

# The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2008



Feature Articles

*Our Relationship With Christ*  
 Pastor Paul M. Sadler ..... 5

*Seven Times a Failure*  
 Pastor Cornelius R. Stam ..... 13

*A Guide to Godliness, Part 2*  
 Pastor Ricky Kurth ..... 19

Departments

Conversation Peace ..... 4

Question Box ..... 12

Use Christmas!..... 12

BBS Letter Excerpts ..... 26

New Grace Commentary..... 28

News and Announcements ..... 29

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

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# From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

I can still remember the day when as a nineteen-year-old young man I came home and heard that Pastor Stam had called while I was out. I was certainly excited when I returned the call and learned he wanted me to come to BBS to work for him. I so enjoyed the subsequent years I spent with him, proofreading and typesetting the *Searchlight* and the different Bible study books he was writing back then. If anyone had suggested at the time that I would one day be asked to be the *Searchlight's* editor, I would have dismissed the idea without a thought, for it was during those years that Pastor Stam shared this verse of Scripture with me:

**“Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not...” (Jer. 45:5).**

I was so impressed with this verse that I had it made into a plaque, a plaque that still hangs in my study to this day. Thus years later when Pastor Sadler asked if I could return to BBS to help him with correspondence, I again entertained no thoughts about becoming your editor. Even now that our board of directors has extended this invitation, I accept only because I know Pastor Sadler will continue on as president of *Berean Bible Society*, and will be readily available to guide me as I learn the ropes.

And so while the picture of the editor on this page may have changed, we trust that the editor's commitment to the proclamation of Paul's gospel will not. We firmly believe it is the answer to the religious confusion we see all about us, and the need to get this message out has never been greater.

I mustn't close without thanking my wife Barbara, who has always allowed me to give myself wholeheartedly to the ministry. Thanks too should be extended to the people of *Faith Bible Church* of Steger, Illinois, where I have served as pastor for nearly thirty years now. They have been very supportive of my ministry at BBS, even this year when speaking engagements constrained me to miss eight Sundays. Special thanks must go to Vern Simmons, who teaches our adult Sunday school class, and Wednesday night Bible teacher Dave Stewart. Their help and willingness to fill in for me when I am gone is invaluable.

And so I covet your prayers as I step into the position Pastor Stam established and that Pastor Sadler filled so well and so faithfully for the past twenty years. As I often say, I can always tell when people are praying for me!

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth





# CONVERSATION PEACE

**“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).**

Interestingly, whenever Paul uses the phrase “*stand fast*,” it is always to challenge people to stand fast in an area in which they were *not* standing fast! For instance, he tells the Corinthians to “*stand fast in the faith*” (I Cor. 16:13), for they had lost their faith in one of the fundamentals of the faith, the resurrection (I Cor. 15:12-50). He told the Galatians to “*stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*” (Gal. 5:1) because they were forsaking grace for the law. He told the Thessalonians to “*stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught*” (II Thes. 2:15), especially the “*tradition*” of working for a living (3:7-12). The Thessalonians had become so excited about the Rapture that many of them quit their jobs in anticipation of the Lord’s coming!

But here in Philippians 1:27, Paul tells the Philippians to “*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*” This is because two ladies in the church were quarreling (4:2), and some in the church were siding with Euodias and some with Syntyche. “*Striving together*” is the Greek word *sunathleo*. The prefix *sun* means *together with*, and *athleo* is the word from which we get *athlete* and *athletics*. Athletes are often teammates who must strive together to achieve a common victory, and this is what Paul was calling on the Philippians to do for the cause of Christ.

Notice Paul isn’t talking about faith *in* the gospel. The faith *of* the gospel is our faithfulness or *fidelity* to maintaining the gospel *as God gave it*, just as old “high-fi” or “*high-fidelity*” records claimed to be highly faithful to the sound recorded in the studio. We are to strive together to maintain fidelity to the gospel God gave to Paul.

Finally, Paul does *not* say we should strive *with one another* for the faith of the gospel. He rather says we should be striving “*together*” as those who see the fellowship of the mystery with those who don’t. With all the talk about “*peace on earth*” that we hear this time of year, how refreshing it would be if we could enjoy the “*conversation peace*” Paul longed to see in Philippi! (Psa. 133:1; Eph. 4:3).

—Pastor Kurth



# Our Relationship With Christ

By Paul M. Sadler

## **LIBERATED**

The story is told about a woman who married a tyrant.

He didn't like the way she kept house.

He didn't like the way she did the laundry.

He didn't like the way she ironed his clothes.

He didn't like the way she conducted herself in public.

He constantly criticized her for everything.

Early on in their marriage he handed her a list of 25 rules for her to follow. And she hated it. You can imagine how frustrating it was for her to have to constantly check her list to see if she was pleasing him—and stay

out of trouble. She usually failed and each time she got a tongue-lashing from him.

Then suddenly one day, he died, and she soon fell in love and married a wonderful caring man. They loved each other very deeply, and she practically broke her neck to please him. Sometimes she even brought him breakfast in bed. One day she ran across that old list from her first husband. As she read it, feelings of anger and inferiority returned. Then she began laughing! As she checked the list she realized that she was now doing all that was on the list for her new husband and more. And she was doing all this with joy because she loved this man so much.<sup>1</sup>

The Law of Moses was like this woman's first husband. It was a hard taskmaster, it was unyielding. The law said, "This do and ye shall live." It pointed its bony finger into the face of those who were under it and said, "You are a sinner—you deserve to die." When the woman met her second husband she felt *liberated*. Out of a heart of love she gladly served him. In like manner, Christ has delivered us from the bondage of sin; as a result we *willingly* serve Him when we consider what He has accomplished for us at Calvary (Rom. 7:4). That's grace!

