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Editor: Paul M. Sadler

Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

Printing: Lithocolor, Westchester, IL

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

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

Internet: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>

E-mail: <berean@execpc.com>

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

It has always been our policy to utilize our equipment until only those in their eighties or nineties would recognize the name of the product. Through the years this has made for an interesting mix between old and new. In fact, we have some equipment that would probably qualify as museum pieces. While there are advantages to keeping these machines for an extended period of time, there are disadvantages as well. Namely, replacement parts become more and more difficult to come by, not to mention being outrageously expensive.

With this in mind, we soon plan to retire our old offset printing press (1930's vintage). In addition to becoming increasingly difficult to work with due to excessive wear, it is quite an experience to change colors of ink. This press has probably paid for itself a hundred times over, but the time has come to say *sayonara*. Although we send most of our literature to outside sources, we still print everything that is a single page in-house—tracts, letterheads, national letters, etc. It is somewhat cumbersome, but it's well worth the savings due to the high volume.

Rather than replace the press with another printing press, which would be costly, we are planning to purchase a two color, 600 dpi, *Risograph Digital Duplicator*. This particular unit will easily handle our volume without the hassle. It is relatively new technology that will greatly simplify things for our staff. In the past we have replaced old equipment by merely squeezing it into the budget. However, this will not be possible with this purchase since it falls under the category of a *major* expenditure.

Perhaps you have some of the Lord's money set aside, but have been waiting for just the right need to arise. Well, we can't think of a better way to invest in the Lord's work than the printed page. If you are in a position to help us with this project, please designate your gift *Risograph*.

Thanks so very much for your thoughtful consideration; we sincerely appreciate your interest in the work. As we pause to remember that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," may you and yours have a truly blessed Holiday Season in the Lord.

Joyfully in His service,

Paul M. Sadler
President

From Iowa:

"We so much appreciate your ministry of the Word, rightly divided. What a blessing it is. Our prayers continue to lift you daily for your part in faithfully doing this work of our great Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

From Wyoming:

"Just a note to let you know that people are looking at your Internet program. I went to give a copy of 'Children' to this woman and she said she'd already gotten copies off the Internet. Thanks for all the work you do for me. I learn so much from the *Searchlight* and the books. The Bible class I lead is planning to study Pastor Stam's book, *Our Great Commission*."

From Florida:

"Enclosed is a small gift in support of your *Berean Searchlight*. We look forward to reading it each month. My wife and I are enjoying your book, *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ* at our morning devotions. It makes everything clear. Why can't more people see the message given to the Apostle Paul for us in this dispensation? Keep up the good work." (Well, beloved, some are willingly ignorant of this blessed truth, some have counted the cost of standing for it and departed from the faith because the cost was too high, and others have never heard it. We can't help the first two groups, but there is hope for the latter group. May God help us to open our mouth boldly that all men might see the Mystery. Ed.)

From New York:

"I pray God's blessing on the message of the grace of God as the word is sent out."

From the Internet:

"Thanks so much for your thought-filled and encouraging response. Your ministry is such a blessing for those of us who really are looking for more than just the stock answers most religious organizations provide."

From Oklahoma:

"For years I struggled with grace and law. Your ministry has made it all too clear that *rightly dividing* the Bible is the only way to understand salvation for the grace age. Please enter my subscription to the *Searchlight* and send me the material I have noted on the order form."

From the Internet:

"I just wanted to let you know how much I have learned from Pastor Stam and Pastor Sadler. I am 35 and just in the last 2 years have I heard about dispensations. A man from Colorado wrote a manuscript 'The Plot of the Bible' which made all of the seeming contradictions in the Bible disappear with his dispensational teaching. Your ministry is awesome and I thank God continually for the blessings I have been receiving from your ministry. Never has the Bible been more exciting to read and discuss with others than it has in the past two years. (May this brother's enthusiasm be a reminder of just how precious this glorious message is. Ed.)

From Alberta, Canada:

"This is only a note to say thank you for all your beautiful ministry in the *Berean Searchlight*. It is heartwarming when the magazine comes in the door. It is so good to be a part of what *Berean* believes and to rightly divide the Word. I never get down to writing but I do enjoy the *Searchlight* and say again, keep up the good work. Thank you again and God bless each one."

