

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 1999

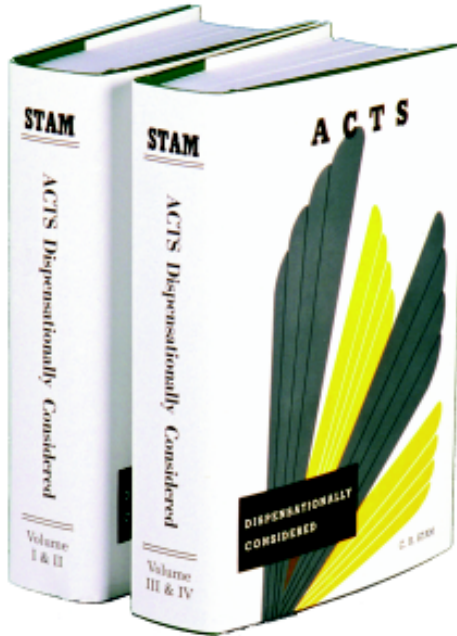


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The *Berean Bible Society* is an organization for the promotion of Bible study by means of newspaper series, recorded Bible lessons, and the distribution of Bible study literature. It is a non-profit organization, a work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends.

The *Berean Searchlight* is the official organ of the *Berean Bible Society*, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

Editor: Paul M. Sadler

Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

Printing: Lithocolor, Westchester, IL

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

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

Internet: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>

E-mail: <berean@execpc.com>

The *Berean Searchlight* (ISSN 0005-8890), February 1999. Volume 59, Number 11. No subscription price. The *Berean Searchlight* is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by the *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Periodicals postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Berean Searchlight*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756.

From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

The Book of Ephesians has been called the Alps of the Pauline Epistles. It most assuredly brings us to the pinnacle of Body truth where the doctrines of *grace* might be viewed in their fullest sense. I asked Pastor Stam over dinner one evening why he had never written a commentary on Ephesians. He explained that years ago Ephesians was so frequently preached in our churches that he felt most Grace believers had a fairly good understanding of the epistle. Thus, when Brother Stam began his writing ministry he directed his attention to those areas of Paul's revelation that weren't dealt with as extensively from the pulpit.

I guess it seemed to me that Ephesians was the logical place to begin, although I could see Pastor Stam's point, having gone through the latter part of the era he was speaking of. But times change! Today, the grace message has spread around the world from its humble beginnings here in the Midwest. Only a small percentage of our readership has the unique privilege of attending a Grace assembly. Consequently, a large number are dependent upon our Grace organizations for sound literature that they might grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the *Mystery*.

With this in mind, the past three or four years your Editor has been writing a commentary on Ephesians. To say this has been a challenge time-wise would probably be a gross understatement. Trying to juggle *Searchlight* deadlines, teaching at the Institute, speaking engagements, and administrative duties is enough to give anyone an Excedrin headache. But, by the grace of God, we are making headway, even though sometimes it's at a snail's pace.

Having known Brother Stam for nearly twenty-five years and having worked with him fifteen of those years, I am beginning to understand why he planned his schedule so meticulously and had such rigid rules that he expected others to follow. For example, he used to take what he called "writing trips." Usually, only two people knew what state he was visiting—his secretary and me! If you called Pastor Stam while he was on one of these trips, you better have had a *good* reason. Something akin to the roof collapsing. Those calls, like most calls to Brother Stam, lasted *three minutes*, and it was back to work.

So if you phone *BBS* in the near future and ask for Pastor Sadler and our receptionist says, "He's on a writing trip," you'll know I can't be reached without placing a staff member into a state of fear and trembling. Thanks so very much for your interest in the ministry. Please pray that God will give a special measure of strength and wisdom as we labor to make the commentary on Ephesians a work that will bring *honor* to His name.

Paul M. Sadler
President

From Pennsylvania:

"I came into the knowledge of the Word, rightly divided, about 10 years ago through a great teacher I met at my church. Only then did so many life-long questions get answered and peace and joy began to reign in my life instead of fear and guilt. Your literature helps supplement the wonderful things I learn in my Bible study. Keep up the good work. I'm also including a gift for wherever it is most needed."

From Michigan:

"We praise God for your ministry. May our Lord Jesus Christ greatly use you in your labors for Him. The Lord bless and protect, guide and direct you and your ministry."

From Tennessee:

"Really enjoy how the *Searchlight* helps me to understand what God is doing today. By understanding what God is doing dispensationally, I can serve Him best. May God bless you and your ministry." (The Mystery is like a compass, it points you in the right direction. Ed.)

From Arizona:

"I have a sincere Christian brother who still lives under the law, or at least believes in tongues and signs, and can't see the different program of Grace which we live in resulting from a failure to *rightly divide the Word of truth*. I discovered this truth from *BBS* back in 1992 and it has been a blessing ever since. It clears up the confusion and removes all condemnation. I wish to order the book, *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ* to give to this brother in the hope that he will discover the truth for himself."

From New York:

"God the Holy Spirit enlightened me to Grace through II Corinthians 9:8 as recorded in a copy of the January 1981 *Amazing Grace* booklet which I had on hand. As to Brother J. C. O'Hair, surely Revelation 14:13 does apply."

