

# The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

November 2011



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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,

Like many Americans, I used to spend Sunday evenings watching *60 Minutes*. My favorite part came near the end of each week's show, when Andy Rooney would voice his complaints and opinions about things. Since his complaints were often aimed at new things, I figured he was just a crotchety old man who didn't like change. Now that I'm about the age that he was then, I'm finding that I'm not so crazy about change myself, and there is one societal change that I find particularly vexing.

When I was a boy, I was taught that if someone says "thank you," the polite way to respond is to say, "You're welcome." In recent years I have noticed that "you're welcome" has been replaced by "no problem," or "not a problem." I'm not sure why this vexes me, but in true Andy Rooney-like fashion, it does!

Maybe it is because, if we think it through, this response isn't nearly as good. Saying "you're welcome" after a kindness means that the person who did you the kindness feels that you are a good person who is welcome to such kind treatment. "No problem" just says, "Being kind to you didn't inconvenience me;" it says nothing of your worthiness to be treated so well.

If God were speaking aloud these days, one wonders how He would respond when we thank Him for all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3). I doubt He would say, "No problem, being kind to you didn't inconvenience Me," for the price He paid at Calvary to procure these blessings was too high. We feel He would rather respond to our thanks with, "You are welcome to such blessings." Of course, we are not worthy of these blessings because we are good people in ourselves, but rather because of who He has made us in Christ. As difficult as it is for humble Christians to accept, now that we are children of God, we are welcome to the same treatment from God that He gives His own Son. As Paul put it, we are "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), and so "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (v. 32).

As you gather together this month with family and friends to give thanks to God, remember to thank Him for all that He has done for you in Christ. Anyone can thank Him for "life, and breath, and all things" of that nature, for these "He giveth to all" (Acts 17:25). Only the child of God can thank Him for "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." If we don't thank Him for these things, who will?

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth





# It Didn't Add Up!

In Daniel 9:25, the prophet Daniel was told that from the going forth of the commandment to restore Jerusalem “unto the Messiah” would be 69 weeks of years (cf. Gen. 29:27; Lev. 25:8). Frankly, this very specific prophecy baffled Bible students for many years, for the predicted time of 483 years ( $69 \times 7$ ) “unto the Messiah” did not match up with the time of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, in his book *The Coming Prince*, a Bible teacher named Sir Robert Anderson realized the problem lay in the different ways Jews and Gentiles mark time. We number our years using a solar calendar wherein each year has  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, but the Jews used a 360-day lunar calendar, with each year consisting of 12 months of 30 days each.

Evidence of this is found in Genesis 7:11, where we read that the deluge began “in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month,” yet exactly “an hundred and fifty days” later (v. 24), “the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month” (8:3,4). The only way an exact period of five equal months can end 150 days later on the same day of the month is if each of those months has 30 days. Further evidence of this is seen when we remember that the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week is sometimes said to last “forty and two months” (Rev. 11:2), and sometimes it is said to last “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (v. 3). The only way 42 equal months can work out to 1260 days is if each of those months has 30 days.

Once Sir Robert recalculated the prophecy using lunar years, he found that the 69 weeks “unto the Messiah” worked out *to the very day* the Lord Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem and made an official presentation of Himself to Israel. No wonder the Lord lamented later that day, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in *this thy day*, the things which belong unto thy peace!” (Luke 19:42).

The point? When you are asked why men should trust the God of the Bible, why not give the reason God Himself gives—*fulfilled prophecy!* (Isa. 42:8,9; 44:7,8 cf. John 13:19). To those who would tout the gods of the world’s other religions, God says, “Produce your cause...bring forth your strong reasons...let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen...shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods” (Isa. 41:21-24).

The God of the Bible *alone* is God!

—Pastor Kurth



# God's Indescribable Gift

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

## THE GIFT THAT INCLUDES ALL OTHERS

Those who are history buffs know that the *Statue of Liberty*, which gazes out over New York Harbor, was given to the United States as a *gift* from the French government. It was unveiled on October 26, 1886 as a memorial of the 1876 Centennial Celebration. Lady Liberty stands 302 feet high and upon her pedestal is inscribed one of the best-known sonnets ever written, “The New Colossus,” by Emma Lazarus:

“Give me your tired, your poor/  
Your huddled masses yearning  
to breathe free/The wretched re-  
fuse of your teeming shore/Send  
these, the homeless, tempest-tost  
to me/I lift my lamp beside the  
golden door!”

If there is one outstanding thing that characterizes gifts that men and governments give to each other, it would be this: They can all be *described*. Some may be a little more difficult to put into

words than others, but there is usually some type of description we can give to them. The same, however, cannot always be said of the gifts that God favors us with as believers.

As Paul contemplated the bountiful blessings he’d received from the hand of the Lord, which indeed all members of the Body Christ enjoy, he was overwhelmed with emotion. Consequently, it is with a true sense of gratitude that the apostle says, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15). The term *unspeakable* here in the original language has the idea of that which is *inexpressible* or *indescribable*. There should be little question here that Christ Himself is the indescribable *gift of God*. What mere mortal could ever begin to plumb the depths of the person and work of Christ? For example, Paul states,

**“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes**

**He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9).**

This particular passage prompts us to ask three questions based on Paul’s chronology here in II Corinthians 8:9: When was Christ rich? When did He become poor? And in what sense are we rich?

### **THE RICHES OF CHRIST**

Paul’s statement “though He was rich” takes us back to eternity past. It must always be remembered that the Scriptures clearly teach Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God. Indeed, He is the very fullness of God. Therefore, He is spoken of as the “firstborn of every creature [creation]” (Col. 1:15). Normally, we use the title “firstborn” to describe the first child born into a family. The term usually denotes *order*—first, second, third born, etc. Here’s a case in point: “And [Joseph] knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS” (Matt. 1:25).

While we don’t place too much emphasis on birth order, there are some interesting observations that most parents have made during the years they were raising their children. Firstborn children, for example, are customarily *perfectionists*, probably because their parents expect them to be little models of themselves. They are normally very organized individuals and disorder drives them absolutely crazy. The second born, who is loved just as much, often complains of being the forgotten one. Of course, it doesn’t help matters when Great-Grandma pays the family a visit and can’t remember the second born’s name. And,

naturally, there is no question in the minds of the other siblings that the third born is spoiled rotten and gets away with murder!

In any event, when Mary brought forth her “firstborn son,” it was in the sense of the above. He was her *first* offspring, implying other children were born to her and Joseph after the virgin birth (Matt. 1:25 cf. 13:53-56).

