

# The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2007



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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:

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Dearly Beloved,

We cannot allow the year to pass without personally *thanking* all the churches, Bible Study groups, and conferences for inviting your Editor to proclaim Paul's gospel and share what the Lord is doing through the ministries of the *Berean Bible Society*. It has been a rewarding experience to meet so many new Grace Believers who have been, like myself, delivered from the perils of denominationalism.

If the Lord tarries, we hope to accomplish the following in 2008:

**Travel Schedule:** While my speaking schedule is completely filled for next year, which includes a trip to the Philippines to participate in the *50th Anniversary* celebration, Pastor Kurth still has a few openings on his calendar. It is, however, important that you contact him as soon as possible.

**DVD Series:** Lord willing, we hope to release the first installment of our video series on *What It Means to Be a Grace Believer* this coming spring.

**CD & MP3:** In mid-January we plan to release Pastor Stam's *Bible Time messages* on CD. See next month's *Searchlight* for all the details! This will be followed later in the year by my *Bible Time* and conference messages on CD. Eventually every series will also be offered in MP3 format.

**New Commentary:** The articles presently being published in the *Berean Searchlight on Philippians* will be compiled and *expanded* into a commentary, hopefully by the end of 2008. Many, many thanks for the heartwarming response to these messages.

**Searchlight:** We have received numerous requests from our readers for your Editor to resume his series on the *Book of Revelation*, which is under consideration. Many benefited from the dispensational approach of these studies in light of the Word, rightly divided. Others have inquired to see if we have any plans to do a series on the *Mysteries of the Kingdom* found in Matthew Chapter 13. This, too, is under consideration.

**Books & Booklets:** A number of our books and booklets are currently out of print. With the exception of our commentaries, all of our works are now being published in paperback to save the Lord's money, while at the same time keeping the message of Grace in print. These works will only be placed back into print as the funds are available. Any assistance you can lend us in this area will be greatly appreciated!

Thanks so very much for your prayers and faithful support of the ministries of the *Berean Bible Society*. May this coming year bring further light and blessing to those who are seeking a fuller knowledge of His will.

Yours in His redeeming love,  
Paul M. Sadler, President



## 20th Anniversary Recognition

By Pastor John Fredericksen  
*Chairman, BBS Board of Directors*

The Apostle Paul frequently recognized those who had been faithful to the Lord in various ways. He commended Phebe as a sister in the Lord who had assisted him and others (Romans 16:1-20). He recognized Priscilla and Aquila who had been his “helpers in Christ” to the extent they had their lives endangered on his behalf, and as those who had faithfully used their homes for the cause of Christ (Romans 16:4-5). Paul used the churches of Macedonia as shining examples of those who, in the face of deep poverty “gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” (II Corinthians 8:1-5). Timothy was also extolled as the only man who was so “likeminded” with the Apostle Paul in his love for the saints at Philippi that he would “naturally care” for their state (Philippians 2:20).

With this biblical precedent in mind, it is only appropriate to recognize the devoted, sacrificial, and loving ministry of another one of the Lord’s servants. The above picture was taken at the fall Bible conference of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* in Evansville, Indiana, where Pastor Sadler was honored for his service with a plaque. It read: “This plaque is presented to Pastor Paul M. Sadler by the Board of Directors in grateful appreciation for 20 years of faithful and outstanding ministry to the Lord Jesus Christ as President of the *Berean Bible Society*.”



**“Brethren...mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17).**

May each of us seek to follow Pastor Sadler’s example of consistent and dedicated service to the Lord, then as he would, give all the praise to the Lord Jesus Christ for His enablement.



# A Full Measure of Grace

By Paul M. Sadler

At this time of the year, as we prepare to set a time aside to remember the coming of our Savior into the world, we thought it only appropriate to take this opportunity to address this life-changing event through the lens of Paul's gospel. Lord willing, we will resume our studies in Philippians next month!  
—Ed.

A commonly asked question around this time of year is whether or not we should set a day aside to remember the birth of Christ. While we certainly respect the convictions of those who feel we shouldn't, we believe that a time should be set apart to commemorate the birth of our Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us. We do believe, however, that it isn't prudent to get caught up in the worldliness of the season or become entangled in the unfounded traditions of men. It should not surprise us though that the religious world would impose their various forms of ceremonialism upon the sacred record.

It really doesn't matter that the exact day is unknown to us when Christ was born, the important thing we need to keep in mind is: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Perhaps it will help to remember that our nation pauses every February 12th to pay tribute to one of the greatest Presidents our country has ever known. Interestingly, it is Mr. Lincoln's *accomplishments*, not his date of birth that the nation commemorates. The Christmas season gives us a wonderful opportunity to *expose* the unfounded traditions surrounding the events of Christ's entrance into the world to redeem us back to God.

Pastor Stam used to say, “We believe that we should use the ‘Christmas’ celebration to bring out the truth, just as Paul used the Athenians’ religious zeal and their ‘altar to the unknown god,’ to proclaim Christ to them.” We need to tell one and all that we no longer worship the babe in Bethlehem’s manger, but serve a living Savior who came to die for the sins of the world. Nor do we worship Him as the King of Israel, as the Magi did two years *after* His birth when they visited the home of Mary and Joseph in Nazareth (Matt. 2:11). Rather, we worship Him as the God of all grace who is the Lord of glory, the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ. When we rightly divide the Word of truth it equips us to dispel the traditions of the professing church and bring men into a fuller knowledge of God’s will.

### **THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AND THE GRACE OF GOD**

**“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

Every child of God marvels at the virgin birth of Christ. Actually, His entrance into the world was not unusual in itself—it was like millions of other births preceding it. The miraculous element is found in the profound truth that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin. You may be surprised to learn that Catholicism teaches that Mary was also miraculously conceived, a dogma known as the

Immaculate Conception. They teach “her soul was preserved free from original sin by divine grace.” However, there is not one shred of evidence to substantiate such a claim in the Scriptures. In fact, just the opposite is true. Mary herself acknowledged that she was a sinner who needed a Savior.

