

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2001





Happy Birthday!!!



Dearly Beloved,

In case you haven't heard, here's our newest arrival, Katelyn Victoria. Katelyn was born on Monday, October 23rd and weighed in at 7 lbs. 15 oz. I guess you could say that I'm a little partial, but she's cute as a button. And what an appetite; this little girl is going to need her own dairy cow. You had better have a bottle in hand when she wake's up from her nap—*or else!!*

It's great being grandparents. Of course, you probably already know that because I think I might have mentioned it before. It's quite an experience watching *Veggie Tales* again, and again, and again. After a while you have Larry and Bob's lines memorized. Thankfully, the stories are biblically based which is profitable for the whole family. What a privilege to be a part of these little impressionable lives. As we know, our kids today need role models more than ever. Consider these insightful words:

“Young Timothy needed the strong spiritual roots provided by his mother and grandmother. And young people today, facing the same tensions, need godly parents and grandparents to help their own roots go deep so that they might withstand the storms of life. To meet that need, God in His divine wisdom, ordained that each child should have six adults to provide care and backup.”

“Backup,” now here's a role every grandparent can play. If Mom and Dad are both busy working to make ends meet, grandparents can stand in the gap. We can provide a positive spiritual influence for our grandchildren that will serve them well the rest of their days. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have a quick reaction time either when a ball's thrown at you. It's amazing how *straight* Cody can throw a ball at his age. When he joins the Major's someday, Grandpa will be able to say that he was his first backup catcher!

Parents and grandparents need to prepare their children and grandchildren early in life to trust Christ as their personal Savior. It is interesting that it was not Timothy's mother or grandmother who led him to the Lord, but the Apostle Paul. But who would ever question that it was their godly influence which paved the way for his eventual conversion. “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

In His loving care,

Grandpa & Grandma Sadler

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From Texas:

"I have been receiving your magazine for several months now, and I thought I would write and tell you it is interesting and stirring, it causes one to think. I have been a Pentecostal minister, but I have yet to read anything as compelling as the message in the *Berean Searchlight*. This message of Grace has gripped me."

From Wisconsin:

"I have recently began attending Sunday evening services at *Grace Bible Church* in Beloit, WI. My wife and I are finding the grace theology very clear and liberating from 'religion' and legalism. I would like to receive the *Searchlight* publication. Thank you."

From Missouri:

"We look forward each month to receiving the *Searchlight*, and it is read from cover-to-cover the day it arrives. There are churches on every corner, but not *one* that teaches the Word, rightly divided...We so need a grace teaching pastor in this area who would view this as a mission field. We have been 'grace believers' since the late '80's, and since moving here a couple years ago we have been dropping seeds of grace, but it is very rocky ground here." (We'll be praying that those seeds you planted will bear fruit someday. Remember, He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ed.)

From Wisconsin:

"You are one of the few Christian ministries that do not compromise the gospel of Grace!"

From Iowa:

"Our prayer is that many will hear and be saved. We also pray that God will bless and guide BBS in your work. Greetings to Pastor Stam, I shall always remember his gentle but firm stand for God's Word, 'rightly divided.' It helped us to understand that we are saved by the grace of God through our Savior Christ Jesus. No works on our part."

From Michigan:

"I have learned so much and have been set so free by your teaching. I totally love your *Berean Searchlight*. Some I have shared the message with have also subscribed to this blessed publication."

From Iowa:

"I received your *Thanksgiving Communiqué* today. Please remove my name from your list of mailings. I have been born again and Spirit baptized for 35 years now, and I am delighted to say that I speak in tongues everyday in praise, worship, and intercessory prayer. I fellowship with my Lord Jesus through His Word and in my prayer times, as well as during the times when I am doing my daily chores. In all these times, I pray in tongues as well as in English. Unfortunately, you must not have studied the Bible as thoroughly as you think you have since you do not recognize that the in-filling of the Holy Spirit is just as real today as it was in the time of the Apostles.

"Speaking in tongues is a beautiful way of communicating with our Heavenly Father and building up ourselves on our most holy faith, as well as doing spiritual battle against the enemy of our souls, Satan. I believe you will be surprised and saddened when you get to heaven and discover you were wrong and what you missed out on." (Someone is going to be surprised and saddened, but I doubt it's going to be us on this subject—I Cor. 13:8-13. Ed.)

From Washington:

"Thank you and praise God for the *Searchlight*. I look forward to it. I enjoy the 'lighthouse' pictures on the covers. This cursed world needs the 'SON' light that you teach."

From Ohio:

"Thanks *over and over* again, for sending me the booklets. They are a blessing here in Cleveland. Also would you thank Pastor Sadler for me, for his 'faithfulness.'"

From Ontario, Canada:

"My husband and I have been blessed and appreciate the work that goes into the monthly *Berean Searchlight*. I am even more excited when, from time to time, I see a note of thanks and praise from another Canadian besides ourselves. I cannot help but wonder why God has not yet moved in a mighty way in Canada with 'the Mystery,' or maybe He is but we have not heard all the many years we have been a Christian. God has His reasons. It hurts to think that we in this country of Canada may be just too complacent that we think we have arrived spiritually and that our journey of learning is complete. When you come to study God's Word, rightly divided, the journey has really just begun! Studying the Bible now is so much more refreshing and exciting.

"We as Christians need to know the importance of 'putting God first,' and what better way than to come to know Him better by studying His Word. Thank you again, and 'hello' and God's blessing to my fellow Canadians and to all my brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world. I pray that the message of Grace will quickly and steadily move through Canada and elsewhere before Christ returns to claim 'the Body of Christ' unto Himself. Please pray for my husband and I as we continue to take a stand for rightly dividing God's Word as we have already experienced rejection from our pastor and church friends who believe 'we have gone off the deep end,' without even studying to know the truth." (Your group's enthusiasm may be the spark that sets Canada ablaze for Paul's gospel. Ed.)

