

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2006



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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.

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

Editor: Paul M. Sadler; Assistant Editor: Ricky L. Kurth

Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

Printing: National Graphic Solutions, Appleton, WI

Questions, comments, orders? You can reach us at:

Berean Bible Society
 N112 W17761 Mequon Road
 PO Box 756
 Germantown, WI 53022

Main Office: (262) 255-4750
 Fax Number: (262) 255-4195

Internet: www.bereanbiblesociety.org
 E-mail: berean@execpc.com

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., CST

The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), October 2006. Vol. 67, Number 7.

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



From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

There were many facets of the Apostle Paul's ministry, one of which was traveling from church to church confirming them in the faith that was first delivered to him by the Lord of glory. With God's help, we have sought over the years to follow the apostle's example to encourage our local churches through our BBS conference ministry. I have often said in these types of meetings that it is not our desire to compete with the local assembly, but rather to *compliment* it. We are simply coming alongside to highlight the ministries of our Grace Pastors who have already established their congregations in Paul's gospel.

In our travels, we often hear from saints who tell us that they wish we could hold a conference at their assembly, but they are small and could never afford to cover the expenses of BBS. With this in mind, we'd like to mention that every year we hold one Regional Meeting that is fully funded by BBS. These meetings are held in different parts of the country and provide a great source of fellowship for those of like-precious faith. This is an *outreach* ministry to encourage those who are stranded Grace believers and show our support for our smaller assemblies. Interestingly, the saints who attend these meetings are so grateful that the BBS Board of Directors thought of them, they usually cover most of our expenses when it is all said and done.

If your local assembly would like to help us set up a Regional Meeting in your area we would like to hear from you. Perhaps a number of you gather once a month at a Community Center to hold a Bible study; you, too, may want to consider helping us in this outreach. Here's another suggestion: If there are a cluster of smaller Grace Churches in a particular part of your state that are amiable, we would be willing to consider spending enough time to visit and preach at each assembly.

Normally, we complete our speaking schedule for the following year shortly after *Thanksgiving*. If you are interested in having a Regional Meeting in your area, or an itinerate ministry to a group of local assemblies, we would be more than happy to take it into consideration. Please remember, the 2007 conference schedule will be finalized by the end of this year. We hope to hear from you! In the meantime, God's very best as you faithfully share the riches of His grace.

Yours in His service,
Paul M. Sadler, President

A Compelling Reason

“I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing” (II Cor. 12:11).

The Apostle Paul did not like to “glory” or *boast* about his apostleship. He would much rather spend his time teaching the great truths of the Mystery, and the Word of God, rightly divided. However, the immaturity of the Corinthians “*compelled*” him to such boasting. They were so impressed with the boasting of the “false apostles” (11:13) that Paul was forced to speak to them in the only language they seemed to understand—that of *boasting*.

Grace believers are often accused of boasting too much about the apostleship of Paul, and to this we plead guilty. We too would much rather spend our time teaching the great truths of the Word of God, rightly divided. However, the sorry state of modern Christianity is such that we too are “*compelled*” to boast about Paul’s apostleship. The immaturity of contemporary Christianity has caused them to overlook Paul as “*the apostle of the Gentiles*” (Rom. 11:13), and presents us with a *compelling reason* to emphasize his apostleship.

Paul found the Corinthian situation especially disappointing, since as he told them, “*I ought to have been commended of you.*” As the one who had begotten them in the gospel (I Cor. 4:15), they should have been singing the praises of his apostleship, instead of forcing him to defend it. And so it is today. All who are saved in the dispensation of Grace are saved by grace through faith apart from works (Eph. 2:8,9), a gospel that is *exclusive* to the Apostle Paul. And so in a very real sense, all who are saved today are begotten of the Apostle Paul, and should be singing the praises of his apostleship, instead of forcing us to defend it.

The false apostles in Corinth were probably protesting, “Why, Paul isn’t even one of the twelve apostles! We have as much authority as he has!” This forced Paul to declare that he was “*not a whit behind*” the very chiefest apostles, i.e., James, Peter and John. But if Paul only claimed he wasn’t “behind” the twelve apostles, why do we insist on emphasizing his epistles *ahead* of the epistles of James, Peter and John?

Ah, Paul’s apostleship was *equal* to theirs, but he was the apostle of *a different group of people*. As he told the Galatians, “He that wrought effectually in Peter *to the apostleship of the circumcision*, the same was mighty in me *toward the Gentiles*” (2:8). All state governors are equal in authority; no governor is a whit behind any other. However, if I am wise, I must recognize the authority of the governor of *my* state. And if we are wise as Christians, we must likewise recognize the authority of “*the apostle of the Gentiles.*”

—Pastor Kurth

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 1:1-3

By Paul M. Sadler

“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”
—Phil. 1:1

A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

When Paul penned these words to the saints at Philippi he was sitting in a Roman prison waiting for a ruling on whether he would live or die. The apostle's life was precariously hanging in the balance for the sake of the gospel, as noted in his desire that Christ might be magnified in his body, “whether it be by life, or by death” (Phil. 1:20). This is a clear indication that the circumstances regarding his incarceration had *changed* dramatically.

Upon arriving at Rome the apostle was given a degree of liberty to come and go as he pleased while he pleaded his case, but contrary winds unexpectedly arose, placing his very life in jeopardy

(Acts 28:30 cf. Phil. 2:17). Apparently the charge of defiling the Jewish temple was weak, at best, as far as Rome was concerned. Therefore, the Jews who accused him must have gone back to the accusation that Paul was the ringleader of an *insurrection* and crimes against the state. This was one of the three original false charges leveled against him at Caesarea, which the enemies of the gospel thought they could use against him more effectively at the throne of Caesar (Acts 24:5,6,12,13,18).

Of course, anyone who caused an uprising against Rome found himself staring into the face of death—a case in point would be Barabbas (Mark 15:6,7). These were serious charges that placed the apostle's life in peril, but his total reliance on the Savior enabled him to say: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Beloved ones, you, too, can weather the storm, if

your life, like Paul's, is centered in Christ.