**“And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46,47).**

The Apostle Paul makes frequent references to the first coming of Christ in his epistles, but he never stops long at Bethlehem, but continues his journey to its triumphant conclusion to more fully explain why the Savior came. Paul shows us the correlation between the birth of Christ and the gospel of the grace of God. This prompts us to ask three questions based on Paul’s chronology in II Corinthians 8:9. When was Christ rich? When did He become poor? And in what sense are we rich?

### **The Riches of Christ**

Paul’s statement “though He was rich” takes us back to eternity past (II Cor. 8:9a). It must always be remembered that the Scriptures clearly teach that Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God. He is the very fullness of God. It has been correctly said regarding the Godhead that “what one knows, the others know: what one desires, the others desire; and what one wills, the others will.” But this raises the question, in what sense is Christ called the “firstborn of every creature [creation]”? (Col. 1:15). Actually, this

term is used in two senses in regard to the person of Christ.

First, the title “firstborn” is used to describe the first child born into a family. The word typically denotes *order*—first, second, third born, etc. While we wouldn’t take the following observations too far, birth order is a fascinating study in itself. Firstborn children are customarily *perfectionists*, probably because their parents expect them to be a miniature model of themselves. They are highly organized individuals and disorder drives them absolutely crazy. I can relate to that! The second born, who is loved just as much, often complains of being the forgotten one. Of course, it doesn’t help matters when Uncle Henry stops by for a visit and can’t remember the name of your second born. And, naturally, there is no question whatsoever in the minds of the other siblings that the third born is spoiled rotten and gets away with murder. In any event, when Mary brought forth her “firstborn” son it was in the same sense of the above. Christ was her *first* offspring, which strongly implies that she would bare other children (Matt. 1:25 cf. 13:53-58).

The term “firstborn” is also used as a title of *honor* and *dignity* in the Word of God. Although Israel was the least among the nations, God called the chosen nation His *firstborn* son. In other words, Israel held a position of *preeminence* over the nations. Seeing that Christ is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature [creation],” He is *heir* to all things. “For by Him [and for

Him] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:16,18).

“Far from the ivory  
palaces of Rome,  
Christ was born in  
*obscurity*. There was  
no pomp or fanfare....”

As the Creator of all things He wore honor, and glory, and majesty as a robe. The angelic host of heaven was at His beck and call. The Seraphims above the throne and Cherubims around it in heaven rested not day and night, saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:3 cf. Rev. 4:8). In time past, the host of heaven all bowed in humble adoration when the Father said to His beloved Son: “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.”

But Christ willingly left it all behind for the great work of redemption. He emptied Himself of the *outward manifestation* of His attributes and glory. With that said, we must never lose sight of the fact that Christ was wholly God and wholly man when He walked the earth. He simply *veiled* His glory with the garb of human flesh that sinful humanity could enter into His presence. Charles Wesley beautifully captures this thought in his hymn, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*. He states in the second stanza:

“Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord: Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.”

Christ took on the form of a servant that He might experience what it was to be human, yet without sin. In so doing, He became the poorest of the poor.

### When did Christ become poor?

“Yet for your sakes He became poor” (II Cor. 8:9b). As we have seen, Christ is the eternal Son of God who pre-existed the incarnation. “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of the woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Along these same lines the Apostle John writes: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The Greek verb translated “was” in this passage is actually “became.” So then, the “Word became flesh” when the Son of Man was conceived in the virgin’s womb. Interestingly, the Savior chose not to be identified with royalty, where only a select few would have access to Him. Instead, He was born into *poverty*. This we believe was by divine design, for *all* men could freely approach Him, whether they were rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, young or old.

After centuries of waiting for the consolation of Israel, the fullness of time had finally arrived. God is always on time! Unbeknownst to him, under the guidance

of the providence of God, Caesar Augustus determined that “all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2:1). This was actually a *census* in preparation for a future taxation, which required that everyone under the sphere of Roman rule return to the place of their *extraction*. Since *both* Mary and Joseph were of the house and lineage of David, it necessitated that they return to Bethlehem to be *registered*. Of course, by this time Mary was great with child. She probably thought to herself that the decree was an imposition, and it could not have been more untimely. But this is a good example that sometimes our disappointments are God’s appointments. With one turn of the wheel, God in His infinite wisdom fulfilled a twofold purpose.

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

Most in those days would have called Bethlehem, which means *house of bread*, an insignificant little town, but it was the city where God chose to have eternity and time intersect. In the house



of bread came forth the Bread of Life who would bring life and light to a lost and dying world.

Newborns are news! In biblical times, a new life was seen to be a blessing from God. Everyone wanted to congratulate the parents and see the precious little life that had entered the world. On this night of nights, there would be visitors, and we would expect the list to be impressive, seeing that the King of kings and the Lord of lords had been announced by the angelic hosts. Sadly, the rulers of this world were all slumbering in *darkness*. It makes you want to cry out, Awake you evildoers, the Savior of the world is in your midst, but they were dead to the world.



God chose rather to announce the coming of His only begotten Son to a handful of *poor*, lowly shepherds. Ironically, it was this humble group of shepherds, faithfully attending their sheep, who were among the first to worship the *Lamb of God*. They were probably amazed to find the Holy One of God lying in a manger, a splinter-filled feeding trough for animals. But this would be characteristic of His years on earth. In fact, early in Christ's ministry He

stated: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20).

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

### In What Sense Are We Made Rich?

"That ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9c). Through Christ's poverty we have been made *spiritually* rich. In Him we have redemption through His precious blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. There are well over one hundred spiritual blessings we enjoy in Christ that are a direct result of His willingness to humble Himself, even unto the death of the Cross. Some of these riches are: eternal life, our identification with Christ, the blessed hope, the bodily resurrection, heavenly citizenship, seated with Christ in the heavenlies, etc.

