

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

March 2001



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A Tribute



“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.” On Wednesday, December 27, 2000, our old friend and co-laborer Maurice Reynolds entered glory just two weeks prior to his 86th birthday. Maurie had been experiencing discomfort in his chest for some time before his homegoing, although doctors were unable to put their finger on the problem.

When I spoke to his niece the other day she told me that he was planning to have dinner with them on Christmas day, but phoned to say he’d be a little late. When she inquired how late, he replied, “Oh, about a week or so, I’m not feeling that well.” That’s our Maurie, a good sense of humor to the end!

Until his retirement, Maurie and his brother Wilbur co-owned the *Reynolds Metal Works*, which employed many believers in Christ. While Brother Reynolds was quiet and unpretentious, he was a man of deep thought, which gave birth to many ingenious ideas. They say “necessity is the mother of invention,” so Maurie rolled up his sleeves and designed and built the first van hydraulic side-entry wheelchair lift, for which he was granted a patent. He also came up with creative ways of spreading the good news of Christ and Him crucified. Maurie’s “Insurance Policy” and “ABC’s Bookmark” have been instrumental in introducing thousands to the gospel of the grace of God.



Know Your ABC's	
A menum them	—II Cor. 8:6
B lessed be	—II Cor. 13:31
C harm us in	—Eph. 1:4
D eal to Christ	—I Thes. 4:30
E asily see	—I Thes. 5:11
F aith is counted	—Rom. 4:5
G od manifest	—I Tim. 2:46
H ead of the Church	—Col. 3:10
I nsured man is	—II Cor. 4:36
J ailed to the	—I Cor. 8:17
K nowledge of the	—I Tim. 8:4
L ooking for that	—Titus 2:13
M ake right by the	—Eph. 2:13
N ecessity is laid	—I Cor. 9:36
O bey your parents	—Col. 3:20
P ray without	—I Thes. 5:17
Q uestioned us	—Col. 3:16
R emember just	—I Thes. 1:3
S ark these things	—Col. 3:1
T echnicity unto	—Acts 14:3
U nderstand all	—I Cor. 13:9
V engeance is mine	—Rom. 12:19
W ages of sin	—Rom. 6:23
X marks the time	—For decision
Y eah! He	—Col. 2:10
Z achary of good	—Titus 2:14

Brother Reynolds loyally served on the *Berean Bible Society* Board of Directors for over 50 years and stood with us when others headed for cover. If there is one word that sums up his life it would be “faithfulness.” In the 25 years or so that I knew him, he never once wavered in his stand for Paul’s apostleship and message. Surely a great recompense of reward awaits Maurie at the Judgment Seat of Christ. May God grant us a special measure of grace to follow his godly example and desire to “make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery.”

As a *tribute* to Maurie’s generosity, we are offering a dozen “Insurance Policy’s” or the “ABC’s Bookmarks” free of charge, while supplies last. If you are able to assist us with a two dollar donation to help with postage and handling, we will be eternally grateful.

From Pennsylvania:

"We thank our wonderful Lord for His faithful workers in supplying your service for Him. We greatly appreciate all of you."

From New York:

"How we love to give thanks for all the Lord's goodness. I especially am grateful for you people who have been a real blessing to us, rightly dividing the Word. I never stop thanking you all for the simple powerful insight that you have shared. God surely has blessed us through you."

From Alabama:

"We are learning a lot from your *Berean Searchlight*. We hope one day to visit you." (The welcome mat is always out. By the way, Pastor Stam donated his entire Library to BBS several years ago so be sure to leave enough time to browse through some of his books. Sorry, no checkouts! Ed.)

From Wisconsin:

"I just read one of your *Berean Searchlight* magazines about the Word rightly divided and I'm interested in receiving it. I have just started studying the Scriptures dispensationally and I'm **thirsty for more truth**. Your guidance on where and what to read would be greatly appreciated."

From Massachusetts:

"How I look forward to your monthly magazine. I pray that your ministry will continue to prosper and that more Christians will understand the meaning of grace, in all its truth. May God bless you abundantly and use you mightily to give rest to His weary and over-burdened saints. You're continually in my prayers and I thank the dear Lord for leading me to you folks."

From Kentucky:

"May the Lord continue to bless each of you as you serve Him. I enjoy the *Berean Searchlight* each month. Thank you in His precious name."

From Florida:

"God bless each and everyone of you for your efforts and kindness in teaching God's Word. It has been edifying to me reading your articles in the magazine, and to know that others are being blessed through this ministry encourages me to help."

