

# The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2008



Feature Articles

*Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians—Phil. 4:1-7*  
 Pastor Paul M. Sadler ..... 5

*Hope for the Bereaved*  
 Pastor Cornelius R. Stam ..... 13

*Song of Solomon*  
 Mr. Steve Shober ..... 19

Departments

50th Anniversary of *Things To Come Mission* ..... 4

Florida Bible Preaching Tour ..... 12

Question Box ..... 25

BBS Letter Excerpts ..... 26

C. R. Stam’s Bible Time Messages on CD ..... 29

News and Announcements ..... 30

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

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# From the Editor to You:

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Dearly Beloved,

How faithful is our God! Soon after the need arose for a new Business Manager for the *Berean Bible Society*, He provided our beloved Brother Jim Tollar. Jim has a B.A. Degree in Business Management and Economics, so he is well suited for the position. He is currently a *part-time* student at the *Berean Bible Institute* where he is training for full-time Christian service. He also recently accepted a position on the Board of Directors at the *Falls Bible Church*.

Jim and his wife, Missy, have three children; Samantha 12, and twin boys, David and Andrew, who are 9. Since Jim is a part-time student at BBI, he projects it will take him four more years to finish his schooling. Therefore, Jim was willing to give us a four-year commitment, perhaps five, if they wait until Samantha graduates from High School before going to the mission field. Jim has been in three of my classes at BBI and is a good student who is well grounded in Paul's apostleship and message.



Lord willing, the Tollars plan to apply to become missionaries to Kenya through *Things To Come Mission*. In fact, Brother Jim took a short-term missionary journey last summer to Kenya with TCM. It was a life-changing experience that gave him and Missy an even greater desire to reach the lost for Christ in the regions beyond. Jim feels his new position with us here at BBS will be his entrance into full-time ministry, which will help prepare him for future responsibilities in the Lord's service.

The position of Business Manager at BBS is really the hub of the business end of our ministry; consequently, it is multifaceted in its scope. So we're sure Brother Jim will appreciate your prayers as he enters the learning curve at a high rate of speed. By the time you receive this issue of the *Searchlight* Jim will already be behind his desk wondering what he has gotten himself into, which brings to mind the following passage: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

Yours in His service,

Paul M. Sadler, President



# 50th Anniversary Celebration

of

## Things To Come Mission

April 22-26, 2008

Ozamis City, Philippines

### Guest Speakers:

Vernon Anderson, Joe Watkins, Ben Anderson,  
Frosty Hansen, Paul M. Sadler, Joel McGarvey

### A Brief History

*Things To Come Mission* (TCM) was founded in the USA in 1955 by Herbert Palmer. In 1958 *Vernon Anderson* and then *Joseph Watkins* arrived in the Philippines to start the Grace ministry in the country. With a handful of Filipino contacts, the two American missionaries, together with their families, started planting churches in Mindanao. They established a

Bible school that would train pastors and Bible women for local churches. As a result of its ministry for the last 50 years, TCM has now

more than four hundred local churches with more than four hundred workers. Every region in the Philippines has a local *Grace Gospel Church of Christ* under the supervision of *Things To Come Mission*. It has four resident Bible schools and twelve church-based Field Bible Schools. Further, it has established various fields of ministries such as radio, literature, field work, youth, children and finance.



Vernon Anderson



Joe Watkins

### Purpose and Commitment

TCM is dedicated to the task of worldwide evangelism through the methods of the Apostle Paul. This involves the preaching of the gospel of salvation through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the training of believers for ministry and leadership, and establishing indigenous local churches on all fields where TCM ministers. TCM is committed to proclaiming the distinctive message that was entrusted to the Apostle Paul as stated in Ephesians 3:1-9. This message of the supremacy of God's super-abundant grace is what guides every aspect of our ministry.



# PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 4:1-7

By Paul M. Sadler

The story is told that during the American Civil War, when the rival armies were encamped on the opposite banks of the Potomac River, the Union's band played one of its patriotic tunes, and the Confederate musicians quickly struck up a melody dear to any Southerner's heart. Then one of the bands started to play "Home, Sweet Home." The musical competition ceased, and the musicians from the other army joined in. Soon voices from both sides of the river could be heard singing, "There is no place like home."<sup>1</sup>

In similar fashion, the members of the Body of Christ have a home, a home in heaven. While divisions have always plagued the Church, we all have a common destiny. So when Paul opens Philippians 4 with the term "therefore," he is prefacing what he was about to say on the preceding passage where he established that we are citizens of heaven. He wanted the saints at Philippi to remember and remember well that they

belonged to the Lord and were blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Against this backdrop, the apostle is going to share with us how to effectively deal with a problem between two believers when a conflict arises within the local assembly. We might call this particular portion that is under consideration—Problem Solving 101!

## ISOLATING THE PROBLEM

**"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."**

—Phil. 4:1,2

As we have seen, Paul hinted in the previous chapters that there was an underlying conflict at Philippi, but he now isolates the problem and names names. It involved two women in the assembly whose names were Euodias and Syntyche, often referred to by

humorists as “Odious” and “Soon-touchy.” These two women had worked closely with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel when the apostle first came to Philippi, but in the course of time they became archenemies. Of course, Paul’s concern, and justifiably so, was that should this rift continue it could eventually divide the assembly and greatly hinder the cause of Christ, which is something God does not take lightly.

Having observed these types of conflicts over the years in the local church, they usually begin between two dominant personalities in the assembly who are both leaders in their own right, or could be. The very thing that made them so effective in the Lord’s service oftentimes becomes the very thing that ends up dividing them. Since the fall, *disputes* among the Lord’s people have been all too common. For example:

**“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath He not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it” (Num. 12:1,2).**

According to this passage, the conflict between Moses and Miriam arose over his marriage to an Ethiopian woman. We are not told what happened to Moses’ first wife, Zipporah, but one thing is certain, Miriam and Aaron weren’t happy with this new union, at least that’s how it appeared on the surface. During times of conflict, it’s important to remember there is usually the “problem,” and then there’s the “real issue” underlying

it! That’s exactly what we have here. The *problem* was Miriam’s displeasure with Moses’ decision to take another wife, but the *real issue* was his authority. She was jealous that Moses was the Deliverer through whom God spoke!

“And the LORD heard it,” and was displeased. As you continue to read the narrative, it is interesting that God bypasses the smokescreen and deals directly with Miriam’s rebellion. Under the law, questioning God’s ordained spokesman had serious consequences, as Miriam found out when she became white as snow with leprosy for seven days (Num. 12:5-15).