Legalism is the enemy of grace because it will rob you of a more intimate relationship with Christ. It will put you on a *guilt* trip faster than a speeding bullet! Those given to legalism establish rules and regulations to which they expect everyone to align themselves. Failure to do so can have dire consequences, as the following account by Kent Crockett demonstrates:

"I knew a lady who attended a legalistic church. The church made her feel guilty because she didn't wear dresses which had sleeves that came down to her wrists. They told her someone might lust after her because her arms were exposed. She tried to explain to them that it was unlikely this would happen since she was almost eighty years old. They continued, however, to make her feel condemned for wearing short sleeves.

"Finally she bowed to their pressure and bought a pretty dress covered with strawberries with sleeves down to her wrists.

She was excited to go to church that day, thinking the guilt trips would be over. She asked the pastor's wife, "Well, how do you like my dress?" She answered, "Those strawberries are much too red. The dress is worldly. You are just trying to attract attention to yourself!"<sup>2</sup>

The chief end of legalists is to mold you into their image and standard, which they have convinced themselves is true spirituality. The main weapons in their arsenal to accomplish this goal are fear and guilt. Fear, that is, of falling short of what is expected of you and guilt when you do. The problem with legalism is those who are subjected to it find themselves going through the motions to make a fair show in the flesh, without really having a change of heart. This produces cold, mechanical Christians. You can get spiritual frostbite in these types of assemblies.<sup>3</sup>



The mistake our dear sister made in the above account, which many believers make, was she yielded herself to the demands of a legalistic system when she should have *yielded* her life to the Lord. As Paul says: "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive

from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

If we fully yield ourselves to the Lord, then the grace of God will become the overriding principle in our Christian walk. You see, “grace” is God’s *influence* in our life that will conform us to the image of Christ, which He accomplishes through His Word. For the yielded believer, the Word of God is the *standard* that is to be followed. If grace had been the governing factor in the life of this dear saint she would have been seeking God’s *approval*, who states the following in regard to her appearance:

**“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety...” (I Tim. 2:9).**

The term “shamefacedness” in this passage has the idea of *reverence* that is rooted in the character, which strongly implies the influence of God in the life of a woman who submits herself to His will. We are to understand it is the hidden man of the heart that is a far greater price in the sight of God (I Peter 3:1-6). In short, a godly attitude! The issue isn’t short sleeves or long sleeves; it’s a pure heart that truly loves the Lord and wants to honor and glorify Him. With this in mind, a godly woman in Christ Jesus will always dress modestly because she fully understands that she’s representing the Lord. Her desire is not to please those who would place unreasonable demands on her or to draw attention to herself; rather, it is her heart’s desire to please the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

## ADOPTION

**“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father” (Gal. 4:1,2).**

One of the many benefits of our relationship with Christ is sonship. We are the sons of God, which is a new revelation when it comes to the Gentiles! When we consider the matter of *adoption* we must be very careful not to impose our modern definition of a word that we use today on a biblical term. Today “adoption” means the taking in and the raising of someone else’s children. I personally believe it is very commendable when a family takes in children and gives them a good home that they would not have had otherwise. I believe *adoption* is the answer to the 1,350,000 abortions that take place in our country every year. However, the biblical meaning of adoption has the idea of “placing as sons”; or being given a “position as a full-grown son.”

The procedure of the placement of a son was deeply rooted in both the Hebrew and Greek cultures. In the above passage, the reference to the “child” is the Greek word *nepois* which has the idea of a very young child, one that is yet a minor who cannot yet be trusted to make sound decisions. Consequently, the father placed the child under “tutors” and “governors.” The tutors were in charge of the personal care and welfare of the child. They were his guardians and teachers. The governors

on the other hand were in charge of the child's property. They had general oversight of all the heir's possessions and lands "until the time appointed of the father."

The father determined when the child was mature enough to take possession of his inheritance. A formal ceremony was held at which time the father announced that he was "placing his son" in charge of all the family's affairs. He was then given his inheritance. Paul would now have us see the spiritual parallel in what he has just stated.

In regard to Israel, the law was a tutor and governor—it was the schoolmaster. Under the law Israel was said to be a child. The children of Israel who lived under the law were no different than a servant or a slave; they had no rights or privileges. The law taught her that she was a sinner in need of a Savior. Israel was the rightful heir of the Promised Land, indeed the earth, but she could not take possession of what God had given her "until the time appointed of the Father." But what does it mean "when the fullness of time was come"?

### **THE APPOINTED TIME**

**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).**

God is always on time! And we would do well to always remember that His time is not our time! God works all things out according to the counsel of His will. The fullness of time has to do with the fulfillment of prophecy and the times in which it was fulfilled.

According to the threefold division of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks of years, phase two was about to begin with the birth of Christ (Dan. 9:24-27).

With one turn of the wheel God effectively accomplished a twofold purpose when it was time for His Son to be born. He used the census of Caesar Augustus, an unbeliever, to cause Mary and Joseph to leave Nazareth in order to fulfill prophecy. This was something they would have never done on their own with Mary so far along in her pregnancy. According to the prophet, the Christ would be born in Bethlehem of Judah (Micah 5:2). He was born at the right time, in the right place, under the right circumstances. They laid Him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. It is significant that the manger was often frequented by the lambs. Years later when John the Baptist was introduced to the Redeemer, he prophetically declared: "Behold the Lamb of God."

Furthermore Rome ruled the world with an iron fist; therefore, when Christ was born the world was relatively peaceful. Rome had built a network of roads across the known world of that day which gave free access for the delivery of both the kingdom gospel and the gospel of the grace of God.

When "God sent forth His Son," humanly speaking, we are faced with an insurmountable problem. How is God going to bring His Son into the world without being contaminated with our sin? As we know, all who are born into the human family are identified with Adam's sin and inherit a sin

nature (Rom. 5:12-14). In God's infinite knowledge, He used the vehicle of the virgin birth. Christ was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin; therefore He was not tainted with our sin. This strongly implies that the sin nature passes through the seed of the father.

