

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

November 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.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

As the days grow more and more evil it seems very unlikely there will be another revival before the Lord's return. The great awakenings that shook Europe and America are all but a passing memory of a bygone era. Of course, nothing is impossible with God, but His Word seems to indicate that in the last days the world will be lulled into a false sense of security. They will have a form of godliness, Paul says, but deny the power thereof—the *power* being the preaching of the Cross. But while a large scale revival may not be on the horizon, we still have a responsibility to tell lost souls that God loves them and that Christ died for their sins.

We have long prayed that before we hear the sound of the trump there might be one last awakening to Paul's apostleship and message. Of course, Paul's gospel is the answer to the confusion in the Church today, a confusion that some in denominational circles are beginning to acknowledge, especially among our Baptist friends. They are beginning to see the inconsistencies in traditional Baptist teachings; therefore, they are searching for answers to address the contradictions of the Acts 2 position. Since Preterism and Progressive Dispensationalism only raise more questions than answers, many of these Baptist brethren are turning to the Word, rightly divided.

We are hearing from more and more of these brethren who are searching for the truth. Some have come to see the message on their own, while others have been introduced to it through our writings or the writings of other Grace pastors. We have even been receiving invitations to preach in their churches to help them further their understanding of the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

Those who have taken a stand for Paul's gospel have been ostracized by their denomination and disenfranchised by other churches in the community. Be that as it may, the truth is precious to these dear saints who are not ashamed of the Lord or His apostle. One former Baptist pastor stated to me after our meetings together that he was so grateful to BBS for being there to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We want each of our readers to know that without your prayers and faithful support this outreach would not be possible. Thanks so very much for your faithfulness, and please join us in prayer that more of our denominational brethren will be reached with this wonderful truth.

Yours in His service,
Paul M. Sadler, President

Letter Excerpt *Extra*

From the Internet:

I can not begin to explain how much your web site has helped me. We discovered the true Grace Message by reading Miles Stanford's books that deal with the "in Christ" truths, and then realizing that his Acts 2 position was inconsistent with the importance he was placing on Paul's epistles. Your site was and is one of the most useful sites I have ever seen concerning a Mid-Acts Grace position.

I bought the *Grace Library* on CD, and this has been unbelievably helpful. It has had a huge impact on me and others in this area. In fact in the last year there have been at least nine believers that have changed their view to the true Grace Message.

Not only has this information led all of those believers into the Grace Message, it has changed their relationship with Christ! All of these believers are now secure in their salvation; they understand that from start to finish, everything is provided by Christ. These folks are resting in Christ, and are far more mature in their Christian walk than ever before. They understand what Paul meant when he said, "For me to live is Christ!" Most of these believers are in teaching positions in local churches.

We can hardly wait to see what God is going to do through us in the next year. Already people are coming to Christ, and the youth group at the local church has gone from 0 to 25-35 kids. Of course, the pastor is upset, but for some reason he is still allowing the Grace Message to be taught. Our hearts all desire for the pastor to see the truth, and although he is mad at us, we are not mad with him. We were all blinded at one time too! And we believe Christ will reach him in due time.

Another local Acts 2 pastor has changed to a Mid-Acts position. And believe it or not, I have been sharing these truths with a Seventh Day Adventist pastor and some of his elders. They actually had me come and speak at some of their meetings, and they always ask me to be a part of their weekly Bible study. It has been amazing to see these people being called to the Grace position. Of course, some are very resistant, but the pastor and the elders are not. Only God knows where this will lead. When we did the book of Galatians many people were touched. It was a true blessing to see God working in such a legalist denomination.

So many things are happening and I need all the help I can get. These people are very open to the Word of God, rightly divided! By the way you have already done so much by just having your web site up and running. I thank God for your work constantly.



PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 1:1-3

By Paul M. Sadler

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

THE TORCH OF GRACE

If you were to receive a letter from the person who led you to the Lord, I am sure they would have your undivided attention. We hold a very special place in our heart for the one who introduced us to the Savior and set us on the path of spiritual understanding. So when Paul writes to the saints at Philippi he didn't need an introduction, nor was it necessary for him to defend his apostleship. Paul simply opens the letter with: “Paul and Timothy, the servants [bond slaves] of Jesus Christ.”

Unlike the Corinthians who questioned his apostleship (I Cor. 9:1,2), these brethren loved Paul and understood he was the apostle of the Gentiles who received a special revelation from the Lord. Furthermore, there were

no major doctrinal departures at Philippi that made it necessary for Paul to exercise his apostolic authority. Instead he speaks to them as a loving spiritual father hoping to mend the rift between some within the assembly before it became a more serious problem (Phil. 4:2).

“*Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ.*” The apostle includes Timothy in his salutation for good reason. Good leaders are good planners. They are always one step ahead of everyone else, which was true of Paul. These brethren knew Timothy well, but the apostle wanted to refresh their memory, and the memory of the other Gentile churches, that he knew of no other man who was so *like-minded*, who would naturally care for their spiritual state (Phil. 2:20). You see, Paul was uncertain if he would live or die at Rome at the time. He knew if he suffered martyrdom that the torch of grace would pass to Timothy. The brethren would then naturally look to

Timothy and his faithful companions for direction in the things of the Lord. We are not speaking about apostolic succession, but the handing down of the message of Grace from one generation to the next.

Here, too, we need to follow Paul's example. If we fail to commit the Mystery to our children, or if the message is compromised, it will be lost in just one generation, which is exactly what happened when Timothy's generation passed from the scene. As a result, the Church was plunged into spiritual darkness, leaving it gripped by religious confusion as history painfully bears out. The same holds true for the local Grace assembly; if those who are entrusted with the responsibility of leadership waver in their commitment to Paul's apostleship and message it will only be a matter of time before the assembly drifts back to the perils of denominationalism.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Paul refers to himself and Timothy as the "servants of Jesus Christ." We are to understand from the apostle's words that he is making a reference to the Old Testament. Unlike most of us, Paul's knowledge of the Old Testament was incredible. He frequently drew from it in his epistles to teach valuable spiritual lessons. While we place great emphasis upon the various distinctions in the Scriptures, and justifiably so, there are also important connections between the two programs of God. In time past, many of the patriarchs and prophets were called the *servants of the Lord*. For example:

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you" (Josh. 22:5).

"This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD" (Isa. 54:17).