The designation “firstborn” is also used as a title of *honor* and *dignity* in the Word of God. This is very important to understand in the context of Colossians 1:15. Although Israel was the least among the nations, God called the chosen nation His *firstborn* son. In other words, Israel held a position of *preeminence* over the nations. The same is true of Christ because of who He is! Since Christ is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature [creation],” He is *heir* of all things. “For by Him [and for Him] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and



invisible...that...He might have the **preeminence**” (Col. 1:16,18). As God, He wore honor, glory, and majesty as a robe in eternity past. After the creation of the angelic host, they were at His beck and call. The Cherubim and Seraphim

rested not “day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” The Apostle John adds,

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1,2).**

The verb *was* used here in the last sentence means “existed.” So “the same *existed* in the beginning with God.” As the Son of God, Christ *pre-existed* His birth at Bethlehem. This is further substantiated by the prophet Isaiah who predicted, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a **Son is given**” (Isa. 9:6). Notice that a child is born, but the Son is *given*. Why? Because He is the *eternal* Son of God. But out of love, Christ left the glory and honor all behind for the sake of the great work of redemption. He emptied Himself of the *outward manifestation* of His attributes and glory (Phil. 2:5-8). Bear in mind that He was *wholly God* and *wholly man* when He walked this earth. He simply *veiled* His glory with the garb of human flesh so that sinful humanity could enter into His presence.

This helps us understand how, during His earthly ministry, there were times He hungered, and thirsted, and became weary from His journeys. While His divine nature was veiled by His flesh it did shine through at times to the glory of God the Father. This means the entire creation was *subject* to His commands. You will recall the account when the Lord and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. As darkness fell, a terrible storm unexpectedly swept across them. That old ship

was up one side of the swells and down the other. It grew so intense that the waves washed over the boat. As the ship began to take on water, it finally dawned upon one of them to awaken the Master before they all perished.

**“And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” (Matt. 8:26,27).**

These occasions demonstrated that Christ clearly had a divine nature when He dwelt among us. But the Father’s primary purpose in sending His Son was for Him to assume the form of a servant and experience the human plight. Indeed, He became the poorest of the *poor*!

### **WHEN DID CHRIST BECOME POOR?**

In regard to the *incarnation*, John also confirms the word of Isaiah that “a child is born.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Here the verb “was made” is actually “to become or became” in the original. “And the Word *became* flesh.” Of course, this brings to mind the wonderful workings of God concerning the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Son of Man.

Although the *virgin birth* is being challenged today in many Christian circles, we hold this truth to be self-evident as one of the cardinal doctrines of the faith. And we say emphatically before God this day that, without the

virgin birth, our redemption would not have been possible. It is the means through which the Savior was able to enter the world without being tainted with Adam's sin. Every child of God marvels at the birth of Christ but, in reality, His entrance into the world was not unusual in itself; it was like thousands of other births. What was really the hallmark of the event is the truth that Christ was *miraculously conceived* by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin.

"Yet for your sakes He became poor." As we have seen, Christ is the eternal Son of God who pre-existed the incarnation. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Accordingly, the "Word *became* flesh" the night that Christ was born of the virgin. Interestingly, He chose not to be swaddled by those of a royal palace, where only a select few would have access. Rather, He was born into *poverty*. As a result, down through the generations, young or old, rich or poor, bond or free, male or female could freely approach Him.

After centuries of waiting for the consolation of Israel, the fullness of time had finally arrived. Unknown to him, in accordance with the providence of God, Caesar Augustus determined "that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1). This census required that everyone under the sphere of Roman rule had to return to the place of their *extraction*. Since *both* Mary and Joseph were of the house and lineage of David, they were required to return to Bethlehem to be *registered*. Of course, by this

time, Mary was great with child. She probably thought to herself that this Roman decree could not be more untimely. Humanly speaking, it was an imposition. But with one turn of the wheel, God fulfilled a twofold purpose.

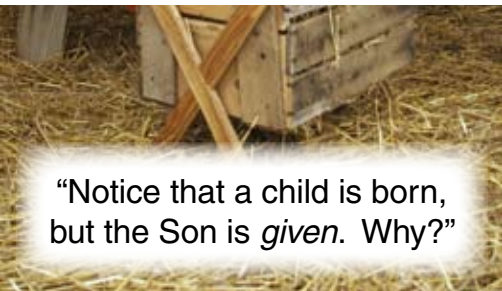
What little money Mary and Joseph had was probably nearly depleted by the time they arrived at the city of David. It made little difference though, since weary travelers had already filled every available room in town. Even the stables were overflowing with beasts of burden, leaving no room at the inn. Apparently, Mary and Joseph found refuge in one of the out-buildings or caves nearby, which at least gave them some shelter from the cool night air. Far from the ivory palaces of Rome, Christ was born in the *obscure* little village of Bethlehem. There was no pomp or fanfare, only the sigh of the wind as it blew the autumn leaves across the dirt floor.

On this night of nights, it should not surprise us that there were visitors. And we would expect the list to be impressive, inasmuch as the King of kings and the Lord of lords had made His entrance into the affairs of men. The rulers of this world, however, were all slumbering in *darkness*. It leaves us wanting to cry out, "Awake, awake ye evil doers, the Savior is in your midst!" But they were dead to the world and dead to eternity.

God chose instead to announce the coming of His only begotten Son to a handful of *poor* lowly shepherds. Ironically, it was this humble group of shepherds, faithfully attending their *sheep*, who were among the first to worship the *Lamb of God*. They were



probably amazed to find the Holy One of God lying in a *manger*, a splinter-filled feeding trough for animals. But this would be characteristic of His years on the earth. In fact, early in His ministry, the Lord stated, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head” (Matt. 8:20).



“Notice that a child is born,  
but the Son is *given*. Why?”

Shortly after Mary and Joseph attended to their business at Bethlehem, they began their long journey back to Nazareth, where they lived (Luke 2:39). Their travels took them through Jerusalem where they remained for a few days for good reason: It was here that Mary’s firstborn was circumcised on the eighth day and given His name Jesus. With the birth of every male child, a special offering was required according to the Law of Moses. Normally, a lamb was offered, unless the family was *poor*, in which case a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons were sacrificed (Lev. 12:8 cf. Luke 2:24). This further substantiates that Christ was born into *poverty* that we might be rich.

### IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE RICH?

Paul ends the passage, “That ye through His poverty might be

rich.” Christ came to die that we might be rich—that is, spiritually rich. It has been said that there are over one hundred spiritual blessings that we have been blessed with in Paul’s epistles; can you name seven of them? Before you can appropriate them by faith into your daily Christian life, you must first know what they are, where they are found, and more importantly, the significance of each one. Although our spiritual blessings are all a present possession, *after* our conversion to Christ, they can be categorized in three tenses: past, present, and future. Here is a small sample of the *riches* the Body of Christ enjoys in Christ:

**Past:** We have been redeemed by the blood, have been justified through faith, and have the forgiveness of our sins. As a result, we have received the free gift of eternal life, and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit as members of the Body of Christ.

**Present:** We have a new nature and are identified with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, which enables us to deny worldly lust and live righteously and godly in this present evil age.

