

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2007



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

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

Every so often we like to remind our readers about the importance of planning ahead. While we aren't to dwell on the future, it is important to have our *house in order* in the event the Lord should call us home unexpectedly. If your wishes are not outlined in a "will" your loved ones may well be left with the nightmare of dealing with the legal ramifications in court. With this in mind, if you are planning to have a *will* drawn up soon, may we encourage you to ask the Lord if He would have you remember His work here at the *Berean Bible Society*.

There have been two times in the history of BBS that an estate was used of the Lord, at the eleventh hour, to keep our doors open. The proceeds from *wills* also play a key role every year to help us replenish our funds, which are often flashing S.O.S. due to so many monthly withdrawals to keep our literature in print, which includes publishing and mailing out the *Berean Searchlight*. We are very grateful to those who, in addition to their regular giving, have included BBS in their estate planning. Your foresight will assist us in making known the riches of His grace long after your homegoing.

A good example is our dear Brother Maurie Reynolds, who for many years served on our BBS Board of Directors. Before Maurie departed to be with Christ, he sold two modest properties in northern Wisconsin on Land Contracts and set things in motion that the mortgages would be paid to BBS. Because of Brother Reynolds' foresight, every month, like clockwork, we receive two gifts in the form of mortgage payments. This is a gift that keeps on giving!

We also want to pass along a tidbit of news that some will find of interest. A new law passed in 2006 called the *IRA Charitable Rollover* that allows taxpayers 70½ years and older to give as much as \$100,000 from their IRA directly to qualified charities without triggering federal income taxes. Taxpayers can get an exclusion from gross income for otherwise taxable distributions, and this money counts toward the taxpayer's required minimum distributions for that year. This new option is available only for distributions through the end of 2007, so the window for this opportunity will only be open for a short time.

We thank the Lord for your fellowship in the gospel and pray without ceasing that God will continue to increase your knowledge of His Word, rightly divided. May God's very best be yours as we labor together to make known Paul's gospel.

Yours because of Calvary,
Paul M. Sadler, President



Accepted in the Beloved

By Pastor John McKay

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

Alfred the Great was made king of an ancient division of England known as Wessex. Early in his reign he suffered devastating losses at the hands of the Danes. His men scattered and he was reduced to hiding in the cottage of a simple herdsman. Dressed as a peasant, Alfred did chores for the family, and once was scolded for letting the bread burn. Although the humble family did not know who they were scolding, Alfred displayed patience and humility. After he regathered his forces and went on to victory over the Danes, he returned—we are told—to thank and repay the herdsman for the kindnesses shown to him. Needless to say, he was fully received and treated as their King.

In a much more significant way, the Lord Jesus Christ “came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” The princes of this world did not know the hidden wisdom of God, “for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” He was “despised and rejected of men,” and still is by this present world-system. Although the Lord Jesus is now in glory, the world continues to reject Him. The principle that we are being rejected because He is being rejected is found in John 15:20.

Ephesians 1:6 brilliantly shines peace, patience, and comfort unto us. The Heavenly Father “hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” When our faith is in the Son of God and His death for our sin, grace makes us immediately acceptable to God because of the infinite merit of Christ, and His righteousness to us by that faith! If we are rejected now, at least one day, we shall be manifested as children of God.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 1:11-18

By Paul M. Sadler

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” —Phil. 1:11,12

As we have seen, it was Paul's desire that the Philippians be blameless and without offense until the day of Christ. But he goes on to add, “being filled with the “fruits [i.e. fruit singular] of righteousness.” Commentators are about evenly divided as to whether the apostle is speaking of the fruit of Christ's righteousness, which is received by faith, or “fruit” in relation to what the believer should be because he is right with God. Both interpretations compliment the passage, but we have chosen the latter for several reasons.

First, unlike Romans where Paul deals extensively with the doctrine of justification, in Philippians the apostle is addressing the *practical side* of our Christian life. Second, as Paul closes his prayer in this section he does so by praying that their love might abound

more and more *experientially*; therefore, it seems highly improbable that he would revert to their position in Christ in verse 11. Third, every time this phraseology, “the fruit of righteousness” is used in the Scriptures it speaks of the believer's *conduct* (Heb. 12:11; James 3:18, etc.).

Living a righteous life is an *outward* expression of the imputed righteousness we have in Christ. As it has been correctly said, “Salvation is the grace-filled life that bears the fruit of righteousness.” The child of God is always to take the moral high ground. For example, the issue for the believer isn't, is it politically correct, but is it *right*. It is this type of lifestyle that is well pleasing to God and will ultimately be to the praise of His glory at that day.

THE STATE OF THE GOSPEL

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have

fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil. 1:12).

Paul now turns to the subject of the epistle, namely, the state of the gospel at Rome where he was imprisoned. There is probably no other subject that brings more joy to the believer than the gospel. The word itself is music to our ears. What lofty victories have been won through the centuries as the good news of Christ and Him crucified made inroads into the affairs of men. But who will deny that the measure of our resolve to win lost souls to Christ is not always what it should be, especially when we consider Paul, who turned the world upside down, or should we say right side up. More often than not, we have a defeatist attitude when it comes to evangelism.

A lesson from ancient history may give us some help in this regard. You will recall when Daniel unfolded the progressive revelation regarding the “times of the Gentiles,” he likened the “third world empire” to a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings. If you picture a leopard in your mind’s eye for a moment, you will probably envision the swiftness of a large cat sweeping across the plain in pursuit of its prey. Put four wings on his back and he is portrayed as striking with lightning speed. In accordance with the foreknowledge of God, this prophecy was merely history written in advance!