The title "LORD" is the name Jehovah in the Old Testament. Paul uses similar phraseology as above, "*Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ*" to point out that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whom Israel acknowledged to be God, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God! We serve the *same* living God who today is carrying out His secret purpose as the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ.

"...members of the Body of Christ...are saints at the moment of conversion."

Sadly, we are living in a day when there is little reverence for the things of the Lord. Here's a case in point: "I Follow JC," "Jesus is the Reason for the Season." We feel that many believers who take the name of the Lord lightly will be absolutely awestruck when they step into His sovereign presence. Then they will witness the honor, and glory, and reverence in which the host of heaven holds that precious name, which is a name that is above every other name.

Protocol requires that heads of state always be addressed with a title of honor; it is disrespectful to do otherwise. Our Commander

in Chief would be addressed as *Mr. President*, Tony Blair as *Prime Minister* Blair, the leader of Jordan as *King Abdullah*, etc. If this is true of earthly leaders who have feet of clay, how much more so should this be the case with our Savior. In biblical times those who spoke to the Lord did so, *without exception*, by using a title of respect such as, Rabbi, Master, Lord, or Savior.

Nicodemus: “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, **Rabbi**, we know that thou art a teacher come from God” (John 3:2).

Peter: “And Simon answering said unto Him, **Master**, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (Luke 5:5).

Paul: “And I said, **Lord**, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee” (Acts 22:19).

I believe that when we address the Lord, or use the name “Jesus,” we should do so with reverence by acknowledging the honor of His name with a title of respect. For example, “Thank you *Lord* for saving me by Thy grace,” “We pray in the name of our *Lord* and *Savior* Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us,” etc.

Interestingly, Paul uses the name of our Lord in two ways here in Philippians 1:1—*Jesus Christ* and *Christ Jesus*. When the apostle refers to the Savior as *Jesus Christ* he is speaking about Him as a *person*. As we saw above, “in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” This particular name is closely associated with the Lord’s *humanity*, as the

law of first occurrence of it clearly demonstrates: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). Paul’s reference to the gift of grace coming “by one man, Jesus Christ” further substantiates this as well (Rom. 5:15).

Paul was the first to make reference to our Lord as *Christ Jesus*. In fact, with the exception of two passing references in Peter, this name is exclusively used by the Apostle Paul. The name *Christ Jesus* has to do with our Lord’s *exaltation*. Today He is seated at the right hand of the Father as the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ, far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named (Eph. 1:20-22).

We also learn here in Philippians when Paul writes “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi” that the designation *Christ Jesus* has to do with the Lord’s relationship with the members of His Body. The Philippians were “in Christ,” therefore, they were identified with His death, burial, and resurrection. They were also seated with Christ in a position of exaltation and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.¹

THE SAINTS

“To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”

In the apostle’s opening words he addresses all the *saints* at Philippi. What the Scriptures teach on the subject of “sainthood” and what religion teaches are diametrically opposed to one another. A case in point would be the canonization process of

Roman Catholicism. According to *Religion Facts*:

“The primary purpose of canonization is to officially authorize veneration and intercession of a particular saint. The investigation process that precedes canonization seeks primarily to ensure that the person is in heaven and God is working through him or her...If a person is martyred for the faith, miracles are not necessary to be declared a saint. As mentioned above, the purpose of canonization is to verify that the person is now in heaven, and all those who die as martyrs are believed to go straight to heaven.

“For those who died naturally, however, at least one miracle is necessary to be declared Blessed (beatified) and at least two miracles are necessary to be declared a saint (canonized). These miracles must have occurred after the person’s death (to demonstrate that the person is in heaven and able to assist the living), but miracles during his or her lifetime are also taken into account as evidence of God’s favor.

“Phenomena investigated as miracles after a would-be saint’s death include the following:

Healings attributed to intercession of the saint or contact with relics.

Incorruptibility—the saint’s body does not decay after a long period in the grave.

Liquefaction—the dried blood of the saint liquefies every year on the day of his or her death.

Odor of sanctity—body exudes a sweet aroma instead of the normal stench of decay.

“Miracles during the life of the saint that have been reported:

Levitation—the saint floats in the air.

Stigmata—the saint’s body exhibits five wounds of Christ, which usually bleed during Mass.

Bilocation—the saint reportedly appeared in two places at once.”²

Normally the process of declaring a deceased individual a saint is only considered decades after their death. It is reserved for an elite few. After a long, tedious process the pope declares canonization at a special Mass in the saint’s honor, at which time a tapestry of the image of the new saint is displayed at St. Peter’s Square for Catholics to pray to and venerate. This is a good example of what the Lord meant when He stated that the traditions of men make the Word of God of none effect (Mark 7:13). We must always carefully distinguish between Church doctrine (teachings of men) and the teaching of the Word of God.

According to the Scriptures, those who have placed their faith in the finished work of Christ are *saints*. The members of the Body of Christ do not become saints after death; they *are* saints at the moment of conversion. As it has been said “sainthood is not an attainment, it is a state into which God in grace calls men.” Note that the apostle writes “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” In other words, these saints were *present* at Philippi faithfully serving the Lord, with the bishops and deacons.

The term “saints” is the Greek word *hagios*, which simply means “holy” or “to be separate.” It is always used in the plural to refer to

a group of believers, with the exception of Philippians 4:21 where it says: “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.” But even here the passage implies plurality. Saint-hood is tied directly to our sanctification in Christ, which has both a positional and practical side. We have been separated unto God for His service, but to effectively do so we must *separate* ourselves from the things of this world. We are to be holy as He is holy; consequently, we are to live a life of holiness.



The story is told of Oliver Cromwell [Lord Protector of England] who, when faced with a shortage of precious metal for coins, sent his troops out to find some. They reported that the only precious metal to be found was in the statues of the “saints” standing in the corners of the churches. Cromwell said, “Well, melt down the saints and put them in circulation.”³

In the local Grace churches in Paul’s day the majority of saints were actively involved in the Lord’s

work, such as we see at Philippi. Today it seems the burden usually falls on a small handful of believers who bear the load of the ministry on behalf of all those who enjoy the spiritual benefits, but who don’t participate. What we need in our assemblies today, to help lighten the burden of those who have given so much, is to put more of the saints in circulation in the Lord’s service. As the old saying goes, “Many hands make light work.”