From New Zealand:

"We enjoy very much reading the *Berean Searchlight* and also having access to acquiring Pastor Stam's books and booklets. It was approximately 3 years ago that we were introduced to *rightly dividing the Word of truth* and found it very exciting to finally be given valid answers to our previously unanswered questions. We are thankful for the faithfulness of the person who stood for the dispensational truths and introduced us to them. From there it goes up the chain to the *Berean Bible Society* and ultimately to the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself." ("It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Why? First, without faith it is impossible to please God. Secondly, faithfulness will insure that you're available when a poor, confused soul is searching for the truth. Ed.)

From California:

"I look forward to receiving the *Berean Searchlight*. Thank you. Such a blessing to read the article on Mrs. Stam. A wonderful lady."

From Florida:

"I do appreciate you keeping me on your mailing list. The *Searchlight* and what you send continue to give me guidance and encouragement so woefully lacking through the chaplaincy here. Your consideration with my persistent requests wasn't honored in vain. After 5 years of often intense and thorough Bible study, I'm coming to a firmer stance (doctrinally) of who Christ is today and who I am in Him. May God use you in a special way at this time of year to point people to who Jesus Christ really is."

From Iowa:

"I want to express my thanks to you for the *Berean Searchlight* and its many articles which I read cover to cover, before giving it to a friend at church who also reads them completely. I have enclosed my regular gift to you to help in the Lord's work."

From New York:

“I pray God’s blessing on each of you as the printed messages go to hearts that are waiting and ready to receive the truth of the Word of God.”

From Indiana:

“I apologize for not sending a monetary gift sooner and also a word of thanks for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. Oh, how I am enjoying it and learning from it. I was not even aware of *BBS* until I attended a Les Feldick Seminar and a dear lady from Pennsylvania told me about *BBS* and requested that I be placed on your mailing list. It’s been several years now that my husband and I learned through Les Feldick’s teaching about the grace age and God’s Word rightly divided. And now how thrilling it is to read the *Searchlight* and discover someone teaches as Les does. Pastors Sadler and Stam’s articles always seem special. I enjoy every aspect of the *Searchlight* including news and announcements. We hope to attend a conference sometime.”

From Colorado:

“I want to thank God for the ministry He has given you and for your faithfulness to it in the midst of difficult times. Your leadership has further enhanced the ministry of the *Berean Bible Society*.” (We thank the Lord for His grace and the opportunity to serve Him in this capacity. Thanks so very much for your thoughtful words of encouragement. Ed.)

From Virginia:

“Thank you for your ministry. My cousin added my name to your mailing list. I am slowly getting started using the many materials to aid in my Bible study. Thank you for *rightly dividing* the Word of truth. May the Lord richly bless *Berean Bible Society*. May you continue to search the Scriptures as diligently as those at Berea.”

From Iowa:

“Enclosed is our donation to help with the ministry at *BBS* and *BBI*. We thank God for your stand and proclamation of the gospel of Grace. It is so very sad and heartbreaking to see Christian colleges and schools that once stood for dispensational teachings fall back into the so-called Covenant-Kingdom-Lordship-Works-progressive Dispensational theology. We certainly are living in the ‘signs of the times’ spoken by the Apostle Paul....It looks like everyone else had the same thoughts I did when I read Pastor Paul’s first installment on the *Institution of Marriage*. We need ‘Grace’ writers writing about practical topics such as marriage, etc. Instead of leaving it up to the ‘psychobabblers’ and ‘Christian counselors.’”

From Canada:

“I sure enjoy reading the *Berean Searchlight*. Look forward to it each month, so I am sending a donation to show our appreciation.”

From Illinois:

“I’m glad you put the articles *The Institution of Marriage* in booklet form. I saved them all and will give them to my daughters and to a friend.”

From Wisconsin:

“I truly find the *Searchlight* a true light to rightly dividing the Word of truth. God has richly blessed your work. I pray that it will grow by leaps and bounds. Thank you for your glorious help in reaching others for Christ. What a marvelous reunion there will be when Christ comes again to take us home.” (I was sharing with a friend recently that I was confident I would precede him to glory when the Rapture occurs. “Oh! how’s that,” he said. Well, I just know that I am going to have a coronary arrest when I hear the sound of the trump. And as Paul says, “The dead in Christ shall rise *first*.” Ed.)

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

The Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period (Part II)

By Paul M. Sadler

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit....”

—I Cor. 12:8,9

Having touched upon the gifts of wisdom and knowledge in our last lesson, we now come to the gift of *faith*. Clearly this has nothing to do with the regeneration of the soul as some teach. The Corinthians had been saved for many years prior to the time Paul penned this letter; in fact, the apostle calls them *saints* in I Corinthians 1:2. The supernatural gift of faith, which many of these Corinthians possessed, was the ability to perform the *impossible* as a result of their deep and abiding faith in God.

Near the end of our Lord's pilgrimage here upon the earth, as He and His disciples journeyed from Bethany to Jerusalem the Lord became hungry. It was soon thereafter that they came upon a fig tree that had leaves but was *barren*. Consequently, our Lord *curse*d the tree and said: “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!” Not only did the leaves whither away, but the entire tree from its roots (Matt. 21:18-20; Mk. 11:20-24).

Of course, the fig tree *represented* the nation Israel, who like Adam, sought to cover herself with the fig

leaves of *religion*. However, she was *spiritually barren*. Her leaders, again and again, failed to heed the cries of John the Baptist to bring forth *fruit* fit for repentance. Thus, the kingdom was taken from them and given to the “little flock” who would bear fruit (Matt. 21:43).

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have *faith*, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt 21:21,22).

If the disciples thought the withering of the fig tree was remarkable, this was merely a precursor of the miraculous manifestations that will be performed leading up to and during the millennium. The gift of faith allowed them to *demonstrate* their unshakeable confidence in a sovereign God who does “...according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:35).

