

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

November 2009



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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

Dear Friends in Christ,

Recently my son Jesse and I shared an experience that touched my heart. It involves our visit to the *Grace Community Chapel* in Leitchfield, Kentucky this past September. I had been invited to come down and speak at some special meetings being held at the church, and was of course more than happy to accept.

As is our custom when we travel to speaking engagements, we arrived a day early to ensure that we would not have to rush cross-country to get to the first meeting on time, in the event of car trouble or other unforeseen delay. Since Jesse was along, we spent early Saturday taking the two hour tour of Mammoth Cave, the world's largest cave, and in general enjoying the scenic countryside of rural northwest Kentucky.

When Saturday night finally arrived, we took the Green River ferry (much to my son's delight and interest!) and began to make our way to *Grace Community Chapel*. The church is located in the middle of nowhere, or at least it seemed that way to this suburban-grown pastor. Upon our arrival, Pastor Floyd Frank greeted us warmly, and made us feel immediately at home. The church building itself reminded me much of my own church, small and modest, but very clean and neat. We were greeted by each member of the small congregation, all of whom made us feel very welcome.

The meetings went well, with spirited singing, special music, and out-of-town visitors that encouraged the hearts of this small congregation. The church hosted a luncheon on Sunday that enabled me to hear how the people had learned the grace message, and how the church got started. Before we knew it, it was time to say good-bye and head for home.


What touched my heart about this church is hard to explain. No single event from the meetings stands out in my memory. In every way it was just another opportunity to visit a local grace church, and rejoice with them in the riches of God's grace. Maybe it was because the congregation was smaller than most, but I went away greatly encouraged by the dedication of these saints, and their heartfelt commitment to the message of grace. Every Sunday morning, each of them drives past a goodly number of far more glamorous church buildings sporting larger congregations in order to find their way to a place where the truth is taught, rightly divided. And I am firmly convinced that their support of the truth will not go unnoticed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



Joyful Thank Offerings

By Pastor
Ricky Kurth



These days it seems most Christians aren't satisfied with "just" being saved. Many also covet the health and wealth promised to Israel if they were good. But grace believers who have carefully studied all that we have in Christ never cease "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). This is because, as Pastor Stam has well said in his comments on Romans 8:32, salvation is "the gift that includes all others."

Under the Law, a man could simply *say* he was thankful, but if he was *really* thankful, he also brought a costly *thank offering* (Lev. 7:11-15). Today, while God is no longer interested in *animal* sacrifices, a truly thankful believer will present *his body* to God as a *living sacrifice*. This kind of sacrifice costs us our time, our labor and our money, but it is only "*reasonable*" that we afford Him this service (Rom. 12:1) in light of all that He has done for us in Christ.

Psalm 69:30's reference to thanksgiving is especially significant since this is a psalm about Calvary (v. 21 cf. John 19:29,30). Because of this, we believe Verse 30 is a prediction of the thanksgiving the Lord gave in the very shadow of the Cross (Luke 22:19). We conclude from this that the Lord was actually *thankful* for the opportunity to serve His Father by giving His life a sacrifice for our sins. How thankful was He? Psalm 69:30 predicted He would be thankful "*with a song*," something confirmed by Mark 14:26. This suggests we should similarly present our bodies as living sacrifices to God with joy and singing, and not with grumbling and complaining!

Thanksgiving is a great way to edify other believers, but only if they can understand it (I Cor. 14:16,17). While God once gave the gift of tongues to help with this, that gift has been withdrawn. But thankfully, like the universal languages of math and music, *every* believer can understand and be edified when they see us walking a walk that is "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" in grateful appreciation for all He has done for us (Col. 1:10).

In closing, it should be pointed out that the thank offering was a "*free will*" offering (Lev. 22:29). Even under the Law, God did not *require* His people to be thankful. He has always rather longed that thank offerings would be the spontaneous response of our hearts to His goodness. May this be the sentiment that simply *overwhelms* us as we gather around the table this Thanksgiving Day.

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Revelation 2:8-11

By Paul M. Sadler

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”

—Rev. 2:8

As the Apostle John was standing on the balcony, as it were, overlooking the events of the future tribulation period, he is now instructed to write to the pastor of the church in Smyrna. While the message the Lord is about to deliver was primarily meant for this assembly, it also was intended for the other churches in Asia Minor who were about to experience many of the same things (Rev. 2:17a).

It is noteworthy that the name *Smyrna* means “myrrh, a bitter, but fragrant perfume with which they embalmed the dead” in biblical times. You will recall how Joseph and Nicodemus used

myrrh and aloes when they prepared our Lord’s body for burial after His crucifixion; they did so in accordance with Jewish burial procedures (John 19:38-40). So it is closely associated with death! It is also important to keep in mind how the priests in the Old Testament were instructed to include *myrrh* (stacte) as part of the ingredients that made up the incense they burned on the golden altar of incense, which was well pleasing to the Lord (Ex. 30:34-38). More on this in a moment!

In the introductory remarks to each of the seven churches, John begins with a statement that the Son of Man made in chapter one when He was standing in the midst of the assemblies. Each of the statements perfectly fits the church to whom it was made. For example:

Admonition

Vision of the Son of Man:

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man” (Rev. 1:12,13).

Ephesus:

“These things saith He...who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 2:1).

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place” (Rev. 2:4,5).

Martyrdom

Vision of the Son of Man:

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hades*] and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

Smyrna:

“These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive” (Rev. 2:8).

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Chastisement

Vision of the Son of Man:

“And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword” (Rev. 1:16).

Pergamos:

“These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges” (Rev. 2:12).

“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Rev. 2:16).

Judgment

Vision of the Son of Man:

“And His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” (Rev. 1:14,15).

Thyatira:

“These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass” (Rev. 2:18).

“And I will kill her children [unbelieving followers of Jezebel], with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works” (Rev. 2:23).

Security

Vision of the Son of Man:

“These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God [special class of angels], and the seven stars [seven ministers of the gospel of the kingdom]” (Rev. 1:4,16,20).

Sardis:

“These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars [seven ministers of the gospel of the kingdom]” (Rev. 3:1).

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5).

