

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2000





From the Editor to You:



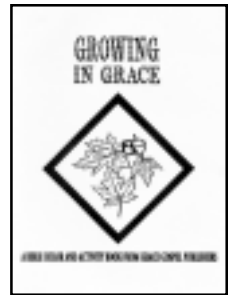
Dearly Beloved,

We receive a steady stream of inquiries here at BBS regarding *Grace* Sunday School materials. This has been a great need in our churches longer than anyone can remember. In the past, those who sought to write, illustrate, and publish quarterly curriculums soon found it to be a daunting task that eventually fell by the wayside. In addition, the cost to reproduce these materials for so many age levels was astronomical.

Through the years, various grace ministries have approached us with the suggestion that the *Berean Bible Society* should undertake the project. However, with our current staff stretched to the limit, to say nothing of the additional funds that would be needed, this simply wouldn't be prudent at this time.

Thankfully efforts are being made by others to meet this need on a graduated basis. We are happy to report that Mrs. LeAnn Beauchamp has recently written and designed a Sunday School Workbook for elementary ages. Published by *Grace Gospel Publishers* in Denver, Colorado, this work will be a welcome companion to *First Things First*.

If necessity is the mother of invention, then Mrs. Beauchamp has found an innovative way to share the good news of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery. *Growing in Grace* is an illustrated primer, based upon the alphabet, which introduces our young people to different aspects of the gospel of the grace of God. We also understand that she is planning to release another workbook in the very near future.



Those who work with the above ages will find this material useful for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Camp programs. In fact, Mrs. Beauchamp originally developed these lessons while teaching in these very ministries. We are pleased to announce that *Growing in Grace* is now available through the *Berean Bible Society* for \$5.00 per copy, which includes postage and handling.

Affectionately, in Christ,

Paul M. Sadler
President

From Our Mailbag	4
Question Box	6
The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter (Part VIII)	7
Where Do You Stand?	13
Why Did God Create the Devil?	15
Fall Bible Conferences	20
Grace Cruise Conference	21
The BBI Byline	24
News and Announcements	25

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), October 2000. Volume 61, Number 7. No subscription price. The *Berean Searchlight* is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by the *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Periodicals postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Berean Searchlight*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756.

From Arizona:

"I enjoy reading the *Berean Searchlight*. Thank you for sending it to me. I am 85 years old and I love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my Savior, my Lord and my God." (Amen!! Ed.)

From Texas:

"Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* that another brother in Christ had sent to us."

From Saskatchewan, Canada:

"My wife and I are reading the commentary on *Ephesians* and enjoying it greatly. Not only do we learn from your biblical interpretation, but also all of the illustrations and life examples are very rich. Truly you're God's man to reach this present generation, as was Brother Stam to the previous one. Thank you for your faithfulness to God's Word and the proclamation of the great Mystery."

From Georgia:

"I had the opportunity to read one of your *Berean Searchlights*—September 1997. If the articles of today's *Searchlight* are as true and uncompromised as the one I read, please put me on your mailing list." (It's steady as she goes, as they say on the high seas! Welcome to the family! Ed.)

From Tennessee:

"Brother Sadler, I like what you said in your letter, 'We have often said that those who are open to the truth will eventually come to see the Mystery when they are exposed to it.' Well, let's try to get it to them for free by all getting behind the Newcomers Project."

From Arizona:

"Thank you for the 60th Anniversary *Berean Searchlight*. We enjoyed it so much."

From New York:

"Thank you for so faithfully sending me your publication. It is truly a blessing to me. It's the only way I receive the truth *rightly divided*."

From Florida:

"To all you wonderful godly vessels. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the many years of wonderful inspiring godly illumination, encouragement and edification. God bless you all."

From California:

"We often pray for you (and for your family), that the Lord will continue to give you the guidance in allocation of time for family when there are so many other demands on your time. We have seen some tragic results from family neglect, when the busy pastor did not have time for his growing children. We are encouraged that the Lord has given you several well-qualified fellow-workers to share the load. Thanks to the rest of the staff for working together in support of the Lord's *Berean* ministry." (Thanks, beloved, for the wise counsel. I, too, am grateful for a dedicated staff that allows me to spend time with my family. Ed.)

From the Internet:

"I have just received my order that I placed last Sunday. Thank you for your quick response time. It really surprised me. Thanks to you I should have an interesting and profitable weekend."

From Ohio:

"I thought the article in the March *Searchlight* regarding II Thessalonians Chapter 2, *Will the Body of Christ Go Through the Tribulation?* by Mr. Stam was excellent. Mr. Stam hit the bull's eye once again....The *Searchlight* always has good thought-provoking material. I enjoy reading it and studying it."

From Iowa:

"We want to thank you for sending us the *Berean Searchlight*. It helps us to better understand God's Word."

From Washington:

"What a book you did with *Ephesians*. There are no words to express to you—your hard work, the time, study, to make it so rich, encouraging and plain, it will be a blessing till the end of time."