THE DATE AND OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE

Paul's epistles are divided into two parts, which helps us to distinguish between his early and latter ministries. The pre-prison epistles of I & II Thessalonians, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans were written to the Church, the Body of Christ, during the Acts period. During the apostle's first Roman imprisonment, which marks the beginning of his latter ministry, he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Hebrews. Paul's letters to Timothy (I Timothy) and Titus were penned between his two Roman imprisonments when he was set free for a period of about one year (Titus 1:5 cf. 3:12; II Tim. 4:20). The apostle's second letter to Timothy was written at the end of his second Roman imprisonment just shortly before his martyrdom. The epistle to the Philippians then was written around 64 A.D. during the apostle's first Roman imprisonment.

There are three epistles that Paul wrote after the Acts period that form a trilogy of truth—Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. The letter to the Ephesians unfolds the truth of the Body of Christ and our relationship to Him as the Head of the Body (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:12,13). Philippians on the other hand emphasizes our fellowship with one another as members of His Body (Phil. 2:2-4). Finally, Colossians presents the Headship of Christ and His

relationship to the Body (Col. 1:18-24). When this trilogy of truth is understood it will help us to more fully comprehend the *occasion* and *theme* of the letter.

There were three reasons the apostle was writing to the church at Philippi at this time. First, Paul wanted to convey his *gratitude* for their fellowship in the gospel, especially in regard to their generous support. Time and time again these saints had given sacrificially to the Lord's work, in spite of their poverty stricken condition (II Cor. 8:1-6). When other Grace Assemblies failed to support Paul financially, the Philippians stood in the gap and came to his aid.

“We can either *choose* to grovel in our own self-pity or *rejoice* in whatever state we may find ourselves.”

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now....Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity” (Phil. 1:3-5; 4:15,16).

While the apostle was enduring a terrible hardship at the time, he had a thankful heart, something

we would all do well to remember. As it has been correctly said, “thanksgiving requires the recognition of the source.” Thus, Paul thanked God who was the source of this *physical* blessing and expressed his gratitude to the saints at Philippi through whom God had supplied his need. As believers in Christ we are to give thanks in everything, even for *fleas*.

Corrie ten Boom in *The Hiding Place* relates an incident that taught her always to be thankful. She and her sister, Betsy, had just been transferred to the worst German prison camp they had seen, Ravensbruck. On entering the barracks, they found them extremely overcrowded and flea-infested.

That morning, their Scripture reading in I Thessalonians had reminded them to rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances. Betsy told Corrie to stop and thank the Lord for every detail of their new living quarters. Corrie at first flatly refused to give thanks for the fleas, but Betsy persisted, and Corrie finally yielded to her pleadings. During the months spent at the camp, they were surprised to find how openly they could hold Bible study and prayer meetings without guard interference. It was not until several months later that they learned the reason the guards would not enter the barracks was because of the fleas.¹

Second, Paul took the occasion to acknowledge the *suffering* these saints were encountering for the cause of Christ. “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not

only to believe on him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1:29). These believers could identify with Paul’s distress seeing that he, like they, stood in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. On the other hand, the apostle could sympathize with them as they suffered at the hands of numerous adversaries because they named the name of Christ (Phil. 1:28,29).

As we noted in our first lesson, Philippi was a corrupt Roman colony that had an undying allegiance to Caesar. By the time of this writing, Nero was considered a god throughout the empire. The residents of Philippi would have commonly referred to him as *savior* and *lord* at public events, an honor this tyrannical ruler most gladly received. Of course, the saints at Philippi believed that Christ was the true and living God; consequently, they were unwilling to pay homage to the emperor. Their refusal to call Caesar by the titles of *lord* and *savior* would have brought the wrath of the citizenry, and perhaps even Rome itself, upon these believers. As heavenly citizens, the loyalty of these dear saints at Philippi was to the Lord of heaven—He is Lord. The glorification of the Caesars could well have prompted Paul to remind believers, who suffer for His name’s sake, of the coming *universal subjugation* of all unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment. In that day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ *is Lord* to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10,11).

Thirdly, the apostle took the opportunity to address the *unrest* that had arisen within the assembly among some of the brethren. Although this hadn't deteriorated to the point of major divisions such as we witness at Corinth, the possibility for this was undoubtedly a concern in the mind of Paul. This is confirmed by the apostle's challenge to be "likeminded," and to have the "same love" toward one another (Phil. 2:2). It is further substantiated by his admonitions to, "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory" (2:3), and to "do all things without murmurings and disputings" (2:14). (See also Phil. 4:2).

The frequent use of the word "all" in the epistle, which one author calls "a studied repetition," shows us it was the Lord's will that there be *unity* among them for the sake of the gospel. These internal disturbances had the potential of disrupting their fellowship with one another and destroying their testimony with those outside of the assembly. Many years ago I was speaking to an unbeliever about the things of the Lord when the name of a particular church inadvertently came up, to which he responded: "Oh, that church, you mean the one where they fight like cats and dogs!" All the tea in China wouldn't have convinced him that the problems had been resolved and he should consider attending some Sunday. Sadly, in his mind those Christians were *fighting again!*

There also seems to have been a group within the assembly at Philippi that had the view that



they had *arrived* spiritually (Phil. 3:15). Paul uses his own Christian experience to let the wind out of the sails of those who thought they had attained to a state of perfection, that is, that they were complete for all practical purposes. The apostle shares these insightful words with those who thought too highly of themselves: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [complete]: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended..." (Phil. 3:12,13). After thirty years of faithfully preaching and studying the Word of God, Paul makes it perfectly clear that he himself had *not* attained, and he was the Apostle of the Gentiles who spoke face to face with the Lord of glory.

THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE

With so many general themes running through the Philippian letter, most commentators seem to struggle to assign a primary topic. After much consideration of

the matter, we believe the *Christ-centered life* was the intended theme of the letter, which, as we will see, is highlighted in each chapter.

Chapter One:

“For to me to live is *Christ*, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

Chapter Two:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in *Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 2:3-5).

Chapter Three:

“That I may know *Him [Christ]*, and the power of *His* resurrection, and the fellowship of *His* sufferings, being made conformable unto *His* death” (Phil. 3:10).

Chapter Four:

“I can do all things through *Christ* which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

While the apostle makes frequent references to “joy” in the epistle we feel it is a sub-theme to the Christ-centered life. We have chosen this order simply because “joy” is a fruit of our relationship with Christ. Here it is important to carefully distinguish between “joy” and “happiness.” Happiness is always a product of your circumstances. For example, if you receive an unexpected bonus at the end of the year for a job well done, you’re ecstatic or *happy*! Two months later when you are informed that your position is being phased out and you will need to find a new job, you suddenly find yourself devastated or *unhappy*.