**Future:** We are given a heavenly hope and calling, the hope of the Rapture and its resurrection of these bodies of humiliation, and the hope of ruling and reigning with Christ in the heavenlies.

But there is more, much more! It is difficult to comprehend, but after all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf, God the Father plans to show us His *kindness* in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7). Picture, if you will, walking with God the Father in glory and

pausing every so often to hear Him say, “These heavenly realms are your inheritance. Take full possession of them; they are yours to enjoy. These positions of authority, once held by the fallen host, are now yours. Those angels over there were specifically created to serve you throughout eternity. Because the heavens are higher than the earth, all members of my Son’s Body shall reign over the earth.” We are indeed blessed in Christ! Blessed with riches untold!! After pondering all that the Savior had done for him, Paul broke out in this doxology: “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”


### A FULL MEASURE OF GRACE

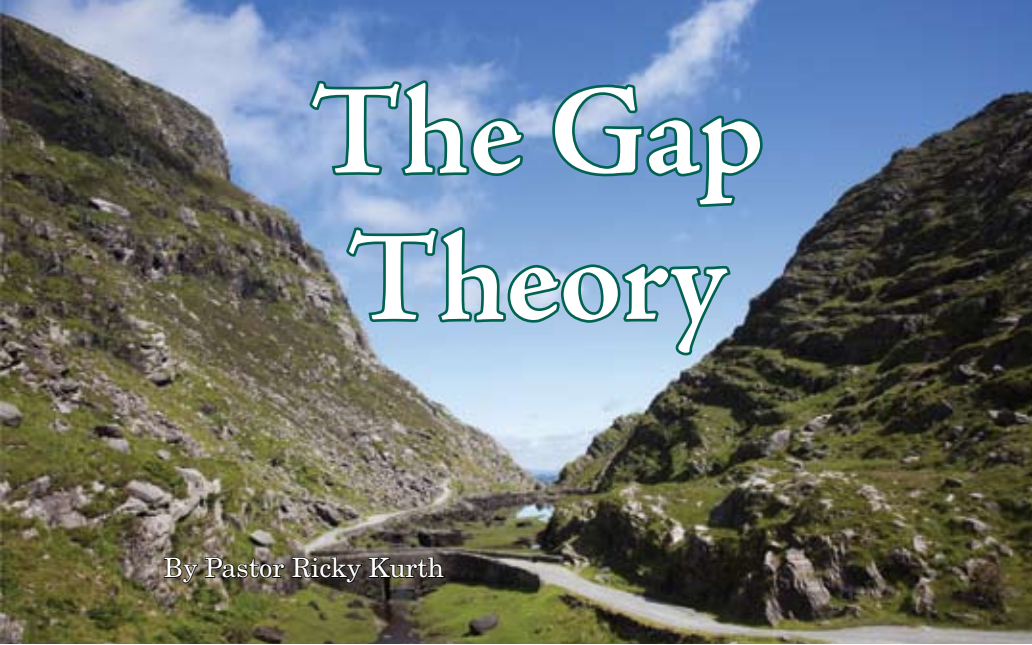
We would venture to say that you would probably have a hard time remembering the last time you gave an expensive gift to your worst enemy. Just as I thought: *NEVER!* We tend to give gifts to those we *love*. Of course, there may be other reasons, such as reciprocation or to win the praise of another, but love is the primary reason.

It has been said that God’s gift is indescribable because of the *grace* by which it is given. God, who is rich in mercy, gave the world the *gift* of His dear Son while we were at *enmity* with Him. Paul says: “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Therefore, *in Him* we are freely given all things: redemption, peace with God, being clothed in His righteousness, deliverance from the wrath to come, wisdom and knowledge, etc.

Most everyone has been raised to offer a word of thanks when someone was thoughtful enough to give them a gift. How much more so this should be true of believers when we consider that our heavenly Father has given us the *priceless treasure* of His Son that Jews and Gentiles might be joint heirs with Him. We cannot help but say with Paul, “Thanks be unto God for His *indescribable gift*.”

Our heavenly Father has ensured that the world will never forget that He sent His only begotten Son. He has accomplished this by making Christ the *center* of history. Although the world is attempting to change these old milestones, all major events before the birth of Christ are identified as being B.C. After His advent, they are distinguished by A.D. “in the year of the Lord.” More importantly, however, is He the *center* of your life?

If you are yet outside of Christ and feel you are in danger of someday ending up in the Lake of Fire, we are not going to sugar-coat it for you; you are in danger of the hellfire judgment to come. We want you to know that God loves you and Christ died for your sins. You see, the day Christ died at Calvary, He wasn’t dying for His sins; *He knew no sin*. Instead, He was dying for the sins of the world—my sins and your sins. God has made a provision for *all*, but to be a beneficiary of this provision, you must believe that Christ died for you personally and rose again (I Cor. 15:3,4; I Thes. 4:14). Salvation is in a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ! He alone can save you from your sins! 



# The Gap Theory

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

No, not *that* gap theory!

When someone mentions “the gap theory,” they are usually referring to an interval of time between the events of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. This article will rather address the gap that we personally believe will fall between the Rapture and the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week of Tribulation. While many good Bible teachers believe the seventieth week will begin immediately after the Rapture, we believe the two will be separated by an indeterminate interval of time, up to a generation in duration.

The practical ramifications of this position should not be overlooked, for it affects the way we look for the Rapture. While it is commonly taught that “the stage is being set” for the Tribulation in our own day, we personally believe that *none* of the world events we hear about on a daily basis are in any way connected to the coming time of Jacob’s trouble. We rather

believe that a post-Rapture gap of up to a generation in length will provide more than enough time for any stage-setting that needs to be done for that terrible day.

## The Case for This Position

To present the case for this position, let’s begin with a look at the seventy weeks prophecy. In Daniel 9:24, the angel Gabriel tells Daniel:

**“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”**

Here Daniel is being given a timetable for the coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Since neither Israel nor the world will see an “an end of sins” and “everlasting righteousness” until the establishment of the kingdom,

Daniel is being told how long his people will have to wait for it. God had “determined” that *seventy weeks* must transpire before the kingdom could come.

A Hebrew who knew his Bible well, Daniel would know that Gabriel was speaking about weeks of *years*, not weeks of days (cf. Gen. 29:27; Lev. 25:8). This Hebrew idiom of *a week of years* sounds strange to our Gentile ears, until we remember that we ourselves sometimes speak of “a month of Sundays.”

After learning that the kingdom was still seventy weeks away, Daniel is next given a breakdown of what will transpire during these 490 years. Gabriel begins by speaking about the first 69 weeks:

**“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25).**

Here Daniel learns that the first 69 weeks of the prophecy will consist of two segments, one of 7 weeks, followed by a segment of 62 weeks. Since the first seven weeks were to begin with “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” we believe these first seven weeks refer to the 49 years it would take to build Jerusalem after Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of that great city at the onset of the Babylonian captivity. The other 62 weeks of the prophecy refer to the 434 years that would then follow, unto the Messiah. In his book *The Coming Prince*,

Sir Robert Anderson correctly calculated that the 69th week would end on the very day of the Lord’s “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem, which marked His official presentation of Himself to His nation (See Page 4 of this issue).