But there's more! It is difficult to comprehend, but after all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf, He plans to show His *kindness* to us in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7). Picture, if you will, walking with God the Father in heaven's vast domain and pausing every so often to hear Him say, "These heavenly realms are your inheritance, take full possession of them, they are yours to enjoy. These seats of authority that were once occupied by the fallen host of Satan are now yours to occupy. Those angels over there were specifically created to serve you throughout eternity." He will declare, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, all members of my Son's Body shall reign with Him in glory." We are indeed blessed in Christ! Blessed with riches untold!

Our heavenly Father has insured that the world will never forget He sent His only begotten Son. One of the ways He has accomplished this is by making His Son the *center* of history. All major events before the birth of Christ are identified as B.C. while official documents after His birth are distinguished by A.D., "in the year of our Lord." More importantly, however, is He the *center* of your life?

## GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

**"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15).**

As the Apostle Paul contemplated the bountiful blessings he had received from the Lord, indeed, which all members of the Body of Christ enjoy, he was overwhelmed with emotion. With

a true sense of sincere appreciation the apostle gives thanks to God for His *unspeakable* gift. The term "unspeakable" here in the original language has the idea of that which is *inexpressible* or *indescribable*. If there is one outstanding thing that characterizes gifts men give to each other, it would be this, they can all be *described*. Some may be a little more difficult to put into words than others, but there is usually some type of description we can give them. The same cannot always be said of the gifts God bestows upon us.


There should be little question that Christ Himself is the *indescribable gift of God*. Consider for a moment the very *nature* of the gift itself. What mere mortal could ever begin to plumb the depths of the person and work of Christ? Who can fully comprehend God? There is a movement within the Church today to bring God down to the plane of human understanding. This type of unsound theology only serves to rob God of who He is. If God lacks knowledge of anything, then He is no longer God. God forbid the thought!

Who can count the stars? Most astronomers admit that their number is beyond any number in our numerical system. But the testimony of the Scriptures is clear, God not only knows their number but has given a name to each and every star. We have to agree with David who said, "Such knowledge is high!"

**"He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147:4,5).**

I would venture to say that you would probably have a hard time remembering the last time you gave an expensive gift to your worst enemy. Just as I thought—*never!* We tend to give gifts to those we love. It has been correctly said that God’s gift is indescribable because of the *grace* by which it is given. God, who is rich in mercy, gave the world the *gift* of His Son while we were at enmity with Him. We hated Him! “But God commendeth [directed] His love toward us, in that, while

we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

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

## Question Box

*“Can you tell me what it means to pray in the Spirit?”*

**“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...” (Eph. 6:18).**

This verse, the only Bible mention of praying *in* the Spirit, encourages us to do so, but doesn’t define it. For a definition, we must look to Galatians 4:6:

**“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*”**

The name “Abba” was only used by the Lord Jesus Christ, when in Gethsemane He prayed:

**“...Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt” (Mark 14:36).**

Thus we believe that praying in the Spirit means to “let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6), but to always add, “nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

Now, this is *not* how *children* make requests! You’ll never hear, “Mom, I want this toy, but not my will but yours be done”! But this *is* how God expects *us* to pray, since unlike “the *children* of Israel,” we have “received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15). God considers us full-grown sons, “and because ye are sons,” God would have us *pray* like sons.

—Pastor Kurth

# Abortion and the Sanctity of Life

By Pastor Ken Lawson



## The Dilemma

Lisa was terrified. She was the oldest of five girls and the one on which her parents could always depend. She had been brought up in a Christian home and had attended church regularly. With her new found “freedom” far away from family, she had allowed her relationship with God to suffer. Now, in her second year of college, she found herself pregnant and alone. A million questions flooded her mind. How could this happen to me? How can I tell my parents? How far along am I? Is it a baby or a mass of tissue? Is abortion an option for me? What part should my boyfriend have in the decision? How will this affect my education? Who can I turn to?

Some time ago, she had attended a “soul talk” in the Student Union building. She met pastor Ted Johnson and his wife Katie who were well known as confidants to many students who had moral and spiritual issues. She respected their judgment and the direct and loving manner in which they engaged the students. If anyone could help her now, it was this kind and understanding couple. She had made a *royal mess* of things but now she wanted to do the right thing. At the first meeting with the Johnsons, she told the story and voiced all her concerns about the future.



Ted listened intently and thoughtfully. His first question surprised her. “Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ personally as your Savior?”

She reflected a moment and said, “Yes, I received Him as Savior when I was a little girl in Sunday School class.” After several more probing questions Ted was satisfied with her Christian profession. But she was puzzled as to why he was asking her these questions about her faith. He explained that much of what he wanted to share with her would make more sense if she knew the Lord and trusted the authority of His Word. He continued by saying that there was one question that was more important than all the others. Is that life growing inside of you a person in God’s sight? If so, all secondary issues will have to be subjected to this one overriding consideration. Lisa knew that Christians regarded abortion as a sin but also knew that abortion is not mentioned in the Bible so how did they know? What follows is the substance of Ted and Katie’s counsel to her and the Biblical teaching on the sanctity of life as it bears on the issue of abortion.

### **The Heavenly View of Human Life**

It is true that the word “abortion” does not occur in the Bible but that is because the ancient Hebrews saw in children a special sign of God’s blessing. “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3-5). Being barren or losing a baby in childbirth were thought to be a curse and no Jewish couple would ever consider an abortion.

What is important to understand is that, even though the word is not used, all the key issues bearing upon abortion are adequately covered by the Word of God. The Lord does not leave us in doubt as to when human life begins. In the great penitential Psalm of David, he confessed his guilt before God and said, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). David was not saying that his mother sinned by conceiving him; rather the sin nature was inherited by David at the moment of conception. This is the same truth confirmed later by Paul when he said, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). The first cause of David’s sin is that he bore within him a nature that responded to temptation. Note carefully that David used the personal pronoun when describing this, “...and in sin did my mother conceive *me*.” David, as a person, began with his conception. That was not merely his own opinion for he wrote as a prophet. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21).