Interestingly the believer in Christ can have *joy* in spite of the circumstances. Paul is a good example; he was sitting in a Roman prison cell facing death, and to add

insult to injury, there were those envious of him that hoped to add affliction to his bonds, yet through it all he *rejoiced*. He writes: “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.” Some believers when faced with adversity have trouble getting beyond the question, *why me?* They become so bitter that it spiritually disables them in their Christian life. Oftentimes they blame God for their poor decisions.

We can either *choose* to grovel in our own self-pity or *rejoice* in whatever state we may find ourselves. You see, joy flows from our confidence in God that He is working all things out according to the counsel of His will. If we are living a Christ-centered life we, too, can have an attitude of joy like the apostle, because we understand God is sovereign and in control of all things (Phil. 4:4-7). Another saint who applied this principle to her life was Fanny Crosby, who was left blind at the hands of an incompetent doctor when she was just six weeks old. She could have become bitter in her early years, but she chose to rejoice in the Lord regardless of her adversity. In her own words, she said concerning her blindness:

“It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.”

The following biographical sketch is a touching tribute of her life that there is *joy* in serving Jesus.

Tell Me the Story of Jesus

The next time you sing an old, familiar hymn, look at the small print at the bottom of the page, and you probably will read the name of Fanny Crosby. Throughout her long career, she wrote more than 8,500 gospel songs and hymns, many of which are still popular today. “To God Be the Glory,” “Praise Him, Praise Him,” “Tell Me the Story of Jesus,” “I Am Thine O Lord”—every song is a testimony of her love for Jesus Christ.

However, this gifted poet, who described her salvation experience as a “floodtide of celestial light,” could not actually see light. In May of 1820, when she was six weeks old, she caught a cold, and her eyes became slightly inflamed. The regular physician in Putnam County, New York, was out of town, and a man posing as a doctor gave her the wrong treatment. Within days, her eyesight was destroyed, and the man fled town in a panic. Fanny was never bitter about the stranger’s intervention. “I have not for a moment in more than eighty-five years felt a spark of resentment against him, because I have always believed...that the good Lord...by this means consecrated me to the work that I am still permitted to do.”



Fanny Crosby

Her devoted Christian parents raised Fanny to be a confident, happy child. She dressed herself, did her own hair, and had impeccable table manners. Known for being a mischief, Fanny spent as much time as possible climbing trees, riding horses, and playing practical jokes on her many friends. One of the strongest influences in Fanny’s childhood was her grandmother. An intelligent and patient woman, she took Fanny on nature walks, describing every bud and leaf in meticulous detail. She exposed her to great literature and poetry. Most importantly, she read her long passages from the Bible every day.

Even with such attentive teaching, Fanny’s thirst for knowledge was not satisfied; her mind was phenomenal. Before she was ten years old, she had memorized most of the New Testament and more than five books of the Old Testament. However, since schools at that time were not equipped to teach blind children, she was unable to receive a regular education. Fanny knelt with her grandmother beside her rocker and prayed: “Dear Lord, please show me how I can learn like other children.” It wasn’t long before her mother gave her the exciting news about an opportunity to attend the *New York Institute for the Blind*. Within the year, she was their best student and after graduation became a teacher. As she grew, poetry became her passion, and she filled every spare moment with writing verse. By the time Fanny was twenty, she was famous throughout New

York and a sought-after speaker for poetry recitations and official ceremonies.

In spite of this popularity, she still felt something was missing from her life, and it took a severe cholera epidemic in 1849 to show her what that was. More than half of the students at the Institute died, one of them in her arms. After helping to nurse the sick for months, she almost succumbed to the disease herself and fled to the country. The deaths of those close to her shook Fanny greatly. Deep in her heart, she knew she was not ready to die. On November 20, 1850, Fanny knelt at the altar at a local revival and gave her heart to Jesus. Biographer Basil Miller tells her response: “For the first time I realized that I had been trying to hold the world in one hand and the Lord in the other,” she said. Finally, the God of her grandmother had become real to her.

Her poetry immediately reflected this change in her heart, and songs of praise took the place of regular poems. When she met the Christian composer William Bradbury in 1864, the friendship was almost instantaneous. Bradbury furnished the tunes for many of Fanny’s hymns; and though she worked with several composers, their partnership was the most enduring.

Fanny usually composed dozens of songs in her head before dictating them to a secretary, but no matter what she created, she used the same approach. The book *More Than Conquerors* tells what she said about her method: “It may

seem a little old-fashioned, always to begin one’s work with prayer, but I never undertake a hymn without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration.”

She had more speaking invitations than she could keep, and famous men such as President Polk called on her often. With so many friends and associates, she was never lonely. Then in 1858, God brought a special man into her life, the blind musician Alexander Van Alstyne. They were married forty-four years and had one child, who died in infancy. Even in her later years, Fanny stayed as busy as ever, and not just with song writing. Always on her heart were those less fortunate, and she volunteered much time at local ministries. Whenever someone approached her with a question or need, she witnessed to them one-on-one and shared the light of God’s Word.

Fanny died peacefully in her home in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on February 12, 1915. The crowds at her funeral were a testimony to the wide-spread influence she had for the Lord. These words from one of her final hymns express the foremost hope of her life: “And I shall see Him face to face and tell the story—saved by grace.”²

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Michael P. Green, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, pages 376,377.
2. IN TOUCH® Copyright © 1995-2005 *In Touch Ministries*®, ITM, Inc., Atlanta, GA, used with permission. All rights reserved. This content and more resources can be found on www.intouch.org.

Question Box

“What do you believe about mercy killing?”

While we are not unsympathetic toward those whose suffering is prompting them to consider assisted suicide, we believe euthanasia is wrong, whether accomplished by withholding nourishment or through the application of deadly medication.

When Saul was “sore wounded,” he asked his armour-bearer to slay him, lest the enemy come and “abuse” him (I Sam. 31:1-4). In other words, he asked him to assist in his suicide, to save him from a slow and painful death. However, his armour-bearer was rightly “sore afraid” to comply, as we all should be when asked to assist in someone’s suicide. Saul then took his own life.