### The Gap

As we continue in the 70 weeks prophecy, Gabriel proceeds to tell Daniel what would happen “after” Messiah presented Himself to His people on the final day of the 69th week:

**“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself...” (Dan. 9:26).**

Here Daniel is told that “after” the 69th week ended with the presentation of Messiah to His nation, He would be “cut off” or *killed*, “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa. 53:8).<sup>1</sup> While Gabriel does not say *how long* after, we now know that our Lord died a few days after His “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem. This means He



died *after* the 69th week ended, but *before* the beginning of the 70th week, which Gabriel does not mention until the next verse of this prophecy (Dan. 9:27). Thus our Lord was cut off during a *gap* in the 70 weeks prophecy. The Cross was still a prophesied event, of course, but a prophesied event

that transpired outside the confines of the prophesied 70 weeks.

Before we continue, we should point out that Daniel 9 is not the only place in Scripture where a prophetic gap appears. The seven feasts that God gave to Israel (see Leviticus 23) are “a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:16,17), a prophetic schedule for the future of the nation. The first four of these prophetic feasts have all been fulfilled. The first, Passover (Lev. 23:5), was fulfilled in the death of Christ (I Cor. 5:7). The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-8) was fulfilled when the “lamb without blemish” (I Pet. 1:19) was sacrificed without the leaven of sin. This feast was followed by the Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:10-14), which spoke of the resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:20,23). Fifty days later came the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-22), which finds its fulfillment in Acts 2:1 “when the day of Pentecost was fully come.”

The remaining three of Israel’s seven feasts await a future fulfillment, but it is clear what each one signifies. The Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24,25) foreshadows the gathering of redeemed Israel to enter the kingdom (Matt. 24:31). Since the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27-32) was a day when Israel was cleansed from their sins as a nation (Lev. 16:30), this feast will come to fruition after the second coming of Christ, when God takes away their sins as a nation (Rom. 11:26,27). They will then be ready for the kingdom, the last entry on Israel’s prophetic calendar, typified by Israel’s last feast, the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-44). God told Israel to keep this feast

“when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land” (Lev. 23:39), and so it speaks to the time when the “wheat” of redeemed Israel will be gathered into the “barn” of the kingdom (Matt. 3:12; 13:30).

Significantly, the first four feasts began in “the first month” of Israel’s calendar year (Lev. 23:4,5), and all four were finished within fifty days (vv. 15,16). Then there was a *gap* of several months before the Feast of Trumpets and the other remaining feasts began to be celebrated “in the seventh month” (v. 24). As in Daniel 9, this gap in Israel’s prophetic calendar suggests that God intended for the fulfillment of Israel’s last three feasts to come sometime after the fulfillment of the first four feasts.

### Not the Mystery

Here it is important to point out that the gap in the seventy weeks prophecy is *not* the dispensation of grace. The dispensation of grace is an *unprophesied* gap in God’s prophetic program, a gap of which Old Testament prophets like Daniel knew nothing. However, this *prophesied* gap is what allowed God to insert the *unprophesied* dispensation of grace into the seventy weeks prophecy, a sort of a gap within a gap. Without this prophesied gap, *even God Himself* would have no right to insert a dispensation of two thousand years duration into the precise timetable of the 70 weeks prophecy. He Himself had given this prophecy of 490 years, and without a gap in the schedule, He could not add or detract years from it without breaking His word. Needless to say, this prophetic gap worked out to our advantage as Gentiles.

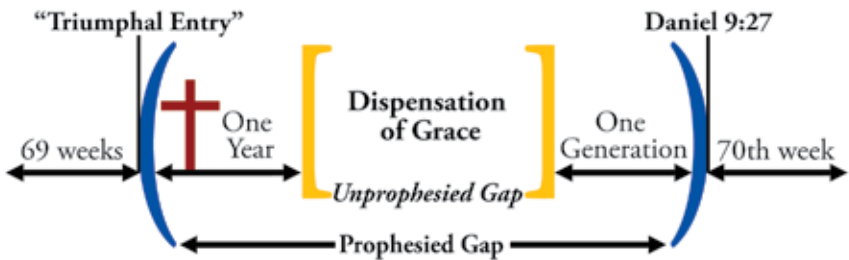
This prophesied gap also worked out to Israel's advantage, for the cutting off of Messiah was to have been followed immediately by the wrath of the 70th week. Psalm 2 clearly predicts that, after the kings of the earth and the rulers in Israel "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed....then shall He speak unto them in His wrath" (vv. 2-5). But because God had provided an interruption in the airtight schedule of the 70 weeks prophecy, He was able to give the people of Israel an additional year to reconsider what they had done at Calvary.

This additional year was the subject of the Lord's parable in Luke 13:6-9. The "certain man" represents God the Father, who planted the fig tree of Israel in His vineyard (cf. Isa. 5:1-7). During the "three years" (Luke 13:7) of the Lord's earthly ministry, God sought spiritual fruit in Israel.

This is where it gets interesting. Those who have studied Bible chronology assure us that the events described in the first seven chapters of the Book of Acts cover a period of *one year*. When at the end of this additional year the leaders of Israel stoned a man filled with the Holy Ghost, it showed that the fig tree of Israel had still not produced the spiritual fruit that God was seeking. At that point, God had no choice but to "cut it down" (Luke 13:9).<sup>2</sup>

### The Gap within the Gap

When this writer was in school, we learned that when a writer wishes to insert parenthetical information into the body of a sentence, he uses parentheses, of course. If he then wishes to insert parenthetical information within the parentheses, he must set this information off with brackets, not with parentheses within parentheses.



Finding none, He determined to cut Israel down when the cutting off of Messiah brought an end to His three year earthly ministry. But "the dresser of his vineyard" (the Lord Jesus) prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and persuaded His Father to let the tree of Israel alone "this year also" (13:8).

The point? When grace teachers draw a timeline to help illustrate God's plan of the ages, the dispensation of grace is often placed within parentheses. While we would not quibble with this time-honored portrayal of God's plan, in the illustration above we placed the prophesied gap between the 69th and 70th week

in parentheses, and the dispensation of grace in brackets within those parentheses.

Looking back, we know that one year after the open parenthesis marked the interruption of the 70 weeks prophecy, the opening bracket of the dispensation of grace began. This means, however, that after the Rapture brings the closing bracket of the present dispensation of the mystery to an end, there may be additional prophetic time remaining in the parenthetical break in the 70 weeks prophecy before the 70th week begins. We believe this to be the case, based on some things the Lord said during His earthly ministry to Israel.