From Alabama:

"Thanks so much for sending us the *Berean Searchlight* all these years. We enjoy them so much. May God's richest blessings rest upon you as you preach the Word, rightly divided. I have lost an issue of the *Searchlight*, November 1998. I think it is the one that had an article by Brother Stam on the Rapture that I enjoyed so much because I had come to believe the same thing. I would be grateful if you could send that issue."

From Ohio:

"I thank God everyday for His love and for the strength of Jesus Christ who did for me the things I could not do for myself. I also thank you for your help with the tracts and booklets you have sent to me. I have been studying the Bible for several years but always received conflicting information. The booklet you sent seems to show the continuity of the Word and I would like to find out more. I would greatly appreciate any help you can be."

From Washington:

"A thank you for the *Searchlight*. I've enjoyed it for many years. We are studying *Galatians* by C. R. Stam in our Bible class and enjoying it."

From Idaho:

"Thank you and your ministry for the help and the donation of September's issue of your magazine. This will help the ministry grow here at I.S.C.I. Inter-Faith Chapel. It will make it possible for the inmates to grow stronger and closer to the Lord."

From Washington:

"Thank you all for your desire to allow God to use you to give such abundant blessings to the readers of the *Searchlight*, books, pamphlets, etc. Please send me 10 copies of the *Writings of John* by Pastor Stam. P.S. How do I join the *Berean Bible Society*?" (We do not require membership to participate in our ministry. However, we do encourage membership in your local Grace church if it is faithfully making known the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery. Ed.)

From New York:

"Thank you for sending the *Berean Searchlight* all these years. Please continue to send it and use the check to help pay for it."

From Washington:

"My husband and I have enjoyed and appreciated your little magazine for years. We are thankful for your faithfulness in teaching the rightly divided Word of truth.... There is no church in my area where grace is taught, and at times I long for fellowship with like-minded believers. I weary of the Sunday hodgepodge of raucous, repetitious 'music' and shallow teaching of law and self-effort. The Church is so judaized and compromised with the world today that many ignore Paul as though he didn't exist and don't know the difference. Thanks for proclaiming the liberating truths of the grace of God."

From Saskatchewan, Canada:

"Thank you very much for sending the Bible study information so promptly. It will be very helpful in forming a group in my home. We are in the process of getting a group together with the church's help. Lord willing, we can start up by the end of September. (This is exactly how many of our grace assemblies had their beginning. Remember, from the little acorn comes the mighty oak. Ed.)

From Ohio:

"I receive the...paper and I have been so impressed with your writing. *Two Minutes with the Bible* is the message you write. I believe your articles are the truth of God. I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your writings."

From Minnesota:

"Enclosed is my check for *Triumph of His Grace*. I have enjoyed receiving the *Berean Searchlight* immensely. Your *mining* of the Word as you rightly divide it has led me to a different way of studying and certainly more hours of study. The Bible is indeed the Living Word in that it always refreshes and never grows old. God bless your work. It bears much fruit."

"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

Many have requested that we republish an article regarding the visitation of the wise men that appeared in the Searchlight years ago. In fact, the response was so great at the time we were unable to keep up with the requests for additional copies. This particular article raises the question: "Is your faith resting in the Word of God or the traditions of men?" Since tradition has a strangle hold on the Church today the message herein is timely. —Ed.

The Visitation of the Wise Men

By Paul M. Sadler

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him."

—Matt. 2:1,2

While the story of the wise men contains many wonderful truths, unfortunately they have been overshadowed through the centuries by the traditions of men. The Apostle Paul warns us in Colossians 2:8, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men....*" We should point out that not all traditions are necessarily harmful. However, when *the traditions of men* contradict *the Word of God* they rob us of truth and further light. The account of the wise men is a classic example which merits our consideration.

Who among us has not been taught since childhood that the wise men were three kings who came from the east following yonder star? Furthermore, we were led to believe that the star guided these men of renown to Bethlehem, where they worshiped the Christ-child the same night He was born. The basis for this conclusion is

largely founded upon the famous hymn, "*We Three Kings of Orient Are*," which by the way, barely contains an ounce of truth.

"We three kings of Orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse a-far; Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder star; O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright; Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to Thy perfect light."

This hymn is sung by believers around the world at this time of the year with little, if any, thought as to its accuracy. We have always been of the persuasion that not only should we preach the truth, but that we should *sing* the truth as well. To discover who the Magi (wise men) were, from whence they came, and the significance of their visit we must rely solely upon the Scriptures.