### **God’s Little Prophets**

Other prophets of God recognized that they existed as persons in the womb and were chosen there by God for a special purpose.

**“Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?” (Job 31:15, NIV).**

**“Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name” (Isaiah 49:1).**

**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5, NIV).**

**“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace” (Galatians 1:15).**

## **Science and the Bible**

God is our Maker and He imparts at conception everything that makes us unique as individuals. Medical science is finally catching up with the Bible on these vital truths. For example, we now know that the union of the male sperm and female egg forms all the genetic information that will be present in the full grown individual. The only things that are added are growth and development. Personality traits as well as physical attributes are imparted at conception. This is important because scientists once believed that the fetus underwent a sort of quick evolutionary process in the womb. It began as a one celled animal, then an invertebrate, a fish, a reptile, a mammal, a primate, and finally a human. This recapitulation theory has been proven false by modern science and yet some text books still include this in their teaching of evolution. Scientists cannot tell, by examining a person’s DNA, whether it is a full grown adult or a human embryo. Genetically, he is human from the moment of conception. The child shares DNA from both parents but also differs from both and has his own blood type. He lives within the mother but is a separate human being.

## **The Image of God**

This brings up another issue bearing on the unborn. What is it about human life that makes it more valuable than other forms of life? We are the only creatures living on planet earth that bear God’s image.

**“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27, NKJV).**

The image may be marred by sin but it is still present (1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). Like God we have intellect, emotion, and will. But more importantly, we have a capacity to have a relationship with Him. When was the last time you had a discussion on the Cross of Christ with your dog? Even though much has been made of the genetic similarity



of humans with chimpanzees, only man has the potential, through regeneration, to have fellowship with God.

The consistent testimony of God through the Scriptures is that human life is to be nurtured and protected. Severe punishment is commanded to those who shed innocent blood.

**“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man” (Genesis 9:6).**

There is a passage from the Law of Moses which speaks of an accidental abortion and its penalty.

**“If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Exodus 21:22-25, NKJV).**

The scenario is one that could legitimately happen and the aftermath is clear. Two men are fighting and a pregnant woman gets in the way and is hurt resulting in the premature birth of the child. If the woman and child are not harmed, the responsible person still has to pay restitution. If the woman or child are harmed, the person has to pay more substantial restitution depending on how severe the injury. If a death is involved (either the woman or baby), the man will pay with his life (life for life). While it is true that we are not under the law but under grace, this passage is valuable to determine God’s view of the status of the unborn. It is not merely a mass of fetal tissue or a blob of protoplasm but a living soul.

## **Jesus and John**

The New Testament Scripture provides a similar view of the unborn when Mary visited Elisabeth while both were pregnant.

**“And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, *the babe leaped in her womb*; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and *blessed is the fruit of thy womb*. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, *the babe leaped in my womb for joy*” (Luke 1:39-44).**

Mary was carrying Jesus in her womb at the same time that Elisabeth was carrying John the Baptist. When Mary spoke to Elisabeth, John leaped for *joy* in her womb. We know that John was filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15). The ramifications of this should be immediately apparent. God does not fill fetal matter with the Holy Spirit, neither does a non-person experience joy.

John was fully conscious of the presence of his Lord in Mary's womb, even though he was still in his own mother's womb.

There can be no doubt that Jesus Himself was considered a person before His birth in Bethlehem.

**“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found *with child* of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:18).**

Not only do we learn that the Holy Spirit was the true Father of Jesus but also that He was considered to be a child before His birth.

## **The Testimony of David and Modern Photography**

Perhaps the most beautiful passage of Scripture bearing on the issue of abortion and the sanctity of human life is Psalm 139, a Psalm of David. He begins by describing the wonder of God's knowledge of him in all things (vs. 1-6). Next, he tells of the Lord's presence with him in all circumstances of life (vs. 7-12). Finally, he speaks of His creative power and providential care of David while still in his mother's womb (vs. 13-16).

**“For Thou didst form my inward parts;  
Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.  
I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.  
My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth.  
Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;  
And in Thy Book they were all written,  
The days that were ordained for me,  
When as yet there was not one of them” (NASB).**

David tells us wonderful things about God's working within the womb, things that were beyond the reach of the science of his day. The only way he could know these things was by divine inspiration. David marvels as he contemplated God's forming of his inward parts, his heart, lungs, stomach, intestines, brain, etc. He describes the Lord's working as the Master Craftsman in weaving together his body tissues within the womb. This brought forth a spontaneous ode of thanksgiving from the heart as he declared, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made!”

Medical science has known for many years the minute intricacies of the human body. Anyone taking a course in human anatomy will be amazed at the interlocking skeletal structure, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, organs, glands, and connective tissue which make up a human body.

What has been hidden, until recently brought to light, are the images of pre-natal development. Through the development of micro-photography within the womb and advanced ultra-sound, we can now see the progress of the unborn in each stage of development. Many



women who were considering abortion have been stopped cold in their tracks when they are able to view their child through these modern imaging techniques.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that they are viewing a little person.



Quite a number of books, magazines and videos have published these images so ignorance is no longer an excuse. Only the most hardened abortionist can see the evidence and maintain the right to kill the baby. This is a part of the evidence the U.S. Supreme Court was not privy to when, in 1973, they handed down the infamous ruling in *Roe vs. Wade* legalizing abortion on demand. It will not do to use the outdated argument about taking care of those who are already here and abort the

unwanted. When the mother becomes pregnant, they are already here, albeit hidden.

David’s words echo through the centuries, “Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret.” The womb of his mother was the secret place and symbolically described as “the depths of the earth.” Notice once again that David used the personal pronouns “my, me, I” rather than an “it” when explaining his pre-natal state. Though his forming body was concealed from human view, his frame was not hidden from God because He was skillfully fashioning all the parts as it pleased Him. David knew from God that he was not merely a potential human life but a human life with great potential.

