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The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to *evangelize* the lost, to *educate* the saved in "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15), to *energize* their Christian lives, and to *encourage* the local church.

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# From the President's Desk

Dear Co-laborers in the Gospel,

It has been correctly said, "It's okay to believe anything today, but the truth." This is particularly true of the Scriptures. Of course, this shouldn't surprise us seeing that Paul warned us of these very days. "For the time will come when they will not endure

sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Years ago I had a friend who had a dog that was a cross between a Doberman Pincher and a Pitbull. When he stared at you, you wanted to confess everything you ever did wrong. If you were brave enough to pet him, he enjoyed being scratched behind the ears. However, when you stopped, well, let's just say he wasn't too happy. Sadly the same principle applies to many believers these days; as long as they are being entertained and hearing feel-good messages, they are quite content. Preach sound doctrine to them and you get that junkyard dog stare.

Those who desire to hear the sound teaching of the Word, rightly divided, are to be commended. With this in mind, the response to our new DVD series has been better than we could have ever hoped for; in fact, many have ordered four and five additional sets to give to family members. One dear brother writes: "I ordered, received and have reviewed the DVD series, 'What It Means to Be a Grace Believer'....It is fantastic! I would like permission to show it to my Sunday School class....I feel like a three-way light bulb, and the last setting has come on. Wish I had this information 35 years ago. The Bible really makes sense now."

Our dear friend, Tim Board, has volunteered his time to develop a study guide for each of the messages in the series. Tim is the Associate Pastor of the *Community Bible Church* located in Tipp City, Ohio. These study guides will be especially beneficial for those who want to use the DVDs for Bible Study groups. As soon as they are complete, they will be posted on the BBS website, as a *free* download. Tim is already well underway, so you will want to be sure to check the website from time to time.

We are making plans to do the next series of messages on the "End Times." Lord willing, we will begin recording after the conference season ends in mid-November. Thanks so very much, brethren, for your desire to have a closer relationship with Christ through the study of Paul's gospel.

Yours in His service, Paul M. Sadler, President By Pastor Ricky Kurth



"In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Everyone knows that when God told Solomon He would give him whatever he asked (II Chron. 1:7), Israel's king asked for "wisdom and knowledge" (v. 10). However, in the parallel passage in I Kings 3, this account says that Solomon asked God for "an understanding heart to judge Thy people" (v. 9). Far from a contradiction, the variance in these parallel accounts is God's way of giving us a fuller understanding of that for which Solomon asked, and a definition of wisdom and knowledge. Anyone possessing these two virtues would by definition have an understanding heart to judge or rule God's people. When Solomon was given this, he became a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," i.e., an understanding heart rich in its ability to judge God's people.

But those who acknowledge the Mystery that Paul mentions in the previous verse (Col. 2:2) know that God has an *earthly* people (Israel) and a *heavenly* people (the Body of Christ). It was "the glory of God" that He was able to "conceal" the Mystery for 4,000 years (Prov. 25:2) in the "unsearchable" heart of the King of kings, "the heaven for height, and the earth for depth" (v. 3). Thus Paul speaks of "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," and declares "how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33) when he says he wants us to understand the mystery of Israel's blindness (v. 25), and how God's plan to rule His earthly people would undergo a postponement that has now lasted 2,000 years. But when he speaks of the Mystery in Ephesians 3, he prays that we might understand the "depth and height" of it (v. 18). That is, he is praying that we might also understand that God has a plan to rule His heavenly people, the Body of Christ (v. 1-17), in "the heaven for height."

Thus in God's plan to rule His people Israel on earth we find *some* of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in His plan to rule His heavenly people, the Body of Christ, in the heavens, we also find *some* of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but unless we acknowledge *both* we do not understand "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" that are hid in the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Studies in the Book of Revelation Revelation 1:12-20 By Paul M. Sadler

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

—Rev. 1:12,13

As the Apostle John turned to see who was speaking to him, he saw the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks or *lampstands*. While the Book of Revelation is woven throughout with symbolic language, the Holy Spirit interprets the symbolism for us as we compare spiritual things with spiritual things. As we have established in a former lesson, the seven golden lampstands are seven churches located in Asia Minor in the future day of the Lord (Rev. 1:20).

Just as local assemblies today are comprised of believers who

make up the true Church, the Body of Christ, in similar fashion these seven Jewish assemblies are an integral part of the Kingdom Church. Therefore, the special revelation the Lord is about to deliver to these seven assemblies is meant to be distributed to the whole Church.

When we consider the seven golden lampstands our minds naturally return to the golden lampstand in the Old Testament Tabernacle (Ex. 25:31-40). Although there are similarities between the two, they serve a different purpose. The lampstand in the Tabernacle was one stand with seven lamps that were attached to each of the branches.1 It provided light for the sanctuary located in the holy place where no natural light was permitted. This lampstand foreshadowed Christ who is the light of the world—He is the light! (John 8:12).



Here in the Book of Revelation we are introduced to seven individual lampstands, each of which is to exhibit the light of Christ. You see, these Jewish assemblies will be responsible to shine as lights in the midst of the darkness of the Anti-Christ kingdom. They are to be a light to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, pointing them to the Good Shepherd of the sheep and the green pastures of the coming kingdom. In so doing, they will glorify their heavenly Father through their good works, as the Lord stated during His earthly ministry:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick [lampstand]; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

#### THE SON OF MAN

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man" (Rev. 1:13).

The title "Son of Man" is closely associated with the humanity of Christ and the fact that He is the *Judge* of all the earth, who will one day return to the earth in a flaming

fire of vengeance to execute judgment upon His enemies. This title is never used by the Apostle Paul in his Gentile epistles. We no longer know Christ after the flesh, nor will we witness His Second Coming to judge mankind.