Eternal Kingdom

Vision of the Son of Man:

“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

Philadelphia:

“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7).

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God” (Rev. 3:12).

The Judge

Vision of the Son of Man:

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5).

Laodicea:

“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock [as Judge—James 5:9]: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

TRUSTING GOD IN TRYING TIMES

“On his march through Asia Minor, Alexander the Great fell dangerously ill. His physicians were afraid to treat him because if they did not succeed, the Macedonian army would suspect them of malpractice [the consequence of which would have been death]. Only one, Philip the Acarnanian, was willing to take the risk, as he had confidence in both the king’s friendship and his own medications.

“While the medicine was being prepared, Alexander received a letter from an enemy of Philip’s that accused the physician of having been bribed by the Persian king to poison his master. Alexander read the letter and slipped it under his pillow without showing it to anyone. When Philip entered the tent with the medicine, Alexander took the cup from him, at the same time handing Philip the letter. While the physician was reading it, Alexander calmly drank the contents of the cup. Horrified and indignant at the malicious misrepresentation, Philip threw himself down at the king’s bedside, but Alexander assured him he had complete confidence in his honor. After three days, the king was well enough again to appear before his army.”

If men place this type of confidence in one another, which is commendable, how much more so it should be true in the affairs of God, especially when we consider what lies ahead for those who enter the coming tribulation. Those times will require *total* trust and dependence on God, as we are going to see.

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9).

Here the Lord acknowledges the *works* of this assembly, which are many and varied under the kingdom gospel. One such requirement will be to faithfully keep the *Sabbath*. In fact, the Lord instructed those who would endure the coming day of the Lord that they were to pray the abomination of desolation does not take place on the Sabbath (Matt. 24:15-20).

The “abomination of desolation” is when the Anti-Christ enters the temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be God. When they witness this unsettling event, they are to flee to the mountains. The problem is this, a Sabbath day’s journey was a little less than a mile, which, of course, would not be far enough to get out of harm’s way. This particular event will mark the beginning of a great holocaust in Israel, as the pursuing death machine of the Anti-Christ sweeps across the land. This is why they were to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath.

The faithful at Smyrna will also suffer *tribulation* and *poverty*, which will be commonplace in that day. To openly name the name of Christ in the future tribulation will cost many their livelihoods. In addition, under the third Seal Judgment the demonic rider of the black horse will bring *famine* to the earth, so much so that it will take nearly an entire day’s wages to purchase a couple of loaves of bread (Rev. 6:5,6).

As the time of Jacob's Trouble intensifies the Anti-Christ will require the mark of the beast. Without this mark no one will be able to buy or sell; however, those who receive it will be eternally damned (Rev. 13:16-18 cf. 14:9-11). Those believers who somehow escaped *poverty* up to this point will be plunged into it practically overnight. Thankfully, God will providentially intervene on behalf of His people and supernaturally provide for them as He did during the wilderness wanderings. They will literally pray in that day, "give us this day our daily bread," in fulfillment of the Lord's prayer. Thanks be to God that we are living in the dispensation of Grace and will never encounter the mark of the beast.



In view of the persecutions and poverty these kingdom saints will suffer at Smyrna, the Lord reminds them, "but thou art rich." Rich, you see, because they were *laying up treasures* in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20). For their faithful service in keeping the commandments of God and taking a stand for Christ,

they will be richly rewarded in the coming Kingdom when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory.

To add insult to injury, the Lord reveals here that the saints at Smyrna will also suffer at the hands of their own countrymen, as He did. "And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Once again, it is very important to remember, and remember well, that unlike the Body of Christ, Israel, nationally, will *again* be made up of believers and unbelievers, as this passage clearly teaches.

This looks back to the parable of the wheat and tares. The "tares" made reference to in the parable were "the children of the wicked one" (Matt. 13:38). This phraseology is never used of unbelievers in general, but is reserved for a specific group known as *religious* unbelievers (John 8:38-44). In time past, these "tares" were the religious Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and hypocrites who themselves will never enter the kingdom and barred the way for others to enter due to their self-righteous requirements. They piously made long prayers in the houses of widows hoping to receive gifts to fill their coffers. These workers of the evil one would travel great distances to win one proselyte to their religious system and make him "twofold more the child of hell" than themselves (Matt. 23:13-15).

There will be a similar group of Jewish religious leaders and their followers at Smyrna who will deceive the unsuspecting and oppress those who place their faith

in the Messiah. The Lord exposes them as those who are of the *synagogue of Satan*, and He predicted the following near the end of His earthly ministry: “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2).

MARTYRDOM

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

During the time of Christ, when the Lord was ministering upon the earth, Satan opposed the advancement of the kingdom gospel by instigating brutal acts of torture, imprisonments, martyrdom, demon possession (Legion) persecutions, etc. Today, Christ is carrying out His heavenly ministry to the Church; therefore the members of the Body of Christ are engaged in a spiritual warfare against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. The theater of warfare today is a battle for the mind (Eph. 6:11-18).

After the Rapture, this warfare will revert back to earth due to the fact that Christ is going to overthrow the kingdom of Satan in the coming tribulation and establish His kingdom of righteousness. Knowing that his time is short, the Devil will pull out all the stops to again hinder the advancement of the gospel of the kingdom. The attacks that took place during the time of Christ are going to pale in comparison

when Satan unleashes his fury on these future kingdom saints, as the chapters that follow in the Apocalypse clearly indicate.

The Lord reveals to the saints at Smyrna that some of their number were about to go through a fiery trial. Satan will be instrumental in causing an uprising against them resulting in their imprisonment for a period of “ten days,” during which time their faith will be tested. Some interpret these *ten days* to be symbolic of the supposed ten years of persecution under Roman Emperor Diocletian beginning in 284 A.D.; however, there is no credible evidence whatsoever that this was the case. Even if this were true, the persecution would have been of the Church, the Body of Christ, not the Kingdom Church which is under consideration in our passage.



We are to always take a literal interpretation of the Scriptures unless the context demands otherwise. There is no reason to believe that we are to take the *ten days* to be any thing other than “ten literal days.” It is merely a prediction of things to come. Of course, we are reminded of a related period of time in the life of Daniel when he endured a similar trial.