“Legalism is the enemy of grace because it will rob you of a more intimate relationship with Christ.”

The importance of the virgin birth cannot be overstated, for without it we would still be in our sins. If I may reverently say, with all due respect, Christ was the empty vessel into which our sins could be poured at Calvary. He endured the judgment of God for the sins of the world, that all those who believe on Him might escape the wrath to come. According to Hebrews 2:14:

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”**

Notice that the children are said to be *partakers* (*koinoneo*) of flesh and blood. In other words, as members of the human family we all share in common the frailties of the flesh and the sin nature. Christ also took part (*metecho*) of the same, but *not completely*, for we know from numerous other

passages that He was without sin that He might become the Sin Bearer.

**“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).**

Christ was born, lived, and died under the law to redeem them that were under the law. The pronoun “them” in this passage clearly refers to Israel. Therefore, Israel is no longer under the tutelage of the law. As far as God is concerned, believing Israel will be placed as full-grown sons with all the rights and privileges that go along with it, one of which is her *earthly inheritance*. While she has ownership of this blessing she will not take possession of it until the kingdom.

As Gentiles we were never under the law, but we were in bondage to the world with its idol worship. The world, the flesh, and the devil were the taskmasters that governed our existence prior to God opening the door of grace to the Gentiles. Thankfully, Christ has freed us from this bondage, which explains Paul's next statement: “That we might receive the adoption of sons.” The shift to the pronoun “we” is an indication that believing Jews and Gentiles today have also received the adoption as sons through the redemptive work of Christ.

**“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).**

The apostle changes pronouns again, directly addressing the Galatians as “ye.” Because they

were sons, God had given them the Holy Spirit that bears witness that they are the sons of God and have a personal relationship with Him. Why then, the apostle implies, would they ever want to place themselves under a legalistic system to draw closer to God? They already had an intimate relationship with Him through the Cross, so much so that they were able to reverently address Him as, “Abba, Father!”

Abba is a term of endearment. It would be used in the sense of Beloved Father or our Heavenly Father. Interestingly, the Old Testament saints rarely addressed God as their Father because under the law He was *unapproachable* (Ex. 19:9-25). It wasn’t until the chosen nation was in the shadow of the Cross that the Lord taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:9,10). You see, they were now able to freely address God as their Father in light of their placement as sons in the coming kingdom. Today, as members of the Body of Christ we affectionately call Him Father for we, too, are sons.

As citizens of heaven, indeed, as the sons of God, we have certain rights and privileges much like our American citizenship grants us. The Constitution/Bill of Rights of the United States insures us the right of free speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, the right to a fair trial, etc. Spiritually we have the privilege of being joint-heirs with Christ. Everything that Christ possesses,

we also partake of according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 3:6). As we know, we are promised to rule and reign with Him in the heavens throughout eternity.

We also have the privilege of a heavenly hope and calling. In our contemporary language we use the word “hope” in the sense of wishful thinking. It may come to pass, or it may not; and probably won’t. For example, you might say, I “hope” to travel around the world and see the seven wonders of the modern world. In all likelihood, it probably isn’t going to happen.

“Hope” in the Scriptures is something sure and steadfast. It is the anchor of our souls. Paul says in Colossians 1:27: “Christ in you the hope of glory!” Christ is the *object* upon which our hope rests. For the believer *hope* is always a confident expectation—it will come to pass. It’s like the little boy that thanked his dad for taking him on a fishing trip, which wasn’t until the next day. You see, he knew his father would honor his promise. If this is true in the affairs of men, how much more so with our Heavenly Father who cannot lie. As the sons of God we have a *heavenly inheritance*. Therefore the theme song of the Body of Christ should be the chorus, “*When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the victory.*”

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

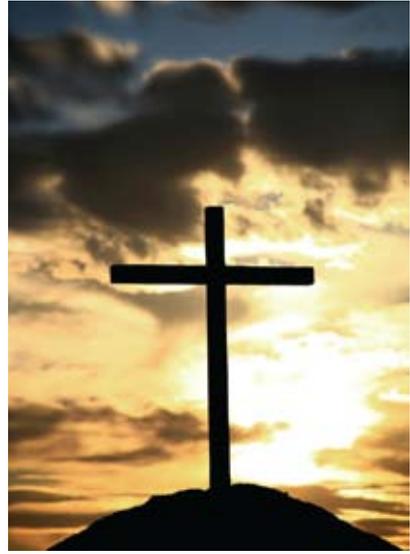
Perhaps you are reading these lines and you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We want you to know that life begins at Calvary! By

way of illustration, if you consider a moment the *vertical* beam of the Cross, it represents the **way** through which the broken relationship between God and man can be restored. The **way** is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior Himself said, “I am the **way**, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

In your heart of hearts you know that you are not right with God. Sin has separated you from the Holy One of heaven. It has made a mess of your life. It’s left you living in fear of death and the judgment to come. I know, I’ve been there! Salvation is not in what you can do to make yourself acceptable to God, but what He has already done for you at the Cross.<sup>4</sup>

The only way to restore your broken relationship with God is to believe that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (I Cor. 15:3,4). You see, when Christ died at Calvary He was not dying for His sins, He knew no sin; He was dying for *your* sins personally, that He might redeem you back to God. As the song says, “When He was on the Cross, you were on His mind.”

The moment you place your *faith* in Christ you will be forgiven of all your sins; past, present, and future. Salvation is the free gift of God; it’s not of works lest any man should boast. With the burden of your sins lifted, you will for the first time in your life experience the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). Once this relationship is established it can never be lost, because it is sealed



by the Holy Spirit Himself until the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. 1:13,14).

We might liken the *horizontal* beam of the Cross to our relationship with those around us. Our lives touch the lives of others. God has believers in every walk of life so that those who are still outside of Christ might have the opportunity to hear the gospel. But this horizontal beam is also to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ who have yet to see the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:8,9). This raises the question, when was the last time you shared Paul’s gospel with a Christian friend? 