As we pass from the law to the present age of Grace, conflicts between believers persist to this very day, due to the fact that we still possess a sin nature after we are saved. Needless to say, Satan is a master at bringing out the worst in us. And, sadly, some believers play right into his hand. Paul had seen this firsthand when he received the report that Euodias and Syntyche weren’t seeing eye-to-eye. This portion of Scripture is a clinic in how to effectively deal with problems in the local church.

**“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:1,2).**

Imagine these ladies sitting there listening to Epaphroditus read this letter publicly and hearing their name read aloud. It would have undoubtedly gotten their undivided attention. It is

noteworthy that the apostle didn't take sides. If he were to do so he would lose his objectivity. Of course, by not taking sides he ran the risk of getting shot at by both sides. But he was more than willing to take this friendly fire if it meant resolving the problem.

As Paul ministered the gospel he did so with impartiality, a lesson every spiritual leader is well served to remember. Notice how the apostle includes Euodias and Syntyche in his greeting to the assembly at Philippi. They, too, were "dearly beloved and longed for" and were also his "joy and crown." Those Paul had won to Christ were his joy and his crown of rejoicing, as he says in Thessalonians. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Lord will acknowledge Paul's labor of love in evangelizing the lost; they will be his "crown of rejoicing." The same is true of all those who have a love for lost souls.

**"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (I Thes. 2:19,20).**

Like many of those at Thessalonica, Paul had personally brought Euodias (flagrant) and Syntyche (fortunate) to Christ when he first visited Philippi (Acts 16:12,13). These two women had faithfully served the Lord together for many years, but something came between them. Before we consider how Paul handled this problem, we first need to consider what the problem may have been. While we are not told the nature of the conflict, we can conclude it did not involve a dispute over a

*major* doctrinal issue, simply because the apostle doesn't instruct the assembly to separate from one or both of these women, as he did with the church at Rome.

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).**

Nor was the problem of an immoral nature such as we witness at Corinth. In that case Paul instructed the Corinthians to put the offender out of the assembly until a time of repentance (I Cor. 5:1-7). Thankfully, this cannot be said of Euodias and Syntyche. The issue was probably over a *secondary* doctrine of the faith or jealousy. Perhaps one was preferred above the other or one of the two ladies received what the other one felt was unwarranted praise. Whatever the case, the quarrel was causing disunity within the assembly. Some were apparently already taking sides. The battle lines were drawn and reinforcements were being recruited to shore up the frontlines on each side. In all likelihood it was one of those cases where you could cut the atmosphere with a knife.

### **AN EXHORTATION TO UNITY**

**"So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4:1,2).**

It is noteworthy that Paul encouraged *both* of these women in regard to the issue at hand. He "urges Euodias" and he also "urges Syntyche" to stand fast and be of the same mind in the Lord.

Usually when there is conflict in the local church such as we have here there are problems on both sides of the aisle. One normally raises a questionable issue while the other one's response to it is anything but Christ-like. This begins the descent into chaos, which oftentimes ends in a major division. Of course, Paul was hoping to head off a major crisis before it happened.

Paul's *solution* to the problem was to "stand fast in the Lord." Notice it does not say "stand fast for the Lord," but **in** Him. Euodias and Syntyche had been given a position in Christ; therefore, they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. They were accepted in the Beloved, forgiven, eternally secure—complete in Him! Whatever disagreements or shortcomings these two women may have had, they were *one* in Christ. The best remedy for any dispute within the local church is the acknowledgement of our oneness in Christ.

It has been said the local assembly is like a wagon wheel, the rim of the wheel representing the circumference of the faith in which all born again members are embraced and the members of the assembly representing the spokes in the wheel.<sup>2</sup> Thus, when one spoke is broken or warped, the strength of the wheel is affected. We might say that the nearer the spokes are to the hub, the nearer they are to each other. Christ, of course, is the Hub, the center, soul, and bloodstream of all true Christianity and all true Christian unity. It is **IN HIM** that we solve our difficulties and find perfect harmony and unity.<sup>3</sup>

You see, the apostle wanted Euodias and Syntyche to resolve their differences by being of "the same mind in the Lord." Rather than focusing on defending themselves, he wanted them to focus on the things of the Lord. In so doing, they would be reunited in a *common goal* to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. The end result would be the restoration of *unity* within the assembly. If, however, these two women refused to heed his counsel, Paul recruits the help of an intermediary. Sometimes it takes a third party, who is more objective, to give direction to those involved that have lost their spiritual compass.



**“And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel” (vs. 3).**

We would suggest that the mediator here was probably Timothy, which he calls a “true yokefellow,” one of many metaphors the apostle heaps on this dear brother (Phil. 2:22). The term “yokefellow” according to Thayer has the idea of being united in a common relationship—a *colleague*. Paul refers to Timothy



as his “own [i.e. true] son in the faith” (I Tim. 1:2). This term “true” is only used by the apostle when he referred to Timothy and Titus. As Paul was dictating this letter he most likely paused and turned to Timothy, who was being sent to Philippi, and said: “I implore thee, Timothy, *true yokefellow*, help these [Gr. *autos*]<sup>4</sup> women who labored with me in the gospel.”

Paul isn’t instructing Timothy to give Euodias and Syntyche a helping hand in the work of the ministry to lighten their burden, but rather to help them be of the same mind in the Lord. He wanted his colleague to remind these sisters in the Lord of their position and oneness in Christ. Paul adds how there was a time when they had *labored* with him in the furtherance of the gospel. The term “labored” here is the same word translated “strive” in Philippians 1:27. In track and field events each athlete *strives* to do his part for the team. Paul’s heart’s desire was to rekindle that team spirit these women once had in the Lord’s service. As the old saying goes, there is no “I” in team!

In addition to Euodias and Syntyche, the apostle instructs Timothy to *encourage* “Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.” It could well be that Paul mentions these brethren in this context simply because they were disheartened over the circumstances at Philippi. Strife within the local assembly is enough to take the wind out of anyone’s sails. A word of encouragement can go a long way in

restoring one who has a broken spirit. While many brethren look for opportunities to criticize, it is far more honorable to be an “encourager.” Paul was! No matter what the outcome at Philippi, he reminds them that their “names are in the book of life.”