When King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel he returned to Babylon bringing with him the spoils of victory, which included those of the captivity to serve in his kingdom. Old Nebuchadnezzar took the best and the brightest of those he captured to stand in his court, four of whom were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These subjects were taught the learning and language of the Chaldeans so they could serve the king as advisors. To ensure these Hebrew children developed properly the king ordered that they be given a portion of his food and drink.

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank” (Dan. 1:8).

In addition to the king’s food being unclean according to the law, at least for the most part, it also had been offered to idols before being given to Daniel to eat. This set in motion a fiery trial for the young Hebrew who *refused* to compromise his faith. Daniel’s refusal to partake of the king’s portion placed not only his life in danger, but also the life of the prince of the eunuchs whom Nebuchadnezzar had placed over the Hebrew children. If those Hebrew children weren’t well nourished when they stood before the king, heads could roll, literally!

Daniel requested of the overseer Melzar that he and his companions be permitted to eat vegetables and drink water for *ten days* to demonstrate that they would do as well or better on this diet, than eating the king’s portion (Dan. 1:11-16). After ten days the

Hebrew children passed the test and were fairer and fatter than their counterparts who ate the king’s food.

Daniel trusted God that He would provide a way of deliverance; this will also be true of the future tribulation saints at Smyrna, but with a completely different outcome. In their case they are to be “faithful unto death” to which the Lord adds, “And I will give thee a crown of life.” These instructions are totally foreign to the Body of Christ simply because Paul tells us to, “present [our] bodies a **living** sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [our] reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

On the other hand, many of these kingdom saints are going to suffer *martyrdom* for the cause of Christ; they loved not their lives even unto death. These are the souls that the Apostle John saw in the fifth seal who “were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Rev. 6:9). This church is properly named seeing that Smyrna, as we have noted, means *myrrh*, that bittersweet fragrance that was well pleasing to the Lord. Hence, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

The deliverance for these martyrs who trusted God will come in the first resurrection when they are raised from the dead to enter into the blessings of the kingdom. This *hope* is based on the Lord’s opening statement to this assembly that He is “first and the last, **which was dead, and is alive.**” In other words, Christ conquered death and rose again; as a result, He has promised these martyrs who place their trust in

Him that they too will be raised at the last day. The *crown of life*, then, is a resurrected life that is forevermore!

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11).

Deception will be a powerful tool of Satan in the coming tribulation, which will make it extremely difficult to discern who is saved and who is counterfeit, especially since they will be operating under a performance based system (Matt. 7:21-23). Only the *overcomers* will escape

the second death. According to the Scriptures, the *second death* is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (II Thes. 1:7-9 cf. Rev. 20:14,15). But who are these overcomers? The Apostle John tells us in his writings—they are those who are **born again**—those who believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (I John 5:4,5).

To Be Continued!



Question Box

“Ephesians 3:21 sounds like the church in the world will never end?”

“Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

“World without end” here is a figure of speech, used elsewhere only in Isaiah 45:17, where it helps to know that Old Testament verses frequently say one thing in the first part of the verse, then repeat the thought using different words in the latter part. With that in mind, “*ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded*” is another way of saying “*Israel shall be saved*,” and “*world without end*” is another way of saying “*everlasting*.”

But Ephesians 3:21 is not saying “the church which is His body” (Eph. 1:22,23) will be in the world everlastingly. It is rather a doxology, one in which Paul expresses the heartfelt desire that *God be glorified* “in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (cf. Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20, etc.). *God will be glorified* in us “through Christ Jesus” in eternity future (Eph. 2:7). May we be “filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” in the meantime (Phil. 1:11). —Pastor Kurth



Standing, Walking, and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

In a way the Christian life is a *stand*; in another way it is a *walk*; in still another way it is a *race*.

Many who have taken a stand for Christ have not yet learned to *walk* “as becometh saints.” They are saved and even experience, in some measure, the joy and assurance of salvation, but their practices cause others to stumble and hinder their own effectiveness as witnesses for the Lord who died to save them.

Others in turn have learned to walk as Christians, living consistent, godly lives, but they have never put enough into it so that it might be said of them that they are *running*. They have never come to look upon the Christian life as a *race*.

By God’s grace we want to *stand, walk, yea run* for Him.

No one in Scripture has more to say about all this than the Apostle Paul, the God-given example¹ for believers today.

STANDING

Thank God that He can cause the fallen sons of Adam to stand!

In I Corinthians 15:1 the Apostle Paul writes of “*the gospel... wherein ye stand,*” and in Romans 5:2 of “*this grace wherein we stand,*” while in Galatians 5:1 he bids us: “*Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...*”

The apostle deals with the believer’s stand under three general headings as follows:

Stand Fast in the Lord

Philippians 4:1, “*Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so **stand fast in the Lord**, my dearly beloved.*”

There was a time when the writer thought that this blessed verse was merely an exhortation to stand fast *by His help*, but we have come to see much more in it now.

God has given us a position *in Christ*. The apostle tells us in Ephesians 1:6 that we have been “*accepted in the Beloved*” while in Colossians 2:9,10 he says, “*For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him....*”

If God, then, sees us in Christ, *let us take our stand there.*

Would men require of us works for salvation or have us append to our salvation works once required? Would they tell us what more we must do to belong to *the Church* or to be *complete* as Christians? Let us tell them that we have been accepted in the Beloved and that God sees us complete *in Him*. Let us “*stand fast in the Lord.*”

Would the world allure us or Satan tempt us to doubt our salvation by pointing to our failures? Let us remember that God, in His own sovereign grace, hath made us accepted in Christ and let us “*stand fast in the Lord.*”

Stand Fast in the Faith

In I Corinthians 16:13 our apostle goes a step farther:

“*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*”

This follows naturally.

It is blessed to know that God accepts us in the Beloved and to take our stand in Christ, but it is more blessed to know *why*—to be “*established in the faith,*” to have “*the full assurance of understanding.*”

By “*the faith,*” of course, is meant *the doctrine*, and it must be borne in mind that when Paul speaks of “*the faith*” he refers, not to the message of John the Baptist or of Christ on earth or

even of Peter at Pentecost, but to “*the faith which should afterwards be revealed*”—that glorious message which is the capstone of divine revelation, the “**one faith**” of Ephesians 4:5, which he calls elsewhere “*My gospel*” and “*the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me*” (Rom. 16:25; II Tim. 1:13).

