

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 2002



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The *Berean Bible Society* is an organization for the promotion of Bible study by means of newspaper series, recorded Bible lessons, and the distribution of Bible study literature. It is a non-profit organization, a work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends.

The *Berean Searchlight* is the official organ of the *Berean Bible Society*, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

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The *Berean Searchlight* (ISSN 0005-8890), September 2002. Volume 63, Number 6.

The *Berean Searchlight* is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Second-class postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Berean Searchlight*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756.



From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

For better or for worse, we have come a long way since the days of the Apostle Paul in regard to the various avenues at our disposal to communicate the gospel. The message of the gospel can now be sent around the world in a moment of time via the Internet. Since the fall of man, good and evil have been present in God's universe; thus conscience requires we abstain from all known evil and perform that which is good and righteous. While we cannot control the immoral intent of those who would use the Internet for evil, as believers we can and should use this medium for the glory of God.

Our website, located at <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>, has been greatly used of the Lord to introduce many to the Word, rightly divided. Since its inception, in the fall of 1998, over 50,000 have contacted the site. This particular ministry offers around the clock exposure for the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the Mystery. Here's what the BBS website has to offer: A brief history of the *Berean Bible Society*, the monthly *Berean Searchlight* on-line, an archive of past issues of the *Searchlight*, *Bible Time* radio broadcasts, a bookstore where all of our literature and tapes can be purchased, a conference schedule for those who would like to attend our meetings around the country, plus information on *Berean Bible Institute* is available for those who may be interested in attending BBI.



Thanks to our dear Brother Richard Church, who maintains our site, you can now receive *Two Minutes With the Bible*, a daily devotional, via e-mail. Simply visit the BBS website to sign up. Incidentally, in addition to using MasterCard or Visa to purchase literature on-line, you can also give a donation to the Lord's work, as the Lord leads.

While we are listed on all the major search engines on the Internet, we would like to encourage you to spread the word about the BBS website to your family and friends. It's a great way to introduce someone to Paul's apostleship and message. Don't forget, our web address is located on the inside cover of each issue of the *Berean Searchlight*.

In His service,
Paul M. Sadler
President

From Texas:

"Do I detect an increasing emphasis on 'Living the life,' along with the emphasis on doctrine? If so, that is great!! While we strongly believe in the great grace of our God, I fear we have sometimes missed the boat on separation from this world." (Doctrine and walk are two ends of the same scale. The key word in the ministry is BALANCE! Ed.)

From Oregon:

"Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* which we and our church have been receiving for many years with such blessings!...We have all been truly blessed by the writings and ministry of both Pastor Stam and Pastor Sadler as well and have given out many of their books and booklets to everyone in our assembly."

From Colorado:

"I appreciated your in-depth study on our 'sealing' in Christ, and just wrote to BBS to get 24 extra copies for my own distribution. Bless you, and all at BBS. You are appreciated. We would be starved if we had to rely on the spiritual pabulum we see being served in the Lord's name."

From Oklahoma:

"We enjoy your *Searchlight* magazine and all your books that we have received. We have passed many on to other people and they are now getting books on their own."

From Florida:

"I am writing to thank you as personally as I can for passing along the truth....Could you please pass this new address along to BBS? I wouldn't want to miss any future issues of the *Berean Searchlight*."

From the Internet:

"Thank you for your e-mail. It will take me some time to sift through all the information, but I am excited! However, you have triggered another question....Thank you sweet brother, and God bless you."

From Norway:

"I am a dispensationalist, and I like your fine and biblical teaching. It supports most of my own view on things. It seems today as if we cannot teach too much on the Grace-subject—Christendom seems to have backslidden into Judaistic Torah mixed up with Grace, leaving many servants of God confused and not really made fit for preaching Grace. This is something I know I shall continue to emphasize, to hold forth the importance of Grace only, no works—salvation as a gift. For that purpose, I noticed, among many other fine articles at your site, an article written by Pastor Rollin E. Wilson, *The Prayer of Jabez, Its Principle, and Paul*. Now people here in my own church are quoting from that book of Bruce Wilkinson, and how important they feel that we learn to pray the prayer of Jabez. This I would like to correct, and Rollin Wilson's article is excellent in that purpose! May I be allowed to translate his article into Norwegian, as I will give full name of the original author, and also where the article may be found in its original English?" (Permission granted! Thanks for helping us get the message out to the confused masses. Ed.)

From Florida:

"I have been reborn recently and would be willing to receive information relating to Bible studies."

From the Internet:

"Thanks so much for the information on the Lord's Prayer. It has been years since our pastor went over this, and I couldn't remember much of it. He went to be with the Lord and we moved away and there are no churches that are Pauline in the area. We get the *Searchlight* and enjoy it very much. Thanks again for your time and information."

From California:

"My wife and I enjoy the *Berean Searchlight* very much. Keep up your excellent work. May the Lord richly bless you and your efforts."

From British Columbia, Canada:

“I have recently come to an understanding of the Mid-Acts position (I was previously an Acts 2 dispensational believer) and would very much appreciate receiving the *Berean Searchlight* in order to learn more. Thanks so much for your ministry. Are you aware of any brothers and sisters of ‘like precious faith’ with whom I could find fellowship? God Bless You.”