There are those who believe the Lord was merely speaking figuratively when He stated: “...if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.” In other words, those who possessed this gift would simply be empowered to perform incredible acts. While this is plausible, we have always been of the number who believe

He was speaking *literally*. We doubt there are many who would question the judgment of the fig tree was literal; therefore, we can safely assume that the *prayer of faith* could move mountains off their foundations and in some cases even cause them to disappear (Rev. 5:8 cf. 6:9,10,14; Rev. 8:3-8 cf. 16:17-20).

Another example of the use of this gift would be Stephen. As we know, he was chosen by the kingdom Church to be one of the first deacons. He was said to be a man "...full of *faith* and power, [who] did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). Interestingly, when Stephen ran up against the intelligentsia of his day regarding the teachings of the Messiah, "...they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

This is an example that some believers possessed more than one gift. In the case of Stephen, the gift of faith enabled him to *trust* God in spite of the fact he was staring in the face of death. He proclaimed the Word of God with such *boldness* that those with whom he was disputing were unable to answer his argument, even though they had attended the Ivy League schools of their day. Stephen spoke with such eloquence and persuasiveness, because he also had the gift of wisdom, that his adversaries were left speechless.

These *same* gifts were bestowed upon the members of the Body of Christ in accordance with our dispensation. They were a demonstration that God was making known His secret purpose among the *Gentiles*.

THE GIFTS OF HEALING

"...to another the gifts [or acts] of healing by the same Spirit" (I Cor. 12:9).

Today, many so-called faith healers claim to have power to heal the sick. But, most times their healing practices are far from convincing. Normally they involve people being healed of migraine headaches, blurred vision, back pain, etc.—things that would be difficult to substantiate at best. These types of healings do, however, provide a convenient means through which to *deceive*.

Some years ago, my father was travelling home from Pittsburgh and decided to stop at a roadside restaurant to pick up a cup of coffee. As he was waiting for the waitress to fill his order he overheard two men talking to a friend sitting in the booth behind him. They were sharing how they had just come from a church in downtown Pittsburgh where a well-known faith healer was holding services. Apparently these gentlemen were invited to appear on stage and to simply say they had been healed of a particular ailment. My dad recounted that they were laughing about it as he went out the door, stating: "It was the easiest fifty dollars they had ever made!"

But what about those healing services where someone has been legitimately healed—surely *this* lends credibility to the practice of faith healing. While we do not dispute this can and does happen at times, we must ascertain whether or not the healing was the result of God working through *someone* who has the gift of healing or was it merely a *ploy* of Satan. As we

have seen, the sign gifts of the Acts period have *ceased*—more will be said about this later. Therefore, either the healing was some type of elaborate *deception* or *Satan* performed it.

Remember, if Satan can inflict illness, such as he did in the case of Job, surely he can also remove it if he so desired. Job's journal of affliction records for us Satan's petition: "Put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job. 2:5-7).

But what does the Devil possibly hope to accomplish by using this kind of unseemly scheme? Simple! If he can cause unsuspecting souls to follow *experience*, rather than the living Word of God, he has won a major victory. If you have ever spoken to those who regularly attend healing services, the tenor of their conversation usually revolves around those who were supposedly healed, what they were healed of, and the *emotional high* they experienced. Nevertheless, the Word of God must never stand in the shadow of experience.

The healing program that God employed in time past was characterized by individuals being made *completely whole*. The beggar who had been lame from his

birth didn't go limping off the stage at Pentecost when Peter miraculously healed him. Nor did he need therapy sessions three weeks after he was healed like many today. "Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he *leaping up* stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and *leaping*, and praising God" (Acts 3:6-8).

To further illustrate the extraordinary workings of God in those days, at Ephesus they brought handkerchiefs and aprons from Paul's presence and the sick were healed of all manner of diseases. On another occasion Paul healed Publius' father who was near

death, which naturally drew others to the apostle to be healed of their infirmities (Acts 19:11,12; 28:7-9). In regard to the prophetic program, these acts of healing were a *foretaste* of a future time of blessing in the kingdom when sickness and disease will be the exception rather than the rule (Isa. 35:1-10). On the other hand, Paul's healing ministry among the Gentiles was a *sign* to Israel that God was setting her aside in *unbelief* (Rom. 11:25,30-32).

Although the sign gift of healing has served its purpose, God can and does heal today as it is

"The healing program that God employed in time past was characterized by individuals being made *completely whole*."

according to His will. He is *still* the Great Physician. Let's not limit God through unsound theology. During Paul's *latter* ministry, not long after the sign gifts had passed from the scene, we know for example that Epaphroditus was *healed*, undoubtedly in response to the prayers of the saints at Philippi (Phil. 2:25-30). We're sure most pastors could probably cite cases where *God* has *intervened* and healed someone of a terminal illness in answer to the fervent prayers of the saints. It's simply unexplainable! Even the attending physician is often at a loss for words when he compares the x-rays.

But most times God's response to our maladies is the same that the apostle received:

“For this thing [Paul's thorn in the flesh, probably ophthalmia] I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Cor. 12:8,9).

MIRACLES

“To another the working of miracles” (I Cor. 12:10).

It was during our Lord's post-resurrection ministry that He chose to dispense the *final* installment of the Great Commission to His disciples. It included a number of startling statements: “And these signs shall follow them that believe...they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

These two facets of the commission have so troubled commentators that they argue the closing

verses of Mark's gospel were fraudulently inserted into the text; therefore, there is good reason to question their genuineness. However, any evidence to support such a claim is nonexistent.