Today we know Christ as the glorified Lord of heaven lavishing the members of His Body with the riches of His grace. We know Him as the Savior who died for the sins of the world. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Today He is the Savior of the world, but the time is fast approaching when God will speak to the world in His wrath. Those who continue in their rejection of the Savior will one day face Him as their Judge, as the following story illustrates:

"Some years ago a man driving down the streets of one of the great cities lost control of his horses and was in danger of being dashed to death. Suddenly, there sprang out into the street a man who, seizing the horses by the bit, stopped them in their mad career and saved the driver's life.

"By a singular coincidence, vears afterwards the man whose life was saved was on trial before the one who had stopped the horses, who sat in the judge's chair. The trial was ended; the lawyers had made the plea and the jury had returned with its verdict, when the judge said, 'Have you anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon you?' Then, rising, trembling with great emotion, he said: 'Judge, don't vou remember me?' And the judge said once again, 'Have you anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced?" And then he said, 'Why, Judge, I am the man you saved; have mercy, have mercy.' And with a look full of pity, his honor replied, 'I do remember you and I am very sorry for you, but then I was your savior, and today I am your judge;' and the sentence of death was passed.

"Today our Savior stands waiting to be merciful, with tears in His eyes...but one day the picture will change, and He will be the Judge who will say to those who reject Him, 'Depart, for I never knew you.' God save us from that day."<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, the prophetic Scriptures depict the Lord sitting at the right hand of the Father until all His enemies are made His footstool. In short, these are those who deny He is Messiah and have oppressed His people. Since the days when Israel was in bondage to the Egyptians until the present, one attempt after another has been made to eradicate her, like an unwanted plague from among the nations. The Anti-Christ will nearly accomplish this very thing, if it were not for the Lord's intervention. The chosen nation looks forward with great anticipation to the fulfillment of the Psalmist's words:

"Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded" (Psa. 7:6).

"Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight" (Psa. 9:19).

"Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations" (Psa. 82:8).

In the scene that is set before us by John, the Son of Man is standing in the midst of the seven churches clothed in a long flowing garment down to the foot. The apostle is describing for us the dawn of the tribulation period known as Jacob's Trouble. While the heavens are silent today, God is going to soon speak to the world in His wrath, for its blatant denial of who He is, and the outright rebellion against what He accomplished for mankind at Calvary. Men will believe the lie of evolution, before they will acknowledge God to be the Creator and the Sustainer of all things. Medical science will tirelessly search the invisible things of creation to extend life, but openly reject Christ who freely gives life and life eternal to all who believe. Mark these words and mark them well. God will address their unbelief!

"For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17). In the middle of the tribulation a swarm of locust/demonic beings will be unleashed from the bottomless pit and torment men for five months. Recently on a Southwest Airlines flight from Phoenix, Arizona, a scorpion fell from an overhead bin and stung a passenger on the leg. Needless to say, he was in excruciating pain for days with a swollen leg. These infernal beings that ascend out of the pit will afflict men with a scorpion-like sting, the pain of which doesn't last for days, but months. Men will seek death, but it will flee from them under this judgment (Rev. 9:1-6). Dear ones, don't forget to thank the Lord tonight that you have

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escaped the wrath to come, as a member of the Body of Christ!

#### THE VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire: And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:13-17).

In time past, all those who were given the privilege of stepping into the veiled glory of Christ's presence immediately fell at the feet of His Eternal Majesty. This was true of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Isaiah, and Paul. John was so overwhelmed by the appearance of the Son of Man that he, too, fell at His feet as dead, but for a somewhat different reason. You see, he was accustomed to seeing the Son of Man in His humiliation; this was the first time he had ever seen Him as the Judge of the earth. If we contrast Christ's humiliation with His appearance in the Apocalypse as Judge, it will help us to better understand John's astonishment. We have taken the liberty to present an expanded version of Leon Tucker's observation of these two periods in our Lord's life:

"In Christ's humiliation, He was the lowly Savior who was despised and rejected of men: here. in the Book of Revelation He is the sovereign Judge of the universe. In the days of His humiliation, He hung on a cruel tree amidst two thieves; here, He is standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands in supreme glory. Then, He was unclothed and displayed in nakedness while the soldiers parted His garment among themselves; here, He is robed in a garment of a High Priest and Judge. **Then,** He girded Himself with a towel to wash the disciples' feet in all humility; **here**, He is gird about with a golden girdle, which speaks of deity. He is prepared for battle! Then, His head was encircled with a crown of thorns: here. He is the Ancient of days whose head and hair is white as snow.

"In Christ's humiliation, He wept over Jerusalem; here, His eyes are as a flame of fire exposing the ways of the evil one. In the days of His humiliation, His feet were pierced through with a large spike; here, His feet are as fine brass burnished in a furnace, which speaks of His enemies who are about to be judged and crushed under His feet. In the days of His flesh. He offered up prayers and supplications in meekness: in John's vision, His voice is like the sound of a mighty waterfall—powerful and full of majesty! Then, they nailed His right hand to the Cross; here, in His sovereign good pleasure He holds the believer in His right hand. Then, out of His mouth came the words of life; here, a

sword to smite the nations and rule with a rod of iron. **Instead** of a 'visage marred more than any man,' His countenance **in John's vision** is 'as the sun shineth in his strength.'"<sup>3</sup>



As noted above, the garment in which the Son of Man appeared is the same type of garment that was worn by the High Priest and the Judges in Old Testament times (Lev. 16:4). The Lord will actively execute both of these roles in the coming tribulation and kingdom. As He stands in the midst of the seven churches. He is the High Priest of those who place their faith in Him. He lives to make intercession for His own. These kingdom believers will find comfort and strength in this when they face one fiery trial after another at the hands of the Anti-Christ. They will be able to say with all confidence, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted [tested] like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Within these assemblies, however, the enemy has sown tares to corrupt the truth of God. These deceivers will say they are Jews, but in reality they belong to the synagogue of Satan (Rev. 2:9). The day of grace is now past; therefore when the Judge returns He will tread the winepress alone, and trample those who follow the Beast in His fury, and their blood will stain His garment, for the day of vengeance is in His heart (Isa. 63:2-4).