From Minnesota:

“I am considering getting the *Grace Library Bible* software for my father, and was wondering if it is compatible for Windows XP...God bless you all at *Berean Bible Society*. I just love the *Berean Searchlight*.” (I’m somewhat computer challenged, but I believe the software is compatible with Windows XP, as long as your father has Acrobat Reader 5.0 or higher. Ed.)

From Florida:

“Thank you for my monthly *Berean Searchlight*. I look forward to every issue.”

From North Carolina:

“Just a quick note, to thank all of you for your website and the labor of love it takes to make so much study material available via the Internet. I deeply appreciate the study articles, and the *Berean Searchlight* publications in pdf format; this is such a blessing to me. Thank you! May God continue to richly bless each and every one of you at the *Berean Bible Society*.”

From Oklahoma:

“Just wanted you to know that your article *Security of the Seal* was magnificent. We will be sharing that article with others so they too might see that their salvation is secure and nothing can take it away. Let us continually praise our God for all that He has done through His Son our Savior Jesus Christ.”

From Georgia:

“Thank you for the recent *Searchlight*...I especially appreciated the article about secular careers. That’s my current dilemma (Did you write that JUST for me?!) My grandmother [Mrs. Griggs] was especially appreciative of the article about my grandfather. Thank you from all of us.”

From Oregon:

“A few days ago I received a letter from two dear friends...Included in the letter was a photocopy of part of the *Searchlight* monthly booklet for May. Our desire for the future is to get back to our fundamentalist roots, which began in Pennsylvania, where we sat under Pastor David Eroh’s teaching for five years at Leighton Bible Church...We got away from our roots for years until we got books by Pastors Sadler and Finck in 1999. Now we want to serve God by sharing the Word, rightly divided. Please put us on your mailing list for the *Berean Searchlight*, starting immediately.”

From Florida:

“Thanks so much for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. I enjoy the articles and appreciate being updated about the Berean Bible Conferences across the country. I use your information to keep the Grace Conferences website updated.” (Thanks, Mark, for keeping the brethren informed. Ed.)

From Nigeria:

“Having come to a knowledge of grace, my members are seriously eager to know about your ministry, where it is and how it came to be, because the villagers are persecuting us. They are unbelievers, full of African traditional religion. In fact, they now hold their meetings on our Bible Fellowship day at the village council hall as a way of intimidating us. But as it is the Lord’s doing, we managed to stay under a big shade tree to study the Word of God.”

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

Memories

Some golden daybreak the trump is going to sound and the dead in Christ shall rise first and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then: "We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (II Cor. 5:10,11).

When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ
And He shows me His plan for me;
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way, and I see
How I blocked Him here and checked Him there
And I would not yield my will,
Shall I see grief in my Savior's eyes;
Grief though He loves me still?
Oh, He'd have me rich, and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While my memory runs like a hunted thing
Down the paths I can't retrace.
Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With tears that I cannot shed.
I'll cover my face with my empty hands
And bow my uncrowned head.
No! Lord of the years that are left to me
I yield them to Thy hand.
Take me, make me, mold me
To the pattern Thou hast planned.

—Author Unknown

May God give us the strength to redeem the time wisely. *Only one life; 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last.*

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

II Peter 3:1-9

By Paul M. Sadler



“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.”

—II Pet. 3:1,2

THE PROMISE

As we consider a page from history for a moment, the account of a poor Scottish farmer named Fleming is remarkable. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow terrifying death.

The next day a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman’s sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Mr. Fleming had saved. “I want to repay you,” said the nobleman. “You saved my son’s life.” “No, I can’t accept payment for what I did,” the Scottish farmer replied, waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer’s own

son came to the door of the family hovel. “Is that your son?” the nobleman asked. “Yes,” the farmer replied proudly. “I’ll make you a promise. Let me provide your son with the level of education my son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he’ll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of.”

True to his word, he did. Farmer Fleming’s son attended the very best schools, and in time he graduated from St. Mary’s Hospital Medical School in London. He went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin. Years afterwards, the same nobleman’s son, who was saved from the bog, was stricken with pneumonia. What saved his life this time? Penicillin! The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son’s name? Sir Winston Churchill!¹

The stately nobleman honored his promise, with an unforeseen benefit which changed the course of history. His word was his bond—it could be trusted. If this is true in the affairs of men, how much more so in regard to God who cannot lie. God *always* keeps His promises, even though it may not be within what men deem an acceptable time frame. In fact, this is the very issue Peter is about to address with regard to a question that will be raised by scoffers in the last days. Namely, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (II Pet. 2:4).

Almost as an afterthought, Peter states, “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.” Like today, there

may well have been some in Peter's day who questioned the authenticity of his first epistle. This prompted the apostle to open this section with "This second epistle, beloved, I now write," to which he adds "in both," that is, in both epistles he has sought to bring certain things to their remembrance.