In Matthew 16:28, the Lord said that “there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.” We know it is commonly taught that this prophecy was fulfilled six days later when the Lord was transfigured before James, Peter and John (Matt. 17:1-5), who became “eyewitnesses of His majesty” (II Pet. 1:16-18). However, we feel that seeing the Lord’s majesty is not the same as seeing “the Son of man coming in His kingdom.” Indeed, Luke’s version of our Lord’s words have Him saying that “there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, *till they see the kingdom*” (Luke 9:27). If a prediction of *seeing* the kingdom can be satisfied with *a vision* of the kingdom, how do we know that those who are born again will see more than just a vision of the kingdom (John 3:3)?

We feel it is more natural to believe that the Lord was saying

that some who were standing there would live to see the actual kingdom of heaven established on earth. Remember, *most* if not *all* of the disciples, and certainly all of the apostles, were alive six days later for the transfiguration, and the Lord had said that only “*some*” would live to see the kingdom.

Later, after speaking of events that will transpire during the Great Tribulation, the Lord asserted that “this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matt. 24:34). We know it is commonly taught that the Greek word translated *generation* here should be translated something similar to *race*, making this a prediction that the Hebrew race would not die out, but would rather remain in existence unto the Tribulation. Here we have to agree with preterists,<sup>3</sup> who label this interpretation as “a reach” and “a stretch.”

We believe this construal, and all other attempts to explain away our Lord’s plain statements to this effect, originated with well-meaning Bible teachers who did not understand that the present dispensation of grace *interrupted* the fulfillment of our Lord’s plain prophecies. Had the dispensation of grace not interrupted the prophetic program, that generation would have lived to see the Tribulation, and the subsequent establishment of the kingdom of heaven.

This then is why we believe that a period of time of up to a generation may yet remain after the Rapture, before the beginning of Daniel’s 70th week. Only one year of the Lord’s generation passed before the age of the mystery

interrupted prophecy. That means that after the Rapture, when God picks up exactly where He left off in His prophetic program, much of that generation will remain before the 70th week begins.

### Learning from Hitler

While it is often said that the stage is being set for the coming Tribulation during the present dispensation of grace, we believe Satan is not repeating the mistake made by Adolph Hitler during World War II. Emboldened by his success on the western front, Hitler ignored the counsel of his advising generals and invaded Russia, committing himself to a war on two fronts, a war that history proved could not be won.

While Satan is a powerful adversary, like Hitler, he is a finite being with a finite number of forces to deploy. Satan cannot be everywhere at once, and he cannot afford to spread his finite forces of fallen angels too thin. With that in mind, we believe he is focusing *all* of his attention on battling the gospel of the grace of God and the Pauline revelation found in God's rightly divided Word, the battle of *this* dispensation, knowing he will have most of a generation after the Rapture to set the stage for the coming battle of Daniel's 70th week.

This is especially so when we remember that Satan is also not omniscient. He doesn't know when the Rapture will take place. To say that he is setting the stage today is to say that he knows the curtain time that God has set for the Rapture. We believe he is smart enough to know that any stage setting he might do today

would all go to waste if the Lord does not return for us for another century or so.

### Crying Wolf

If Satan is not now setting the stage for post-Rapture events, we believe it is high time that believers stop trying to identify current events as signs that the Rapture is near. This writer has been saved for 41 years, and in every one of those years we have heard prophecy preachers pointing to world events and concluding from them that the Rapture must be very near.<sup>4</sup> We believe such predictions discredit legitimate Bible study in the eyes of the world, just as surely as setting exact dates for the Rapture does, the foolishness of which we were again reminded last month when yet another predicted date for the Rapture came and went.



“...it is high time that believers stop trying to identify current events as signs that the Rapture is near.”

We further believe that Rapture predictions based on world events are actually counterproductive to the cause of readying believers for the coming of the Lord. The fabled boy who cried wolf too often found that when the wolf really appeared, no one believed him. In the same way,



believers who have heard one too many world-event-based predictions of the Rapture are more apt to ignore the next such prediction, rather than readying their hearts and lives for His coming.


### Keep Looking Up!

While we personally do not believe in looking for the Rapture based on current events, we firmly believe in looking for the Rapture! God's Word *says* we should be "looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), and so we should always be ready for His return, and warning the lost that His coming is imminent. However, we do not believe Paul told Titus to look for the Rapture based on the current world events of his day. We rather believe he based his exhortation on the only firm foundation a child of God has, the truth of God's Word. God *says* that the Lord may come for us at any moment, and it is this and this alone that should motivate us to live like people who "love His appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

As a boy, we delighted in watching the silliness of *Gilligan's Island* on TV. One day Mary Ann was missing, and the castaways combed the island to find her. When they met back at the rendezvous point, the Professor asked the Skipper if he had found her. He replied, "I didn't see hide nor hair of her." To this Gilligan interjected, "You're not supposed to be looking for hides or hairs, you're supposed to be looking for Mary Ann!" Seeming not to hear, the Skipper went on, "There's not a sign of her anywhere," to which Gilligan responded, "You're not supposed to be looking for signs,

you're supposed to be looking for Mary Ann!"

We often think of this when we hear yet another observation based on world events that the Rapture must be near. Christian friend, we are not told to be looking for *signs* of the Lord's coming, *we are supposed to be looking for the Lord!* The fact that Paul told Titus to be looking for the Rapture 2,000 years ago means nothing needs to be fulfilled before He can come to catch us up to be with Him.

*Are you ready?* Are you busy fighting the fight that the Apostle Paul fought? If Satan is focusing all of his efforts on battling the proclamation of Paul's gospel, we should likewise be focusing all of our efforts on getting the blessed message out to others. May God help us to ignore the wolf cries and focus on the task at hand, fulfilling our commission "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph. 3:9). 

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### Endnotes

1. Messiah was cut off "not for Himself" (Dan. 9:26), but for the sins of Isaiah's people (Isa. 53:8), the Jews.
2. This parable is the death knell of the Acts 28 position, which holds that Paul preached the kingdom gospel to Israel all the way to Acts 28:28, a period of 32 years. The parable allows for only *one* additional year of kingdom ministry, not 32.
3. Preterists believe that the Matthew 24 prophecies of the Tribulation were all fulfilled by 70 A.D.
4. Over thirty years ago, we were told that vultures were massing in the valley of Armageddon in unprecedented numbers, and that this was surely a sign that this apocalyptic battle was nigh at hand (Rev. 19:17-19). After three decades, one would assume these birds must be getting pretty hungry, and Armageddon is still a generation and seven years away!