Later, an Amalekite lied and claimed he had assisted Saul in taking his life, thinking David would reward him (II Sam. 1:1-10). But David commanded he be executed for not being “afraid” to slay Saul (v. 13-16). Thus we know it is *not* permissible with God to end someone’s suffering by euthanasia. God considers it a crime punishable by death, the Bible punishment for *murder* (Gen. 9:6), clearly implying that *mercy-killing is murder*.

Those who argue we have a right to do what we want with our own body when it comes to euthanasia sound eerily like those who champion abortion rights. But for the Christian, I Corinthians 6:19,20 declare that Christians do *not* have a right to do what we want with our bodies, for “ye are not your own,” but “God’s.”

Paul says when we “groan within ourselves” (Rom. 8:23), it should cause us to be “waiting for...the redemption of our body (v. 23), i.e., the Rapture. If we “with patience wait for it” (v. 25) in the final days of a long and protracted illness, our life can be a testimony that literally *screams* to the unbeliever that we have something they don’t have. However, if we *impatiently* end our suffering by our own hand, or by the hand of an assistant, we rob God of what is often the most powerful testimony of our lives.

We are sometimes asked about cases where a patient is terminal, with nothing to look forward to but a slow, agonizing death. While people in such cases have our deepest sympathy, we must insist that the Bible is right in this area, as in all others. May God help all of us to fortify our souls with the nourishment of God’s Word, so that if called upon to endure a long and protracted death, we will be able to say with Paul that His grace is sufficient (II Cor. 12:9). —Pastor Kurth

The following is the first of a series of articles drawn from Pastor Stam's book, *Our Great Commission, What Is It?* Since this book never appeared as a series in the *Searchlight*, many of even our long-time readers may not be familiar with these selections.

Our Great Commission

By C. R. Stam

OUR
GREAT
COMMISSION



What is it?

INTRODUCTION

At a panel discussion on *Dispensationalism* held at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, in 1947, the author made reference to “the *so-called* great commission.”

One of the other panel members challenged this terminology, stating that the commission to the eleven *was* “the great commission,” *not* “the *so-called* great commission.”

In our response we insisted that this commission *was* the *so-called* “great commission,” reminding our hearers that the Word of God does not call it “the great commission”; *men* do.

This obvious and important fact should be borne in mind by those who earnestly desire to “rightly divide the Word of truth” and carry out intelligently God’s program *for us today*. Such a recognition would be the first step in the discovery of the root cause of the doctrinal divisions that have separated true believers in Christ

and have gripped the Church in deep confusion which it does not seem possible, otherwise, to dispel.

The commission which our Lord gave to the eleven (later twelve) has so long been called “the great commission” that multitudes of sincere believers have a hazy notion that the Bible designates it thus. The fact is, however, that this designation merely reflects traditional views and, as in our Lord’s day, “the traditions of men” all too often “make void the Word of God.”

Granted, our Lord’s commission to the eleven was indeed a great commission, but it should never be called “the great commission,” for the ascended Lord later committed a greater, a far greater, message and ministry to the Apostle Paul.

Unless we recognize a change in dispensation with the raising up of Paul, that *other* apostle, the commission to the eleven must

stand as an irreconcilable contradiction to the great doctrines of the Pauline epistles—and *vice versa*.

It should be noted throughout this study that the Scriptural term “the eleven” is used only with regard to the period between Judas’ defection and death and the appointment of Matthias to take his place. Here, however, a note in the *Scofield Reference Bible* rightly defines the identification as “a collective term, equivalent to ‘The Sanhedrin,’ ‘The Commons,’ not necessarily implying that eleven persons were present. See Luke 24:33, I Corinthians 15:5; and cf. Matthew 28:16, where ‘eleven disciples’ implies a definite number of persons.”

“...the Word of God does not call it ‘the great commission’; men do.”

We know, however, that in Acts 1 the number of the apostles is again brought up to twelve. Thus when we refer to the *giving* of the commission, in this volume, we will designate this group as “the eleven,” but when we refer to the *carrying out* of the commission in early Acts we will refer to the same company as “the twelve.”

Finally, it should be noted that throughout this volume we designate Bible-believing Christians as *fundamentalists* rather than *evangelicals*. The rise of the new evangelicalism has caused many

sincere believers to refer to themselves as *evangelicals*, but we feel that this term is vague and indefinite, while the term *fundamentalist* historically refers to those who stand for the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

OUR LORD’S PARTING COMMISSION TO HIS ELEVEN APOSTLES

A Thorough Examination

Before going into any consideration of the so-called “great commission,” we respectfully request the reader to examine, thoughtfully and prayerfully, all five segments of it, as quoted below from the *King James Version* of the Bible. Yes, you have read all of these passages before, but *read them again*. This time you may see things you’ve never seen before.

Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Mark 16:15-18

“And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

“And these things shall follow them that believe: In My name

shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

“They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Luke 24:45-48

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

“And ye are witnesses of these things.”

John 20:21-23

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.

“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

Acts 1:8,9

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Since the subject of our God-given commission is so profoundly important, and since one or more of the passages quoted above are generally considered to be *our* great commission, we suggest that it would not be a waste of time for the reader to turn back and read these five passages again, this time noting carefully just what they say and what they do not say.

Does the passage being read refer to prophecy and the law? What are the terms of salvation? What were to be the evidences of salvation? Does it teach “no difference” between Jew and Gentile? Does it mention salvation by grace, through faith, on the basis of the shed blood of Christ? Does it mention the “one baptism” by which we are baptized into “one body,” and made one with Christ? Does it proclaim a heavenly position and prospect for those who believe? Does it mention “the mystery” so often referred to in Paul’s epistles?

Such an examination of the record itself may prove to be a real eye-opener entirely apart from our interpretations as presented in this volume.

To Be Continued!



If Pastor Stam has piqued your interest, and you just can’t wait to read his insight into this important subject, see Page 28 for a special offer that will help make *Our Great Commission* an integral part of your Christian library.