As history bears out, this is a remarkably accurate description of Alexander the Great, who was the mastermind behind the Grecian Empire. It is said that he

would have his armies march for days on end simply to surprise the enemy. Interestingly, as Alexander was marching on Persia, it looked as though the great empire was about to crumble. However, there was a critical moment which nearly resulted in disaster. The army had taken spoils of silver, gold, and other treasures in such quantities that the soldiers were literally weighed down with them. Alexander gathered all the treasures together in one great pile and set them on fire. The soldiers were furious, but it was not long before they realized the wisdom of their leader. It was as if wings had been given to them—they marched with lightning speed to their destination. The campaign proceeded to victory.¹



Brethren, if we expect to have *victory* in our proclamation of the gospel, we must first relieve ourselves of the things of this world. They will weigh us down, too. A good soldier of Jesus Christ must never entangle “himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (II Tim. 2:4). Armed with this truth, we must also follow Paul, who is the divine example today of how to properly evangelize the lost to Christ.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places” (Phil. 1:12,13).

The saints at Philippi and the Apostle Paul had a very close relationship in Christ. When they learned he had been imprisoned, they were naturally concerned for his well-being. Upon his arrival at Rome, Epaphroditus shared with the apostle that the assembly was devastated by the news of his incarceration, which prompted him to respond to their concern for him.

You see, Paul was a firm believer in the *providence of God*. Providence is “God’s faithful and effective care and guidance of everything which He has made.” Things simply don’t happen by chance for the believer, God is working through us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13 cf. II Tim. 1:9). He has a plan and purpose for our lives and ministries. While this runs contrary to *self*, which desires to be in control of every situation, the apostle’s response to such unsound reasoning was: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20).

The providence of God is clearly seen in both the early and latter ministries of the apostle as he sought to evangelize the lost to Christ. As we noted earlier in our

study, on Paul’s second apostolic journey, Paul and Silas attempted to advance the gospel eastward into Asia, but were *forbidden* by the Holy Spirit. As they moved westward to Mysia, they tried to go north to Bithynia, but again were *prohibited* by the Spirit. Finally, after arriving at Troas, the apostle received the vision of a man praying: “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” There was no question in Paul’s mind that this was the Lord’s leading, for Luke records:

“Immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts 16:6-12).

God indeed was pointing the way, for the farther west the gospel of the grace of God spread, the warmer its reception. Simply because we are living in the administration of Grace does not mean that God is out of touch with His creation or the Church, the Body of Christ. Sadly, many in the Church today have lost sight of the fact that God is still sovereign! (I Tim. 1:17 cf. 6:15,16).

“Rome could bind the apostle, but it could not bind the Word of God!”

Years later, it must have seemed as though everything was collapsing around the apostle when he was unjustly jailed in Caesarea. He suffered through one miscarriage of justice after another

before appealing to Caesar, which narrowly spared his life. Then, on the way to Rome, he endured a catastrophic shipwreck that landed him on a pagan island where he was bitten by a venomous snake. Upon arriving at his destination, he faced a number of false charges, each of which carried serious consequences. But Paul realized that all these things were according to God's plan and purpose. Thus, the apostle longed to calm the fears of those at Philippi when he wrote:

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil. 1:12).

Here we are given some insight into Paul's manner of life, specifically in regard to his *attitude* in times of adversity. How would you have responded if placed in a similar set of circumstances? There is usually one of two responses at such times: “Lord, after all these years of faithful service, why have you forsaken me? Why me? It's just not fair!” Or, “What is God teaching me through these distressing circumstances? How can I glorify Him?” Paul's approach was the latter. He looked upon times of adversity as opportunities to share the gospel. In other words, he had a *new audience* that he would not have had otherwise.

What appeared to be setbacks, humanly speaking, *providentially* resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. The term “furtherance” has the idea to “cut beforehand” in the original language. We might liken it to the advance team who clears the way of trees



over a mountain pass so a road can be built. The things that had happened to the apostle gave him access to Rome's seat of power. It was a groundbreaking effort that prepared the way for others to follow. Think of it, Paul had admittance to Caesar's household, at *Rome's expense!* Amazing!

As a result, Paul adds that his “bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places.” The “palace” here is the Greek *praitorion*, which in this context is not merely a reference to a place (Caesar's court), but also to the imperial guard. This was an elite group of soldiers who were highly trained to protect the royal household. They were the cream of the crop! The Secret Service Agents who protect the President of the United States would be comparable to this select unit.

Julius, the centurion who escorted the apostle to Rome, was a member of this special force called Augustus' Band (Acts 27:1). Although Paul was the prisoner, Julius and the others of this inner-circle were a captive audience as they heard again and again how

Christ had died for their sins. At first they most likely concluded that Paul was mad. But as they beheld the sincerity of his love for lost souls, and the passion with which he proclaimed the Cross, the gospel gradually chipped away at their stony hearts of flesh. The result, *victory!* A number of this elite unit, along with others of Caesar's household, came to a knowledge of the truth and were wonderfully saved (Acts 27:1,3,43; 28:16 cf. Phil. 1:13; 4:22).

Rome could bind the apostle, but it could not bind the Word of God! Its greatest hindrance is often the child of God who is reluctant to speak due to the *fear* of men. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

FRIENDLY FIRE

"And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. 1:14-16).

The apostle happily reported that *many* at Rome were zealously evangelizing the lost to Christ, but that there were *some* who had ulterior motives for preaching the gospel. As these dear saints beheld Paul staring into the face of death, while maintaining a clear

Christian testimony, they were emboldened by his courageous stand. Persecution is often the torch that sets souls on fire for the things of the Lord. In 1934 when Pastor Stam's older brother, John, and his wife Betty, suffered martyrdom at the hands of the communist Chinese, hundreds of couples felt compelled to train for the mission field. In John and Betty's absence, they took up the torch and carried the gospel around the world. As it has been said, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

While there were those at Rome who highly esteemed Paul's apostleship and message, others were *envious* of his fruitful ministry. Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by observing the advantage or prosperity of others.² You will recall the heartache this sin caused when Joseph's brethren became envious of him. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons because he was the son of his old age. But Jacob's partiality in no way justified the sin of his sons. Furthermore, it was obvious that a special blessing had been conferred upon Joseph, which should have been received with thanksgiving by the other family members. Instead they resented him.

