

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2001



Feature Articles

<i>Christ and Him Crucified (The Teaching of the Cross)</i> Pastor Paul M. Sadler	7
<i>With Him, The Glories of the Life to Come</i> Pastor Cornelius R. Stam	13
<i>Living in Light of Eternity</i> Pastor John Fredericksen	17

Departments

From Our Mailbag	4
Electronic Grace Library	6
Question Box	12
Grace Singles' Conference	21
The BBI Byline	25
News and Announcements	26

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Editor: Paul M. Sadler; *Composition and Layout:* Kevin J. Sadler

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

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

Berean Bible Society Main Office: (262) 255-4750

Berean Bible Society Fax Number: (262) 255-4195

Internet: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>

E-mail: <berean@execpc.com>

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., CST

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

Whenever you have children and grandchildren there's never a dull moment. The other day our daughter-in-law, Jessica, took Cody and Katelyn along with her to drop her sister, Julie, off at the airport. Since they arrived early, Julie stopped by the newsstand to pick up a couple of magazines to read during her flight. While Jessie was waiting, she browsed around the store pushing the kids in the stroller, occasionally stopping to look at something.

Shortly after leaving the newsstand, Jessie noticed that Cody seemed to be acting strange. *Quiet!* Like he was thinking about something. Mom inquired what was wrong, but he just shrugged his little shoulders. After they arrived at the gate, Mom observed that he had a concerned look on his face. While Jessie was talking to Julie, she turned to check on the kids only to find Cody unwrapping something under the blanket in the stroller. When she asked what he was doing, he got a sheepish look on his face and pulled out a package of *lifesavers* he had *taken* from the newsstand. At this point, he was in need of a “lifesaver!”

My grandson, a *felon* at the age of 2! Jessie marched the little perpetrator back down the concourse to the newsstand where he handed over the goods and apologized to the clerk. Of course, later that day he had to face Dad. When interrogated about the crime, he threw his blanket over his head and had no comment. It's always tough to face the music!



This was Cody's first brush with his conscience and suffering the consequences of disobeying it. Interestingly, we never have to teach our children or grandchildren to do wrong—it comes naturally! They have inherited a sin nature, which introduces itself at an early age in the form of temper tantrums. This is why the Scriptures admonish us to “train-up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” In other words, we must discipline our children to do *right*, otherwise the judicial system will discipline them some day with little compassion.

Yours in His service,
Grandpa Sadler

From Oregon:

"The *Berean Searchlight* was delivered to our mailbox in error. Before sending it on to the intended receiver, we looked at it briefly and decided it was one we would like to have come to our home. Enclosed is a donation to cover the cost of a year's subscription." (Sometimes the Lord works in mysterious ways. Ed.)

From Colorado:

"I truly enjoy the *Searchlight* and have been blessed with an understanding of the Mystery and the grace of God."

From Illinois:

"Thank you so much for sending me the *Berean Searchlight* each month and through the years, and your continued faithfulness in preaching and teaching the Word, rightly divided. It's a great blessing to me, and truly an inspiration and encouragement. May the Lord God, Jesus Christ, continue to bless you and your ministry in abundance. Keep up the good work."

From North Carolina:

"Keep up the good work. I especially enjoyed the September issue of the *Berean Searchlight*."

From Ohio:

"I look forward to the *Searchlight*. Thank you for sending it to me. I'm still enjoying Pastor Stam's books, and also the one I got this past spring by Pastor Sadler. Please use this check toward the *Berean Searchlight* or where needed. Thank you very much. I pray God will continue giving you good health to keep up the grace of God according to St. Paul."

From Texas:

"Your publication has been a means of edification for my spiritual growth."

From Colorado:

"I pray each one is doing well. You are in my prayers as you so faithfully serve our wonderful Lord."

From Iowa:

"We pray that God will bless and supply your needs, and that many will hear the gospel and be saved. Glad to see Brother Sadler is back, we enjoy his writings in the *Searchlight*."

From Massachusetts:

"Thanks for defending the truth as you do. We need you folks more than ever these days when so many perverted gospels are finding their way into the mainstream denominations. May God bless you abundantly for your tireless efforts defending the gospel of Grace, as set forth in God's Word." (Over the years we have merely sought to plot a steady course for all those who desire to hear the truth of Paul's gospel. Ed.)

From New York:

"Stand firm on the Word of God as given to us. Man's way of thinking destroys the fact it is God speaking to us through His Word."

From Colorado:

"Thank you for keeping me on the mailing list at *BBS*. I have been *on* for 30 years or so and bought a lot of Pastor Stam's books (as well as others advertised) but I never heard of the one mentioned on page 23 of the current issue. Please send me a copy of *Divine Election and Human Responsibility* as offered in the Autumn Book Special."

From Ohio:

"Thanks again for your faithfulness in sending me the booklets. They are a blessing indeed."

From Tennessee:

"I want to thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* and for the light it gives to us. The article in September (*Revealed by Fire*) by Fred Wisniewski is one of the best yet. He got to the point fast without going around the world to get there. To me he said more in just a few words than most would write in a book. Please, if he will write more often, use him for the glory of God."

From British Columbia, Canada:

“Thank you ever so much for sending the *Berean Searchlight*. I have learned so much over the years. It is such a wonderful feeling to have peace with the Lord. We are sending our blessing to you and to all the people who have suffered from the disaster in the USA.” (Heartfelt thanks! Like Pearl Harbor, September 11th is “a day that will live in infamy!” as President Roosevelt once said. Ed.)

