

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2005



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The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15), to energize their Christian lives, and to encourage the local church.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

As we enter the holiday season many will set a time aside to remember the coming of our Savior into the world. While the world religiously acknowledges the babe in Bethlehem's manger, the Scriptures present "the rest of the story!" It has been said, "When God gave us the Lord Jesus Christ, He gave us all gifts in one."

Although other writers of Scripture deal with the birth of Christ more extensively, the Apostle Paul touches on the subject more *frequently*, and for good reason. Luke's narrative, for example, explains in detail all the events that transpired the night Christ was born, but it is Paul who connects the birth and the death of Christ, and more importantly reveals the spiritual significance.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5).

God sent His only begotten Son to be *born* of the virgin to redeem those who were under the law, which was accomplished at *Calvary* that *we*, the Body of Christ, might receive the spiritual blessing of being placed as full grown sons.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9).

Christ was *born* into poverty by divine design that we might be spiritually rich, which, once again, was accomplished at the *Cross* but manifested in due time through Paul's gospel. Today we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Indeed, we are rich in Him!

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15).

Christ came into the world, of course, the night He was *born* in Bethlehem. Why? To save sinners on the basis of His finished work at *Calvary* that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

As you can see, the virgin birth and the Cross are bound together according to the eternal purpose of God. Therefore, whatsoever God has joined together let no man put asunder! May every day be a day of remembrance of this wonderful truth. God's very best to you and yours this holiday season!

Yours in His redeeming love,
Pastor & Mrs. Paul M. Sadler

Acrostics and Puzzles

While the name of God does not appear in the Book of Esther, His name *does* appear in the Hebrew text in the form of an acrostic. An example of an acrostic can be seen in our *Authorized Version* in Psalm 119, where each section of eight verses begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Numerous acrostics can be identified in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, giving evidence of the fingerprints of God on His Book.

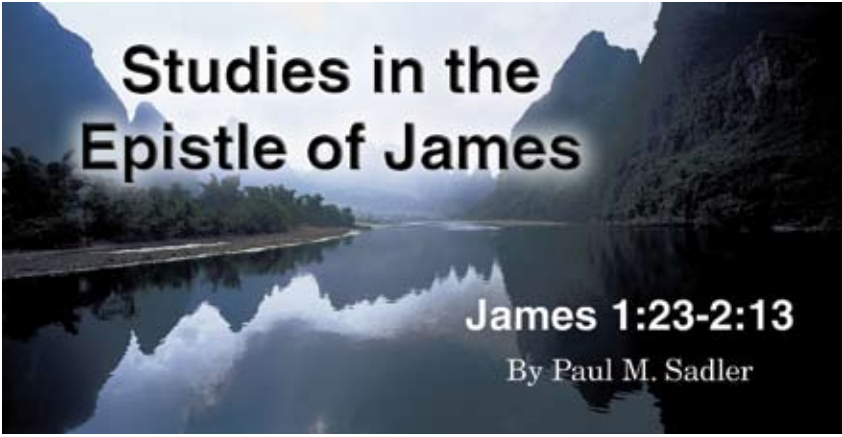
Though not exactly the same thing as an acrostic, Bible word puzzles can be fun. In the spirit of the season, 43 words relating to our Lord's birth are hidden in the letters below. After you have found all of the words listed below, the uncircled letters that remain will spell a mystery word that we will print next month in News and Announcements.



TwoPaths Bible Study, www.twopaths.com

Words to find:

Advent, Angel, Anointed, Augustus, Bethlehem, Betrothed, Caesar, Carpenter, Census, Christmas, Divine, Dream, East, Epiphany, Frankincense, Galilee, Gifts, Glory, Gold, Herod, Immanuel, Inn, Israel, Jerusalem, Joseph, Joy, Judea, Magi, Mary, Messiah, Myrrh, Nativity, Nazareth, Peace, Presents, Savior, Shepherds, Son, Star, Swaddling, Virgin, Worship, Yule



Studies in the Epistle of James

James 1:23-2:13

By Paul M. Sadler

“For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

—James 1:23,24

THE PAINFUL REALITY

Most people are photogenic! They have a winsome smile and look as natural in a photograph as real life. Unfortunately, I am not one of those people. Several years ago I went to a professional photographer hoping to get an acceptable photograph to use for the *Searchlight* and press releases. I explained to him that I wasn't photogenic to which he replied, with a chuckle, "Pastor, I've been doing this longer than you've been alive. Don't worry we'll have you out of here in a few minutes." An hour later he was whistling a different tune! "You're right, Pastor, you're not camera friendly!" I tried to warn him! Those who have attempted to get a good picture of me are reading these lines saying

to themselves, truer words have never been spoken!

With the advent of the computer and programs like *Adobe Photoshop* it's possible to work wonders with a photograph today. You can darken graying hair, remove blemishes, and even eliminate wrinkles. If you are really on the cutting edge of this new technology, you can make a posed appearance look natural. Some would call this mercy! If you look in a mirror, however, what you see is the cold hard facts. Mirrors don't lie! This is called justice!

Mirrors ("a glass" Gr. *esoptron* from which we get our English word optical) in biblical times were highly polished pieces of metal that reflected one's image. In the above portion, James uses the mirror as a metaphor for the Word of God. He likens the man who is merely a hearer of the Word to a man who looks into a mirror, but simply walks away ignoring the fact he's withering away. The mirror of God's Word exposes the "hearer only" to be

a wretched sinner, but he has no time or desire to ponder the matter and quickly forgets his precarious state.

“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).