While it is true the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts do not contain the last twelve verses of the gospel according to Mark, it is generally accepted that these manuscripts have been proven to be *corrupt*. Attempting to surgically remove these passages to merely get around a controversial section doesn't resolve the problem because the sign gifts listed here are clearly taught in the other Gospels.

We firmly believe that these parting instructions were included in the *original* biblical text. The problem is not textual; rather, it is a failure on the part of these same commentators to *rightly divide* the Word of truth.

A short time ago, a story aired on one of the national newsmagazines, which had to do with the “religious practices” of a Full-Gospel church down south. This particular assembly believed that they could handle snakes based on Mark's gospel. Of course, when the interviewer questioned the wisdom of such a practice, the pastor opened his Bible and pointed to the text in Mark and said: “But that's what God's Word says, right here, and I believe it.”

The media was conducting the interview because one of the members of the small congregation had been *bitten* by a rattlesnake and *died*. Another member had also been bitten and was at home experiencing cold sweats from a high

fever, but he was expected to live. The interviewer was quick to point out, but the Bible says, "No hurt will come to them?" To which the pastor replied: "Apparently, they didn't have enough faith."

Beloved, the sign gifts of the Acts period were *not* dependent upon one's spirituality or lack thereof; they were performed in *fulfillment* of God's plans and purposes at the time. This is a good example that it is possible to be Scripturally correct, but *dead* wrong (literally, in this case) dispensationally.

There is good reason to believe that those who performed the working of miracles didn't specifically conduct snake-handling services. If those who were carrying out the Great Commission accidentally stepped on a poisonous snake they were given the following promise: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Let's suppose that a little one came face to face with a deadly viper; those who possessed the gift of miracles would be able to take it up without any harm coming to anyone. In short, the working of miracles was never meant to be a staged event. This could be said of *all* the sign gifts for that matter.

At Melita Paul didn't hold up the poisonous reptile that came out of the fire before those present and say, "Oops! he bit me, but I

have the gift of miracles so no harm will come to me." Paul was just as *surprised* as those who were with him that day when the venomous snake latched onto his hand.

"And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god" (Acts 28:4-6).

This miraculous manifestation, and the other signs Paul performed, gave *credibility* to his apostleship that he was indeed sent from God.

The *signs of an apostle* confirmed that he was the divine, authoritative spokesman of God. We should add that the working of miracles sometimes entailed the pronouncement of *judgment*. This came through loud and clear to Bar-jesus, who sought to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith. Paul exposed this enemy of righteousness for who he was and caused *blindness* to come upon him for a season (Acts 13:6-11).

The phrase "and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" is also to be understood in the context of *every day* ministry.

"...the working of miracles was never meant to be a staged event."

This, too, fell under the working of miracles, but it did not mean those who were given this gift purposely drank poison to test the Lord. It was not uncommon for believers in Christ to find themselves in life threatening situations. They consistently lived in the face of real and present danger. The threats that were made against them weren't idle tales; actual attempts to kill them were quite common (Acts 4:21; 5:40; 12:1-4; 23:12-22). So it is not beyond reason to conclude that *poisonings* were in the realm of possibility.

“For I [Nehemiah] was the king’s cupbearer. And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king...” (Neh. 1:11-2:1).

We note that even ancient kings took precautionary measures when it came to poisonings. It was a rather convenient way to dispose of an enemy. Thus, the cupbearer was more than someone who merely brought the king his chalice of wine. He first drank from the cup to insure that no one had poisoned the drink. The concept was, let death come to the cupbearer, but long live the king.

Whether those who carried forth the gospel were purposely poisoned to *silence* them, or if they drank something *accidentally* that was obviously deadly, no harm would come to them. This particular sign gift allowed those who possessed it to walk away from potentially life threatening situations to the glory of God.

To be continued!



QUESTION BOX

“Pastor, I understand that we are secure in Christ, but how would you explain II Corinthians 6:1-3? We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.”

If we remove Paul's parenthetical thought for a moment it becomes clear that the apostle had the *ministry* in mind, not salvation, when he used the phrase “that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” As ambassadors, representing Christ in His absence, the Corinthians should have been living exemplary lives. However, their conduct was far from beyond reproach, thus placing their ministry which they had received by the grace of God in jeopardy of being *ineffectual*.

With the re-insertion of Paul's parenthetical phrase, the apostle was seeking to show the Corinthians the gravity of the situation. While they were busy squabbling among themselves, lost souls were perishing.

—Pastor Sadler

Your Only Qualification

A Word to the Unsaved

By Cornelius R. Stam

“Fools make a mock at sin.”

—Prov. 14:9

Increasing thousands all about us are throwing moral restraint to the wind “to enjoy the pleasures of sin.” Loose living is one of the characteristics of the age. Those who dare to go farthest are considered the most daring. They “make a mock at sin.”

As we look about us today we must bow our heads in shame and acknowledge that God’s indictment against humanity is true.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not becoming;

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, malignity; whisperers,

“Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

“Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:28-32).

What reckless folly! They know the judgment of God awaits them, yet they will not face it. They try to “laugh it off.”

And what about you, unsaved friend? How do you stand before God? You say you are not nearly so bad as those whose sins are

listed above? We too once argued that we were as good as many and far better than some, but while it is true that there are differences in the character and the degree of men’s sins, there is surely no difference in this, that “ALL HAVE SINNED and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

This means that all of us—you too—must either trust in Christ as Savior, or stand some day to bear the judgment for sin ourselves. There you have the simple truth as God’s Word gives it to us, and our consciences bear witness that the proposition is more than just—it is infinitely gracious and kind.