It is interesting to note that Paul addresses “*all* the saints at Philippi with the bishops and deacons.” This is the only letter of the apostle where he mentions the bishops and deacons in his salutation. By addressing *everyone* in the assembly Paul was intentionally including Euodias and Syntyche who were causing tension among the brethren because they were not like-minded (Phil. 4:1,2). The apostle thought a great deal of the ministry of these two women, who apparently played an important role in the assembly, so much so he wanted them to reconcile their differences for the sake of the gospel. In making reference to the bishops and deacons, Paul showed he was in agreement with the spiritual leadership of the assembly that there needed to be *unity* among the brethren.

As we consider the leadership of the church at Philippi the first thing that is called to our attention is the importance that’s placed on *structure*. Everything was done decently and in order. The *bishops* were the spiritual overseers of the assembly, while the *deacons* attended to the physical needs of the Lord’s people. They, too, however,

were to hold the Mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (I Tim. 3:8,9). It is noteworthy that both the *elders* and *deacons* are spoken of here in the plural, which is a clear indication that there was a plurality of leadership in the early church. There is wisdom in a multitude of counselors. As we have often said, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Today there seems to be less and less respect for those who hold positions of leadership in the Church. In fact, the ministry can be a dangerous place—you can get seriously hurt trying to care for the spiritual needs of the Lord’s people! We often remind our young pastors to keep their eyes on the Lord lest they become discouraged. This is why Paul reminds the *brethren* “to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (I Thes. 5:12,13). I like the last part, “and be at peace among yourselves.” Essentially the apostle is saying: lay aside your personal vendettas and the desire to have your own way, for the work’s sake (Rom. 12:19).

LOVE AND WAR

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:2).

All of Paul’s epistles open with *grace* and *peace*, not from the apostle, but from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a *declaration* from God Himself during the administration of Grace. Today the heavens are silent; God is not speaking to

mankind in His wrath as He will in the coming day of the Lord. In that day He will declare *war* on this sinful world, but, thankfully, now He is declaring *grace* and *peace*. This is the message that was committed to the Apostle Paul by the Lord of glory. It is the good news we are responsible to share with others that all men might see what is the fellowship of the Mystery.

Pastor Stam used to say, “Paul’s message is not the kingdom at hand, his message was not repent and be baptized for the remission of sins; his message was: ‘Grace be unto you and peace.’”

In Paul’s revelation we learn that the *grace of God* has brought us salvation, and teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it has given us a blessed hope in Christ Jesus (Titus 2:11-13). We have received from Paul that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Cor. 5:14-21). God is longsuffering in this present dispensation, not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to know Christ as their personal Savior. He has graciously declared *peace* to all who will receive it!

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Phil. 1:3).

To Be Continued! 

Endnotes

1. For a more in-depth study of the names of our Lord, see *The Honour of His Name* by Sir Robert Anderson.
2. Religion Facts: *Canonization of the Saints*/www.religionfacts.com.
3. *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Michael P. Green, Editor, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI.

An Unexpected Honor

St. Louis Theological Seminary is pleased to announce that on Sunday, September 17, 2006, the Board of Regents bestowed upon Paul Sadler the honorary degree of "Doctor of Divinity." According to Richard Owsley, president of *St. Louis Theological Seminary*, "I know of no man, no theologian, who is more deserving of this honor. Paul Sadler, with his scholarly accomplishments in the realm of authorship and his faithful contributions to the advancement of the 'Grace Message' has earned this degree. This seminary and Bible college is pleased to recognize Pastor Sadler's leadership in proclaiming the Word of God, rightly divided."

This honorary Doctorate of Divinity was presented to Pastor Sadler while he was conducting a three-day lecture series on the "Earthly and Heavenly Ministry of Christ" at SLTS. This seminar was also sponsored in part by *St. Louis Bible Fellowship*, where Brother Owsley serves as pastor.



Pastor Owsley presents Pastor Sadler with honorary degree



Pastor Sadler teaching at SLTS

St. Louis Theological Seminary is an accredited seminary and Bible college that provides quality education using the "Distance Education" format, while teaching from a mid-Acts, Dispensational understanding of the Scriptures. The degrees offered include, a Bachelor of Biblical Studies, Master of Biblical Studies, Master of Theology, and Master of Divinity. SLTS is dedicated to training pastors and lay leaders in the Word of God, rightly divided and recognizing the distinctiveness of the revelation of the Mystery committed to the Apostle Paul.

For more information on this new Grace Seminary:
Phone: (314) 781-0472
Web: www.stlouistheological.org



St. Louis Theological Seminary

The following is the second 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.

The Prevailing Confusion Over This Commission

By C. R. Stam

OUR
GREAT
COMMISSION



What is it?

AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT

There are few, if any, major Bible subjects on which *all* of the denominations and sects of Christendom are agreed. There is one, however, on which *almost* all of them agree.

The vast majority of fundamentalists, neo-evangelicals, modernists and Roman Catholics, along with practically all of the cults, agree that the so-called “great commission,” containing our Lord’s parting commands to His eleven apostles, contains God’s program for the Church today. Or, to be more specific: Most “Christians,” nominal or genuine, believe that our Lord, during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, instructed His apostles concerning *His program for the Church today*, and they all call these instructions “the great commission,” or “His parting commands,” or “our marching orders.”

It is not all as simple as that, however, for especially among

fundamentalists, those who study their Bibles most, there has been sharp disagreement as to precisely *which* of our Lord’s commands, given between His resurrection and ascension, apply to the Church today: which of them in particular constitute *the* “great commission.”

In each one of the four records of our Lord’s earthly ministry and in the Book of Acts we have written accounts of *some* of these instructions, but does the term “great commission” properly apply to all of these or only to certain of them? This has by no means been agreed upon.

In the records of the various parts of our Lord’s commission there are certain commands or instructions which thinking Bible students have for years found wholly incompatible with the great truths later revealed in the epistles of Paul. And so it came about that most of the great fundamentalist Bible teachers of the past generation concluded that only *some* of our Lord’s parting

words constitute our “great commission,” but they never could agree as to *which* ones applied. This is the legacy they have left to the present generation as far as the so-called “great commission” is concerned. There is little agreement; only confusion and division, where this subject is concerned.

It is sad indeed that at this late date God’s people, and even their spiritual leaders, remain in disagreement on so important a subject as to *what God would have us do and teach*. This is written in the year 1974 A.D., and still the Church does not know what its great commission is! This is because the so-called “great commission” is so rarely *examined* and *expounded*. Rather it is mentioned, referred to, and phrases from the record taken out of context as topics for sermons!