From Illinois:

“Praise the Lord for all the writers who spread the good news of God’s amazing grace in the *Berean Searchlight*. What a blessing it is to read.”

From Ghana, Africa:

“I and my church members do thank you for your faithful service. Sometimes I tell my church members the work you are doing. Keep on and we also always keep on remembering you in our prayers. I like this sentence that you wrote in February 2001, on page 11, ‘*The death, burial, and resurrection declared Satan and his fallen host to be defeated foes.*’ I also prefer the Christian duty you provided in that book.”

From Georgia:

“Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* publication. Here is a check to help you with your work, which has been a blessing to me.”

From Arizona:

“Here is our monthly contribution to the Lord’s work. We thank God every day for your faithfulness. We have reached an age where the extent of our service is this small pittance and constant prayer. We thank God that you are fulfilling Romans 12:1&2 and then we see you *abounding* in the work of the Lord (I Cor. 15:58) and feel as if we do have a small part in the *work*. Thanks again for your steadfastness to the message.”

From Indiana:

“My understanding of God and the Bible have opened up since I learned about *rightly dividing*. Thank you for your ministry and the *Berean Searchlight*.”

From Oregon:

“We appreciate and look forward to the *Berean Searchlight* each month. We thank God for you all and appreciate your endeavors to share the *truth rightly divided*. You are such a blessing to us.”

From Tennessee:

“I had a booklet, the *Berean Searchlight*, come into my hands and I would like to be put on your mailing list to receive it monthly. Enclosed is a check to help with the postage and handling.”

From Indiana:

“I thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* I have been receiving these past months. I do have so many spiritual books and Sunday school lessons from the Methodists, so I cannot read it all. But did appreciate the love shown me and ask that you take my name from the mailing list. God bless you in your work in spreading the Lord’s work, especially during these troubled times in our country.”

From Missouri:

“Do so enjoy the *Searchlight*. It has answered a few questions. I pray for you all and that God’s grace will continue to bless your life. Thank you.”

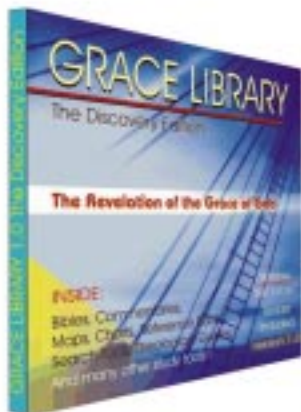
From Michigan:

“Many thanks for sending me the *Searchlight* every month. To know that the Word of God is the only source of truth and comfort in these troubled times is a great blessing. God bless you in this great work.” (Since 9/11 Bible sales have increased dramatically. We’re praying this will give rise to a great spiritual awakening in our country. As we know, Christ is still the answer! Ed.)

“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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Christ and Him Crucified

The Teaching of the Cross

By Paul M. Sadler



As we began our voyage last month, the first port of call brought us to the predictions of the Cross. David gave us a vivid description of the crucifixion of Christ one thousand years before it actually transpired. Psalm 22 is a remarkable testimony of the foreknowledge of God.

With our sails reset, we are now going to consider the *teaching of the Cross*. As our voyage brings us within view of the crucifixion, we want to study the events preceding and following this great historical event. We are now sailing with Peter, as the drama of redemption continues to unfold. As we sound the depths of the Word of God, exactly what did Peter and the other apostles of the kingdom understand and teach about the Cross?

UNWELCOME WORDS

“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” —Matt. 16:21

Approximately one year before the end of our Lord’s earthly ministry, He *began to teach* His disciples

about His impending death. This is another noteworthy reference to the Deity of Christ. Who among us can predict the place, time, or manner of our death—Christ did! Once again, the Spirit of God demonstrates that both the sovereignty of God and human responsibility were key components in the crucifixion. The term “must” here is a clear indication that Christ’s death at Jerusalem was *unalterable* according to the plans and purpose of God. This intersects with the foreknowledge of God, which permitted the leaders in Israel to carry out their diabolical plan to have the Lord executed.

After the Lord foretold His death, Peter received them as *unwelcome* words, therefore he took Him aside and began to rebuke Him: “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matt. 16:22). If Peter were around today, he would be the last one chosen to head up a high profile national ministry. In the eyes of many, he was impetuous, ignorant, unlearned—a mere lowly fisherman. But the Lord saw something in Peter, as He does in all believers. In Peter’s case, his greatest asset was a *willing heart*. The clay was pliable! Thus, the Potter could fashion him into a vessel of honor, fit for the Master’s use. As Peter matured in the faith, he, on more than one occasion, disarmed his critics and left them speechless (Acts 4:13).

As we return to his formative years, Peter couldn’t believe his ears regarding what would soon take place at Jerusalem. It engendered this response, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.”

In essence he is saying, “You are the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. We will defend you with our last breath, if need be.” Peter’s actions proved the sincerity of his love when he drew the sword, the night the Lord was betrayed, and attempted to separate the High Priest’s servant’s head from his shoulders. Malchus apparently took evasive action, or an unseen hand protected him, which resulted in only his ear being cut off. There is no record of anyone ever dying in the presence of our Lord (John 18:10,11).