The Scriptures teach that from the foundation of the world every name has been recorded in the book of life. God has made reservations for all! Interestingly, the “book of the living” is a record of those who possess natural life, so when they die their name is removed (Psa. 69:27,28), but there is an *exception*. Those who believe the gospel in their lifetime receive eternal life; therefore their names are sealed by the Holy Spirit on the basis of the finished work of Christ. With this in mind, the names of Euodias, Syntyche, Clement, and the other fellow laborers at Philippi are all *permanently* sealed in the book of life for time and eternity.

Little wonder then, that Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4). It is significant that we are to rejoice *in the Lord*, and with the above in mind, Paul adds, “again I say rejoice.” As we saw in an earlier lesson, we are to rejoice in the great things He has done for us! You see, we are to *rejoice* that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. *Rejoice* that we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins through His precious blood. We are to *rejoice* that we’re justified freely by His grace. This is why the apostle places so much emphasis on this theme throughout the epistle. Christ is the source of our joy!

## THE PEACE OF GOD

**“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:5,6).**

These passages indicate *temperers* must have been flaring at the assembly and that some of the discussions had become heated. The word “moderation” in the original has the idea of being gentle, mild mannered, patient, etc. Paul’s purpose in stating this was twofold. First, it would help defuse the volatile situation at the assembly if they simply were gentle and considerate of one another, so the problem could be dealt with in a Christ-like manner. If they would merely stop wanting to have their own way, it would help to resolve the issue. Second, the apostle didn’t want to see this assembly tarnish its reputation before the world, which, up to this point in time had been commendable. This is why he states, “Let your gentleness be known unto *all men*.” Once it is known that those Christians are fighting among themselves, the person and work of Christ is disregarded in the eyes of the world.

Undoubtedly, there were believers in this assembly who were confused and anxious, not knowing what to do or where to turn for help. Paul knew that those who were directly involved in the skirmish were only thinking about defending themselves and had completely lost sight of how it was affecting those around them and the long-term ramifications to the Lord’s work, not to mention

the loss they were going to suffer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. For the sake of those who were victims of the circumstances Paul instructs them accordingly:

**“The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”**

“The best remedy for any dispute within the local church is the acknowledgement of our oneness in Christ.”

Essentially, the apostle is saying there is no need to become anxious or worry yourself sick over recent events—“the Lord is at hand.” He is not saying the Lord’s *coming* is at hand, instead the thought is, “the Lord is present.” These believers were to realize the Lord was not far from any one of them. He is omnipresent—a present help in time of need! When a raging storm came up unexpectedly on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples thought it was time to pack their bags for eternity when the waves swept over the bow of the boat. But when the presence of the Lord appeared on deck the fears and worries of the disciples dissipated like the morning dew on a warm summer’s day (Matt. 8:23-27). You see, Paul wanted those who were troubled at Philippi to know that the Lord was with them.

Furthermore, Paul tells them to pray, pray without ceasing! “But in *everything* by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” There is nothing too small, nothing too great, to lay before Him, as it has been said. The Lord is interested in every aspect of our lives. Many times we go to the Lord in *prayer* and simply pray about things in general. *Supplication*, on the other hand, is more specific; it is seeking the face of God for example, with a deep burden for the salvation of a particular lost soul. Both are to be offered with thanksgiving because *we know* “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”? **NO!** “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

Most understand this peace to be a tranquil life where they “lie down in green pastures” and the Lord leads them “beside the

still waters” as the Psalmist says. Paul, however, is speaking about the peace of God in the midst of times of trouble and turmoil. It is resting in the sovereignty of God, that He is in control of all things. Having this peace is looking beyond the tragedy, knowing that at that day all things are going to work out for our good and His glory. This is the peace of God that passes all understanding; it will guard your heart and give you peace of mind.

*To Be Continued!*



## Endnotes

1. *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, by Michael P. Green, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, page 68.
2. ©iStockphoto.com/William Sommer.
3. *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians*, by Oliver B. Greene, Greenville, SC, page 110.
4. *Englishman's Greek New Testament, Stephen's Text (Textus Receptus)*, page 518.

# Grace Conference in Sunny Florida

**Speaker:** Pastor Curt Crist  
(welcometograce.com)

**Dates:** February 29-March 1, 2008

**Location:** *Grace Bible Fellowship*  
10999 60th Street North  
Pinellas Park, Florida

For additional information, please contact:  
Allen and Linda Rooks at (727) 992-0561  
or Debbie Crist at (828) 606-9056

*Come for the sound preaching  
of God's Word, rightly divided!*



# Florida Bible Preaching Tour

## Grace Bible Fellowship

4979 E. Arbor Street  
Inverness, Florida

**Date:** Sunday, March 2, 2008

**Speaker:** Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For more information, please contact:  
Pastor Wes Barteck at (352) 726-9972  
or e-mail: [wdbarteck@peoplepc.com](mailto:wdbarteck@peoplepc.com)

## Spring Hill Bible Fellowship

7384 Blue Skies Drive  
Spring Hill, Florida

**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2008

**Speaker:** Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For more information, please contact:  
Lee & Stella Wasson at (352) 688-4427

## Fellowship Bible Church

310 N. Hiawassee Rd.  
Orlando, Florida

**Date:** Sunday, March 9, 2008

**Speaker:** Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For more information, please contact:  
Pastor David Siegmann at (407) 294-0020  
or e-mail: [davesiegmann@hotmail.com](mailto:davesiegmann@hotmail.com)

*May God richly bless these meetings  
to the praise of His glory!*







# Hope for the Bereaved

By Cornelius R. Stam

## **THE FEAR OF DEATH**

In the thirty years of my ministry I have seen many people approach death and have seen a few die.

Some, who knew Christ as their Savior, were ready, even eager, to go to be with Him. Some of these passed from this scene with songs or words of praise on their lips. Others, who had failed to prepare to meet God, died in mortal fear, not merely of death, but of what lies beyond.

These things do not always run true to form, however, for I have also seen the most hardened unbelievers go out of this life joking and seemingly unafraid, while, on the other hand, I have seen sincere

Christians cringe with fear at the approach of death. These human reactions did not change the fact that the unbelievers had reason to *be* afraid, while the believers need not have been.