Those who work in the field of medical science tell us that the mind has the amazing capacity to retain everything. The problem, of course, is recalling it! This explains why an old picture will sometimes bring back a flood of memories we thought had long been forgotten. Peter is going to speak to his countrymen in "word pictures" with the hope of jogging their memory concerning "the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior." The image the apostle puts before them is the *end times*. But before he begins, Peter wants his readers to be well aware that what he is about to reveal to them is based upon the teachings of the Old Testament prophets and the earthly ministry of Christ to the twelve.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:3).

Led by the Spirit of God, Peter prophesies that in the last days scoffers will arise questioning the validity of Christ's Second Coming to the earth. They will brazenly ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" First, the "last days" here are the last days of Israel according to the Prophetic Scriptures (Joel 2:28-32 cf. Acts 2:14-18). Unlike the "last days" in Paul's epistles, these days

will be closely identified with signs, times, and seasons.

Signs: "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24:30 cf. Acts 2:19,20).

Times: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation [when the Anti-Christ enters the temple and declares himself to be God], spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)" (Matt. 24:15).

Seasons: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:20,21).

This is the time of Jacob's Trouble that will cover a period of seven years and be brought to a close by the Second Coming of Christ to execute judgment upon His enemies. In the early part of the tribulation, the scoffers will declare that they don't see any of these things taking place, "for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:4). That, of course, is a blatant lie, which Peter was not about to allow to pass without a challenge. Oh that we would be so quick to defend the truth!

THE WORLD THAT PERISHED

Like many today, these scoffers are going to hold to the doctrine of Uniformitarianism. "According to this interpretation of earth history,

existing physical processes, acting essentially at the present rates, are sufficient to account for all geological formations.”² In other words, every thing has remained the same or *uniform* since the beginning. Therefore, sedimentary deposits hundreds of feet thick, fossils, and wonders such as the Grand Canyon were all formed through natural processes over billions of years. Uniformitarianism does not leave room for a cataclysmic event such as the universal flood. If such an event took place, it would completely collapse the theory of evolution, which is dependent upon the fossil record found in the so-called geologic column, to prove that life gradually emerged over millions and millions of years.

Now I am no expert on these matters, nor do I pretend to be, but I do believe the Word of God when it says that there was a catastrophic event in Noah’s day known as the universal flood, which destroyed the earth. “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (II Pet. 3:5,6). Clearly Peter believed and taught the universal judgment of the flood in the days of Noah.

But what does Peter mean by “the earth standing out of the water and in the water”? On the second day of creation God separated the waters from the waters, which formed a protective vapor canopy around the earth (Gen. 1:6-8). Hence, we have “the earth standing out of the water.” Evidently the entire earth was a tropical paradise. This sheds light on a number of areas.

First, prior to the days of the flood, men lived to be well over 900 years old. After the collapse of the canopy during the global deluge, drastic

changes in climate, coupled with the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun, dropped the life expectancy of man dramatically to its present standard of 70 or 80 years (Gen. 5:1-27 cf. Psa. 90:9,10). Second, the earth standing “in the water,” is a reference to the subterranean waters just beneath the earth’s surface, which were apparently used to cool the earth’s crust after creation. But they also served another purpose before the flood: God used the mist of these waters to irrigate the whole earth since it never rained prior to the days of Noah (Gen. 2:6).

“...the present is not the key to the past, as many have been led to believe.”

After the fall of man, these two great bodies of water above and beneath the earth’s surface, once intended to be a blessing, were reserved as an instrument of judgment upon the ungodly deeds of men. At God’s appointed time, He broke up the fountains of the deep, which probably resulted in tidal waves sweeping across the face of the earth. Simultaneously, God opened the windows of heaven, allowing the vapor canopy to condense and gradually fall to the earth in the form of a torrential rain that spanned forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:11,12).

This eventually caused the waters of the flood to rise twenty-two feet over the highest mountain. Moses stated that the waters covered the hills and mountains “under the whole heaven,” and were “on the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 7:18-20 cf. 8:8,9). Every living thing that walked the earth, with the exception of the

inhabitants of the ark, perished in a watery grave. Peter substantiates this when he says, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (II Pet. 3:6). So we are to understand that the present heavens and earth are vastly different than the old world that perished.

For the most part, the incredible rock formations and usual sedimentary deposits we see around the world are a direct result of the universal flood. The deluge also explains why we find plants and animals of all kinds buried together in massive fossil graveyards. Interestingly, an animal that dies of natural causes will not produce a fossil—it’s merely food for the scavengers. Plants and animals only become fossils when there is *rapid* burial accompanied by a tremendous amount of pressure, such as a catastrophic flood would generate.



With the removal of the protective vapor canopy came a dramatic change in climate, especially at the poles. Suddenly once tropical regions of the world became frozen tombs. In Siberia and the Arctic, for example, huge mammoths have been discovered intact with tropical vegetation in their mouths and stomachs. A few have even been exhumed recently by scientists who hope to one day use the DNA to reproduce these massive beasts of the field.³

Although the scoffers claim “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,” according to the Word of God this is just not the case. So the present is not the key to the past, as many have been led to believe. Rather, the present heavens and earth differ immensely from the old world that perished.