KINGS AND WISE MEN

"Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king..."

"For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon" (Dan. 2:2,12).

The Scriptures *never* call the wise men who came to visit the Christ-child, kings. As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit takes great care to distinguish between these two positions of authority. An examination of the record in Matthew 2:1 should erase any doubt from our minds as to the facts involved. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of *Herod the king*, behold, there came *wise men* from the east to Jerusalem" (Matt. 2:1).

Kings rule over a domain demanding the obedience of their subjects. But who are these wise men and where did they dwell? Stepping back in time we receive some helpful insights from the prophet Daniel. The book that bears his name divides the wise men into four classifications: magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and the Chaldeans. Their expertise was in the study of the heavens: some were doubtless skilled *astronomers*, while others of their company practiced *astrology*.

Many scholars agree that the Magi were able to predict solar and lunar eclipses with amazing accuracy. Furthermore, their knowledge of science, agriculture, and mathematics gave them entrance into the courts of kings which meant they exercised a great deal of political influence.

The wise men of Babylon had a very high regard for Daniel, due to the fact that he had been instrumental in saving their lives when

they were unable to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Apparently Daniel had the opportunity to teach at least some of the Magi about Israel's true and living God. Through the Spirit he undoubtedly revealed to them how a *deliverer* was to come, and their background taught them to watch the heavens for a sign. It is also advantageous for us to remember that after the Babylonian captivity ended a remnant of Jews remained in Babylon. Therefore, the testimony of Holy Scripture continued to have an impact years later.

"The Scriptures *never* call the wise men who came to visit the Christ-child, kings."

So then, comparing Matthew 2 with Daniel 2, we conclude that the wise men were *not* kings, but rather astronomers and astrologers who studied the stars. We also know that they were *Gentiles*, who were evidently from Babylon, which is further substantiated by the fact that under the Law Israel was never permitted to engage wise men. They were to rely solely upon Jehovah for divine direction in their lives.

YONDER STAR

"Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matt. 2:2).

In all probability the wise men were yet in Babylon when they saw the star over Bethlehem, which was cause for jubilation. Back in those days one didn't just climb aboard a camel and make

tracks across the desert! Supplies had to be purchased, families had to be informed, a route had to be planned, and arrangements had to be made to assemble a caravan. Pondering this conclusion alone leads one to believe that there were more than three in the company who made the journey from the east. Presumably, there was a considerable group of Magi, accompanied by soldiers, servants, and beasts of burden.

This explains why, upon their arrival, King Herod was troubled *"and all Jerusalem with him."* When this impressive entourage entered the city it turned every head. And to add insult to injury, these noble men of the east inquired concerning the whereabouts of *the King of the Jews*. The people of God were embarrassed to say the least—King of the *Jews*?!

Incidentally, while the wise men saw the star in the east the night Christ was born, contrary to popular belief, they did *not* follow yonder star to Bethlehem! As Isaiah says, *"Come let us reason together."* If the Magi followed the star to Bethlehem, then why stop at Jerusalem to inquire as to where the newborn King could be found? Mark these words and mark them well: it was not necessary at this point in time to have a star guiding their way. The wise men had already anticipated that the King of the Jews would be born in the land of the Jews. So they would naturally come to Jerusalem, the city of God, to begin their search for the holy One of Israel. Thus, upon their arrival they inquired, *"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"*

Pausing here for a moment, can the reader imagine how this must have infuriated Herod? Why, the audacity of these foreigners! *I* (Herod) am King of the Jews! Indeed, but he was not the rightful heir to the throne of David. Knowing this, he sought to end the young child's life. Oh, the pride of man to think that he can overthrow the plans and purposes of God!

Inquiring on behalf of the wise men, Herod interrogated the Sanhedrin¹ as to where the Christ should be born. They, of course, revealed to him from the Scriptures that it was to be Bethlehem in the land of Judaea (Matt. 2:5,6). The plot thickens as Herod seemingly plays along in hope of getting his wicked hands on the newborn King. He then informed these men of the east that they should go to Bethlehem (so as not to arouse their suspicion) and when they had found this king they should bring him word, that he too might come and worship Him.