The path of envy is always littered with lies, even if it's only lying to one's self—"I'm more deserving." Those who entangle themselves in this web of deception, as Joseph's brethren did, desire the spotlight to shine on them. After they cast Joseph into a pit, they decided among themselves to sell him to the Ishmaelites. But, to their surprise, when they

returned to the pit, Joseph was gone. Interestingly, even though it was the Midianite merchantmen who actually sold Joseph into Egypt, God held Joseph's brethren *accountable* for the evil deed (Gen. 37:28,36 cf. Acts 7:9). Joseph adds, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). Here again we see an example of the providence of God in action.

"Grace leaves room for
differences, without
compromising the faith."

The Apostle Paul experienced a similar attack from an unlikely source. Some of the brethren who should have been standing in defense of Paul's ministry became envious of him and sought to add affliction to his bonds. This had to be a bitter pill to swallow. We expect the enemies of the Cross to oppose us; it's part of the territory. When the alarm reverberates through the Church in the day of battle, we stand side by side and foot to foot wielding the sword of the Spirit against these workers of iniquity. As we fight the good fight of the faith, whenever Satan brings railing accusations against us for the preaching of the gospel, we endure it for the cause of Christ. But when those of the household of faith, *brethren*, who should be upholding us, slander us and seek to destroy and uproot,

it is like an arrow through the heart. The envious man is reminiscent of the archer who stands in the shadows and shoots his arrows from afar. You can hear the arrow coming, you can feel it pierce through your soul, but the *carnal* one who shot it is nowhere to be found. There's a word for those who exhibit this type of behavior—cowards!

As we proceed, Paul shows us how to achieve victory in spite of opposition. First, we must distinguish between taking a stand against unsound teaching, and tolerance with those whose motives are not always what they should be. For example, when the Judaizers sought to corrupt the gospel at Galatia, the apostle rolled out the 16-inch guns:

"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" (Gal. 1:8).

Since the gospel Paul preached was the one and only way of salvation, he pronounces anathema upon anyone who states otherwise. The word "accursed," Greek *anathema*, also appears in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire...Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be accursed [Gr. *anathema*] thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed [Gr. *anathema*] thing" (Deut. 7:25,26). In the eyes of the Lord, idols of gold and silver were an accursed thing—they brought the disfavor of God. Thus, Israel was to have

nothing to do with them. In like manner, those who corrupt the gospel that Paul taught are also said to be accursed; that is, they are to be *avoided*.

Second, on the other side of the coin, Paul exercised a spirit of *tolerance* with those whose motives were questionable at times, for he knew the Lord would judge them at that day. This didn't mean he agreed with their actions or their flawed philosophy that the end justifies the means. But he could say with a clear conscience, "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18).

This is a lesson we need to learn today in the Church. Paul didn't try to conform everyone into his image or his way of doing things. Rather he desired, as we should, that others be conformed to the image of Christ. The brethren

sometimes become so rigid trying to mold others into their way of thinking that they frustrate the grace of God. Grace leaves room for differences, without compromising the faith. It more than compensates for our failures and shortcomings. Grace gives liberty in Christ.

What about you, dear friend, have you experienced the victory of the gospel in your life? If not, remember and remember well the apostle's words, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. *Encyclopedia of 7000 Illustrations*, Assurance Publishers, Paul Lee Tan, pg. 836.
2. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, World Bible Publishers, W.E. Vine, Vol. 2, pg. 37.

Spring Bible Conference

Dates: March 23-25, 2007

Location: *Grace Bible Fellowship of Nokomis*
2600 N. Tamiami Trail
Nokomis, Florida

Speaker: Pastor Ricky Kurth
Berean Bible Society
Germantown, WI

This conference is also your opportunity to meet and fellowship with noted Grace writer Robert Brock!

For more information, please contact:

Pastor Whitey Meyers at 941-496-8051
or e-mail: Elvnmyers@aol.com



Question Box

“As I understand Christ’s earthly ministry to be to the Jew only, I wonder what Matthew 4:24 means. Did Jesus deal with Gentiles?”

“And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people...and He healed them” (Matt. 4:24).

In Matthew 15:21-28 we read of the Lord’s reluctance to heal a Gentile. If He was consistent about this throughout His ministry, then we have to conclude that the Syrians whom the Lord healed were Syrian *Jews*. On the surface it seems strange that there might be Jews living in the land of this ancient enemy of Israel. However, it should not come as a total surprise, for several reasons.

First, Jacob spent many years there (Hosea 12:12), and doubtless had an influence among his neighbors. Then Naaman, the Syrian who was healed of leprosy, went back to Syria to live (II Kings 5), vowing to worship the God of Israel in his homeland (v. 17). Naaman was “*captain of the host of the king of Syria*” (v. 1), and surely the testimony of this notable public figure would be a powerful witness among his countrymen. Leprosy was *incurable*, and so when Naaman returned from Israel cleansed, surely many Syrians became Jews (cf. Esther 8:17).

Next, we know that Syria eventually became part of the great Assyrian Empire, who later “*carried Israel away into Assyria*” (II Kings 17:5,6). And so by the time of the Lord’s earthly ministry, the Syrians of Matthew 4:24 might have included part of the remnant of the Assyrian captivity of the northern ten tribes of Israel.

Finally, “the head of Syria is *Damascus*” (Isa. 7:8), and we can prove from Scripture that there were Jews in Damascus because there were *synagogues* in Damascus (Acts 9:2). If there were synagogues in the influential capital city of the nation, one would think that there were also Jews and synagogues throughout Syria. It could be argued that these synagogues mentioned in Acts 9 sprang up because of the healing of the Syrians in Matthew 4:24, but they would have had to have sprung up in only a couple of years. In light of the earlier influences of Israel on Syria which we have cited, it seems more natural to believe that there were Jews in Syria prior to Matthew 4:24, and that it was Syrian Jews whom the Lord healed.