James praises the man who continues in the “perfect law of liberty.” This man is blessed because he isn’t merely a forgetful hearer of the Word; he’s a doer of it. He looks into the mirror of God’s Word and sees the importance of obeying the will of God. The *perfect law of liberty* is synonymous with the *Sermon on the Mount* recorded in Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7. A casual reading of the *Sermon on the Mount* and the epistle of James clearly shows that the two are woven together throughout with kingdom truth. In fact, there are at least 15 parallel passages between the teaching of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle James. Here are three examples:

1. *The importance of spiritual maturity concerning kingdom truth:*

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:4).

2. *The kingdom saints were to avoid the perils of uncertain riches:*

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and

where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:19,20).

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (James 5:1-3).

3. *Whatever the kingdom saints asked in faith believing they received:*

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. 7:7,8).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering....And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” (James 1:5,6; 5:15).

The *Sermon on the Mount* referred to by James as the “perfect law of liberty” is the standard of *righteousness* that will govern the coming Millennial Kingdom to be established here upon the earth. It should be noted that the “perfect law of liberty” primarily deals with *relationships*. While the foundation of this charter rests squarely upon the Mosaic system, it transfers the offence

of a sinful act to the motive behind it. The Law says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” but the *perfect law of liberty* adds, “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). After Pentecost, when a Spirit-filled believer *applied* the deeper teachings of the *Sermon on the Mount* in his every day experience it brought *liberty*—hence the designation, the perfect law of liberty. It is important to remember, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Cor. 3:17).

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:26,27).

Although Christianity is often called a religion, humanly speaking, it is only so in a secondary sense. True Christianity is a personal *relationship* with Christ. It’s amazing when you consider it, but *all* the religions of today’s world are false. The only religion that was ever divinely ordained of God was Judaism. Sadly, the Jews had allowed it to degenerate to the point where Paul merely called it “the Jews’ religion” (Gal. 1:13).

Religion is *works*, pure and simple! But James differentiates between religious acts which are external and those that are a product of an inward change. Note that the apostle uses the terms

“pure” and “undefiled” in a moral and ethical sense rather than a ceremonial sense. The Jew who went through all the motions of giving alms, fasting, and praying publicly may have seemed to be religious, but his unbridled tongue exposed his true nature. The venom flowing from his lips in the form of cursing and bitterness demonstrated that he had only *deceived* himself into thinking that he was acceptable to God on the basis of his good deeds. As James says, his religion was as empty as a dry well.

The man who had believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was regenerated; therefore, he experienced a change of heart, mind, and direction. Thus like the horse that is bridled, his tongue was under control of the Word of God. In relation to the kingdom then, the mark of *true* religion was the man who glorified God with his speech and would naturally care for the orphans and widows among them. A change of heart *always* reflected itself in a change in actions under the kingdom gospel (Matt. 7:15-20). Today, “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Note, “we *should* walk” in good works, which implies this may not always be the case. That’s the nature of grace!

THE PITFALL OF PARTIALITY

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto

your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4).

As James tackles the subject of *partiality* in this section he begins with the salutation "my brethren" to remind us that he is addressing the *household of faith*, particularly those of the dispersion. The apostle adds, "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." Though somewhat awkward, the sense of this passage is "hold not the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons." The warning was, don't show *favoritism* toward anyone!



James uses attendance in the assembly to illustrate his point. First, the term "assembly" here is the Greek word for *synagogue*, which is Jewish through and through. Every Sabbath Day the Jews would gather at their local synagogue to hear the reading of the Scriptures and worship God. With this in mind, James says, let's suppose for a moment that a rich man and a poor man come among

you to worship. When the man who is rich enters, you immediately escort him to the best seat up front because he is obviously a man of stature and means whom you want to impress. Shortly thereafter a poor man enters whose clothing is tattered and torn, but you say to him, you can stand in the back of the auditorium or sit over there on the floor.

James wasn't one to sit idly by where an injustice was concerned; consequently, his response is predictable: Are you not showing *partiality*, which is a sin against God? God is equally concerned about both souls. In essence, he says, isn't it in keeping with your calling to be an imitator of God, who is not a respecter of persons? The apostle makes an airtight case that they had become "judges of evil thoughts." Clearly the *motive* behind showing partiality to the rich man was selfish gain. On the other hand, the poor man had nothing to offer but a sincere heart and a desire to serve the Lord. Sadly, this same type of prejudice can be seen today in the Church in regard to divorce, social status, race, etc. For example:

Mohandas K. Gandhi was the leader of the Indian nationalist movement against British rule and considered the father of his country...Gandhi says in his autobiography that in his student days he was truly interested in the Bible. Deeply touched by reading the Gospels, he seriously considered becoming a convert, since Christianity seemed to offer the real solution to the caste system that was dividing the people of

India. One Sunday, he went to a nearby church to attend services. He decided to see the minister and ask for instruction in the way of salvation and enlightenment on other doctrines. But when he entered the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go and worship with his own people. Gandhi left and never went back. "If Christians have caste differences also," he said to himself, "I might as well remain a Hindu."¹

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James 2:5-7).

James was appalled at the attitude of many within the assembly who despised the poor. They were the very one's God had chosen to inherit the kingdom blessings. This doesn't mean that simply because a man is poor he's automatically saved, anymore than a rich man could not be saved because he's wealthy. God loves them both! William Barclay makes this insightful comment:

James is not shutting the door on the rich—far from it. He is saying that the gospel of Christ is especially dear to the poor and that in it there is a welcome for those who have no one to welcome them, and that through it there is a value set on those whom the world regards as valueless.²

God has greatly used the believing poor to accomplish His will, seeing that they are normally in closer touch with the counsel of His will. The night Christ was born God chose to announce the arrival of His beloved Son to a group of poor, lowly shepherds who, like Simeon, were awaiting the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:8-20,25). Of course, the rich were so consumed with their business affairs they were unaware the Messiah was even coming. Interestingly, Christ passed by the ivory palaces of Rome when He came into the world. He chose rather to be born in the insignificant town of Bethlehem, where His mother Mary laid Him in a manger—a feeding trough for animals. He was born into poverty that we might be made rich. The humble surroundings into which Christ was born speaks volumes. You see, both poor and rich can approach Him, as demonstrated in the visitation of the shepherds and the wise men.