For one reason or another Peter failed to understand that, according to prophecy, the sufferings of Christ must precede the glory of the kingdom. This first part was partially veiled, therefore he only saw the brilliance of the crown before him. Peter had a classic case of tunnel vision! He was looking forward to the Golden Age—that time of peace and righteousness when Israel’s enemies will be subdued and the faithful will reign with the Messiah upon the earth.

“But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt. 16:23).

Moments earlier Peter had been the mouthpiece of the Father, when he announced the Master was the Messiah, the very Son of God. How quickly things changed, now he had become the mouthpiece of Satan when he declared, “be it far from Thee Lord,” which demonstrated his indifference to the will of God. Simply because we are believers does not preclude us from being an instrument in Satan’s hand. There is nothing more pitiful than a child of God who’s caught in the snare of the devil. Sadly, those who allow themselves

to become ensnared in his web of deceit are usually the last ones to be aware of it.

Peter fell into Satan’s trap by failing to savor the things of God. In this context, the “things of God” speaks of the rejection and suffering of His dear Son to accomplish the plan of redemption, even though this was not fully understood at the time. Rather than accepting God’s word by faith, Peter followed in the footsteps of Satan by relishing the things of men; that is, glory and honor and recognition. The kingdom was just too close to entertain the thought of anything happening to the Master. As we follow this line of thought, it helps us to better understand the Savior’s next statement:

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any *man* will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24).

This passage has suffered greatly at the hands of those who apply it devotionally to believers today. Many say, for example, that “your cross” may take the form of financial reversals, loss of health, or whatever other burdens you may be bearing. But, dispensationally, the Lord is speaking about what the kingdom saints may be called upon to endure for the cause of Christ. Those who denied themselves and followed Him would be *rejected* and, in all probability, pay the *ultimate sacrifice* for their faith. According to Church history, all the apostles of the kingdom died a martyr’s death. In the case of Peter, it is said he requested to be crucified upside down out of respect for His Master’s sacrificial work.

AN AMBITIOUS REQUEST

“And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and

the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death. And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *Him*; and the third day He shall rise again” (Matt. 20:17-19).

Now, in the shadow of the Cross, the Lord takes His disciples aside to give them a more detailed account of the events soon to unfold at Jerusalem. He confirms the words of the prophet, that He would be betrayed into the hands of ungodly men who would condemn Him to death. It should also be noted that the Gentiles would bear the responsibility of carrying out the will of the leaders of Israel. This is the *first* time that the Lord specifically states the manner of His death. He would suffer death by crucifixion, as foretold in Psalm 22!

What exactly did the disciples and the kingdom saints understand about the death, burial, and resurrection at this point in time? Nothing! Clearly the disciples did not grasp the significance of these events, nor did they place their faith in the coming death of Christ at Calvary to be saved, although this would be the means by which they would be redeemed. According to the biblical record, these things were *hidden* from them (See Luke 18:31-34).

This sheds more light on why the disciples seemed oblivious to our Lord’s words. They were more interested in the glories of the kingdom and the positions they would have when they reigned with Him. This is substantiated by what follows.

“Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping *Him*, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right

hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom” (Matt. 20:20,21).

Every mother wants the best for her children, but sometimes her ambition can be a product of the flesh. Concluding that the kingdom would soon be established, the Mother of James and John wanted her sons to have the distinct honor of being seated on the right and left hand of the Master. Of course, James and John competently argued the case. After all, they were among the first who left their fishing nets behind and faithfully followed the Lord. The true intent of their request was to secure positions of authority so they could rule over others, like the Gentiles. But the Gentiles desire for such power was purely selfish.



What they failed to comprehend was, the kingdom could not be established until the Master had suffered and died for the sins of the nation. The Lord also reveals in this portion that they, too, would drink of this same cup. Then He adds, “to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” Most likely this honor will be given to Moses and Elijah, who represent the law and the prophets (Matt. 16:28; 17:1-3).

You see, the key to greatness in the kingdom was not based upon position and power, things that the Gentiles covet, but *character*. They were to follow in the spirit of our Lord who came not to be ministered

unto, but to minister and give Himself a ransom for many. Christ was the Creator of all things, yet He humbled Himself and took on the form of a lowly servant. Thus, the Master admonishes His disciples, “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:23-28). We believe this same principle can be applied to the Body of Christ when we rule and reign with Christ in the heavenlies.

REMOVAL OF THE VEIL

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day” (Luke 24:44-46).

It was not until *after* the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that the Lord opened the disciples’ eyes that it was He who was spoken of in the Law of Moses (Deut. 18), and the prophets (Isa. 53), and the Psalms (Psa. 22). The veil that once shrouded their eyes on this matter was removed. It now became clear to them for the first time that Christ was the promised Redeemer the Scriptures had foretold. But let us be careful not to assume that the disciples understood more than they did. They merely understood the *fact* of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Nothing more!

Armed with this new light, the disciples continued to proclaim Christ in accordance with the prophetic theme, which portrayed Him as a *victim*. This is confirmed by Peter’s

address to his countrymen on the day of Pentecost.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).

As we enter into the bay of the Book of Acts, we are still sailing in prophetic waters. Peter is going to cautiously steer us through the dangerous shoals created by the traditions and commandments of men. It is important to remember that the early chapters of the Acts record are merely a *continuation* of the earthly ministry of Christ.

Luke makes this very plain when he writes, “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen.” The “former treatise” that Luke refers to here is the gospel according to Luke, wherein he introduced his friend Theophilus to “all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach.” But as Paul Harvey would say, “Now for the rest of the story...” “To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1-3).

