

The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2010



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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thirty years ago, when *Faith Bible Church* of Steger, Illinois, first called me to be their pastor, I was working here at *Berean Bible Society* as our typesetter. Intimidated by the daunting prospect of pastoring a church at the age of 23, I naturally asked BBS founder and then-president Pastor Stam for advice. He paused, then answered: “Teach a book of the Bible through, verse by verse.” Then he paused again and said, “Teach *Romans*.”

As I look back now over the past thirty years, I have brought many a topical message on different subjects and themes in our church, but by far the vast majority of my messages have been textual. I’ve taught each of Paul’s epistles through two or three times, as well as most of the rest of the New Testament, and even many Old Testament books, verse by verse. Of course, the first time I taught through Paul’s epistles, Pastor Stam had not yet written his commentaries on these books. All I had were recordings of radio broadcasts in which he taught through Paul’s epistles, and as you would expect, these were not nearly as in depth as his subsequent written commentaries.

Thankfully, by the time I began my ministry, Pastor Stam *had* written a detailed commentary on the Book of Acts, a key dispensational New Testament book. So after teaching Romans, I went straight to the Book of Acts, and armed with Pastor Stam’s in-depth four volume commentary, I was richly blessed by that study, and was able to share that blessing with our people. To this day, that commentary remains my favorite of his writings.

But if you have recently tried to order the first two volumes of this four-volume set (now available as the first volume of a two volume set), you have no doubt noticed that it is not presently listed as one of our selections. Any time you do not see a familiar title on our price list, it usually means that this work is temporarily out of print, and such is the case now for the first volume of *Acts*. While we hope to be able to offer it again soon, the Acts volumes are the largest books we print, and so printing them constitutes our largest printing expense. If you would like to help with this expense, simply designate your gift as “Acts Reprint,” and somewhere some other young pastor who is just starting out in the ministry, and his congregation, will be eternally grateful.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth





Wrath or Respite?

When natural disasters such as hurricanes and tsunamis take their toll in death and destruction, many preachers insist these calamities are the result of the wrath of God on sin, pointing to such verses as Ephesians 5:6, where speaking of the sins of Verses 3-5, Paul says:

“...for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

While the Greek word for “cometh” here is in the present tense, we believe Paul is saying that while God’s wrath is *coming*, it hasn’t yet arrived. Consider: after the Lord announced that His betrayer was “at hand,” we read that “immediately...*cometh* Judas” (Mark 14:42,43). However, we know that Judas had not yet arrived, for Verse 45 tells us what happened “as soon as he *was come*.” You see, the word “cometh” means that something is presently on its way, but the word must be in the *past tense* for us to understand that whatever is coming has arrived.

While many preachers declared that Hurricane Katrina was God’s wrath on New Orleans for the debauchery of Mardi Gras, others surmised the catastrophe was rather an example of God’s mercy, for thousands more would have died had the levies broken *during* the storm rather than after. Herein lies the problem in determining what God is doing or not doing by trying to interpret circumstances, which are always subjective and open to speculation. The only *sure* way of knowing what God is doing is *from the Word of God*, and God’s Word tells us that the presence of even ten believers in New Orleans would have prevented God from destroying it (Gen. 18:23-33). And so while even insurance companies call tornadoes and earthquakes “acts of God,” the Bible asserts that we are living in the dispensation of *grace* (Eph. 3:2), an age in which God is dispensing grace, not wrath, an age in which mankind is experiencing a respite from His judgment.

But if the reader of this page is not saved, please don’t think you will get away with sin forever. Romans 2:5 describes you as one who “treasur[est] up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath.” You may not have an account with any bank, but you have a sin account with God. His wrath on your sin is not being revealed today, but the day of the “revelation of the righteous judgment of God” is coming. Why not “*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31).

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Revelation 2:18-29

By Paul M. Sadler

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.” —Revelation 2:18

John is now instructed to turn his attention to the church at Thyatira. Of course, Lydia, who was from Thyatira, is often credited with establishing this local Jewish assembly. But there are two major problems with this conclusion.

First, Lydia (Gentile name) was saved under Paul’s gospel; therefore, if she was instrumental in helping start an assembly in this city, of which there is no evidence, it would have been made up of members of the Body of Christ. We know, however, John was writing to *kingdom saints* in the coming day of the Lord. Second, there is no historical record that a local kingdom church ever existed at Thyatira in biblical times. Robert

Brock makes this insightful comment in his writings:

“When the Bible was being formed into one book by the early Church Fathers, many of them thought that the Book of Revelation should not be included in the Canon of Scripture. The authorship of John was disputed, and one of the major reasons was because of the message to the church at Thyatira. **THERE WAS NO CHURCH IN EXISTENCE AT THYATIRA AT THAT TIME....**”¹

“THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES”

This is a fitting title, originally coined by James M. Gray, to describe Satan’s opposition to the plans and purpose of God in redemption. The conflict began when man disobeyed God and fell into sin, which brought with it the promise of a coming Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). From that day forward Satan would do everything

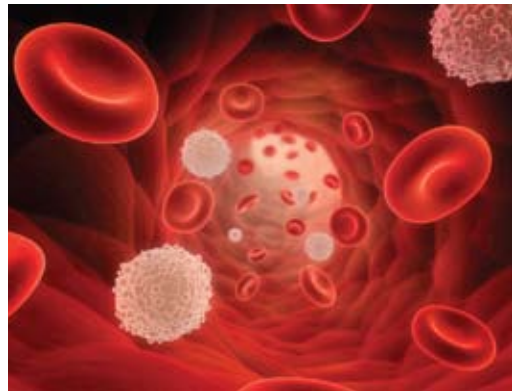
in his power to destroy the seed of the woman through whom the Redeemer would come. With the special revelation given to Paul, we now understand that we have redemption through Christ's precious blood, even the forgiveness of sins, when we believe the gospel. Christ is the fulfillment of the promise!