It seemed to go beyond James as to why there were those in the assembly who wanted to cater to the rich. It was the wealthy and powerful who were behind setting up false witnesses against Christ and Stephen. They were the ones who demanded the death of the Savior and committed the murder of Stephen. Why then would they want to appease those who persecuted them and were responsible for having some of their own hauled off to the judgment seat? James was amazed that they were so blind! Like Judas, some of the rich undoubtedly surmised

that the coming kingdom might profit them in more ways than one (John 12:4-6). Thus, they had an ulterior motive for their attendance—gain!

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced [convicted] of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:8-13).


We believe the “royal law” is a reference to the *totality* of the Law of Moses, which is summed up in: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” You see, if the hearers of James loved their neighbor, they would not commit adultery with their neighbor’s wife. If they loved their neighbor, they would not steal from him or do him any harm. But if they showed *partiality* against their neighbor, they had sinned and therefore were transgressors of the law.

But as sure as the sun rises someone probably pointed out to James that while they may have been guilty of *prejudice*, they had never murdered anyone. To which James replied: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” D. L. Moody explained it this

way: Picture a man hanging over a ravine by a chain that has ten links. If all ten links break, he will fall to his death. If five links break, he will fall to his death. If just one link breaks, death is waiting! You only have to break *one* law to be a transgressor of the law.

“True Christianity is a personal *relationship* with Christ.”

Those who lived under the law will be judged by the law. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” Note James clarifies that it will essentially be the “perfect law of liberty” the Lord uses to administer justice in the kingdom. As we have seen, it specifically deals with *relationships* under the Mosaic system and exposes the motive behind the action. One of the standards is this, those who showed no mercy will not be shown mercy (Matt. 7:1-5 cf. James 2:13). The apostle’s desire was that his readers would show mercy to the poor so that in the Day of Judgment they might *rejoice* in judgment and not be the subject of it for being unmerciful.

To Be Continued! 

Endnotes

1. *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Edited by Michael P. Green, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, pages 286,287.
2. *The New Daily Study Bible, The Letters of James and Peter* by William Barclay, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, London, pages 76,77.

The following is the latest installment in our series of articles drawn from Pastor Stam's classic work on *True Spirituality*. Since this book never appeared as a series in the *Searchlight*, many of even our long-time readers may not be familiar with these selections.

The Relation of True Spirituality to the Word of God

PAUL'S FOURFOLD CLASSIFICATION OF THE HUMAN RACE

By Cornelius R. Stam

In the Pauline Epistles the human race is divided, by the Spirit, into four classes:

The *natural* man.

The *babe* in Christ.

The *carnal* Christian.

The *spiritual* Christian.

All four of these are referred to in one passage of Scripture (I Cor. 2:14-3:4) and it should be noted that they are classified according to their ability to appreciate and assimilate "the things of God" as revealed in His Word. We quote the passage here in full:

"But the NATURAL man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

"But he that is SPIRITUAL judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto CARNAL, even as unto BABES in Christ.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

THE NATURAL MAN

The "natural," or *soulish* man is the man we have described in the first chapter of this book; the fallen son of fallen Adam, as he is, without God; his fallen soul dominating his entire being. God says with regard to him, that *he "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,"* that *"they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them"* (I Cor. 2:14). This is so even where the simple "preaching of the cross" is concerned, for we read that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18).

This is not intended as a rebuke. It is a simple statement

of fact. Man, by nature, does not receive the things of the Spirit, “neither can he know them.” By worldly standards he may be generous and kind, gifted, cultured and refined; he may be possessed of superior intellectual powers, yes, and even be quite religious, but with all this he still remains utterly helpless to comprehend “the things of God.” Why? “*Because they are spiritually discerned*” (I Cor. 2:14).

“The things of God” must remain completely incomprehensible to the wisest, most religious man on earth until God *reveals* them to him by His Spirit (I Cor. 2:10) and this is effected only as God *imparts* the Spirit to him:

“For what man [or, who] knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:11).

An animal cannot appreciate “the things of a man,” for the simple reason that he possesses an animal nature, rather than human nature. In the same way man, as he is, cannot understand “the things of God,” unless God imparts to him *His* nature. Indeed, man cannot even truly understand the animal world, which is beneath him; how could he understand God, who is above him, unless the *Spirit* of God be imparted to Him?

This explains why otherwise intelligent men fail, no matter how they try, to take in spiritual truths which seem so simple to the child of God; it explains why great intellectual leaders can

make such fools of themselves when they begin to discuss “the things of God”; indeed, it explains why even *religious* leaders can display such abysmal ignorance of spiritual truths so clearly revealed in the Word, for neither intellectual acumen nor religious zeal qualify or enable the natural man to understand the things of God. Man, by nature, can know only “the things of a man” because he has only “the spirit of man” within him (I Cor. 2:11).

In this connection the apostle does not divide the unsaved into classes, for *all* are *equally*, because *totally*, in darkness as to “the things of the Spirit of God.” They may observe and recognize certain facts which give them to feel that they are on the “right track,” but actually they are in such spiritual darkness that they fail utterly to comprehend the things which the Word reveals about God, or to understand and have fellowship with God Himself.