From Massachusetts:

"Thanks for your tireless efforts to educate the saints and grow us up in the knowledge of Him, who is the Head, Jesus Christ. May you be richly blessed for your hard work, dedication, and unwavering devotion to our Savior."

From Oregon:

"We thank God for you all...for your faithfulness and diligence...for your ongoing endeavor of preaching the Word, rightly divided, and for blessing our household with the *Berean Searchlight*."

From Florida:

"Thank you so much for sending the *Searchlight* all these many years. I am 92 years old and love the Church, which is Christ's Body. It was my greatest comfort when my husband died to know I still had a ministry to my fellow members of His Body. The truth is very practical."

From Pennsylvania:

"As an ongoing recipient of the *Searchlight* I wish to express my gratefulness and the blessings I continue to receive from reading the various messages. It is evident that Pastor Sadler is truly growing as shown in the books and articles. He surely seems to have taken up the torch of the message of Grace and not forgotten his past of a small school of long ago in Harmony, PA. As we all grow in the Lord until His return or our departure, may you continue to show forth the Word, rightly divided." (It's always good to remember our roots. We pray without ceasing that your roots might go deeply into the fertile soil of God's Word to the praise of His glory in Christ Jesus. Ed.)

From Michigan:

"Thank you for your faithful ministry. We always keep you in our prayers."

From Indiana:

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the *Berean Bible Society*. Receiving God's Word, rightly divided has been a blessing to me beyond words...I look forward to reading it every month. God bless you and all the people involved in furthering Paul's gospel."

"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

In addition to being a good friend, Pastor Win Johnson was a great encouragement to your Editor when he first entered the ministry. Before his homegoing (1993), Win served as the pastor of the *Berean Church* in Denver for over 30 years. He was also the Editor of the popular daily devotional guide *Amazing Grace*. The following article, which appeared in *Amazing Grace* years ago, is currently available in tract form. For those who are interested in placing an order, simply write: *Grace Gospel Publishers*, P.O. Box 1155, Denver, Colorado 80201. —Ed.

The Unpardonable Sin

By Pastor Win Johnson


“I’m afraid I’ve committed the unpardonable sin.” This grim statement climaxed a telephone conversation the writer recently had with a lady in our city. Among other things she related how an accusing conscience tormented her “day and night” till she was almost at the point of mental derangement. Realizing that the Bible speaks about such a sin, and being unable to arrive at the knowledge of sins forgiven, this lady, like many others, concluded that she must have committed the “unpardonable sin,” and consequently, would never be forgiven.

It was the writer’s joy and privilege to point out the Scriptural, as well as dispensational solution, to her distressing problem.

Matthew 12:31,32 states: “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [age], neither in the world to come.”

These words of warning came from the lips of the Son of God while He walked among men in His earthly ministry. They were addressed to the religious leaders of the nation Israel. Their blasphemy against Him even when He hung on the Cross was forgiven by the Father in answer to the prayer, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

But when at Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, announced the return of Messiah on the condition of Israel’s national repentance, these leaders instigated a persecution that reached its climax in the stoning of Stephen, a godly man, “full of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:54-60). It was here that the “unpardonable sin” was committed by Israel’s leaders. The Third Person of the Trinity had been blasphemed and His pleadings through the Apostles ignored. This sin will never be forgiven.

In this age it is blessedly true that “we have redemption through His blood, the *forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7). Though all sin is *unpardoned* till it is forgiven, it is not *unpardonable*. Christ died for *all* sin. The penalty has been paid and God now offers eternal life as a gift to be received by faith. Have you received this gift? Do you know the joy of sins forgiven? You can! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31 cf. I Cor. 15:1-4). 

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

I Peter 3:18-22

By Paul M. Sadler



In the court of public opinion, the Bible is an outdated relic of the past, which isn't relative to today's enlightened man. But the pronouncement of God regarding man's wisdom is, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Since the message of the Word of God is *spiritual* its relevancy spans the ages. This is clearly seen in the case of Peter's writings, which are not only addressed to those of the dispersion, but to the future Tribulation saints as well.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

—I Pet. 3:18-20

As we know, Peter's hearers suffered numerous injustices for well-doing similar to our Lord. It was, therefore, comforting for them to know that they weren't alone in this matter. In essence Peter says, Christ suffered at the hands of evil

men, the Just for the unjust, that He might "bring us to God." These words are reminiscent of his address to Israel's leaders shortly after Pentecost, "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14,15). Israel was *guilty* of crucifying her own Messiah. This is an important point to remember as we make our way through the context.

Christ died *once* for the sins of the chosen nation. Simply because an Israelite could boast that he was of the seed of Abraham did not necessarily mean he was right with God. Thus, the apostle declares that Christ died to "bring us to God." Not to bring them "glory" or "into the kingdom," *but to God*. You see the latter would make the former a reality.