Buckeye State Meetings

Dates: Sunday, October 22, 2006

Location: *Grace Bible Ministries*
120 Woodbine Avenue
East Liverpool, Ohio

Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For additional information, please contact:
Pastor Tom Schneidmiller
Church: (330) 385-3777 / Home: (330) 368-0134

Keystone State Meetings

Dates: October 28-29, 2006

Location: *Grace Family Bible Church*
2243 Mill Road
Duncansville, Pennsylvania

Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For additional information, please contact:
Pastor James Zaebst at (814) 696-4366

A Wise Old Farmer

“I see that at your church convention,” said the farmer to the pastor, “you discussed the subject: *How to Get People to Attend Church*. I have never heard of a single address at a farmers’ convention on how to get cattle to come to the feeding trough. We spend our time discussing the best kind of feed.”

It has been our experience that the Lord’s people want to hear the sound preaching of the Word, not promotional gimmicks that tickle the ears of the hearers. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the *Word of His grace*, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

—Pastor Sadler



Grace for a Restless Apostle

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(From a message given at the 38th annual Bible conference
of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*, June 18th, 2006)

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

“I had *no rest* in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia” (II Cor. 2:12,13).

Paul speaks here of the *serious* effect it had on him when he was deprived of the fellowship of his friend Titus. He begins with the word “*furthermore*” because fellowship was *also* the subject of the preceding context, although this is not readily apparent. Let’s begin by backing up to determine what this “*furthermore*” is there for.

After Paul had advised the Corinthians to break fellowship with the fornicator in their midst in I Corinthians 5, he was delighted to hear that they had followed his instructions. However, he was now dismayed to learn that they were refusing to *restore* fellowship to the man after he repented! And so Paul says to them,

“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (v. 6,7).

The reason Paul urged them to re-admit the man into their assembly was because he knew that the man needed their fellowship—and they needed his. Paul knew that *fellowship is important*, and to show these Corinthians just how important it was, he begins our text by saying, as it were, “*Furthermore, even I Paul need fellowship.*” He then went on to describe how he had “*no rest*” apart from the fellowship of Titus.

And so we begin this message with a few words about the importance of simply *going to church*.

Grace believers know that the Apostle Paul never commands us to go to church. Even if you believe that Paul wrote Hebrews, the admonition we read in Hebrews 10:25 is not in the imperative mood in the Greek text, and so is not a command. But while Paul never commands us to go to church, he *assumes* that we will *want* to attend church regularly. He says in I Corinthians 11:18:

“For first of all, *when ye come together in the church....*”

Do you see how Paul just assumes that *even the carnal Corinthians* will gather together regularly with other saints to study God’s Word, to sing His praises, and to fellowship with one another? Surely if even the great Apostle Paul needed fellowship, it is certain that we need it too!

Perhaps the reader is thinking, “Pastor, you don’t understand. My church is filled with difficult people, with whom I find it hard to get along.” All the more reason to go to church! We can never learn to demonstrate the grace of God in our lives without difficult people to be gracious *to!* Where better than the local church to learn to display the same mercy, longsuffering and grace that God extends to *us* when we grieve *Him*.



And aren’t these the greatest of God’s attributes? Don’t you *want* opportunities to display the mercy, longsuffering and grace of God in your life, and in so doing testify to what He has done in your life? When it comes right down to it, these grand attributes are actually the *only* attributes of God that we *can* display. Not a one of us can display God’s omniscience, His omnipotence or His omnipresence, but all of us can learn to exhibit His *grace*. But not without difficult people to be gracious *to!*

The absence of the fellowship of Titus so affected Paul that he didn’t enter an open door of opportunity to preach the gospel. This is the *only* time we read that Paul failed to enter an open door. Why would God allow this dark blot on Paul’s otherwise unimpeachable record if not to teach us the importance of *fellowship*. Take some time to read the stirring list of things that Paul endured in the ministry in II Corinthians 11:23-33. As you read each item in this poignant register, remind yourself that the *beatings* that Paul endured didn’t stop him from entering open doors, the *stonings* didn’t stop him, the *shipwrecks* didn’t stop him—NOTHING stopped him. But a simple lack of fellowship stopped him *dead in his tracks*.

And it might stop your pastor also. Thus one of the simplest ways you can support the teaching of God's Word in your area is to simply go to church. You don't want to have to explain at the Judgment Seat of Christ how you allowed the light of the gospel to be *snuffed out* in your area because your pastor was deprived of your fellowship and support.

Now, careful students of Scripture might object that the real reason for Paul's discouragement was his concern over the response of the Corinthians to his first letter to them, an epistle that contained some sharp reproof. Thus when Titus failed to appear with news of their reaction, it was *this* that caused Paul to pass on entering the open door. We agree that this was *part* of the reason for Paul's disheartenment, for later in this epistle, he states:

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had *no rest*, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

"Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

"And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (II Cor. 7:5-7).

Here it cannot be denied that part of the reason for Paul's unrest was due to his concern over the Corinthian reaction to his first epistle, and the absence of news about this that he expected Titus to bring. But when Paul says that he was comforted "by the coming of Titus, and not by his coming *only*," we must conclude that he was adversely affected by *both* the absence of the fellowship of Titus and the report that Paul expected he would bring.

This brings up another very practical point. Perhaps Paul would have entered the open door had he not been burdened with concern over the Corinthian reaction to his reproof. Obviously, this concern diverted Paul from furthering the gospel through that open door. With this in mind, how it behooves us to conduct ourselves in the local church in such a way that our pastors can give themselves to the ministry, and not be distracted by concerns over disobedience in the church.

Before we move on in our text, we want to share one more thought about "open doors." It is said that God never closes a door without opening a window. While this is not a quotation from Scripture, it was surely true in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul was later imprisoned by the Roman government, but as the prison door closed on his freedom, a window of opportunity opened for him to share the gospel with members of Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22). You see, Paul was incarcerated in a sort-of "white collar prison" located right in Caesar's

“palace” (Phil. 1:13), giving him access to members of the royal family, some of whom had come to know the Lord!

If the reader is wondering whether God is still actively opening such doors of opportunity in our lives, it should be noted that Paul speaks of this very thing in Colossians 4:2,3, a prison epistle that was penned after the close of the transition period in the Book of Acts. In fact, he asks for prayer in this late epistle that God would *continue* to open such doors, indicating that this would continue to be the norm throughout the duration of the dispensation of Grace. May we be faithful to enter such open doors at every opportunity!