From Wisconsin:

“Thank you for your continued support in sending the *Searchlight* to me each month. And also for answering what questions I may have from time to time....It is so true that all things must be tried by Scripture and the Spirit.”

From Pennsylvania:

“It is a joy to us to give this gift to your ministry for our Lord’s work. We sure enjoyed the messages and fellowship at the BBF Conference.” (The conference was well attended this year. In fact, it was a challenge to find a seat at some of the services. Ed.)

From Nebraska:

“Please put me on the *Berean Searchlight* list and send a current price list of your works.”

From Arizona:

“Thank you for the personal copy of your commentary on *Ephesians*. I have begun my second tour through the book to reinforce what I learned and to learn what I missed the first time. We pray our Lord will use this excellent commentary as an instrument to open blinded eyes to the truth of God’s Word—*THE MYSTERY* as revealed to Paul our apostle. I especially appreciate your discussion of the *depravity of man* and your comments concerning God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility.”

From Florida:

“Sending my contribution for June to help in spreading the good news of God’s amazing grace. God bless all of you.”

From Ohio:

“Thank you so very much for sending me the *Searchlight*. I look forward to reading it each month. Thank you all at *BBS* for what you have done for me to understand the preaching of Jesus Christ and the ministry as given to Paul.”

From Oklahoma:

“Thank you for all you do to get God’s Word out rightly divided to the people. Our offering is a little late, but better late than never. We thank God we can send a little to help in some small way.”

From New York:

“I pray God’s blessing and guidance each day as we wait for His coming. The only hope, security, and safety is in His presence in each ‘born again’ new creature in Christ.”

From Illinois:

“We so enjoy and learn as well from reading the *Berean Searchlight*.”

From Alberta, Canada:

“I thoroughly enjoyed the 60 years of truth, the special issue. It was excellent....Keep up the good work. Enjoyed seeing the pictures of the *workers* there—they all look good!”

From Oklahoma:

“A few weeks ago I ordered the set by C. R. Stam and I’m enjoying them very much. I have attended a Bible study here in Tulsa taught by Les Feldick for several years. It appears that you and Mr. Feldick are very close in your *rightly dividing the Word of truth*.” (We’re within a half a gnat’s eyelash of one another. Ed.)

From Arkansas:

“I look forward to the *Searchlight* every month. May God bless you and your faithful service.”

From Florida:

“We thank you so much for the books that you have written. They are truly God’s work through the Holy Spirit. The books are indeed a true blessing to me and I’m sure to others also. We are thankful for the *Berean Searchlight* which contains excellent articles for education and for study.”

“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

YOUR OWN VERSION

*You are writing a gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say.
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say, what is the gospel
According to YOU?*

—Gilbert

“Do we begin to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (II Cor. 3:1,2).

Question Box

“In what sense does Paul use the term ‘save’ in II Timothy 4:16? ‘Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.’”

According to the context, if Timothy would faithfully proclaim Paul’s revelation, he would not only save or *deliver* himself from deception and unsound doctrine, but also those that hear him. In short, Paul’s gospel is a safeguard against error.

—Pastor Sadler

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter (Part VIII)

By Paul M. Sadler



“...that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

As the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee one evening, they were unexpectedly caught in a storm. That old boat was up one side of those huge waves and down the other. Just about the time they thought they were going to perish in a watery grave, the disciples saw someone walking toward them on the sea.

The Lord often uses unique ways to get our attention. This was certainly the case with the twelve. They couldn't believe their eyes! In fact, this phantom of the night left them absolutely terrified. The experience was enough to make their hair stand at attention on the back of their necks. As the disciples were pondering their fate, they breathed a sigh of relief when they heard the consoling voice of the Master say, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Matt. 14:27).

As their collective heart rate began to return to normal, Peter requested if he, too, might walk on the water. To which our Lord responded, “Come!” Without a second thought, Peter threw his leg over

the side of the ship and climbed down to the water. Interestingly, the other disciples were more than happy to remain in the safety of the ship. This is all too often the attitude of believers, they are more than willing to stand idly by while someone else steps into the waters of adversity for the cause of Christ.

With childlike faith, Peter wanted to *follow* in the footsteps of his Master. After walking a short distance on the surface of the water, his attention was drawn to the howling winds that were causing the waves to crash at his feet. The next thing Peter knew the water was coming up around him. He was *sinking!* As death prepared to pull him under, he cried, saying, “Lord, save me!” Beloved, the storms of life may rage around us, but if we keep our eyes upon the Lord and the counsel of His Word, He will see us through the most difficult times. While there are many practical lessons we can draw from this narrative, this portion also contains a great dispensational lesson.

The miracles our Lord performed during His earthly ministry are closely identified with the future day of the Lord. In this case, the twelve represent the nation Israel, who will be caught in the *fury* of the coming Tribulation. As the ship of state is about to be engulfed by the sea of ungodly nations, all hope is abandoned. In the midst of this darkness and turmoil Christ appears in His Second Coming to put down the rebellion of the Anti-Christ, *saving* Israel from sure destruction.