Most Christian people have heard their pastors or evangelists speak on Matthew’s “Go” and “lo, I am with you,” on Mark’s “*all the world*” and “*every creature*,” on Luke’s “*ye are witnesses*” and the Acts’ “*ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you*.” But how many have ever heard our Lord’s parting words thoroughly and thoughtfully *expounded*? When have their leaders ever conducted Bible studies on the commission which they so stoutly defend as their own?

If pastors and Bible teachers faithfully studied and explained these important commands of our Lord in detail, they would soon find that it is difficult, yes, impossible to reconcile them with

the epistles of Paul *unless* we recognize a change in dispensation with the raising up of Paul, God’s appointed apostle of grace. Surely the legalism of Matthew’s account, the baptism for salvation and the miraculous demonstrations of Mark’s, the “Jerusalem first” of Luke and the Acts, and the apostolic forgiveness of sins of John’s record are not compatible with the glorious truths later set forth in the Pauline epistles.

What the spiritual leaders of the past generation taught us about the commission to the eleven, must inescapably affect the teachings of our generation. This is the place, then, to back up a generation, as it were, and put the writings of the “fathers” to the test. We do this first as we enlarge upon our writings of thirty years ago in our booklet, *This Is That*. In this booklet we dealt with the deep confusion over the so-called “great commission” among the great—truly great—Bible teachers of that day. As we note this confusion we should not lose sight of the fact that they were giants, spiritually, where many other subjects were concerned.

Dr. H. A. Ironside, long dubbed “The Archbishop of Fundamentalism,” held that the Church’s commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20 and that to deny this is Bullingerism. In one example of his strong feelings about this he wrote, with reference to the passage in Matthew 28:

“People who have never investigated Bullingerism and its kindred systems will hardly believe me when I say that even the

Great Commission upon which the Church has acted for 1900 years, and which is still our authority for worldwide missions, is, according to these teachers, a commission with which we have nothing whatever to do; that it has no reference to the Church at all....Yet such is actually their teaching” (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, P. 17).

Apparently, though, our dear brother was so intent on going after the “Bullingerites” that he forgot that many of his colleagues, including Mr. J. N. Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren (with whom Dr. Ironside was for many years associated) emphatically denied that the Matthew commission is ours. We quote here from Darby and several others among Dr. Ironside’s colleagues.

Mr. Darby: “The accomplishment of the commission here in Matthew has been interrupted... for the present it has, in fact, given place to a heavenly commission, and the Church of God” (*Collected Writings*, P. 327).

Dr. James M. Gray: “This is the Kingdom Commission...not the Christian Commission” (*Christian Workers’ Commentary*, P. 313).

Dr. I. M. Haldeman: “We must call this the Kingdom Commission” (*The Commission*, P. 14).

Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein: “This is the Kingdom Commission” (*Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 2, P. 323).

Dr. Wm. L. Pettingill: “This we would call the ‘Kingdom Commission’....It would be a strange thing to find the Church’s commission in the Kingdom Gospel” (*Bible Questions Answered*, Pp. 106,107).

Dr. I. M. Haldeman believed that our commission is to be found in Mark 16:15-18. How he would thunder the words: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’ What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.*”

But strangely, Dr. Haldeman did not believe that the miraculous signs of Verses 17,18 are included in God’s program for today! You could not join Dr. Haldeman’s Church (New York’s *First Baptist*) without water baptism, but if you spoke with tongues or sought to work miracles you would be—and some were—excommunicated! Yet these were part of the same commission, yes, the same specific record of the commission (Mark 16:15-18). Pastor J. C. O’Hair once wrote to Dr. Haldeman, asking whether *he* was not putting asunder what God had joined together, by thus separating Mark 16:15,16 from Verses 17,18. Pastor O’Hair never received a reply.

Dr. Gaebelein held a still different view. Luke, he said, was the Gentile gospel—presumably because it was written to Theophilus (Luke 1:3). However, everything about Luke’s gospel is Jewish, not Gentile. Luke’s record opens with the baby Jesus in the arms of a Jewish mother and of the aged Simeon, also a Jew (Luke 2:28), and it closes with our Lord in the arms of Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (Luke 23:50-53).

Dr. William L. Pettingill, however, believed that Ironside, Haldeman, Gaebelein and those who stood with them were *all* wrong. Pettingill taught that the Church’s

commission is to be found in Acts 1:8, basically because in the Book of Acts we have baptism “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” which he concluded to be the proper “formula” for our day. However, he never explained, to this writer’s knowledge, *why* the “formula” in Acts is different from that in Matthew. Dr. Haldeman was so sharply opposed to Dr. Pettingill’s view that we know of one family who, having been baptized in Dr. Pettingill’s church in Baltimore, had to be baptized all over again to join the *First Baptist Church* of New York City, where Dr. Halde- man was pastor.

But what about the record in John 20:21-23? Did not our Lord say here: “*Even so send I you?*” Yet this record of the commission was strangely overlooked and barely referred to by the brethren mentioned above and, indeed, by most fundamentalist Bible teachers from their day on. The reason? Those closing words, which the Church of Rome so strongly emphasizes: “*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*” (John 20:21-23).

Some Protestant theologians have sought to explain, really explain *away*, the simple statement made by our Lord here, but their arguments against Rome’s position have been as weak as cotton thread, for the simple reason that in this case Rome has always been able to point back to the Scriptures with the reply: “But this is what it *says*.” This is always a strong argument and, in this case,



a difficult one for Bible-believing Christians to gainsay.¹

Surely it should be seen from the above that not only has Christendom in general been confused over the so-called “great commission,” but our greatest Bible teachers of the past generation have been as thoroughly confused, or at least as hopelessly divided. And if this is so of *that* generation, what shall we say of *this!* The only difference, probably, is that the leaders of our day have been so greatly influenced by the new evangelicalism that they avoid specifics, only *referring* to the commission in a general way as something we should all obey. There is great urgency, but little specific information in their repeated calls to carry out the “great commission” *in this generation*.

If we would find a Scriptural solution to this important problem, then, let us begin by humbly acknowledging that the Church has not given a clear, united testimony to the world. Indeed, how *can* we obey our “marching orders” if we are not sure what they are? “*For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?*” (I Cor. 14:8).

CHOOSING COMMISSIONS

If we hold, as most Christian believers do, that the epistles of Paul apply to the Church of this dispensation, but *also* believe that our Lord's parting instructions, between His resurrection and ascension, comprise our commission for today, we are indeed in trouble.