A STANDING RESERVATION

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (II Pet. 3:7).

Why is it that these scoffers were so insistent that nothing had changed since the beginning of creation? So much so that they were willingly ignorant, as Peter says, regarding the global deluge in the days of Noah. You see, if they acknowledged that God judged the world as a result of evil in time past, then the probability that He will judge the wicked deeds of men in the future day of the Lord is even greater! While God has set a boundary that the waters will never again cover the earth, He will one day purge the present heavens and earth with *fire* (Psa. 104:5-9 cf. Matt. 3:7-12).

Life as we know it will not be brought to an end by a nuclear holocaust between nations, as some predict. It will rather be by the hand of the Lord who will purge His creation in a flaming fire of vengeance. The scoffers foolishly ask, “Where is the promise of His coming?” Little do they realize when Christ does return they are the very ones who will be carried away in judgment. Beloved, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). But thankfully, God is slow to judgment! For those among the brethren who may have their faith shaken by these scoffers, Peter consoles them with these insightful words:

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:8,9).

There are two things withholding the Second Coming of Christ to judge His enemies—the Church which is His Body, and the longsuffering of God. After the Church is caught up, God will *continue* to be longsuffering at the beginning of the tribulation. This is substantiated by the number of souls that will be saved during this period (Rev. 7:9-17). Thus, God will give ample time for men to come to repentance as His wrath gradually intensifies in the coming day of the Lord.

“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Although teachers of prophecy have sought to use Peter’s words as a way to predict when the Lord will return, they always live to regret it. We are living in the *parenthetical* age of Grace; consequently, any attempt to create a timeline based upon prophetic events is sure to fail. There is simply no possible way anyone can predict the duration of the longsuffering of God in the present administration of Grace. God may Rapture the Church tomorrow, then again, it may be another hundred years before the trump sounds. Only God knows!

But even within prophecy, Peter’s words were never intended to be a formula to predict the future, or any such thing. The essence of the apostle’s words is this: God is *eternal*—time has absolutely no bearing upon Him, as it does upon man, who often finds himself enslaved to it. God does everything according to the good pleasure of His will, and none can stay His hand. He is sovereign, eternal, almighty! In fact, this is the very context of the Psalm from which Peter quotes:

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God....For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Psa. 90:2,4).

The last days of prophecy will be a time when many will seek to undermine the Word of God. With this in mind, Peter wanted his hearers to understand, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Men are sometimes slow to honor their promises due to a lack of attention or forgetfulness. This charge will be made against God in the coming day of the Lord, but Peter reminds his readers that God’s longsuffering should never be confused with inattentiveness. God always honors His promises, according to His plans and purposes. The birth of Isaac is a good example (Heb. 11:8-12).

You see, the apparent delay in Christ’s return was not due to God’s inaction, but a result of His longsuffering. He is going to give the unbeliever every opportunity to repent of his evil deeds in accordance with the kingdom gospel before He pours out the full measure of His wrath (Luke 3:3,7-17). God is exceedingly patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all would receive His gracious offer of salvation. There is, however, a limitation to His longsuffering for those who reject His dear Son, as we are about to see.

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. Selected—Author Unknown
2. *Evolution, The Fossils Say No!* by Dr. Duane T. Gish, Ph.D. Pg. 54, Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, California.
3. National Geographic Expedition

Question Box

"I am curious as to the 'phrase' Pastor Sadler had in the last Searchlight. In your Philippines' article, you commented that the churches over there have the same three 'problems': The Lord's Supper, KJV Only, and Pure Grace." My question is: What is Pure Grace, and how could that be a negative thing?"

You would think that "Pure Grace" would be a good thing. Normally its usage is, but in this case there are unsound doctrinal overtones. The Pure Grace concept in some grace circles, both here and in the Philippines, emphasizes that we should never use or study the Old Testament (including the four Gospels) since the commands of Christ for the Church today are found solely in the Pauline revelation—hence, "Pure Grace!" Of course, we agree with the latter part of this statement, but does not Paul also instruct us that the things written aforetime were written for our learning and admonition? We have often said that to be truly Pauline you must have a knowledge of the Old Testament, seeing that the apostle quotes from it so frequently (See Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-12; II Tim. 3:15,16; etc.).

Those who teach the "Pure Grace" position also instruct their hearers that the early epistles of Paul, especially I Corinthians, was written exclusively to the Jews under the kingdom gospel. But there is clear evidence that Corinth was a Gentile city, wherein a predominantly Gentile church was established, which was made up of Jews and Gentiles in one Body without distinction (Acts 18:4-11 cf. I Cor. 12:2,12,13).

There is, however, an ulterior motive for disposing of I Corinthians. Namely, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings; consequently, the commands found therein could only apply to Israel since physical things belonged to her. Primarily, yes, but not exclusively! Are we not commanded, as members of the Body of Christ, to offer our *physical* bodies as a living sacrifice unto God? (Rom. 12:1,2). The precious Book we hold in our hand, is it not *physical*, with a life changing message? (II Tim. 3:15,16; 4:13 cf. II Pet. 3:15,16). We use *physical* hymn books to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns (Col. 3:16,17). Paul gathered the saints together to worship in *physical* buildings (Acts 18:6,7 cf. 20:6-12). As God has prospered us, we give of our *physical* means to further the cause of Christ (I Cor. 16:1,2 cf. II Cor. 9:6,7). Then there are the *physical* elements of the Lord's Supper—the bread and the cup (I Cor. 11:23-26).