In the Bible we have preserved for us letters which were written almost 2,000 years ago by the Apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus, two young pastors whom he had stationed at Ephesus and Crete.

In these letters he passes on to his two sons in the faith a number of “*faithful sayings*,” truths important enough to justify frequent repetition. The very first of these is perhaps the principal one of all, at least it is of *primary* importance. Unless we heed it there is no point in even troubling ourselves about the others. It is found in the first chapter of his first letter to Timothy:

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

It is strange that such a simple and blessed truth should have needed such constant emphasis, but it did and it still does today.

There are some who try to make themselves and others believe that they are not sinners. What they need to know is that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinner*,” *not* the righteous, but SINNERS. What need have “good” people of a Savior? How can He help those who do not feel they need His help?

On the other hand, however, there are many people who hesitate to come to Christ for salvation because they feel they are not worthy. They feel that they must first learn to live better lives. They turn over new leaves; they make frequent resolutions to do better; they promise themselves they will take their religion more seriously—all because they feel they are unworthy to come to Him *as they are*.

To such this “faithful saying” comes with equal force. Whom did Christ Jesus come into the world to save? Sinners! *Sinners!* SINNERS! Do you feel you are a sinner? Then Christ Jesus came into the world specially to save *you*. Do not try to better yourself first, for you will never succeed. Sinners need a *Savior*. And how can He save you from your sins if you do not come to Him *with your sins, as you are?*

It is remarkable that this passage was penned by the *chief of sinners*. When, according to prophecy, Jew had joined Gentile in rebellion against God and His Christ, it was Saul of Tarsus (or called *Paul*) who led the world rebellion.

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

In the greatest demonstration of love and grace this world has ever seen, outside the Cross itself, God reached down and *saved* Saul, the blasphemer and persecutor, appointing him to go forth with *the gospel of the grace of God*, the glorious message that anyone anywhere may find salvation full and free by grace through faith in Christ alone.

God saved the chief of sinners so that you, sinner friend, might know that He is willing and ready to save *you*, for Paul, by the Spirit, explains in this same passage of I Timothy:

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting” (I Tim. 1:16).

Will you learn the great lesson God is trying to teach this sin-cursed world?

Not everyone is qualified to take a place in a college football team. Not everyone can join the Army or the Navy. There are certain qualifications which must be met. Even in seeking employment, education and experience make a great deal of difference. But our only *qualification* for salvation is *our need—our sin*. It is the only qualification that must be met. It is the only one we *can* meet.

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS

Sin was no joke to Him. He knew its horrible results. He knew too the dreadful penalty which justice must visit upon it. Yes, and

He also knew that *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Yet He left the glories of heaven and stooped to bear the guilt of a sin-cursed world *Himself!* Yes, *"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"* (I Pet. 3:18).


As the cruel, wicked wretches drove nails through His blessed hands and feet they emphasized two of the greatest facts men can ever learn—the unspeakable wickedness of which the human heart is capable and the infinite love of God, for *"He bare our sins in His own body on the tree."*

This infinite grace has touched the hearts of millions. It accomplished what the law could never

do, for these millions now seek to please Him, not from fear, but from sheer gratitude and love. As the Apostle John puts it, *"We love Him because He first loved us"* (I John 4:19).

Friend, do you feel you are a sinner? Good! That is the first step toward heaven, for—listen once more—*"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."*

God loves you. Christ died for you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3,4). 

NEWS FROM BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP, NEOSHO, MISSOURI

For many years we have been grading correspondence Bible lessons for prisoners and others. Most of these students have been referred to me from *Prison Mission Association* for the advanced courses in *Things That Differ* and *Dispensational Relationships*. However, in recent years we have had a great increase in beginning students as the word gets around, especially in the prisons.

We have been supplying booklets and reading material to those who desire to study and learn, but sometimes an advanced student asks if we have any *Scofield Reference Bibles* available. We have been able to send only a few of these (mostly used ones), but there are always requests for more. If anyone has a used *Scofield* on the shelf (any condition), we would greatly appreciate it if you would send it to us to share with those who can't afford one. Send it by BOOK RATE to *Bible Correspondence Fellowship*, John Willson, Field Rep., 407 W. Hickory St., Neosho, MO 64850-1726. Thank you!

—John Willson

WEARY IN, NOT OF, THE WORK

George Whitefield preached judgment in the fields of both old and New England. Near the end of his life, a friend advised him to go to bed rather than keep a preaching appointment. But Whitefield prayed, "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of it. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for Thee once more in the fields, seal Thy truth, and come home and die!" A few hours later he preached his last sermon, then died the following morning.

—Selected

EARTHEN VESSELS

God uses earthen vessels,
All battered and scarred,
As clear ringing bells,
Tho' the bell is so marred.

It's the music so clear
With God's message to tell,
That first catches the ear,
Not the sight of the bell.

God pulls the heart-strings
With His message true,
That even the bell sings,
As tho' it was new.

God in a marred vessel,
Now that is a pair;
With God ringing the bell
Music fills the air.

The vessel gets older,
But polished inside.
It's sound is louder
With God there to abide.

Alive, tho' once crucified!
The sound seems to swell.
Arose to glorify!
Behold a shining bell.