Thus it came about that great, truly great, fundamentalist Bible teachers were forced to choose individual records of the so-called "great commission" as binding in this dispensation, in accordance with the amount of difficulty they experienced in harmonizing the various commands with God's Word through Paul. This has naturally contributed much to the deepening confusion among sincere believers today.

As we have seen, Dr. Ironside declared that our commission is to be found in Matthew 28:18-20, but Drs. Gray, Gaebelein, Haldeman and Pettingill, along with Mr. Wm. R. Newell and many others, realized immediately that this would bind believers hand and foot with the law of Moses, for our Lord distinctly commanded the apostles that in going to "all nations" they should "*teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,*" and this would inescapably include obedience to the law of Moses for, not only was our Lord Himself under the law (Gal. 4:4), but He commanded His disciples to "observe and do" whatever the scribes and Pharisees directed them to do *because* these leaders in Israel occupied "*Moses' seat.*"

Similarly, Dr. Haldeman chose Mark 16:15-18 as the Church's marching orders, but other great Bible teachers rightly objected that our Lord here taught baptism "*for the remission of sins*" and miraculous signs as the *evidences* of sins remitted. They correctly concluded that in the light of the Pauline epistles this *could not* be God's program for our day.

It has been said that when some theologians are "persecuted" in one Scripture passage they "flee to another"! And it appears that this is just what Dr. Haldeman did. To prove that miraculous demonstrations are not in God's order for today he appealed to the Pauline epistles, but he did not do this where water baptism was concerned for, *despite the wording of the passage*, he believed that *this* was in order as a testimony to salvation.

"...how can we obey our 'marching orders' if we are not sure what they are?"

A pastor once said to this writer: "Brother Stam, I believe that Mark 16:16 applies to our day, but I don't teach baptism *for the remission of sins!*" We replied: "If you believe that Mark 16:16 is binding today you *should* preach baptism for the remission of sins, for that is what Mark 16:16 commands."

Dr. Gaebelein, as noted above, chose the record in Luke 24:46-48 as our commission, but the phrases

“repentance and remission of sins” and “beginning at Jerusalem,” rightly convinced other leading teachers that this passage, like that in Matthew, is related to the kingdom reign of Christ, which will, of course, be established *at Jerusalem*.

Dr. Pettingill chose the record in Acts 1:8, but this passage too has the apostles beginning at Jerusalem.

As to John 20:21-23, almost all fundamentalist Bible teachers have agreed that this is not the commission for the Church today, but the Church of Rome surely has Protestants “over the ropes” on this one!

THE FOLLY OF CHOOSING COMMISSIONS

How foolish and wrong it is for any of us to use “snatch-grab methods,” as Pastor O’Hair called them, in ascertaining our Lord’s will for us! What right have we to choose some particular segment or segments of our Lord’s instructions to the eleven in the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, and to apply only these to ourselves or to the Church today?

Nothing could be clearer than the fact that our Lord “showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). In those forty days, then, one person, our Lord, spoke to eleven men, and gave them instructions as to the program they were to carry out after His ascension. In every single

case it is crystal clear that these commands were *not* directed to others, who were to live at some *future* date, but to *the apostles*, who were to commence to carry them out after His departure, when the Holy Spirit had endued them with power.

This is emphasized by the phraseology found in *all five records*: Matthew 28:19, “Go ye,” Mark 16:15, “Go ye,” Luke 24:48, “Ye are witnesses,” John 20:21, “So send I you,” and Acts 1:8, “Ye shall be witnesses.” How preposterous, then, to argue, as so many hard-pressed theologians have done, that one or more segments of the commission are to be carried out by *another* generation at a *later time*! By what rule of hermeneutics or logic have we the right to exclude from the interpretation of these commands the very ones to whom our Lord gave them?

Some, agreeing with the above, have concluded that the commission as a whole, then, must be for our obedience, but this too is impossible in the light of the Pauline epistles. Indeed, the Lord has rendered it impossible to obey *any* of the segments of the so-called “great commission,” as we shall presently see.

Probably the fundamental reason why so many people conclude that the commission to the eleven is for our obedience is because *they have heard it said so often!* Repeatedly pastors and evangelists and Bible teachers have referred to the Lord’s parting instructions as “His parting words to us,” “our marching orders,” “our commission” and “*the* great commission,”

as if our Lord never gave any other. But all this is grossly incorrect and unscriptural. These were not our Lord's last words. He spoke again from heaven to and through the Apostle Paul and gave to him a greater, far greater, commission than that which He had given to the eleven.

Before dealing with this greater commission, however, we can, perhaps, best see that the so-called "great commission" is not for our

obedience if we carefully examine all the segments of it—all of them, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Acts—and note precisely what this commission *does* and what it *does not* say.

To Be Continued! 

Endnote

1. Rome's position, however, has been answered, simply and completely, by the application of dispensational truth. See the author's booklets: *Apostolic Authority of the Twelve* and *Paul, the Masterbuilder*.

Question Box

"If we go to be with the Lord when we die, why do we need the Rapture?"

When a believer dies, his or her soul *departs* (Gen. 35:18) to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8). Our *spirit* also returns to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). Our *bodies*, however, "return to the earth" (Eccl. 12:7). This is why we need the Rapture and the bodily resurrection that it will bring.

God designed us to be a *trinity* like Himself. This explains why He said to the other members of the Trinity, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness..." (Gen. 1:26). And it is the testimony of the Apostle Paul that man remains a trinity to this day (I Thes. 5:23). Thus when death divides a believer by separating his soul and spirit from his body, man no longer exists in the form that God designed for him. This divided condition is then rectified by the Rapture. In all of this, we follow the pattern of the Lord Himself, who died and spent three days in Paradise (Luke 23:43; Matt. 12:40), and yet needed to be re-united with His physical body in resurrection.

The body of the believer has been bought and paid for by the blood of Christ, and so Paul calls it "*God's*" (I Cor. 6:19,20). It is "*the purchased possession*" for which the Lord will return on "*the day of redemption*" (Eph. 1:14; 4:30). It is significant that Paul speaks of "*the redemption of our body*" and calls the Rapture "*our salvation*" (Rom. 8:23; 13:11). These references indicate that in the mind of God, our salvation and our redemption will not be complete until our soul and spirit are re-united with our resurrected body.