Although an early epistle, which needs to be rightly divided, Paul's letter to the Corinthians throughout contains Body truth for the Gentiles today. The Pure Grace doctrine being propagated is pure nonsense. As you can see beloved, pure grace as they teach it is contrary to the grace of God taught by the Apostle Paul.

—Pastor Sadler

Paul, The Apostle of Grace

By Cornelius R. Stam

(Continued from the August issue)

THE BELIEVER'S WALK

This is so again with regard to the broad subject of the believer's spiritual life and conduct. NO OTHER BIBLE WRITER DEVOTES SO LARGE A PROPORTION OF HIS TEACHINGS TO THIS SUBJECT.

Moses had much to say about loving God and obeying His commands, but it soon became evident that the Mosaic Law would not produce results, as God pronounced it "old"¹ and promised to make a *new* covenant with His people, under which He would so work within them that they would spontaneously do His will (Jer. 31:31-34).

At Pentecost there was a foretaste of this kingdom blessing as the Holy Spirit *caused* Christ's disciples to prophecy (Joel 2:28,29) and *also caused them to do His will* (Ezek. 36:26,27).

Hence in the early chapters of Acts we find the apostles and disciples neither committing sins nor making blunders. They were *all FILLED* with the Spirit (Acts 2:4). Thus God demonstrated the fact that the only way in which even His own can perfectly obey Him is when He *takes possession* of them and *causes* them to do His will.

As we know, however, Israel rejected the King and His kingdom and *that* operation of the Spirit ceased. Today He no longer takes possession of men, supernaturally causing them either to prophecy and speak with tongues or to do His will.

But in God's grace, Paul was raised up to show how even in "this present evil [age]" we may have

spiritual victory *by grace through faith*, for while the Spirit does not cause us to do God's will automatically, He does dwell within, always ready to help, and what is thus provided by grace we may appropriate by faith. *What a challenge!*²

This is why the Apostle Paul has so much to say about the operation of the Spirit *now* and about our spiritual life and conduct *now* in this time of Christ's rejection. This is why the doctrines in each of his great epistles to the churches are followed by practical applications to our behavior in "this present evil [age]."

What a volume of Paul's writings we could cite in support of these facts! The following are but a few representative passages:

"...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:11-14).

"The law of the Spirit, [that] of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh” (Rom. 8:11,12).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19,20).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

To all this much more could be added to show how no one until Paul proclaimed the truths of *reconciliation*, of the *one Body*, of our *baptism into Christ*, etc. How all this cumulative evidence marks Paul as the one especially raised up of God to make known the particular truths for the present dispensation!

But there is still more evidence of another nature.

Dr. J. S. Howson has pointed out how the Apostle Paul *calls God for his witness* more than any other Bible writer, and also has more to say about *conscience*, particularly his own.³ But Dean Howson did not see the relation of these facts to the revelation of the mystery and the dispensation of Grace.

PAUL'S OATHS

How often the apostle speaks with an oath!

“God is my witness” (Rom. 1:9).

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 9:1).

“As God is true...” (II Cor. 1:18).

“I call God for a record upon my soul” (II Cor. 1:23).

“As the truth of Christ is in me...” (II Cor. 11:10).

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not” (II Cor. 11:31).

“Behold, before God, I lie not” (Gal. 1:20).

“God is my record” (Phil. 1:8).

“I speak the truth in Christ and lie not” (I Tim. 2:7).

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (I Tim. 5:21).

“I give thee charge in the sight of God” (I Tim. 6:13).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (II Tim. 4:1).

As Howson says: “When [Paul] makes a solemn statement under the sense of God’s presence, he does not hesitate to *express this*” (Hulsean Lectures for 1862, p. 160).⁴

But had not others spoken under the sense of God’s presence? Indeed Peter, by the Spirit, says: “If *any man* speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (I Pet. 4:11). Yet even a superficial reading of the Scriptures will reveal that **PAUL CALLS GOD TO WITNESS FAR MORE OFTEN THAN ANY OTHER BIBLE WRITER** and mostly with regard to his personal integrity. Why is this? Why did he ever *need* to speak with an oath?

The answer to this question is again to be found in the distinctive character of Paul’s ministry as the apostle of the mystery.

John the Baptist did not need to speak with oaths, for he proclaimed the kingdom which had already been predicted by all the Old Testament prophets. The four “evangelists” did not need to speak with oaths, for they depicted our Lord as the prophesied

Messiah. Peter at Pentecost could point out that “this” was “that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16), why would he need to swear that he was telling the truth? Moreover, both he and his associates were all evidently under the control of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

“...the revelation of ‘this mystery’ brought with it a revolutionary change in message and program, a new dispensation.”