She is then brought safely to the shores of the kingdom where she will enjoy her long-awaited millennial *rest*.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

—I Pet. 2:9

While the epistles of Peter were intended to hold out hope to those living in his day, the primary thrust of his writings has *future* Israel in view. As mentioned earlier, we naturally turn to Paul’s apostleship and message for our instructions today; however, those living in the coming day of the Lord will turn to *Peter’s* apostleship and message for their marching orders.

Thus, Peter states, “ye are a chosen generation.” The term “generation” here is the Greek word *genos* or race. Although there are numerous races in the world, according to the Prophetic Scriptures there is only one chosen race—*Israel* (Isa. 43:20; 44:1,2). A race implies a *common* ancestor, who in this case we know to be Abraham. He is the taproot of the family tree through whom came the multiplied seed, who are said to be “as the stars of heaven, and as the sand, which is upon the seashore.”

Notice Abraham’s seed was divided into two parts. Some of his descendants believed the God of heaven and walked in His ways. Sadly, others of his race were like the sand of the sea, great in number, but swept aimlessly across the shores of time, due to their rejection of the counsel of His will. As Paul says, “Neither, because they are the

seed of Abraham, are they all children” (Rom. 9:7). In short, simply because a Jew claims Abraham as his father does not necessarily mean he is born again. Thankfully, Peter’s hearers were of that number who had placed their faith in the Messiah.

In this parenthetical age of grace, God is *preserving* the Jew. This is perhaps the greatest proof of the fidelity of the Word of God. It has stood the test of time. Mark these words and mark them well, God will literally fulfill every promise He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Golden Age.

Those to whom this letter is addressed are also called a *royal priesthood*, which implies kingship. Under the law, it was required that there be a separation of powers. A priest, for example, was never permitted to hold the office of king. The same held true for the kings in regard to the priesthood. You will recall the time King Uzziah intruded into the priest’s office and how he was smitten with leprosy for offering incense at the sanctuary (II Chron. 26:18-21). Whether the consequence of disobedience is immediate or future, one thing is certain, it’s inescapable. In Uzziah’s case, it was *immediate*. In addition to being plagued with leprosy, he was an outcast among his people until the day of his death.

In what sense then were Peter’s hearers a *royal* priesthood? We believe it has to do with the intimate relationship these saints share with the King of kings. They are promised to rule and reign with Christ in the millennium. In other words, they will enjoy royal *privileges* as a kingdom of priests. John followed this same prophetic theme when he declared, “And hast made us unto

our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10). It has been correctly said, “They were therefore a true hierarchy, called to reign as well as to serve.”¹

Next, Peter tells us these believers were “*an holy nation.*” While most commentators have to do spiritual gymnastics to make I Peter 2:9 apply to the Body of Christ, this particular designation poses a real obstacle for them, although they give it “the old college try!” According to their position, after Pentecost there is only one gospel taught throughout, which essentially denies the distinctive apostleship and message of Paul. Since these brethren fail to rightly divide the Word of truth they are forced to remain consistent with their inconsistencies.

“...one thing the Body
of Christ is not is a
nation, much less
‘an holy nation.’
This honor is reserved
solely for Israel.”

We are many things to the Lord, but one thing the Body of Christ is not is a nation, much less “an holy nation.” This honor is reserved solely for Israel. The Greek term *hagios* or “holy” has the idea to consecrate or to set apart. Shortly after God set aside the nations of the world in unbelief, He raised up Abraham to whom He gave the promise, “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great” (Gen. 12:2 cf. Deut. 7:6-9). In Abraham, God established a *new* nation, setting it apart from the other nations.

Historically Israel did not fully blossom into a nation until God delivered her from the hand of the Egyptians. Hence, soon after her deliverance from Egypt, God said to Moses, “And ye shall be unto me...an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Ex. 19:6). The one thing that distinguished Israel from the other nations of the world was her *government*. In America, our form of government is of the people. The first line of the Constitution reads: “*We the people of the United States...*”

Israel’s government was of God. Moses clearly says, “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all *His* commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth” (Deut. 28:1).

This injunction gave the chosen nation a position of preeminence over the Gentiles—the Ten Commandments governed her moral life, the Civil law her social life, and the Ceremonial law her religious life. By the time Peter wrote to his countrymen the national glory Israel once knew was all but a passing memory. God was setting her aside in unbelief. But there still remained a faint heartbeat, for James said to Paul (during the apostle’s visit to Jerusalem) around this same period, “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law” (Acts 21:20).

Humanly speaking, the death of the nation came in 70 A.D. when Titus laid siege to Jerusalem. The city was plundered, along with the

destruction of the temple, which brought an abrupt end to the sacrificial system. Israel's obituary aptly reads, "Once the light of the world, the chosen nation now lies dormant in darkness."