"V" IS FOR VICTORY

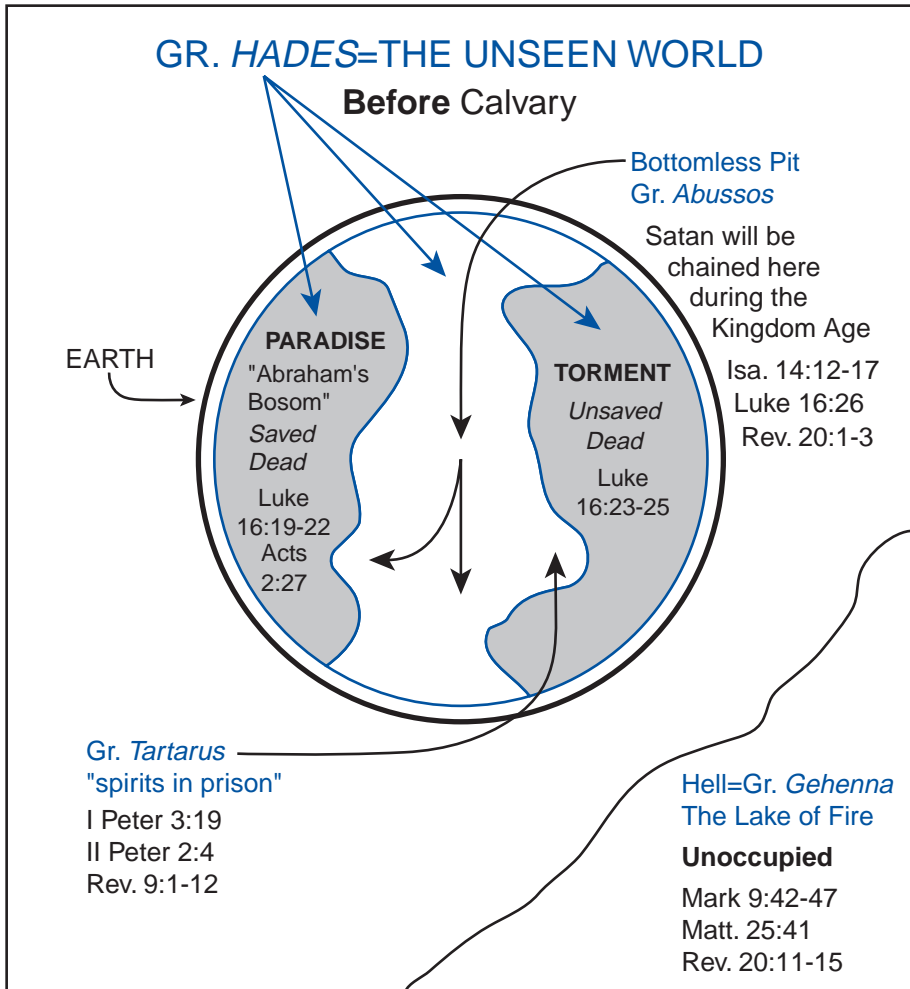
It is generally agreed that Christ was wholly God and wholly man when He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Even though I can't fully comprehend this wonderful truth, I accept it by faith based upon the many infallible proofs taught in the Word of God. The fact that Christ was "put to death in the flesh" is a clear indication He was indeed *human*. He had a body (Matt. 26:26), soul (John 12:27), and spirit (Luke 23:46). When the Savior was nailed to the Cross, He died physically the moment He dismissed His spirit into

the hands of the Father. Death is the *separation* of the soul and spirit from the body.

The day Christ died He descended into the lower parts of the earth to hades or the unseen world. We know our Lord entered this realm in a *disembodied* state, for Peter declared at Pentecost: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). If we connect this with the promise the Savior gave to the thief on the Cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," we can safely conclude

that paradise was located in hades prior to Calvary (Luke 23:43).

Since we do not have an English word or an equivalent for the Greek word "hades," the translators chose to use the term "hell" in its place, hoping to give us at least some sense of this realm. Of course, over the years this has caused untold confusion among the brethren, insofar as "hades" and "hell" (Gr. *Gehenna*) are two completely different places. It would have been preferable if the translators had *transliterated* the Greek word "hades," as they did with the word "baptism."¹



Although “hades” does contain a region, we’ll call torment, for the unsaved dead, it is not the literal “hell” of the Bible. According to the Scriptures, “hell” (Gr. *Gehenna*) is *unoccupied* and will remain *unoccupied* until the Great White Throne Judgment when hades is cast into the lake of fire (hell) (Rev. 20:11-15).² In the meantime, a good concordance will help you distinguish between these two realms.

So then, Christ descended into *hades*, not hell, on the day of His crucifixion. He remained in paradise (Abraham’s Bosom) for three days and three nights in a disembodied state. On the first day of the week, the promise was fulfilled that the Father would not leave the soul of His Son in hades. Consequently, Christ left the unseen world, returned to the tomb where His soul and spirit were reunited with His body, and was gloriously raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.

With the finished work now complete, which is confirmed by the bodily resurrection, the next phase of God’s plans and purposes could be fulfilled. Immediately after Christ arose from the dead, He descended *again* into hades to lead captivity captive according to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:7-11).

While the blood of bulls and goats merely covered the sins of the prophetic saints before Calvary, at the Cross the blood of Christ removed them as far as the east is from the west. As a result, the redemptive work of the Savior now made it possible for these believers to be transported into the presence of the Father where they *temporarily* reside until the Second Coming of Christ. These are the saints who will return with the King of Kings

at the close of the Great Tribulation (Jude 14,15 cf. Rev. 19:11-16). Before the Lord removed paradise from hades to the third heaven, where it is presently located (II Cor.12:4), He is said to have “preached to the spirits in prison.”

“SPIRITS IN PRISON”

Peter gives us this insightful revelation: “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

After the Spirit quickened Christ, Peter states, “by which,” that is, in His resurrected form “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” This raises a number of interesting questions, the least of which is, who were these spirits who were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah? There are three basic positions we would like to present for your consideration.