We must never underestimate the importance of *blood*, both as a biological mechanism in the human body and in our redemption. As King David pondered the wonderful workings of God in creation, he penned these words that echo down the halls of time to this very day: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa. 139:14). Robert Morgan makes the following observation of God's handiwork in regard to blood:

"Our bodies have a transportation system so complex and complete that it dwarfs that of a metropolis. The body's transportation system cuts through every tissue and organ by means of a network of sixty thousand miles of blood vessels. No cell of your body lies more than a hair's breadth from a blood capillary. The center of this vast system is a pump the size of an apple or a fist, that pumps two thousand gallons of blood through its chambers every day, sending blood to every part of the body. The blood carries vital, life-giving oxygen and nutrients to every cell in the body.

"The body has twenty-five trillion red blood cells, which are like little UPS trucks carrying all sorts of packages (such as oxygen)

that are needed by the cells in the body. Every cell in the body requires oxygen to remain alive. If the blood is cut off to any part of the body, it deprives that part of the body of oxygen, and that bodily part will die. If the brain is deprived of oxygen, the brain dies, and the body dies.



"The white blood cells, meanwhile, are like billions of little tanks protecting the body. There are five different kinds of these white blood cells, and each one is trained to go after a different enemy. One drop of blood can contain anywhere from seven thousand to twenty-five thousand white blood cells, and the number of them increases when our body is fighting an illness, just like the government calling up the reserves.

"As far as our skeletal structure is concerned, our bones do double duty. Not only do they support the body, keep us upright, and keep us from being amoeba-like blobs, but they are hollow. On the inside of these bones are marvelous little factories that operate day and night, producing these billions of little trucks and tanks. The brain oversees the entire operation,

and the heart keeps it functioning. Thirty-five hundred years ago, God told us, 'The life is in the blood.' And when Christ died, the life-giving blood drained from His body, providing forgiveness and life to all who believe."²

One of Satan's first major attempts to stamp out the seed of woman, through whom the Redeemer would come, was to corrupt the human race in the days of Noah. While some believe the following passages refer to inter-marriage between the godless line of Cain and the godly line of Seth, we believe something far more sinister was taking place. If we stop and think about it, believers and unbelievers have been joined in marriage in every generation without the catastrophic results that we witness in the days of Noah.

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

The title "sons of God," is always a reference to angels in the Old Testament, never men, and in this particular instance *fallen* angels (Job 1:6,7; 2:1). Apparently, Satan commissioned these fallen angels to leave their own habitation (heaven) for the unseemly purpose of corrupting the human race (Jude 6-8).

It appears that these evil creatures transformed themselves into a human form, which was

well within their power. We know, for example, that the elect angels who visited Abraham and Lot appeared in a *physical* form. In fact, Lot washed their feet, and prepared a meal for them, "and they did eat" (Gen. 18; 19:1-11). It has also been suggested that the "sons of God" may have possessed men in the days of Noah, thus altering their metabolism. This was certainly true of Legion, who had superhuman strength (Mark 5:1-12).

Whatever the case might have been, we know the "sons of God" committed *fornication* with the daughters of men with catastrophic results. Dr. James M. Gray states that this sin would have been "the confounding of two distinct orders of creatures and the production of a mixed race, partly human, partly superhuman, which would be just such a derangement of the divine plan as to warrant that which occurred, namely, the almost total extermination of all who were upon the earth."

This helps us to better understand the *severity* of the flood in the days of Noah. With the *exception* of Noah and his family, all flesh was destroyed from the face of the earth, which abruptly ended the corruption of the human race and the violence it perpetrated (Gen. 6:12,13). This also explains why *some* of the fallen host are chained in the center of the earth awaiting the judgment to come (II Pet. 2:4,5).

Having failed to corrupt Noah's family, Satan turned his attention to Israel after God raised up Abraham. The seed of the woman was now reduced to one nation.

Without a moment's hesitation, Satan focused his attention on destroying that nation. When Pharaoh decreed that all the male children in Israel were to be slain at birth, Satan was the one who was behind the evil plot. He knew if he accomplished his purpose the nation would be unable to propagate itself. But the midwives feared the Lord and spared the little ones, thwarting the Devil's scheme (Ex. 1:7-22).


Next, God reveals that the Redeemer would pass through the house of David; consequently, the seed of the woman is narrowed to one family (II Sam. 7:12-16 cf. John 7:42). Satan wasted no time to set into motion a diabolical plan to destroy the seed of David. He used Athaliah, the wicked daughter of King Ahab and Jezebel to accomplish his end. After Athaliah's son Ahaziah was slain by Jehu, the Scriptures say "she arose and destroyed all the seed royal" (II Kings 11:1).

With the exception of little Joash who was hidden in the storage room (bedchamber) by Jehosheba, Athaliah nearly accomplished her purpose. She had all the children of the royal seed murdered, or at least she thought she had. When Athaliah ascended to the throne she did not realize that Joash was alive and well. Joash was of the seed of David; therefore, the rightful heir to the throne. The promise of God to bring a Redeemer into the world came down to one little boy.

The next chapter in the conflict of the ages took place in the days of King Herod. Satan himself was unaware when the Messiah would

come into the world, so when he heard the wise men inquire of Herod, "where is He who is King of the Jews?" he was all ears. Bethlehem!

Since Herod was consumed with staying in power, he customarily eliminated any threat to his throne, including having some of his own family members killed. With this in mind, Satan probably reminded Herod, "You are the king of the Jews!" If this was the case, it was an ingenious thing to point out to an egomaniac! This set into motion a tragic set of events known as the slaying of the innocents. All the children in Bethlehem and the surrounding region that were two years of age or under were slain. But unbeknown to Herod, God had already moved His Son out of the reach of his murderous exploits (Matt. 2:16-18). Satan came within a hair's breadth of nullifying the divine promise of a coming Redeemer, but, once again, God overruled His archenemy in His sovereignty.



"We must never underestimate the importance of *blood*..."

Although there would be other occasions during the life of Christ where Satan would try to destroy Him, the next chapter in the story brings us to Calvary. Having turned the tide of public

opinion against Christ, the people cried out, “crucify Him, crucify Him.” Satan thought he had finally sealed His doom. Little did he realize that Christ was securing redemption for all those who would place their faith in Him.