But the apostle *does* classify the *saved* into three groups, of which the first to be considered is:

THE BABE IN CHRIST

It will be observed that when Paul first came to the Corinthians in their unsaved condition, he proclaimed to them “*Christ crucified*”:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you...determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (I Cor. 2:1,2).

The reason for this is not difficult to determine. It was by “*the death of the cross*” that our

blessed Lord procured salvation for us, hence it is by *“the preaching of the cross”* that the Spirit works in men’s hearts to save them. On the cross our Lord paid the just penalty for sin, and the Spirit uses the proclamation of this fact to convict and convert the lost; thus, for a twofold reason the preaching of the cross is said to be the *power* of God unto salvation.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor 1:18).¹

“But we preach Christ crucified...unto them which are called, both Jews: and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:23,24).

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

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...for therein is the righteousness of God revealed...” (Rom. 1:16,17).

The “preaching of the cross” then, is what the Holy Spirit uses to save men. Even this message, to be sure, is “foolishness” to them until the Spirit operates within them and causes them to see, but He uses no other. No man in the present dispensation is saved apart from the preaching of the cross. It is only as that message is preached, and the Holy Spirit reveals it to the heart that the child of Adam is begotten anew

and becomes a babe in the family of God; a *“babe in Christ.”*

The “babe in Christ” is not, of course, ready immediately for the “strong meat,” the *solid food*, of the Word. He could not yet digest these *“deep things of God”* (Heb. 5:13,14 cf. I Cor. 2:10) but must first be fed on the *“milk of the Word”* (I Pet. 2:2) the elementary truths of the gospel, by which he was saved and wherein he must learn to stand (I Cor. 15:1,2).

“What is it to be ‘spiritually minded’? Simply to be vitally interested in the things of God, as revealed in the Word of God.”

Babes in Christ can hardly be called either “carnal” or “spiritual,” since the things they do and say may be attributed so largely to the fact that they have not yet grown up. They may, however, be “carnally minded” or “spiritually minded” (Rom. 8:6). If “carnally minded,” they will wither and shrivel up, rather than grow, and will become carnal Christians, no longer possessing even the bloom and freshness of youth. If “spiritually minded,” they will blossom and grow from the freshness of spiritual childhood to the vigor of spiritual manhood,

“For to be carnally minded is death;² but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6).

What is it to be “spiritually minded”? Simply to be vitally interested in the things of God, as revealed in the Word of God. Let

man's criterion of spirituality be what it may; God's is simply this: How interested is this child of Mine in what I have to say and wish him to do? How much has he grown in the knowledge of it? Thus it is a sincere effort to know and obey God's Word that produces true spirituality. The Word is the food on which we grow. This is why babes in Christ are exhorted:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere [pure] milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Pet. 2:2).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [fullgrown] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

“But speaking [holding] the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:13-15).

To Be Continued! 

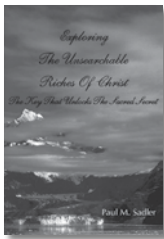
Endnotes

1. In preaching the cross as good news, we do not, however, know Christ “after the flesh” (Cf. II Cor. 5:16; Heb. 2:9, and see the writer's booklet: The Preaching of the Cross).
2. This, of course, has to do with the believer's experience. It does not mean that the saved may be lost again, but that as far as Christian experience is concerned, carnal mindedness brings death.

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The Profit of Spiritual Gifts

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(A message delivered June 20th, 2005, at the 39th annual Bible conference of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* in Cedar Lake, Indiana)

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (I Cor. 12:1).

Many Christians are uncertain about the precise definition of a spiritual gift. A spiritual gift is a special talent or ability given to men that is separate and distinct from any *natural* talent or ability they may possess. That is, while we sometimes say that someone has “a gift for music,” this is *not* what the Bible means when it speaks of “spiritual gifts.”

To define “spiritual gifts,” we need to employ “the law of first mention,” the Bible study principle which states that the first Scriptural occurrence of a word, phrase or idea often *defines* the word, phrase or idea, and sets the tone for its use throughout Scripture. The first spiritual gift given was the gift of “*tongues*,” defined for us in Acts 2 as the ability to speak *instantly* and *fluently* in a known, identifiable language other than one’s native tongue (Acts 2:4-11). Thus while “a gifted musician” must work very hard to *develop* his gift, a spiritual gift is a *supernatural* gift of the Holy Spirit that does not require any such development. It is this writer’s conviction that *all* of the spiritual gifts ceased with the completion of God’s Word, just as Paul predicted they would (I Cor. 13:8-10).

Paul begins his discussion of spiritual gifts with a seemingly unrelated observation:

“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led” (I Cor. 12:2).

Paul here reminds the Corinthians that they used to be idol-worshipping Gentiles who had a natural propensity to get “*carried away*” with their idolatry. While on the surface this might seem to have nothing to do with the subject at hand, Paul had observed that the Corinthians had *made a god out of their spiritual gifts*, and he is pointing out that they were now getting as “*carried away*” with their *gifts* as they used to get with their *idols*. Paul’s warning about this is timeless, for who can deny that even today there is still a tendency among at least some of our Pentecostal friends to get carried away with what they perceive to be *their* spiritual gifts.

But before we judge the Corinthians or our Pentecostal brethren too harshly, we must remember that Paul also warns us about “*covetousness, which is idolatry*” (Col. 3:5). It is not inconceivable that believers who know better than to get carried away with any perceived spiritual

gifts might instead be found rendering worship-like attention to “the almighty dollar” and all the material things it can buy. It would behoove each of us to examine our heart to see if we live in the “glass house” of covetousness before we consider throwing stones at Pentecostals for their idolatrous adoration of imagined spiritual gifts.

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (I Cor. 12:3).