First, there are those who teach that it was the Spirit through Noah who preached to the disobedient on the earth in the days of Noah. As a consequence of their disobedience these spirits of the unsaved dead are now imprisoned in hades. But can it not be said that the Spirit spoke through all the holy men of old; why single out Noah? Furthermore, the context here in I Peter indicates *movement*; that is, Christ *went* from point A to point B to fulfill a foreordained purpose after His resurrection. The Greek word “went” has the thought of “traveling or going on a journey.” In addition

to ignoring the time sequence of the event (Christ's resurrection), this interpretation doesn't allow for this movement.

Second, between Christ's death and resurrection He preached to these spirits of disobedience in the torment region of hades. But why would the Savior limit His address to those who lived in the days of Noah when millions of others shared the same fate?

Third, these spirits are the fallen angels who left their first estate in the days of Noah and cohabited with women. Because of this terrible act of disobedience, which was contrary to God's natural order, they were assigned to the forbidding realm of *Tartarus* located on the sides of the bottomless pit in hades. Therefore, these are the "spirits in prison" to whom Christ preached.

As you prayerfully consider all the above interpretations, we believe number three best fits the context of I Peter 3:18-22. In the so-called New Testament, the term "spirits" is solely identified with *angelic beings* unless specified otherwise. For example:

"When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the *spirits* with His Word, and healed all that were sick" (Matt. 8:16).

"And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against *unclean spirits*, to cast them out" (Matt. 10:1).

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the *evil spirits* went out of them" (Acts 19:11,12).

According to the biblical record, these particular "spirits in prison"

Peter speaks of were those angels who *sinned* in the days of Noah (II Pet. 2:4,5). Apparently Satan commissioned these fallen angels to leave their own habitation (heaven) for the unseemly purpose of corrupting the human race. Of course, this was an attempt of Satan to derail the plans and purposes of God to send the Redeemer through the seed of the woman.

"And it came to pass...that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose...There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Gen. 6:1,2,4).

The title "sons of God," is *always* a reference to angels in the Old Testament, never to men, and in this particular instance, fallen ones (Job 1:6,7; 2:1). Apparently, these evil creatures transformed themselves into a human form, which was well within their power. We know, for example, that the elect angels who visited Abraham and Lot appeared in a *physical* form. In fact, Lot washed their feet, and prepared a meal for them, "and they did eat" (Gen. 18; 19:1-11). It has also been suggested that the "sons of God" may have possessed men in the days of Noah, thus altering their metabolism. This was certainly true of Legion who had superhuman strength (Mark 5:1-12).

Whatever the case might have been, we know the "sons of God" committed *fornication* with the daughters of men with catastrophic results (II Pet. 2:4,5 cf. Jude 6-8). Dr. James M. Gray states that this sin would have been "the confounding of two

“...the death, burial,
and resurrection
declared Satan and
his fallen host to be
defeated foes.”

distinct orders of creatures and the production of a mixed race, partly human, partly superhuman, which would be just such a derangement of the divine plan as to warrant that which occurred, namely, the almost total extermination of all who were upon the earth.”

This helps us to better understand the *severity* of the flood in the days of Noah. With the exception of Noah and his family, all flesh was destroyed from the face of the earth, which abruptly ended the corruption of the human race and the violence it perpetrated (Gen. 6:12,13). This also explains why *some* of the fallen hosts are chained in the center of the earth awaiting the judgment to come.

Peter pinpoints for us where the *prison* of these spirits is located: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them *down* to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (II Pet. 2:4). The term “hell” in this passage is the Greek word *tartarus*. Once again, this demonstrates the importance of consulting the original languages at times to arrive at the proper sense. *Tartarus* is not the literal hell of the Bible. They are two separate realms, although both are associated with the consequences of sin. As we have already established, “hell” is unoccupied at this hour, which cannot be said of *tartarus*.

But why did Christ descend into the lower parts of the earth to preach to these spirits in prison shortly after His resurrection? First and foremost, the Lord didn’t preach the gospel to these spirits simply because angels are not included in the plan of redemption. In addition, the term “preach” that Peter used conveys the idea to “make a proclamation by an official representative.” We believe Christ’s proclamation had to do with the *defeat* of Satan’s scheme to overthrow the purpose of God. In spite of Satan’s effort to corrupt the human race, the incarnation came to pass when Christ was born of the woman, which would have been an impossibility had the race remained mixed.

Furthermore, the death, burial, and resurrection declared Satan and his fallen host to be defeated foes. The bodily resurrection of Christ was the death knell that sealed their eternal doom. Thus, one word sums up our Lord’s proclamation to these fallen spirits—**VICTORY!!**

The apostle Paul says, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). We normally associate Paul’s words here with the ascension on resurrection morning; however, the *triumph* first manifested itself in the center of the earth with Christ’s proclamation to these “spirits in prison,” as He prepared to lead captivity captive (John 20:16-18; Eph. 4:7-10; I Pet. 3:19).

Peter adds, “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (I Pet. 3:22). Notice Christ’s triumph and proclamation has *made* angels and authorities and powers

subject to Him. This cannot be said of the elect angels who are willingly subject to Him.

THE BAPTISM WHICH SAVES

“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 3:20,21).

Peter gives a graphic illustration regarding redemption when he refers back to the days of Noah, when eight souls were saved through the water or through the judgment. He goes on to add, “whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.” In other words, the *water* that bore up the ark of Noah and *baptism* are corresponding truths, which set forth the redemption of these Hebrew believers.

But which *baptism* is Peter referring to here? We must never lose sight of the fact that there are 12 different baptisms taught in the Word of God. This baptism certainly could *not* be a water ceremony, otherwise we would have a symbol of a symbol. We believe the answer is found in Luke 12:50, “*But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.*”

These words were spoken by our Lord well into His earthly ministry. When He spoke about having “a baptism to be baptized with,” He was teaching His disciples about His impending death at Calvary. If we understand that the term “baptism” means “full identification” then we

see that Christ was identified with death in order to be the Redeemer of mankind.