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## Endnotes

1. Author unknown.
2. Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook*, Peabody, MA; Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, pg. 179.
3. ©iStockphoto.com/Marketa Ebert.
4. ©iStockphoto.com/Andrew Penner.

## Question Box

*“What does Paul’s oft-repeated greeting, ‘grace be to you, and peace,’ mean exactly? Do we need more grace and peace than what we already have in Christ?”*

We feel there are a couple of things to consider in this regard. First, while Paul’s epistles were addressed to believers, he knew that there would always be unbelievers present when his letters were read in the churches (Col. 4:16). And “grace” and “peace” was an official proclamation of our Lord’s message to these unbelievers through Paul, a sharp contrast to what the Lord will be offering when He comes to “judge” and “make war” (Rev. 19:11).

But we believe Paul’s recurrent greeting has a message for the saved as well. It is true that the simplest believer has unbreakable “peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 5:1), and indeed *stands* in grace (v. 2), never needing additional amounts of either. However, the simplest believer sometimes sins and *feels* that his peace with God has been broken, and that he stands in need of further grace.

We might compare Paul’s use of the phrase “be to you” here to the first Bible use of this phrase in Genesis 43:23, where Joseph uses it to extend “peace” to his brethren. If you know the story, you know that at no time did Joseph’s brethren ever *lose* their peace with him, but they *feared* that they had when they found they had inadvertently not paid for his corn. In the same way, Paul’s trademark greeting offers assurance to all believers that nothing we can do can disturb the grace and peace we already enjoy as present possessions from God.

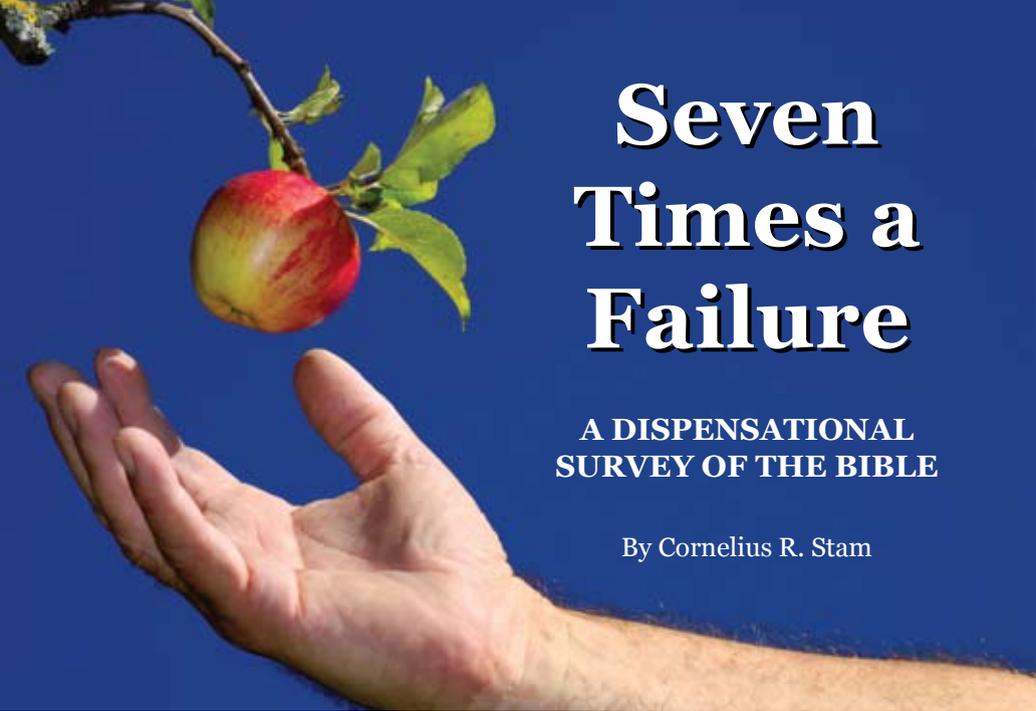
—Pastor Kurth

## Use Christmas!

Years ago, Pastor Stam wrote: “The time is again at hand when the millions about us will stage the greatest farce of the year: a gigantic birthday celebration for the Christ they reject—and many will do it with drinking and revelry... What should be our response...?...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...”

*See Page 29 for some suggestions!*



A photograph of a hand holding a red apple against a clear blue sky. The apple is bright red with some yellow-green at the top, and it's attached to a small branch with a few green leaves. The hand is open, palm up, and appears to be holding the apple gently. The background is a solid, clear blue sky.

# Seven Times a Failure

## A DISPENSATIONAL SURVEY OF THE BIBLE

By Cornelius R. Stam

Like the present political administration in the *United States of America*, a divine administration, or dispensation, naturally covers a period of time. But it is not in itself a period of time, as so many have supposed. Dispensationalism is not concerned with time, but with the government of God over His creatures.

Thus sacred history may be divided into many dispensations or few, according to the measure of detail taken into consideration. For example, in Romans 5 the Apostle Paul deals with the whole period from the fall of man to the giving of the Law as one dispensation. "From Adam to Moses," he says, "death reigned," though there was "no [Mosaic] law" (Rom. 5:12-14). Yet we know that several dispensational advances took place during this period.

### THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

For many years we have felt that basically the Scriptures fall most naturally into seven dispensations, generally called: (1) Innocence, (2) Conscience, (3) Human Government, (4) Promise, (5) Law, (6) Grace, and (7) Kingdom (See chart on Page 15).

Some label the Pentecostal period a dispensation because the kingdom program was then practiced, but this was at least *abortive*, for the kingdom was not accepted by Israel as a nation. The tribulation period too is sometimes labeled a dispensation, but this again is actually God's judgment upon a world that has rejected His grace and is a *preliminary* to the bringing in of the kingdom reign of Christ.