The Word of God tells us that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). It is the “after this” that makes men so afraid to die. They fear the truth of Romans 14:12, that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” They know in their inner hearts that they are responsible to God for their conduct and are afraid to be called before Him in judgment, especially since the Bible says that “all things are naked and opened

unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

### CHRIST’S DEATH FOR US

But wait, I didn’t quote the entire passage about death and judgment in Hebrews 9:27,28. The full passage reads as follows:

**“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without [apart from] sin, unto salvation.”**

Note carefully the “as” and “so.” AS it is appointed unto men once to die and then face God in judgment, SO “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” This can mean only one thing: that Christ died for us and bore the judgment for our sins. In other words, He died, not merely physically, but suffered for us the pains of “the second death,” God’s terrible judgment upon sin.



Thus Hebrews 2:9 declares that “by the grace of God” the Lord Jesus Christ “*tasted death for every man,*” and Verses 14,15

go on to say that He did this “that through [His] death He might... deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

How these last words describe the feelings of the great majority of people with regard to death! They may joke about death and pretend not to fear it, but actually they go through life constantly fearing death—“*through fear of death...all their lifetime subject to bondage.*”

Thank God, the one who has committed himself to Christ as the Savior who died for his sins, is not, certainly *need* not be, afraid of death, judgment or the lake of fire, for he knows that Christ was “offered to bear the sins of many.” He knows that by the grace of God He “tasted death for *every man*” and has applied this blessed truth in faith *to himself*. And thus he is, or certainly should be, delivered from the fear that holds, or should hold, unbelievers in bondage.

### THE CHRISTIAN’S CONFIDENCE

The true Christian acknowledges that he is a sinner and deserves the condemnation of God, but he believes “the gospel [good news] of the grace of God, that Christ was “once offered to bear the sins of many,” that He “tasted death for every man,” and believing this, he has committed himself in faith to Christ as *his* Savior. He rests on God’s promises about salvation through Christ and rejoices in Scripture passages like the following:

**“For the wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God is eternal life***

through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“Being *justified freely by His grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

“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.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

“[Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for [Lit., on account of] our justification.

“Therefore *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 4:25; 5:1).

“There is therefore now *no condemnation* [Lit., judgment] to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

## THE BELIEVER’S HOPE

Let me say right here that the word “hope” most frequently used in the New Testament Scriptures does *not* mean *to wish for*, but rather denotes *eager anticipation* or a *confident expectation* of good things to come. Thus Hebrews 6:11 speaks of “the *full assurance* of hope” and Verse 19 adds: “which hope we have as *an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast...*”

With this in mind it is significant that Paul, by the Spirit, wrote to the Thessalonian believers about their departed loved ones, exhorting them not to sorrow “as others which have no hope.”

We believers may indeed mourn the *loss* of Christian loved ones, but we do not mourn their *fate*, for we are assured of their greater blessedness in the life that follows this. Hear Paul’s Spirit-inspired words:

“We are *confident...and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*” (II Cor. 5:8).

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

“...to depart and to be with Christ...is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

The declaration that “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints*” (Psa. 116:15) is more significant now than when it was first written.

The souls and spirits of the Christian dead have left their bodies to go to be with Christ and are already “far better” off than we, but even this is not all, for we read in I Corinthians 15:51-54:

“Behold, I show you a mystery [Lit., I tell you a secret]; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *death is swallowed up in victory.*”

In I Thessalonians 4:16-18 the apostle goes into greater detail and shows how this is the basis

upon which bereaved Christians may comfort one another:

**“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**

**“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

**“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”**

This present “dispensation of the grace of God” will be brought to a close with the coming of Christ for His own, whether living or dead, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” *Blessed prospect!*

The Apostle Paul, by divine inspiration calls this great event the believer’s “blessed hope”:

**“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).**

### **THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND**

The first and most significant reason why the apostle designates the Lord’s return for His own as a “blessed hope,” is because “*the Lord Himself* shall descend from heaven” to come for us (I Thes. 4:16).

This terminology immediately suggests both His greatness and His gracious condescension. The story is told of a humble Northern private in the Civil War, who lay in a hospital tent slowly recovering from a serious wound. One day he fell off to sleep, to be awakened again by a gentle stroke on his forehead. As he looked up,

there stood *the President himself*, offering words of comfort and encouragement! No more had Lincoln left that bedside than the lad sat up and wrote a letter to his mother. “To think,” he wrote, “that *the President of the United States* would stop and talk to me!”

This illustration is, of course, a feeble one, for what human anecdote could adequately describe the condescension of our Lord, exalted “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion and every name that is named,” in coming *personally* to conduct us poor, undeserving creatures to heaven?

### **THE WHOLE BODY WILL BE UNITED**

How blessed to know that the members of the Body of Christ, now constantly divided by schism, geographic distance and death, will some day be gloriously and eternally united! We shall all be “*caught up together*” (I Thes. 4:17).

No more separation then, not even by physical distance! We have heard Christian people express their desires to be “right near the Lord Himself,” or to “sit next to Paul” or some other worthy in heaven, but if this were necessary for fellowship there, heaven would be no improvement over earth. Now we are limited in many ways. In our present finite condition our senses soon become clogged and confused. We stand on a hillside and our eyes can take in but a limited view, our ears can hear but a few sounds, our nostrils can smell the fragrance of but a few flowers and our minds can





think but a few thoughts. But then these limitations of our faculties will disappear and, with a fuller knowledge, we shall enjoy full and intimate communion with all other believers, just as our Lord can now have intimate *personal* communion with multitudes of individuals all at the same time.

### ANGELS WILL BE OUR ESCORTS

*“Caught up together...in the clouds”!* (I Thes. 4:17).

Well does the writer recall his childhood thoughts at the appearance of any dismal, cloudy day. “This might be the day,” he thought, “for does not Revelation 1:7 say: *‘Behold, He cometh with clouds’*”?

But the clouds in which our Lord will return to earth and into which we will be caught up when He comes for us, are not *rain* clouds. Any multitude or host is spoken of in the Bible as a “cloud.” Referring to believers gone before, the apostle says in Hebrews 12:1:

**“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which**

**doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”**

When the Lord led Israel through the wilderness, His guiding presence was veiled in what appeared as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This was the *Shekinah Cloud*, the host of His attending angels.

At His incarnation “*the glory of the Lord*” shone about the shepherds, and there was with the announcing angel “*a multitude of the heavenly host*” (Luke 2:9,13). At His transfiguration “*a bright cloud overshadowed them*” (Matt. 17:5). At His ascension “*a cloud received Him out of their sight*” (Acts 1:9). At His coming for us we will be “*caught up...in the clouds*” to meet Him (I Thes. 4:17). And finally, at His return to earth to reign He will come in “*the clouds of heaven*” (Matt. 26:64) i.e., He will be “*revealed from heaven with His mighty angels*” (II Thes. 1:7).