—Pastor Kurth

The following is the latest installment in our series of articles drawn from Pastor Stam's book, *Our Great Commission, What Is It?* Since this book never appeared as a series in the *Searchlight*, many of even our long-time readers may not be familiar with these selections.

What This Commission Does and Does Not Say

By C. R. Stam

OUR
GREAT
COMMISSION



LUKE 24:45-48; ACTS 1:8 Needed Light and Power

There are at least four reasons why we should consider the records of Luke and the Acts together as we determine what the commission to the eleven says.

1. Both books were penned by Luke, thus naturally have much in common.

2. Both relate how *before His ascension* our Lord equipped the eleven in a special way for the ministry they were to undertake.

3. Both contain the command to “tarry” or “wait” at Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit’s coming to endue them with power.

4. Both record the command to *begin* their ministry at Jerusalem.

In Luke 24:45 the Lord’s commission is introduced with these words:

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.”

No question need be raised as to *which* Scriptures are referred to here, for the preceding verse identifies them as “*the law of Moses, and...the prophets, and...the Psalms...*” Thus, the Hebrew Scriptures.

Does this mean, then, that these eleven men now understood every detail of every prophetic passage, with no questions left unanswered? Surely not. It means rather that they now had an intelligent understanding of God’s revealed *plan and purpose* as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. This statement in Verse 45 doubtless bears the same sense as if we should say that someone had come to understand the mystery. By such a statement we would not mean that that person now understood *every detail* of this great body of truth, but rather that he now had an intelligent understanding of God’s secret, eternal *purpose*, the *plan* which had been “hid from ages and from

generations” until revealed by the glorified Lord to and through Paul.

In the context of the Acts record we find a fact quite as arresting, and one that is generally overlooked in connection with the commission to the eleven. In Chapter 1, Verse 3, we learn that during the period between our Lord’s resurrection and His ascension He spent *forty days* with them, “*speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*”

Think of it! A forty-day seminar, conducted by the Master Teacher, the risen Lord Himself! Forty days of teaching, *with the spiritual eyes of His students already supernaturally opened to understand the Scriptures!*

What then shall be said of the many who have charged these apostles, so thoroughly enlightened by the Lord Himself, with being ignorant of God’s plan, prejudiced against the Gentiles, etc.? Surely they, not the apostles, are the ones who are ignorant of God’s plan.

It has often been charged that the apostles’ question of Acts 1:6 was due to ignorance and unbelief. Again, however, it is not the eleven but their critics against whom this charge should be levelled. Consistently the Old Testament Scriptures bear witness to “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should *follow*” (I Pet. 1:11). Is it strange, then, that after our Lord’s sufferings were over and He had been raised from the dead, the eleven should ask: “*Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*” Of

course not. They were correct in now expecting the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, with Christ on the throne. Clearly understanding the prophetic program, they had no question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Their only question was whether this would take place “at this time.”

Our Lord’s reply: “It is not for you to know,” however, indicates that there was one great body of truth they did *not* understand, or even know about: “*the mystery.*” God’s secret purpose concerning this parenthetical interruption of the prophetic program was not to be revealed until Israel had rejected the ascended Christ and God had graciously raised up that *other* apostle, Paul.

Thus the eleven clearly understood the prophetic program, under which they were to labor, but the revelation of God’s secret, eternal purpose regarding the Body of Christ, the Church of this present dispensation, was reserved for the Apostle Paul, whom God used to usher in “the dispensation of the mystery” (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:2,3; Col. 1:25,26).⁵

All this demonstrates clearly the close connection between the commission to the eleven and God’s *prophetic program* as outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moreover, as a clear understanding of the prophetic program was essential to the fulfillment of *their* God-given ministry, so a clear understanding of “the mystery” is essential to the fulfillment of *our* God-given ministry. Hence Paul’s fervent prayers that “the eyes



of our understanding” might be opened to comprehend this great body of truth (Eph. 1:15-22; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9; 2:1-3).

In both Luke and the Acts we also have our Lord’s command to the eleven to wait at Jerusalem until they had been baptized with the Holy Ghost. These passages have been erroneously interpreted to mean that the apostles were to *pray* for the Holy Spirit’s coming. Many a modern “tarrying” meeting has been patterned after this false notion.

The apostles were not told to *pray* for the Holy Spirit’s coming, but to *wait for the fulfillment of God’s promise to send the Spirit*. The precise wording is as follows:

Luke 24:49: “And behold, I send *the promise* of My Father upon you: but *tarry ye* in the city of Jerusalem, until *ye be endued with power from on high.*”

Acts 1:4,5: “[He] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but *wait for the promise of the Father* which, saith He, ye have heard of Me.

“For John truly baptized with water, but *ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*”

And thus it was that “*when the day of Pentecost was fully come,*”

the apostles and disciples were “*all filled with the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:1,4).

This baptism with the Spirit was, as we have seen from the above Scriptures, for *power*, supernatural power to work mighty miracles in confirmation of Christ’s resurrection and to live lives that were completely under the Spirit’s control (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37).⁶

One more detail—an important one—that is found alike in the records of Luke and the Acts: They were to begin their ministry at Jerusalem. Luke’s record simply says:

“...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

In the Acts record we have the geographical *order* in which their commission was to be carried out, and again Jerusalem is first:

“...ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Well-meaning but confused Bible teachers who insist that the so-called “great commission” is for our obedience, often interpret

“Jerusalem” here to be any place *but* Jerusalem. Only recently the author heard a Chicago pastor say: “*Your* Jerusalem is Chicago. You must witness for Christ here first. Then your Judaea is Illinois, your Samaria the USA and your ‘uttermost part’ the foreign field. You *must* be a missionary at home before you can be used in foreign lands.”

We do not deny that it is true that if a man is not a witness for Christ at home, he is certainly not ready for a ministry in a foreign land. *But this is not what our Lord meant in His commission to the eleven.* He clearly had in mind something very different from witnessing first at home.