## Question Box

*“What do sorrow and repentance have to do with salvation, and why would anyone repent of being saved? (II Cor. 7:10).”*

**“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of...” (II Cor. 7:10).**

There are different kinds of salvation in Scripture. Paul spoke about the salvation of our souls (Eph. 2:8,9), but he also spoke about his *physical* salvation *from prison* (Phil. 1:19 cf. Ex. 14:13). Additionally, he advised Timothy that if he would continue in Pauline doctrine he would “save” himself from the misery that always comes from *not* continuing in Pauline doctrine! (I Tim. 4:16). There is also the salvation from despair that the hope of the Rapture gives (Rom. 8:23,24), and the Rapture itself is called a salvation (Rom. 13:11).

The salvation in our text is yet another kind. In the context, Paul says he made the Corinthians sorry “with a letter” (II Cor. 7:8), i.e., his first epistle to them, in which he rebuked them for not disciplining the man living in fornication (I Cor. 5). They then “sorrowed to repentance” *about this* (II Cor. 8:9). The word *repentance* means to have a change of mind, and they changed their mind about allowing the fornicator to continue in their midst. This “saved” them from the dangerous leavening effect that his presence would otherwise have among them, and so their godly sorrow worked repentance to salvation, a salvation Paul assured them they would not regret or repent of later.

It also worked another kind of salvation among them, one similar to the salvation Paul references in I Corinthians 5:5, where he speaks about the fornicator and tells them,

**“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”**

In context, we know that delivering the man to Satan meant putting him out of the assembly (v. 2,13). Letting him wallow in sin might destroy his flesh, but it would bring him back to the Lord, and “save” him *from a loss of rewards* at the Judgment Seat (I Cor. 3:15). The Corinthians would likewise be saved from such loss by their obedience to Paul’s instructions. Their sorrow worked this kind of repentance to salvation as well, another salvation they would not regret, of course, for no one at the Judgment Seat will ever repent of having done the right thing.

—Pastor Kurth

# Important Contrasts in the Bible



By Pastor John Fredericksen

When parents are blessed with both a daughter and a son, there are obvious differences. Each has his or her own distinct looks, clothing, goals, and requirements. Both are recognized for their God-given differences, and loved separately, yet equally. Even after they have children of their own, this continues to be true. In a similar way, God established two distinctly different programs and peoples in the Bible. One is the children of Israel, who were given the Mosaic Law as their instructions and to whom nearly two thirds of the Bible was written, and the other is the sons and daughters of God in the Body of Christ, who are under Grace.

## THE NATION OF ISRAEL

There are several specific reasons why God made the nation of Israel His “special people” (Deut. 7:6). It begins with the *persistent rebellion of man* very early in history. We learn from Romans 1:21-32 that even “when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.” Mankind plunged so deeply into idolatry and immorality that they sank to the level where “they *did not like to retain God* in their knowledge.” Since man was created as a free moral agent with choice, God did not force man to have a relationship with Him. However, He was not willing to stand idly by and allow the entire human race to foolishly run down a course leading to the eternal Lake of Fire, so He intervened by establishing the nation of Israel.

When Abram was called to become the father of Israel, God *promised him three things*: “I will make of thee a great nation...and make thy name great...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:2-3). The first two promises amount to using the nation of Israel as *an undeniable witness of God* to an unbelieving world. Repeatedly, the Scripture tell us this was one of the primary purposes for Israel

as a nation and all she encountered in history. Solomon's prayer was "that all people of the earth may know thy name..." (I Kings 8:43). Hezekiah prayed that the Lord would deliver them from enemies "that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only" (II Kings 19:19). Ezekiel was told to predict a future when enemies will "come up against my people of Israel...that the heathen may know me" (Ezek. 38:16). Likewise, Isaiah predicts a day when "all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (Isa. 49:26). Even those who do not want to retain the knowledge of God have heard of the Lord parting the Red Sea and providing a host of miracles for Israel. Israel has been God's witness to the world.

The *third promise to Abram* was to *bless all the families of the earth through him and his seed*. Ultimately, this was fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, coming as the Son of Man and Son of God to pay the ransom for the sins of all mankind. Salvation is now available to all because *God used Israel to produce a needed Savior*.

### THE MOSAIC LAW OF ISRAEL

It is imperative that we understand to whom the Law of Moses was given, what it involved, and why it was given. The Lord told Moses, "I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments...that thou mayest teach them [to Israel]" (Ex. 24:12). These laws were given *only to the nation of Israel*. They were not given to, nor intended for, Gentiles of the past or present. Moreover, many further misunderstand the scope of the Law of Moses. It was far more than the Ten Commandments; it included volumes of strict requirements governing the social, civil, dietary, and worship life of Israel. It was an entire package to be obeyed. No one was allowed to pick and choose certain requirements and ignore others.

God had several important purposes for giving these laws. They were to be a *testimony* to all who "hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people...who hath God so nigh unto them" (Deut. 4:5-8). It was intended to *draw lost souls back to God*, but it was never intended as a way to merit eternal life. Paul taught, "Ye could not be



justified [from sin] by the law of Moses" because it was given that "all the world may become guilty before God...for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*" (Rom. 3:19,20). The law was a beautiful system for Israel, but even Peter acknowledged that it was a heavy "yoke...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). God's ultimate purpose

for the law was *to prove man's guilt*, to prove his inability to be righteous through good works, and to become "our schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ*, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). It is absolutely not intended for the practice of believers today.

### HOW LONG DID THE MOSAIC LAW LAST?

The Lord Jesus clearly said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). He told His disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles...but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6). *In the early chapters of Acts*, it is clear that Israel was still the exclusive focus of ministry (Acts 2:5,22,36; 3:12,25; 7:2,51,52; 11:19,20). Moreover, these Jewish believers were still operating under the law. The Lord Jesus taught, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do" (Matt. 23:1,2). They were still to keep the law because Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law...but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17).


For many present-day Christians, much confusion exists because they incorrectly attempt to apply instructions or promises that were given *exclusively* to Israel under the law. Only Israel was to "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat...or drink...but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and *all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:25-33). Only Israel was promised, "*And these signs shall follow them that believe...In my name shall they cast out devils...speak with new tongues...they shall lay hands on the sick*" (Mark 16:17,18). Only Israel was promised, "*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*" (John 14:13,14; 16:23; Matt. 18:19). When we read the Old Testament, the Gospel accounts, and the early chapters of Acts, we are not to claim promises or instruction intended *exclusively* for Israel. These books were included as part of our present-day Bible because God intended them "for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). Let's learn the lessons God intended without claiming Israel's promises.

### THE BODY OF CHRIST

Believers today are not part of the nation of Israel. In the early part of the Book of Acts, God set Israel aside from her favored and exalted position due to repeated waywardness (Rom. 11:11,12). Today, "There is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). Those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ today are placed into a new group of believers called "the church, which is His Body" or the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). This is a brand new group of believers that began with the Apostle Paul. Dr. C. I. Scofield said it well in his reference Bible when he wrote: "*In his [Paul's] writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church.*"<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle Paul teaches us, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). God saves us by His grace (Eph. 2:8,9), keeps us

secure because grace “reign[s]” (Rom. 5:21), and grace provides a lasting daily peace “wherein we stand” (Rom. 5:1,2). Finally, “...the grace of God [is]...teaching us that, denying ungodliness...we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-13). As we live in this current Age of Grace, we are to depend on *grace* in every area of our lives, and look consistently for *our* promises and instructions in the letters of the Apostle Paul.