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES IN THE TRIBULATION

Christ crushed the head of the serpent at the Cross, in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, and completely defeated him. While Satan cannot undo Calvary, as much as he would like to (I Cor. 2:7,8), the conflict of the ages continues in another way. Today Satan does everything in his power to keep men from coming to the truth of the gospel that Christ died for their sins. He accomplishes his purpose by blinding men with religion and false doctrine. In the coming Day of the Lord the conflict between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness will intensify because the devil knows that his time is short.

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass” (Rev. 2:18).

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan” (Rev. 2:24).

Although there is no question that the one addressing the seven churches in Asia is Christ, Thyatira is the first church where He is actually identified by name. The title “Son of God” has to do with

the deity of Christ—Jesus Christ is God! He is the *eternal* Son of God. It has been correctly said, the Son of God became the Son of Man that the sons of men might become the sons of God.

Notice, at this assembly we have the teachings of the Son of God and the “depths of Satan” opposing the truth. This confirms that the conflict of the ages will continue through the day of the Lord. In the age of Grace we are shown the deep things of God, but in the coming Tribulation they will be exposed to the deep things of Satan (Ver. 24). Scary!



The titles Son of God and Son of Man combine to teach us that Christ is the perfect Judge. His eyes are said to be like a flame of fire that exposes the evil deeds of those who corrupt the Word of God at Thyatira. While the Lord is pleased with the love and patience of this assembly and commends them for these virtues, there are those in their midst who *tolerate* Jezebel and her evil teachings.

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my

servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20).

While it is doubtful that this prophetic name will actually be Jezebel, the Lord assigns this designation to her simply because her evil exploits mirror those of Jezebel in the Old Testament. Jezebel of old was the epitome of evil. Perhaps we should pause here a moment to consider her background and evil ways, which will help us better understand her namesake at Thyatira.

Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, whom we would know to be the Phoenicians. Notice that her father’s name, *Ethbaal*, has attached to it the name of the pagan God, Baal. He was a Baal worshipper, and the same can be said of his daughter, Jezebel. They were idol worshippers! When Ahab, the king of northern Israel, married Jezebel he forged an alliance with the Phoenicians to help secure his borders, but he got more than he bargained for in the relationship.

Jezebel was as wicked as they come. She was domineering, merciless, and cold as ice. Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord when he married the *unbelieving* Jezebel who deliberately drew him away from Jehovah. It is said of him that he “went and served Baal, and worshipped him” (I Kings 16:30,31). After he erected an altar and a grove to Baal on her behalf, Jezebel introduced *witchcraft* and *whoredom* (fornication) into Israel’s worship of Baal (I Kings 16:32,33 cf. II Kings 9:22).

Jezebel hated, with a passion, the prophets of God and killed the

ones she could find, but the queen relished the company of the prophets of Baal and had them dine with her at her table (I Kings 18:13,19). And you can be sure some of the dishes on the menu would have included things that had previously been sacrificed to idols. When Ahab told Jezebel that Elijah had called fire down from heaven and consumed her prophets she sent this message to Elijah: “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time” (I Kings 19:1,2). The threats of this woman could make the hair stand up on the back of your neck! Elijah knew this wasn’t an idle threat, and took the first chariot out of town.



On another occasion, after Naboth refused to sell his vineyard to Ahab, the king was sorrowful and pouted. In short, he was depressed. Jezebel wasn’t about to take this lying down, she *framed* Naboth and had him stoned to death so her husband could take possession of the vineyard (I Kings 21:5-16). This devilish act resulted in Jezebel being cast out a window and eaten of dogs, as foretold by Elijah (I Kings 21:17-23 cf. II Kings 9:30-37).

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20).

As Jezebel of old led Israel away to commit fornication with the temple prostitutes, the Jezebel at Thyatira will seduce the servants of the Lord to commit *spiritual* fornication. As a prophetess, who supposedly ministers in spiritual things, she will probably claim to have received a special revelation from God that His servants should pledge their allegiance to the one-world church to have a greater outreach. Those who fail to do so will be unmercifully persecuted. The one-world church is an amalgamation of religions that in the course of the Tribulation will make up the *religious* arm of the Anti-Christ kingdom. Essentially it will be a State Church similar to ancient Babylon that operated under the auspices of “unity,” apart from God (Gen. 11 cf. Rev. 17,18).

“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds” (Rev. 2:21,22).

We learn from this passage that God calls upon her to repent of her evil deeds and He does so through the ministry of His chosen apostles and prophets at that time (Rev. 18:20). But when Jezebel refuses to repent she is warned that if she continues in her rebellion she will be cast down like Jezebel

of old, but in this case “into a bed,” along with those with whom she committed adultery. In other words, the Lord is going to cast her into the Great Tribulation where she and her children will suffer a death similar to the horrible fate of Jezebel and the prophets of Baal who were consumed by a ball of fire, in the Old Testament.

“And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden” (Rev. 2:23,24).

The eyes of the Son of God pierce straight through the “reins and hearts” of men exposing their wicked ways. There is nothing in the secret chambers of the innermost being that is hidden from His penetrating gaze. With “His feet like fine brass,” which depicts judgment, He will judge these evil-doers according to their works. As the Scriptures say, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Interestingly, the ungodly teachings of Jezebel reached far beyond the church of Thyatira to the other churches in Asia as well. So we are to understand that the warning here is to all these assemblies. Thankfully there is a remnant in this church that will not be taken in by her false doctrine and influence and therefore, will not know the depths of Satan.

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end,

to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star” (Rev. 2:26-28).

This particular promise to the overcomers who endure to the end of the Tribulation is rooted in Psalms 2:8,9. The prophecy in Psalms regarding ruling over the nations and judging them was originally given to the Son by the heavenly Father. But this passage is a clear indication that the promise of ruling over the nations is to be shared with those who do not give themselves over to the depths of Satan in the Tribulation. The fulfillment of this will be when the “morning star,” who is Christ, returns to establish His kingdom on the earth (Rev. 22:16).

The practical lesson we glean from this study is the importance of *separation*. If you read the context of this letter carefully, while some at Thyatira were completely deceived by Jezebel, others within the assembly knew what she was teaching was wrong, but tolerated it. May it never be said of us that we went along with something we knew was not right simply to keep peace and avoid criticism. “It is a grave mistake to underestimate sin and strive for no-fault moralities.”