—Pastor Kurth

Partakers of Their Spiritual Things

By John Willson



In Romans 15:25-26, Paul speaks of taking a contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem. The kingdom saints in Judea and Jerusalem had not only suffered persecution, but were in great need, having sold their land and possessions in accordance with the Kingdom program of early Acts (See Acts 4:34-37). Then in Acts 8:1-3 we read of great persecution at Jerusalem, with Saul (Paul) being a leader of it. But some years later, after God mercifully saved him, he was chosen with Barnabas to send relief to these Jewish believers. Quite a change in the man!

Then on Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, he stands before Governor Felix and says, "I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings." This is the offering (evidently a large amount) that Paul writes of in Romans 15:25-26, "...for the poor saints at Jerusalem." Then verse 27 reads, "It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things." The question addressed here is, how are we made partakers of their spiritual things?

The first thing we might think of is what Paul said in Acts 28:28, "...the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it." This was the third time Paul said in Acts that he would turn to the Gentiles, because, for the most part, the people of Israel rejected his preaching of salvation in Christ. More is said of their rejection and fall in Romans 11:11, "...through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." In Ephesians 2:12-13, we read that the Gentiles were "...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." So now that Israel has been set aside, we are made partakers of the spiritual things they once had as the people of God.

Perhaps the next thing that would come to our mind is that we now possess the Word of God that came to us through Israel. Romans 3:1-2 says that the chief advantage of the Jew was that "...unto them were committed the oracles of God." So now we have the entire Bible: the truths of creation, the history of Israel and mankind through the centuries, the judgments of God, the covenants, the promises, and many prophesies concerning Christ and the things to come.


As Romans 15:4 states: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The things “written aforetime” would include the warnings Paul mentioned in I Corinthians 10:1-11. Verse 11 reads, “now these things happened to them for examples, and they are written for our admonition....” Furthermore, “All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (II Timothy 3:16). There is a great wealth of these things in Scripture, and how thankful we are for them. For wisdom, reproof, and instruction in righteousness, we read Proverbs. For examples of worship, prayer and praise, we read the Psalms. For a knowledge of prophecy, we have all the prophets, including the Lord Jesus who prophesied of the judgments to come and the future Kingdom.

In addition to the Old Testament, there is blessing for us in reading the four gospels that teach concerning Christ’s first coming. The doctrines of the virgin birth, His deity, His ministry on earth, and His future Kingdom are things we should know, and for our learning we read the chapters that tell us of His suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Concerning the New Covenant that was originally promised to Israel, we Gentile believers now have the spiritual blessings of it. We have salvation through His blood. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 26:28 saying, “This is the blood of the New Testament (covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” However, the great truths of the New Covenant were not fully revealed until the Book of Hebrews was written. The author of Hebrews, who this writer believes is Paul, wrote to the Jewish Christians who knew all the ordinances and prophecies of the Old Testament as Paul did. The New Covenant shows that all the types, offerings and sacrifices, priesthood and ordinances of the Law are fulfilled in Christ. Although Hebrews is not addressed to Gentiles, we do rejoice in the truths of it. As II Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture...is profitable....”

Paul says in II Corinthians 3:6, “Who also has made us able ministers of the New Covenant.” This covenant was promised to Israel (Jer. 31:31-34), yet we are partakers of “this great salvation” mentioned in Hebrews 2:3. Perhaps this is what Paul was referring to when he said he was a minister of the New Covenant.

Besides all these “spiritual things,” we have those epistles of Paul that *are* addressed to Gentile believers, and they contain the revelations concerning the truths that God has especially for us in this dispensation of grace. Although Paul often used “proof texts” from the Old Testament saying, “according to the Scriptures,” his writings contain a complete body of doctrine for the Church today. For knowledge of our salvation by grace, our position in Christ, our spiritual life and our destiny, we must know Paul’s epistles. In order to be established

in doctrine and spiritual understanding we must know Paul's gospel, "...and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery" (Romans 16:25). However, when we consider that we have **all** the Word of God, how thankful we should be that we are made partakers of the spiritual things of the Jews as well. 

Our good friend John Willson is one of our senior Grace Bible teachers, and has been a frequent contributor to the *Berean Searchlight* over the years. You can write him at 407 W. Hickory St., Neosho, MO 64850 with any questions about the above article, or for information about his *Grace Bible Courses* correspondence ministry.



True Thanksgiving

By C. R. Stam

Many people entertain only vague notions about thanksgiving, just as they do about faith.

They confuse faith with optimism, will power, presumption, imagination, and all sorts of other things. A doctor tells his patient that but for his faith, he never would have come through his illness. Somehow the patient was "just sure" he would recover. A smiling mother encourages her married daughter to "have faith, that everything will turn out all right." But faith in God is believing *God*; believing *what He has said*. True faith is based on the written Word of God (See Rom. 10:17).

But unregenerate men have vague ideas about thanksgiving. A man escapes some great harm and thanks his "lucky stars." Another says: "I'm grateful for a healthy body," but *to whom* is he grateful? He doesn't say. In many cases it doesn't even occur to him to ask. He's "just thankful!"

How refreshing, then, it is to open our Bibles, especially to the epistles of Paul, the chief of sinners, saved by grace, and to see him giving thanks for specific blessings, and *to* a specific Person—*God!*

"Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:12,13).

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" (II Cor. 9:15).

"Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory!" (I Cor. 15:57).

"Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph!" (II Cor. 2:14).

It is our prayer for all our readers that this Thanksgiving season, and always, you may be especially thankful for "*the gift of God [which] is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord*" (Rom. 6:23).



Is Miraculous Healing in God's Program for Today?

By Pastor John LaVier

The newspapers recently carried the story of a so-called "faith healer," who has been holding forth at Vandalia, Illinois and attracting large throngs of people, all seeking to avail themselves of his supposed miraculous healing powers. The following is part of a United Press dispatch:

"This usually quiet southern Illinois town of 5800 persons was bursting at the seams today with 4000 ailing persons. They came here hoping to be cured by a former game warden who turned 'faith healer' eleven months ago.

"The sermons and prayers of the Rev. Henry Branham, 38, nattily dressed Free Baptist minister, attracted the lame, halt and blind from every section of the country—and even southern Canada.

"The town was jammed with invalids on crutches, in wheel chairs and on stretchers. A score of ambulances that had been driven across the country were parked at downtown curbs. A constant stream of people limped or were carried to a tent on the edge of town, in which the Rev. Mr. Branham preached, prayed and attempted cures for two six-hour sessions daily.