### What about Lisa?

Five difficult years have past since Lisa Ann first learned of her pregnancy. Because of some poor choices, she had to take a long, hard, look at her direction in life. With the Johnson’s help and that of her parents, many positive things are beginning to happen. Joey is the joy of her life and is a rambunctious, all American boy with an insatiable curiosity to explore everything. Sometimes she shudders when watching her “little man” knowing how close he came to becoming another abortion statistic. Joey’s father has married another women but, with pressure from the court, is beginning to make child support payments. Lisa’s parents were initially devastated but, like all dependable parents, have rolled up their sleeves to help their daughter with all facets of child-rearing. She thanks God also for godly grandparents who are willing to leave no stone unturned to assure Joey has the best chance possible. Her college education had been put on hold for awhile but now she is attending night classes toward finishing her Degree.

Lisa knew that premarital sex was wrong but has learned by experience something that she already knew in her heart. Sinful actions lead to serious consequences. Or as the apostle said, we reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7,8). Selfishness and rebellion affect not only ourselves but also our loved ones. Many nights she has reaped a flood of tears and shattered dreams. Still, she is amazed at the goodness and mercy of God. She has returned to church with her family and is quick to tell others



that Christ is a specialist at taking broken lives and re-fashioning them into trophies of his grace. All he needs is a pliable piece of clay and that means brokenness and humility. Even for those who have magnified their guilt by the sin of abortion, there is forgiveness with the Lord for those who receive the Son (Rom. 4:7,8; Col. 2:13).

The detrimental effects of abortion are many: killing of human life, destroyed human potential, victimization of women, hardening of the conscience, and physical injury. But one of the forgotten effects of abortion is the traumatic guilt and sense of loss that many women experience. Abortion violates something very basic in a woman. While the natural inclination in men is correction, the natural inclination in women is protection. Even women with no spiritual or religious instruction find it hard to shake the thought that they have taken the life of their baby. But the whole reason Christ died for our sins is because of His great love for us. The Son willingly took upon Himself the punishment of all our sins that we might be set free. God doesn't want to punish us for our sins but delights in saving the undeserving from death and setting them upon the Rock of Christ. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

*O Lord, give us a heart for people.  
Show them your love through us.  
Give us the brokenness of human lives  
That we may apply Christ's healing balm  
And lead us into the way eternal.*



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## Endnote

1. Graphic: ©iStockphoto.com/Antti Karppinen

Questions or comments for Pastor Lawson should be addressed to him directly at: 108 E. Douglas, Edinburg, IL 62531.

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a dark shirt, looking down at an open Bible. The Bible is resting on a surface, and the lighting is warm, highlighting the text on the pages. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Discerning the Will of God

By Ricky Kurth

The third in a series of four messages given this past summer at the 39th Annual Bible Conference of the Berean Bible Fellowship in Cedar Lake, Indiana

Perhaps the most basic and fundamental declaration of the will of God is found in I Timothy 2:3,4:

**“...GOD our Saviour...WILL have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”**

If you are not saved, it is the will of God that you be saved from your sins. If you are saved, it is God’s will that you come to a knowledge of the truth, the truth of the distinctiveness of the Pauline revelation. If you are saved and have already come to a knowledge of the truth, it is God’s will that you get *others* saved, and bring *them* to a knowledge of the truth. And God’s will for your life, in all other areas of your life, revolves around His will for you in *these* areas. To demonstrate this, in the present article we shall consider references to the will of God in the life of the Apostle Paul. We find the first in Acts 18:

**“And he came to Ephesus, and...when they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying...I will return again unto you, IF GOD WILL” (Acts 18:19-21).**

In hindsight, it clearly *was* the will of God that Paul return to Ephesus, for upon his return, he established a very spiritual church there, and a base of operations from which “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord” (Acts 19:1,9,10). If it is God’s will that people be saved and come to know the truth, then it was clearly God’s will for Paul to return to Ephesus.

In Acts 21, Paul was warned that going to Jerusalem would result in his arrest (v. 10-12). When the apostle determined to go anyway, the disciples replied, “*The will of the Lord be done*” (v. 14). But was it?

Seemingly not! Upon Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, he was nearly beaten to death by the Jews, escaping only when the Romans arrested him (v. 31-33). But remember, it was not God's will that Paul have an easy life, but that people be saved and come to know the truth. And we know that this was the result of Paul's experience from what he wrote in Philippians 1, where he explained that "the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel,

**"So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places" (Phil. 1:13).**

Paul's arrest and subsequent imprisonment in Rome enabled him to reach influential members of Caesar's palace with the gospel (Phil. 4:22), and soon the truth was radiating out from there unto "all other places." And, as Paul later wrote,

**"...many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (1:14).**

In addition, Paul's Roman imprisonment had still *another* beneficial fallout:

**"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house...teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30,31).**

Before his incarceration, *plenty* of men forbade him to preach the gospel, and the many perils he enumerates in II Corinthians 11:23-27 were a constant concern. But now the Roman guards assigned to keep him from escaping unwittingly served as personal bodyguards, protecting him from harm and from any who might threaten him for preaching the truth! Thus in hindsight, we can say of Paul's trip to Jerusalem that the will of the Lord was certainly done.

As we move on to Paul's epistles, we find Paul praying and

**"Making request, if by any means...I might have a prosperous journey BY THE WILL OF GOD to come unto you" (Rom. 1:10).**

Paul's mention of God's will here assures us he was not praying for his own personal prosperity, but that his journey might be "prosperous" in getting people saved, and bringing them to the truth. Would to God that all His people prayed for *this* kind of prosperity!

Now a sobering question: Are you willing to pray, as Paul prayed, that God might use you "*by any means*" to prosper the gospel in your life? Before you answer, remember that the means God chose to prosper the gospel in Paul's life included getting him beaten, arrested and imprisoned, not to mention the two-week storm at sea that Paul endured in transit to Rome (Acts 27). The world would not consider this a "prosperous journey," but the islanders who heard the gospel after Paul's subsequent shipwreck would disagree!