Although Peter was well aware that the handwriting was on the wall, he never lived to see the final collapse of the nation. At the time of his writing approximately ten years remained before Titus would enter Jerusalem. Whatever time was left, however, Peter wanted his countrymen to understand that they were numbered with the chosen nation, the *covenant* people of God. In essence, he's saying to his readers, both past and future, that Israel shall be restored to her former glory.

These saints are also said to be a "peculiar people." Once again, some have surmised from this that Peter was writing to the Body of Christ, based on the premise that Paul used the same expression for the Church. Simply because similar terms and phraseology are used in regard to both Israel and the Body of Christ, it in no way diminishes from the distinction between these two entities. For example, both are called the "house of God" (I Tim. 3:15 cf. I Pet. 4:17). Both are referred to as being a "church" or called-out ones (Acts 7:38 cf. Eph. 1:22,23). Both proclaimed the "kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15 cf. Acts 20:25).

The *context* must always serve as our guide when these identical terms and phrases appear. This particular designation "a peculiar people" simply means "God's own possession." Peter applies it to his hearers in the following manner: They were purchased by the blood of Christ, which has brought them into a special relationship with the

God of their fathers. Like a jeweler who displays his precious stones for all to see, God will exhibit His *private* collection of kingdom saints at the Second Coming of Christ (I Pet. 1:7,13; 2:12; 5:10).

As members of the Body of Christ, we, too, are a "peculiar people" but in a completely different sense. We are His purchased possession in relation to the *heavenly* ministry of Christ. Therefore, as the trophies of His grace, we will appear with Him in glory when the trump sounds at the Rapture (Eph. 2:5-7; 5:27; Col 3:4; Titus 2:13,14).

Peter's countrymen were the recipients of all these blessings for a reason, a very important reason, "that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." They were saved to *serve!* Darkness had once held them in its dreaded sway, leaving them in ignorance concerning the things of God. They had lost their way until "His marvelous light" appeared. That light was Christ! "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Having received their Messiah, they were now to show forth the *virtues* of Him who had called them into the light. These dear saints had already been over the high seas of adversity, so they were in a unique position to declare His preeminence, His righteousness, His holiness, His goodness, and His mercy.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Pet. 2:10).

Here again many commentators incorrectly draw the conclusion that

Peter was writing to the Gentiles on the basis of Paul's words found in Ephesians 2:11-13. It is true, of course, that in time past we were without God, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. It is also true that we are no longer strangers and foreigners, having been made nigh by the blood of Christ. But this wonderful truth regarding the reconciliation of the Gentiles should not be confused with Peter's words.

First and foremost, the phrase "people of God" is a title that God has given exclusively to Israel. *They* were the people of God. Therefore, Peter purposely limits his statement to the chosen nation. Looking back through the corridor of history, there was a time in Israel's past when God rejected His people. You will recall in the days of Hosea that the betrothal God had entered into with His people was *broken*. Israel played the role of the harlot worshipping strange gods. For her adulterous ways, God gave her a writing of divorcement and instructed the prophet to name his third child "Loammi," which means "not my people."

But God who is rich in mercy has promised that one day He will restore Israel to her rightful place of honor. "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hosea 2:23). While the fulfillment of this prophecy and I Peter 2:10 will not be fully realized until the day of the Lord, the little flock with

whom these believers were joined had already tasted of His mercy.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2:11,12).

As "strangers" these sojourners longed for their homeland. Although they never saw the fulfillment of the promises in their lifetime, these believers will enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land in the resur-

rection. For the time then present, Peter's countrymen were "pilgrims," that is, *resident foreigners* among the Gentiles, which meant they had no rights. Consequently, Peter admonishes them to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The Jews, for the most part, were unwelcome guests in these

nations, who often dealt harshly with the people of God. As the trial of their faith grew increasingly intense, it might be the tendency of some to retaliate. But to act in the flesh would only serve to add to their hardship, not to mention destroy their testimony for Christ.

As citizens of the kingdom, Peter appeals to the behavior of his countrymen as a means of reaching the Gentiles with the gospel of the kingdom. Sometimes *actions* speak louder than words. Perhaps the following illustration will help us better understand the apostle's wise counsel.

"...Peter appeals to the behavior of his countrymen as a means of reaching the Gentiles with the gospel of the kingdom."

The story is told of two farmers who lived side by side on land that was divided by a shallow river. On a day in August the cows belonging to one of them got out of the pasture, crossed the stream, and ruined about half an acre of the ripened corn that grew along the bank. The man who owned the field was so angry that he corralled his neighbor's cattle and locked them in his own barn. After making the first farmer pay for everything they had destroyed, he continued to hold the animals hostage until a high ransom was paid for them.