"And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17,18).

The voice of the sound of many waters that will strike terror into the heart of the unsaved in the future day of the Lord will be comforting to the believer. John was so overcome by the vision of the Son of Man that he collapsed at His feet in humble adoration. Our Lord compassionately lays His right hand on the shoulder of the apostle, affectionately known as the disciple "whom Jesus loved," and says, Fear not! If there was any doubt in John's mind as to who was standing before him, it vanished like the morning mist when he heard these familiar words. John undoubtedly recalled the first time he heard them. It was the day the Lord miraculously filled the net of the disciples with fish, after they had fished all night and caught nothing. "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." They all dropped their nets and followed Him.

After His initial encounter, the Lord adds, "I am the first and the last." The terminology in Verse 8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," and

here in Verse 17, "I am the first and the last," speaks to the fact that Christ is the great "I AM." He is the eternal God! This is why Isaiah states, in Isaiah 9:6, that a *child is born* (Christ's birth at Bethlehem), but a *Son is given*, which looks to Christ who is the eternal Son of God.

The Lord's next statement, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore," is to be understood in the context of His incarnation when the Word was made flesh. In other words, Christ made in the likeness of men yet without sin. "He that liveth" refers to the thirty-three years He dwelt among us, "and was dead," which speaks of His death at Calvary, "and, behold, I am alive for evermore," which is clearly a reference to His bodily resurrection from the dead. As a result He has the "keys of hell [Greek Hades] and of death." The authority that Satan once held over hades and death he lost when Christ conquered death and victoriously rose over it.



If you hold the keys to a safety deposit box, then you have the right and authority to access it.<sup>4</sup> The same is true of Christ; because of His finished work He has the *authority* over the unseen realm

of the dead and death itself. As it has been said, "no man can die apart from divine permission even though afflicted by Satan and in trial and trouble." The fact that Christ rose from the dead, which guarantees the believers' future resurrection, and that He is sovereign over the life to come, will be particularly consoling to those who endure the tribulation.

## THE APOSTLE'S COMMISSION TO WRITE

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

The traditional interpretation of this passage goes something like this: Past: "Write the things which thou hast seen" is limited to the vision of the Son of Man found in Chapter 1. Present: "And the things which are" is a reference to Chapters 2 and 3, where we are presented with the seven ages of the Church, the Body of Christ. Future: "And the things which shall be hereafter" which speaks of things to come beginning in Chapter 4.

This particular interpretation has been weighed in the balance and found wanting for a number of reasons. First and foremost, we have already established from the Scriptures that the entirety of the Book of Revelation from Chapter 1 to Chapter 22 is futuristic. Consequently, the Church, the Body of Christ is never made reference to by the Apostle John.

A more natural explanation is that John was to give a "record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, **and**  of all things that he saw" (Rev. 1:2). In other words, when the Lord states: "Write the things which thou hast seen," John was to record *all* the visions he had received from beginning to end, which would have included the vision of the Son of Man. For example, "And I saw and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow" (Rev. 6:2). "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 14:6).

We would also suggest that Chapter 1 actually serves as an *Introduction* to the Apocalypse. Most authors, myself included, normally write the Introduction to a book after it is finished. This way the author is familiar with the entire content of the writing of which the Introduction is a brief summation. If you read Chapter 1 thoughtfully it is evident that John is summarizing what he wrote about in other parts of the Book—this is especially true of the first ten verses.

Next the Apostle was to record "the things that are." Many believe the Apocalypse is a closed Book and therefore can never be understood, however, they fail to understand that in many cases the Book interprets itself. The "things that are" simply means John was to explain various aspects of the symbolism of the Apocalypse. That is, what they actually signify. For example, if we wonder what the seven stars signify in the right hand of the Son of Man, John tells us: "The seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches" (Rev. 1:16 cf. 1:20). If we inquire as to the meaning of the "mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns," in Revelation 17, once again, the apostle interprets it for us. "The seven heads **are** seven mountains" or kingdoms, which have seven kings. "And the ten horns which thou sawest **are** ten kings," each of which have no kingdom (Rev. 17:7 cf. 17:9,10,12).

Finally, John was to record, "the things which shall be hereafter." One thing we note about the Old Testament is that it doesn't give us a chronological order of things to come. John, however, gives us a sequence of events from beginning to end, with parenthetical pauses at times. He records for us the things that will come to pass. For example: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter..." (Rev. 4:1). "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree" (Rev. 7:1). "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power" (Rev. 18:1).

To Be Continued!



#### **Endnotes**

- 1. ©iStockphoto.com/gremlin.
- 2. Present Day Parables, by J. Wilbur Chapman.
- 3. Studies in Revelation, An Expositional Commentary, by Leon Tucker, pgs. 60,61, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI.
- ©iStockphoto.com/David H. Lewis.

**Bibliography:** The Apocalypse, by E. W. Bullinger, D.D., Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd, London, England.

# Berean Bible Fellowship Fall Conference

**Location:** *Grace Bible Church* 549 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Dates: October 8,9, 2009

#### **Guest Speakers:**

Paul M. Sadler, Edward Bedore, Andy Kern, Matt Ritchey, Kevin Sadler, Joel Finck, Jeff Seekins, Robert Nix

Theme: Abounding in the Work of the Lord

For brochures, directions, information or accommodations, contact: Pastor Paul Turner at 920-279-1340 or gbcoshkosh@tds.net



## **BBF Youth Conference**

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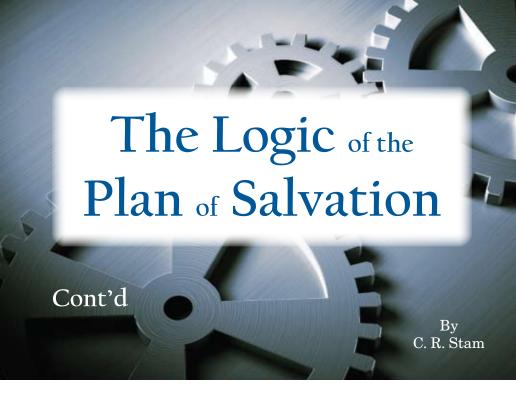
Location: Grace Bible Church—Oshkosh, WI

Date: Saturday, October 10, 2009

Theme: "Dead to Sin, Alive to God" (Rom. 6:11)

#### Challenges from God's Word and Group Activities

Pastors and Youth workers are invited as sponsors! For brochures or more information about this *free* conference, please contact: Pastor Richard Ware at 870-941-6110 or rnrware@aol.com.