"The dispensation of the fulness of times," it is sometimes argued,

follows the kingdom reign of Christ and should also be classed as a separate dispensation. But “the dispensation of the fulness of times” can hardly be classed with other dispensations since it will be, like our Sunday, not merely a new day, but a whole new beginning, quite separate from the seven “days” that preceded it.

“The dispensation of the fulness of times” (Eph. 1:10), will not be, like the seven preceding dispensations, a demonstration of man’s sin and his need of Christ, but will rather be the culmination of all God’s dealings with man since Adam, and the banishment of sin from heaven and earth—man’s need gloriously supplied.

There are other dispensational divisions which able Bible teachers have pointed out, to which we have no particular objection, but having considered at least many of them we have concluded that the “seven dispensations” view is the most basic and natural.

Dr. Scofield and others have shown how each of the seven dispensations ends<sup>1</sup> with a visitation of God’s judgment upon man for his disobedience. What these brethren have apparently overlooked, however, is that after the fall the record of each new dispensation *begins* with a *narrative*, indicating beforehand that man will fail again.

Thus, after the fall the dispensations do not only end in failure; they *begin* with failure.

Then, after man has failed seven times, historically, and has been judged seven times, God gathers all in heaven and on earth

together in Christ in “the dispensation of the fulness of times” (Eph. 1:10).

### THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE

Before the fall man was innocent. He did not know good from evil, simply because he knew only good. He had no desire or inclination to disobey or rebel against God in any way. He was naked, yet unashamed, even in the presence of God. Yet all this did not prevent him from ultimately yielding to Satan’s temptation and disobeying God.

Adam, so auspiciously created by the hand of God Himself, so graciously cared for by God Himself, and enjoying such sweet fellowship with God Himself, yet failed and fell, and as he fell all mankind fell with him, for all the succeeding generations of men were then still *in Adam*.

**“...by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).**

From this point on the record of every dispensation begins with a narrative which indicates clearly that under the changed conditions man will fail again. Thus every dispensation demonstrates again man’s deep need of God’s grace in Christ.

### THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE

With the entrance of sin man came into possession of the knowledge of good and evil, and with it *conscience*. A sense of blameworthiness smote him when he even

# MAN — SEVEN TIMES A FAILURE

INNOCECE	CONSCIENCE	HUMAN GOV'T	PROMISE	LAW	GRACE	KINGDOM
<p style="text-align: center;">From Creation to the Fall</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAN ENTERS IN GOD'S IMAGE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gen. 1:27</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From the Fall to the Flood</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CAIN KILLS ABEL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gen. 4:8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From the Ark to Babel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FIRST RULER DRUNK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gen. 9:21</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From Abraham to the Desert</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ABR. FAILS TO ENTER CANAAN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gen. 11:31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From Sinai to Stephen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GOLDEN CALF WORSHIPPED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ex. 32:4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From Paul to the Rapture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">APOSTLE OF GRACE IN PRISON</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Eph. 6:20</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Reign of Christ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">STRONG NATIONS REBUKED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mlc. 4:3</p>
<p>SIN ENTERS THE WORLD</p> <p>Rom. 5:12 Creation Cursed Gen. 3:14-19</p>	<p>EARTH FILLED WITH VIOLENCE</p> <p>Gen. 6:11 The Deluge Gen. 7:10-24</p>	<p>MAN DRUNK WITH HIS GREATNESS</p> <p>Gen. 11:4 Tongues Confused Gen. 11:5-9</p>	<p>ISRAEL FAILS TO ENTER CANAAN</p> <p>Heb. 3:19 Death in Desert Num. 14:22,23</p>	<p>GOD'S ANOINTED SON REJECTED</p> <p>Acts 7:52 Israel Cast Out Rom. 11:7-15</p>	<p>GOD'S MESSAGE OF GRACE OPPOSED</p> <p>II Tim. 3:13 Great Tribulation Matt. 24:21</p>	<p>MULTITUDE FOLLOWS AFTER SATAN</p> <p>Rev. 20:8 Gog and Magog Rev. 20:7-9</p>

This chart is not meant to indicate the close of any dispensation, but rather the changes or advances in God's dealings with men, for some of the dispensations have not even yet closed. For example: while the call of Abraham ushered in the Dispensation of Promise, it did not bring the preceding dispensation to a close, for human government is still in force.

contemplated doing wrong. One would think that this would in itself be a strong deterrent to evil and, perhaps, prevent man from ever falling into sin again.

Far from it, however, for man now had a sinful *nature*, and as we turn to the very next chapter of the sacred record we find a *narrative* in which Adam's firstborn refuses to bring to God the required blood sacrifice—he was too refined for that! But he was not too refined to bludgeon his own brother to death when his brother's sacrifice was accepted by God and his own was not (Gen. 4:1-8).

Thus the *Dispensation of Conscience* begins with the account of a murder, and before the dispensation is brought to a close the earth is "filled with violence" and "their feet are swift to shed blood" (Gen. 6:11; Rom. 3:15) so that God must destroy all mankind by a flood, except Noah and his family.

## THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Because of the violence and bloodshed that had prevailed, God now instituted, with Noah, the *Dispensation of Human Government*. The core of this new dispensation is found in the divine injunction:

**"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6).**

This is the basis of all penal law, for as God put into the hands of man the responsibility to inflict capital punishment He, of course, included all lesser penalties.

But again we have barely read the account of the Noachic Covenant before we come upon the narrative of Noah's drunkenness and shame.

**"And Noah...planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken: and he was uncovered within his tent" (Gen. 9:20,21).**

There he lay, drunken and naked in his tent, so that Shem and Japheth had to take a garment and cover him.

"Wine is a mocker," and drunkenness is always apt to make a fool of its victim, but this case was more significant than most, for Noah was the world's first civil ruler, and in Proverbs 31:4 we read:

**"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink."**

The meaning of this admonition is clear. The ruler of the people should not indulge in intoxicating drink for he must be sober and alert at all times. Let others imbibe if they will, but not the king, for his responsibilities are grave.