In the fall of that year, some hogs belonging to the second farmer escaped through a broken fence, crossed the stream, and invaded the potato patch of the man who owned the cows. The pigs rooted around his property, grunting happily, and caused great damage. Although the man was disturbed by the loss of his crop, he carefully rounded up the strays and began herding them back to their own pen. When their owner saw him coming, he expected trouble and got out his gun. But he soon discovered that his neighbor had no intention of harming him or his hogs.

Coming out of the place where he had been hiding, he said in surprise, "How can you be so kind to me after the way I treated you?" The man replied, "Because I'm a Christian!" That evening the unsaved farmer and his wife paid a visit to the home

of their good neighbor. Before they left, they had both accepted Christ—all because a consecrated believer refused to render "evil for evil."²

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." In spite of false accusations, the godly behavior of these saints not only disarmed their accusers, it opened a door of utterance to evangelize the lost to Christ. Thus, the Gentiles who are saved *through* the chosen nation will glorify the God of Israel in the day of visitation.

In this context, the *day of visitation* or "inspection" is clearly the Second Coming of Christ and subsequent judgment of the nations. In that day, the nations of the world will appear before the King of kings at Jerusalem to be judged in relation to how they treated God's chosen people (Matt. 25:31-46). Since Israel's light was growing dimmer and dimmer at the time of this writing, Peter's words will have a far greater impact in the coming day of the Lord (Rev. 7:9-17).

To Be Continued! 

Endnotes

1. *The First Epistle General of Peter*, Alan M. Stibbs, Pg. 104.
2. *Windows on the Word*, Dennis J. DeHaan, Compiler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, Pgs. 97,98.

PERFECT LOVE

Slow to suspect	— Quick to trust	
Slow to condemn	— Quick to justify	
Slow to offend	— Quick to defend	
Slow to reprimand	— Quick to forbear	
Slow to belittle	— Quick to appreciate	
Slow to demand	— Quick to give	
Slow to hinder	— Quick to help	—Selected

Where Do You Stand?

By Cornelius R. Stam

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him. Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?”

—Josh. 5:13,14

God had appointed Joshua to lead the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. It was just before the battle of Jericho that the great leader looked up to see a man with a drawn sword facing him. His sudden appearance must have startled Joshua, but he showed no trace of fear—not Joshua!


Advancing toward the man, Joshua demanded: “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” No wonder the answer brought him to his knees! He had been standing face to face with the captain of the Lord’s hosts, no doubt Michael, the angelic prince of Israel (See Dan. 10:21 and 12:1).

The question was not, whose side was the angel of God on, but whose side was Joshua on! Was he himself in harmony with God’s will?

There is an important lesson for us here. In the constant battle over truth and error, there is a tendency for Christians to demand of other Christians: “Whose side are you on? Are you for us or for our adversaries?”

If this is as far as we have gotten in our service for the Lord, we still have much to learn, for the great question is not: “Are *you* on *my* side?” but “Am *I* on *God’s* side?”

God’s truth will prevail. His purposes will be carried out, and even though we might be on the side of the most powerful and influential of men, we will surely be driven to defeat if we are not in harmony with God’s Word and Will.

Shall we not all fall on our faces with Joshua then, and say: “*What saith my Lord unto His servant?*” 



“...even though we might be on the side of the most powerful and influential of men, we will surely be driven to defeat if we are not in harmony with God’s Word and Will.”

Birthday Greetings

We thought everyone would enjoy reading some of the heart-warming notes that Pastor Stam received on his 92nd birthday.

—Ed.

From Illinois:

“Happy Birthday!! I’ve been reading the *Searchlight* for some time now (thank you) and have most of your books. I really thank God for you and your faithful stand. Now I know what it means to rightly divide God’s Word, before I only heard confusion.”

From Ohio:

“The best to you with the hope that all is going as well for you as can be expected. I suspect that it has been 20 years since our paths crossed, more to my benefit than yours, for which I thank you. What a wonder is God’s Word, both the written and the living Word. After 40 plus years working with man’s word and law, one would have to have his head buried in sand not to recognize the difference. I have not stopped thanking God for you, and I know this is the thanks that you would have offered and made. You were always careful to not let yourself stand in the way in any respect between those you ministered to and their Lord.”

From West Virginia:

“This note is just to say thanks for your faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ. I was wonderfully saved in September 1960 in Huntington, West Virginia but it wasn’t until November 1995 that I was introduced to God’s message of grace according to the Mystery and was given a copy of your work *Things That Differ*. The light I received was truly an answer to my prayers. As a result, a new grace church has been established in Ridgeley, West Virginia where I am now serving as an elder and am now enjoying many more of those *all-spiritual* blessings. Praise His name.”

From Texas:

“Happy Birthday! May God bless you in a special way on your birthday. We have never met, but God has blessed your ministry in my life. I learned of the distinct apostleship of Paul in the 1960’s. Since then your books, tapes, and magazine have served as a guide for my Bible study and life. I am so grateful for your ministry and that God has provided Pastor Sadler to continue in the ministry. I pray everyday that God’s abiding presence will sustain you as you face the infirmities of age. It is not easy and I know that Satan would delight in our failure to live for Christ in the most trying of times in our life.”