But with Paul it was a different matter. Separate from the twelve, who were widely known as the apostles of Christ, Paul had been raised up to make known a wonderful secret which God had kept hidden from all who had gone before. While in no way a *contradiction* of prophecy, this secret was nevertheless *not* to be found in the sayings or writings of any who had preceded him—not even in veiled language.⁵ Moreover, the revelation of “this mystery” brought with it a revolutionary change in message and program, a new dispensation. Hence it is appropriate that the apostle should insist again and again that he writes as in the presence of God.

PAUL’S CONSCIENCE

In the same way the apostle was keenly aware of *conscience*, and taught others to be so. Indeed, HE HAS MORE TO SAY ABOUT CONSCIENCE THAN ANY OTHER BIBLE WRITER.

In Acts 23:1 we have his words to the Sanhedrin:

“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” (See also II Tim. 1:3).

He had even been conscientious (though conscientiously *wrong*) in his persecution of Christ (Acts 26:9) and while it is clear that he was not *saved* through obedience to his conscience, this characteristic of his make-up became the more strongly marked after his regeneration and enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

To Agrippa he could say, with regard to his Damascus road experience.

“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).

To Felix he could say:

“Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

And he proved this to Felix himself as he refused to yield to the temptation to seek freedom by giving him a bribe (Acts 24:26).

To the Corinthians he could write:

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (II Cor. 1:12).

And this is representative of many similar passages.

Further he appeals to the consciences of others.

“...not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (II Cor. 4:2).

Timothy was exhorted to keep faith “and a good conscience” (I Tim. 1:19), and was reminded that the deacons must hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (I Tim. 3:9).

“It is interesting to note that the apostle both showed and exhorted conscientiousness especially where financial matters were concerned.”

In dealing with the believers' relations with each other, the apostle beseeches them to be sensitive with regard to not only their own, but each other's consciences (I Cor. 8:7-12; 10:25-29).

It is interesting to note that the apostle both showed and exhorted conscientiousness, especially where financial matters were concerned. Not only did he exhort others to “provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17) but he himself practiced this. In connection with the larger contributions being made by the Gentile churches to the saints at Jerusalem, he wrote to the Corinthians that along with Titus (sent to collect *their* contributions) he was sending another brother, who was well known to all the churches and appointed by them to travel with him in taking the gift to Jerusalem:

“Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

“Providing for honest things [what is honorable] not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (II Cor. 8:20,21).

Indeed he had already written:


“And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

“And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me” (I Cor. 16:3,4).

Does not all this indicate that the kingdom program had been

interrupted and the dispensation of Grace ushered in? There would have been little need for such precautions and exhortations or even for such collections, had the Pentecostal program continued uninterrupted, for “*the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which is possessed was his own; but they had all things common....Neither was there any among them that lacked...*” (Acts 4:32-34).

Under such Spirit-controlled conditions it would be superfluous to caution one to regard the conscience of another. They *all lived for each other*. Indeed, two who sought to *join* the company by means that disregarded conscience were stricken dead (Acts 5:1-11). It would likewise have been superfluous to exhort Peter and his brethren at Pentecost to hold the truth in a pure conscience for they were all “filled with the Holy Spirit” according to promise.

But the supernatural manifestations of Pentecost have since passed away and we now live under the dispensation of *Grace*. It is supremely appropriate, therefore, that our apostle has so much to say about *conscience*, urging us always to maintain personal integrity and to show due consideration for the spiritual welfare of others, thus bearing the *fruits* of grace. 

Endnotes

1. “In that He saith, A *new* covenant, He hath made the first old” (Heb. 8:13).
2. For a fuller discussion of this subject see the writer's booklet: “*The Believer's Walk.*”
3. Hulsean Lectures for 1862.
4. An important commentary on Matthew 5:33-37.
5. Indeed even the mere *fact* of Christ's death was spoken of only in a veiled way, as we have seen.

The following article was written by our good friend David Tidd. David and his wife, Julie, live in Iola, Kansas where they are currently home schooling their five children. Brother Tidd originally wrote these lines as a tract for his oldest son, Joshua, to share with his AWANA leaders when they questioned him over water baptism. David also serves on the Board of the *Midwest Grace Fellowship*. —Ed.

At What Age Was Jesus Baptized?

By David Tidd, Bible Teacher

While serving as a young deacon in a Baptist church, I appreciated the opportunities I had to visit with the associate Pastor. Pastor Jim was a good listener, and he often would open up to me as well. His oldest son, Joel, was a young boy when he came forward during an evangelistic (revival) meeting to profess the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. Usually what would follow in the Baptist church would be what's known as believer's baptism, a ceremony in which the Pastor immerses the believer into water and then takes him out.

Sometime later, Jim shared with me that some in authority at the church were not satisfied with his example, since Joel had not yet been immersed. He told me that he wanted his son to fully understand what Baptism was about first. Sadly enough, the Senior Pastor later placed Jim in the position where he felt he had to resign and move his family on. I'm sure that Jim and I wouldn't see eye to eye today on this subject; however, I have great respect for him and his concern that his son understand Baptism. I also hope that my family puts the doctrines of the Bible above the doctrines of man, and in their proper place. And this concern is for each of you who reads this as well.