This too is a puzzling statement in light of the context. Why would the Corinthians need to be *told* that no man speaking by the Spirit would call the Lord Jesus accursed? We believe that it was because of the convincing *manner* in which He was being called accursed. We believe He was being called accursed *in tongues*.

Satan is the great *imitator* of God, mimicking the Almighty on every hand. When God had prophets, Satan had “false prophets” (II Pet. 2:1). When God had apostles, Satan had “false apostles” (II Cor. 11:13). When God’s Spirit indwelt men and caused them to speak in tongues, Satan apparently countered by filling men with evil spirits who also spoke in tongues. These demoniacs spoke fluently and convincingly in foreign languages, but Paul here reminds the Corinthians that the *content* of their utterances would identify them as men who were speaking by a spirit other than the Spirit of God.

We do not wish to imply from this that the *modern* gift of tongues is Satanic; in fact, we believe quite the opposite. Since in this dispensation God has “ceased” from giving the gift of tongues, Satan is no longer trying to counterfeit this gift. Since no man today has the miraculous God-given ability to speak in a foreign tongue, Satan is not empowering anyone to do likewise. We believe that the gibberish that passes for the gift of tongues today is nothing more than the emotional product of the religious flesh of men.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (I Cor. 12:4-6).

Did you notice that Paul here mentions each member of the Trinity? He says that spiritual gifts *belong* to the Spirit, they are *administered* by the Lord Jesus, but it is *God the Father* who works in the recipients of the gifts. Paul’s point here was to try to impress upon the Corinthians how the members of the Trinity *worked together* in glorious harmony in *giving* the gifts. This was in stark contrast to the discordant manner in which the Corinthians had *received* the gifts! There was *anything but* harmony in the selfish way they were glorying in their gifts or envying the gifts of others. Thus *sin* was taking the gifts that were designed by God to draw them closer together and using them to drive them further apart.

This is always the effect of sin on everything God gives to draw us closer together. Marriage, for instance, is surely designed by God to bring two people closer together, but every pastor who has done any marriage counseling knows how sin can instead cause marriage to drive two people apart. Human government is also devised by God to draw people together, but who can argue that some of the bloodiest wars that have ever been fought have been *civil* or *revolutionary* wars that have pitted brother against brother. Finally, the local church is surely designed by God to bring *believers* closer together, but we must sadly admit that some of the bitterest acrimony anywhere to be found is present in many a church split. The solution is for believers to give to one another the unconditional grace and acceptance that God extends to us (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (I Cor. 12:7).

The gifts of the Spirit were given to “profit” them spiritually. But it must not be assumed that when God caused spiritual gifts to cease that He left the Body of Christ without a resource for our *continued* spiritual profit. In II Timothy 3:16, Paul tells us that “all *Scripture*...is *profitable*.” The “profit” afforded to the Corinthians by their spiritual gifts is now provided to believers *by the Word of God*. This is why the cessation of spiritual gifts coincided with the completion of the perfect Word of God.

We see a vivid illustration of this in the miraculous “*pillar*” that led Israel through the wilderness to the promised land. The pillar is last mentioned when they were camped within sight of Canaan. Having led them through the wilderness, it seemed that the purpose of the pillar had expired, and so it was of course withdrawn. However, can it really be said that the people of Israel no longer needed guidance from God as individuals and as a nation? Certainly not! This is why the pillar was not *just* withdrawn, it was *replaced* in a symbolic as well as a literal way *by the Word of God*. The pillar was last seen “over the door of the tabernacle” (Deut. 31:15). Nine verses later Moses “*finished*” the Book of the Law and put it inside the tabernacle in the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:24-26). From that time forward, the people of Israel no longer followed the supernatural pillar, but rather followed the ark which contained the Word of God to them through Moses. Wherever the ark moved, the people were to follow (Josh. 3:3,6,8,14-17). This was God’s symbolic way of teaching them that they would no longer be led by a supernatural manifestation, but instead *by the written Word of God*.

And so it is with the spiritual gifts. When God *withdrew* the spiritual gifts, He left us not without means of spiritual profit. He rather *replaced* the spiritual gifts with Paul’s epistles, the Word of God *to us today*. In the writings of Paul we find all we need to guide and “profit” us in the dispensation of Grace.

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit” (I Cor. 12:8).

Some in Corinth were given a supernatural gift of wisdom, similar to that given to Solomon, but little evidence need be presented to prove that no man *today* has a supernatural gift of wisdom! But if believers today seeking wisdom cannot turn to a man endowed with the gift of wisdom, where can they turn? *To the Word of God!* Paul says that “*we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery*” (I Cor. 2:7), and prayed that God would give unto us “*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*” (Eph. 1:17).

This “spirit of wisdom” is given to us not to puff us up with knowledge, but so that we might *do something* with it. God gave select men in Israel “the spirit of wisdom” (Ex. 28:3) to assist them in designing Aaron’s garments, and building the tabernacle that was to be the dwelling place of God (Ex. 31:3ff). Similarly, God gives *us* the spirit of wisdom not to puff us up with pride but to *build up the Body of Christ*, the present dwelling place of God (I Cor. 3:17; I Tim. 3:15).

“The ‘profit’ afforded to the Corinthians by their spiritual gifts is now provided to believers by the Word of God.”

We must pause here in our examination of these individual gifts to submit that there is *an order* to the list of gifts as a whole. Paul *begins* with the spiritual gift that is of *greatest esteem* in God’s eyes, and ends with the gift that He esteemed *least*. That is, he begins with the gift of *wisdom* and ends with the gift of *tongues* (v. 10). But when Paul devotes an entire chapter to the Corinthian misuse of tongues (ch. 14), it is not difficult to conclude that the Corinthians had *reversed* this God-ordained order and had esteemed the gift of *tongues* above all others.