When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost to address his countrymen, he preached the same message that he had during the earthly ministry of Christ, with one addition—He charged Israel with the death of her Messiah!

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge

of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:22,23).

As we have seen, the death of Christ was according to the sovereign *design* of God, referred to here as “the determinate counsel.” Peter strongly asserts Christ was not delivered into the hands of evil men due to “weakness” or that He was beyond the control of the circumstances surrounding Him. The Scriptures are unmistakably clear that Christ gave His life voluntarily (John 10:17,18).

“...the early chapters of the Acts record are merely a *continuation* of the earthly ministry of Christ.”

Interestingly, Peter adds, “and foreknowledge of God.” God chose the most appropriate time, place, and manner for His will to be carried out. Simply because God foreknew the actions of those who would reject and condemn His Son does not diminish from their guilt. Some of those standing before Peter at Pentecost were the very co-conspirators who helped set up the false witnesses against the Lord. There were also those present who cried out, “Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!” Hiding behind them were the ones who chanted, “Away with him, away with Him, crucify Him!”

Peter wasn't one to mince words. He effectively exposed the *guilt* of those responsible for the death of Christ when he stated, “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” It was as if the blood was dripping off the ends of their fingers. Incidentally, have you


heard any good news up to this point? For want of a better term, Peter was preaching the *bad news* of the Cross. As if that wasn't bad enough, he tightened the noose with: you crucified Him, but God the Father raised Him from the dead and placed Him at His own right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool. Let all Israel know who committed this evil deed that they are the enemies of God (Acts 2:24-36).

Suppose for a moment you and a friend planned and carried out the perfect murder. Unexpectedly, a couple of months later your friend taps you on the shoulder and says, “By the way, remember that man we murdered, he's back from the dead and he's looking for us.” Now that would have your undivided attention! In like manner, Peter had his hearers' attention when he *charged* them with the death of Christ. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” That is, what must we do to be saved from this terrible sin we have committed?

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent....” Finally, here's the good news, “repent” repent of what? Repent of crucifying their Messiah. This would have included belief on His *name*, that He was who He claimed to be, the Messiah, the very Son of God (John 20:31). “And be [water] baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, [Upon expressing their faith in this manner, they would have been saved according to Mark 16:16], and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

These were the *amended* terms of salvation under the kingdom gospel after the day of Pentecost. Land *ho!* We are most grateful to Peter

who has brought us safely to our destination where he will give the first legitimate *offer* of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 3:17-21). Her rejection, however, of God's gracious offer of repentance will mark a major turning point in God's dealings with mankind.

One of the things from Peter's message that we would all do well to remember is, we are always *responsible* for our actions. The greater the position, the greater the responsibility. Next month we will be sailing with Paul! 

To Be Continued!

Question Box

“James speaks about the ‘perfect law of liberty.’ What is your viewpoint on this phrase? ‘But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed’ (James 1:25).”

We believe James is referring to the *Sermon on the Mount*, which is merely an amplification and intensification of the Law of Moses (See Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Here's a case in point that speaks for itself:

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [you're worthless], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:21-22).

Since the Sermon on the Mount governs the moral and spiritual life of Israel, the blessings and warnings contained therein have been called the *Charter of the Kingdom*. In this regard, the Sermon on the Mount and the Book of James parallel one another. For example:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3).

“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem....But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt. 5:34,35,37).

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom...” (James 2:5).

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither in heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12).

As James says, it is not the forgetful hearers of the “perfect law of liberty” who inherit the blessings of the kingdom, but those that obey and continue in it.
—Pastor Sadler

With Him

THE GLORIES OF THE LIFE TO COME

By Cornelius R. Stam

God has not seen fit to reveal to His children all the details of the life to come. He has, however, made known to us what we need to know for our encouragement and establishment in the faith.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The event that will bring this present dispensation of grace to a close is the *rapture* of the Church—the *true* Church—to be with Christ.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds¹ to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thes. 4:16-18).

But when Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord in His heavenly glory he was instantly blinded, and only by a divine miracle was his sight restored. How then will we be able to endure His glory? The answer is found in I Corinthians 15:51:

“We shall not all sleep, but we *shall* all be *changed*.”

In contrast to the gradual—often all-too-slow—metamorphosis referred to in II Corinthians 3:18,² this change will be sudden:

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...” (I Cor. 15:52).

Philippians 3:20,21 also refers to this wonderful change:

“For our conversation² is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

“Who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

What a glorious prospect! And the most wonderful part of it is that not only will our bodies be changed, but we shall be changed *morally and spiritually*, so that we will never again be tempted to commit one single sin to grieve our Lord.

“We are confident, I say, and *willing rather*, to be absent from the body and to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD” (II Cor. 5:8).

“...having a *desire* to depart and to be WITH CHRIST, which is *far better*” (Phil. 1:23).

“...so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD” (I Thes. 4:17).

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together WITH HIM” (I Thes. 5:9,10).

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Believers will appear before “the judgment seat of Christ”⁴ immediately following the rapture. This is evident from the following Scriptures:

I Thessalonians 4:17: “caught up together...TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR.” Clearly this is not a chance meeting, but a called meeting. We are *caught up to meet Him*. Some have rendered this passage: “for a meeting with the Lord.” Note also that this meeting will be held “in the air;” before we “go [bodily] to heaven.”