Did *God* send that storm? No, we feel certain it was rather sent by *Satan*. We just serve a God who knows how to capitalize on Satan's

opposition, which brings us to the next mention of the will of God in Paul's epistles:

**“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.**

**“And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD” (Rom. 8:26,27).**



The “infirmities” (v. 26) that cause us to groan in pain (v. 22) naturally cause us to pray for their removal, just as Paul prayed (II Cor. 12:7,8). However, God knew that the removal of Paul’s thorn in the flesh was not the best thing *spiritually*, and so denied his request. Similarly, with our limited understanding of what is best spiritually, we too groan for the removal of infirmities. But the Spirit groans for what is best spiritually, “with groanings which cannot be uttered” *by us* with our limited understanding. Had Paul known that being beaten, arrested and imprisoned would fall out to such a furtherance of the gospel, we dare say he would have willingly prayed for these hardships to befall him.

How then does the Spirit intercede for us? Well, “He that searcheth the hearts” is God (I Chron. 28:9). Now, you would think that it would say, “He that searcheth your heart *knows your mind*,” but it doesn’t. Paul rather says that God who searches our hearts *knows the mind of the Spirit!* And unlike us, the Spirit knows if removing our infirmities or our problems is the best way to get people saved and bring them to the truth. And so when we pray for the removal of thorns and problems, not knowing “what we should pray for as we ought,” the Spirit “maketh intercession for us *according to the will of God.*”

Does this mean God does not hear our prayers, or know our hearts? We know that He does both, from II Chronicles 6:7-9, where Solomon said,

**“Now it was *in the heart* of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord...but the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was *in thine heart* to build an house for My name, thou didst well that it was *in thine heart*. Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house....”**

Here it is obvious that God searched David’s heart, and knew he was minded to build a temple for the Lord. However, God did not want David to build the temple, since he was a man of war (I Chron. 28:3).

And so while He knew the desire of David's heart, even commended him for it, He *acted* according to His own will.

We believe this is a good illustration of how prayer works, according to Romans 8:26,27. God hears our prayers, and knows our hearts, but answers prayer in accordance with His will, His will that all be saved and come to know the truth. Does this mean we should only pray for people to be saved and come to know the truth? Hardly, for in Paul's next reference to the will of God, he says,

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake... that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;**

**“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;**

**“That I may come unto you with joy BY THE WILL OF GOD...” (Rom. 15:30-32).**

Paul's mention of “prayers to God for me” teaches us that there is nothing wrong with asking for people to pray for us, as long as, as Paul says here, it is “*for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.*” That is, Paul asked them to pray for his personal safety *so that* he could deliver the contribution he had collected among the Gentiles to the poor saints at Jerusalem (15:23-27), and then visit the Romans “with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel” (15:29). Both of these things were part of the will of God at that time. And so we conclude that it is all right to petition God for personal safety *so that* we can continue to share the gospel and the Grace Message, which is the will of God for us today. If you ask this writer to pray for your health or safety just so you can skate through life without illness, injury or problems, we flatly refuse to do so, but we are happy to uphold you in prayer in areas like this so that you can continue to serve the Lord.

When Paul asked them to pray that he might be able to come unto them “with joy,” we are tempted to conclude that God did not answer this part of Paul's prayer, when we consider the beating, the arrest and the shipwreck that brought him to Rome. However, we suggest that Paul *did* come to them with

**“We too can learn to have joy, no matter how God answers our prayers, if...”**

joy, despite these hardships, when he reflected on the spiritual blessing his trip had brought to the islanders, the Romans, and the poor saints at Jerusalem. We too can learn to have joy, no matter how God answers our prayers, if we learn to rejoice in the right things—the salvation of the lost, and the opening of the eyes of the saved to the truth.

Does God then give people cancer, cause tornadoes to hit their homes, or cause their baby to die just to bring about spiritual good?

No, like the storm that brought the gospel to the islanders, things like this are either the opposition of Satan, instances of reaping what we sow (Gal. 6:7), or just the consequence of living in a world cursed by sin. God does not expect us to rejoice in these things, but He does encourage us to rejoice in the spiritual good that He can work *through* these things (Rom. 8:28).

We would like to conclude this article with a Bible illustration of what we've been saying, and so we turn now to the Book of Philemon. Some wonder why this little epistle is included in the canon of Scripture, for it doesn't seem to teach any of the great doctrines of the Pauline faith. But while it is true that Philemon doesn't *teach* great doctrines, it most assuredly *illustrates* them. That's why it appears last in our Bible in the divinely-arranged order of Paul's epistles, for every preacher knows that first you teach doctrine, then you illustrate it. But before we show how Philemon illustrates Paul's teachings about the will of God, we want to preface our remarks by first demonstrating at length that Philemon is indeed a book designed to illustrate the doctrines that went before in Paul's epistles.

Philemon had a servant named Onesimus, who ran away, met Paul, and got saved. Paul returned the runaway slave to his master with the epistle to Philemon, in which he begs Philemon to be lenient to his returning servant. As an apostle, Paul could have *commanded* Philemon to show mercy (See Verse 8, where the Greek word for "enjoin" is elsewhere always translated "command" or "charge"). But Paul chose rather to "*beseech*" his old friend "*for love's sake*" (v. 9). This is of course a precious illustration of how God Almighty could *command* us to serve Him, as He did with Israel under the Law, but under Grace He rather *beseeches* us to serve Him, *for love's sake* (II Cor. 5:14). In the Old Testament, God never beseeched anyone to do anything, but under Grace, He inspired Paul to "beseech" us over and over. And so we see how this key doctrine of grace is not *taught* here in Philemon, but wonderfully *illustrated*.