Incidentally, this helps us understand Paul’s peculiar statement in I Corinthians 6:4, where he tells the Corinthians that rather than taking one another to court they should “set them to judge who are *least esteemed* in the church.” Far from instructing them to allow slow-witted or unspiritual men to settle their important disputes, Paul is rather reminding them that they had *men with the gift of wisdom* in their midst who could be called upon to resolve their legal disagreements. We know this because Paul goes on to say,

“I speak this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?” (I Cor. 6:5).

It was a “*shame*” that the men with the gift of wisdom were “least esteemed” among them, but it was a fact. It is likewise a shame that today the imitation gift of tongues is held in higher esteem than a knowledge of the “*mystery, even the hidden wisdom*” (I Cor. 2:7), but this too is a sad fact.

The next gift on Paul's list is the gift of "*knowledge*" (I Cor. 12:7), and speaks of a knowledge of *God's Word*. Thankfully, although the *gift* of knowledge has been withdrawn, a knowledge of God's Word is still available to God's people through diligent *study* of Scripture. However, if indeed this list is given in order of priority, it should be pointed out that knowledge here takes second place to wisdom in God's eyes. Many Christians feel that knowledge of God's Word is the pinnacle to which we should aspire, but in the mind of God *wisdom*, the *application* of Bible knowledge, is "the principal thing" (Prov. 4:7).

"To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit" (I Cor. 12:9).

The mountain-moving gift of faith of which Paul speaks here and in I Corinthians 13:2 reminds us of the mountain-moving kind of faith that the Lord said was needed to cast out devils (Matt. 17:18-20). Demon possession was still a problem around the time of the writing of I Corinthians (cf. Acts 19:15,16), and so the gift of faith enabled the Corinthians to cast out devils and serve the Lord in other ways that were specific to that day and time in God's program. While there is no supernatural gift of faith available to men today, Paul says that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing *by the Word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). In the measure that we study God's Word and believe it, in that measure we will be able to serve God in ways that are specific to *our* day and time in God's program, such as proclaiming His Word by faith (II Cor. 4:13) and using "the shield of faith" to quench "all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16).

The gift of "healing" enabled a man to heal "*every one*" who was sick (Acts 5:16). When the so-called "healers" of today cannot demonstrate this same complete mastery over disease, they force us to conclude that they do not have a God-given gift of healing.

However, there is a healing ministry in which our Lord was involved in which believers today can happily participate. We read that the Lord was sent to "*heal the brokenhearted*" (Luke 4:18), and this is a ministry to which every believer should aspire. This writer recently officiated at the funeral of a Christian man who took his own life. We could sense that some of his mourners believed the old fable that suicides cannot go to heaven, and so naturally were brokenhearted at the loss of their loved one by his own hand. It was our privilege to heal the brokenhearted that day with the sound teaching of the eternal security of the believer (Rom. 8:35-39; II Tim. 2:13).

"To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (I Cor. 12:10).

A "miracle" in Scripture is a "wonder" or a "sign" (Acts 2:22), and miraculous signs belonged to Israel (Psa. 74:9). God taught Israel to "require" a sign (I Cor. 1:22), and then gave them plenty of signs to see

over the many centuries in which He dealt with them as a nation. Now that God has set national Israel aside, the gift of miracles has been withdrawn.

For the reader who laments the loss of the gift of miracles, let's look at some of the different ways that Paul uses the Greek word *dunamis*, here translated "miracles." This word is translated "power" when Paul declares that "the gospel of Christ" is "the *power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Hence believers today can still work *the greatest miracle of all* when they introduce a lost sinner to the Savior. *Dunamis* is also translated "power" when Paul prayed that the Romans might "abound in hope, through the *power* of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). When a believer today is able to abound in hope, filled "*with all joy and peace*" despite the oftentimes overwhelming adversities and heartaches of life, *that's a miracle!* Lastly, Paul tells us of how the Macedonians contributed financially to the Lord's work "*beyond their power*" (II Cor. 8:3). This begs the question, if they gave beyond *their power, whose power prompted them* to give so wonderfully yet so inexplicably? We submit that only the miracle-working power of God can cause believers to give out of "*deep poverty*" unto *rich liberality*. As you can see, God's miracle-working power today is centered in the heart and mind of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as he implements the Word of God into the very fabric of the details of his life.

"Prophecy" is the ability to speak authoritatively for God, and often involved predicting the future, a gift that passed with the completion of the Scriptures. Today God speaks only through His Word, and we can speak for Him and prophesy future events only as we teach His Word. But while the gift of prophecy has passed, there are still a number of predictions that we can make based on the principles of the Word of God. For instance, we can still predict the activities of the adversary, based on his *modus operandi*, his method of operation as exhibited in Scripture. We can foretell that He will continue to cause the believer to question God's Word, as he did with Eve (Gen. 3:1). He even tried this tactic on the Lord Himself. When at our Lord's baptism His Father declared, "*This is My beloved Son*" (Matt. 3:17), Satan immediately sought to cause Him to doubt God's Word, saying, "*If Thou be the Son of God...*" (Matt. 4:3,6). And so a man need not be a prophet to predict that our adversary will continue to employ the tried and true method of attack that he has utilized for six thousand years, and to be forewarned about this is to be forearmed.

When Paul describes the gift of "*discerning of spirits*," he uses a Greek word that is also used in I Corinthians 14:29, where he instructs them to "*judge*" the prophets, that is, discern whether they were speaking by the Holy Spirit or by some *other* spirit. Not all false prophets ran around calling the Lord Jesus accursed, and the gift of discernment was vital to detect more subtle false prophets. But once again, though

the gift of discernment has passed, with the Word of God the believer today is completely equipped to discern the spirit behind all who claim to speak for God.