I Corinthians 4:5: It is *when “the Lord comes”* that He will “bring to light the hidden things of darkness” as He “judges” our Christian conduct and service.

II Timothy 4:8: Here refers to a “crown” to be given to him and to “all them also that love His appearing”—“at that day.”

THEN WHAT?

Then, with our “slates” (*as His people*) all wiped clean, as it were, we will “judge angels” (I Cor. 6:3) and, in proportion to our former faithfulness, will “reign with Him” (II Tim. 2:12). As the kingdom saints will reign with Christ *on earth* (Luke 19:17,19), we, His heavenly people, will reign with Him *over the earth and over the angelic hosts* who now have this authority (Rom. 8:17).

And then—how could any book contain all the details of an eternity with Christ? We could not understand them in our present state, neither do we need to know them. It is enough to know that He has saved us by His grace and has

given us a heavenly position and prospect (Eph. 2:4-6),

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ver. 7).

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

If we know little about the glory of “the ages to come,” we know even less about the so-called “intermediate state,” our state between death and the resurrection. But again, there are some things we *can* know, and God has revealed all that we need to know.

We know, for example, that we shall be conscious—and *consciously blessed*. See what the Apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, has to say about this:

“to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

“to be with Christ...is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8).

And there is more. In Luke 16:19-31, we find “the beggar” in conscious blessedness in what has been called the “blessed compartment” of *hades* (Ver. 25). This is where the saved of former ages went at death. Further, in Luke 23:43 we have our Lord promising the crucified thief: “Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise”—evidently the same place.

But our Lord did not remain in *hades* with the saints there, for we read in Ephesians 4:8-10: “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and...ascended up far above all heavens...,” so that now “Paradise” has been transferred to the *epouraneous*, the highest

heavens. Indeed, from II Corinthians 12:4 we learn that Paul was “*caught up* into Paradise,” which was now in “the third heaven” (Ver. 2). Thus it is Scripturally correct to say that believers “go to heaven” at death.

THE BEST OF ALL— “WITH HIM”

As we contemplate the glories to come, surely the most blessed prospect of all is the fact that we shall be “*with Christ*,” whether we depart this life before the Rapture of the Church, or whether we “are alive and remain” until that time. Note the emphasis on this glorious fact in Paul’s epistles:

“We are confident, I say, and *will-ing rather*, to be absent from the body and to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD” (II Cor. 5:8).

“...having a *desire* to depart and to be WITH CHRIST, which is *far better*” (Phil. 1:23).

“...so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD” (I Thes. 4:17).

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together WITH HIM” (I Thes. 5:9,10).

As we consider these glories that God has prepared for His children, is it not enough—and most blessed of all—to know simply that we will be “*with Christ*”? If I were invited to visit one of the world’s richest and noblest men, would I need to inquire about the food and lodging? Would it not be enough simply to know that I would be “*with him*”? Or, where love and protection are concerned: If a loving father from New York City were to take his son for a vacation

in California, would it be necessary to inquire about the details of the son’s whereabouts and activities? Where is he now? Is he well fed? Is he enjoying interesting and beautiful sights? Would it not be enough simply to know that a loving father has provided this time of pleasure, and that his son is there “*with him*”?

Thus it is with the glorious things held in store for the members of Christ’s Body. What more do we need to know than He has told us, especially since He has told us that whether we are taken by the hand of death or whether we are still alive at the Lord’s coming for His own—from the very moment of our departure from this world, we will be “*with Him*”!

“As we contemplate the glories to come, surely the most blessed prospect of all is the fact that we shall be ‘*with Christ*’...”

Many stories have been told about heaven that are Scripturally deficient, but one of these at least brings out a most precious truth. A simple but godly old man, it is said, died and went to heaven. There he was met by an angel who offered to introduce him to his new surroundings. “Where’s my Jesus?” asked the old man. “Oh, we’ll see Him soon,” said the angel, “but I’m sure you’ll want to see the beautiful mansion in which your mother now lives.” “Well, that’s all right,” said the old man, “but I want to see my Jesus.” “You will,” replied the angel, “but first let me show

you your new surroundings and especially the mansion prepared for you.” “No! No!” said the old man, “all that can wait; I want to see my Jesus.”

Incorrect as some of the details of this story undoubtedly are, it brings out forcefully the deep desire of every spiritual believer to see His blessed Lord and to be forever with Him.

“Wherefore, comfort one another with these words” (I Thes. 4:18).

A DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In closing it should be observed that all these blessings will be the more precious to us as we consider them from a dispensational perspective.

All of the glories that we shall share “with Christ” are promised to us *as members of His Body*, hence they are found only in the epistles of Paul. Neither in the “Old Testament,” nor in the records of our Lord’s earthly ministry do we find one promise of going to heaven to be with Christ at death.


Israel’s hope and prospect were *earthly* in sphere. Christ, her Messiah, was to—and will—reign over her, and over the other nations, *on earth* (Jer. 23:5). Thus, at His coming to earth 2000 years ago, He was named “*Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God WITH US*” (Matt. 1:23). This prospect will, of course, be more completely realized during our Lord’s millennial reign. What a joy it will be when Isaiah 11:1-9 and 35:1-10 and 59:20-60:3 are fulfilled, and the favored nation dwells in a restored land with Messiah in her midst! Indeed, this hope will be

“...Christ is ‘our hope,’
and heaven, God’s
own dwelling place,
is our home!”

even more gloriously fulfilled in the “new earth” of Revelation 21:3, of which we read:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is WITH MEN, and He will dwell WITH THEM, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be WITH THEM and be their God.”