"The Rev. Mr. Branham, formerly a game warden of Jeffersonville, Indiana, came here a week ago under the auspices of the local Pentecostal church. He said he had 'cured hundreds of persons suffering from nearly every known disease.'

"I was 11 when I was first called,' he said, 'I was carrying water, and a tree talked to me. When I was 14, I tried to smoke a cigarette. A man with a long white beard and flowing robe visited me. He told me not to smoke. Then 11 months ago I got a call so insistent that I went out and started healing people.'

"The Rev. Mr. Branham said he effected his cures by touching the patient's left hand. 'I receive vibrations caused by the germs in the person,' he said. 'I can usually tell what the disease is and when the devil leaves the person the vibrations stop.'"

After having read the above account, may we remind you that this happened, not in Africa, but in America. We sometimes ridicule the beliefs of the poor souls in heathen lands, but surely none of their superstitious ideas can exceed such nonsense as this. One wonders

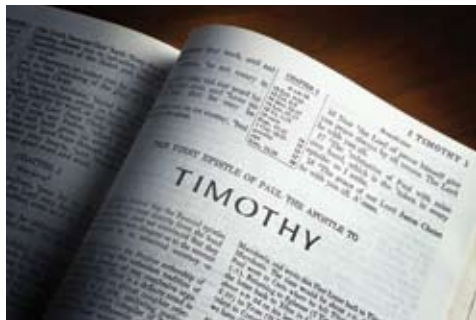
how long it will be before these other lands start sending missionaries to convert the heathen in the USA. Think of these thousands of poor deluded people, travelling great distances to witness some supposed miracle or hoping to be the beneficiary of some miraculous healing. Man will seemingly go to any lengths to get a little healing for the body, and the devil was not altogether wrong when he said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." All one need do is come along with some kind of a healing scheme and he will soon have a following.

This incident at Vandalia is but a sample of that which is happening in many other places, though perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale. Many, including some really born-again Christians, are endeavoring to perpetuate the miracles and signs of Jesus of Nazareth. They are, of course, ignorant of the Word. Today, God speaks to us only through the Scriptures, not through a tree. If we would know His will for us, we learn it from the pages of His Book and not from some long-whiskered gentleman. Of course, in the Bible we do have the record of many healings, miracles, wonders and signs. However, if these sign-seeking folks would really study the Word, and rightly divide it, they would discover that with the setting aside of Israel, God turned from His "sign" program, and brought in the present dispensation of grace, which is a "signless" dispensation.

As long as the message was being proclaimed to Israel as a nation, signs were in evidence, "For the Jews *require* a sign" (I Cor. 1:22). They required a sign because their Old Testament Scriptures had foretold the fact that when Messiah came and the kingdom was established, signs, visions, etc. would be the order of the day. See Isaiah 35:5-6 and Joel 2:28-

31. The miracles of Christ were thus His credentials *to Israel*, as stated by Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).

During the Book of Acts the Jew is being given another opportunity to repent and receive the blessing of God. It is true that there is a gradual turning away from Israel, the apostle of the circumcision giving place to the apostle of the Gentiles, yet during all this period, and in every place, the Jew is still accorded a priority in the offer of blessing. Paul said, "It was necessary that the Word of God should *first* have been spoken to you" (Acts 13:46), and it is not until, in every place from Jerusalem to Rome, that the blessing had been despised




and rejected by the Jew, that solemn words of Acts 28:28 are spoken to that once highly favored nation: “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

During the time that Israel was *first*, miracles, signs, healings and visions were the common order of things. The writer to the Hebrews says, “Which at the *first* began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us (Jews) by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles” (Heb. 2:3-4). However, after the setting aside of Israel, and the solemn pronouncement of Acts 28:28, the Scriptures will be searched in vain to find the record of even one such miracle.

“The purpose of the miracles was to accredit the Messiah to Israel, and not...to accredit Christianity to the heathen...”

The following, which is so clearly stated, is from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson: “The purpose of the miracles was to accredit the Messiah to Israel, and not, as generally supposed, to accredit Christianity to the heathen, and therefore, as Scripture plainly indicates, they continued so long as the testimony was addressed to the Jew, but ceased when, the Jew being set aside, the Gospel went out to the Gentile world.” Mr. Anderson also wrote: “We shall be prepared to find that so long as the kingdom was being preached to the Jews, miracles abounded, but that when the gospel appealed to the heathen world, miracles lost their prominence, and soon entirely ceased.”

There were three periods in Israel’s history which were characterized by miracles; the days of Moses and Joshua, the days of Elijah and Elisha, and the days of Christ and the apostles. Each one of these periods was also characterized by great apostasy on the part of God’s people. The next time that miracles are in evidence will be during the most apostate days of all, when the man of sin shall be revealed, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thes. 2:9).

The desire of many today for the sensational and spectacular is not indicative of a healthy spiritual condition. Truly the words spoken by the Saviour are applicable today: “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign” (Matt. 12:39). During this present age “the just shall live by faith” (Gal. 3:11). “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7). We are not to look for signs, but to walk by faith alone in the written Word of God. The Lord rebuked those of His day, and said, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe” (John 4:48). Later on He said, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). 



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BBS Letter Excerpts

From Ohio:

"I bought *Things That Differ* from a neighbor's garage sale. I did not look at it right away, but picked it up a couple of weeks later and started reading it. After a few minutes I understood I was reading a very important concept that I knew I needed to understand better. I got my Bible and checked every reference that Pastor Stam made, and I made notes linking verses for my reference. I went through it in a week, and then went back to study the deeper things about which I wanted to be more clear. I went over much of the material with my wife and she quickly became enthused as well."

From Illinois:

"Thanks for sending the *Searchlight*. Each month I immediately go to the Mailbag first, where I quickly identify with my brothers and sisters in Christ who speak of being avalanched in and by God's grace." (With so many of our mail coming electronically, we have changed the name of the Mailbag to "BBS Letter Excerpts."—RK).

From Pennsylvania:

"The conference at White Sulfur Springs was a wonderful time around the Word with Brother Ricky and the local pastors."

From Georgia:

"I enjoyed the study in *James* in the *Berean Searchlight*. Thanks for your study and writing."