#### PEACE AND ACCESS

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access..." (Rom. 5:1,2).

"Being justified...we have peace with God"! What a priceless blessing! We believers are prone to take this blessing altogether too much for granted.

Since the day we trusted Christ and the burden of sin rolled away, most of us have never had another question about our eternal destiny, and we have begun to take it for granted. We fail to appreciate sufficiently what it means to be able to arise in the morning, go about our business during the day and give ourselves up to unconsciousness at night, always assured that through our

Lord's redemptive work we have "peace with God" and our eternal destiny is secure. Surely this knowledge should overwhelm our hearts with constant gratitude and have a profound effect upon our daily conduct.

The companion blessing to "peace with God" is our full and free access into His presence; another blessing of grace far too little appreciated.

Some extreme dispensationalists deny that the believer today has *access* into the presence of God since he is already seated at God's right hand in Christ. We would remind such that the same epistle, indeed the same chapter, which tells us that we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ, *also* tells us that we "have *access* by one Spirit unto the Father" (See

Eph. 2). The distinction is simply that of our *position* in Christ and our *practical experience*.

Some years ago the writer was approached by a man who, though then running for governor of his state, was being widely discussed as a possible candidate for the presidency of the United States. He went out of his way to make conversation and to show his interest in us.



Let us imagine that this man has by now become President of the United States. Recalling our pleasant contact with him some time previous I write him a letter, informing him that I am to be in Washington on June 23rd and will stop by to renew acquaintance. Almost certainly he will never even see my letter. His secretary's secretary's secretary will write for the President to say how pleased he was to hear from me again and how much he would have liked me to stop by at the White House were it not for the fact that pressing business matters will keep him occupied all day!

I write him again and express my disappointment at this "brush off." I say in effect: "When you had your eye on the presidency *you* sought *me* out. Then you wanted my company, but now that you have become President I am evidently no longer worthy of your attention."

Let us not suppose that the nature of this second letter will now cause it to be brought to the attention of the President. Far from it! Rather, another secretary far down the line will be apt to say to his secretary: "Tell him in a nice way to go jump in the lake!"

Naturally! How could the President give all of the two hundred millions of people in this great land personal access into his presence? The President's wife and his closest confidants doubtless have a degree of access into his presence, but for the reader or this writer to gain such access for even one fifteen minute period would take some doing. And the President is but a man, who will soon pass from the scene.

By contrast think of the wonder of our free access to God; how *He*, the Ruler of the Universe, invites us to come confidently before His "throne of grace" at *our* convenience—"in time of need" (Heb. 4:16)!

A friend of the writer's, while still a lad, used to wonder how God could hear him and his brother both saying their evening prayers at the same time! He didn't know then about the omniscience of God. We finite creatures are limited to seeing one sight, taking in one breath of fresh air and hearing but a few sounds at a time. If too many people talk to us at once, we soon protest: "I can listen to

you only one at a time," but not *He*. In His infinite greatness He can give His attention to a million believers individually at the same time.

What a privilege that we, finite creatures, and sinners by nature and practice, may enter confidently into the presence of an infinite and holy God and secure His personal attention! Let us never forget that this high privilege was purchased for us by the precious blood of Christ, and that having thus been purchased, it is *His will* that we avail ourselves of "this grace." Could there be greater proof of His love for us?

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

"A new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19,20).

#### NO CONDEMNATION

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).<sup>2</sup>

This is the next logical conclusion at which the apostle arrives. If the believer has been justified so completely that God Himself invites him into His fellowship how can there be any further condemnation, or judgment? "If God be for us, who can be against us?...Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:31-33).

The apostle, in Romans 8, outlines the two basic reasons why the believer will never come into judgment for his sins; will never suffer divine condemnation.

The first reason is judicial in character. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We stand before the tribunal of God's justice in Christ, "who did no sin." When we went by faith to Calvary, and acknowledged: "This is not His death He is dying. He had no death to die, for death is the result of sin. He is dying my death. He is identifying Himself with me"; in that moment we became identified with Him by faith. The apostle presses this truth home in Romans 6:3, where he says:

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Cf. Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:9-12).

Calvary is ever the meeting place between the Savior and the sinner. We can be "baptized into Jesus Christ" only by being "baptized into His death." There is no other way but to acknowledge and accept His death as ours. The moment we have done this we are baptized into Christ, "made... accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6) and pronounced "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10).

"...while the believer is now deeply obligated to God, he is still left under grace."

Does this result in irresponsible conduct on the part of the believer? Indeed not! On the contrary this grace impels us to give to Him the only kind of service

which can please and honor Him: that which is rendered out of sheer love and gratitude.

But the believer's baptism into Christ involves more than his standing before the bar of divine justice. It has a practical as well as a positional effect, for the apostle goes on to say:

"For 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).

When a person trusts Christ as Savior he is not only pronounced righteous in Christ; he is given *life* in Christ.

This passage refers to two laws: "the law of sin and death" and "the law of the Spirit," which is "life in Christ Jesus."

It is a law, an unchangeable, inexorable law, that sin results in death.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20).

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12).

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15).