“If the commission to the eleven were for our obedience...we would have to begin at Jerusalem....”

He knew, and had taught the apostles, that according to all covenant and prophecy the nations were to be blessed *through redeemed Israel*, with Himself reigning as King *in Jerusalem*, the capital city. From here, and under these circumstances, the blessing would flow to the ends of the earth (Gen. 22:17,18; Isa. 2:1-4; 35:10; 60:1-3; 62:1-3; Jer. 23:5-8).

How, then, could the apostles and their co-workers make disciples of all nations if *the* nation,

God’s chosen nation, did not first repent and turn to Christ? How could the promised blessing flow from Jerusalem to all nations if Christ was not enthroned at Jerusalem? This is why the apostles were instructed to begin at Jerusalem, and to go from thence to all Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.

How perfectly this explains two little-noticed passages by Peter and by Paul! The first, by Peter, just after Pentecost:

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

“Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:25,26).

The second, by Paul to the Jews at Pisidian Antioch:

“...It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).

All this proves with the greatest clarity that God did not usher in the present dispensation of grace at the crucifixion, or the resurrection, or at Pentecost, but later through Paul—after Israel, to whom salvation was first offered, refused it. True, the passage in Acts above refers to a local incident, but what Luke here records about that incident is typical of what was taking place on a national scale.

How much more could be said about the portions of the so-called “great commission” recorded in Luke and the Acts, but the above, we hope, will suffice to prove that this commission is *not* ours, but is rather related to the prophesied reign of Christ on earth.

If the commission to the eleven were for our obedience and we were even now to begin to properly carry it out, we would have to begin at Jerusalem in an effort to win the nation Israel to Christ. And what success might we then expect? Witnesses to Christ are not even *permitted* in Israel, and the few faithful ones who are seeking to “rescue the perishing” there

must carry on an underground ministry, and operate as teachers, technicians and what not. If we openly organized a group of a few hundred missionaries to go to Jerusalem to tell the people of Israel about God’s grace in Christ, they would be denied entry.

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

5. For a detailed comparison of prophecy and the mystery see the author’s book, *Things That Differ*.
6. See the author’s book, *True Spirituality*, for a discussion of the difference between our Lord’s baptism of the disciples into the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the Spirit’s baptism of believers into Christ today.

Northern Grace Youth Camp 2007 Schedule

May 4-6.....	Spring Youth Retreat (7th-12th grade)
June 20-24.....	Young Adult Retreat
June 30-July 7	Counselor Training Week
July 1-7	First Family Camp
July 8-14	Junior Camp (3rd-5th grade)
July 15-21	Intermediate Camp (5th-7th grade)
July 22-28	Junior High Camp (7th-9th grade)
July 29-August 4.....	Senior High Camp (10th-12th grade)
August 5-11	Second Family Camp with speaker Bill Rigg
September 7-9.....	Women’s Retreat
September 21-23.....	Men’s Retreat with music group “The King’s Countrymen”
October 26-28.....	Fall Youth Retreat (7th-12th grade)



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Abounding in This Grace Also

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Many years ago, former president Richard Nixon attended church with a friend who happened to be a clergyman. When the offering plate was passed, the president whispered to his friend, “I’ve forgotten my wallet; could you loan me a bill?” Telling the story years later, his friend said, “You can be sure I gave him the *largest* bill I had in my wallet!” He knew the president would never tell a *minister*, “I don’t want to give *that* much!”

While this incident was perhaps innocent enough, over the centuries religious leaders have employed many less scrupulous tricks to get people to part with large amounts of their money. Such unprincipled ruses are dishonoring to the God that these ministers claim to represent. By contrast, our purpose in this article will be to simply set forth what God Himself has to say on the subject of giving in II Corinthians 8 and 9, the principle passage on this subject in Paul’s epistles.

“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia” (II Cor. 8:1).

Paul begins by saying, Let me tell you about the effect God’s grace has had on the Macedonian churches. But how could Paul measure the effect of God’s grace in the lives of the Macedonian saints? Did he have a “grace-meter”? Today we have meters that can measure just about everything, including the amount of microwaves that may be escaping from your oven! But there is also a grace-meter, and Paul speaks about it in Verse 2:

“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (II Cor. 8:2).

According to Paul, a believer’s “liberality” to the Lord’s work is an accurate measure of the effect of God’s grace in his or her life. And

when we notice that the Macedonians gave out of “*deep poverty*,” the result of “*a great trial of affliction*” they had endured, we realize that it is not our giving *alone* that reveals our appreciation for God’s grace, but our giving *despite our circumstances*. Many Christians plan to help the Lord’s work financially, just as soon as they are released from the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves at the present time. However, life for most of us is little more than a continuous *series* of difficult circumstances! And it is financial faithfulness to the Lord in spite of our circumstances that makes us worthy heirs of the majestic legacy found in the example of these noble Macedonians.

“For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

“Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” (II Cor. 8:3,4).

It is touching to read of how these saints *begged* Paul to allow them to give “*beyond their power*.” Usually it is *the pastor* who must beg *the people* to give, and how uncomfortable it is to hear such appeals! Mark Twain once remarked that after enduring a long offering call, he was not only unmoved to give, when the plate came around he actually *removed* some coins! How much more pleasant it was for Paul to hear the Macedonians beseech *him* to receive their gift! The difference is well illustrated in the following example.

Few among us enjoy the haggling that must be endured when we purchase an automobile. We are determined to get the price down, while the salesman is equally determined to drive the price up! How exhausting this process can be, and how taxing on the nerves! But compare this to what occurred when once we hired a friend to wallpaper a room in our home. After he finished, we tried to pay him *more* than what he asked, while he insisted on taking *less*. The haggling in which we engaged was similar to that involved in buying a car, but was so much more *pleasant!* Just so, how much more pleasant is the process when God’s people *beg* His servants to receive their offering, instead of the other way around.