From Colorado:

“About 15 years ago we read your book *Things That Differ*. It changed our lives. We continue to share God’s message of grace today. We thank God for you and we pray for you.”

From Indiana:

“For several years now I’ve said that seeing the gospel of the grace of God is the next best thing to being saved and I’m so thankful to the Lord that He let me see His love displayed. Had you not written to guide us in God’s Word, I think I never would have seen the Mystery. Thank you Pastor Stam. Hope you have a great birthday party. My birthday is May 28 so I never forget yours.”

It is now more than forty years since Pastor John C. O'Hair went to be with the Lord he loved and served so faithfully for more than half a century. The following is a transcript of a message Brother O'Hair preached at the *North Shore Church* in Chicago where he served as pastor for 35 years. This address is as timely today as it was on the day he first proclaimed it. —Ed.

Why Did God Create the Devil?

By J. C. O'Hair

God did create the devil, but *not* as he is today. The Bible, which is the Word of God, so states; and that is sufficient and final. Where is the man or woman into whose mind has not come the question, Why?

According to the Bible, the devil is a being, a person, a spirit. He is not a myth. He is a real individual. There is one and only one devil, though there are many demons. He is spoken of as the Serpent, the Dragon, Beelzebub, and Satan. He cannot be described as an evil influence or force. There is only one Book that contains his true history and that Book is the Bible. The devil of the Bible is a personal devil. He is at the head of all evil forces. For all that is in the world which is not of the Father, Satan is responsible directly or indirectly; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. He is likewise the supreme director of all religious systems condemned by the Bible, and many of these systems he carries on in the name of God and Christ. He is a clever counterfeiter.

The devil is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world. One who can deceive the whole world must be very wise and cunning, altogether too much for the genius, strength, and wisdom of any mortal. He is declared to be a slanderer, an adversary seeking whom he may devour, a liar, and a murderer from the beginning. Satan beguiled Eve through his subtlety. The Christian is warned and instructed concerning his devices and wiles, and fiery darts. Only those who are in the safe-keeping of the One who conquered Satan in life and death, protected by the spiritual armour which He provides, can stand against the world ruler of darkness in the heavenlies.

Only the shield of faith will quench his fiery darts. No offensive weapon will prevail against him except the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; "it is written," and continual prayer. Thus fortified against this adversary, the Christian is instructed to resist him steadfastly in the faith.

The devil is the god of this age. He is the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. As the god of this age, he blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto



them. He is the prince of this world, in charge of all of the evil forces, as well as demon spirits. The Man Christ Jesus, by His death, “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil” (Heb. 2:14). And by His death and resurrection, the Son of God “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15).

The most insidious assaults made by Satan against God and His righteousness and His Church are accomplished by transforming himself into an angel of light. He holds such complete sway over his deceived religious subjects that he causes them to pose as servants of Christ, as ministers of righteousness, and sends them forth in the name of Christianity to preach *another* Jesus and *another* gospel. Such are false apostles and deceitful workers, and those who follow their pernicious ways are many. They operate in so-called Christian pulpits (II Cor. 11:13-15).



The devil is responsible for all the sin, sickness, sorrow, suffering, crime, poverty and death on this earth. Everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. Unregenerate men do his bidding. He is worshipped by millions. He uses his damnable religious opiates to deceive many in the lost world. He has the upper hand in society, commerce, politics, education, and religion. The daily newspapers of all lands are almost exclusively under his control. His servants in schools, colleges, and seminaries are damning and blighting most of those who are under their instruction. He has brought sects, divisions, enmity, strife, skepticism, unbelief, and worldliness into the Church of Jesus Christ. The terrible darkness, the awful degradation, the unspeakable depravity of the heathen world is the result of his work. Today more than three-fourths of the world's inhabitants are pagan worshippers, while divorces, violence, lust, covetousness, selfishness, self-righteousness, intellectual and religious pride, suicides, murder, and other crimes characterize the ungodly age, which God designates as this present evil age, even in so-called Christian lands.

Men are truly lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God and evil seducers are waxing worse and worse.

We may summon all the optimism imaginable to make things look bright, but the fact remains that this world is in a sad predicament. The asylums, prisons and hospitals are filled with suffering humanity;



to say nothing of the suffering and dying brute creation. God's Book describes the present order as a groaning creation and plainly states that the whole world lieth in the evil one (Rom. 8:22; I John 5:19). But you say that things have always been this way on this earth. Certainly, only not quite so much of it.

Surely Satan would have everything very much his own way so far as this age is concerned, shall all end today. But the curtain is not going down just yet. This is the day of Satan's power. This is man's day. The age is fast heading toward Satan's man, that lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall consign to the lake of fire when, at His coming, He locks up the devil as His prisoner.