II Corinthians 4:7

—Mrs. Anna Lee Walker

What Difference Does it Make?

By David M. Havard

Although no one may actually come right out and say it, when it comes to the distinctive ministry and message of the Apostle Paul, many believers apparently think, “What difference does it make?” While such a question is understandable when it comes from someone unfamiliar with Pauline dispensationalism, the question is quite disturbing when it comes from those within the “Grace Movement.”

The “third generation syndrome”¹ that afflicts Christianity in general also seems to affect the Grace Movement. By the third generation, we see many descendants of Pauline grace believers going back to denominationalism or other belief systems. When asked why they are reverting back to what their grandparents or parents came out of, they often answer, “What’s the big deal?” or, “What difference does it make?”

While those of us who stand for the Grace message may chafe at such a question, it is still vitally important that we know the answer to such a question. What difference DOES it make?

The answer to the question, “What difference does it make?” will depend largely on whether or not we place a high premium on God’s Word. If we take God’s Word and living a God-honoring Christian live seriously, the Grace message makes a tremendous difference. But if we are noncommittal to God, apathetic to His Word, and don’t care to live a Christ-honoring life,

then it will not make much of a difference at all.

But let us say that you take the Bible and your walk before Him seriously. If you do, then the knowledge of God’s Word rightly divided will affect all areas of your life. However, for the sake of discussion, we will focus on just three areas: Bible Interpretation, Evangelism, and our Christian Walk.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION

Understanding the distinctive ministry of the Apostle Paul is absolutely necessary if we are going to be able to consistently interpret the Word of God. Many times critics of the Bible say that they cannot believe it to be true because it is full of contradictions. Of course, we do not believe that it is “full of contradictions,” but it is true that without a full understanding of God’s different dispensations the Bible does appear to contradict itself.

Proper Method

The only method of biblical interpretation that allows the Bible to mean what it says and say what it means—to whom it was written—is the literal method of interpretation. By literal interpretation we mean letting the Bible speak with the normal meaning of words. While the Bible is a supernatural book, we read it as we would any other book, letting the normal rules of grammar and word meanings speak to us.

Even those who do not accept dispensationalism admit that if you stick to a literal method of interpretation you will have to be a dispensationalist. If you do not believe in dispensationalism then you are forced to explain away the contradictions in the Scriptures — which are not contradictions when properly understood in their dispensational context.

Many dispensationalists understand the difference between Israel and the Body of Christ. That such a distinction exists cannot be missed if you literally interpret Paul's epistles. Many dispensational Bible teachers of the past and present (such as Scofield, Darby, Chafer, Walvoord, McGee, Swindoll, etc.) understand that we are now in the dispensation of grace, or as some call it, "the Church Age."

But unfortunately, they fail to see the distinctive message and nature of Paul's apostleship. By failing to see and accept this clearly stated distinction they fail to see the kingdom nature of the gospel accounts and read the Body of Christ back into them. They understand the principle of progressive revelation and know not to read doctrines about the Body of Christ back into the Old Testament, but they do not see that this same principle should also apply to the gospels as well.

They constantly take us back to the earthly ministry of Christ to the Jews as our model of conduct for today. They do this in spite of the fact that even they themselves do not believe that the Church, the Body of Christ began until Pentecost. This leaves the question of how Christ can be speaking to

the Body of Christ in the gospels when it did not come into existence until afterward?

It is also hard to understand how dispensationalists who claim to interpret the Bible literally can believe that the Body of Christ is in the gospels when even Christ Himself clearly states that He did not come to the Gentiles (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24). How can they not believe and accept Paul's unique apostleship and message when he proclaims it so clearly? (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17; Rom. 11:13; Gal. 2:8-9; Eph. 3:1; 3:8; Col. 1:27; I Tim. 2:7; II Tim. 1:11).

Proper Message

Only by interpreting the Bible literally and being a consistent dispensationalist will we arrive at the proper message for us today. There are many preachers and Bible teachers who proclaim the truth of salvation by grace through faith alone. They quickly run to Paul's epistles to expound on the great doctrines of the Christian faith. They do not go to the gospels or the general epistles to prove salvation by faith alone—because you will not find it there! As the late C. I. Scofield said in the preface to Paul's epistles in his original reference Bible:

"The Epistles of the Apostle Paul have a very distinctive character...Through Paul alone we know that the church is not an organization, but an organism, the body of Christ; instinct with His life, and heavenly in calling, promise, and destiny. Through him alone we know the nature, purpose, and form of organization of local churches, and the

right conduct of such gatherings. Through him alone do we know that 'we shall not all sleep,' that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first,' and that living saints shall be 'changed' and caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His return. But to Paul was also committed the unfolding of the doctrines of grace...Paul, converted by the personal ministry of the Lord in glory, is distinctively the witness to a glorified Christ, Head over all things to the church which is His body, as the Eleven were to Christ in the flesh."

It is unfortunate that the editors of the *New Scofield Bible* chose to water down Dr. Scofield's clear teaching on the distinctive nature of Paul's apostleship.

Many Bible teachers today properly teach salvation by grace through faith alone for this dispensation, but because they fail to understand Paul's unique apostleship and message to the Gentiles, they often take us back to the gospels or general epistles for many teachings today.

While Paul himself says that all Scripture is profitable, we must still understand the difference between what is written for us and what is written to us. Only Paul's epistles are written to us, but all Scripture is for us. That is, we build our doctrine from Paul's epistles. We are then free to study all of Scripture in light of Paul's gospel and draw application and principles from all of the Bible and

apply it to our life (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:6; II Tim. 3:16).