But the Lord Jesus Christ "did no sin" and it is also an unchangeable law that "He that hath the Son hath life." "The law of the Spirit" is "life in Christ." The moment one trusts Christ as Savior the Spirit gives him life, the life of Christ, which is everlasting, indeed, eternal life.

Thus the Spirit, baptizing us into Christ, has made us free from "the law of sin and death," first by giving us *a perfect righteousness* in

Christ, the perfect One, who died for our sins, and second by giving us *life* in Christ, who overcame death for us and lives eternally.

#### WE ARE DEBTORS

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors..." (Rom. 8:12).

This is the next logical conclusion. In ourselves we are weak and sinful, to be sure.

"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" (Rom. 8:11).

Mark well, he does not speak here of the future resurrection of our dead bodies, but of the present quickening of our "mortal" bodies by the Spirit. His argument is this: If the Spirit, who raised Christ from the *dead*, dwells in you, surely He will quicken your *mortal* body and help you to overcome the lusts of the flesh. And he continues:

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Ver. 12).

The implication is that with God's Spirit ever present to help, we are debtors to *Him* and have no reason to excuse ourselves for our sins on the basis that "the flesh is weak."

#### LIVING SACRIFICES

"I beseech you therefore brethren...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..." (Rom. 12:1).

This is the final fitting conclusion at which the apostle arrives in his Roman epistle.

Notice that while the believer is now deeply obligated to God, he is still left under grace. He is not commanded or threatened. The apostle says rather: "I beseech you…by the mercies of God." The whole relationship between God and us is now that of grace and faith.

Paul, who has been himself overwhelmed by the grace of God, gladly suffering the loss of all things for Christ, now beseeches other believers: "Present your body," your feet and hands, your heart and mind, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God; a sacrifice that He will find acceptable. This, he says, "is your reasonable service," or worship. "And be not conformed to this world, but be ve transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove [for yourselves] what is that good [for you] and acceptable [to you] and perfect [for you] will of God" (Ver. 2). As your sacrifice of yourself is "acceptable to God" so you will prove for yourself that His will for you is "good, and acceptable, and perfect"!

This is the goal of our salvation: conformity, not to this world, but to "the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). This goal will be fully reached when He comes to "receive us unto Himself," but even now, in the measure that we are occupied with Him, we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18).

#### RECAPITULATION

Thus the argument of the Epistle to the Romans proceeds as follows:

"Therefore thou art inexcusable..." (2:1).

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (3:20).

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested....Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law" (3:21,28).

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access..." (5:1,2).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors..." (8:12).

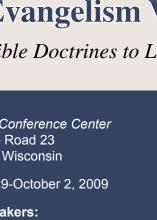
"I beseech you therefore...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..." (12:1).

#### **Endnotes**

- 1. The word "By," with which Verse 20 begins in the A.V., does not appear in the original. "The blood of Jesus" is the "new and living way" into the presence of God.
- 2. The latter part of Verse 1 in A.V. is correctly omitted from R.V. It evidently belongs at the end of Verse 4, where both A.V. and R.V. have it.

"Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).



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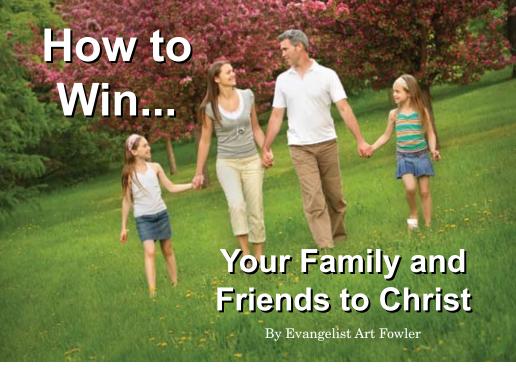
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here is no greater sadness than the difficulty caused by "a divided house." You may recall hearing that phrase in relation to marriage, where one spouse is a Christian and the other is not.

In Sunday School and church, as young people, we often heard this expression given as a caution to those who were serious about getting married. And its companion—being "unequally yoked" (II Cor. 6:14).

Perhaps you never heard either of these expressions, but now that you are a believer, you can see the difficulty of the situation to which the young people were being warned. And for those to whom these expressions are not new, there may be a certain irony in having to come face to face with just such a home environment now that a Christian is married to a nonbeliever.

Maybe *you* are the one who is tired of living in a "house divided." And what about your children? Would you like to see them won to the Lord and attending church and Sunday School with you?

Is it your desire to see your family "complete" in unity of faith and service? Then I invite you to read on, for this booklet is not based on dry and dusty theories. It is not some "pie in the sky" approach to bringing your family together in Christ.

We have tried to put together some practical principles that have been tested and proven to work. There are countless examples of exactly what we mean. In my own work of personal counseling and Christian encounters, I have seen these unique principles transform lives and entire families.

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God is in the business of transforming lives. It is a business in which He delights. It is hard to imagine anything that will bring more joy to the Lord than for a couple to find unity, forgiveness, love and faith... *together*...as a couple, in devoted service to God and to each other.

And when husband and wife are joined in common faith in Christ, there is joy then in seeing the children won. Miraculous? Of course! But let us remember, with God all things...all things...are possible.

Your faith can start this process. Your love will see it through. As you commit this desire to Christ, you will see Him begin to work in response to your faith and commitment.

"...demonstrate your love, even at those times when it is not possible to *feel* that love..."

Will you prayerfully—and carefully—read through these thoughts and ideas and see how they can be used to lead your family to Christ?

#### PART I

#### Your Husband Can be Won...

In the typical "unequally yoked" household, it is the husband who is the non-Christian. Perhaps he did not have godly parents to guide him into faith. Or, in his teenage years, maybe his rebellion included turning his back on God—thinking that "church is for women and kids."

And too often, there is a typical response on the part of the wife who is the believer. She threatens, nags, weeps, or preaches constantly to her unbelieving husband, only making matters worse. Her husband, turned off by his wife's nagging or preaching, seems to wander farther and farther away.