From Wisconsin:

"I have been going to an Assemblies of God church for ten years, and previously (after my salvation) to a Baptist church for ten years or so. I am truly seeking to walk closer to, or in, the perfect will of God and go to a Grace church, where I believe I and my family belong. I want so much to spread the gospel of Grace. I really am blessed when I read the *Searchlight*. I humbly admit my need for guidance and direction after thirty-eight years of knowing the Lord. I believe He is now turning me to the right dispensation and path—and service to Him."

From the Internet:

"Your answer has shed much light on this query. Now I understand and will be able to explain this difference to my sister in Christ, and to all who may ask about this."

From Washington:

"I enjoyed my visit to BBS very much. The close conversation and the tour of all the rooms and offices. I hope someday to visit again, and possibly catch *Berean Bible Institute* when school is in session." (As Pastor Stam used to say, "We always give that \$2 tour for free!"—RK).

From Florida:

"Please send this lady the *Searchlight*. She is a Christian and would love more teaching of the Bible. She's the director of activities here in the nursing home. This is the second one who wants it sent!"

From Ohio:

“After I read *Things That Differ* I told my Bible study group what I had learned. One of the participants borrowed it and after he read it he told me how much sense it made. Our teacher then borrowed it and thoroughly endorsed it. My wife and I are starting a new home study group beginning this fall. Our hopes are that we can introduce the message of Grace to these people as well. I hope to be able to use some of the material on your website to prepare study topics.”

From Missouri:

“Things are still busy with our correspondence courses. I am especially encouraged when they complete Paul’s epistles and continue on with *Dispensational Relationships* and *Things That Differ*. We also have a survey of Genesis and Acts.” (For more information about Brother John Willson’s correspondence courses, see Page 21.—RK).

From Arizona:

“Just had time to finish the book ‘The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter’ by Pastor Sadler. Another great book. I enjoyed it very much and would advise others to read it.”

From Montana:

“There are so many teaching the errors of extra-biblical revelation. The only real answer is Christ proclaimed according to the mystery truth given to Paul.”

From Missouri:

“Although your study on James 2 was several issues back, I wanted to mention that you did a fine job on this chapter. Or at least *I* thought you did!”

From Colorado:

“I’ve been consistent in ordering and distributing your literature, but very inconsistent in my giving. I want to make a monthly gift, and will look for areas that I can cut back in order to do so. In fact, it could be fun to see what all can be cut back for the Lord’s benefit.” (Who says Christians don’t know how to have fun!—RK).

From Nigeria:

“I was fortunate to come across your monthly magazine through a friend... You are one of the battle axes raised by God to break the stronghold of falsehood and heresy. May the grace of God on your life never diminish so that you can fulfill your divine mandate in every land and tongue.”

From the Internet:

“My family has been rightly dividing the Word for three generations, praise the Lord. With the loss of my grandparents, Pastor & Mrs. Roscoe Morrison, we have been without leadership, and I am so afraid that the next generations will be left behind. Please help us.”

From Washington:

“Here is another gift for this wonderful ministry. I am so grateful to share; thank you for letting me be a part.”

From Oregon:

“I was so encouraged to hear of the sacrificial giving of the saints that I want to join the chorus of joyful hearts. I know if all took part even in a small way, there would be no lack of seed for the sower, and the harvest would be great.” (Even the most vocally-challenged can join this chorus!—RK).

“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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Paul's Prayers from Prison (Part 8)

Colossians 2:1-3

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

While our text is not actually a part of Paul's prayer for the Colossians, it is sort of a capsule statement in which he states the reason for his prayer found in chapter 1:9-12. This passage also reveals the importance of verses 13-29, which provide pertinent information for increasing our knowledge of God and His eternal purpose which He has accomplished in Jesus Christ our Lord (also see Ephesians 3:8-12).

Paul's mention of conflict in verse one refers to his concern that the believers at Colosse, Laodicea, and all who had not actually met him in person (which includes all believers of today) might go into doctrinal error. He recognized a spiritual danger that caused him anguish of soul. His desire was that believers would be encouraged in their hearts and knit together (united) in love. This concerns not only the unity "in Christ" all believers share as

members of the Body of Christ, but also the unity of the Spirit as outlined in Ephesians 4:3-6: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Understanding this unity results in the attaining of eternal riches through the full assurance of understanding, which comes through the knowledge of the mystery of the Dispensational of the Age of Grace as has been revealed to and through the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:1-12; Colossians 1:24-27).

All that is truly valuable is eternal in nature, and can only be found in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom God has accomplished that which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world, according to the counsel of His own will.

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.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention Grace Youth! The 2nd annual Grace Youth Conference will be held December 29-31. This year's speaker, Pastor Rob Nix of *Hilltop Bible Church* in Crestwood, Illinois, will address the theme "*Addicted to the Ministry*" (1 Cor. 16:15). The conference will take place at the Gruenhagen Hall on the UW Oshkosh Campus, and the cost is \$90.00 per person. Teens should come expecting three days of intense training regarding ways in which they can serve the Lord. For additional information, contact Pastor Paul Turner at 549 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, WI 54901, or phone: (920) 231-1499, e-mail: gbcoshkosh@tds.net.

Pastor Steve Hamilton has accepted a call to the pastorate of *Community Bible Church* in Lena, Wisconsin. After years in the ministry, Pastor Hamilton is "not a novice," and so we look forward to the Lord's blessing on the union of this veteran pastor and this solid Grace assembly.

Faith Bible Church of Prattville, Alabama is now looking for a pastor in the wake of Pastor Hamilton's departure. For more information, please contact Richard Lewis at 334-365-1115. Why not join the members of *Faith Bible Church* in prayer as they search for a new shepherd for their flock.

If at first you don't succeed in getting a reply from us via e-mail, try, try again. Our Spamcatcher sometimes catches more than just spam. While it allows us to review the letters that it screens out, it catches nearly 2,000 e-mailings a week. Reviewing that much spam weekly is not a good use of the time that the Lord says that we should be redeeming, and would defeat the purpose of having a Spamcatcher! So if your e-mails go unanswered, rest assured that we are not ignoring you. Just phone us (262-255-4750) or FAX us (262-255-4195) instead, and we thank you in advance for your patience.

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

*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Ken and Barb Wardius. The *Milwaukee Breakwater Lighthouse* is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Built in 1926, this light was one of the last constructed on the Great Lakes. Unlike most pier and breakwater lights, which were serviced by a keeper who lived onshore and walked the pier to service the light, this structure was manned with a live-in crew.

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“Thanksgiving is good, but thanksgiving is better.”

—Matthew Henry

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