It is this message of grace and glory which our adversary so bitterly hates and so violently opposes.

Stand Fast in the Fight

Little wonder that the apostle says in Philippians 1:27:

“*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*”²



Depend upon it—where there is faith there is a fight. Satan will see to that.

So many of God’s dear people fail to realize this. They gladly accept His love and grace, but draw back when called upon to stand in battle for Him. They do not seem to realize that God has *committed to us* His precious deposit—

the most glorious message ever proclaimed on earth—and that we are responsible to guard and defend it.

They do not feel keenly enough their responsibility to keep God’s message of grace pure and unsullied. While Satan continues to use even Church leaders to adulterate and neutralize that powerful message, they allow the process to go on without a protest. They say “Let us not have trouble. Anything to keep peace.”—as though our adversary would ever let us proclaim God’s truth in peace! In common parlance, “*They do not have what it takes.*”

Timothy, though such an earnest man of God, had some of this timidity about him and Paul seems concerned about it as he writes exhorting him:

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (II Tim. 1:8).

“Fight the good fight of [the] faith” (I Tim. 6:12).

“Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (II Tim. 2:3).

Surely in these crucial times we need particular grace lest we withdraw from the fight or—God forbid!—fail to see why there should be any fight at all.

It is remarkable that “*we have this treasure in earthen vessels,*” but God has done this “*that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us,*” and weak as we are in ourselves, He will enable us to “keep” that sacred deposit “by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (II Cor. 4:7; II Tim. 1:14).

By God’s grace, then, let us stand fast *in the Lord—in the faith—in the fight.*

WALKING

But the Christian life is more than a stand—it is a *walk*. The epistles of Paul have much to say about the believer’s walk, or manner of life.³



We can often tell by a man’s walk whose son he is, and we should walk so that men about us will know that we are the children of God. One thing is certain—our stand for the truth will mean little if our conduct does not harmonize with our testimony.

Walking Differently

In Ephesians 2:1,2 the apostle reminds us that we were once “*dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked....*” But in Romans 6:4 he says that we have been raised to “*walk in newness of life.*”

There should be a radical change in our conduct after we are saved. If there is not there must of necessity be some doubt as to any resurrection to “newness of life.”

It is true that we are not saved by good works, but it is equally true that we have been “*created*

in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,” as the apostle tells us in Ephesians 2:10. Or, as his letter to the Galatians has it, **“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”** (Gal. 5:25). This, of course, will include walking “by faith,” “in love,” “honestly”—“not after the flesh.”

Walking Worthily

“Walk worthy of the Lord!”

What an injunction!

How can we, poor creatures of the dust, ever walk worthy of Him? Yet that is the standard (Col. 1:10). We have been accepted *in Him*, given a position *in Him*, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies *in Him*. Surely it should be our constant prayer and aim to walk worthy of Him. Moreover, if we fail in this we not only dishonor Him, but bring into contempt our own high position in Christ.

“I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1).

Walking Circumspectly

It is not only for the Lord’s sake and for the sake of our high and holy calling that we should attend to our walk, but for the sake of the lost about us. In Colossians 4:5 and Ephesians 5:15-17 Paul says:

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

Note that in these passages the emphasis is not so much on walking *virtuously* as on walking *wisely*. The days are evil and no one knows when God will close the day of grace and pour out His wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world. “See then,” says the apostle, “that ye walk *circumspectly*”—the word means *accurately* or *pointedly*—twice it is translated “diligently.” It means to be definitely aiming at something. And he goes on, **“not as fools, but as wise, redeeming [buying up] the time, because the days are evil.”**

When he speaks of “understanding what the will of the Lord is,” we dare say he does not refer to God’s will concerning certain particulars in our lives as we are so prone to imagine, but to His own eternal purpose—His will. Paul says that God has “made known unto us the mystery of *His will*” (Eph. 1:9), that we might be “filled with the knowledge of *His will*” (Col. 1:9) and so “stand perfect and complete in all the *will of God*” (Col. 4:12).

We are living in the tense moments between man’s declaration of war on God and God’s counter-declaration. In His matchless love and mercy God has held off the day of vengeance and has left us here as ambassadors, offering reconciliation by grace to His enemies everywhere. But He gives us no hint as to how long this period of grace will continue. We should be keenly aware of this and should walk “circumspectly,” accurately, pointedly—taking

careful aim—not as fools, but as wise, understanding the will of the Lord, buying up every opportunity because the days are evil and the time probably short.

RUNNING

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1).

Running, of course, takes more energy than walking—especially running a *race*.

The Race

Oh, may we not be satisfied just to *stand* for God, or even to *walk* as His children. May we look upon the Christian life as a *race*. May it be our daily desire and determination to cover as much ground, to *accomplish* as much as possible in the little time we have! May we put *everything* into it!

Apart from the Lord Jesus, who was more than man, we surely have no better example here than the Apostle Paul.

Speaking of “attaining” to the resurrection life of Christ—knowing the power of His resurrection—the apostle says:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting these things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

“I press toward the mark [strain toward the goal] for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13,14).

The Goal

This advice is important. When a contestant in a race is foolish enough to look back or even to allow his mind to be diverted to those behind or about him his speed is sure to be reduced.

The goal! He must have the goal—the goal alone—in mind as he runs!

So it is with the believer. If he looks back at his failures he will become discouraged. If he looks back at his “successes” he will become puffed up. Both are bad. He must be single-minded. He must do **“this one thing”—“forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before”** he must **“strain toward the goal!”**⁴



Though the race be long, he must run with patience, all the while *“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”* (Heb. 12:2).

The Prize

Surely it is not amiss to bring the matter of the prize in here.

In straining for the goal, of course, we strain for the prize. Philippians 3:14 reads, *“I strain toward the goal, for the prize*

of the high calling [or upward calling] of God in Christ Jesus.”