It should be noted here that “*the saints*” (II Cor. 8:4) the Macedonians longed to help with their offering were the “*the poor saints*” at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-27). These were the Pentecostal saints who lacked for nothing as long as the Spirit supernaturally empowered them to pool their resources and live as one (Acts 4:31,32). However, after Israel showed that they had rejected the ministry of the Spirit when they stoned God’s Spirit-filled prophet, the kingdom program broke down in Jerusalem, and those who knew no lack soon stood in need of “*relief*” (Acts 11:27-30).

While it was right for the early Gentile believers to minister material things to the Jews who had benefited them spiritually (Rom. 15:27),

this obligation is no longer binding on us. That temporary situation created by that transitional dispensational change is long gone, along with any financial obligation on our part to meet it. Today, Paul says that when we financially support pastors and teachers we are ministering materially to those who minister to us spiritually (I Cor. 9:11).

Since Paul uses the Macedonians to exemplify sacrificial giving, perhaps the reader is wondering whether God would have believers *today* give “beyond their power”? We feel that the apostle goes on to address this question in the next verse of our text:

“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” (II Cor. 8:5).

When the Macedonians gave beyond their power to give, this was not as Paul had hoped, it was *far beyond* what he had hoped. Paul never hoped anyone would give beyond his or her power to give. He knew that to the world about them, this would appear *irresponsible*. Even today when we hear of people giving so irresponsibly, we wonder what kind of cult has deluded them to act so irrationally.

So were the Macedonians acting irresponsibly? No, it was not improvident for them to give beyond their power *at that time*. You see they, like Paul, believed the Rapture would come *in their lifetime*. Notice Paul refers *twice* to “we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord” (I Thes. 4:15,17). This was a conviction on Paul’s part that he no doubt passed on to his hearers, which would include these Macedonians.

Thus, far from being irresponsible, it was *noble* for the Macedonians to give beyond their means. Such giving expressed their faith in the truth of the imminent return of Christ. This is similar to how the Pentecostal saints sold their possessions in view of the Second Coming of Christ to establish the kingdom, a coming that was also at hand, but was interrupted by the dispensation of grace. Such giving also reminds us of how, as the conclusion of World War II drew near, many under-aged men lied about their age in order to enlist, afraid that the conflict would end before they had the opportunity to serve their country. Similarly, the Macedonians were afraid the Lord would come before they had the opportunity to give their all for Him.

However, today it is *irresponsible* to give beyond our means. Through progressive revelation, the Apostle Paul eventually learned that he would *not* live to see the Rapture. This is why he commanded Timothy that *he* should keep the charge that Paul gave him “*until the appearing of our Lord.*” By this time Paul knew that he himself might not live to guard the message of Grace to the coming of the Lord. And it is in light of this further revelation that we too must live. It has well been said that we should *live* our lives as if the Lord were coming *today*, but *plan* our lives as if He were not coming in our lifetime, and these plans would include how we give to God’s work.

How much then should we give? It is clear that in the dispensation of grace, we should give generously but sensibly, “*every man according to his ability*” (Acts 11:29), and “*as God hath prospered him*” (I Cor. 16:2). Some hold that God is not prospering men today, and it is true that the word “God” does not appear in the Greek text in I Corinthians 16:2. However we feel that this ellipsis was legitimately supplied by our King James translators, and that it *is* God who prospers us, and that we should give accordingly, as unto Him.

That being said, the *power* that enabled the Macedonians to give so generously is still available to us today. We read that they “*first gave their own selves to the Lord,*” which empowered them to give so generously. Our money will always follow our heart, and in the measure we give ourselves to the Lord, in that measure we will find ourselves giving as did the Macedonians.

Finally, don’t overlook the fact that the Macedonians *also* gave themselves *to Paul and his helpers*, and that it was “*the will of God*” that they do so. It is our personal conviction that the contributions of Grace believers should go *exclusively* to Paul’s helpers today, ministries that recognize his unique apostleship.

There are millions of Christians who will support non-Grace ministries, but if Grace believers do not support Grace ministries, who will? Surely in the measure that we give ourselves *to Paul*, in that measure our giving will reflect our heart’s commitment to Pauline truth.

“Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also” (II Cor. 8:6).

In light of the sacrificial giving of the Macedonians, Paul encouraged Titus to coax the Corinthians to fulfill the pledge of support that they had vowed. But notice that Paul calls our giving a “*grace.*” The grace of *God* is what He freely did for us when He didn’t have to. Similarly, our giving is what we freely give to God *when we don’t have to!* There is no command to give under grace.

“Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also” (II Cor. 8:7).

Before the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were withdrawn, the Corinthians abounded in them. But while each one of them had a different spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:8-11), they were *all* expected to abound in the grace of giving. This is significant, for some today claim that “giving is not my gift.” But as we see, even when the spiritual gifts were in order, all of God’s people were expected to abound “*in this grace also.*”

“...perhaps the reader is wondering whether God would have believers today give ‘beyond their power’?”

“I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love” (II Cor. 8:8).

Even though we are not under Law but under Grace, God gave us many commandments through Paul (I Thes. 4:2; II Thes. 3:4,6,12). However, *giving is not one of them!* God wanted the Corinthians to care *naturally* for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and He wants us today to care naturally for the lost and confused multitudes all about us, and to support the ministries that minister to them. And so while Paul had received no commandment from the Lord about giving, the eagerness of the Macedonians prompted him to spur the Corinthians on to help also.

When we give to the Lord’s work, we *“prove the sincerity”* of our love for Him. How different this is from Malachi 3:10, where we read,

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse...and *prove Me* now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing...”

Under the Law, God commanded Israel to bring their “tithes and offerings” (v. 8) to “prove” or *test* Him to see if He wouldn’t bless them in return. Under Grace, Paul uses this word “prove” in a dramatically different fashion. Paul teaches that God has *already* blessed us “*with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*” (Eph. 1:3). In so doing, *He* is testing *us* to see if we will bless Him financially in return. Hence when we abound in the grace of giving, we prove the sincerity of the love we profess for God.