### WE SHALL BE CHANGED

*“Caught up...in the air”* (I Thes. 4:17).

Does not the fact that we shall be caught up into the atmosphere above us indicate that some great physical change will take place when our Lord comes for us? Will the law of gravitation be suspended? No, it is *we* who will be changed, and this too is part of “*that blessed hope.*”

In writing to the Corinthian believers the apostle says: “Behold, I show you a mystery [secret]: we shall not all sleep, but we *shall* all be changed” (I Cor. 15:51).

**“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the**

trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

**“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (Vers. 52,53).**

**“For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;**

**“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3:20,21).**

### EVER WITH THE LORD

*“And so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thes. 4:17).*

This indicates clearly that the reason our Lord will come for us *Himself* is because He loves us and wants us for Himself. Yes, *“Christ...loved the Church, and gave Himself for it,”* that some day He might *“present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing...”* (Eph. 5:25-27).<sup>1</sup>

### BEREAVED FRIEND, ARE YOU READY?

It may be that this pamphlet has fallen into the hands of one who has suffered the truly great loss of a loved one who was not prepared to die. To such we can only say the following:

Seldom, if ever, do we know what goes on in the minds and hearts of the unsaved when the actual time of death arrives. Hence, while we know that God cannot justify men apart from faith in Christ, we also know that He is very gracious and may sometimes

reveal Himself to the unsaved in the last moments of their lives.

This, however, is nothing to depend upon. The important thing is to *be ready yourself.*


When the Apostle Paul reasoned with Felix about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come, “Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). And Felix *did* find at least a few “convenient seasons,” but he evidently never got to the place where he was willing to confess that he was the sinner for whom Christ died. Some historians tell us that he finally committed suicide. This is why Paul, by the Spirit, urges:

**“We then as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.**

**“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:1,2).**

Don't be foolish, dear friend, and fritter away the precious days and hours. “God is not mocked,” but He *is* gracious and still gives you “*now*”—*this moment* to trust in Christ as *your* Savior and be saved. Why not do it—*now*?

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).**

**“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).** 

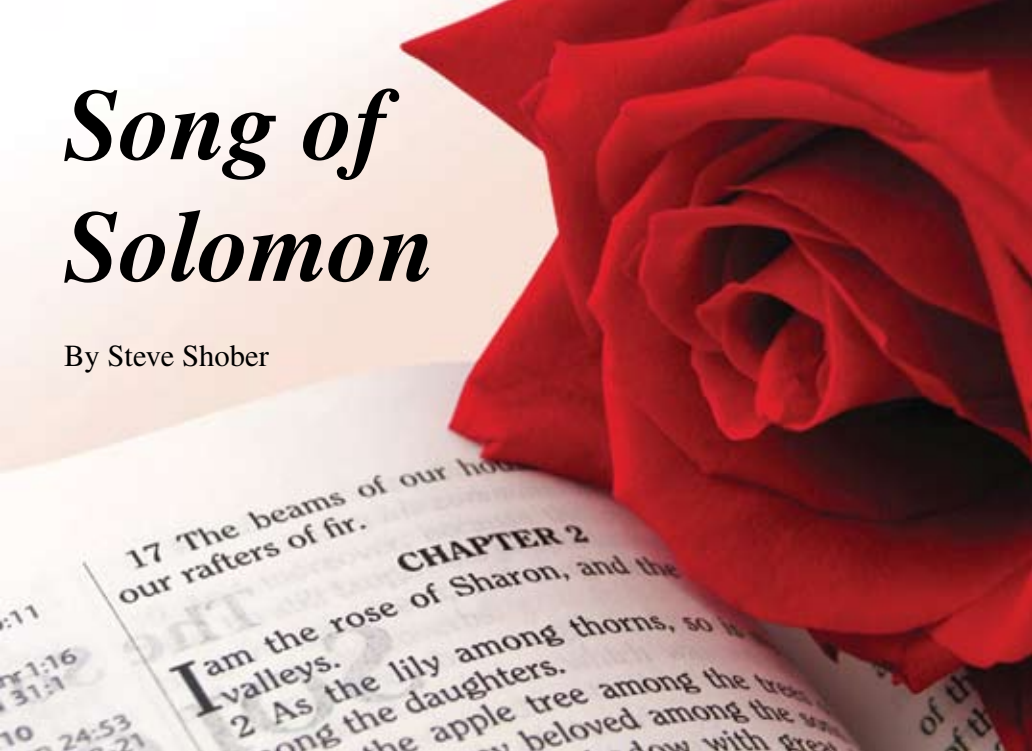
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### Endnote

1. For a more exhaustive treatment of this subject see the author's booklet: *“That Blessed Hope.”*

# *Song of Solomon*

By Steve Shober



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## **Introduction**

The Song of Solomon (SOS) has had a peculiar attraction throughout the ages for God's people, perhaps due to its unusual content or the fascination of trying to decipher any hidden meaning. Its unusual subject matter and supposed lack of spiritual content (it does not even mention God) have led some to question why this book has a place in the canon of Scripture. This two-part article is designed to unravel the Song of Solomon, showing it indeed contains an interesting love story with a deeper meaning told many times and ways in the Scripture. It is a story intended to portray the relationship between God and Israel over the span of history; a divine unveiling of Israel's past and future.

Each person responds to music, literature, and poetry in a different manner. Some hearts are not reached or moved by one, but profoundly affected by another. The poetic approach in SOS uses a love story to teach a deeper truth. Interestingly, that truth has an intriguing relationship to the seven churches in the book of The Revelation.

## **Purpose**

The actual love story in SOS is truly one of a kind. However, the deeper meaning (relating to Israel's history and how her present situation relates to the past) is told in many other biblical passages. In these other passages the basic stories and details differ as the Lord uses alternative means to provide a clearer picture for us. While the

SOS story is unusual, it is precisely this unusualness that beguiles and captivates the reader.