It is Christ’s *identification* with death that saves men in any dispensation, though this was not revealed until Paul (Rom. 3:21,25). As members of the Body of Christ, we share this in common with the nation Israel. This is one of the connections between Prophecy and the Mystery. Subsequently, no matter which dispensation a sinner is saved under, he is saved *on the basis* of the blood that flowed freely at the Cross. It was there that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for the sins of the world, which was to be “manifested in due time” through Paul’s gospel. Of course, Peter was now privy to this truth through Paul’s ministry (I Tim. 2:5-7 cf. II Pet. 3:15,16).

“It is Christ’s *identification* with death that saves men in any dispensation, though this was not revealed until Paul (Rom. 3:21,25).”

It was on the grounds of Christ’s finished work that Peter’s hearers were able to have a good conscience toward God. Peter raises this issue because it was he who charged the chosen nation with the guilt of crucifying their Messiah. This dovetails perfectly with what the writer of Hebrews states: “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” (Heb. 9:14).

Peter is careful to state that a man is *not* saved, *nor* can he ever expect to have a good conscience toward God, by the “putting away of the filth of the flesh.” As we already know, the “putting away of the filth of the flesh” is done by washing with water in order to cleanse. He is informing his hearers that it is Christ’s *death baptism* that saves them, not water baptism, which was merely a shadow of things to come. While this was a further development in Israel’s redemption, it in no way diminished from the fact that water baptism was still *required* as an expression of faith, on two accounts: First, Christ was the Messiah of Israel. Second, it was necessary for her induction into the priesthood (Ex. 19:5,6; 29:1-4; Isa. 61:6; John 1:31).

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Both Peter and Paul present the practical side of the doctrines they taught. Essentially you cannot have the one without the other and remain in the center of God’s will. Although it seemed as though Noah failed as a preacher of righteousness, he nevertheless continued to *obey* the will of God. He remained faithful in spite of the fact that only eight souls were saved through the great flood. Thus, Peter’s hearers were to be encouraged that even though they were small in number it was important for them to follow Noah’s *example*.

There is a lesson here that can benefit us as well. Namely, God does His greatest work through families, like Noah’s, the remnants, the little flocks, and the churches in the house. Sadly, in the present scheme of things, the Church’s primary concern is numbers; the bigger, the better! God, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of *faithfulness*. Another lesson Peter would have these Hebrews glean from his discourse is this: just as Noah was delivered from the old world into the new by the ark, they also were delivered from the old manner of life into a new life in Christ, who is the anti-type of the ark.



Finally, Satan was a roaring lion in those days, walking about seeking to devour whom he may. With the persecution intensifying, these saints would have found *comfort* in Christ’s triumph over the Accuser of the brethren. In Christ they, too, were triumphant.

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. *Transliteration* means to assign letters from the English alphabet to the corresponding letters of the Greek word being transliterated.
2. The exception here would be the Beast and the False Prophet who are cast alive into the lake of fire at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-14,19,20; 20:10). But even this doesn’t take place until the eve of the consummation of all things.

The Silent Holocaust

“Unrestricted abortion is wrong, even if it’s a right.”

—Roy Maynard

Contending for the Faith

By Cornelius R. Stam

One of our prominent coast-to-coast radio Bible teachers said to this writer, some time ago: “You know what I believe about baptism, but sometimes I wonder whether it is worth fighting about.” I replied that I would express it differently; that while I did not believe the truth of the “one baptism” was worth “fighting *about*,” I did believe that it, like many another truth, was worth “fighting *for*.”

It is true that we are not to be *contentious* in our attitude, but we are to stand, and contend, if necessary, for the truth. This is to “fight the good fight of [the] faith.” For example I Peter 3:15:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and
BE READY [surely this implies previous study]
ALWAYS [so ready should we be]
TO GIVE AN ANSWER [Lit., *apology, defense*]
TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU [whether great or insignificant]
A REASON [an intelligent justification]
OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU [lest it be proven an unfounded *feeling*]
with meekness and fear” [Not from mere contentiousness].

Then there is Jude 3, where Jude explains that though he had been inclined to write about the “common salvation,” it was *necessary* for him to exhort his brethren to

“earnestly CONTEND FOR THE FAITH....”


Finally, Philippians 1:17, where Paul, referring to his ministry in general, says:

“I AM SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL.”

And he asserts that the Philippians were “partakers of his grace” in
“THE DEFENSE AND CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL” (Phil. 1:7).

God *could*, of course, defend the truth by direct intervention, but He does not do so. In a world and in a religious system which always tend to *depart* from the truth, God has appointed *men* to defend it. And where they are unfaithful to their charge the truth is not defended in any *other* way, but rather gives way before Satan’s delusions.

If the reader will just stop and think a moment he will realize that were it not for controversialists like Luther, Calvin, Darby and others, we might still be in the dark ages. If Paul had not taken a stand for “the defense and confirmation of the gospel,” it would never have gotten to us. See how legalism, gnosticism and other heresies crept in wherever he had been and threatened to overthrow what he had sacrificed so much to build.

Yes, it *does* matter what we believe and we *are* responsible to others where faith and doctrine are concerned, not only in general, but in particular, otherwise II Timothy 2:15 would have no meaning. 

A Christian Duty

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

—The Apostle Paul

By J. C. Ryle

The late Bishop J. C. Ryle, of Liverpool, England said: “Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the Devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing that is even worse than controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed and permitted without protest or molestation. It was controversy that won the battle of the Protestant Reformation.