The devil has certainly brought God's creation to a state of chaos and in some cases he has marred the Creator's masterpiece, created in His own image, almost beyond recognition. So far as visible results up to the present moment are concerned, the devil has waged a successful warfare against righteousness and truth, although millions of the human race ruined by his pernicious and fiendish work have been redeemed from his power and curse.



Now back to the question. The mystery is, why would God, who could hinder, defeat and destroy this great enemy, permit him to continue in his treacherous and damnable work? We are surrounded by so many mysteries that we cannot refrain from asking this question many times. Why this world? Why man? What is it all about? Why this groaning, suffering world of creatures? Why is there a devil?

Why has God permitted the devil to rebel, slander and oppose Him all these centuries? God has an ultimate purpose. He surely has a purpose now. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and though we cannot understand His ways which are past finding out, we know Him well enough to know that it is all for the glory of His Son, by whom and for whom all things were created.

The God of the Bible is *omniscient*. Therefore, He knew the end from the beginning. He foresaw this present evil age and knew that violence was going to fill the earth and that man deceived by Satan was going to be plunged into great wickedness. He could have destroyed Satan before he played havoc with His handiwork; but it was not His will to do so. We can only submit to the will of the infallible God, and see through a glass darkly for the present.

God created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9). The Word which became flesh created all things; therefore He must have created the Anointed Cherub, and then became flesh for the purpose of destroying this fallen being and his power over humanity. Lucifer fell because of rebellion and transgression. He fell through pride. He fell from heaven (Luke 10:18; Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-18). He was corrupted by reason of his wisdom and beauty. He was not satisfied with the highest place God could give a heavenly creature. He wanted the Creator's place. He was going to be like the Most High God. The Anointed Cherub was perfect in the day that he was created, and therefore was not created

as a sinful creature. All sin entered through the “I wills” of this being. Again why? Why did not God create him so he could not sin?

We do not know the full history of this wicked one, but we have the record of his origin, course, and destiny. We know that every experience with fallen man with which he is accredited in the Bible corresponds with his dealings with us today, and only those who heed the warnings and take the precautions set forth in that Book can understand his tricks and overcome his power. He was met and conquered in the wilderness by the Son of God, who is the only hope and strength of any individual in his conflict with this mighty foe.

Because the Anointed Cherub in heaven said to God, “I Will,” the true Anointed, God in human form, drank the cup in the Garden when He said, “Thy will be done,” and finished the work at Calvary. Because Lucifer wanted to be like the Most High God, the Most High God has been made in the likeness of sinful man to defeat the fallen one.

Why did not God make man so strong that he could withstand the temptation of the Serpent? We know that had Eve and Adam used the shield of faith and been obedient to His will, sin would never have entered into the world, by Adam. Must we say that God permitted Adam to sin in order that He might carry out His will? While we know that on the Cross, the Son of God was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; that He was slain from before the foundation of the world, yet these words are very plain: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man” (James 1:13; Acts 2:23; I Pet. 1:18-20).



To be sure, it is all a mystery; but in the dispensation of the fulness of times God shall “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in Him” (Eph. 1:10).

Down through the eternal ages God is going to put on exhibition some sinners saved by grace: “That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). The Father has ordained that His well-beloved Son, the Son of His love, should in all things have the preeminence. He is before all things and by Him all things consist. He has been appointed heir of all things. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross. He suffered humiliation, rejection, and death to redeem, by God’s infinite grace, a world of sinners in despair and utter ruin. Nothing but the grace of God can redeem a single member of the human race. There is no cure for man’s spiritual disease except the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. No flesh shall ever glory in God’s presence.

Saved by grace must be the plea of every one who shall enjoy that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.


“They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” That is God’s verdict (Rom. 8:8). Man must be justified without a cause (Rom. 3:24). In the flesh, or in the natural man, there dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18).

Man’s natural righteousness is an offense to God. Self-righteousness is sin and must be pardoned by God’s grace before the individual can be acceptable to God. Grace has been described in many terms, but none of them are adequate to express the full meaning and force of the over-abounding grace of the God of all grace. One writer has defined *grace* as meaning to bestow a valuable gift upon someone who is bankrupt. We often hear the expression: “God helps those who help themselves.” That is not grace. God bestows His divine power upon the impotent and helpless sinner who realizes his own weakness and despair and seeks the mercy, pardon and strength of God. When God, who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith He loved us, forgives and empowers the undeserving sinner through Jesus Christ, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, that is grace. Unmerited favor? Yes and more.

“Grace is for sinners. All are sinners; all need grace. No grace, no salvation; only eternal separation from God.”

Man without a fall, without sin, would not need restoration; therefore, he would not need grace. For His own glory, God permitted the human race to be plunged into spiritual bankruptcy. But His permission relieves neither Satan nor man of responsibility. No sin, no grace. Grace is for sinners. All are sinners; all need grace. No grace, no salvation; only eternal separation from God.