Here are some of the negatives you may have observed in similar situations:

#### Nagging or Preaching at Him

Since such actions nearly always produce negative results, nagging or preaching should be avoided. Nor will your husband be won by displaying a "holier than thou" attitude.

In addition, all your pious words will be hollow unless they are reinforced with godly examples of living. Take Mary, for example. Mary (not her real name) and her husband were both non-Christians when they were first married. Yet, she was won to Christ and her life was transformed. Her husband saw that change in her and it had an effect on him. He did not feel comfortable drinking in her presence. He had tried to get her to do some of the things they used to do together—like getting drunk at a local bar—but he noticed that she didn't need alcohol to lift her spirits. Suddenly she had genuine joy coming from deep within, and Mike (her husband) noticed.

In fact, Mike could not help but see the godly life she now lived before him. God had curbed her temper; she was more patient and understanding of Mike and the kids. She prayed for Mike, privately, and gave herself to the task of serving him in love. Not the submission of being a "doormat," but as the Scripture says—"by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).

Thousands—no doubt *millions*—of husbands have been won to Christ in exactly this way by wives who prayed for God to show them ways to *love* their husbands instead of driving them away (I Pet. 3:1-6).

#### Don't Air "Dirty Laundry" in Prayers

There are times when women get together in Christian Bible studies, or at prayer times in church, and the opportunity comes to propose prayer requests for which other Christians can join in prayer. But it is wise to *not* tell too much about the husband's bad points—and why he needs to be saved. If he ever does come into the church, gossip or whispering about his sins or shortcomings will make him feel self-conscious and uncomfortable. If you must go into detail about your husband's problems, confide in your pastor.

#### Don't Compare Your Husband to Other Husbands

Nothing will undermine the confidence of a person more than being unfavorably compared to someone else.

"Rick, why can't you be like Jim? Do you know that Jim takes his wife and family to church every Sunday...and they have family devotions, and Jim..."

This is a self-defeating negative approach that can wreck your efforts to win your husband to the Lord, and so it should be avoided.

#### Don't Make Your Husband's Habits the Big Issue

The Bible says, "*All* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Your husband has faults and problems because he is a *sinner*, and until he accepts Christ as his Savior, he is powerless to overcome his sinful habits. It is not realistic to try and reform your husband until he has received a new heart.

#### Don't Compromise Your Godly Beliefs

While it is advisable to avoid preaching and nagging to see your husband won to Christ, it is just as wrong to go too far in the other direction. Never compromise your standards or Christian beliefs in the hope that if you are not so strict you'll make better progress.

Actually, you should stand firm in love. Your husband will respect your adherence to godly principles. For example, one woman thought that if she continued to go dancing and drinking with her husband, she'd eventually win him over. In fact, just the opposite occurred. He had no respect for values that could be easily thrown over.

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With this in mind, let's examine some of the *positive* things a wife can do:

#### Live According to Your Christian Lifestyle

The old maxim, "Seeing is believing," is the best argument in favor of your own changed life. Your husband may *never* believe the gospel that he *hears*—unless, and until he *sees* that gospel in *you*.

If your husband sees that God has changed *your* life, and that now you have control over your temper, your tongue, your attitudes and actions—then it is likely that your husband will trust the Lord to bring the same victory to his own life and over his own habits.

#### Love Your Husband to Christ

We've already seen that it is not nagging or preaching that draws a person to Christ. *Love is the compelling force*. Take time to demonstrate your love, even at those times when it is not possible to *feel* that love emotionally. True love is often an act of will, as much or more than a simple response of the heart. Read I Corinthians 13 and Paul's epistle to the Ephesians for a good model of love.

#### Ask Your Husband's Help

No man really wants to be thought of as a failure. Most husbands are insecure anyway, when it comes to their roles as fathers.

The positive approach here, instead of the negative nagging or preaching, is to try and lovingly convince your husband that you need his help in rearing your children to have good moral and spiritual values.

Your suggestions might include some non-threatening ideas, such as saying grace at meal times, prayers before bedtime with the kids, reading Bible stories and attending church or Sunday School with the youngsters. Tell him that he is the best example for the children, in a way that can help build his confidence.

#### Appeal to Your Husband's Desire for Success

The frustration of many wives is that their husbands show a remarkable interest in being successful in their careers or business, but seem to be unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of their families.

But perhaps that is because no one has challenged that husband to seek success as a husband or father. Many husbands do take an interest in improving their marriage or family life when they are shown ways to do so.

Successful models of *Christian* husbands and fathers can motivate some men in positive ways toward that goal. Does he read? Get Christian biographies or self-help books by respected authors who appear non-threatening—such as Chuck Swindoll, R. G. LeTourneau, James Dobson or others.

Does he like music? Get him recordings of quality Christian artists performing the kind of music he likes.

Does he like to eat? Take him to a church supper or potluck that has a good program. The good food may get him to come, and a good gospel program may feed his soul.

The main thing is to discover your husband's interests and the things to which he responds, then find ways of showing your own interest in those things. You may be surprised that when you show favor for the things that *he* likes, you may get him to take an interest in *your* concerns.



#### Ask Other Men (Men Understand Men!)

Winning your husband to Christ is a difficult assignment. You may not be able to do it alone. But that's all right. Don't be afraid to ask other men to help. Christian men may more readily understand your husband. He may more easily listen to another man, and respond to such a man.

#### PART II

#### Your Wife Can Be Won...

While it is true that in many cases of divided households it is the husband who is the unbeliever, there are many cases where it is the husband who seeks to win his wife to the Lord.

Many of the principles already cited can be applied to this situation. Yet, because of some of the basic differences between men and women, a few refinements might help to clarify what we mean.

#### **Love Your Wife**

The Apostle Paul gave this command to husbands. He said that husbands are to "love your wives" (Eph. 5:25). Most husbands do not have to be told to *act* on this command. Yet, a common complaint of most wives is that they do not *hear* their husbands tell them, "I love you."