Israel (under the law), and the Body of Christ (under grace), are like a brother and sister. God is the Father of both, yet each is distinctly different. These differences are not intended to be diluted until they are indistinguishable. We are to recognize, respect, and maintain these distinctions. This is a key to understanding our Bible. 

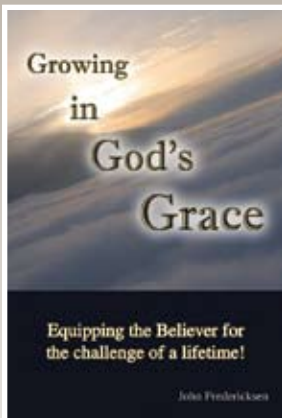
### Endnote

1. Taken from notes on Ephesians 3:6.

This article is just one of many such studies found in Pastor Frederickson's book, *Growing in God's Grace*. If you were blessed by the article, see the ad below to learn how to order the book!

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By John Frederickson



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# The Gambler

By Pastor Ricky Kurth



There are *so* many ways to gamble these days! Casinos that used to be found only in Las Vegas now seem to be everywhere. People gamble on sporting events, at racetracks, and in state lotteries. Others risk their hard-earned money in the stock market, which is always a gamble! But even if you have never placed a bet, if you are not *saved*, you are *gambling with eternity*.

You might be thinking, “I don’t use that word *saved*,” but I wonder if at some time in your life you’ve sung that most beloved of all Christian hymns, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that *saved* a wretch like me.” You may have sung the song, but are you saved? We call the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior; well, the purpose of a Savior is to *save people!* Has He saved *you*?

The Bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31). Now, if you are wondering what it is specifically that you have to believe about Christ to be saved, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians,

**“I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...by which also ye are saved...how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day” (I Corinthians 15:1-4).**

Here the Bible clearly says that the way to be saved from your sins is to believe that Christ died to pay for your sins. So the only question now is, do you *believe* God when He says your sins are paid for? Do you *trust* Him when He says that? If you do, the Bible says that you are *saved!*

If you are not sure what I’m trying to say, suppose for a moment that you have a serious gambling problem, and that you have racked up *a million dollars* in gambling debts. One day some very bad men threaten to *kill* you unless you pay your debt. Naturally, you are very afraid, because you don’t have the money. But just then a friend emails you to say, “I heard about your problem, and I paid your debt.”

Now you have to ask yourself, “Do I really *believe* my friend when he says he paid my debt? Do I *trust* him when he says my debt is paid?”

If you don't believe him, you'll have to keep trying to pay your debt on your own. But if you *do* trust your friend when he says he paid your debt, you'll thank him for it, and simply rest in what he did for you.

That's all God asks of you to be saved from your sins. Believe that Christ paid for your sins, and *rest* in what He did for you. If you'll do that, the Bible says you are *saved*. If you won't, well, you'll just have to go on trying to pay for your sins in your own way, by being good, by not being bad, or by being religious—something the Bible says you can never do:


**“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).**

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).**

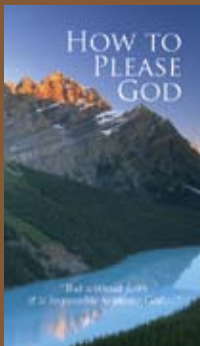
**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).**

If you are *still* not sure what I am trying to say, I have a little exercise for you. Later today, or perhaps tomorrow, you are going to do some good thing, or avoid doing some sinful thing. At that moment, you will be tempted to think, “I just helped pay my way to heaven.” When that happens, *stop yourself*, and say, “No, the Bible says that the only way I can get to heaven is by believing that Christ died for my sins.” Just keep that up, and eventually you'll learn to trust what Christ did on the cross of Calvary to pay for your sins, and rest completely in what He did for you.

They say life is a gamble, and I suppose in many ways it is. But don't gamble with *eternal* life. The stakes are much too high.

I promise you this: A thousand years from this moment, *you will remember this moment*. And whether you remember it with *joy* or *eternal regret* depends on the decision you must make *right now* to trust Christ as your Savior. 

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# Two New Staff Members Join the BBS Team

When the need arose earlier this year to fill two staff positions, we received numerous applications from those who were interested in the openings for *Business Manager* and *Mailroom Clerk*. Most of these applicants had impressive credentials, which made our final decision extremely challenging.

As the field narrowed, after much prayer, we hired Colleen Romain to be our new Business Manager. Colleen was the office manager of an area business for over twenty years until the owner decided to retire. She was, therefore, well qualified to handle all the business affairs of BBS when she came on staff. Since Colleen was unfamiliar with *Corporate QuickBooks*, our former Business Manager, Doug Cox, graciously agreed to come out of retirement temporarily to help her navigate this complex program. With a well-rounded knowledge of accounting procedures, she quickly came up to speed with *QuickBooks*, for which we are most grateful. Colleen has known the Lord for many years and has a good grasp of Paul's apostleship and message.



Colleen Romain



Kelly Olesiak

The other position we needed to fill was in our mailroom. This particular opening required someone who could wear a number of different hats—receptionist duties, filling orders, shipping, updating the *Searchlight* database, *Two Minutes with the Bible*, and a score of other things. I am happy to report that Kelly Olesiak joined the staff in June. Kelly is a second-year student at the *Berean Bible Institute*.

Since she is a part-time student this school year, it leaves her plenty of time to work full time here at the *Berean Bible Society*. She is a quick study, so it didn't take her long to master all the ins and outs of the mailroom. Kelly was raised in a grace home and came to know Christ at a very young age. She attends *Falls Bible Church* and has served at *Northern Grace Youth Camp* where she works with our grace youth.

Colleen and Kelly have been great additions to the staff, and we rejoice with them that they are members of the BBS team. If you plan to visit the *Berean Bible Society* in the near future, or call to place an order, don't forget to introduce yourself to our newest ambassadors of grace.

—Paul M. Sadler, President



## BBS Letter Excerpts

### **From Michigan:**

“What a blessed truth we have been given from our great Creator through the beloved apostle Paul! It sure straightens out a lot of seeming contradictions with which many Christians have problems.”

### **From Wisconsin:**

“Thank you for opening my eyes of understanding. My father planted the seed many years ago, but the understanding was not there.”

### **From Ohio:**

“I understand that there is a way of rightly dividing the Word of truth that I have never heard of before, and I want to really understand how to read my Bible....I'd like further clarification on how to correctly be saved as well....We are a little bit shy but have a real desire to please God...but there is so much confusion because of all the denominations and what they require for me and my mom and my daughter to be saved....Thanks for your efforts to help this concerned family of mine to...finally be solidly grounded and established in the faith.”