Next comes the gift of tongues. Believers today do not have the miraculous power to speak in the different languages of *“men of other tongues”* (I Cor. 14:21), as the gift of tongues has been withdrawn. But for any who sigh for the power to speak in tongues, we would invite you to consider that it is still possible for us to speak clearly to men of all languages. We are told that there are certain universal languages that transcend all human tongues, such as music and mathematics, whose notes and figures are the same in all cultures. In a similar fashion, when a child of God displays acts of *kindness*, or *love*, or *forgiveness*, our meaning is readily understood by men of all tongues, and we should be forward to *“adorn the doctrine of God our Savior”* in all of these things (Titus 2:10).


Similarly, while the gift of *“interpretation of tongues”* is long gone, with a little practice we can learn to interpret the meaning of the words of others. Every parent knows that when a child says, “I hate math,” what he is really saying is, “I don’t understand math.” Oh, that we might learn that when someone at church says something hurtful to us, that perhaps all they are saying is,



“I’m not feeling well today.” If we could only learn to interpret such snubs as perhaps expressions of, “I’m going through a rough time right now.” When once a man in our assembly expressed bewilderment over what he perceived to be the belligerence of another, I knew the cause. As his pastor, I knew that the man’s wife was divorcing him, perhaps prompting him to speak in a way that was out of character for this dear saint, which led to the quarrel. We may not have the gift of interpretation of tongues, but we can and should learn to listen to the words of others with understanding, *“forbearing one another in love”* (Eph. 4:2).

Paul concludes his list of spiritual gifts with the addition of a few more at the end of I Corinthians 12. Of these, we will conclude this message with the gift of *“helps”* (v. 28). Just prior to Paul’s shipwreck in Acts 27, the sailors *“used helps, undergirding the ship”* (v. 17). We are told that this is a reference to how ancient mariners in threatening seas would rush to the bow of the ship and lower ropes or chains around the fragile vessel and cinch them up tightly to prevent it from breaking apart in the raging sea. It is our blessed privilege as members of the Body of Christ to act in a similar way when our brethren in Christ are struggling through the storms of life. May each and every mature saint be willing to rush to the side of his struggling brother and undergird him with the strength of God’s Word rightly divided,

and share with him the compassion that we ourselves receive from the Lord (II Cor. 1:4).

Yes, the spiritual gifts are gone, but it is a blessed truth that God has replaced them with His Word, equipping us therewith with everything we need to fully function as men and women of God in the dispensation of grace. How wonderful to know that the profit of spiritual gifts is still available to the believer who studies to show himself approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. 

Question Box

“The Chart [*The Key to Understanding the Scriptures*] you sent me is great and thoroughly exciting, but there is one thing that I don’t understand and would appreciate your help on. Under the heading *Gospel of the Kingdom Resumed* (Matt. 24:14)—Terms of Salvation: Repent, Believe, Water Baptism—will water baptism be established again?”

It does appear that water baptism will be a part of the terms of salvation in the future day of the Lord. We know, for example, the gospel of the kingdom will again be preached (Matt. 24:14), which included water baptism (Mark 16:15,16). When baptism was practiced by John and the twelve it was to manifest Christ to Israel (John 1:31). This will also be true during the coming tribulation period following the Rapture of the Church to glory.

Since Israel was to be a kingdom of priests it was necessary for John the Baptist to identify believing Israelites with this water rite for their induction into the priesthood (Ex. 19:5,6; 29:1-4; Isa. 61:6). Even though this has been interrupted by the Mystery, it will be reestablished in the future day of the Lord in order to fulfill the promise that God originally gave to Israel.

In time past, water baptism symbolized the washing away of Israel’s sins. This particular aspect of baptism will be replaced with the understanding that Israel will be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:18,19). With this in mind, probably the emphasis of water baptism will shift to an *expression of faith* in Christ’s death.

As we have seen in our studies on the epistle of James, after the Rapture God will pick up right where He left off at Pentecost. What we witness in Acts Chapters 2 and 3 will be reinstated at the beginning of the tribulation. —Pastor Sadler

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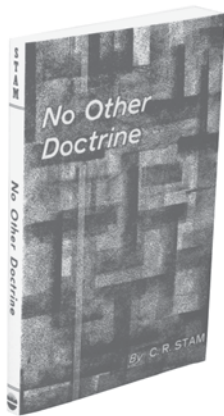
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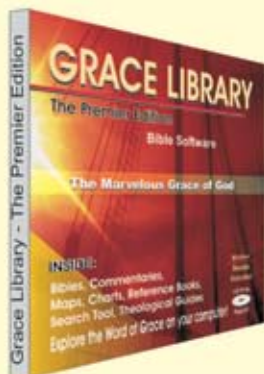
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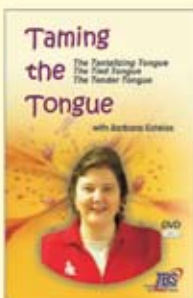
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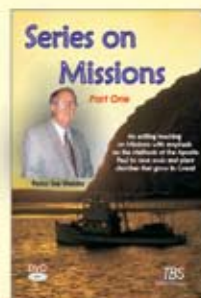
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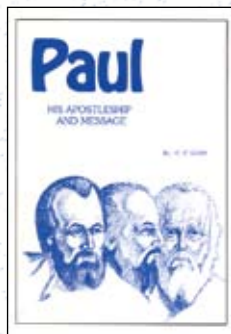
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"Thank you for this *Two Minutes* article. I have never viewed 'anger' in this fashion and the article truly spoke to me. Your articles continue to lift me up and provide inspiration. I am able to share them as well with my fellow email buddies."