Jordan River

In Luke Chapter 3 we see John preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (v. 3). We see that while John was doing the baptizing with the mode of water, he prophesied that the Lord Jesus Christ would be a future baptizer with two modes, the Holy Spirit and fire. In Luke 3:21-22 we read that Jesus was baptized with water. Surely it wasn't for the forgiveness of sins, as John was preaching, for we read in the first portion of II Corinthians 5:21, "Him who knew no sin." Jesus was God in the flesh who never sinned. He needed neither to repent (turn) from sin, nor to be forgiven of any sin.

Some have said that Matthew 3:15 implies that through water baptism Jesus was being identified with mankind. But wasn't that accomplished in Bethlehem? We read in Luke 2:41-52 that Jesus at age 12, under the Law of the Passover Feast, was at Jerusalem in His Father's House, listening and talking to the teachers. Wouldn't Jesus have had enough understanding at 12 years old to have been baptized, if baptism was for a public

testimony of His faith? But Jesus Himself gave the reason He was being baptized in Matthew 3:15, when He told John the Baptist to "...Permit it to be so now for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." So, in accordance with the Law dispensed to Moses, Jesus was thirty years old at the time He was baptized, as we read in Luke 3:23 "...And when He began His ministry Jesus Himself was about 30 years of age." (Perhaps those who insist we should "follow Jesus in Baptism" should also require the person to be 30 years old today).

The Scriptures teach that Jesus was a Prophet, a great Teacher, the King of Israel, the Messiah, and at His baptism we see Him coming as High Priest to the kingdom of priests—the nation of Israel: "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:6). "But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast" (Isa. 61:6). In the New Testament we read in the writings of Peter, who in his own words was "an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the Pilgrims of the Dispersion..." (I Pet. 1:1): "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles..." (I Pet. 2:9,12).

When priests were ordained, the Law prescribed certain rituals to be followed, including washing them with water (Ex. 29:4). That ceremonial washing was performed at Jesus' baptism.

The following Scripture verses from Numbers Chapter 4 require all

those who perform the service or the work in the tabernacle to be 30 years old: Vs. 3,23,30,35,39,43, and 47. Chapters 3 through 10 of the epistle to the Hebrews and Psalm 110:4 tell how God the Father designated His own Son the Perfect High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

While 30 years old is the answer to the question in the title of this paper about Jesus' first Baptism, He also had a second Baptism He spoke of in Mark 10:38-39: "But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They said to Him, 'We are able.' So Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized...'"

The Lord Jesus Christ was approximately 33 years of age when according to the latter portion of II Corinthians 5:21, "...He who knew no sin, became sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (Heb. 9:10-15,26; 10:10-13). By His own death upon the Cross for all mankind's sins, Christ was identified with death and died in our place, was buried in our place, and arose from the dead (Heb. 9:11-12) to offer His own blood in God's tabernacle in heaven as a propitiation or satisfaction to God, and sat down at the right hand of God (10:12). You or I could never follow our Lord in this Baptism. It would greatly help the reader to read the above verses.

The traditions of man have us following old covenant commands to the nation of Israel while ignoring commands from the Risen Lord Jesus Christ to the apostle to the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul said in


I Corinthians 1:17, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect.” Under the old covenant, the laws of Baptisms were established in Exodus 29:4 when Aaron was washed or baptized with water (Lev. 8:6; 16:4,30; 22:6,7).

After His resurrection, Jesus instructed the 11 disciples that “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues...” (Mark 16:16,17). Peter told the men of Israel in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Later Peter says that if the nation will repent and be converted, then Jesus will come back as the long-promised Messiah for Israel (Acts 3:19-21). But they didn’t, so the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ called another apostle.

To Paul He dispensed The Mystery with the Gospel of Grace, rather than Law as He did to Moses. God sent him to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:1-9) and did not send him to baptize

“The traditions of man have us following old covenant commands to the nation of Israel...”

(I Cor. 1:17). Instead, according to Ephesians 4:5, there is one baptism for today (I Cor. 12:13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”). The Holy Spirit performs this Baptism, not an apostle or Pastor. And notice that it is not a baptism with water, but a baptism into The Church The Body of Christ.

When believers see this Baptism for today, they often are cut off from membership rolls in some congregations. But they are not without a church, as the Holy Spirit seals the believer in His Church with a promise (Eph. 1:13). This Identification or Baptism without water makes him one with Christ in His Death, Burial and Resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). And “in Christ” we are immersed forever, never to be taken back out, as one would be from the watery grave of a baptistry. 