### **From Indiana:**

“Brother Sadler, I'm sure that you get similar letters all the time...so I want to write mine. You have not 'Almost' persuaded me, you have fully persuaded me. Your article in the last issue of the *Searchlight*, 'Treasured Gifts,' was an indescribable blessing to me. I am not alone in appreciation for that article.”

### **From our Inbox:**

“I am an independent Baptist who is coming to the realization that many of my beliefs are not Scriptural. I was wondering what writings you would suggest for someone in my shoes.”

### **From Arkansas:**

“My husband introduced me to the grace message about 10 years ago. He was a good family man and embraced all of the riches of God's grace....We miss him dearly, but thank God he understood how to rightly divide the Bible, and taught his family to do the same.”

### **From South Dakota:**

“Thank you for your ministry and the articles I'm reading in the *Berean Searchlight*. A friend of mine has been sharing his copy with me. Please place me on your mailing list.”

### **From Illinois:**

“What a blessing you have been. I pray for you often.” (Can you tell this brother grew up in Chicago?—Ed).

### **From California:**

“I'm new to the grace movement... Things I had questions about have been answered...I am reading *Things That Differ*, and...it's opening a new light on the Bible for me.”

### **From Arizona:**

“The personal touches in your magazine have helped me to feel as though I too am a member of the BBS family (I Cor. 12:27).”

### **From Florida:**

“Thank you for your article regarding baptism. It’s discouraging sometimes, how so many who themselves understand the distinctiveness of Paul’s ministry have little or nothing to say about it, especially where baptism is concerned. They’re into other things, fitting in and being acceptable instead. The *Searchlight*, on the other hand, is an encouraging bright spot. Thank you, Paul, for caring enough about the Body of Christ to write and publish things that really need to be said. My hat is off to you!”

### **From our Inbox:**

“Thanks for your article on water baptism in the May issue of the *Searchlight*. Over the years I have read many articles on water baptism and I want you to know that I appreciate your study from the Word of God on this subject.”

### **From Oklahoma:**

“Thank you so much for your article about ‘baptism for the dead’.... The above article cleared up several Scriptures in my mind.”

### **From Kansas:**

“Please inform Pastor Kurth that *Baptism for the Dead* is the very best sort of interpretation I’ve ever read.”

### **From our Inbox:**

“Your *Two Minutes* articles have taken on a new dimension. Every time I read Pastor Stam’s articles, and now get salt with Pastors Sadler, Kurth...all coming at me with new subjects and in many ways opening up new truth. I forward many of these on to friends and family in order to multiply the effect of your messages. Your message today hit a home run.”

### **From North Carolina:**

“Thanks for the article on redeeming the time. I now see this verse in its context as much broader, and so much more useful to where I find myself regarding family responsibilities.”

### **From Ohio:**

“I was just thinking about the terrific Bible conference in Ashtabula last week. Dad and I enjoyed hearing God’s Word taught by such a fine Bible scholar. Thank you, Pastor Sadler, for coming and spending time with us.”

### **From Florida:**

“The great work of rightly dividing the Word amazes me. Truly, I wouldn’t be in prison if this truth would have been shown to me in my early stages while learning to walk with Christ.”

### **From our Inbox:**

“Your answers are always so direct-on-point and easy to understand the way you explain it. I have to admit that in our world and especially now, with so much evil and sin and a constant barrage of bad news as the USA crumbles apart, it’s easy, at least for me, to get discouraged while I long for His appearing. You lifted my spirit greatly with your answer and I sincerely appreciate that.”

### **From Indiana:**

“The *Searchlight* has been a blessing to me, and opened my eyes to ‘right division’ and God’s plan for today through the Apostle Paul’s gospel to the Gentiles.”

### **From Michigan:**

“I thank you all for giving me the courage, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to stand for the mystery, and rightly dividing the Word.”



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

—Acts 17:11

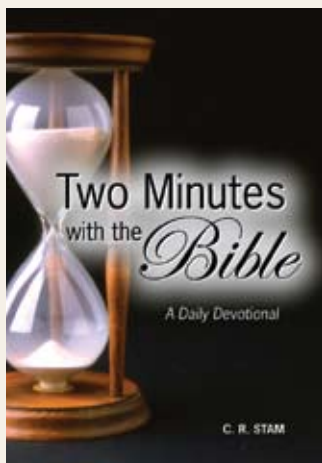


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# News and Announcements



**Rightly Dividing the Word Conference:** The *Southern Bible Institute & Seminary* of Augusta, Georgia, will host a January 14th conference in nearby Evans, Georgia that is sure to warm your frosty winter heart! These meetings will feature institute president Pastor Ron Drawdy, and Pastors Jarrod Adkins, Don Drawdy, Steven Drawdy and Ricky Kurth. What better place to learn how to be “meet for the Master’s use” than Augusta! For information, contact Pastor Adkins: 706-726-4150, [southernbibleseminary@yahoo.com](mailto:southernbibleseminary@yahoo.com).

**Use Christmas:** BBS founder C. R. Stam always encouraged grace believers to *use* Christmas to get the gospel of grace and Pauline truth out to others. Why not write us for a sample pack of our gospel tracts, and a full price list of our Bible study books, booklets, CDs and DVDs? If the Apostle Paul could use “certain poets” to get his point across, you can use Christmas! But to ensure that you order in time for the holiday, *act now!*

**New Church Has a New Location:** The saints of *Faith Bible Church* in Loveland, Colorado are now enjoying a new and improved location at 1635 Foxtail Drive, Loveland, CO 80538. If you live in the area or are just passing through, contact Jim Welker: [Jwelker@uccweb.com](mailto:Jwelker@uccweb.com), (970) 231-4716 or Jon Brunner: (970) 587-5037.

**Berean Grace Fellowship** of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, is now studying with Les Feldick by way of video. Why go *Through the Bible* alone when you can enjoy the warm fellowship of the saints of BGF? To find out when and where they meet, contact Bill Schaeffer: (717) 949-3020, [hitnmis@verizon.net](mailto:hitnmis@verizon.net).

**A Ricky By Any Other Name:** Sometimes people suggest that your editor go by *Richard* or *Rick* in order to sound more dignified. While we appreciate the suggestion, your editor’s given name, as it appears on his birth certificate, is *Ricky*. So we figure if Billy Graham and Harry Ironside could go by nicknames, we’ll stick with our legal name even if it sounds like a nickname!



The cover photo of *Fort Niagara Lighthouse* was taken by Mike Szafranski. The light is located in Youngstown, New York at the junction of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. The river mouth and Fort Niagara have served as points of strategic importance during multiple wars.

# PRICE LIST

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“Although you may have no commentaries at hand, continue to read the Word and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal received from man.”

—John Bunyan

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