From Arizona:

"I have read the *Searchlight* for many years, and it has made me see how wonderful God's Word is when you rightly divide it. I have studied with my parents, and it has been a blessing to see the light turn on in their lives. Please help me make the light brighter and send the *Searchlight* to my parents who are waiting for it to come."

From Georgia:

"Several members of my Sunday School class have expressed just how much the *Searchlight* has helped them in their study and their thinking as well. I look forward to receiving my own."

From Taiwan:

"I'm a Filipino working in Taiwan. Sending me your *Searchlight* would greatly help in our ministry because resources in English are very hard to find here. We are ministering to Filipinos that are also working here."

From Pennsylvania:

"I look forward to receiving my *Searchlight*. Every issue is truly a comfort. Thank you for your inspirational publication."

From Florida:

"Just a small donation; hopefully we can send more later. The Lord is good! Praise Him!"

"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



Spotlight on Grace Churches

This month's church is:

Cebu Grace Gospel Church of Christ

Location: 167 Carlock St., 6000 Cebu City, Philippines

Pastor: Gilbert B. Racines

Services: 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship Service
7:00 p.m. Wednesday Prayer Meeting

Additional ministries:

Women and youth ministry, Sunday afternoons
Hospital visitation, Monday and Wednesday mornings
Home Bible Studies, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, 7:00 p.m.
Evangelism and Gospel Tracts Distribution

Contact information:

Pastor Gilbert Racines at 0919-403-8857

Missionary Journey to the Philippines

A three week ministering tour in the Philippines

Dates: January 17 - February 5, 2006

Meetings are tentatively scheduled for the cities of:

Manila, Bataan, Cebu, Ozamis, and Davao

Guest Speakers:

Joe Watkins, *Things to Come Mission* Associate Director
Dean Reinheimer, *Berean Bible Institute* graduate
Kevin Sadler, *Berean Bible Society* staff member

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

Have you prayed for your missionaries today?

THE BBI BYLINE

Paul's Prayers from Prison (Part 3)

Ephesians 3:14-19

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.
Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

In verse 14 of our text Paul takes up where he left off in verse one of Chapter three. This prayer is actually a continuation or addendum of his prayer recorded in chapter one, Verses 15-23. If we have blessings in Christ (the request of Paul's first prayer) we will now be able to continue in our spiritual growth and understanding of what it means to be "in Christ." If we do not first understand our position or standing before God "in Christ" we simply cannot fully understand what Paul is requesting on behalf of not only the Ephesians, but every member of the Body of Christ. Remember that while this was Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, it was inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in Scripture as God's letter to the entire Body of Christ.

The main thrust of this letter is that the character or nature of Christ would be formed in the heart of the believer. To say it another way "that we would become Christ-minded" (see Eph. 4:20-23; Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 3:8-10). Paul equates this with "being rooted and grounded in love" (v. 17), which in turn enables us to comprehend or understand the matchless "love of Christ which passes knowledge" (vvs. 18-19). The love of Christ is the fourth dimension which gives real meaning and substance to the three-dimensional world we live in. True love can only be found "in Christ."

The love of Jesus Christ can only be exhibited in our lives in proportion to our understanding of the magnitude and scope of God's love and grace of which we have become partakers in Christ Jesus.

Spring Semester begins January 23, 2006!



For more information about **BBI**, please contact Dr. W. Edward Bedore at: **Berean Bible Institute**, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Drive, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086-0587, phone: (262) 644-5504, fax: (262) 644-5507, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org, web address: www.bereanbibleinstitute.org.

***"Only one life; 'twill soon be past.
Only what's done 'in Christ' will last."***

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A champion of the faith called home: We have just received word that on April 11th, the Lord gave a warm “welcome home” to one of His choicest saints, George Giron, just a few days shy of his 100th birthday. For well over fifty years Brother Giron taught the Adult Sunday School class at *Grace Bible Church* in Riverdale, Illinois, and also served as associate pastor during his last few years of ministry. George Giron literally lived to teach the Word of God, rightly divided, and your Assistant Editor has nothing but good memories of many blessed hours spent under his teaching.

Berean Bible Institute Enrollment: The month of December always presents an opportunity for mid-semester enrollment at BBI. If you missed out on enrolling in August, it is not too late to begin your training for a lifetime of service for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have any questions about BBI, please contact Dr. Ed Bedore, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086 or phone: (262) 644-5504, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org.

Did you notice that in the BBI Byline (Page 29) Dr. Bedore is continuing a study of the prayers of the Apostle Paul. Be sure to watch for each installment of this series that just might revolutionize your prayer life!

Good news: Joshua Nathan Miller was born July 7th to proud parents Chuck and Laura Miller of Illinois. The new playmate of his two and a half year old sister Hannah, Joshua is also the latest blessing in the lives of Grandpa Russ and Grandma Bunny Miller, faithful BBS staff members for many years. Those of us who are old enough to remember when Pastor Stam announced the birth of Chuck and his brother David are now entitled to feel at least a little bit *old!*

North Carolina Bible Study: All are invited to attend a Bible study that meets on Thursday nights at 6 p.m. in the home of Marge and Fran Monahan in Etowah, North Carolina. This Bible study group features two excellent Bible teachers who have taught the Grace message for many years. For more information, please contact Fran or Marge at 828-890-0891.

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

*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Ken & Barb Wardius. The *Wind Point Lighthouse* is in Racine, WI. At 108 ft. and built in 1880, it is one of the tallest and oldest lights still active on the Great Lakes.

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“It is far better for Christians, when uncertain about some difficult Bible truth, to keep quiet until they receive light from the Holy Spirit.”
—Pastor J. C. O’Hair

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