As the wise men headed south out of Jerusalem, to their astonishment the star *reappeared*, directing them to the place where they could indeed find and worship the Christ. There have been many explanations as to the appearance of the star at this time. Some have tried to explain it as simply a natural phenomenon, such as a large meteor blazing through the sky. Others have suggested that it was the planets Jupiter and Saturn crossing orbits with one another which caused the brilliant light that fateful night. We believe, however, that the appearance of the star was a *supernatural event* miraculously

directing the “wise men” to the right place. We have already established that it was unnecessary for the Magi to follow the star from the east, but now they surely needed its direction. Thus, once they were outside of Jerusalem it was to their joy that the star reappeared. Little wonder that when they saw it they were exceedingly joyful. *“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy”* (Matt. 2:10).

This is further confirmation that they were not led by the star from Babylon to Jerusalem. After all, why get all excited over something one has been following for months? They were elated, because the star had now *reappeared* in the sky and was directing them to the place where the Son of God could be found. The reappearance of the star is evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt that this was a supernatural event. A meteor falls to the earth but once; however, in this case we have the same star appearing *a second time* to guide these weary Gentile travelers to their destination.

A CHANGE OF PLANS

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was” (Matt. 2:9).

The above passage informs us that the reappearance of the star directed the wise men *away from Bethlehem to another* location, causing a change in their plans. This deserves our most thoughtful attention; Mary and Joseph had long since departed from

Bethlehem and nearly *two years* had passed before the arrival of these eastern visitors. As we shall see, there are at least two observations that confirm the validity of this conclusion.

First of all, according to Luke 2:21,22, after Mary and Joseph left Bethlehem they journeyed north to Jerusalem.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.”

Having accomplished the requirements of the Law of Moses the Word of God reveals that Mary and Joseph departed from Jerusalem and returned to *Nazareth*.

“And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth” (Luke 2:39).

Since Nazareth was the city where Mary and Joseph were living at the time, they naturally would have returned to their home after the census in Bethlehem. The wise men were unaware of this, therefore God supernaturally guided our visitors to the city of Nazareth where they finally found rest. The lesson we learn from this development is significant. Once again tradition and the Word of God are in conflict. Tradition portrays three kings kneeling at the manger in Bethlehem, but the Word of God declares that the wise men did not arrive until years later to pay their homage at Nazareth.

Another indication that the Magi came to Nazareth is found in Matthew's gospel where they are said to have entered a *house*, not a stable (Matt. 2:11). Furthermore, we must not overlook the fact that when they entered the house they directed their worship to the "*young child*" (and *not* to His mother Mary). The night Christ was born He is spoken of as the babe (Gr. *Brephos*) in Bethlehem's manger; however, two years later He is referred to as a "young child" (Gr. *Paidion*). Thus the Holy Spirit meticulously differentiates between these two outstanding events in our Lord's life.

But there is more! After Herod learned that he had been outwitted by the wise men, he ordered his soldiers to go to Bethlehem and slay all of the *children* who were two years old and under. Beloved, we may be sure this was a political "stick of dynamite"! Herod would never have commanded his army to execute all of those innocent children if he had believed that the Christ-child was only a few hours old. He knew the child was nearing two years of age, according to his calculations from the information he had received from the Magi.

GIFTS FOR A KING!


"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshiped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11).

Since these eastern travelers were bearing three gifts it has

"Right worship is always the basis for right giving, right learning and right service."

been conjectured that there were only three who made the journey. But, cannot one man give three gifts? However, we believe that it is more probable there was a large number of wise men who had pooled their resources to bring these valuable gifts.

Upon their entrance into the house they immediately fell down and worshiped the "young child." It has been correctly said, "Right worship is always the basis for right giving, right learning and right service."

May we not hope that He was now *their* King—and *Savior*? This writer believes He was. Also, may we suggest the possibility that the adoration of the shepherds is representative of saved Israel while the visitation of the wise men represents the salvation of the kingdom Gentiles. Yes, God has made a provision for the Gentiles in prophecy that they too might be saved *through* Israel (Isa. 56:6-8; 60:1-3). Regrettably, tradition has robbed many of the simplicity of the visit of the Magi, but thanks be unto God for the authority of His Word! 

Endnote

1. The Sanhedrin, or "council" is sometimes referred to alternately as "the chief priest and scribes."

QUESTION BOX

"It has been said over and over again how a spouse will say, 'I will see my husband in heaven.' I understand that we will be celestial beings, therefore, we will not realize our previous relationships."