They generally shrug and say, "Oh, my wife knows that I love her—or else I wouldn't have married her!" Wives do not like to be taken for granted. Tell her that you love her. *Often!* 

Just as explained earlier with husbands, you also cannot *preach* or *nag* a wife to Christ. Nor can it be done with "constructive criticism," or arguments. A wife must be *loved* to Christ. And this is where you, as her Christian husband, hold the main key to your wife's salvation.

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#### **Communicate With Your Wife**

In the same way that men often take their wives for granted in not telling them often enough that they love them, so too husbands often neglect *talking* to their wives. Communication is a key element cited by marriage counselors for a great marriage. Communication is not some complicated mystery. It's just conversation. So, spend time talking with your wife.

#### **Pray For Your Wife**

Just as you spend time in conversation with your wife, plan to also talk with God in petition for your wife. God delights in your prayers on behalf of a loved one, especially prayers in favor of that loved one coming to Christ.

But in addition to praying for your wife's salvation, spend time in prayer for her other needs. Ask her about her concerns and fears. Let her know that you are praying for her and that you want to know what her requests might be as you go to the Lord in prayer. Your wife will see that you have her needs in mind and that you are asking God to answer the requests that are on *her* heart.



Yet, even if your wife is cool toward the idea of your prayers, continue to speak to God about her and your hope of seeing her won to Christ.

#### Let Your Wife Know You Appreciate Her

One of the worst things that can happen to a person is for them to feel unappreciated or unloved. This will cripple a spirit more quickly than sharp words or fighting.

To ignore someone is to hurt someone. And, by way of contrast, sincere compliments can build feelings of appreciation and foster real worth.

There is a saying, "More people die of a broken heart than of a swollen head." Everyone appreciates a sincere and loving compliment. Such genuine praise will often open a wife's heart to her husband's concern for her spiritual well-being and eventually to the gospel.

#### Appeal to Your Wife's Social Nature

The typical church program has all kinds of weekly activities to offer. If you look at your own list of church events, you will see some programs that will appeal to your wife and her social interests.

Some of these activities are family events, others are for couples. Invite her. Take her. There is likely to be fun, fellowship—and before it's over—a spiritual program.

Or, perhaps there are Christian women in your church or neighborhood who host a coffee break Bible study, and she might enjoy being

a part of it. Often an evangelistic outreach that is held outside of the church is just the right kind of non-threatening activity to reach out and attract a seeking soul.

#### Be the Spiritual Head of Your House

Most wives, even if they do not want to become Christians themselves, will want their children to turn out well. When husbands set the example, with prayers, devotions with the kids, bedtime Bible stories, and going to church, wives will often come along.

Such consistency of faith and Christian living can make a lasting impression upon a wife, and may even cause her to yield her life to the Lord.

To Be Continued!

Î

#### **Question Box**

"Sanctified means 'made holy,' 'set aside,' and 'saved,' right? So is I Corinthians 7:14 saying an unbeliever married to a believer is saved because they are 'one flesh' in God's eyes?"

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband..." (I Cor. 7:14).

The word "sanctified" often refers to salvation (Acts 20:32; I Cor. 6:11), but sometimes it just means to be set apart to God (Ex. 13:2; 19:14; I Sam. 16:5; II Tim. 2:21, etc.), and it has this meaning in our text as well. Paul is saying that an unbelieving spouse is much more likely to come to Christ than someone with less exposure to the gospel and a consistent Christian testimony. Most of the time when we quote Acts 16:31, we don't quote the end:

# "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

This too *sounds* like salvation by proxy, but as we read on we see the Philippian jailer "rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house*" (Acts 16:34). Here we see that the salvation of the man's family was predicated on them believing the gospel as well. Paul was simply saying, "Believe and be saved, and this goes for your house as well!" As the Lord told Paul elsewhere, when it comes to salvation, men are only "sanctified *by faith that is in Me*" (Acts 26:18).

—Pastor Kurth

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## **BBS Letter Excerpts**

#### From Michigan:

"I can't tell you how invaluable the *Berean Searchlight* has been for us and to countless others. A tremendous ministry!"

#### From Belgium:

"Thank you for the gift of the monthly *Berean Searchlight* that I have been receiving from you in Belgium for more than half a year. It gives me real understanding and hope in my life."

#### From our Inbox:

"...what has always bothered me was the issue of water baptism...And after all these years, I always wondered, so the Holy Spirit once and for all decided to lay it to rest through your magazine."

#### From California:

"I just finished reading *Our Minds*, *Our Health*. What a wonderful curriculum this would make for prisoners who are stunted in emotional, mental and spiritual health through drugs, alcohol, abuse, etc. Sound familiar? Like teens, right?" (Thankfully not all teens, but no doubt some.—Ed).

#### From Pennsylvania:

"Thank you for your *Two Minutes With the Bible* in our little local paper *The East Shore Shopper* from Mt. Jay. It is such a blessing these days to see Bible teachings in any paper...I'm including a small donation to help in bringing His saving grace to all who will listen."

#### From Illinois:

"I am very excited about this GUIG Sunday School program. I have been looking for a good resource for home Bible study/family devotional. It is nearly impossible to find teaching that rightly divides. Thank you very much for this resource."

#### From Nigeria:

"Please, kindly send me your statement of faith, since this will help me a long way in explaining more about the grace of God to my followers here. The wonder of this grace is inexhaustible. Many questions keep on flowing from those who have been deluded."

#### From New Zealand:

"Hi brothers, thank you so much for the mp3 audio files. I've bought myself a mp3 player and can now enjoy these studies as I sit in my school bus waiting for the kids on their school outings! A great way to 'redeem the time.' Keep up the good work!"