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. *The Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation* by Robert Brock, Pg. 17, Right Division Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.
2. *Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes* by Robert Morgan, Published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, Pg. 77.

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Courage for the Conflict

By Cornelius R. Stam

“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men.

“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised.

“Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;

“And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

“Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”

—I Cor. 4:9-16

In these turbulent times there is the constant temptation to seek to escape realities.

Even upon the part of Christians—yes, and Christian ministers—there is apt to be a desire to avoid unpleasant facts and responsibilities; to just go on wishing things were better without facing up to the issues.

This is an alarming fact, for if ever there was a need for stout hearts, it is today.

On every hand attempts are being made to re-establish some semblance of unity in the Church, but alas, most of them are at the expense of truth. They are simply get-togethers of those representing the various factions in the Church, at which nothing whatever is done to straighten out the differences between them—union

meetings at which the great Bible truths at issue dare not even be discussed! Even labor and management in the world about us do better than this.

If the divine basis for unity in the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:1-6) continues to be ignored because so many Christians are afraid of the trouble it will cause to raise this issue before popular leaders, then the confusion of the Church must necessarily deepen and her influence upon the unsaved masses be diminished.

It is a divine principle that God will not give more light to those who do not stand for the light they have, and it is for this reason that we call upon all who have come to rejoice in the blessed truth of the “one body” and the “one baptism”—the most important issue confronting God’s people today—to show their colors boldly.



Perhaps it would help such to take up the Sword of the Spirit and enter the conflict if they realized more keenly what the opposition is against God, His purposes and His people. This opposition, coming, as it always has, from both men and angels, constitutes a call to particular courage and

faithfulness on the part of every believer.

HUMAN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPHETIC PLAN

Just when Israel stood at the very threshold of her millennial glory; after the King’s forerunner had proclaimed the kingdom at hand; after the King had identified Himself, had died, risen, ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit—all according to prophecy—just then the favored nation revealed most emphatically her stubborn antagonism against the Lord Jesus.

Amid the wonders of Pentecost two of the apostles had healed a lame beggar who had daily sat at the gate of the temple, so that he had entered into the temple “*walking, and leaping, and praising God.*”

When Peter told the wondering multitudes who gathered, that this miracle had been wrought by the crucified, risen Christ, things happened quickly.

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

“Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

“And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

“And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest,

were gathered together at Jerusalem.”

“And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” (Acts 4:1-3,5-7).

The next verses record those words which Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit” addressed to the Supreme Court of his nation.

The effect was striking.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

That is, they were convinced in their own minds that the apostles had actually been with the risen Lord, or they, unlearned and ignorant men, could not have spoken with such boldness.

Nevertheless, the members of the Sanhedrin agreed to *“threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.*

“And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

“But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye,

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

“So when they had further threatened them, they let them go....

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

“And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God

with one accord, and said...” (Acts 4:17-24).

What *did* they say?

Did they say, “O, God, grant that none of these fearful things with which they threaten us may come to pass?” Did they say, “O Lord, be merciful and deliver us from this persecution?”

They did not. Their prayer was made of better stuff.

This was a time for boldness. Wicked men, though religious men and the spiritual leaders of their nation, were standing in the way of the very truth of God. They, in their pride, would actually refuse to let Israel have the blessing which God offered and the apostles, humble as was their station in life, realized that the situation called for one thing more than anything else—*boldness!*

They did not even seem to think of their physical safety, for, blessing God for His sovereignty, they closed their prayer:

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word” (Acts 4:29).

And their prayer was wonderfully answered, for the record goes on to say:

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

That Israel could withstand such testimony bears witness to the sinfulness of the human heart, but the opposition did go on until Stephen was stoned and a great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

That the rejected Lord should stoop to save the very leader of this rebellion, Saul of Tarsus (See Acts 8:1,3 and cf. I Tim. 1:15) was indeed a demonstration of “*the exceeding riches of His grace.*”

As Israel persisted in her blind rebellion, God raised up this Saul, later called Paul, to offer salvation to individuals everywhere, entirely through the merits of the cross.

The secret crisis had come. While Paul went to the Jew first from Jerusalem to Rome, it was simply that Israel might be without excuse, for Paul was never permitted to offer the kingdom to Israel as Peter had done. Rather he proved to them that Jesus was the Christ and declared that:

“Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38,39).

HUMAN OPPOSITION TO GOD’S SECRET PURPOSE

Long before Israel rejected Christ, God had secretly purposed to show the riches of His grace to the world through the merits of His crucified Son.

Under the terms of the great Abrahamic Covenant the nations were to be blessed through the *multiplied* seed of Abraham (See Gen. 22:17,18). But God knew that Israel would fail. Moreover it was necessary that they should learn that not by their own virtues, but only by the grace of God could they be of blessing to the nations. Hence God had planned that before bringing in the millennial blessing He would set

them aside for a time in order to impress deeply the lesson which the present dispensation teaches (See Rom. 3:22,23; 10:12,13; 11:11-15,32,33).

Now at Antioch in Pisidia we find Paul preaching to the Jews, through whom the Gentiles were to have been blessed. After the service the Gentiles ask to hear the Word, and the next sabbath day finds nearly the whole city gathered together to hear the Word of God.

This, of course, should have delighted the Jews, but it did not.

“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, 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 13:45,46).

Mark well: It was *necessary* that the Word should first have been spoken to the Jews. Why necessary? Because that was the prophetic program. Salvation was to go to the Gentiles *through Israel.*

“BUT seeing ye put it from you...lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

This clearly indicates a *change in program*—and a change which never had been prophesied.

Here the Jews, God’s channel of blessing to the Gentiles, reject Christ, and Paul turns to the Gentiles *in spite of them.* This procedure had never been prophesied, but it was according to the secret

purpose for which God had raised up Paul, that *other* apostle. Nor was it according to any covenant, but only and entirely according to the matchless grace of God. (Read carefully Eph. 3:1-3).

Little wonder that we read: *“And Paul and Barnabas waxed BOLD!”*

If it took boldness for Peter to preach Messiah to *gainsaying* Israel, what do you suppose it took for Paul to proclaim to an *envious* Israel that salvation was to go to the Gentiles in spite of their opposition? What boldness that required!