We do not believe that this “upward calling” refers to the rapture but to his being called into the heavenlies with its spiritual blessings. Otherwise he would be racing *toward* it but not *for* it. In other words, the experimental appropriation of his blessings in Christ—that is the prize he is determined to win. He is speaking of *experiencing the resurrection life of Christ*—of laying hold on that for which Christ laid hold on him (Ver. 12). This is what he seeks to “*attain unto*” or *arrive at* (Verses 10 and 11).

In this we should follow him, for in verse 17 he says, “**Brethren be followers together of me.**”

Experiencing the resurrection life of Christ and our position with Him in the heavenlies—there is a prize worth running for!

Have we entered the race? Then let us put everything we have unto it. Let us be single-minded, forgetting things behind or about us, putting every other consideration aside to *win the race*.

Let us live disciplined lives. Let us “*lay aside every weight*”—everything that might retard our progress. The apostle writes to the Christians at Corinth, the scene of the great Corinthian games:

*“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but **one** receiveth the prize? **So run, that ye may obtain.***


“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown [a fading wreath], but we an incorruptible [an unfading one]” (I Cor. 9:24,25).

It is a blessed fact that in the Christian race more than one may receive the prize, but the apostle’s point is, “*So run*” as if only one were to receive the prize—“*that ye may obtain.*”

It is touching to read in II Timothy 4:7,8, Paul’s last allusion to the race course:

*“I have fought a good fight, **I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:***

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

As long as we are in the flesh we shall always have to say, as even Paul did: “I have not yet attained; I am not yet perfect,” but the return of our blessed Lord draws nearer, and if we run with patience the race that is set before us we shall not only reach the goal, but will receive *a crown of righteousness*, His rich reward to all those who have showed, by the very fact that they entered the race, that they love His appearing. 

Endnotes

1. The Lord Jesus Christ did not, as the Modernists teach, come into this world to be our Example. He came to be our *Savior*. It is Paul who, both in his salvation and his Christian life and testimony, is given to us in a particular sense as a pattern or example. (Read carefully, I Tim. 1:15,16; Eph. 3:8,9; Phil. 3:12-17; II Thes. 3:7-9; I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; I Thes. 1:6). This is not, of course, to deny that our Lord, in *certain matters*, was an example to others nor that we are exhorted to be examples to our brethren.
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The Measure of the Ministry

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(A series of messages delivered at the commencement ceremony of the *Dakota Bible Institute* last May)

When we began to consider the subject of the ministry, we looked in the concordance for the words *ministry*, *minister*, etc., and found an inordinate amount of occurrences of such words in the first six chapters of II Corinthians. After studying these chapters we realized that whether purposely or inadvertently, the Apostle Paul was addressing the theme of the *ministry* in this passage. With that in mind, we plan to skim through these chapters, calling special attention to what God has to say here about this important subject.

Should the reader be thinking, “Why should I be interested in this series; I’m not a minister, neither am I going into the ministry,” we would ask if you have ever profited from studies in Paul’s *pastoral epistles*. We believe that just as husbands can benefit from reading Paul’s instructions to wives, and vice versa, “*all Scripture is...profitable*” for *every* believer (II Tim. 3:16) and *everyone* can benefit from reading about the ministry. Besides, the way God *calls* men to the ministry is *through His Word!* You may not be thinking about the ministry *now*, but just wait until you hear what God has to say about the most important profession in the world!

The first thing you need to know if you are going into the ministry is that *Paul is an apostle by the will of God!* (II Cor. 1:1). It is also crucial you understand that while Peter was the apostle of the

circumcision, Paul is “*the apostle of the Gentiles*” (Gal. 2:7,8; Rom. 11:13). How significant is this distinction? Without it, you can’t even be sure what the simple gospel of salvation is, since Peter demanded the washing of water baptism “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21), while Paul preached “the washing of *regeneration*” (Titus 3:5). What’s more, the only way to know “how ye ought to walk and please God” is to recognize the apostleship of Paul in the dispensation of grace (I Thes. 4:1,2).

The next thing you need to know in the ministry is that your message should be a message of *grace* and *peace* (II Cor. 1:2), not *condemnation* and *guilt*, as is found in too many pulpits today. A minister must be prepared to *comfort* God’s people with His grace and His peace, the very comfort with which He comforts us (v. 3,4). God doesn’t just comfort us with His grace and peace to make us *comfortable*, He comforts us to make us *comforters*. And no one has more opportunity to give “hope” to the people of God with the comfort of the Scriptures than the pastor of a local church (Rom. 15:4).

When unbelievers need comfort, they often look to what is called “comfort food.” During our nation’s present financial distress, the economy is down, but the comfort food industry is booming! God, however, wants *His* people comforted with *the food of His Word* (Jer. 15:16). Jeremiah spoke these words in the middle of a *drought* (14:1), and yet he says that God’s Word brought him not just comfort, but “*joy and rejoicing*.” Go into the ministry and you too can be used of God to bring joyful relief to the afflicted in even the most trying of times. What a calling!

By the way, nothing will comfort *you* in *your* troubles more than comforting others in theirs. When you are suffering, sitting and wallowing in your misery will only lead to more misery. The secret of a happy life is to rather find others who are *more* miserable and comfort them. That’s why the ministry is the most blessed profession on earth.



Having said that, we feel it is only fair to warn you that if you go into the ministry, there is going to be “*trouble*,” as the Apostle Paul can tell you (II Cor. 1:8). Why? Well, did you ever see the haunting video of our country’s last day in Viet Nam? As a helicopter hovered over our embassy to airlift our personnel to safety, South Vietnamese who had helped us crowded the rooftop, *begging* to be taken to the United States as well. And you know why. After we pulled out, the Viet Cong moved in, filled with hatred for us. But they couldn’t reach us once we were sitting safely at home at Uncle Sam’s right hand, so they took it

out on those who sided with us. Similarly, the world and Satan's host who hate the Lord Jesus Christ cannot vent their rage on Him as He now sits at God's right hand, so they take it out on believers who side with Him—*especially* His ministers.