Ezekiel Chapter 16 is a good guide for understanding SOS. Ezekiel presents a very different biblical story, but it has a very similar interpretation. God interprets Ezekiel's story so that we can know the correct meaning; that interpretation turns out to be the same for SOS. Ezekiel's account is one of the most heart-rending chapters in the Bible; few can read it with a dry eye. It is a portrayal of Jerusalem's historic relationship with God: birth, first love, espousal, spiritual adultery, divorce, purification, and reunification. Similarly, in SOS the love story can be interpreted as a recapitulation of Israel's historical relationship with God, with its ups and downs. It answers the question that should have been asked for a long time, and will be in the future: "How did we (Israel) get into this mess and what is our future?" While the Song of Solomon has the same basic interpretation as Ezekiel 16, the story is entwined, even buried, in unusual love language and a poetic format that make it difficult to understand. Perhaps it is the Lord's intent to make us study and study, drawing us in, because we sense the buried nuggets of spiritual wisdom.

### **Incorrect Interpretations**

Some insist SOS is a book outlining the joys of wedded love. When SOS was written, Solomon already had many wives and concubines (SOS 6:8) and continued to amass more (I Kings 11:1-3). A simple reading of the text indicates great trials, polygamy, love at first sight, heathen wives, and more. Pity the soul who believes it is about wedded bliss (even considering inevitable marital difficulties). Clearly, SOS is not about the biblical concept of monogamy or a blueprint for marital joy. It has another clear purpose.

There are those who see the whole book as relating to Christ and the Church. It seems anytime the words or concepts of "love" and a "bride" are mentioned today, people automatically leap to the conclusion the passage is referring to Christ and the Church. This faulty logic assumes everything is written to us and is symptomatic of the desire to satisfy ourselves with personal applications while neglecting the interpretation to those to whom it was written. This is a natural consequence of not rightly dividing the Word of truth. Such an interpretation directly violates God's Word for He says the Church of today was a mystery and not revealed until Paul's day (Col. 1:25-27; Eph. 3:2; 3:9). The Church is not found in figure or type in the Old Testament because it is unsearchable (Eph. 3:8); that is, it can't be found in any form before it was actually revealed. To believe SOS refers to the Church indicates a misunderstanding of the Mystery revealed to the Apostle Paul, not to mention the people and context of the time when it was written. One has to read the Church into SOS; it is not there.



## Position in the Canon

The Song of Solomon is one of the poetic books of wisdom and philosophy, just before the Old Testament prophetic books. Its location in the Scriptures is a key to understanding its contents. SOS provides a transition from the poetic books into the prophetic books. This poetic book subtly slides the reader into what is to come, bridging the gap between the heartbreaking experiences and vain wanderings of man (Ecclesiastes) and the incredible prophecies Isaiah will announce. It may be fair to say that it is a poetic book teaching a prophetic message that only those ‘who have ears to hear’ will understand.

## The Key to Understanding

Understanding SOS depends upon unraveling the actual love story.<sup>1,2</sup> Without really knowing the basic story it just is not possible to render a logical, cogent interpretation. However, once we have a good glimpse of the love story it is possible to develop the intended interpretation. We will see SOS contains a true, historic, continuous love story; it is not a collection of non-related love passages, as some propose. As the actual story is unraveled, the interpretation slowly begins to emerge; eventually it jumps out in clarity.

The key to understanding SOS is found in the unusual manner in which it is written. We expect, in chronological writing, that a story will flow from beginning to end in an orderly fashion. Thus, A comes first, then B, and then C; so a story should unfold like this: ABCDEF. The writing style of SOS is different; the first parts of the story are found at the end, like this, BCDEFA (the beginning information, A, is found at the end in Chapter 8). Once this form of writing is realized the whole story begins to unfold.

## Revealing the Story (Note: references like 8:8-14, refer to SOS.)

**1. Early Life (8:8-14):** The story’s beginning is found in the concluding verses of SOS. Put in common terms the story would begin like this: “A long time ago, in a far away land, in a tiny village (probably Shunem, in Galilee) there lived a beautiful young girl.” This girl was not called by name but merely referred to as the Shulamite. Her father was apparently gone or dead. She had evil step-brothers that treated her poorly, only wanting her for the work she could perform. When she was young, the brothers pondered her future in order to keep her at home, working. They reasoned, if she is a wall (wants to keep men out of her life) they will reward her (8:8-10). If she is a door (wants men in her life) they will discourage love.

The brother’s wildest dreams came true. Not only did she dislike men in general, but she built up defenses against them. She had a special antipathy for Solomon (whom she had not met but believed charged excessive taxes/rent for the vineyard they managed for him).

The lack of a kind father, selfish step-brothers, and excessive work to pay Solomon made her a true man-hater. Because she did not care about men and because she had to work outside, she was unkempt and did not look like the other women. Out of curiosity, one has to wonder if the author of Cinderella borrowed ideas from this story.

## 2. Introduction and Overview

**(1:1-6):** The opening verses of SOS give a general introduction and overview, which takes place in the king's chambers. This must have occurred shortly after their espousal. She asked the daughters of Jerusalem (most likely the wives, concubines, and virgins of Solomon) not to look at her because she was black. She had a dark tan from working outside as required by her angry step-brothers. Clearly this was not how the other ladies in the chambers looked and she was ashamed, but it is noted she was "comely." Her family made her tend sheep and be the keeper of the vineyards, but her own vineyard (her own personal appearance) she could not keep. Solomon had no trouble discerning her true beauty even though she was much different looking than the other ladies.



she could not keep. Solomon had no trouble discerning her true beauty even though she was much different looking than the other ladies.

**3. First Love (1:7-2:3; 8:1-4):** Now the story goes back in time to her home countryside and builds upon how they met and the resulting first love. The story is most interesting here for it has a twist we would not expect. One day she met a man she believed to be a shepherd and fell for him in a big way. This shepherd was really Solomon, perhaps traveling incognito or playing the part of a shepherd because of her dislike for the king (a plan to break down her defenses?). She wondered where this shepherd kept his sheep (where he lived) but he was evasive and did not tell her. He clearly saw a special woman in the Shulamite. During their courting, they even seemed to chide the king; she believed she was addressing another sympathetic shepherd and he played along.

She referred to herself as the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley, common flowers of no special beauty. A silver-tongued suitor, Solomon turned the table on her and indicated that compared to other women she was like a lily among thorns. Their love banter is not what we would appreciate today, but it had the effect of turning this man-hater into a woman in love, but she did not know to whom.

**4. Promised Coming (Envisioning the future) (2:4-17):** Next there is a section dealing with their first love in the vineyard and her euphoric musings of future events. She envisioned springtime and her lover coming leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills.