But all this has to do with Israel and the nations and is based on Old Testament promises. Not until we come to the epistles of Paul do we read of a “*hope which is laid up for you in heaven*” (Col. 1:5).

Wonderful as it is that our Lord will one day dwell on earth as Emmanuel, “*God with us*,” it is still more unspeakably wonderful that we, redeemed sinners of this present dispensation of grace, will one day be “caught up” to be “*with Him*”! Yes, Christ is “our hope,” and heaven, God’s own dwelling place, is our home! 

Endnotes

1. “Clouds”—i.e., the hosts of His attending angels. Cf. Heb. 12:1; Rev. 1:7.
2. The Greek word rendered “changed” here is *metamorphoo*.
3. Gr., *Politeuma*, Citizenship.
4. Our judgment *for sin* is blessedly *past* (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1), but according to I Corinthians 3:13-15 our conduct and service *as Christians* will be reviewed at “the judgment seat of Christ,” where some will be “rewarded” for faithfulness and others will “suffer loss.” There both our *service* (I Cor. 3:10-15) and our *conduct* (II Cor. 5:10) will be scrutinized. See the writer’s booklet, *Will There Be Tears in Heaven?*

Pastor John Fredericksen is well known in Grace circles for his practical teaching on how to live a more productive Christian life. In addition to being the Chairman of the Board here at the *Berean Bible Society*, John recently moved to Rapid City, South Dakota where he is serving as the pastor of the *Grace Bible Church of the Black Hills*. —Ed.

Living in Light of Eternity

By Pastor John Fredericksen

Late in the fall of 1981, my wife and I made a decision that has forever changed our lives. We decided to bring a child into the world. Nine months later God blessed us with a beautiful and healthy baby girl. Since that day our lives have never been the same. No longer could we simply think of ourselves. Now we needed to think ahead to make sure our daughter had food, clothing, adult supervision, and much more. From the day we decided to start a family, we have needed to live in light of that decision. For those of us who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as our only hope for eternal life, we should be living every day in light of that decision. We should be **living in light of eternity**.

In Hebrews 11:23-28 we learn that Moses was a man who lived not merely for the here and now, but for the hereafter. The evidence of this testimony is in the decisions he made. Moses **refused the allurements of the world**. Verse 24 says, *"he...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."* At this point in history, Egypt was the leading nation of the world in power, prestige, education, and pleasures. All of this was at the fingertips of Moses. According to the historian Josephus, Moses was even in line for the throne of this advanced civilization. All of these things were more than a mild distraction, they

were undoubtedly a powerful temptation pulling Moses away from living the life God wanted for him. We today can certainly understand the pull of the world, because we feel it in our lives too. That's why Paul warned Timothy "no man that warreth (in working for the Lord) **entangleth himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier**" (II Tim. 2:4). There is certainly nothing wrong with working hard to provide for our families, in fact it is a noble act. But *it is so easy to become distracted* with these necessities to the point where we lose sight of what is really most important.



As the story goes, a young banker was driving his BMW in the mountains, during a snow storm. As he rounded a turn the vehicle slid out of control and toward a deep precipice. At the last moment he unbuckled his seatbelt and jumped from the car. Though he escaped with his life, his left arm was caught near

the hinge of the door and torn off at the shoulder. A trucker passing nearby witnessed the accident, stopped his rig, and ran back to see if he could be of help. There standing, in a state of shock, was the banker at the edge of the cliff moaning, "Oh my BMW, my BMW." The trucker pointed to the banker's shoulder and said "man you've got bigger problems than a car." With that the banker looked at his shoulder, finally realizing he'd lost his arm, and began crying, "Oh my new Rolex, my new Rolex." The pull of the world can easily steal our affections away, and cause us to live for the wrong things. But believers must live in light of eternity.

Hebrews 11:25 tells us that Moses **chose affliction and association with God's people**, instead of "*the pleasures of sin for a season.*" It was not politically correct or personally advantageous for Moses to choose an enslaved nation living in poverty, over living in luxury with those in power. But this man of God was not looking at the short term. *He was looking at what was best in the long run.* Like Abraham before him, he considered himself to be a stranger and pilgrim on earth. Instead of earthly riches, he "looked for a city... whose builder and maker is God...an heavenly...city" (Heb. 11:10-16). For this kind of living in light of eternity, he was one of whom it could be written "God is *not ashamed* to be called their God."

In 1955 Mr. Akio Morita's company invented the first portable transistor radio. Because he lacked the funds and connections to adequately market it, he entertained an offer from Bulova to sell his product, and provide him with a handsome profit; but he refused. The catch for him was that his

product would be marketed under the Bulova name, instead of his company's name. Mr. Morita persevered, and his company later invented the first VCR, and portable CD player. The company name, SONY. But this huge success story might never have been written had one man not looked beyond what was easy and immediately gratifying. For the believer in Christ, we may stand ashamed at the judgment seat of Christ if we are so short sighted that we live only for the here and now, instead of the hereafter.

Moses made these first two decisions because he "**esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches** than the treasure of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward" (Heb. 11:26). One might truly call this a *proper value system.* He *chose to place more value on eternal reward, than on earthly gain.* Which is exactly what every believer needs to do. Romans 8:18 reminds us "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," II Corinthians 4:16-18 urges us to desire an "eternal weight of glory...(and to keep our priorities on the things which) are eternal." Hebrews 10:34 summarizes it all by reminding us it is possible for us to "have in heaven a better and enduring substance." The right kind of value system will desire eternal reward more than the fading and fleeting riches of earth. Is this what you value most?