True, the commonwealth was but small in Noah's day, but if he was incompetent to rule over even these few, how could he possibly qualify to rule over larger numbers?

Thus man had demonstrated his depraved condition and had failed under another new dispensation. The first human ruler had made a spectacle of himself through drunkenness, thus exhibiting to all his inability to rule responsibly over his fellowmen.

Strangely, mankind as a whole was felled by another kind of intoxication as the dispensation of Human Government drew to its close. He became intoxicated with his own importance and, dissatisfied with God's protection and love, followed Cain who, having been driven from the presence of the Lord, had become the first to build a city.

**“And they said, Go to, Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4).**

“...every dispensation demonstrates again man's deep need of God's grace in Christ.”

The result of their pride was that the Lord confused their language and “*scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth*” (Ver. 8).

It is of this period of history that the Apostle Paul declares: “*Wherefore God also gave them up...God gave them up...God gave them over...*” (Rom. 1:24,26,28).

### **THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE**

It was from this scene that God chose Abraham (then still called Abram) and said to him:

**“Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee;**

**“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing:**

**“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3).**

These promises were unconditional in character and will, of course, be gloriously fulfilled, but not because of any virtue in Abraham or his multiplied seed, for Abraham himself failed at the very outset to appropriate God's promise, as is indicated by the opening phrase of Genesis 12: “Now the Lord *had said* unto Abram...” This indicates that Abraham had done something different from what God had directed him to do, so we must retrace our steps to the brief narrative with which the *Dispensation of Promise* opens:

**“And Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran, and dwelt therein.**

**“And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran” (Gen. 11:31,32).**

Just *how* God had spoken to Abraham we are not told, nor need we know, but from this point on the scene is not difficult to imagine. Abraham tells his idol-worshipping<sup>2</sup> father, and perhaps his whole family, that God has

spoken to him, bidding him leave his country, his kindred and even his father's house to go to a land which God will show him. One can well imagine the consternation with which this announcement would be met and how Terah would remonstrate with his son: "You're imagining things...How can you leave your own flesh and blood?...Take a month or several months to think it over," etc. Finally, when Abraham insists he must go, Terah says: *"I'll take you."*

Now God had clearly instructed Abraham: *"Get thee out...from thy kindred and from thy father's house,"* but Abraham evidently yielded to Terah's final proposition, so that Terah, whose very name means *delay*, "took Abram... and Lot...and Sarai" and *began* the journey to Canaan, but got no farther than Haran, *"and dwelt there."* Indeed, the little group dwelt there until the death of Terah twenty-five years later, so that for twenty-five years Abraham procrastinated, failing for all those years to enter Canaan, the land to which the Lord had called him.

This is the narrative with which the *Dispensation of Promise* opens. And how does it close? With *Israel*, Abraham's multiplied seed, failing to enter Canaan, the land of promise.

In Deuteronomy 1, Moses recalls how it was soon after Israel had left Egypt that he had said to them:

**"Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us.**

**"Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged" (Vers. 20,21).**

But they, like their father Abraham, had listened to the voice of unbelief and delay, as Moses now reminded them:

**"And ye came near unto me, every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come" (Ver. 22).**

**"Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God,**

**"Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day" (Vers. 32,33).**

Some fifteen hundred years later Paul, by the Spirit, summed up this whole matter with the words:

**"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19).**

Thus the *Dispensation of Promise* began with Abraham failing to enter into Canaan and closed with Israel failing to enter in.

*To Be Continued!* 

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## Endnotes

1. Only as another advance in God's dealings with men, and a demonstration of man's need of Christ. Actually some of the dispensations have not yet come to a close. For example, while the call of Abraham ushered in the dispensation of promise it did not bring the preceding dispensation to a close, for human government is still in force today.
2. See Joshua 24:2.

# A GUIDE TO GODLINESS

## Part 2

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12).**

Before you were saved, sin *reigned* in your life, and not in the token manner in which modern figurehead kings reign. Kings in Bible days were *absolute despots*, and it is in this sense that sin reigned in your life as an unbeliever. Sin held o’er your being *absolute sway!* At that time, you had no choice in the matter, since everything you did was sin.<sup>1</sup> But now, while even the best believer can fall into sin, *you don’t have to let sin reign in your life!*

We believe Paul mentions our “mortal” body here to remind us that while our spirit is saved from eternal death, our physical body is still subject to physical death, and *sin hastens death!* Constant drunkenness will destroy your health, for example. When sin advances to the criminal level, such felonious activity increases your chances of being shot by the law or executed by the court. And even if you are never caught and brought to justice, the constant fear of being apprehended causes stress, a well-known contributor to high blood pressure and heart disease. And this fear of getting caught is something that affects even liars and other lesser offenders. No wonder Paul elsewhere affirms that obeying the parents who warned us about sin will promote longevity (Eph. 6:1-3), and no wonder he mentions our mortality here, to give us extra encouragement to avoid these life-threatening assassins commonly known as *sins*.

**“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).**

When you were unsaved, and *had* to sin because everything you did was sin, you were not *yielding* to sin, for yielding suggests you have a choice. You were rather *obeying* a supreme despot who held absolute sway o’er your being. But now you can do what you could not do back when you were one of the “*none that doeth good*” that Paul talks about in Romans 3:12. Now you can yield yourself to God.

In the old days when prisoners were forced to break rocks all day, a prisoner who did so was not *yielding* to the warden, he was *obeying*. But if after paying his debt to society an ex-con decided to drop in for a visit, and the warden requested he break some rocks to help him meet his quota, he would be *yielding* to such a request. Of course, such a man would have to have rocks in his head, so to speak! And the same is true of believers who yield to sin after Christ paid our debt, though sadly we usually remember it only after the fact.