While glorious changes do indeed await us when we receive our glorified resurrected bodies, the Scriptures clearly teach that our identity will be preserved in the resurrection. You will recall that when the Lord ministered to two of His followers on the road to Emmaus, "their eyes were opened, and they *knew* Him; and He vanished out of their sight." In regard to those Paul had led to Christ at Thessalonica, he said: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" Hence, the apostle looked forward to the day he would see these dear saints again, which can only mean that their identity will be preserved in the resurrection.

If we take a page from the former dispensation, we will also be cognizant of past relationships. The rich man who had entered eternity (not in his resurrected body as yet) was well aware that he had family members who were dangerously close to slipping into the hands of an angry God. "I pray thee therefore, father [Abraham], that thou wouldest send him [Lazarus] to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27-31).

Although there will not be marriage, as we now know it, in the resurrection, we will love one another as members of the Body of Christ more deeply than any love we have ever experienced on this side of glory (I Cor. 13:1-13).

—Pastor Sadler



"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Faith and Unbelief

And Their Effects

By Cornelius R. Stam

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing....”

—Rom. 15:13

It is most interesting to observe the effects of faith and unbelief upon the lives of God's children. We see this especially in connection with the incarnation and the resurrection of Christ.

THE INCARNATION

Aged Zacharias doubts the divine promise as to the birth of our Lord's forerunner (Luke 1:18) and is rebuked by the angelic messenger.

“And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

“And, behold, *thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season*” (Luke 1:19,20).

As a further result, it was impossible for the chastened priest to pronounce the usual blessing upon the waiting multitude after the offering of the evening sacrifice. We are told (Ver. 10) that *“the whole multitude of the people were praying without”* at the time. But Zacharias, now stricken dumb, could give them no word of blessing. Rather we read:

“And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

“And when he came out, *he could not speak unto them...*” (Luke 1:21,22).

Symbolically this demonstrates the inevitable effect of unbelief upon the lives of God's people. Where unbelief enters, the testimony is silenced.

In contrast to the doubts of a seasoned man of God, we find sweet, young Mary accepting in simple faith a message which would be considered much more difficult to believe: that she, a virgin, should bring forth a child.

“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word...” (Luke 1:38).

Result: a song! From Mary's heart and lips have come to us the glad *Magnificat*, which begins with those inspired and inspiring words:

“...My soul doth magnify the Lord,

“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46,47).

An interesting sidelight to the whole story is found in the words of Elisabeth, Zacharias' wife, to Mary: *“Blessed is she that believed”* (Ver. 45). Elisabeth had personally suffered the results of her husband's unbelief.

When our Lord had been born, the shepherds, like Mary, accepted the heavenly announcement in simple faith. When the angel had departed, they did not say: “Let us go and see whether this has indeed come to pass.” Rather, their words indicate that they were perfectly certain that it *had* come to pass.

“...the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see *this thing which is*

come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us” (Luke 2:15).

Result: When the shepherds had seen the Babe:

“...they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child” (Luke 2:17).

What, exactly, had been told them concerning this Child? That He was *“a Savior...Christ the Lord”* (Ver. 11).

Further result: Having “made known abroad” this glad message:

“...the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was [had been] told unto them” (Luke 2:20).

Old Simeon likewise believed, took the Babe in his arms, and said:

“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word,

“For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation” (Luke 2:29,30).

The crowning blessing of Simeon’s life was to see with his own eyes, to hold in his own arms, that blessed One in Whom the salvation of Israel was vested.

The aged and devout Anna also believed and the results were what we should expect. Not only did she *“give thanks likewise unto the Lord,”* but she:

“...spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).

THE RESURRECTION

A superficial reading of the synoptic records might leave one with the impression that Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, went to the tomb where the Lord had been buried, believed

the angel’s declaration that He had risen, and went immediately to convey the glad news to the disciples.

The 20th chapter of John, however, supplies other details which illustrate again the sad results of unbelief.

See Mary Magdalene weeping at the sepulcher! (John 20:11). And why does she weep? *Because the tomb is empty!*

There she stands overwhelmed with grief. *“And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher.”* But those tear-dimmed eyes did not notice there the evidences of our Lord’s resurrection.

When the angels asked: *“Woman, why weepest thou?”* she replied:

“Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him” (John 20:13).

Poor woman! She would have preferred to have found His body there!

But here are two disciples on their way to Emmaus, no less broken-hearted. They are talking sadly about all that has transpired in the past few days.