Little does she know her shepherd would not come this way. Her shepherd was wise and referred to animals, flowers, trees, and nature in a way she (but few others) could appreciate. His wisdom was exemplified when he mentioned the tender grapes, which in springtime bloom with tiny, inconspicuous flowers (unknown to most people, but not her) that have a heavenly-sweet aroma. They could compare the delight of the grape's aroma to the sweetness of their love.

She imagined him calling her to come away with him, much like a fantasized Prince Charming. But, the evil step-brothers tried to hinder true love by telling her to catch the foxes, which would harm the grapes. They lost. Important as grapes may be, they pale in comparison to the awakening call of love.

**5. Warning of Separation (3:1-5):** This section seems to take place in her hometown during the time Solomon had not yet revealed his true identity. On her bed at night she appears to dream or envision impending troubles, perhaps the Lord forewarning her of issues that will take place in the future. She found him missing and went out at night looking for him. It was not long and she found him whom her soul loved. She held him and would not let him go until she had brought him into her mother's house (implying the espousal?).

**6. The First Coming (3:6-5:1):** One day, finally, her shepherd came to take his espoused wife. But, it was not at all the way she imagined. In fact, he wasn't even who she thought. Her shepherd wore inexpensive spikenard (1:12); this man wore myrrh and frankincense, perfumes of a king. Not only was her "shepherd" coming in great glory and splendor, but he was not even the man she had grown to trust. She was dumbfounded. She was so astonished when she saw him, she exclaimed in unbelief, "Who is this?" To her amazement her shepherd was Solomon! We cannot begin to empathize with her shock and overwhelming feeling of betrayal. Solomon did understand and immediately began to soothe and win her over, no doubt letting her know why he played the part of a shepherd. He took her to his royal chambers in Jerusalem, quite a departure from what she had envisioned.

**7. Indifference and Actual Separation (5:2-8):** Some time later, she was asleep but her heart awakened her, implying a heart that was troubled by events while the body slept. In this dream-like state he came to her in love but she refused him. Shortly thereafter she awoke, realized what happened and went to the door, but he had left. She had a forewarning of this. She went searching for him, but this was not her hometown. The watchmen found her wandering alone at night and wounded her and took away her veil (was she being treated as a prostitute for walking the streets alone at night?). She was treated very harshly by the protectors, but why? It seems other dire things are implied here, but one cannot be certain. It does seem clear she was defiled. It is also clear a separation occurred and after

she came to her senses it was too late. He was gone and the results were devastating. The reader will perhaps find this all a bit unfair to the Shulamite in our story, but the interpretation will make it clearer why it was this way. At this point in the narrative the love story has entered the tragic stage, and as we near the end of SOS our two lovers are separated.

**8. Restoration (5:9-7:13):** As we continue in Chapter 5 we find the Shulamite rediscovering her first love. She realized she had taken him for granted and he had many other interests (feeding among the lilies and going to his garden may imply other loves, or the search for them). Solomon at this time had 60 queens, 80 concubines, and virgins without number. We know he ended up with 1000 wives and concubines. So he spent considerable time acquiring new women for his court. He wrote 1005 love songs, apparently one for each lady. It is, however, the song he wrote to honor the Shulamite that was the song of songs, i.e., the Song of Solomon (I Kings 11:1-3; 4:32) (SOS 1:1).

In SOS 6:9 she is referred to as “undefiled.” This is very instructive for she seemed to previously have been defiled. As we review Israel’s history this will make more sense, but for now the text indicates a complete change of attitude, repentance, and something being done to remove the indelible stain of sin. What is apparent in this section is the beauty of restoration and the joy of rediscovered first love. Solomon’s and the



Shulamite’s final love transcends the former; his desire (thoughts, heart, mind, actions) was toward her and she attained that which she had always wanted. They went to the vineyard to see if the vines flourished, whether the tender grapes appeared (renewing old memories and restoring the joy of their first love which they had lost).

**9. Perfect Love (8:5-7):** The story ends with a reversal of the question, “Who is this?” This time it was said of her, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?” It was of course rhetorical, but her change was so complete the question had to be asked. Everyone could see the transformation in her: how she went from a man-hater and Solomon-despiser to one that leaned upon him and him only, how she went from rags to riches, how she tried to do it her way and it resulted in failure, how her self interests led to defilement, and how she finally turned to him.

Those observing all these events recall what she had said when he came; they now ask, “Who is this?” Clearly everyone was astounded to see her come up out of the wilderness as pure and undefiled, and

the glory that flowed from her obedience. She was a new person because of him and was so completely changed that their awe was only natural. Now the question is, what does this story really mean, and does it relate to the future?

*To Be Continued!*



## Endnotes

1. Carr, Lloyd; *The Song of Solomon*, Inter-varsity Press, 1984.
2. Ironside, H.A.; *Proverbs and The Song of Solomon*, Loizeaux Brothers, 1981.

Steve Shober is a member of the BBS Board of Directors. If you have questions about this article you can contact him at: 7179 Clover Hill Dr., Waunakee, WI 53597; or shober@chorus.net.

## Question Box

*“Does Ephesians 4:26 contradict Ephesians 4:31?”*

**“Be ye angry, and sin not...” (Eph. 4:26).**

**“Let all...anger...be put away from you” (Eph. 4:31).**

This certainly *looks* like a contradiction! However, Paul was a master logician, as well as a Spirit-inspired writer of Scripture, and so it is impossible he would contradict himself.

We believe that this is similar to the seeming contradiction between when the Bible says “thou shalt not kill,” and yet God instituted capital punishment as a part of human government (Gen. 9:6). Here the solution is to recognize that God sees a difference between the cold-blooded murder of an innocent victim, and the orderly execution of his murderer.

In the same way, God sees a difference between unholy anger and what is sometimes called “righteous indignation.” We know that anger in and of itself is not a sin, for in Mark 3:5 the Lord was angry with the religious leaders of His day, and we know that He never sinned (I Pet. 2:22). It is only when we are angry “*without a cause*” that it becomes sin (Matt. 5:22).

Here a word of caution is in order. Many new Bible versions follow a corrupt Greek manuscript and omit “without a cause” from Matthew 5:22, making the verse a blanket condemnation of *all* anger. This would be a contradiction of Ephesians 4:26, and more importantly, would make the Lord Jesus Christ a sinner in Mark 3:5.

—Pastor Kurth





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“A friend subscribed me to the *Searchlight* and I have become convinced that this is an accurate interpretation of the Word of God.”