“...avoid these  
life-threatening  
assassins  
commonly  
known as *sins*.”

We should rather yield ourselves unto God, “*as those that are alive from the dead.*” But where can we find a role model for this? There were eight individuals in Scripture who were raised from the dead, but the Bible tells us next to nothing of their lives after they were raised. Perhaps this was a purposeful omission on God’s part, leaving us only the example of *our Lord’s* post-resurrection life as our pattern. May each of us

determine to fare better than Hezekiah, who was not raised from the dead, but who was given a new lease on life after a life-threatening illness (II Kings 20:1-6). How sad to read that he “*rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him*” (II Chron. 32:24,25). May these words not be spoken of us at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where it will be determined how well we served the Lord with the new life given to us in the light of all He did for us.

We do know this about life after death: according to folklore only a *ghost* hangs around his old “haunts,” trying to relive the old life he enjoyed before he died. A *resurrected* man heeds Paul’s admonitions to “*seek those things which are above*” and “*set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Col. 3:1,2). God help us to likewise be “*forgetting those things which are behind*” (Phil. 3:13).

**“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).**

Paul here explains *the reason* sin no longer enjoys the absolute dominion it held over us when we were unsaved: “*for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.*” In the dispensation of grace, the only people under the law are unbelievers (Rom. 3:19; I Tim. 1:9,10). “The strength of sin is the law” (I Cor. 15:56), and without it sin has no capacity to dominate us, as we shall see when we get to Romans 7.

**“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid” (Rom. 6:15).**

How many times have you heard, “You can’t tell someone they are under grace, they’ll live however they want to.” However, as has well been said, grace changes our “*want-to!*” That is, grace changes how we want to live. The Lord told Bartimaeus, “*Go thy way,*” but as we read on we see that “*immediately he followed Jesus in the way*” (Mark 10:52). Was he being disobedient? *No!* His way was now the Lord’s way! And so it should be the desire of every blood-bought child of God to follow the Lord Jesus in the way.

How can we even think of continuing in sin after Christ *died* for our sins? A Mafia hit man knows there is no way out of the syndicate other than dying. But what if such a man’s twin brother volunteered to die in order to fool the mob into thinking that the hit man was dead? Such a noble sacrifice would be greatly dishonored if the brother then continued to serve organized crime. Similarly, the noblest Sacrifice in history is equally dishonored when we continue in sin after the Lord died to save us from our sins.

**“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16).**

In the early ‘60s there was a TV show called *Queen for a Day*, in which the woman with the most deserving story was crowned, draped in red velvet, and treated to a fully paid night on the town with her husband. She was actually queen of nothing and no one, but for one night was treated as though she were. Similarly, sin is no longer our master, but when we yield ourselves to it, we make it our king and we are its servants for that moment of our lives.

It is critical that we say something about the “*death*” mentioned here. Like many Bible words, the word “*death*” has many meanings. There is *physical* death, of course, *spiritual* death (Eph. 2:1), and “*the second death*” (Rev. 20:14). In each of these cases the word has the idea of *separation*, for in physical death the soul and spirit are separated from the body (Gen. 35:18), in spiritual death the soul and spirit are separated from God (Eph. 2:1; 4:18), and in eternal death the soul and spirit are separated from God for eternity (Rev. 20:15).

But here in Romans, there is something we like to call *Christian* death, a condition wherein all a believer’s spiritual vital signs are

“flat-lined,” and there is no evidence of spiritual life whatsoever.<sup>2</sup> It is *sin* that has this deadening effect on our spiritual lives. But when it occurs, we don’t need to be *saved* again, we only need to *wake up*. It is to *believers* that Paul says, “...Awake thou that *sleepest* and arise from *the dead*...” (Eph. 5:14). Believers who have died in sin must “*awake to righteousness, and sin not*” (I Cor. 15:34).

Something should also be said about the “*righteousness*” that is said to be the reward of “*obedience*” here. Every true believer knows that “with the heart man *believeth* unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10), and this righteousness cannot be obtained by our works (Rom. 4:5). But this speaks of our *positional* righteousness before God, “the *gift* of righteousness” that we receive when we trust Christ (Rom. 5:17). When Paul speaks here of “*obedience unto righteousness*” he refers to the *practical* righteousness that comes from obeying God (I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22; 3:16).



**“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**

**“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17,18).**

When you were unsaved, you were “*the servants of sin*,” incapable of “*obedience unto righteousness*.” But when you got saved you “*became*” the servant of righteousness. While you can now choose to serve sin or righteousness, you *are* a servant of righteousness, forever free from the tyranny of sin.

**“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom. 6:19).**

To speak “*after the manner of men*” means to give an illustration from the world of men (Gal. 4:15), and the infirmity of our flesh that Paul mentions here is that we often need such illustrations to understand divine truth. Here Paul hesitates to compare the way we live for the Lord with the way we used to live for sin, and so qualifies the comparison with this disclaimer. However, the comparison is such a good one he dare not pass on it. The words “*as*” and “*so*” here indicate that we should now serve the Lord as we used to serve sin, i.e., *with all our might!* We should serve the Lord as enthusiastically as we used to serve ourselves and our own interests and desires.

**“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness” (Rom. 6:20).**

If we are to live for the Lord “*as*” we used to live for ourselves, Paul is setting before us a mighty challenge, for when we served sin we served it *exclusively*, being absolutely “*free from righteousness*.” To serve the Lord in such a manner now would mean likewise serving Him *exclusively*, totally free from sin. Nothing less than this lofty goal should be the express desire of our hearts.

**“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death” (Rom. 6:21).**

By the ordination of God, a fruit tree bears fruit “*after his kind*” (Gen. 1:11). “A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Matt. 7:17), and the end of this kind of fruit in the unsaved is sin and death.

**“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).**

Now that you no longer belong to sin, but rather belong to God, “*the fruits of righteousness*” (Phil. 1:11) that you produce are no longer considered sinful self-righteousness, they are now considered “*holiness*” which ends in “*everlasting life*.”