EVANGELISM **Proper Message**

We are often criticized for our lack of emphasis on evangelism. Thankfully, many grace believers are starting to develop a renewed emphasis on evangelism. However, before we can evangelize, we first need to know what message it is that we are proclaiming for salvation.

It is interesting that even those who reject Pauline dispensationalism go to Paul's epistles to get the majority of their evangelistic texts. This is because anyone who is saved in this dispensation is saved by believing the gospel of the grace of God as given to and through the Apostle Paul. In a way, ALL believers today are "grace believers." NO ONE is saved today apart from under-

standing Paul's gospel of faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

There is only ONE gospel for salvation today—Paul's gospel. Some balk at calling it that, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this is what it is called (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; II Tim. 2:8). This good news is clearly laid out for us in I Corinthians 15:3-4 and it includes the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But what about Peter?" you may be thinking. "Didn't he preach the same thing as Paul?"

"But what about Peter? you may be thinking. 'Didn't he preach the same thing as Paul?'"

It is true that he also preached about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, BUT he preached about it in keeping with Israel's earthly kingdom program. When we look at Acts 2:22-36 and 3:13-15, we see that he preached about the crucifixion of Christ as the cause of judgment upon the Jews. You do not find Peter preaching faith alone at Pentecost.

Peter told the Jews to *repent* of killing Jesus Christ. *If* they would repent (as a nation), *then* the times of refreshing from God would come upon the nation Israel. While it is true that Jesus Christ is the source of the good news for both Jew and Gentile under both the prophetic and mystery programs, we certainly cannot say that Peter understood the gospel of the mystery at Pentecost (after all, it was not revealed until the Apostle Paul).

When Paul preached about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he did it not according to prophecy, but according to the mystery,:

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:25-26).

The proper application of the gospel in *this* dispensation of grace is FAITH ALONE. Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly states, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

“What difference does it make?” It makes a BIG difference! If we do not understand Paul's distinct apostleship and message we may wrongly try to evangelize by preaching the gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ) according to prophecy and not according to the revelation of the mystery.

Ephesians 2:8-9 flatly contradicts the message of faith plus works as the expression of their faith that we find in the gospel accounts (Matt. 5:19-20; 12:50; 23:3; Mark 11:26; Luke 3:10,12,14; 6:46; 8:21; 10:28; 17:10; 18:18-20). If we fail to “rightly divide” the Scriptures we will have a contradictory gospel. The New Testament clearly teaches both the gospel according to prophecy and the gospel according to the mystery. In an attempt to harmonize the Scriptures, most theologians do one of three things when faced with these facts:

- Superimpose the kingdom gospel into Paul's gospel
- Read Paul's gospel back into the kingdom gospel
- Rightly divide the Scriptures

The first choice is what some Bible teachers have done in an attempt to make sense of the kingdom gospel and the gospel of the dispensation of the grace of God. An example of this is the Lordship Salvation teaching of Pastor John MacArthur.

The second choice is what most evangelicals and fundamentalists do. They understand the gospel of salvation as revealed in Paul's epistles. They teach that salvation today is apart from works and totally by faith alone in the finished work of Christ. They are

forced to explain away, rationalize, or spiritualize the clear teachings of the gospels that teach faith plus works.

The third choice, right division, is the only choice that allows God's Word to say what it means and mean what it says. Understanding Paul's unique apostleship and message allows the Bible to teach what the literal sense of the words clearly indicates—a message of faith plus works to the Jews in keeping with their earthly prophetic program under the dispensation of law and a message of

faith alone to everyone today in keeping with the heavenly mystery program under the dispensation of the grace of God.

To be continued!



Endnotes

1. The "third generation syndrome" is the tendency for third generation Christians to walk away from the faith. The first generation of people saved tend to be enthusiastic and "on fire" for the things of the Lord. The children of the first generation are in church and saved but tend to be less enthusiastic for the things of the Lord. By the third generation many children are typically nominally involved in church, or not involved in the things of God at all, or in worse case scenarios, not even saved.

SUPPOSE

Suppose it were true that a person once saved could be lost again.

Suppose such a person, to gain heaven, would then have to be saved all over again.

But suppose the person in question never did get saved the second time and, departing this life a lost man, went finally to the lake of fire—after having once been "saved"?

In what sense, then, was he first saved? What was he saved from? Was he saved from the *penalty* of sin? No, for he did not escape the lake of fire. Was he saved from the *power* of sin? No, for he fell back into sin and died a lost man. And most assuredly he was not saved from the *presence* of sin. None this side of heaven have yet been saved from that.

What was he saved from then? The answer is: *Nothing at all.*

He may have thought he was saved. He may have felt saved. He may have acted as though he were saved. His friends may have thought he was saved but, in the final analysis, he was *saved from nothing.*

Salvation, to be anything more than a mere term, *must* be everlasting. Any person who has been saved has been *eternally* saved. No one is saved until he is *eternally* saved. Anyone who dies in a lost condition never was saved at all.

Does this mean we must wait until after this life is over to find out? No. We may be saved *now* and *know it.* This is evident from such passages as I Corinthians 1:18, where the Apostle Paul refers to "*us which are saved.*"

How can we be saved?

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—that's what to do.

"And thou shalt be saved"—that's when you get it (Acts 16:31).

And *"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"*—that's how long it lasts (Rom. 6:23).