Several hundred years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town, the next a government. The third year the government planned to build a road five miles into the wilderness. The fourth year they tried

to impeach the government because they thought it was a waste of money to build such a road. Here was a group of people who had the vision to travel thousands of miles and endure many hardships, but in just a few years had lost the vision to see even five miles into the wilderness. Believer friend, have you traveled many miles since first trusting Christ, even endured many hardships, but at present have lost your vision of eternal reward and how valuable that will be? Is it time to start living once again in light of eternity?

One thing gave Moses the needed stability to consistently live for the Lord. He had a **close personal relationship with God**. In the context of Hebrews 11:25, which refers to Moses “esteeming the reproaches of CHRIST greater riches,” verse 27 says *“he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”* Moses was keenly aware that he lacked the strength and wisdom to face each day alone. So, he regularly communed with the Lord, loved His words enough to record them with great care, exhibited great faith in his Lord, and ran to Him often with his problems. It was this kind of closeness and dependency upon the Lord that enabled Moses to live for the hereafter, instead of just the here and now. One might say, he kept his eyes on the Lord.

On July 4, 1952 a young woman named Florence Chadwick waded into the water off Catalina Island intending to swim the channel to the California coast. Long distance swimming was not new to her: she was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. But on this day the water was numbingly cold and a heavy fog rested over the water. She swam for 15 hours

before asking to be taken out of the water by her team that followed her in boats. Her trainer urged her to keep going because she was close, only one mile from shore. But Florence just couldn’t make it. “I’m not excusing myself, but if I could have seen the land I might have made it.” Two months later she did make it, because this time she could see her goal with every stroke. Believers, if we are to achieve the goal of living in light of eternity, and do so over the long haul, then we are going to have to keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ in a living daily relationship.

“The right kind of value system will desire eternal reward more than the fading and fleeting riches of earth.”

Abraham, Sarah, Moses, the Apostle Paul, and many other saints of the past were successful in living for the hereafter, and we can too. If this is really what you want for your life, then you will have to make **five choices** every day. You will have to **choose to value eternal reward more than earthly gain**. By no means does this mean that you become negligent about work or financial responsibilities. Moses cared for flocks in the desert, and later for the daily needs of an entire nation. The Apostle Paul made tents to provide for his needs. But in both cases working for the Lord, obeying Him, and proclaiming God’s message for the day was most important. It was their priority and passion. Make it yours too. **Choose to “set your affection on things above, not**

on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). *What we embrace emotionally as being important is a choice of our will.* We can decide to “love” cars, jewelry, houses, clothes, and the such, but these things will only leave us feeling empty here and in eternity. But we can “prepare our hearts” to love our Saviour, our heavenly home, the prospect of reigning with Christ in eternity, and the incorruptible rewards awaiting us. Think about these things, talk about them, and set your affections upon them.


Choose to be content with what you have. We learn from I Timothy 6:9 “*they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*” Many a believer has become so preoccupied with getting ahead, and getting things, that these pursuits have stolen their hearts away from the Lord. The end result is that one often considers himself so busy that there is little time left for the Lord, or His work. God’s advice is “having food and raiment [clothing] let us there with be content” (6:8). But **we should choose not to be content to be poor in eternal rewards.** Often believers bemoan “I’ll only be a street sweeper or stable cleaner in eternity.” Shame on us if this is so, or if we even think it will be so. We’re told to “redeem the time” and make the most of it. We’re told to “*be rich in good works*” (I Tim. 6:18). Don’t settle for a selfish life of pleasing yourself now, and end up with little or no rewards in eternity. No one should be content with that.

Last, **choose to maintain a close relationship with the Lord everyday.** That’s going to mean disciplining yourself to have daily Bible reading, continual prayer, and

regular attendance at church. During these times, seek to apply and implement into your daily life the principles of godliness understood rightly divided. It will also mean learning to trust the Lord in times of trial, seeking to honor Him with all that you have, and to maintain a pure conscience before Him. Living in light of eternity simply cannot be done in our own strength. It can only be done as we are “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

On April 14, 1912, at 10:00 p.m. the Titanic crashed into an iceberg and in four hours sank, carrying hundreds to their death. One woman in a life boat asked if she could go back to her room. She was given only three minutes to do so. She hurried down the corridors, already tilting dangerously, through the



gambling room piled ankle deep with money. In her fancy estate room were treasures waiting to be taken, but instead she snatched up three oranges and hurried back to the boat. One hour earlier she would have naturally chosen diamonds over oranges but, in the face of death, values are seen more clearly. If you have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from any good works of your own, as your only hope for eternal life, then you are now in the life boat of salvation. Your values should be much clearer than those of the unsaved around you. You should realize that you need to be living every day in light of eternity. *If you haven’t recently, then right now is the time to make the choices we’ve just studied about. Will you do so now, before it’s eternally too late?* 

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“WHAT THANKS CAN WE RENDER?”

How can we possibly begin to thank all those who have taken part in this ministry through the years, giving of themselves in faithful, patient toil, sharing the financial burdens and upholding us in prayer!