But how can everlasting life be the “end” of the fruit of holiness when Paul clearly teaches that it is “*by His grace*” that we receive “*eternal life*” (Titus 3:7)? Ah, here the Apostle speaks of the everlasting life that we can enjoy in *this* life. This is similar to how Paul says that we who already *possess* eternal life can “*lay hold on eternal life*” by fighting the good fight of faith and by investing our finances in the Lord’s work and people (I Tim. 6:11,12,17-19). Believers who live only for themselves and spend their money selfishly are laying hold on *this* life.

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).**

This is a verse that we often use when sharing the gospel with unbelievers, but Paul is not actually addressing the unsaved in this chapter, but is rather speaking to believers. This does not mean, however, that we should not use this verse when sharing Christ with others, for the principle that Paul is citing is true. The wages the unbeliever earns for his sin *is* physical, spiritual, and eternal death, and accepting eternal life as the gift of God is his only hope. Paul’s point, however, is to teach us that sin will continue to have a deadening effect in our lives even after we are saved. But thank God, His gift to us as believers is that we can now lay hold on the eternal life that is our only hope of enjoying the rich, fulfilling spiritual life that God longs for us to have as His children. May this be the longing of our hearts as well!

*To Be Continued!*

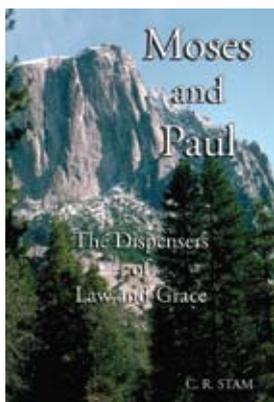


## Endnotes

1. See our comments on Romans 6:3 in our last issue.
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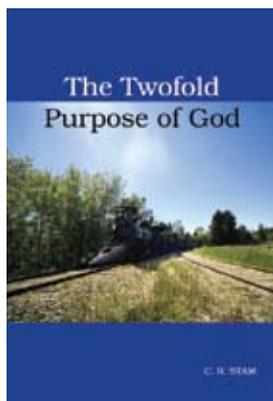
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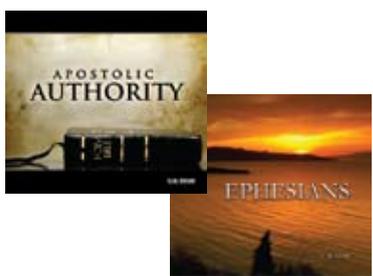
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“Your reply to my questions has been profitable to me. I am better able to fit the events of the Rapture much better than before...two grace pastors I know personally are now way off on the Tribulation and Rapture doctrines.”

**From Pennsylvania:**

“Your booklet *Now That I Believe* is a wonderful piece of material...I have a fellow brother here that’s been having difficulty of what’s expected of him now that he’s saved. His main priority is “How do I deal with sin now that I believe?” (Next month’s article on *Trials and Temptations* will also address this question.—Ed.).

**From Washington:**

“I am happy to see the updated re-issue in a hard cover edition of “Things That Differ”...of which I shall surely include in my ongoing small ministry of giving grace literature to family and friends, in the hope of opening their minds and hearts to the truth, rightly divided.”

**From Oregon:**

“So happy and blessed to be able to give each month. Your hard work is greatly appreciated, more than you will ever know; so is the evidence of your study in the Word, rightly divided.”

**From Internet:**

“You guys are awesome! Over and over again you send me stuff that I am working, or recently working, and your research is so right on in so many ways that I am absolutely astonished. This truly is a Spirit-filled and led ministry. Thank you for your stand on God’s Word.”

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

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# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Good news!** Brother John Baker reports that over 100,000 people have now viewed the creative videos he has produced from our literature on the web site known as *Godtube*. We invite our readers to join us in prayer for this new ministry and for the lives it is touching.

**New Canadian Readers:** Brother John Peters, the president of BBS Canada, would like you to know that you can contribute to our ministry and receive a receipt for tax purposes. Our Canadian address is: *Berean Bible Society*, 54940 Light Lane, R.R. #1, Vienna, Ontario N0J 1Z0.

**Now is the Time:** If you are thinking of enrolling in *Berean Bible Institute*, it is time to get in touch with Dr. Bedore to begin finalizing your plans. The fall semester ends this month, and the new semester begins in January. In times like these, every Grace believer should be firmly grounded in the Word of God, rightly divided. Why not contact them today at [bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org](mailto:bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org), or call them at 262-644-5504.

**Use Christmas:** Pastor Stam often encouraged *Searchlight* readers to use Christmas to get gospel literature into the hands of the lost, and Pauline literature into the hands of believers. If you'd like to purchase some Bible study literature for your friends and family, see Pages 30,31 for our price list. If you'd like to order some gospel tracts to enclose in greeting cards, visit our web site and click on the "Bookstore" for a fuller price list. Either way, just remember to contact us *today*, so as to receive your order in time for the holiday.

**To Help You Plan:** If you are planning a Bible conference or special event that you would like for us to announce in the *Berean Searchlight*, please try to give us a *minimum* of three months advanced notice. This will allow us sufficient time to include your announcement and still make our monthly deadline with our publishers. Remember, the calendar might say December, but we're already working on the February *Searchlight!*

**Our cover this month** features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs and e-mail them with any questions at their website: [www.crestwoodcreek.com](http://www.crestwoodcreek.com).

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Ken and Barb Wardius took our cover lighthouse photo. The *Whitefish Point Lighthouse* is located in Paradise, MI. The light went out just hours before the famed *Edmund Fitzgerald* sank 17 miles to the north-northwest in 1975. Each year on November 10th a memorial service is held at the lighthouse for the 29 men who perished that day.

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“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh:  
yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now  
henceforth know we Him no more” (II Cor. 5:16).

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