—C. R. Stam

II Timothy, Paul's Last Will and Testament

By Dr. W. Edward Bedore
Director, Berean Bible Institute

During Paul's final imprisonment at Rome he was confined to a jail cell. The notorious Nero, emperor of Rome, had instigated persecution against Christians to take the public mind off of his own evil doings. It was during this time of incarceration that Paul wrote his final epistle. He well knew that he would shortly be put to death at the hand of a Roman executioner. This letter to Timothy, his son in the faith (I Tim. 1:2), serves as Paul's "last will and testament" in which he explains what is to be done with his valuables after his death.

Having very little of material value, Paul charged Timothy with the responsibility of carrying on the stewardship of the dispensation of the Grace of God which had been committed to him by the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:1-12). Paul's real treasures and riches were found "in Christ" and he

wanted others to share in them. Paul's letter contains four keys which unlock the rewards that are found in faithfulness to Christ.

First, he admonishes Timothy not to be ashamed of his faith in Jesus Christ or of Paul, His appointed apostle, but to be willing to suffer for the gospel (1:8). *Second*, Timothy is told to be faithful to Paul's message and to teach others who would in turn be able to teach. This, of course, incorporates the principle of "*rightly dividing the Word*" (2:1-2,14-15). *Third*, Paul pointed out that perilous times were ahead and that the faithful believer could expect to encounter persecution (3:1-13). *Fourth*, Timothy is charged to keep the gospel pure and to proclaim it at every opportunity (4:1-5).

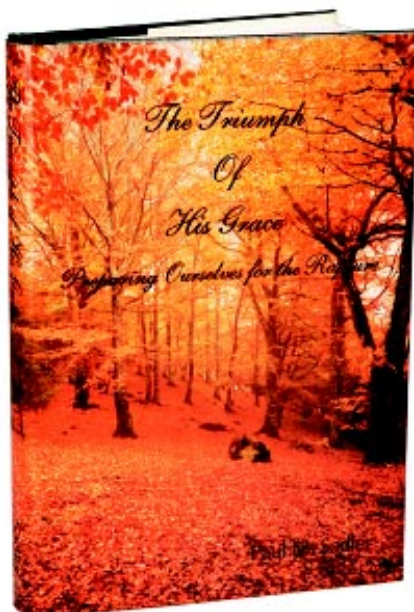
These words are as valid today as they were when Paul penned them. Great riches are to be found in faithfulness.

**"I have no YESTERDAYS,
Time took them away;
TOMORROW may not be—
But I have TODAY."**

Who will be the pastors, Bible teachers, and missionaries of tomorrow? None other than the faithful men and women who are preparing themselves for service today. For more information about Berean Bible Institute contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756, or phone: (414) 255-4094, fax: (414) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>.

The Triumph of His Grace ***Preparing Ourselves for the Rapture***

By Paul M. Sadler



This volume is a comprehensive study on the doctrine of the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church. Midtribulationism, Pre-wrath, Posttribulationism and the Partial Rapture theories are also thoroughly examined under the microscope of the Word, rightly divided. *The Triumph of His Grace* contains *charts, outlines, time lines* and *numerous comparisons* to help the reader understand that the Body of Christ will be “delivered from the wrath to come.”

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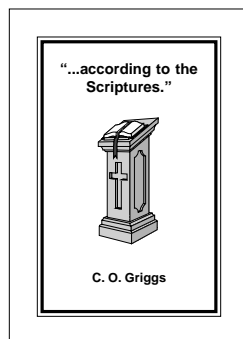
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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW RELEASE: Our good friend C. O. Griggs has authored another timely work entitled: *According to the Scriptures*. This 40-page booklet aptly shows how God has met man's greatest need. We're sure you will find this work a handsome addition to Brother Griggs collection of writings. If you are interested in ordering a copy, simply request:

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A SPECIAL REQUEST: With Mrs. Stam's passing the family has requested that all mail for Pastor Stam be sent to: Cornelius R. Stam, *The Johnson Health Center*, 110 Windsor Park Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188. Since Brother Stam's correspondence must be read to him, please limit your greetings and thoughts of appreciation to **ONE SHORT PARAGRAPH**.

ADVANCE NOTICE: For those who are planning their summer itinerary the *Berean Bible Fellowship Conference* is scheduled to be held at the *Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center*, Cedar Lake, Indiana on June 19-24, 1999. Pastor Joel Finck will be the "Bible Hour" speaker this year.

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*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mrs. Betty France. She is a freelance photographer who we had the privilege of meeting at a craft fair in Milwaukee. The lighthouse is located in Dover, England and was built by the Romans about the first century A.D. It is said to be the oldest existing lighthouse in the world. We will be sharing more of Betty's work with you in future issues of the *Berean Searchlight*.

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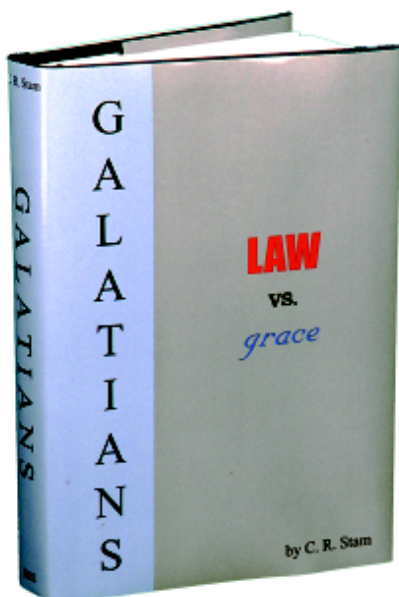
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