In light of Paul’s failure to enter an open door, it is intriguing to hear him speak of *triumph* in the next verse of our text:

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place” (II Cor. 2:14).

While Paul had failed to enter a door of opportunity to serve the Lord, God was still able to cause him to triumph in Christ, because wherever Paul went *instead* of entering that open door, he faithfully made manifest the savour of His knowledge.

“We can never learn to demonstrate the grace of God in our lives without difficult people to be gracious to!”

Perhaps the reader of this page is haunted by the memory of a similar open door that you too failed to enter years ago. May I say unto you by the authority of the Word of God that your life needn’t be filled with spiritual regret over this. God can cause *you too* to triumph in Christ if, like Paul, you too are faithfully making manifest the savour of His knowledge wherever it is that life has led you instead.

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (II Cor. 2:15).

In spite of Paul’s failure, we read that his life was still a sweet savor to God. We believe that this was because of the Biblical significance of the phrase “sweet savour.” This phrase is used forty-three times in Scripture, and almost always refers to the burnt-offering of an animal sacrifice. Notice the significant first use of this phrase in Genesis 8:20,21:

“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.

“And the Lord smelled a sweet savour....”

The reason the burnt-offering was a sweet savour to God was because it foreshadowed the sacrifice of *Christ*, which is also described as a sweetsmelling savour:

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph. 5:2).

We believe that the sacrifice of Christ Himself was a burnt-offering. Throughout the Old Testament, God showed that He was pleased with an offering made unto Him when He answered by *fire* (Lev. 9:24; I Kings 18:24,38; I Chron. 21:26; II Chron. 7:1). And so it was that on Calvary, unseen to human eyes, the fire of God’s wrath fell on our Saviour, causing him to “thirst” (John 19:28), just like the rich man in hell (Luke 16:24), who was also experiencing the wrath of God. Thus there can be no question that God was pleased with the sacrifice of our Lord, the ultimate burnt-offering, and accepted it by fire.

But there were times in Israel’s past when God refused to smell her burnt-offerings. For instance, in Amos 5:21,22 we read:

“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

“Though ye offer Me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.”

Why would God refuse to smell something that reminded Him of the coming sacrifice of Christ? Why did He *accept* the burnt-offering of Noah and *refuse* the burnt-offerings of Israel in the days of Amos the prophet? What had changed? Ah, *the Law* had entered! The Law of Moses was a system of conditional blessing, which stipulated that when Israel was good, God would bless them, but when they were bad, He would curse them (Lev. 26).

We know that Israel was bad in Amos’ day since God speaks to Israel of “*your* feast days” and “*your* solemn assemblies.” When God gave these feasts to Israel, He called them “the feasts of *the Lord*” (Lev. 23:2,4,37,44), but when they were living in rebellion against Him, God took His name off of these feasts and contemptuously called them “*your feasts*.” This is similar to how in the beginning of the Lord’s earthly ministry, He called the temple “My Father’s house” (John 2:16), but by the end of His ministry He called it “*your* house” (Matt. 23:38) because of their sin and rebellion. And so, since Israel was under the Law, it is not surprising to read that God would refuse to smell their sweetsmelling burnt-offerings in the sinful days of Amos.

But now let’s make a comparison of all this to how things work under Grace. For this, of course, we will need to turn to the epistles of Paul, the apostle of grace, and in particular to Paul’s epistle to the Philippians.

The Philippians weren't offering *animal* sacrifices, of course, but we believe them to be the Macedonians whom Paul said gave *sacrificially* to the poor saints at Jerusalem (II Cor. 8:1-5; Rom. 15:26), and then proceeded to give *sacrificially* to the Apostle Paul:

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18).

Here we see that the sacrifice made by the Philippians smelled good to God, and was acceptable to Him. If the Philippians were under the Law, we would have to conclude from this that they had been good, and that this was why God did not reject their sacrifice, as He did with Israel's sacrifices in the days of Amos. However, when we examine the epistle to the Philippians we find evidence to the contrary.

We believe Philippians is an epistle of *reproof*. Paul tells us all Scripture is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction” (II Tim. 3:16), and his epistles appear in our Bibles in this very order. Romans is an epistle of *doctrine*, setting forth the doctrine of our salvation from sin, and how we should *live* in such a way that *demonstrates* we are free from sin. The Corinthian epistles that follow Romans are letters of *reproof*. Reproof was what was needed when the carnal Corinthians didn't live in accordance with the doctrine set forth in Romans. Galatians comes next, and is a letter of *correction*. Correction is what the Galatians needed since they weren't *thinking* clearly about the doctrine set forth in Romans. With Ephesians, the cycle begins again, as this great epistle sets forth the doctrine of the oneness of the Body of Christ.

Philippians then was a letter of reproof, written to people who weren't acting in accord with this Ephesian doctrine of our oneness in Christ. What evidence do we have of this? In Philippians 4:2, we read:

“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Here we have confirmation that two of the ladies in the Philippian church were having a feud, and throughout the epistle we see indications that the church was divided, some siding with Euodias, and some with Syntyche. Paul's frequent use of the word “all” in this epistle (1:1,4,7,8,25; 2:17; 4:23) shows that he refused to take sides in this quarrel, but rather loved and prayed for them *all*, and begged that they would live as “one” (1:27; 2:2).

But in light of this discord, how could God *accept* the sacrifice of these disobedient people? What had changed since His refusal to accept Israel's sacrifice under Amos the prophet? Ah, *Grace* had now entered! Grace is a system of *unconditional acceptance*, and God is pleased to accept all sacrifices made to Him regardless of our spiritual condition. There is even a play on words in the Greek text, for the word for “sweet smell” (Phil. 4:18) is *euodia*. Euodias should not

have smelled sweet to God because of her disobedience, but *she did under Grace!* Likewise the sacrifice of the Philippians should not have smelled sweet to God, but *it did under Grace!*

Having said that, this unconditional acceptance God gives us under Grace should never be viewed as a license to sin. Make no mistake about it, sin *grieves* the heart of a holy God (Eph. 4:30). But it should encourage the heart of every believer to know that every sacrifice we make for Him is *accepted* of Him. What a motivation to live sacrificially for the One who sacrificed Himself for us on Calvary's tree.

Now we come to a very sobering part of our text, for Paul has told us that we are a sweet savour to God "in them that are saved, and in them that perish" (II Cor. 2:15).