“And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

“But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.

“And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?” (Luke 24:15-17).

A glance at *Young’s Analytical Concordance* will indicate that the word “walk” here does not mean to walk on, but to walk about. These disciples had started out to go to Emmaus but here, in their

deep sorrow and disappointment, they were wandering about aimlessly. Some translations render the words “and are sad”: “And they stood still, looking sad.”

Poor, broken-hearted souls! And what was it that had overwhelmed them with grief? Listen to their own explanation:

“But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done” (Luke 24:21).

The third day! Should not this fact have reminded them of our Lord’s oft-repeated promise that He would arise on the third day?

“Oh, what peace we often forfeit! Oh, what needless pain we bear!”

And all because we do not take God at His Word!

Mary weeps because the tomb is empty! The two disciples despair because it is now “the third day” since their Lord was crucified! Such is the irony of unbelief.

THE RESURRECTION AND US

Shall we not now apply these lessons to ourselves? If unbelief brings sorrow and defeat, and closes our mouths; if faith brings joy and victory, and opens our mouths in praise and testimony, how, specifically, does this apply to God’s people today?

To find the answer, listen to Paul’s impassioned prayer that we might know, among other things:

“...what is the exceeding greatness of His [God’s] power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

“Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world [age], but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:19-21).

The resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest demonstration of power in all history. He did not die the death of a sinner; He died the death that would have sunk us all to hell. And it was from *that* death that He was raised and exalted to the Father’s right hand in the *epouranios*, “far above all.”

But the amazing fact which God holds out to our faith is that this limitless power is now offered to *us!* He calls it “*the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe!*”

Why, then, are so many of us defeated and weak in our Christian experience? Is it not because like Zacharias and Mary Magdalene and the two on the way to Emmaus, we have failed to accept in faith His Word *to us?*

God says that He would have us understand “*what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward*” (Eph. 1:17-20), and many of us scarcely show an interest in these riches of grace.


God says that He would have His saints know “*what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles*” (Col. 1:27), and many of us do not care enough to search the Scriptures to learn about “the riches of the glory of this mystery.”

God declares that believers in Christ have been crucified, buried, raised and exalted with Him (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:4-7) to be “blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1:3), and the vast majority do not even bother to look into these glorious truths, committed by the ascended Lord to Paul for us (Eph. 3:1-3).

Is it strange in the light of these facts that God’s people as a whole

are confused and divided, and that their witness for Christ evidences so little of the power of the Spirit?

Let us, then, be the exceptions to this rule, the “remnant,” who do care about what God has to say to us and who take Him at His word. Thus alone can we be “well adjusted” and enjoy the power of the Spirit in our witness for Christ.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...” (Rom. 15:13). 

BETHLEHEM’S BABE EXALTED

The Bible accounts of the birth of Christ are touching indeed. The angelic announcements; the virgin with child, deeply embarrassed, yet highly honored; the holy Babe born in a stable because there was no room in the inn, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger; the night suddenly turned to day, the multitude of the heavenly host praising God!

Surely it is fitting that we remember all this and celebrate it, especially since our Lord thus humbled Himself that He might die for our sins. Yet here we must be careful not to be led astray, lest we know Him only as a sweet babe in a manger rather than as the mighty Savior that He is.

As Americans we celebrate the birthdays of great men, but we do not emphasize *their babyhood!* We rather honor them for what they have accomplished, rejoicing that such men were born into the world.

Our Lord is no longer a babe and He does not wish to be thought of as a babe, but rather as the One who, having died for our sins at Calvary, now lives to dispense to a world of lost sinners the riches of His grace.

It was from His glory in heaven that He revealed Himself to Paul and instructed him to write: *“Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him [so] no more”* (II Cor. 5:16).

And again in Hebrews 2:8,9, the Apostle declares: *“Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus....crowned with glory and honor”* as the One who *“tasted death for every man.”*

It is wonderful to *remember* our Lord as the Babe born at Bethlehem, but still more wonderful to *know Him now* as the One who is *“able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him”* (Heb. 7:25).
—C. R. Stam

Ecclesiastes—The Longing of the Heart

By Nick Meyer

Having completed two years of study at the Berean Bible Institute Nick has earned the Certificate of General Bible Education.