But once again, it is not our love for God *in general* that is being tested, but our love to God *through His apostle*. In context here, the love that was being tested was *their love to Paul* (v. 7). And so it is that we who *say* that we love Pauline truth have the opportunity to prove the sincerity of our love every time the offering plate is passed.¹



Now we must remove our shoes, as it were, for the ground upon which we are about to tread is surely holy ground, as the apostle gives us the example of One who said He loved us, and proved the sincerity of His love beyond any and all doubt:

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

The Lord’s giving of Himself is called a *“grace”* because He freely gave up His riches in glory *when He didn’t have to!* How *“rich”* was He? Before His incarnation, He could point to any star in the heavens, to any mountain or ocean on earth, indeed to *“the cattle on a*

thousand hills” and say: “*Mine!*” (Psa. 50:10). And yet for our sakes He “*became poor.*”

How poor did He become? He “*took upon Him the form of a servant*” (Phil. 2:7), and a servant can point to *nothing* and say “*mine.*” Everything a servant has is owned by his master. And so the One who created the great lakes and rivers of the earth had to ask for a drink of water (John 4:7). Even the foxes and birds had homes they could call “*mine,*” but when “*every man went unto his own house,*” we read that “*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives*” (John 7:53: 8:1). How touching it is to learn that the “*swaddling clothes*” with which His mother wrapped Him were little more than strips of rags. How moved we should be to see Joseph and Mary humbly offering the poor man’s sacrifice at His birth (Luke 2:24 cf. Lev. 12:8). He had to borrow a stable in which to be born, a few loaves and fishes to feed the masses, a penny to illustrate our obligation to Caesar, a donkey on which to ride to Jerusalem, a room in which to hold His last supper, and a tomb in which to be laid. All of this that we through His poverty might be rich.

How rich are we? We are “*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*” (Rom. 8:17). Let others envy the inheritance of the children of Bill Gates or Donald Trump. We are heirs of *God Himself*, and joint-heirs with Christ. Since the phrase “*joint-heirs*” means we are *equal* heirs with Christ, this means that everything *He* inherits we will inherit also, something almost too precious to imagine.

“And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago” (II Cor. 8:10).

What had caused the Corinthians to renege on their year-old promise of financial help? The Corinthians were known for their *carnality*, and carnality will always interfere with the best-intentioned plans of giving.

The word “*expedient*” means *to promote one’s interest*. The Greek word for “*expedient*” is elsewhere translated “*profitable.*” Thus Paul here is reminding the Corinthians that fulfilling their financial pledge would *profit* them, both in this life and in the life to come. Surely rich rewards await the faithful giver at the Bema Seat of Christ, but even in this life it is a blessing to give. We have the Lord’s word on it (Acts 20:35). As Pastor Stam used to say, we wish that all believers could know the joy and fulfillment that sacrificial giving brings to the soul.

“Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have” (II Cor. 8:11).

The Greek word for “*perform*” here is in the imperative mood, making it a *command*. While there are no commands for us to give under Grace, Paul *did* command *the Corinthians* to fulfill the promise that

they had made of a financial contribution, lest the testimony of the Lord suffer harm.

The church building where this writer pastors was built many years ago with a bank loan based on pledges of monthly support from its members, some of whom later left the church without fulfilling their commitment. This of course laid a severe hardship on those who remained, and were it not for the faithfulness of these dear ones who took up the slack, the testimony of the Lord might have been damaged in the community. And so while there are no commands to give under Grace, or to make pledges, when we offer our word to give a gift, we subject ourselves to the Apostle Paul's command to "*perform the doing of it.*"

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Cor. 8:12).

It is possible for the humblest believer to give more than a billionaire, for if our hearts are willing to give, our gift is accepted by God in accord with what we have, and not according to what we don't have. "*Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*" (Luke 12:48), but of those to whom little has been given, He does not ask us to give beyond our means. We have heard horror stories of believers who have been browbeaten into taking out loans just to keep up with paying their tithes. Surely God is not honored when people fall behind in their rent in order to pay their tithes, something of which we have also heard tell.

"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

"As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack" (II Cor. 8:13-15).

Here Paul assures the Corinthians that he was not attempting to gouge them just because they were a large, wealthy assembly. He rather asks them to consider that while presently their wealth could make up for the want of other men, the day could come when this situation was reversed.

Paul then concludes this passage by quoting Exodus 16:18, where we read that some in Israel gathered "*much*" manna, while others gathered "*little*," and yet the needs of all of God's people were met. In the same way, the needs of God's people *today* can always be met, if those who can give much give much, and if those who can give little will give little. As it's been said, "Little is much when God is in it!"

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. ©iStockphoto.com/Sean Locke

"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."

II Timothy 3:15

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“Is the gift of prophecy still active today? I have already read your articles on tongues and have stopped using them myself. I am a Christian and I am searching out truths for myself.” (You are a true Berean [Acts 17:11].—RK).

From Virginia:

“I’ve been blessed by your ministry in being able to distinguish between Prophecy and Mystery. Because of your ministry, I am able to truly serve the One who made me. Amen!”

From Alberta:

“We are located in Calgary. God has called my wife and I to work with young people. We started a Bible study group and an addictions support group. The results are beyond my wildest dreams! What a powerful Savior we serve! We now have 9 people regularly attending and an additional 5 who attend on and off. Our house is getting somewhat small. Two of our young people have newly accepted Christ with three more very close!”

From the Internet:

“The gospel of Grace and the Word, rightly divided, really affect me in a big way, and I know have forever changed me and the way I look at the Word, and everything in general! I am just so amazed at it, and why I don’t hear these big name pastors on TV preach it.”