Thus far in this country, this "trouble" has not yet raged unto "death" as it did in Paul's day (II Cor. 1:9), but the day may come when standing for Christ may endanger *your* life as well. If that day comes, God's people will need men to lead them who are not only personally prepared to meet such challenging times, but who are able to spiritually equip others to meet them as well. *Can you be such a man?*

If it be asked why God allows us to endure such trouble, it is so we learn like Paul "*that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God*" (v. 9). Hey, if the great apostle Paul didn't dare trust in *himself*, do you think maybe you shouldn't either? But while we can't trust ourselves, we *can* trust a God "*which raiseth the dead*" (v. 9), and we all share in the blessed hope of the Rapture (I Thes. 4:13-18).

Psychologists have a "trust exercise" where they instruct people to fall backward and trust that the person standing behind will catch them. If the world can learn to trust a man who can catch them when they fall, surely we can learn to trust a God who can raise us when we die! Anti-terrorist agents know it is hard to stop a man who is not afraid to die. We challenge the reader to *become a man of God like that!*

The problem in Corinth is that they had begun to *doubt* the resurrection of the dead (I Cor. 15:12-50). This brought the ministry in those persecuted days to a *screeching halt*, for "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:19). Do you see how *doctrinal* errors have a *practical* effect? We point this out because in your ministry, many will tell you not to preach doctrine, because as everyone knows, "doctrine is not very practical!" In the face of this we *insist*, we resolutely *declare*, that Bible doctrine is the *only* foundation for a solid Christian life, and it is the minister's *profound* privilege and responsibility to equip God's people with sound Bible doctrine that they might meet the challenges of life.

Now trusting God did not mean that Paul didn't *pray*, nor did it mean he didn't ask others to pray for him (II Cor. 1:11). And listen, if *the Apostle Paul* was not ashamed to ask for prayer, ministers shouldn't be either! Especially since like Paul, today's ministers must deal with human pride, something Paul was concerned about overcoming here.

You see, the "gift" he asked them to pray about was the collection he had made among the Gentiles for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26). Knowing that pride could possibly keep those Jerusalem Jews from accepting help from Gentiles, Paul asked the Romans to pray that it wouldn't (Rom. 15:30,31). And here he asks the Corinthians to join them in praying that rather "thanks may be given by many" among the Jews because of this gift.

Obviously, overcoming pride was a problem in Paul's ministry. And since the "only" source of *contention* is pride (Prov. 13:10), today's minister will also have to deal with pride, because he is guaranteed to face a lot of contention in the ministry! At such times, prayer that God's Word will work in men's hearts should dominate *our* hearts.

Of course, if you are going to be in the ministry, it goes without saying you are going to need a good clean "*conscience*," like the one possessed by Paul (II Cor. 1:12). The Apostle here was being accused of "misappropriating" money from the gift meant for the poor saints, yet his conscience was clear. Likewise if you want to represent God in the ministry, your conduct must also be *above reproach*. Only then will such accusations cause you "*rejoicing*" (v. 12) rather than the guilt and regret such accusations cause men whose conscience is *not* so clear.

It reminds us of how Balaam wanted to "die the death of the righteous" (Num. 23:10), but he didn't want to *live the life of the righteous* in order to attain that blessed end! Likewise, if you want a conscience as clear as Paul's, you have to live *the conscientious life* that he lived (Acts 23:1; 24:16; II Tim. 1:3). A life lived in such a manner is its own reward, giving the minister sweet sleep at night (Prov. 3:24), and the most tranquil life imaginable amid all the turbulence of life.

It is especially important that the minister live "in simplicity and godly sincerity...*in the world*" (II Cor. 1:12), having a good testimony before the unsaved (Rom. 12:17; I Thes. 4:12). Since they can't successfully attack our unassailable message, they *will* attack *the messenger*.

"...Paul closes this chapter with the best job description of the ministry ever given..."

But how sad is it that in writing to these Corinthians, Paul also has to add that he had to have a godly conversation "*more abundantly to you-ward*" (II Cor. 1:12). That is, he had to be more careful around *believers* than the previously mentioned *unbelievers*! We wish we could tell prospective ministers that such overly-critical carnal Corinthian types are as extinct as the dodo bird, but such is not the case.

It is also sad Paul has to go on to affirm his love for the Corinthians (v. 13-19), and even sadder when we learn *why*. He had promised to visit them, and he hadn't come, and so now they doubted his love for them! If that sounds like a complaint a child might make, it should be remembered the Corinthians were "*babes*" (I Cor. 3:1). And while we wish we could tell prospective ministers that all God's people today are spiritually mature and above such childishness, ministers even in grace churches know they have to put in their time in the nursery, so to speak, handling such saints with kid gloves while walking on eggshells. We are sorry to have to give such a discouraging view of the ministry, but honesty demands it, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed!

Spiritually mature believers know that when the demands of the ministry keep their pastor from giving them personal attention that this does *not* mean he doesn't love them! They likewise understand that the faithful man of God proves his love for his people in much the same way that a faithful mother shows her love for her family, by providing nourishing spiritual meals that give the strength that is needed to meet the challenges of life.



The man of God for his part must remember that whenever possible, promises made should be promises kept, for this reason: when Paul closes this discussion by insisting that “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen” (v. 20), it would appear from this that the Corinthians had concluded that if

Paul didn't keep *his* promises, maybe God wouldn't keep *His*. This too sounds immature and childish, but again is typical of these babes in Christ. The reason *parents* need to keep promises made to children is because children think that God is like their parents, and the reason pastors need to keep promises made to their people is because spiritually immature children of God are often tempted to think the same about their pastor. And so we have to say that you shouldn't even *think about* the ministry unless you are prepared to represent God in literally every area of your life.

Next, there was a rumor circulating in the Corinthian church which said that Paul was *afraid* to come to Corinth (I Cor. 4:18), a rumor Paul here crushes by revealing the *real* reason he hadn't paid them a visit. As Paul put it, “to *spare you* I came not as yet to Corinth.” They had been misbehaving, and needed the apostle's chastening hand (I Cor. 4:19-21), but Paul wisely decided to cool down before journeying to Corinth to administer the spiritual discipline they needed.

Here we are reminded that there will be times in your ministry where you will need to invoke church discipline (I Cor. 5). At such times it is wise to do as Paul did, and *wait* to administer it. Parents are similarly advised to wait to administer spankings until their anger passes, to avoid getting carried away and allowing their discipline to lead to child abuse. Years ago, Pastor Stam advised Pastor Sadler that when he needed to write a letter of reproof or rebuke, it was always better to wait a few days before sending such a letter; that one's words might be reviewed under the analysis of a cooler frame of mind.