Next, Paul reminds Philemon that "in time past" Onesimus was "unprofitable" to him as an unsaved servant, "but now" was returning as a profitable faithful servant (v. 11). We believe Paul purposely used those words "time past" and "but now" to remind Philemon that *he himself* had "in time past" been "unprofitable" to God, "but now" was His profitable servant (Eph. 2:11; Rom. 3:12; Eph. 2:13). Since God had mercy on Philemon, Paul argues, shouldn't Philemon have mercy on Onesimus? Another key doctrine of Grace teaches that we should treat one another as God treats us (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13), a doctrine that the Book of Philemon does not *teach*, but here *illustrates*.

Under the Law of Moses, the people of Israel were expressly told *not* to return runaway slaves (Deut. 23:15,16). But Paul returned Onesimus to Philemon, delightfully illustrating how we are not under the Law of

Moses (Rom. 6:14,15). Of course, Paul was tempted to *keep* Onesimus, who could then have ministered to Paul's needs in Philemon's place (Phile. 13). "But," as he says, "without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly" (v. 14). Those words "necessity" and "willingly" remind us of how Paul says we are to give to the Lord's work "not...of necessity" (II Cor. 9:7), but "if there be first a *willing mind*" (II Cor. 8:12). You see, Paul was giving Philemon a chance to give his servant to Paul according to the guidelines of grace, and thereby "benefit" at the Judgment Seat of Christ, thus illustrating yet another doctrine of grace.

Next, Paul intercedes for Onesimus, asking Philemon to "receive him as myself" (v. 17). Doesn't this illustrate how God receives *us* in the Lord Jesus Christ? Just as Onesimus was unacceptable to Philemon *in himself*, but acceptable to him *in Paul*, just so you and I are unacceptable to God in ourselves, but are thankfully "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

Runaway slaves often stole from their masters to finance their getaway, and so Paul tells Philemon,

**"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account" (Phile. 18).**

What a thrilling illustration of the doctrine of *imputation*! How precious to know that though we have wronged God terribly with our sins, our transgressions were imputed to Christ as He hung on the cross (II Cor. 5:21). How much we owe the Lord for all He did for us at Calvary, yea, we owe Him our very lives! And how well this is illustrated when Paul reminds Philemon, "thou owest unto me even *thine own self besides*" (v. 19).

It is difficult to believe Paul could "have joy" (v. 20) after vowing to pay all the debt owed by Onesimus, but what a depiction of the Lord Jesus, "who for the *joy* that was set before Him endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2), paying all of our sin debt in the process.

We often hear it said, "If you tell people they are not under the Law, they won't serve the Lord," but those who say this know little of the power of grace. God is confident that under Grace we will do *more* than what was asked of Israel under Law, a truth illustrated in Philemon 21:

**"Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say."**

Under Grace, the Macedonians were under no obligation to tithe, but rather than neglect their duty they gave "beyond their power" (II Cor. 8:3). God help us to do more than He asks in every aspect of our Christian life!

Finally, the Book of Philemon illustrates the Pauline doctrine of prayer when Paul tells his beloved friend, "I trust that through your




prayers I shall be given unto you” (Phile. 22). The apostle was so sure he would be released from prison in response to Philemon’s prayer that he told him to get a room ready for him. We too can pray with similar confidence that God will do what is best spiritually for us and those around us.

We are grateful for the reader’s patience as we took the time to document how this little epistle was written to illustrate Pauline truth, for we now turn our attention to Philemon 15, where Paul says of the departure of Onesimus from his master,

**“For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever.”**

In hindsight, we know it was God’s will for Onesimus to run away, meet Paul, and be wonderfully saved. The word “perhaps” here indicates that in looking back, Paul *thought* he saw the hand of God in it all, but he was not *sure*.

Now we are going to say something that we suspect the reader may not like. We believe this illustrates that it is not possible to know the will of God for certain in advance. The Book of Philemon illustrates that while, like Paul, we might be able to see God’s will in hindsight, we cannot know God’s will for sure in advance.

So how are we to make the big decisions in life, or even the smaller decisions for that matter, without knowing God’s will? This is a question we shall address in next month’s message, the last in our series on this important subject. 



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## BBS Letter Excerpts

### **From Florida:**

“I have been a believer for the past 20 years, but only the past 1½ years have I truly been able to understand and enjoy my Bible. This is due to a friend showing me how to ‘rightly divide the Word’ as only the Apostle Paul can show us. I am writing to be put on your mailing list.”

### **From Michigan:**

“I have been involved in the charismatic movement for many years with many questions unanswered, but since being involved with Berean study I have moved away from this thinking.”

### **From Oklahoma:**

“It’s taken me 22 years, but I finally understand the gospel of the kingdom and Paul’s gospel of Grace.” (From a reader who has been receiving the *Searchlight* for 17 years.—RK).

### **From Florida:**

“When I didn’t understand dispensational differences, I was often times confused and frustrated. I wanted so badly to share Christ with others, but wrestled with what seemed to be contradictions. But now, glory be to God, He has opened my eyes to the truth.”

### **From Ontario:**

“I had received mailings from you before and would like to start getting them again. I had a hard time understanding some of the material, but feel that it is time for me to try again.”

### **From Indiana:**

“It is often difficult to read words you can often quote without looking and think, ‘that isn’t meant for me.’ However, thinking ‘grace’ often makes passages more understandable.”

### **From Oregon:**

“I don’t know if Pastor Sadler remembers me, but he has prayed for me a few times on the phone when I wanted to die because of awful things that were happening that I thought I could not bear. But God helped me through and now I am doing so much better!” (I remember well those days and thank Him that He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” as your testimony demonstrates.—PS).

### **From Minnesota:**

“Your Sunday School material is excellent, well written, easy to teach from, clearly explained, with clear and fun illustrations—my list of commendations goes on and on! I am amazed at the foundation of knowledge the children already have from the use of this curriculum. I homeschool too, and was grateful you provide homeschoolers a reduced rate.”

### **From Australia:**

“I have just read the March 2007 edition of the *Berean Searchlight* from cover to cover and congratulate you on producing an excellent periodical that just gets better and better. I draw a lot of strength and encouragement from the content.”