The book of Ecclesiastes records the fruitless and painful efforts of one man to find meaning in life. The author plunged himself into the study of nature (1:4-11), the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge (1:12-18) and pleasure (2:1-11), the accumulation of possessions (2:12-26), a fatalistic outlook on life (3:1-15), the worship of self (3:16-4:16), the doing of good works (5:1-7), the attainment of wealth (5:8-6:12), and the pursuit of morality (7:1-12:12). Despite his efforts to explore every corner of life, the author found that all was bankrupt of meaning. Although Solomon, the author, probably sought out fulfillment in a more intense way than most, his quest was not unique. What prompted him is something shared by all men and which in a measure dictates their actions as well.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 may be the key to explaining the motivation behind what drove Solomon to the pursuits he records. *“He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”* Solomon elucidates how that everywhere he searched, life under the sun left one with an empty hollowness—vanity is the word he used. The second verse of chapter 1 sets the tone for much of the book: *“‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher; ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’”*

What does the author’s pursuit for meaning and the continual


disappointment he faced imply but that his heart was lacking something meaningful? There is a built-in desire, a need, in each human being for something more than what we can offer ourselves or what the world can offer us. The longing of the heart is expressed in the first half of the verse (“He has put eternity in their hearts”), and the inability of the heart in the second (“except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end”). The experiences recorded in this book personify this longing and inability. The Proverbs record the same struggle: *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (Prov. 14:12).

As God is our Creator, who has created all things for Himself (Rev. 4:11), the heart senses its separation from Him. Solomon confesses: *“God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes”* (Eccl. 7:29). By his own doing man has cut himself off from his very life source. Yet, the heart still echoes the effects of that lost relationship with God. Thus, Augustine has said: *“Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.”* And Sir Francis Bacon quipped: *“Atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man.”* The heart longs for God to fill it. But those who will not let Him in, try to fill their hearts with the passing pleasures of sin, the pursuit of

knowledge, the worship of self, or the worship of nature. What is found is the same thing that Solomon found: nothing.

Throughout the book's laments and disappointments periodic references are made to God. They only foreshadow what in the end is held up as the clue to the meaning of life. The tone of the body of the book is despair, in the midst of which references are made to God that don't fit the atmosphere that is being created. Some of these references are: "God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight..." (2:26), "that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God" (3:13), "But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God" (8:13). Such statements are made throughout the book, yet the meaningless tone continues until

the last chapter, where he concludes: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (12:13).

Our world is living in the meaninglessness and pain described in this book; and it is because the longings of men's hearts are not being satisfied with God, the only One who can fulfill them. Instead of turning to God, they seek through their own efforts to find meaning. In the end Solomon found God, but he did not counsel men to seek Him through the same process he did. "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth," were his words. Actions have consequences, even when they are repented of. If men would seek God now, much vanity and sorrow would be spared. Our Lord Jesus Christ once said: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Nowhere but in Him will one find meaning in life. 

THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...by which also ye are saved..." "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was *buried*, and that He *rose* again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

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THE LESSON

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Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are they who mourn.

Blessed are they who thirst for justice.

Blessed are you when persecuted.

Blessed are you when you suffer.

Be glad and rejoice, for your reward in heaven is great.

Then Simon Peter said, "Do we have to write this down?"

And Andrew said, "Do we have to turn it in?"

And James said, "Does spelling count?"

And Bartholomew said, "Do we have to memorize this?"

And Nathaniel said, "What if we don't know it?"

And John said, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this!"

And Matthew said, "When do we get out of here?"

And the other James said, "When do we have lunch?"

And Judas said, "What does this have to do with real life?"

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Him His goals in the cognitive and behavioral domains.

And Jesus wept.