It must be remembered, however, that church discipline should be reserved for unrepentant sinners living in open defiance of God's Word, such as the fornicator in I Corinthians 5. Paul gives very *different*

advice for those “*overtaken in a fault*” (Gal. 6:1). The word “*overtaken*” implies that *this* believer was running as hard as he could to try to *escape* a certain sin, but was *overtaken!* Regarding *such* believers, Paul instructs us to “*restore such an one,*” and the minister must always remember the difference, and be as willing to restore as to chasten.

At this point, Paul realizes his tone in II Corinthians 1:23 sounded harsh, so he hastens to assure the Corinthians that his intent was not to have dominion over their faith (v. 24). Here we have a key verse when it comes to understanding the role of a minister of the gospel. If *the Apostle Paul* didn’t have dominion over the faith of God’s people, then *ministers shouldn’t either*, nor the religious hierarchy that rules over ministers themselves. Rome claims that the Apostle Peter was the first pope, and that the present pope is his successor, and as such has dominion over all of God’s people. With that in mind, it is interesting to read that “the first pope” agreed with Paul in this area, when he admonished ministers to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly...*neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock*” (I Pet. 5:3). Too many pastors even in Protestant churches behave like tyrants, treating their churches like their own private fiefdom.

But if *ministers* don’t have dominion over our faith, *who does?* Well, as Paul told the Corinthians, “*by faith ye stand*” (II Cor. 1:24) and faith cometh by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). And so we believe and teach that only *God* has dominion over the faith of God’s people, *through His Word*. It is the minister’s duty only to help people *find* God’s Word on any given subject, and then encourage them to *obey* it.

Such obedience is what brings *joy* to the lives of God’s people, of course, and so Paul closes this chapter with the best job description of the ministry ever given: “*helpers of your joy.*” Carnal Christians view the minister as someone who *kills* their joy and spoils their fun, by insisting that God’s way is best. However, just as children grow to realize their parents’ rules only *seemed* to rob their joy, so mature Christians are those who have learned that the lifestyle prescribed by our Creator actually *brings* joy to our lives.

The story is told of a drill sergeant boot camp instructor who was advising his recruits about what to do if captured. “They won’t always torture you to obtain information,” he said, “they might try to bribe you instead. If that happens, the best thing you can do is ignore them.” From the back of the room a voice was heard to ask, “What’s the *second best* thing we can do?” How like most Christians, willing to settle for God’s *second best!* May God raise up among us an entire *generation* of men willing to seek God’s best in their own personal lives, and then faithfully teach the Word of God rightly divided, so as to enable their congregations to do the same.

To Be Continued!





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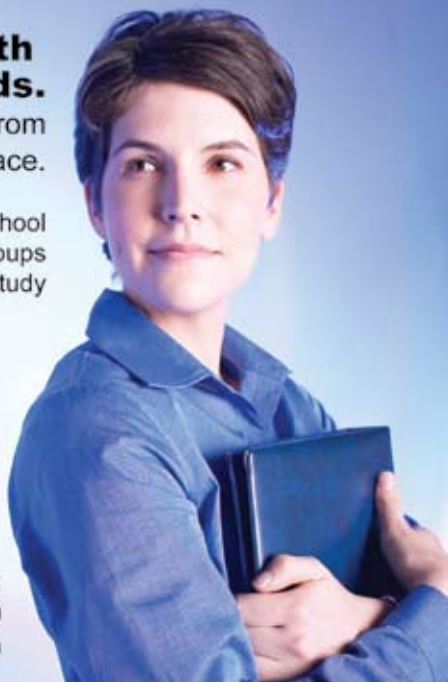
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From our Inbox:

“Thank you so much for helping me in my daily walk. You truly bless me each day when I read your verse for the day and your insightful *Two Minute* commentaries.”

From Arizona:

“I was bound by not understanding the Mystery or the Word rightly divided. The weight of the Law crushed me early on as a Christian, always trying to obtain God’s favor by works...Now that I understand grace, I understand my relationship with God and it has caused my heart to rejoice.”

From China:

“We are a mission group from Singapore working in China. After viewing your *Growing Up in Grace* materials, we look forward to your Middle School Book 1: *Christ in My Heart*. Kindly keep us informed when it is ready. By the way, can we use your materials to translate them into Chinese?” (GUIG Director Steve Shoher happily grants this permission!—Ed).

From Florida:

“I work at a prison and a few of the inmates are very excited about the grace of God. It is all they talk about. Me too. Thank you so much!!!!”

From Wyoming:

“We were privileged to have Pastor Sadler, and his lovely wife, give our sermon in Laramie on Sunday, August 30th. He had a wonderful message!”

From Oregon:

“The *Berean Searchlight* is such an encouragement month after month in our searching the Holy Word of God. It helped me at long last see how to rightly divide the Word and get into where God has us now. What a wonderful difference! The Scriptures make sense now, and leap into life!”

From Florida:

“Thank you for taking the time to answer my letter. I am even more convinced that water baptism is at the very most simply symbolic...I am as solidly sure I do not need it—I have the Spirit. I truly believe that Jesus laid it out clear for us—He *finished* it, and that includes John the Baptist’s baptism. Thank you for giving me some confirmation.” (“Ye are complete in Him” [Col. 2:10,12].—Ed).

From Australia:

“We recently ordered more of your, *According to the Scriptures*, and *The Key to Understanding the Scriptures*, They are well done! We have also ordered, *What It Means to be a Grace Believer* DVD set. The quality is excellent and the presentation is tops!”

From our Inbox:

“Thank you very much for the information on ‘the 12 in’ position. It gives me another view. As I have said to my wife, we as Bereans are to study to see what the word of God says to us. This is another view, it won’t shake my world, but it helps me to grow in God’s Word.”