From Nebraska:

“My family came out of Mormonism some years ago because it was full of heresy. I have been a Grace Believer for some time now. I recently met with a friend who happens to be pastor a Foursquare denominational church. I gave him a copy of this month’s *Searchlight* article entitled, *Is Miraculous Healing in God’s Program for Today?* He committed to reading the study and then asked my permission to use it during one of their midweek Bible studies. I was asked to attend the discussion. It was truly a joy and I am sure a challenge to Foursquare doctrine!”

From Michigan:

“I want to thank you for clearly and boldly professing your doctrinal viewpoints here on the website. While I disagree with some of your doctrine, I will be returning here to study your views and learn from them.” (Another Berean!—RK).

From Ghana:

“I have read a lot of your books and they have really helped me in my Christianity.”

From California:

“Would you please send me a copy of the November *Searchlight*? Either I misplaced it or as I suspect I didn’t receive that issue. Either way, the second article on *Our Great Commission* is in that issue and I would like to know what it says. I have been bombarded by the Matthew 28 passage for the past couple of years by pastors of the evangelical movement, and I need all the encouragement I can get to offset their comments and set approach to their Baptist ways.” (Praise the Lord, we are happy to pass you some ammunition!—RK).

From Michigan:

“Almost 17 years ago I was challenged to read a book by an author I’d never heard of, C. R. Stam. I went to Kregel’s bookstore here in Grand Rapids in search of anything he’d written. I was hunting through the used book section in the basement when a stock clerk asked what I was looking for. It turned out he had an old copy of *Things That Differ* on his cart. More than a coincidence, I think. I bought it and began to read it that same afternoon. I studied that book for over a week with the goal of proving it wrong. Instead, it became painfully clear that it was I who was in the wrong camp. I was pretty shook up at first, but then began to realize that my foundation was gradually becoming much more solid and secure than ever before.”

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From Oklahoma:

“I’ve thought long and hard about moving up north and attending BBL, but obligations here prevent me from doing so. I do not know what your policy is regarding out of state students. I was told that you discourage the idea, but why?” (We are happy to say that we have several out-of-state students at *Berean Bible Institute*, and would welcome you should your situation change.—RK).

From Wyoming:

“You have been sending me the *Searchlight* for a long time. I have enjoyed studying it very much. I want to help send the wonderful Grace message to more people. I am enclosing a check...”

From Georgia:

“The *Searchlight* helps me see the Grace message clearly. I feel blessed to participate financially in the Berean work.”

From Pennsylvania:

“We are enclosing a small gift. We do not want anyone who does not know of God’s Grace to miss this teaching.”

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



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By Cornelius R. Stam

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Paul Beseches the Church

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

Often we find the Apostle Paul beseeching, or imploring, the local churches that he wrote to to take action in regards to the truths expounded on in his letters. To beseech someone is to make an earnest request, to beg that something be done. It carries with it a sense of urgency. In other words, when we find Paul saying, “*I beseech thee brethren*”, or something similar, we know that he is dealing with an important subject that we should pay attention to.

So, why should we give earnest heed to what the Apostle Paul wrote to local churches almost 2,000 years ago? Because it has been preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures as God’s revelation for the Dispensation of Grace that we are living in today. The particular grace truths, the Spiritual principles, and the instructions for Godly living that are found in

Paul’s letters are as relevant for the Church, which is the Body of Christ, today as it was the day that he first wrote them by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The truths proclaimed in the letters that Paul wrote are essential to understanding what God is doing today and how the members of the Body of Christ *can* “...*be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*” (Col. 1:9b-10).

In future **BBI Byline** articles, we will be looking at some of the key passages of Scripture in which Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, beseeches the Church to do those things that produce Godly living in those who do them by faith.



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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Two Minute Milestone: Circulation for the daily e-mailing of our *Two Minutes With the Bible* devotional recently passed 1200. If you would like to join the ranks of Grace Believers who receive this daily dose of God's Word, rightly divided, just go to www.bereanbiblesociety.org and click on "Daily E-mail Devotional."

A Death in the Family: Our good friend, Roy Closius, stepped into eternity on Friday, November 17th at the age of 88. Roy and his brother Mel, who is also with the Lord, were fixtures in Chicagoland, where they were introduced to Paul's gospel under the ministry of Pastor J. C. O'Hair. Both were bachelors who devoted their entire lives to making all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. Roy and Mel are going to be deeply missed by those of us who had the privilege of laboring with them in the gospel.

Web Site Index: Our BBS web site features an archive of back issues of the *Berean Searchlight* dating back to 1999. However, once a year our Kevin Sadler separates and organizes that year's articles into an index that presently features *Searchlight* articles since the year 2000 collated into categories. This can be a big help for Bible students who are researching a specific topic. Just click on "Bible Study Articles." You can also use the search engine to search the entire site for articles containing key words or a specific verse of Scripture.

Kettle Moraine Bible Church of West Bend, Wisconsin, has asked Dr. Ed Bedore of *Berean Bible Institute* to serve as their interim pastor, and Kevin Sadler of *Berean Bible Society* to serve as their intern associate pastor. Both men will continue with their duties at BBI and BBS respectively, but will now also help bring consistency to the ministry at KMBC until the Lord provides a different or more permanent situation.

Florida Bible Conference: Terry and Barbara Hutcheson have asked Pastor Curt Crist of *Grace Bible Church* in Hendersonville, NC, to speak at a conference in Plant City, FL, scheduled for May 26-28 (Memorial Day Weekend). The theme: *The Bema Seat of Christ*. For more information, contact the Hutchesons at bahutch@ij.nct, or at 813-737-2127, or at 8020 Edison Road, Lithia, FL 33547, or FAX them at 813-737-5357.

*Bob and Eleanor Elias took our cover photo of the *Cape Leeuwin Light* of western Australia. The host of *International Lighthouse Day* in 2004, 60 knot winds that day let visitors "feel the sway." *Leeuwin* has withstood such winds since 1895, a testament to the builder.

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