This is why he writes to the believers at Rome:

“Nevertheless, brethren, *I have written the more boldly* unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles...” (Rom. 15:15,16).

As the opposition mounted it required more and more boldness on the part of the apostle. To the Thessalonians he writes:

“But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention” (I Thes. 2:2).

To Be Continued!



His Great Love



By Pastor
Kevin Sadler

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us” (Eph. 2:4).

God’s Word declares that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and sin separates us from a holy God who can never allow one sin in His presence. Unless our sins are taken away, sin will separate us eternally from Him in the lake of fire.

Singer Steven Curtis Chapman once said, “In the gospel, we discover we are far worse off than we thought, and far more loved than we ever dreamed.”

God is rich in mercy and loves us with a “great love.” Out of that great love, He sought our greatest and highest good, even though we have nothing in ourselves to commend ourselves to Him. And He sent His perfect Son to die for us, to bear the full punishment for our sins at the Cross (I Cor. 15:3,4).

God asks a very simple thing for salvation today: just believe that Christ died for you, for your sins personally, and that He rose again, and you are saved by grace through faith, your sins are forgiven, and you are made righteous by God. It’s been said, “The redeeming death of the Savior is sufficient for all, deficient for none, but efficient only for those who believe.” Have you believed?

Question Box

“The 12 apostles didn’t carry out the so-called Great Commission, because Israel didn’t accept the kingdom. So they stayed in Jerusalem. At least they didn’t go to the entire world as our Lord commanded (Mark 16:15). How can you explain Mark 16:20: ‘they went forth, and preached every where...’?”

The term “every where” is used eleven other times, and there are times where it would seem to refer to *everywhere on earth* (Acts 17:30; I Tim. 2:8). But in Genesis 13:10, the term “every where” refers to everywhere *in “the plain of Jordan.”* Similarly, in I Chronicles 13:2, the phrase is limited to every where *“in all the land of Israel.”* And so as always, words and phrases must be defined in light of the context in which we find them.

Armed with this understanding, we are now better equipped to know what Luke 9:6 means when it says the twelve went out “preaching the gospel, and healing *every where.*” Applying the principle we learned above, the “every where” here must be limited to “the towns” through which they traveled. If the reader is wondering *which* towns, here we must look to the *larger* context of the other gospel accounts of this commission for the answer. In Matthew’s account, we learn that when the Lord first sent the twelve out to preach, He told them to “go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:5,6). Hence we know from the larger context that “the towns” in which the twelve preached “every where” under this first commission were towns found only in *Israel.*

This finally helps us understand Mark 16:20, for the “every where” here must be interpreted in light of the other accounts of the “great commission.” In Luke 24:47, we learn they were commissioned to go to “all nations,” but they were to begin “at Jerusalem.” We also know that they were not to continue on to “all Judaea...Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8) until Jerusalem was wholly converted, for in the kingdom “the word of the Lord” must go forth *“from Jerusalem”* (Isa. 2:3). Since, as you say, Israel didn’t accept the kingdom, the twelve remained in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), and the “every where” of Mark 16:20 can only refer to everywhere *in Jerusalem.*

—Pastor Kurth



The Measure of the Ministry

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(A study of the ministry in II Corinthians 1-6—Part 4)

Our study of Paul's thoughts on the ministry in the early chapters of II Corinthians has brought us to Chapter 3, where in our last issue we considered the subject of the minister's *message*, i.e., new testament grace. We saw that this message is so glorious that Paul urged that it be preached with "*great plainness of speech*" (3:12). This is in stark contrast to the message of Moses, who "*put a vail over his face*" (3:13) to represent the *veiled language* God was using to speak to Israel through him. Whatever this veil represented, it was something that "*blinded*" Israel (v. 14), and kept them from seeing that the message of the law that Moses preached was destined to "*end*" and be "*abolished*" (v. 13 cf. Rom. 10:4 "*end*" and Eph. 2:15 "*abolished*"), "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof" (Heb. 7:18).

We needn't guess what this veil represented. When Paul says "their minds were blinded, *for...*", this indicates he is about to tell us how they were blinded by the veil. He then goes on to explain that the veil that blinded Israel was "*the reading of the old testament*," and that this veil was *still* blinding Israel, as Paul says, "*until this day*," since Moses was still "*being read in the synagogues every sabbath day*" (Acts 15:21). Hence we conclude that the veil represented *the law*, and that *the glory of the law* is what blinded the Jews to their own inability to keep it.

But how could the reading of such a glorious law blind them if, as the Psalmist said to God, “the entrance of Thy words giveth *light*” (Psa. 119:130)? We generally associate blindness with *darkness* rather than *light*. But while it is true that temporary blindness can be caused by a *lack* of light as our eyes adjust to the darkness, what reader hasn’t been temporarily blinded by the sudden *presence* of light, such as that of a camera flash? In the same way, the glorious light of the law blinded Israel to their own inability to keep it, and to the need for the law to end and be replaced by the new covenant.

This is important to remember, especially if the reader has ever been troubled by Bible statements that indicate God sometimes blinds people to spiritual truth. God blinds people, not by *withholding* light from them, but rather by *giving* it, i.e., not by the *concealing* of truth, but rather by the *revealing* of it. Isaiah was told to “go, and *tell*” Israel something, and it was *the telling* of truth that would “*shut their eyes; lest they see*” (6:10). It was *the telling* of truth that would “make the heart of this people *fat*, and make their ears *heavy*” (v. 10). Hearts are made *fat* and ears are made *heavy* by an *abundance* of truth, not by a *deprivation* of truth.

Because of this, God can never be charged with injustice when men are blinded to spiritual truth. Remember, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart by showing him miracle after miracle that could as easily have *softened* his heart to believe on Israel’s God. It was Pharaoh’s own pride that caused him to instead harden his heart in response to these miracles, and here in our text it was Israel’s own pride that kept them from seeing their inability to keep the law.

But if Paul could say that “until this day *remaineth* the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament” (II Cor. 3:14), surely this means that the veil *first* blinded the Jews during the *initial* reading of the old testament in Exodus 24. There we read that when “Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments” that “all the people answered with one voice, and said, *All the words which the Lord hath said will we do*” (v. 3).