"To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life..." (v. 16).

When we make manifest the savour of His knowledge and someone *believes*, we are of course a sweet savour to God. But when we make manifest the savour of His knowledge and someone does *not* believe, we are likewise a sweet savour to God. We see this exemplified in our Lord's testimony to the two thieves with whom He died. One believed on Him while the other did not, but who can deny that He was a sweet savour to God in both cases. Hebrews 4:16 compares the Word of God to a "two-edged sword," a weapon that *cuts both ways*. The same sun that causes the crops to grow can also ignite destructive wildfires that can devastate the countryside, but God is always pleased with the sun. And when we faithfully present the Son of God, He is always pleased with our sweet savour, regardless of whether the results be eternal life or eternal destruction.



Paul closes this passage with a haunting question:

"...and who is sufficient for these things?" (II Cor. 2:16).

Who is sufficient, i.e., who can be trusted with these issues of eternal life and eternal death? Obviously, the Lord proved sufficient for these things as He hung between the thieves. But *we too* are sufficient for these things if we faithfully make manifest the savour of His knowledge!


This writer never wanted to be a doctor; I never wanted to have human life dependent on *my* ability to preserve it. If the reader is thinking, "But Pastor, you became a *minister*, and people's *eternal* lives depend on you," *think again!* Paul says of *the gospel* that "IT is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The eternal destiny of men depends upon *the gospel*, not on our ability to present it. All we have to do is hold it forth, and we are "sufficient for these things."

That is, *if* we do not *corrupt* the Word of God. Paul says that he and his co-workers were sufficient for these things,

“FOR we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (II Cor. 2:17).

Who would want to corrupt the Word? Unscrupulous men who are more interested in *personal* triumph than allowing God to cause them to “triumph *in Christ*.”

We all receive junk mail, Christians receive Christian junk mail, and pastors receive pastoral junk mail. This writer receives plenty of the latter, all of it promoting ways to build a bigger church. None of these ways ever involve preaching the pure, unadulterated gospel of the grace of God, or teaching God’s Word, rightly divided. But it is only in the measure that we are faithful in these areas that we are sufficient to be entrusted with issues of eternal life.

In the ’60s, the militant anti-government protestors became aware that the TV news cameras were broadcasting their protest meetings to the world, and so at one point they broke into a chant that soon became their mantra: “*The whole world is watching!*” As Christians, we have a far more important and august audience, One who monitors our every thought, word and deed. As Paul puts it: “in the sight of *God* speak we in Christ.” May the lives that we live and the message that we proclaim always be worthy of His closest scrutiny. 



Spotlight on Grace Churches

This month’s church is:

Grace Bible Fellowship

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Pastor: Wes Barteck

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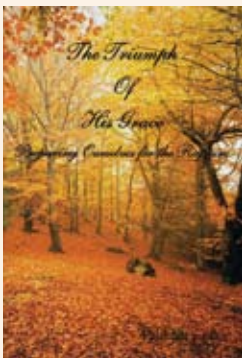
6:00 p.m. Wednesday Choir Practice

7:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study/Prayer

Additional Ministries: Monthly Breakfast Fellowship, Bi-Monthly Fellowship (Covered Dish) Meals, Home Bible Studies, Prison Ministry, Community Outreach Activities (Busy Bees)

Contact information: Church phone: (352) 726-9972; Church mailing address: PO Box 1323, Hernando, FL 34442-1323.

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By Paul M. Sadler

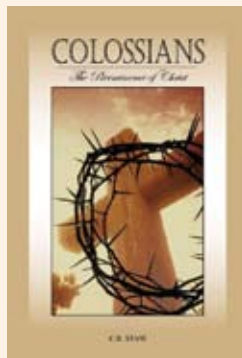
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BBS Letter Excerpts

From the Internet:

“I want to thank you for the *Searchlight* and the articles posted on your site. I always knew in my heart that some of the Bible was addressed to the Body of Christ and some to Israel, it just seemed logical. But until I read Pastor Stam’s *Things That Differ* I had a more difficult time keeping everything straight in my mind. Now I find it much easier to know and explain to my friends in my study groups. Thanks again.”

From the Philippines:

“I am the pastor of a Bible church, a graduate of a Baptist seminary. I read one of Mr. Stam’s books and I was surprised at the teaching he has concerning the right division of the Bible and in dispensationalism.”

From Oklahoma:

“Your ministry of rightly dividing the Word has changed our lives. Our desire is to search the Scriptures—our knowledge of God’s Word is in large part due to your teachings. We hope you find this gift helpful.”

From the Internet:

“Thanks for sending the *Berean Searchlight*. I am edified, inspired and fed spiritually. My six-year-old son started asking me about correct division.”

From Arkansas:

“I appreciate the *Berean Searchlight* tremendously. It along with the Bible helps keep me grounded.”

From Ohio:

“I want to express my deep gratitude to the *Berean Bible Society*. Thank you so much for helping me as a Grace believer to see clearly.”

From the Philippines:

“You have a great part in my life through what you have written—*Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ*. My copy was read from cover to cover by my three youth that have become the core of my church now.”

From Florida:

“I’ve just finished reading again *The Life & Letters of the Apostle Peter*. You are like Pastor Stam, you have such a marvelous way with words to bring out the meaning and sense of the Scriptures so as to be easily understood—and the best part is that it is *rightly divided*, the only way!” (Pastor Stam often spoke of the importance of giving the *sense* of a passage of Scripture [Neh. 8:8]—RK).

From Missouri:

“Your book on *Ephesians* was good the first time I read it, but was better the second time around.”

From the Internet:

“Thank you very much for the encouragement and inspiration that you have given me through your publication the *Berean Searchlight*. Each magazine has a great impact on my spiritual life. It has also enriched my prayer pattern and my home study friends.”

From Montana:

“It was because of the reel-to-reel tapes from Mr. Stam in the 1960’s that we learned to appreciate and understand the Grace message.”

From Missouri:

“A big thank-you for writing the articles on James. Although it was inspired many years ago, the lessons continue to be very timely for our living today.”

From Texas:

“I look forward to the coming commentary on James, as I have enjoyed the series. It revealed to me a clearer understanding of the two gospels of justification. My gift is down this month, but with blessings of the Lord I am sure He has someone in mind to take up the slack for this month.”