From Oregon:

“How very much we have learned about the Grace gospel which has simply made the Scriptures come alive...[Dear Grace friends] answered our many questions (we were good ol’ Baptists) and we started to receive the *Berean Searchlight*. They also gave us books by Paul Sadler and C. R. Stam to read...Last November, with our friends, when we arrived in California we attended a Bible Conference where we met and heard Pastor Sadler speak. We praise God that He has brought all of you into our life so we could have the key to understanding the Scriptures.”

From our Inbox:

“I’m nearly 82 years old and still learning and loving it...My husband and I look forward to this Two Minute devotional.”

From Oklahoma:

“You have no idea how much of a blessing that BBS has been to me over the years. Please accept my small donation in deepest appreciation.”

From California:

“As a young lad we lived on Wilson Avenue and I knew *North Shore Church* was there. We were poor folk and I had a free thanksgiving dinner there one year—only to go home and have *another* dinner. I didn’t tell my folks about the first dinner until I got sick later on...Many years later...I was instructed by a fellow worker named George Giron about the Mystery and rightly dividing the Word of Truth. The Bible finally made sense as I learned about the difference between law and grace.” (Brother Giron was the editor’s Sunday School teacher for many years.—Ed).

From Washington:

“Recently I was going through some old *Searchlights*. What a blessing they are. These booklets grip the heart with God’s truth. One Sunday as I sat in our Adult Sunday School I was applauded for my understanding of the Bible. I could only bow my head in silent, humble thanksgiving to our Lord Jesus Christ for these precious truths revealed to me from BBS. I have to believe God has revealed them to you for your uncompromising stand for His Word, rightly divided.”

From Massachusetts:

“Thank you for boldly proclaiming the gospel of His grace.”

From Missouri:

“The articles you wrote about water baptism were especially meaningful and of encouragement for me. I attend a local Baptist church, and during a particular morning sermon, the pastor chose to emphasize the need for water baptism—he called it ‘the second step’ in becoming a Christian. Although I knew water baptism has no place in this age of grace, your articles were so timely and uplifting. Thank you again.” (We all need to be “put in remembrance” of these things [I Tim. 4:6; II Tim. 2:14]—Ed).

From Pennsylvania:

“We praise God for your strong stand on the Gospel of Grace revealed to the Apostle Paul. Keep up the work of getting out the Gospel. Just a little love gift to help you do that.”

From Idaho:

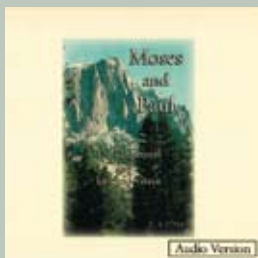
“I so thank you for the *Searchlight*, and the books. God is so gracious to open our eyes and plant our feet on solid teachings.”



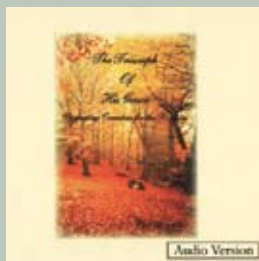
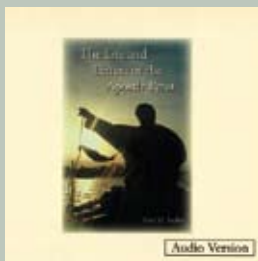
“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
—Acts 17:11

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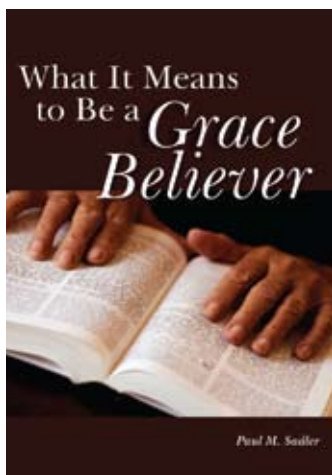
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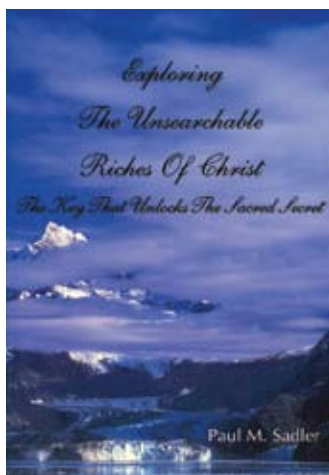
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News and Announcements

New Grace Church: *West Valley Grace Fellowship* is now meeting in the northwest Phoenix area in Surprise, Arizona. Pastor Mark Dilley and the saints of this new congregation would like to extend a warm welcome to all grace believers in nearby El Mirage, Sun City, and Peoria. They are also within reasonable proximity to Wickenburg, Goodyear, Avondale, Glendale and the greater Phoenix area. Visit www.westvalleygf.com to find out when and where they meet, and contact Pastor Dilley for additional information at 16501 N El Mirage Road, #821, Surprise, AZ 85374. Phone: (623) 583-4186. Email: jjdster@gmail.com.

Web Site Wonders: BBS Webmaster Richard Church reports that average daily sessions on our site in August were up 23% from July, and average pageviews per day were up 20%, possibly due to some of his initiatives on *Facebook*. Actual numbers include 23,515 sessions in August, for an average of 759 sessions per day, with 86,853 pageviews per day for an average of 2,802 pages viewed per day. Translation: a lot of people are getting the message at www.bereanbiblesociety.org!

It is not too early to begin planning your 2010 Bible conference or special meetings at your church. Pastor Sadler's schedule is already filling up, but at this writing Pastor Kurth can easily be scheduled to help with your event.

Pennsylvania Bible Conference: *Grace For Today's* Leon Gilchrist and Ricky Kurth will be addressing the theme of *Complete in Christ* at the annual Bible conference of the *Berean Grace Fellowship*, to be held April 30-May 2nd at the *Kenbrook Retreat Center* in Lebanon, PA. Reservations made before January 31st will help ensure a room on the conference grounds, so contact conference coordinator Bill Schaeffer as soon as possible at hitnmis@verizon.net, or at (717) 949-3020.

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



The *White River Lighthouse* is located in Whitehall, MI. Increasing lumber commerce was the reason for establishing a beacon on the channel that connected White Lake and Lake Michigan. Built in 1875, this castle-like light was decommissioned in 1960, and is now a museum.

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“Giving thanks to God is appropriate every day.”—C. R. Stam
“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the
Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:17).

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