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—General John J. Pershing

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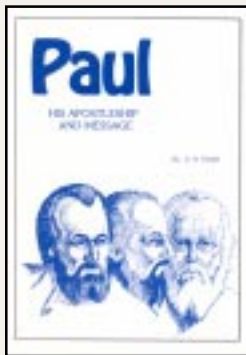
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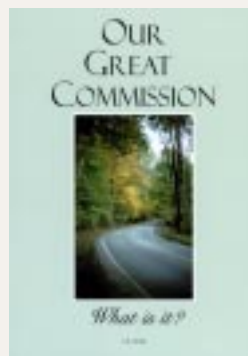
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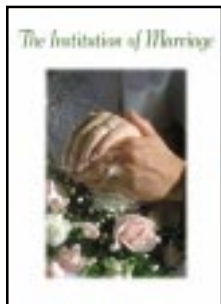
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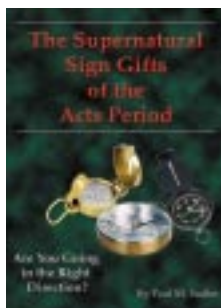
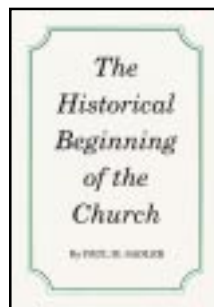
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Why Berean Bible Institute?

By James Penney

Why BBI? I asked this question in January 2002. When my employer of eighteen years downsized I was one of the first to go. I have a Bachelor's of Arts degree from an accredited denominational institution, with a Theology major and minors in Greek and Applied Theology. I left the denomination because of the conviction that they were not teaching the truth.

All of those years working for one company, I never gave up the hope that I would one day be able to minister again. My wife, Tricia, and I had been attending a local Grace church for over a year and we were excited about the message.

We had begun praying for the Lord to open a door to full time service when I lost my job. I didn't need work right away, so I decided to go to school. The question was where? My pastor recommended *Berean Bible Institute*. Reading their catalog I thought there was nothing new to learn there. Little did I realize how wrong I was!

I took classes in Apologetics, Romans, and Bible exposition and the first day, I noticed a real difference. Instead of reading about the Bible, we spent most of the time actually studying the Bible as our primary textbook. Classes were small so we received a lot of individual attention. In marked contrast to some of the classes that I had taken from a much larger school, questions were patiently answered. Before, some

professors did not want to be interrupted during a lecture and questions were left unanswered.

BBI had a student body that ranged from age 18 to 50, with many young men and women from different parts of the country. We even had two brothers from Brazil.

As a BBI student, I received invitations to speak at various churches. When considering my credentials, they were much more impressed with the fact that I was a BBI student than that I had a degree in Theology. In June I spoke at a nearby church and was asked to be a pastoral candidate. Meanwhile, my local church board ordained me to the Gospel Ministry. This would not have been possible had I not attended BBI. I have no doubt that the Lord led in this.

I will attend at least another semester. Which brings me back to my original question: Why BBI? Because it is a unique school that incorporates the traditional Bible school format with the flexibility of a community college. It is an institution that produces pastors and teachers of God's Word rightly divided.

I do not regret my Liberal Arts education, but I feel that the Lord, in His providence, led me to BBI where I would learn to be the most effective Grace Pastor possible.

If you are undecided, email me at GraceBeliever48@aol.com, or far better, visit BBI and sit in on classes. You will not be disappointed. May the Lord lead you as He has led me!

In July, Brother Penney was called as pastor of *Falls Bible Church* in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. It is located at W156 N6531 Pilgrim Road and services are: Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. and Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A WARM WELCOME is extended to those living in Dexter, Oregon to attend the *Lost Creek Grace Fellowship*. Pastor Kerry Kinman is currently teaching through the Book of Romans verse by verse, so you're in for a real spiritual feast. The fellowship meets every Sunday morning (10:30 a.m.) at the church located at 80710 Lost Creek Road, Dexter, OR, which is near Eugene/Springfield, Oregon for those who may be traveling through the area. For additional information, please contact Pastor Kerry Kinman at (541) 937-2783. God's very best to these dear saints as they faithfully proclaim the good news of Christ and Him crucified.

BIBLICAL HEALTH MINISTRIES (BHM): Have you been searching for answers concerning chronic disease, lack of energy, weight control, insomnia...Perhaps BHM can help. For years Steve Shober, a long-time Grace Believer and BBS Board member, has had an interest in biblical health principles and natural approaches to health. Steve is a *Doctor of Naturopathy* (from the *Trinity School of Natural Health*) and is designing a new ministry to address health issues from a biblical, grace perspective. The goal of this ministry is to promote salvation (Eph. 2:8,9), explore renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2), and offer nutritional/herbal/lifestyle advice for daily living (Psa. 104:14,15). It is possible to escape the pain, outrageous medical bills, and loss of faculties many of us experience and instead be energetic, productive, and happy until the Lord takes us home. BHM is offering conferences/workshops to help interested persons explore biblical-based natural health. Contact Steve for a brochure containing more specifics or to discuss holding a conference/workshop in your area; e-mail: <shober@chorus.net> or phone: (608) 836-9579.

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*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Sam Castrova of Willow Springs, North Carolina. The *Cape Hatteras Lighthouse* is located in Buxton, North Carolina. It is the tallest lighthouse in the nation. The beacon from the light can be seen some 20 miles out to sea. Because of its spiral striping, the *Cape Hatteras Lighthouse* has been given the nickname, "The Big Barber Pole."

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