From Pennsylvania:

“You mentioned about publishing *Studies in the Epistle of James* in a paperback format. I would very much like to help with this. Enclosed is my check.”

From Florida:

“I’m writing to inform you of my address change. Please continue to send me the *Searchlight* because it has been edifying and such an inspiration to my soul.” (Alerting us to address changes saves us money and helps us to be better stewards of the money that the Lord entrusts to our care.—RK).

From Minnesota:

“I enjoy receiving the *Berean Searchlight* and read it from cover to cover the day it comes in the mail. It is so refreshing to get a magazine that has correct doctrine.”

From the Internet:

“Thanks for your input; that is deep material. I depend almost solely on my own study, and have only a short time ago found you all, so any corrections are really appreciated. It actually surprised me that you would respond.”

From Denmark:

“Your writings are very helpful to me and I pray I will be able to order some of your books soon.”

From Arizona:

“Oh, how I looked forward to receiving my *Searchlight* this month, and to my amazement it did not come. I feel that I am missing out. I let my brothers read them; this helps me explain the importance of rightly dividing. So please, please, please sign me up again. I need you and your fellowship!”

From New York:

“The Bible conference last weekend at upstate Port Jervis was exhilarating, invigorating, refreshing, edifying and encouraging.”

From Florida:

“Thank you for sending the *Searchlight* to my friend. Now another friend wants it!...Our pastor is teaching pure grace, the uniqueness of Paul’s gospel! Many in our Independent Baptist church are really accepting this, and the church is growing. They still hold to baptism, but no tithe-giving!” (Please pray for this church and this pastor.—RK).

From Tennessee:

“God bless you for making it possible for us to participate financially in the Berean work.”

“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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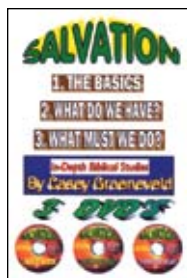
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Our Great Commission

By C. R. Stam

Our Lord's commission to the twelve was indeed a great commission, but it shouldn't be called "*the* great commission," for the ascended Lord later committed a greater message and ministry to the Apostle Paul.

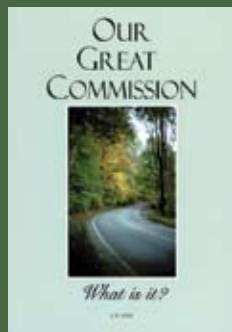
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Paul's Prayers from Prison (Part 7)

Colossians 1:9-12

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

Since he had first heard of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for other believers, Paul had been praying for the church at Colosse on a regular basis. Of course Paul's divinely inspired and recorded prayer for this group of believers is an expression of God's desire for the entire Body of Christ.

This petition to God makes mention of four specific requests on behalf of believers. First, that they would *"be filled with the knowledge of His will"* (v. 9). Of course this can only be accomplished through godly wisdom and enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 1:26-31 tells us that wisdom from God is only found in Jesus Christ, and in chapter two, verses 6-16 that it is only through the indwelling Holy Spirit that spiritual enlightenment is possible.

The second request was for *"a walk worthy of the Lord"* (v. 10). This entails a life style that bears fruit unto the Lord through our labors (good works) done in faith on His behalf.

Third, Paul asked that the church be *"strengthened with all might according to His glorious power"* (v. 11), to the end that we will be able to endure suffering on behalf of Christ with the joy that comes from knowing our hope *"in Christ"* is sure and that He is all that is needed to sustain us: *"And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power"* (Col. 2:10).

Last, that thanksgiving (v. 12) from a truly grateful heart would be given to the Father who has imputed Christ's righteousness to us that we might share in His Son's inheritance (Rom. 8:16-17; Eph. 1:10-12; 2:4-7; Col. 3:1-4).

Spring Semester begins January 22, 2007!

For more information about **BBI**, please contact Dr. W. Edward Bedore at: **Berean Bible Institute**, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Drive, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086-0587, phone: (262) 644-5504, fax: (262) 644-5507, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org, web address: www.bereanbibleinstitute.org.



**"Only one life, 'twill soon be past.
Only what's done for Christ will last!"**

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Home Church Housewarming: The newly-formed *Grace Bible Church* of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, has scheduled a gathering of Grace believers to introduce themselves to the Grace community in their area of the Midwest. The date is October 28, and while all are welcome, GBC would like to extend a special invitation to *Searchlight* readers in their immediate area. If you've been thinking of visiting this new group, this just might be the occasion for which you've been waiting! Snacks start at 5:30, and the Bible study begins at 6:30. For more information, contact Doug Winebrenner at 260-486-6263, or at doug4231@aol.com.

Subscription Derailment: For some weeks this summer, when people subscribed to the *Searchlight* on our website, the subscription did not get through to us. If you know anyone who recently subscribed, but is not receiving the *Searchlight*, please extend our apologies to them, and advise them to subscribe again. Thanks in advance for your help in this matter.

Dayton Update: Pastor Trent Cole reports that *Grace Church of Christ* has undergone a change in name and location. Now known as *Dayton Grace Bible Church*, the new address for this assembly is: 8150 Washington Village Drive, Dayton, OH 45458. For further information, you can reach Pastor Cole at 937-304-3524, or check out their website: www.DaytonGrace.com.

Grace Sportsman's Fellowship: Come for a time of fellowship and feasting on God's Word in the great outdoors! This unique event will take place November 28th thru December 2nd in Edgerton, Kansas. For more information, please contact Pastor Jeff Seekins at 937-667-2710, e-mail: jjseekins@juno.com, or Byron Finley at 913-208-3342, e-mail: finleyfarms@earthlink.net.

North Carolina Bible Study: A solid group of Grace believers meets every Thursday night in Etowah to study the Word of God, rightly divided. Our good friend Brad Truitt teaches the class with occasional help from our old friend Doug Lee. This group is not sitting on their hands, for they have seen some people come to know Christ, and others come to know the Grace Message. If you live in the area, or if Carolina is on your mind for a vacation, you can contact Brad at cbtruitt@ioa.com.

*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Mrs. Jessica Sadler, employee at *Berean Bible Institute*. The *Cana Island Lighthouse* is located in Door County in Bailey's Harbor, WI. Door County has 10 lighthouses, more than any other county in the United States.

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