Have you ever noticed, though, that the Apostle Paul never thanked those who helped him in the work? Search his epistles and see. Never once does he thank them for their labors or prayers or financial contributions. Rather, he thanks *God* for them and for their encouragement and support—and he *tells* them this.

More and more we find ourselves following the apostle's example in this matter, for we are well aware that “*it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*” Also, in the truest sense you do not labor or make sacrifices for *us*, but for *Him*, and this makes us all “workers *together* with Him.”

This is blessed fellowship indeed, for which we thank God every day. And now, as we look back over sixty years of such fellowship we can say with all our hearts: “*What thanks can we render to God again for you!*”

He has been good to give us this vital place in His service, and it is our prayer that He will bless and use you—and all of us together—in ever greater measure for His glory.

Missionary Journey to the Philippines

Things to Come Mission has invited BBS to join them for a two week ministering tour in the Philippines

March 16-31, 2002

The cities where meetings are being arranged are:

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For additional information, please contact: Pastor Joe Watkins, *Things to Come Mission*, 2200 English Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana 46201, or e-mail: <tcmusa@tcmusa.org>, phone: (317) 262-8806.

THE BBI BYLINE

Dear Ones in Christ,

The purpose of **Berean Bible Institute** is to glorify God by providing sound Bible and ministry training for individuals who are endeavoring to prepare themselves for the ministry as workmen who rightly divide the Word of Truth.

As you know, **BBI** is an independent faith ministry that relies on the sacrificial giving of God's people for its financial support. Thus, it is through the love gifts of fellow saints who share our zeal for making the "*revelation of the mystery*" known to a lost and terribly confused world that **BBI** is able to exist and carry out its ministry of teaching "*faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.*"

BBI could be described as a "faith ministry" in another sense as well. We not only trust that God will provide the material resources necessary for making the ministry of **BBI** possible, but we also believe that in the future He will bring forth spiritual fruit through the preaching and teaching of those who have received training here at **BBI**. And, we sincerely thank all of you who have become a vital part in this ministry through your faithful giving.

Berean Bible Institute does not beg or use fund-raising gimmicks to entice people to give. We simply share with believers what our needs are. Those who think that a Bible centered ministry training school,

that does not compromise the Grace Message, is important to the future of the Grace Movement are asked to prayerfully consider becoming regular prayer and financial supporters of **BBI**.

There are three areas of need that we would like to ask you to consider helping with. (1) The General Fund. This fund is used for meeting the day-to-day expenses of operating **BBI**. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers the free gift of eternal life to those who believe, but the means of getting the message out does cost. (2) The Scholarship Fund. This fund helps to keep the tuition that **BBI** charges as low as possible. This special help has proven to be a real blessing to our students, some of whom simply could not afford school without it. (3) The Building Fund. With **BBI** growing each year, it is just a matter of time before we will need new facilities. With this in mind, the Building Fund was established to help meet the cost of acquiring our own building in the not too distant future.

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Yours in Christ,

Dr. W. Edward Bedore
Executive Director

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For an application or more information about *Berean Bible Institute*, please contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 40, Germantown, WI 53022 or phone: (262) 255-4094, fax: (262) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>, web-site: <www.bereanbibleinstitute.org>.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREECE/TURKEY TRIP: Due to the ongoing terrorist threats against Americans traveling abroad, we have cancelled our *Footsteps of Paul Tour* this coming May. Lord willing, the trip will be rescheduled once the danger of terrorism significantly diminishes.

AS YOU PLAN YOUR SUMMER, the dates for *Rocky Mountain Grace Camp* this coming year are August 19-24, 2002 at *Long's Peak Inn*, Estes Park, Colorado. For brochures, directions, and additional information, please contact: Kevin and Jessica Sadler at (262) 268-0940.

BBS WEBSITE: If you haven't visited our website lately you're in for a pleasant surprise. In addition to each issue of the *Berean Searchlight* being available in an archive file for future reference, we have added a "Search Engine" to make it easier to locate specific subjects. Since we advertise our books every month in the back pages of the magazine, sometimes the "Search Engine" will take you to a book announcement. But even this is beneficial because the subject you are searching for is often dealt with more extensively in one of our books. We can be reached at <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>.

NOTICE: Beginning this month our office hours and phone numbers will appear on the front inside cover of the *Searchlight*. Just a reminder, the office hours of the *Berean Bible Society* and the *Berean Bible Institute* are Monday through Friday—**9:00 a.m.** to **6:00 p.m.**, Central Standard Time.

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Berean Bible Institute Main Office: (262) 255-4094

THE REAL CHRISTMAS STORY by Paul Pontis is a paperback book containing 121 pages in which Brother Pontis effectively challenges commonly held traditions surrounding the birth of Christ. It sells for **\$6.00**, which includes postage and handling, and should be ordered *directly* from Brother Pontis at 3020 Brixton Dr. East, Springfield, OH 45503.

LATE WORD: The *Fellowship Bible Church* will be holding their Annual Spring Bible Conference on February 15-17, 2002. *Fellowship Bible Church* is located at 310 N. Hiawassee Road, Orlando, Florida. The guest speaker this year is Pastor Ivan Burgener, President of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*. For times of services and directions, please contact: Pastor Dave Siegmann at (407) 294-0020 or e-mail <davesiegmann@hotmail.com>.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mrs. Betty France. The *Cape Blanco Lighthouse* is located in Port Orford, Oregon. It is Oregon's oldest continuously operating lighthouse.

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