“If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had any Reformation at all. For the sake of peace, we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin, and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling! There are times when controversy is *not only a duty but a benefit*. Give me the mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and we are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season, but it is soon over and it clears the air. It is a plain Scriptural duty to ‘contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.’

“The Apostle Paul was the most devisive and controversial character portrayed in the entire book of Acts, and because of it, he was beaten with rods, stoned and left as dead, chained and left in a dungeon, dragged before magistrates, barely escaped assassination, and so pronounced itself in him that it came to a point when the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica declared—“These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.’

“God pity those pastors and Christian leaders whose main objective is the growth of their organizations and whose main concern lest their ‘boats’ be rocked. *They may escape involvement in controversy, but they will not escape the Judgment Seat of Christ.*”

The Apostle Paul Gives Six Names to Members of the Body of Christ

SAINTS for their holiness

STEWARDS for their responsibility

BELIEVERS for their faith

AMBASSADORS for their authority

BRETHREN for their love

SOLDIERS for their courage

The following testimonial was written by our dear Brother Thomas Freeman. Brother Tom is a former Baptist who came to see the riches of God's grace several years ago. He now attends the *First Grace Gospel Church* in Ashtabula, Ohio where he serves as a Bible Teacher. As you will see, Paul's gospel has truly enriched his life. —Ed.

The Gospel for Today's Age of Grace According to Paul

Christ's Apostle to the Gentiles

By Thomas J. Freeman

The desire to write this article comes from my experiences in searching for God's will in my life. Why it took me so long to clearly see the dispensational change Paul's simple but profound message presented, I am not sure. Christ's message to Israel (the gospel of the circumcision) is so often mixed together with Christ's message through Paul for the world today (the gospel of the uncircumcision). Fortunately the Holy Spirit used a number of situations to keep me moving toward God's goal for my life.

The Scriptures state in Romans 8:28:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

Notice it doesn't say to those who love God enough. The Holy Spirit used several men to bring me to being an ardent dispensationalist. One was Dr. C. I. Scofield and his notes in the *Scofield Study Bible*. Another was a tract, placed in my hand by a caring person, which in turn led me to the *Berean Bible Society* and Pastor Stam. The Holy Spirit used his books to open my eyes to the mystery and the “Word rightly divided.” Through a man I met at work, I learned about the

First Grace Gospel Church of Ash-tabula, Ohio and Pastor Adams. Through Pastor Adams and his careful exposition of God's Word, my mind and heart were truly united in the “grace” message.

There is a poem I like so well, written by Martin Luther. “Feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. I'll rest upon the Word of God, none else is worth believing.” Resting in His Word rightly divided is the only way. The words “rightly divided” comes from II Timothy 2:15 and is a translation of the Greek word “orthotomeo,” pronounced or-thot-om-eh'-o which means to make a straight cut, to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message). As you read the rest of this article I trust you will come to realize the importance of understanding complete dispensational teaching.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

“But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter (for He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision” (Gal. 2:7-9).

Paul was recognized by the twelve apostles as God’s man to carry this new message of grace to the Gentiles. Clearly two different gospels are mentioned. Paul in Galatians 1:11 and 12 tells us how he received his gospel.

“But I certify you brethren that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11,12).

It has been said by some that Paul’s gospel was the same as Peter’s. Others claim that Peter was out of God’s will, narrow minded, and because of his refusal to go to the Gentiles, God had to raise up the Apostle Paul. I take exception to these views. For Galatians 2:8 tells us something else.

“For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.”

There are several more reasons.

1. If it were the same there would have been no need for a special revelation.

2. Paul speaks of the gospel he preached as “my gospel” in Romans 16:25, 2:16.

3. Those who would find fault with Peter’s or Paul’s work are really finding fault with Christ’s work, for it is He who is working through

both men as the Scripture states in Galatians 2:8.

4. The “my gospel” Paul spoke of is referred to as being kept secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7,8; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26). The gospel Peter spoke of is referred to as being known since the world began (Matt. 25:34; Luke 1:67-70; Acts 3:21,24).

Indeed, Israel from Jacob on has been looking for their Messiah, who was to come and set up their kingdom as the most favored nation. When as a nation they accept their Messiah, God will have all people come through Israel. We, of course, know that Israel rejected Christ

and they were then set aside until the dispensation of Grace, for which Paul was called to be its apostle, has run its course. Notice Paul’s words are spoken of as *commandments*, which is not a take it or leave it word.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him ac-

knowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37).

When I was in the service, we learned a principle that is crucial to being a good soldier in the military or in God’s work. That principle is this: You obey the last lawful order given by the one in charge. I know that in past dispensations other orders were given, which were valid at the time given, but by examining the Scriptures of past dispensations, one can see major differences in the requirements that are in addition to faith.

There are many people who believe that the Bible words printed

“...by examining the Scriptures of past dispensations, one can see major differences in the requirements that are in addition to faith.”

in red are the most important for they were spoken by Christ. They are the words of Christ and very important indeed, as all God's Word is, which we are to study. But they were especially important to the Jewish people to whom they were written regarding the coming kingdom. When we, who are of the dispensation of Grace, study the Gospels, we must interpret them in light of the epistles written by Paul. They are Christ's *final* marching orders for the Church today. They have the correct interpretation for the day we live in. Yes, we can take our stand and rest assured. We have the correct interpretation for today when we follow Christ's words given through Paul.

In Ephesians 1:3 the Word tells us that we are looking for a heavenly home, not an earthly kingdom.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20).