#### From California:

"In my life's experience I was baptized four times for four different reasons at four different churches... Of course *now* I know the truth of the Mystery and that man is 'saved by grace instead.' This is the title to the hymn I wrote in 1951 with Pastor Ray Rich of *Open Bible Church* in Riverdale, Illinois arranging the music. He had it published. Do you have a song book with my song in it?" (We don't, but perhaps one of our readers does?"—Ed).

#### From our Inbox:

"You explained it so well, I did a study today on the unpardonable sin, and during that study, I could see clearer than I did yesterday."

#### From Arizona:

"We are thoroughly enjoying your DVD series on being a Grace Believer."

#### From North Carolina:

"I just wanted you to know our small (9 person) house church here in Hendersonville is being blessed by your, What It Means to be a Grace Believer...Keep up the good work, Paul. Those DVDs are an excellent source of teaching—the discussion times which follow are perfect for answering questions that arise."

#### From Wisconsin:

"I just recently started going to a church that was almost strictly all Old Testament, up to John. I have been leaving these booklets on their back tables (with permission of course) for about two years now. They really knew little about Paul and were reluctant to hear about the epistles. But now, praise the Lord Jesus Christ, the pastor's sermons are more and more about Paul and grace."

#### From Oregon:

"Thank you for sending the Search-light each month, it is read cover to cover. Now we can dig into the Holy Scriptures and grow as never before, being in church and Sunday school for years. The Word has jumped to life these last three years when during our winters in Southern California we started attending a little body of believers and first heard of the mystery that Christ gave to Paul."

#### From our Inbox:

"With what you have set out in J. C. O'Hair's work and others regarding the dispensations, I no longer see through the glass quite so darkly, and have set a course on more sure ground doctrinally and experientially. Thank you. My wife and I have a question which we cannot find an answer to in all your website, or anywhere else for that matter..."

#### From Florida:

"I was reading your article, and was surprised that you questioned water baptism...Jesus mentions water baptism in John 3:5...I thank you for the *Searchlight*, as I find it very informative, although I don't understand everything. Enclosed is a check, long overdue." (We're not used to receiving gifts from those who disagree with us! Please pray for this dear lady.—Ed).

#### From New Mexico:

"I just finished reading *The Key to an Effective Pastorate*, and it was encouraging to my heart. Although I am not a pastor, the central truth of this brief message spoke to me deeply. I have been receiving the *Two Minute* emails for quite a long time now, and I just realized I have never taken the time to say thank you for these delightful and edifying little snippets of wisdom and encouragement."

#### From Ohio:

"These little magazines are so good, I read them twice!"

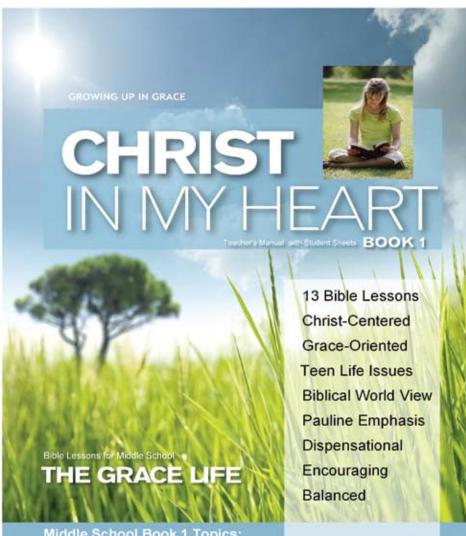
#### From North Carolina:

"Please use the enclosed where you need it the most. We enjoy reading your magazine. I wish more people would see the importance of rightly dividing the Word."



"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



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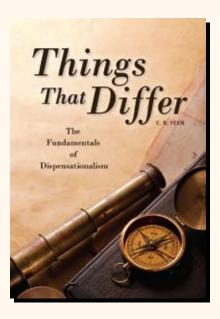
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# News and Announcements

**BBS on Facebook:** As many of our online *Searchlight* readers know, Facebook is a social networking website that enables users to connect and interact with others. BBS has now joined the 250 million people currently using *Facebook*, and without even being announced, we are off to a good start with over 150 "fans." If you are interested, just search for *Berean Bible Society* on *Facebook*.

**Evangelist Art Fowler:** About a year ago, our BBS board of directors asked if we could have a *Searchlight* article on evangelism. At that time, we contacted grace evangelist Art Fowler, and scheduled the booklet that you see on Page 19 to appear in the *Searchlight*. Now as we go to press, we have just learned that Art has been diagnosed with a Stage 4b cancer that is not fully covered by his insurance. If you are blessed by his article, and wish to help Art, contributions can be mailed to Pro Impact Intl., P.O. Box 1234, Castle Rock, CO 80104.

**Grace Bible Church** of Madison, Wisconsin, is still looking for a pastor. In the meantime, you can hear Pastor Kevin Sadler guest speak there on September 20th, and Pastor Ricky Kurth on October 18th. If you are interested in candidating, or can help with pulpit supply, contact GBC elder Bob Vandervort at rcvand1@charter.net.

**Looking for fellowship:** Lars and Kathy Kemp were teaching the grace message in a home Bible study in conjunction with their local church, but "there arose no small stir about that way," and now they are looking for fellowship in the Longmont, Colorado area. They can be reached at 2203 Barn Swallow Drive, Longmont, CO 80504, or at <a href="wklkemp@q.com">wklkemp@q.com</a>.

**This month's back cover quote** was contributed by Dorothy Usher Bell, who also authored it. Dorothy may not be famous, but she is very wise.

**Our cover this month** features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs and e-mail them with any questions at their website: www.crestwoodcreek.com.



The *Sturgeon Point Lighthouse* is located in Harrisville, Michigan overlooking Lake Huron. Sturgeon Point earned its name because of the fantastic number of sturgeon that came in to spawn in this area. The light was built in 1869 on land donated by its first keeper.

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of being accepted in Christ." "Rejection makes me fully comprehend the blessing "...He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). —Dorothy Usher Bell

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