The bankruptcy was brought by Satan. He beguiled Eve through his subtlety. Then Adam sinned, and by one man sin entered into the world, and all have sinned. If Satan had not fallen through sin, man would never have sinned, for he never would have had the suggestion of sin. Man could have remained sinless and righteous, even when tempted by the devil, but he did not. Satan could have remained sinless and obedient, but he did not. God could have created Satan and man so neither could have sinned, but He did not. You may have God’s righteousness as a free gift of His grace and through the Lord Jesus Christ have the divine image restored. Perhaps, you will not? Why not? That’s the question. One answer is, Satan (II Cor. 4:3-4). You will never will to be saved until you have the desire.

If you will fall in with God’s present plan, submit to His will and turn the government of your life over to the Son of God, you will share His glory ages after He has consigned Satan to the lake of fire. Then and only then will He let you into all of the secrets that you need to know, and answer all the whys that He thinks you ought to know. 

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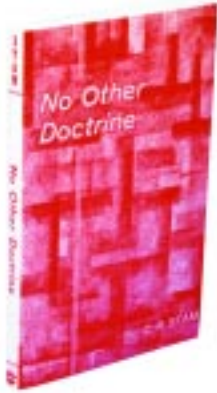
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Filled Full in Christ

By Kevin Mepsted

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

“And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principalities and power.”

—Col. 2:8-10

There are “Christian philosophies” that are still in the church today. Paul was fighting the same philosophies in his day. According to chapter two, there were those who were adding to or taking away from Christ. In verse eight, Paul is telling us not to follow the traditions of man because we are complete in Christ. This would be a great place for a preacher to insert what he thinks the traditions of man are, but there is no need for that, for Paul goes on to tell us the traditions that he is making reference to.

In verses twelve and thirteen, he says we have been circumcised spiritually and baptized spiritually into Christ. There are those who teach that our spiritual circumcision and baptism in Christ is not enough, but Paul calls this “philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of man...and not after Christ” (Ver. 8). Paul says this because we are *complete* in Christ, we cannot add anything to that.

The moment we do, we take away from our completeness and the work that Christ did on the Cross.

By way of illustration, let’s say you had a glass of water and it was filled to the brim and would not hold another drop. Then you tried to put a couple more drops of water in that glass, what would happen? Obviously, it would overflow and spill out. Did you help fill that glass? No, it was already filled; you just made a mess! The same principle applies to the child of God when he tries to add something to his completeness in Christ. You cannot add anything that is going to help add to your completeness that you have in Christ. On the contrary, as soon as you add one drop of water you have overfilled the glass and made a mess of the finished work of Christ, and you have diminished the significance of it.

That is one of the blessings we have living in the dispensation of Grace. We have the freedom and assurance that we are filled full or complete. We cannot do anything, because Christ has done it all. That takes the responsibility off our shoulders and puts the responsibility back where it belongs, on the Lord Jesus Christ. When this truth grips our hearts we are completely free to serve our Lord, because we are complete in Him.

Kevin Mepsted has earned the *Certificate of General Bible Education* from BBI and is currently pastoring the *Community Bible Church* in Lena, Wisconsin. Kevin and his wife, Jenny, have been married for 2 1/2 years and have a son, Josiah.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTHERN REGIONAL MEETINGS: Lord willing, next spring your Editor is planning to hold meetings across the northern tier of states along I-90 ending in Seattle, Washington. If your church or Bible Study would like to be added to the schedule, there are still a few dates open. For those who are interested, please contact David Havard by December 1, 2000.

RELOCATION: We are pleased to announce that the Grace Bible Church has relocated into a newly renovated facility in Altoona, Wisconsin. Your Editor had the distinct honor of delivering the message at their Dedication Service on August 20th. The times of the Sunday services at Grace Bible Church are: 9:30 a.m. Bible School followed by the Worship Hour at 10:30 a.m. The church is located at 320 Division Street, Altoona, Wisconsin 54720 or phone: (715) 552-3456.

For additional information or for times and places of Bible Studies, please contact Rollin E. Wilson, Jr., Pastor at: 12429 66th Ave., Chippewa, WI 54729. Brother Wilson can also be reached by phone: (715) 726-8833 or e-mail: <rwils@nbi-sems.com>. God's very best to these dear folks as they faithfully minister the gospel of the grace of God.

CORRECTION: Last month we announced that a new Grace Bible Study group is now meeting regularly at the home of Mike and Roberta Karnes, 705 Pleasant Point Circle, Cicero, Indiana 46034 (North of Indianapolis). However, apparently we posted an incorrect e-mail address. S-o-o-o, for additional information, please contact: Mr. & Mrs. Michael Karnes: <r.karnes@worldnet.att.net> or phone: (317) 984-4799.

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3. We send receipts and acknowledgments for all gifts. Should you fail to receive a receipt for any gift you send, please inquire to make sure that we have received it. For those who are interested, the Berean Bible Society also provides annual reports for tax purposes upon request.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mrs. Betty France. The lighthouse is located on *Cape Meares* along the Oregon coast.

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