Yes, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have God's Word for all people to study, but they are written to the people of the kingdom dispensation. We know Christ was addressing those for whom the kingdom was coming to earth. How? Because the Bible tells us so.

Matthew 4:17 says:

“From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In Matthew 3:2, John the Baptist speaks of the coming kingdom. In Matthew 10:5-7, we see Jesus instructing the twelve apostles regarding the coming kingdom.

Christ is still speaking to us today with the words of salvation, love, encouragement, and how to live a life pleasing to Him. Yes, He is speaking to us today throughout His Word, but again we must use the epistles written by the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, for a proper application today. It is not a matter if we like them or not.

Now grace, faith and obedience have always been in vogue, for apart from God's grace no man deserves to be saved. Without faith in God's plan for that day, no man would have been saved, for rituals alone never saved anyone. When God's plan calls for circumcision, the building of an ark, and baptism, the man of faith will obey. However, when God speaks in His Word and tells us it is by faith alone, the man of faith will follow His commands. It is only by God's grace, in any dispensation, that sinful man can be saved, for we do not deserve God's gracious offer. In all dispensations God has wanted His people's obedience. In past ages, He has required it to receive His blessings. Today God wants our loving obedience because He has already blessed us. One example before we move on.

In Matthew 6:15:

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

In Ephesians 4:32 we find Christ's words for us today.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.”

Notice in the gospel of the kingdom forgiveness is required to be forgiven, while in the epistles penned by the Apostle Paul we are already forgiven and already blessed. Therefore, out of love and gratitude, I want

to please the One who bled, died and rose again, paying completely and forever for all my sins. Yes, thank God, past, present and future sins are covered by the sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ (Look up Rom. 4:15,16, 3:23,24; Gal. 3:13; Col. 1:21,22, 2:13). These are just a few of the verses that tell us of the wonderful and complete salvation we have in Christ Jesus.

In Ephesians 2:8 and 9 we find Christ's commands written for us today.

“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.”

In I Corinthians 15:1-4 we find Paul spelling out for us, the gospel (the good news) for today.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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.”

This is how we are saved today. It is by faith alone in what Christ has done for us according to the Scriptures. Anything you would add to God's plan is a false gospel. God has chosen to place our *complete* salvation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Anything we would add is an affront to God's Son, for we are saying that He is not worthy of the great honor God has placed in Him. And we are really saying that we know better than God Himself.

When referring to the gospel he preached, Paul speaks of it as my gospel. That's what Romans 16:25 and 26 tells us:

“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 [Greek word *nun* speaks of present time] is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets [the word ‘prophets’ as used here is an adjective so a clearer rendition would read by the prophetic Scriptures] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”

Do you want to be “established?” The Scripture tells us it is by following Christ, according to the gospel presented in Paul's epistles.

“God has chosen to place our *complete* salvation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus.”

In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul speaks about another gospel and says of any who would add to or change the gospel that was given to him by revelation: “let him be accursed.” The matter is so serious he repeats it again in verse 9. One other matter needs to be clarified before we discuss these verses. In the Greek text, there are two different words used for “another;” which have different shades of meaning. The Greek word “heteros” is used which means another of a different sort, and the Greek word “allos” which means another of the same sort.

Now let's read Galatians 1:6-9:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another [another of a different sort] gospel,

"Which is not another [another of the same sort]; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."


It is extremely important that we are not altering God's plan given to Paul and trusting in some work, such as water baptism, joining the church, keeping the law, some particular part of the law, or going forward in a church service.

See Colossians 2:10:

"And ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and powers."

And also Romans 11:6:

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

As we stated earlier from Ephesians 2:8 and 9, it is "by faith and not by works." Are you trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ? Trusting in His death, burial and resurrection alone for your salvation and the total payment for all your past and present sins? If you are not familiar with dispensational teaching and the revelation of the mystery given to Paul, you may well have other questions. 

Copies of this article are available in booklet form for \$2.00 each, postage paid. Simply write to Pastor David Adams at the *First Grace Gospel Church*, 5730 Adams Avenue, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004.

Question Box

"How could it be that the 'little flock' (the remnant in Israel), was the New Covenant [Testament] Church when the New Covenant wasn't established with them during that time? Isn't the New Covenant established with the house of Israel and the house of Judah during the 'Kingdom Age?'"

The New Testament was originally promised to the nation Israel. While the "little flock" was *heir* to the promise prior to Calvary, these kingdom saints did not *taste* the blessings of the New Covenant until the day of Pentecost. With the cutting off of the chosen nation shortly after Pentecost, it is correct to say that the fulfillment of the promise will not be fully realized until the coming kingdom. Israel in the truest sense of the title is the *New Testament Church*, according to the Scriptures (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-32; Luke 22:19,20; Acts 2:1-47).

—Pastor Sadler

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I Corinthians

By C. R. Stam

Like the Church today, the Corinthian believers were superficial in their perception of the truth, and unbelievably permissive in their moral conduct. Also, as a congregation they despised Paul's apostolic authority. Thus, the intent of this epistle was to correct the unruly conduct of these saints.



II Corinthians

By C. R. Stam

It is interesting indeed to note how many profound doctrines are discussed in *II Corinthians*, in contrast to all the rebukes, corrections, instructions, etc., found in *I Corinthians*. Two of the greatest of these are, perhaps, the New Covenant and the doctrine of reconciliation. This companion volume is a must read!

A commentary on a specific subject, in this case I & II Corinthians, is always preferable to a commentary on the whole Bible, which is usually very limited in its treatment of most passages due to the enormity of the task set before the authors.