While this sounds like the right thing to say in response to God’s words, it was not the reply He had in mind! God was hoping they would say, “*Such a law is too high, we cannot attain unto it!*” Instead, their spiritual pride blinded them to their inability to keep such a law. Moses responded by writing the law in a book (v. 4), and then “he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people” (v. 7), as if to say, “Are you *sure* you want to agree to the terms of this

“...grace pastors have the answer to the needs of every individual on the planet...”

covenant? Listen to the conditions *again* before you solemnly vow to keep a law that will curse you if you cannot keep it.” When they again replied, “*All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient*” (v. 7), God decided to give them about fifteen centuries to try!

Sadly, we can say with Paul of the time now present that “even unto *this* day, when Moses is read” in synagogues around the world, “*the veil is upon their heart*” (II Cor. 3:15). Yes, even in nominally Christian churches, men are still blinded by the glory of the law, and by their own spiritual pride, into thinking that they can keep it well enough to be saved, and so they see no need of “the Mediator of a *better* covenant” (Heb. 8:6).

What’s the solution? Well, as Paul says here, the veil that blinds men’s hearts is “*done away in Christ*” (II Cor. 3:14). The removal of the veil is not automatic, however! As Paul puts it, it is only “*when it [their heart] shall turn to the Lord*” that “*the veil shall be taken away*” (v. 16). It has always been true that the veil of spiritual pride is lifted only when men *realize* their inability to keep the law, and do what Israel should have done when the law was first given—*turn to the Lord for salvation* instead of thinking they could earn it by their own obedience. This is how Jews were “justified” under the law (Luke 18:9-14), and it is still how men are saved today.

Now when Paul goes on to say that “*the Lord is that Spirit*” (v. 17), we feel like asking, “The Lord is *what* spirit?” Well, the only spirit mentioned in the passage is *the spirit of the new testament* (v. 6). Why then did our translators put a capital “s” on Spirit here? It is because “*the Lord is that Spirit*.” Christ is the spirit of the new testament, having been “made a quickening *spirit*” (I Cor. 15:45), and the message of new testament grace is now the only hope of sinful man. That’s why Paul says that “*where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*” (II Cor. 3:17), whereas in time past, where the letter of the law was, there was only *bondage*.

Now up until this point, Paul has been speaking of the quickening power of new testament grace in the hearts and souls of *unbelievers*. He closes this chapter, however, by saying that “*we* all [all us believers] with open face [no veil of unbelief!] can also benefit from new testament grace by “*beholding as in a glass [the Bible (James 1:23)] the glory of the Lord...*” (II Cor. 3:18).

Here we must pause, however, for everyone knows that when men look into a mirror, they behold *themselves*, not the Lord! Ah, but since the believer is *in Christ*, when *the believer* looks in the mirror of *Paul’s epistles*, he sees “*the glory of the Lord*.” That is, he sees all that God has made him in Christ.

And when we do, an amazing thing happens: we are “*changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*.” You see, it is not by looking into the mirror of the old covenant law that

changes us into the image of Christ, it is by looking into the mirror of the epistles of Paul. When we look into the mirror of the old covenant law, we behold ourselves, and “what manner of man” we are (James 1:24), i.e., we see ourselves in all our sinfulness. But when we look into the mirror of Paul’s epistles, we see ourselves in *Christ*, the Spirit of the new testament. Focusing on *Him*, and what God has made us in Him, is what changes us into His image, not the focus on ourselves that the law brings. And isn’t being changed into the image of Christ that for which we should all be *yearning*?

It is this transforming message that grace pastors are distinctly and uniquely privileged to carry to the lost and confused multitudes all about us. For it is the same grace “*that bringeth salvation*” to all men that then goes on to teach believers to “*live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*” (Titus 2:11,12). While untold thousands of “Christian” ministers are completely unaware that men are saved by grace through faith and not by works, and thousands more are still trying to change believers into the image of Christ by browbeating them with a law that was designed to show men their sinfulness, and their need of a Savior, grace pastors have the answer to the needs of every individual on the planet, lost or saved: *grace!*

With that in mind, if the reader of this page has never considered becoming a grace pastor, may we ask: *why not?* Even the lepers in Israel of old knew that “*we do not well*” if we “*hold our peace*” in “*a day of good tidings*” (II Kings 7:3-9). After they had feasted on the riches of God’s goodness, and stored some up for the future (v. 8), they felt constrained to want to *share* the good news with others. If you likewise enjoy feasting on the goodness of God’s grace, and have stored up a goodly amount of understanding of it, we are praying that His love will now begin to constrain your heart to make it your life’s work to *share* the riches of God’s grace with others (II Cor. 5:14,15).

This is certainly how the Apostle Paul felt about it. “*Therefore seeing we have this ministry,*” he said, “*we faint not*” (II Cor. 4:1). When the apostle speaks of “*this ministry,*” of course, he is referring in the context to the new testament “*ministration of the spirit*” of which he had been speaking (3:8). If he had been asked to minister the law, he might well have felt like fainting! And so might we, if we were called upon to minister what Paul earlier called “*the ministration of death*” (3:7). The law earned this moniker by demanding that men “*keep the commandments*” to obtain eternal life (Matt. 19:16,17), and men have been trying unsuccessfully to keep the law for 3500 years now!

How would you like it if you were hired to be a salesman, and your boss said to you, “Our product hasn’t worked for 3500 years, now *get out there and sell it!*” The only correct response to that would be, “Pass the smelling salts, I think I’m going to faint!” But the new testament of which we’ve been made able ministers is a ministration of *grace*

and *mercy*. That's why Paul says, "*as we have received mercy*, we faint not." As able ministers of the new covenant, all we have to do is ask people to *receive* God's mercy, just as we have received it! Add to that the special "mercy" Paul added to his customary "grace and peace" greeting when writing to pastors (I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4), a mercy which He continues to extend to grace ministers today, and there is no need for us to faint in His service!

Something else that can cause an honest man to faint is being accused of dishonesty, and Paul was being charged with misappropriating funds from the collection he took among the Corinthians for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26). Rather than fainting, Paul not only repudiated this charge, he "*renounced the hidden things of dishonesty*" that others used as well (II Cor. 4:2), and later explained to the Corinthians the careful measures he had taken in "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (8:21).