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“As I continue to preach on the radio, the *Searchlight* is my research material, aside from a set of books written by Cornelius Stam on my shelves.”

### **From Maine:**

“I live in Caribou, and there was a pastor from New York visiting his father who lives in our neighborhood. He was outside walking by our house and he stopped to talk, and the conversation turned to the Bible. He was explaining the Grace message and he could see I was interested, and so gave me one of your books. Everything seems to make sense. Quite a bit different though than traditional teachings. Some people are quite reluctant to accept these teachings, but it seems to clear up a lot of contradictions.”

### **From British Columbia:**

“I like to encourage others, including my pastor, to read the *Searchlight* in view of studying God’s Word, rightly divided.”

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“Please send the *Searchlight*, so I can continue teaching the young people in my church in Bohol.”

### **From Tennessee:**

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### **From Virginia:**

“Just a note to tell you how edifying your book ‘*The Triumph of His Grace*’ has been for me and my wife. It has been helpful with my lessons in the Bible study that I have the privilege of teaching each Monday at a nearby rest home.”

### **From the Philippines:**

“*Things That Differ* is blessing people here, even non-grace pastors in the area. I had an opportunity to talk to pastors of different denominations. This led me to introduce to one of the members of the ministerial fellowship the distinctiveness of the message that was commissioned to Paul. Another pastor was opened to this message and is currently studying the Bible, rightly divided. We have conducted Bible studies in his church and he is very much determined to embrace the teachings of the Apostle Paul.”

### **From Wyoming:**

“Our ladies Bible class is studying *Philippians*, using the series in the *Searchlight*. It is a great study.”

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“I am sharing the *Searchlight* with my officemates during our midweek Bible study in the office, especially when I am the leader. Thank you once again for your precious time shared with us two years ago.”

**From Iowa:**

“Thanks for your very thorough response to my last question pertaining to the Lord’s Supper. I sent a copy to my brother and to a friend who is becoming acquainted with the Grace message.”

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“*Things That Differ* has really helped me in the campus ministry I am engaged in. There are interested college students among others who want to study the Bible in the light of II Timothy 2:15. I found *The Key to Understanding the Scriptures* very relevant in our Bible study. Its features really made a great impact.”

**From Indiana:**

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**From Florida:**

“The *Discerning the Will of God* series is clearing up a lot of stuff I thought was right, and showing it to be wrong. Now I am passing this knowledge on to others.”

**From the Philippines:**

“I received my first *Searchlight*. This will be an excellent Bible study source that I really need for my weekly Bible study group.”

**From Pennsylvania:**

“Twenty years ago I was a hair trigger away from pointing my finger at God and telling Him to stick it, because the church let me down and never reached down to pick me up. But God re-introduced me to a man in my past that had been hurting like me. When he started to talk to me I almost punched him out, I was so angry with rage. But I listened, and he handed me a *Searchlight* article he had photocopied. God grabbed that finger I shook in His face, and has never let go. And that long-lost friend never knew he stopped a suicide. All because of a few kind words from a friend and an article from the *Berean Searchlight*.”

**From Alberta:**

“I would like to order the *Searchlight* for a friend who has been studying with me. I’m using your messages mostly in our studies. She is in tears over the truths she never experienced before. I’m enjoying the blessing of seeing someone new to the Grace message being so thrilled and uplifted with the truth. I had been praying that I could have a Bible study and show someone the Grace message.” (“Lord, teach us to pray” *this* prayer [cf. Luke 11:1]—RK).

“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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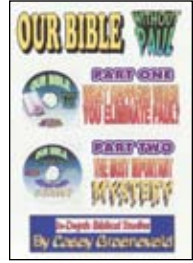
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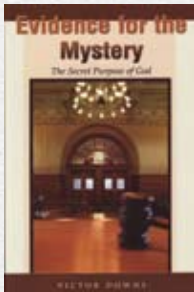
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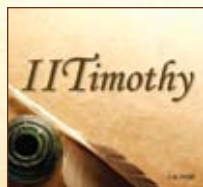
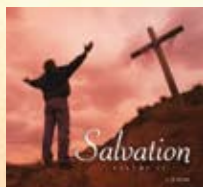
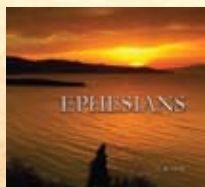
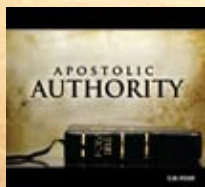
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# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**The month of April** will mark the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of *Things To Come Mission* in the Philippines. For more information about this grace milestone, see Page 4. Also, be sure to read the *Mailbag* on Page 26, where this month we are featuring letters that talk about getting the message of Grace out to others. Since a full third of these letters come from the Philippines, it is easy to understand how the Grace message has grown so exponentially among our Filipino friends.

**Black Hills Spring Bible Conference:** The saints of *Grace Bible Church* of Rapid City, South Dakota, will welcome spring with an April 4-6 Bible conference that will feature Pastor Paul M. Sadler. Why not begin planning now to get away and enjoy some great Bible teaching, and the warm hospitality that can always be found at GBC. For further information contact Pastor John Fredericksen at (605) 343-3349, or at [jtgbc@msn.com](mailto:jtgbc@msn.com).

**It's not too early!** If you are planning a Bible conference or special meetings at your church in 2009, and would like to invite Pastor Sadler or Pastor Kurth to participate, it is not too early to get in touch with us about this. Pastor Sadler's schedule is already filled for 2008, and he has already booked some dates in 2009. The second mouse may get the cheese, but the early bird still gets the worm!

**Quotable Quotes:** As much as we enjoy finding quotations to adorn the back cover of the *Searchlight*, we wonder if you might have a favorite that you would like to send us. Or if you come across a statement while reading that you feel is really profound, why not share it with our readers. Just remember, your Editor has veto power over any and all submissions!

**Northern Grace Youth Camp** will open with a Spring Youth Retreat on May 2-4, followed by camp weeks for all age groups, interspersed with two family camps, retreats for men and women, and a fall youth retreat. See [www.northerngraceyouthcamp.org](http://www.northerngraceyouthcamp.org) for further information.

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

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\*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Ken and Barb Wardius. The *Manitowoc Breakwater Lighthouse* sits on a breakwater that protects the harbor from Lake Michigan storms. In WWII the light witnessed the departure of 28 submarines built in the Manitowoc shipyards.

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