**From Colorado:**

“The past year and a half I have been fortunate enough to both *see* and *receive* the ‘Mystery’ declared to Paul. However, that certainly has *not* always been the case. I had been studying for 20 years and amazingly never heard or saw God’s Word ‘rightly divided,’ as I have with BBS. It was the *Searchlight* and the *BBI Bulletin* that delivered me from many years of false indoctrination through mainstream Christianity, and the yoke of legalism that the 7th Day Adventist Church had firmly secured around my neck.”

**From Florida:**

“I would like to learn more about ‘rightly divided truth’ and what God’s Word is speaking to me in this time. I must admit I don’t understand much that I read in the Bible. I try to keep the commandments of God, but I’m told they don’t apply to me as a Gentile. Can you please send me information on this?”

**From Georgia:**

“I need your prayers right now, very, very badly. A minister told me that I blasphemed God. I hope and pray I haven’t.” (Please pray for this man, with whom we shared the truth of the gospel, rightly divided.—RK).

**From Indonesia:**

“Some time ago I was working on an oil drilling rig and got acquainted with this man from New Zealand, and he told me about your publication the *Berean Searchlight*. So I requested one and have been receiving it ever since. I just want to thank Paul M. Sadler for this wonderful publication as it has truly changed my life, as now I feel like I am growing up in grace.”

**From the Internet:**

“Pastor Stam’s writings that I have read so far are very enlightening and encouraging to my Bible studies. My thanks to Les Feldick, who has BBS for a link on his website, which was the means of how I found you.”

**From Missouri:**

“The series on *Philippians* and on *Hell, Sheol & Hades* are outstanding! Thank you!”

**From Virginia:**

“In searching for materials on ‘*rightly dividing the Word*,’ I have found that we are in agreement on this approach. I really like your *Two Minutes* articles. I have only been studying the Bible dispensationally for about eight months and have a lot to learn, but I have researched your site for hours and have found a lot of valuable information.”

**From Wisconsin:**

“I talked to our new pastor about the Mystery and this age of grace. I also told him about the *Searchlight*, and he’d like to have it sent to him.”

**From Minnesota:**

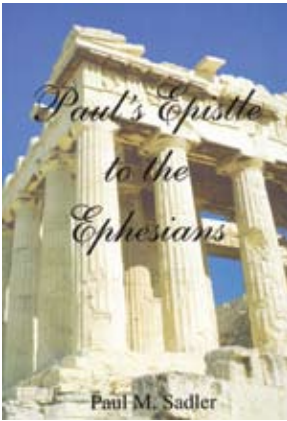
“Here in the senior housing building where I live, there is a box where so-called ‘religious material’ can be deposited, and that’s what I do with the *Searchlight* after reading it.” (Great idea!—RK).

**From Georgia:**

“I feel so blessed that my eyes were opened by God’s grace. Learning how to rightly divide the Word has made such a difference in my Bible reading. Please accept this donation from someone who really appreciates your ministry.”

“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

# Holiday

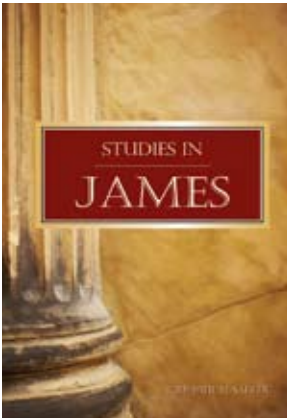


## Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

By Paul M. Sadler

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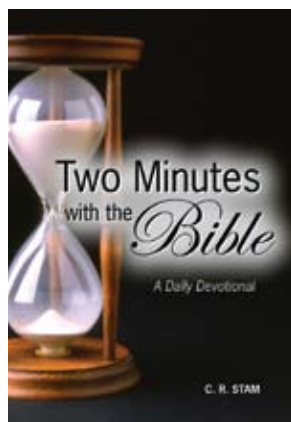
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# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Eleanor Terlaak's arrival** was announced in Heaven on September 27th. A veteran Dutch missionary, Eleanor translated and published many of Pastor Stam's writings in Dutch. Our good friend David Liles, who gave her eulogy, called her "the Lord's ambassador to the Dutch people." She now awaits the sound of the trump, and the "translation" of us all!

**Tax-free Gifts:** Taxpayers over age 70½ may donate up to \$100,000 from an IRA to a nonprofit organization without having the distribution count as taxable income on their federal income tax return. This opportunity exists in most states, but is good *only through December 31st*. For more information, go to [www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org) and click on "Monthly Magazine," then "November 2007 Searchlight," Page 18, or contact us here at BBS.

**February Bible Conference:** *Grace Bible Fellowship* of Nokomis, Florida, will welcome Dr. John McKay of Defiance, Ohio, for a weekend of great teaching and good fellowship. Mark your calendar for February 15-17, for when Dr. McKay gets together with Pastor Whitey Myers and GBF Bible teacher Robert Brock, much light is sure to be shed on God's Word! For more information, phone Pastor Myers at 941-496-8051, or e-mail him at [Elvnmyers@aol.com](mailto:Elvnmyers@aol.com).

**A word of clarification:** Last month's back cover featured a quote that read: "God's program is not back to Jesus, but on to the Mystery." With this quote, Brother John LaVier did not mean to slight the Lord in any way, but rather to affirm that God's program for today is the Lord's Mystery ministry through Paul, and not His earthly ministry to Israel. We regret any misunderstanding we may have caused.

**A change in venue:** In November we announced that *Berean Grace Fellowship* of Myerstown, PA had planned an April 25-27 conference at the Kenbrook Bible camp. We have just received word that the conference will be held at the *Quality Inn* in Lebanon, PA instead.

**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](http://www.crestwoodcreek.com).

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\*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Ken and Barb Wardius. The *Kewaunee Pierhead Lighthouse*, located in Kewaunee, WI, stands 43 feet tall, and combats the area's frequent thick blankets of fog with a signal that sounds a 3 second blast every 30 seconds.

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