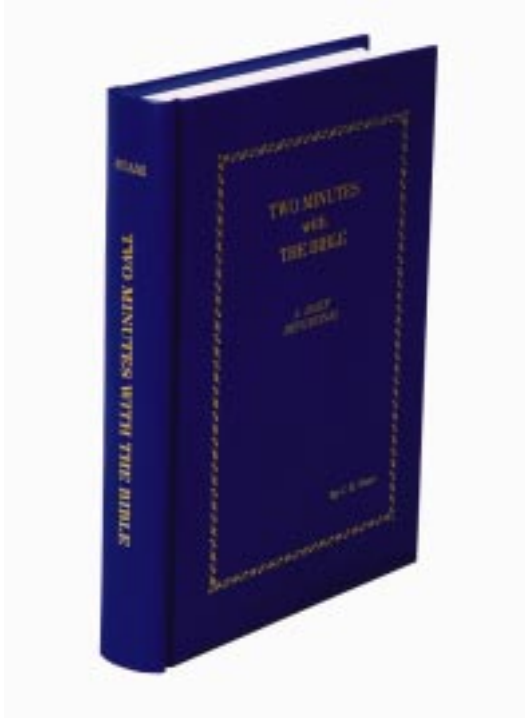
—Author Unknown

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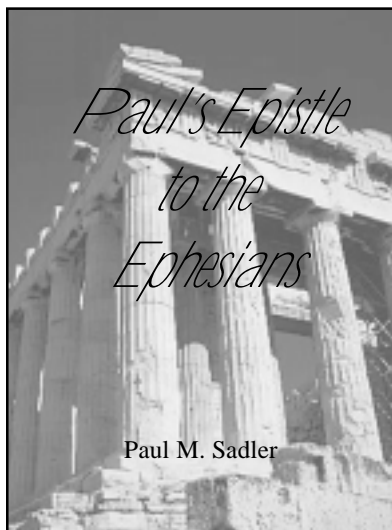
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“One time at the City Temple in London, there was in the congregation a restaurateur named Emil Mettler, who was a close friend of Albert Schweitzer. Mettler would never allow a Christian worker to pay for a meal in his restaurant, but once he did happen to open his cash register in the presence of a secretary of the London Missionary Society. The secretary was astonished to see among the bills and coins a six-inch nail. What was it doing there? Mettler explained, ‘I keep this nail with my money to remind me of the price that Christ paid for my salvation and of what I owe Him in return.’”

Indeed, we all owe Him a great debt of gratitude.

—Ed.

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Make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.
So the little moments, humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages of eternity.”

—Julia Carney

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOMEGOING: We were so sorry to learn of the death of Pastor Jeff Farrell's wife, Laura. After being diagnosed with cancer only six months ago, Mrs. Farrell passed away on September 9th after suddenly becoming ill. Thankfully, she is with the Lord, which is far better, but those who have been left behind naturally mourn her passing, especially her dear husband. Please pray for Pastor Farrell that God will console him through this time of sorrow.

GET WELL SOON: Our dear Brother Bob Hanna was involved in a serious traffic accident recently near his home. Rescue workers had to use the "jaws of life" to extricate him from the twisted wreckage. Bob suffered a triple fracture to his left hip, broken ribs, and a punctured lung. Brother Hanna has been released from the hospital, but will have to undergo weeks of physical therapy at a rehab center. If you would like to drop Bob a get well card, his address is: P.O. Box 702, Calimesa, California 92320.

RETRACTION: It has been brought to our attention that the quote by Janet Reno, which appeared in the October issue, was a hoax. Apparently our sources were also misled; therefore, we extend our sincere apology for any inconvenience this may have caused.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS: By the time you read these lines your Editor's commentary on Ephesians should be just about ready for the printer. Let's begin to pray now that the Lord will use this work to bring many into a fuller understanding of the revelation of the Mystery.

 **DON'T FORGET:** If you have a question, request or you're simply placing an order it will only be necessary to use the following address:

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Of course, if you are using the *Business Reply* envelope, simply drop it in the mail, all the pertinent information is already provided. **Please note**, however, if you are sending us a *package* it will be necessary to use the street address located on page 3, especially if you are sending it UPS. Heartfelt thanks!

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Lindy Root. She is the niece of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Martin of Kalamazoo, Michigan. The lighthouse is located in South Haven, Michigan.

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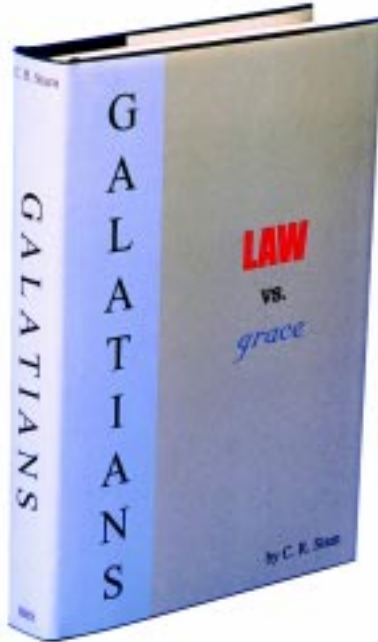
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