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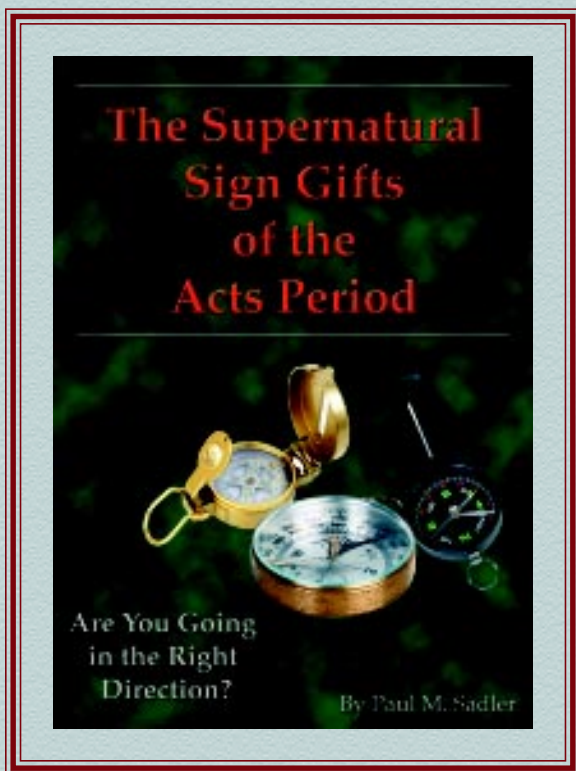
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Timothy, Be Strong in Christ Jesus!

By Kevin T. Heyle

I can relate to Timothy and Paul's admonitions and encouragements not to please men but to be approved of the Lord. Timothy was given great responsibility as Paul thought that he possessed the qualities needed to meet the task. He had to be a godly man. His mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek (Acts 16:1,3). Not much is known about his father, but his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, were godly women (II Tim. 1:5). They had trained him in the ways of the Lord and through their faithfulness, Timothy became a godly man. Paul took him under his wing and further instructed him in the things of the Lord.

While traveling with Paul through Macedonia persecution struck and Paul was forced out of Thessalonica, but Timothy, along with Silas, stayed and ministered to the faithful there (Acts 17:13-14). Later they rejoined Paul and moved on to other areas with him. Through this time of training, Timothy became a very promising young leader and more responsibility was given him. To the Philippians Paul said of Timothy: "...you know his proven character; that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel" (See Phil. 2:19-22 cf. I Cor. 16:10-11).

The two epistles that Paul wrote to Timothy reveal the kind of man he was, and the instructions given in them are as relevant today as then. Anyone who is involved in ministry should take them to heart. The standard is high and the call is demanding but the benefits are

beyond belief, as they include the *"promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come"* (See I Tim. 4:6,8). Timothy was to be an example in his conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. This was to be achieved through the reading of Scripture, studying the doctrines found therein, and application of what had been learned.

Not only was Timothy to study the Word, but he was also to guard the doctrines committed to him by the Apostle Paul, not allowing false teachings to corrupt them (I Tim. 6:20). In II Timothy 1:13-14, Paul instructed him to *"hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."* Paul instructed him to pass this message on to others. *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (II Tim. 2:2).

Few truly understand the message Paul gave to Timothy, even fewer have a heartfelt desire to see that it is passed on. Paul's words to Timothy really speak to me. I feel as though I am like Timothy, so undeserving and unqualified to take this enormous responsibility. The challenge is great, the task is large, but the power of God surpasses it all. It is through His power that the work that is before us will be accomplished.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOMEGOING: Our dear brother Orville Smallwood was promoted to glory on December 11, 2000 after a long battle with cancer. In addition to being a dedicated co-laborer, Orville never wavered in his love for the truth. His daughter, Ann, dropped us this touching note regarding her beloved father: "During his lifetime he was a staunch supporter of the Grace Message and the *Berean Bible Society*. He was once offered the pastorate of a local Baptist Church but upon explaining his position on water baptism, he naturally was not allowed to become their pastor. He never regretted taking that stand and has always remained true to the Grace message." As we know, "to be with Christ is far better," but it is our prayer that God will comfort the family with the full assurance of our blessed hope in Christ Jesus.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Many of the lighthouse pictures that appear on the front cover of the *Searchlight* were taken by Betty France, as is the case with this issue. Betty is a freelance photographer who has traveled the world to capture some of the most unique sights you will ever see on film. If you would like to visit her website, she can be reached at <www.mwt.net/~bbfrance/>.

BEREAN BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE: If you are planning your summer itinerary, the *Berean Bible Fellowship Conference* is scheduled to be held at the *Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center*, Cedar Lake, Indiana on June 16-21, 2001. The theme this year is: *SOUND IN THE FAITH*. For reservations, please contact the *Cedar Lake Conference Center* (219) 374-5941. For brochures and additional information, please contact: Pastor Ivan Burgener (618) 344-6741. More next month!

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD'S WORK: If you have a burden to see others reached for the grace of God after your homegoing, it is important to plan ahead. The gifts BBS has received from estates over the years have helped us to replenish our supply of *Things That Differ* and/or place books that were out of print back into print. Should you be planning to prepare your "Will" in the near future, prayerfully consider including the *Berean Bible Society*. This is one way to ensure that your legacy will be used to the glory of God. We should add that you might want to consider naming a neutral Executor, such as your attorney or personal banker, to guarantee that your wishes are honored.

We have often marveled at how innovative the saints can be when it comes to the Lord's work. One dear brother, who's been in the insurance business most of his life, wrote me to say, "Brother Sadler, tell the brethren that they can honor the Lord by simply naming the *Berean Bible Society* as the beneficiary of their life insurance policy." I rest my case!!

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life by His death.”*

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