There is perhaps no area in which more discredit can be brought upon the Lord and the ministry than in the area of *finances*, and so in financial matters it is crucial that ministers abstain from even the *appearance* of evil (I Thes. 5:22). Pastor Stam once asked his wife, "Henrietta, is this shirt dirty?" to which she replied, "*If it's doubtful, it's dirty*," an attitude that this conscientious man of God recommended that Christians adopt toward all things. We would add that this goes double for pastors, and doubly so in the area of the Lord's money.



In addition to this charge of dishonesty, Paul was also being accused of "walking in craftiness" (II Cor. 4:2). His accusers in Corinth were saying, "Paul didn't *burden* us by asking for money directly, he was much too *crafty* for that! He rather caught us with guile" (12:16). They claimed the apostle had craftily made a gain of them *through his helpers*, something he steadfastly denied (v. 17,18). When preachers employ this unscrupulous method today, it reminds us of how Mafia kingpins can truthfully say, "I never extorted money from anyone," when the truth is they did so through their goons. Faithful ministers must scrupulously avoid this and all other crafty methods of extorting money from God's people.

It shouldn't be surprising that a minister who would handle money dishonestly, and handle people with craftiness, would also handle the Word of God "*deceitfully*," another charge being leveled against Paul, and another charge he vehemently denied (II Cor. 4:2). But how did

the “*manifestation of the truth*” commend Paul in this area? Ah, if you preach Paul’s gospel, and teach what the Word rightly divided has to say about finances, everyone will know that you are not after people’s money! If you preach that God won’t punish you if you don’t pay your tithes, if you preach that tithing was only *required* of Jews under the law, the manifestation of these truths will commend you to “*every man’s conscience*,” for the simplest of men will know you are not out after their money if you are saying things like that! Paul may not have had any “*epistles of commendation*” (3:1) to vouch for his integrity, but as he put it, he and his helpers were “*commending ourselves*” (4:2) by manifesting these grace truths that are so seldom heard from the pulpit.

Those who were still preaching the law and not grace were keeping the veil on the hearts of men (3:15), “*but if our gospel be hid*,” Paul says, “*it is hid to them that are lost*” (4:3). Paul preached *Christ*, and that veil was “*done away in Christ*” (3:14). The “*mystery*” that Paul preached may have been “*the hidden wisdom*” of God (I Cor. 2:7), but the *gospel* he preached was as open and as simple as “*Christ died for our sins; believe and be saved!*”



But if it is so simple, why don’t more people believe it? It’s easy to blame the devil, especially when Paul describes the lost as people “*in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*” (II Cor. 4:4). If the reader is wondering if it is fair for God to allow Satan to blind men to the gospel, please notice that Satan is only allowed to blind the minds “*of them which believe not*.” People are *willingly* ignorant of the gospel (cf. II Pet. 3:5). Satan is able to blind them to it only because they don’t want to believe it.

He blinds their minds with “*the reading of the old testament*” (3:14), getting them to reject the righteousness that is in Christ by playing on their sense of *self*-righteousness, convincing them they can keep the law well enough to be saved, something they are all too willing to self-righteously believe. Adherents of the law are convinced that the law is able to mold them into the image of the God who gave it, and so turn a blind eye to “*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God*” (II Cor. 4:4). As we have seen, the law was glorious, *but not that glorious!* (3:7-11).

Thus grace pastors have such a glorious message to proclaim that like Paul, “*we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*” (4:5). Untold harm has been done to the cause of Christ by preachers who preach *themselves!* Years ago, a friend of this writer went to hear a famous fundamentalist preacher, who used the words “*I*” and “*me*” and

“my” so much that even this friend who was not yet saved knew something was wrong. If the reader is thinking of entering the ministry, you should know in advance that the pulpit is no place for your own thoughts and opinions, or even your personal convictions! We trust that you will determine here and now that you will *preach Christ*, pray the prayer that pastors used to pray to “hide the speaker behind the cross,” and then like Paul freely admit to the saints that we ourselves are nothing more than “*your servants*” (4:5).

Ministers are not *masters*, they are *servants*. The place where we proclaim the truth is a *pulpit*, it is not a *bully pulpit*. Pastors are *servants*, not *lords* (I Pet. 5:2,3). Too many politicians forget that they are public servants, and too many preachers forget that they are *servants of the Lord and His people*. If you want to be a pastor so you can “lord it over” people that you are somehow above them, as far as God is concerned you need not apply for a position in the ministry.

Next Paul tells the Corinthians that he was their servant “*for Jesus’ sake*” (4:5), not for the selfish sake of the Corinthians themselves. Like many wealthy people, the Corinthians had plenty of servants whom they didn’t appreciate, and so when Paul became their servant, they didn’t appreciate him either (II Cor. 12:15)! So why then did Paul serve them? “*For Jesus’ sake!*” And this is why ministers should serve God’s people today. Paul was not the first nor the last pastor who poured out his life ministering to ungrateful people. If the reader is balking at entering the ministry because he knows or has even witnessed firsthand how ungrateful a congregation can sometimes be to such devotion, don’t let that keep you from becoming a pastor; do it *for Jesus’ sake!*

God “commanded” the light to shine out of darkness (4:6 cf. Gen. 1:3), but He is not commanding you to become a minister. He has rather gently shined the light of the gospel “in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (4:6), and is hoping that this will touch your heart and make you want to give your life in service for Him. And so we close by praying that the love that God commended toward us at Calvary (Rom. 5:8) will constrain you to want to preach the glory of God in the unveiled face of Jesus Christ with great plainness of speech!

To Be Continued!



e-mail



It's not your computer!

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If your e-mails to BBS keep bouncing back, it is because we have a new address. Just make this change to your address book, and if your e-mails still bounce back, well then maybe it IS your computer!



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Florida:

"I just got finished reading Brother Stam's book on *True Spirituality*. Wow! What a refreshing teaching!"

From Washington:

"I'm learning so much from studying these *Growing Up in Grace* lessons that I didn't realize, and I have been a Christian since 1952."

From Facebook:

"It's great to find BBS here on FB! *Things That Differ* by C. R. Stam opened my eyes many years ago and I've been thankful ever since! Grace rules!" (We agree! [Rom. 5:21]—Ed).

