!

*The Bereans ...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day.*  
(Acts 17:11)

[“Be a Berean” will regularly cover topics that arise during the “Acts 29” and “Lifted Up” Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—[liftedup@lockportalliance.org](mailto:liftedup@lockportalliance.org)—with questions or comments.]

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### Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

**If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.**  
(Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

**There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.” And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. But when he came to himself, he said, “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you...’” And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** (Luke 15:11-20)

Why isn't the son in the book of Luke punished, as the book of Deuteronomy demands?

This apparent contradiction is no contradiction at all to the student of the entire word of God. The passage from Deuteronomy comes from the Law. The law is what we deserve. The passage from Luke is an example of God's grace. Grace is what we don't deserve.

The purpose of the law is to lead us to God's grace. The law is a tutor, showing us that we have fallen short of God's standard, taking us by the hand to ask for God's forgiveness: **Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.** (Gal 3:24/NKJV)

You can see the law at work in the life of the Prodigal Son. The son tells the Father that he does not deserve to be called his son. The boy is right. So we see that the law is right. And it is for our good.

But the law cannot restore us to the inheritance we have forfeited through sin. Only God's grace makes it possible for Him to shower His blessing upon us. The Father restored all that the boy had squandered, and more.

Is the Law still in effect? Absolutely. **The wages of sin are still death** (Romans 6:23).

The Good News is that God has a Way back home! Jesus took upon Himself the demands of the law for all those who look to Him for their salvation. That's what Jesus

meant when He said, **“I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.”**  
(Matthew 5:17)

Jesus paid it all.

So God’s law in Deuteronomy is fulfilled to the last letter. And His love is showered upon us, just as the story of the Prodigal Son describes. There is no contradiction in the Bible, or in the character of God.

The seeming contradictions--between the Old and New Testaments, between God's Law and His Grace, between the prodigal boy in Deuteronomy and the prodigal boy in Luke--are reconciled at the cross of Jesus Christ, when God combined uncompromising wrath against sin with unconditional forgiveness. There at the cross, in a sheer display of the entire spectrum of His character, we by faith see the miracle of the universe, which makes all else pale.

By faith in Christ make the cross your miracle, and you'll see your stern, unwavering Father sprinting down the road to welcome you home, at last.

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It is our fervent hope that you will Be a Berean by attending one or more of these Bible-based classes this week! —

“Acts 29” Bible Class—Sunday at 9:45

“Everyday Wisdom for the Average Joe”—Sunday at 9:45

“Lifted Up” Continuous Bible Class—Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

“Beth Moore Bible Study”—Thursday at 7:00 p.m.