From Facebook:

"*Things That Differ* is an awesome book!! Very helpful!"

From Facebook:

"Thank you for the hours of wonderful reading and listening...I have read every article, including the entire O'Hair library."

From British Columbia:

"We wish to thank you for the *Searchlight* each month. It is food for the soul and encouragement to the heart."

From Myanmar:

"Your publications build faith and open up our minds, and remind us to keep on, walk another mile for Jesus. The magazine has been a monumental resource to our life and mission... real life-giving and life-changing."

From Michigan:

"I grew up with the blessing of right division and understanding the Scriptures foundationally only in this way...I think that the *Searchlight* will help my husband understand as he asks many questions and is searching the Scriptures."

From Facebook:

"If you haven't read Paul Sadler's book *The Triumph of His Grace* (Preparing Ourselves for the Rapture) I highly recommend it...I am re-reading it for the umpteenth time...it is a marvelous book and it will open your eyes even more to our Blessed Hope... when you read 'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with...a shout, with voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first' I Thes. 4:16...how can you read that and not get excited and want to tell the entire world to make sure you are ready for this glorious moment in the lives of all believers!" (How indeed!—Ed).

From Oklahoma:

"Thank you for the series on *Revelation* in the *Searchlight*. It has really helped me to understand who the seven churches are. It makes sense!"

From California:

"How very much we have learned about the grace gospel that has simply made the Scripture come alive... Why, oh why is this truth being withheld from the people?"

From Arizona:

“I’m a little new to rightly dividing the Word of truth. Since I’ve been introduced to it, things make a lot more sense now....I have read some of C. R. Stam’s books and really gained clear insight in understanding the Bible better.”

From Facebook:

“Thank you for posting this wonderful preaching on Philippians. My wife and I listened to this for the first time this morning.”

From Connecticut:

“Enclosed is a check for the book *The Triumph of His Grace* plus a gift. Praise God for Les Feldick and the *Searchlight!*”

From Facebook:

“Thank you so much for all you do in the teaching of the Word rightly divided! You all are a constant source of encouragement and information for me, and I greatly appreciate all the articles, the *Searchlight*, and the amazing responses when I have contacted you with questions.” (They don’t call it “amazing grace” for nothing!—Ed).

From Nigeria:

“I cannot thank you enough for such a wonderful book, the *Searchlight* of August 2007. ‘Be the Best You Can Be’ was indeed a message not to any other person but myself in particular. I have wasted all these years not doing anything tangible to my Lord. I have decided to give Him my best this time....*Hell, Sheol, Hades, Paradise and the Grave* by Dr. Bedore was widely and extensively consulted for academic research by the students in the seminary here. The author really did justice to this subject.”

From the Philippines:

“I would like to request a free monthly booklet of the *Berean Searchlight*. I used to read it when I was in college. I learned a lot from them, which helped me accept Christ as My Lord and Savior last July. I am now a CPA and I have done some speaking at our church, and your monthly issue is a great help.”

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“I do enjoy so very much the *Berean Searchlight* each month. Thank you so much for all the great work you’re doing so that others may come to know Him.” (We are all about Philippians 3:10!—Ed).

From South Dakota:

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From Facebook:

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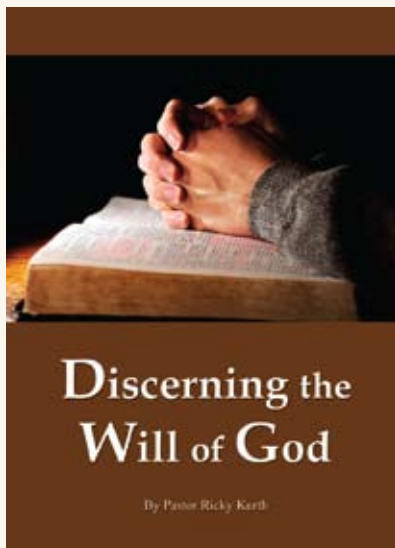


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News and Announcements

A Pennsylvania Plus: After your editor's meetings at the *Kenbrook Retreat Center* in Lebanon close at noon on May 2nd, we will be speaking later that day in Short Gap, West Virginia, and enjoying a potluck dinner and the fellowship of the saints in that area. For more information on the Lebanon meetings, contact Bill Schaefer at hitnmis@verizon.net or 717-949-3020, and to find out more about the Short Gap meeting, just get in touch with Suzanne Potter at 304-263-2411.

Former BBS Business Manager Doug Cox has been selected as the new president of *Things To Come Mission*. Since leaving us, Doug remained active in a number of grace ministries, but still made time for some handyman projects around the office here at BBS. He then assumed his new position at TCM on January 1st, and is already hard at work. We know that Doug and his wife Sonja will appreciate your prayers as he endeavors to lead the important work of this historic grace mission.

Church-planting: When we announced last November that the newly-formed *West Valley Grace Fellowship* of Surprise, Arizona was up and running, we neglected to mention that this new work was actually a *church plant*. When Pastor Josh White became the pastor of *Grace Bible Church* in Phoenix three years ago, it was his expressed desire to help plant another grace church in the area within five years, and this has now come to fruition. We mention this to encourage other grace churches to consider church-planting, a neglected area of ministry that God has blessed and used countless times to the praise of His glory.

Correction: When we announced in November that Niles Knutson was pastoring the newly formed *Grace Bible Fellowship* of West Salem, Wisconsin, this was certainly news to him, and to *Dakota Bible Institute* graduate Pastor Micah J. Graham, who is the actual leader of this new assembly! Thankfully, this correction gives us the opportunity to tell you that Sunday School has been changed to 9:45 a.m., with church at 11 a.m. For further information, contact Niles at 608-269-0302.



Michael Ortiz took our cover photo of *Punta Figuras Lighthouse* located in Arroyo, Puerto Rico. It was first lit by the Spanish government in 1893. During WWII, it was used as a lookout. In 2003, the Puerto Rican government rehabilitated the light at a cost of two million dollars.

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"It is wonderful to be saved by the grace of God, but it is even more wonderful to be used by God for the salvation of others."

—Pastor C. R. Stam

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