From Iowa:

"I receive untold blessings from your literature."

From the Internet:

"I am fortunate to have found your web site. I find your books very interesting. Everything makes more sense from a dispensational point of view."

From Missouri:

"I appreciate all your efforts in taking an unwavering stand for the preaching of God's Word and the distinctiveness of Paul's ministry. Thank you for all the literature published by the *Berean Bible Society*. I receive the *Berean Searchlight* and it is a great blessing to me. The November issue was especially good—the article 'What's for Supper?' by Dennis Kiszonas was outstanding. Keep up the good work." (Dennis' title reminded me to call my wife to ask, "What's for dinner?" Pork! Thankfully we're living under grace!! Ed.)

From Indiana:

"Wishing you a good year and peace, contentment, and lasting joy in the Lord. I do enjoy and appreciate the *Berean Searchlight*."

From West Virginia:

"We enjoy the *Searchlight* and may God's blessing be on each of you for making this possible. Remember our church in your prayers as we are babes in Christ."

From Georgia:

"For years I have bought and read Brother Stam's books. I love the Bereans and have learned a lot about the Lord from them."

From Wisconsin:

“We thank our faithful Lord for all of you at *BBS*. The riches of His grace in His precious Word committed to faithful men is truly a blessing to be part of, and all of the glory goes to our Savior. The Lord willing, another year in His grace unless the Rapture.”

From Oregon:

“God bless thee and keep thee for your ministry is a great blessing to my husband and me. Enclosed is a love gift for the ministry. We really enjoy and are blessed with the *Berean Searchlight*.”

From E-mail:

“Two days ago I received the tapes you sent (Ephesians). Thank you so much. I’ve never heard such clear straightforward biblical teaching. They have been very challenging to my present views as well as food for thought (and prayers). Thank you again and keep up the good work with the tape ministry.” (Ephesians has been called the Mount Everest of Paul’s epistles. From the summit we are given a great view of God’s eternal purpose for the Church, the Body of Christ. Ed.)

From Michigan:

“Thank you for the *Thanksgiving Communiqué*. Yes we have much to be thankful for, and I’m especially grateful for those who brought me along in the gospel of grace such as Pastor Peebles, who led me to the *Searchlight* and the books by Brother Stam. Now I appreciate the light your books have shed on this marvelous Mystery. May God continue His blessings on *BBS* and *BBI*!”

From Minnesota:

“Enclosed is a small donation. Wish it could be more but we hope to send additional gifts in the future. We appreciate the hard work and sacrifice you put into the ministry. Thank you for your efforts.”

From E-Mail:

“I’m so glad to be able to meet folks like yourself in the Grace Movement and to be finally able to enjoy the whole Bible without torturing it simply because I was not rightly dividing it....I was helped into this position by the books of Brother Stam and am now starting to collect the books of other such writers. I really want to learn this thoroughly and am so glad I’m not going to have to work it all out by myself.”

From Illinois:

“I appreciate your work and the *Searchlight*.”

From Alabama:

“We enjoy your writing. We stand with you for the Grace message.” (The art of writing like the art of preaching isn’t to see how complex a subject can be made, but how understandable. Thanks for the thoughtful word! Ed.)

From California:

“After 18 years under traditional teaching, the confusion has cleared and the Scriptures are so clear now that I’ve learned about the dispensational interpretation of Scripture. Thank you so much.”

From Wisconsin:

“Words can’t describe the benefit we get from the *Searchlight* and the *Institute*. God’s blessings on you all and the work.”

From Colorado:

“Last November I requested a subscription to the *Berean Searchlight*. I appreciate your prompt response to my request in sending the magazine. Friends loaned me their Cornelius Stam and Paul Sadler books which I have found most helpful in clearing up much confusion that was clouding my Bible Study. I very much enjoy the website, as well as the written material.”

“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



From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

When computers were first introduced, they were responsible for many sleepless nights. As hardware and software improved, a new phrase was coined, “user friendly.” It simply meant you didn’t need to memorize or decipher a stack of commands to work with the operating system and software. If I may borrow the phrase for a moment, we would like the *Berean Bible Society* to be “user friendly” when you contact us. Perhaps the best way to accomplish this is to introduce you to those who will be assisting you when you call or write. While our staff members are classified as employees, we like to remind them that they are carrying on a ministry for the Lord. Therefore, we are here to serve you!

Linda is our receptionist who fields most of the calls here at BBS. She is also in charge of accounts receivable, orders, and address changes. If you have a question regarding a book, tape, or donation, Mrs. Bedore will be the one helping you.



Mrs. Linda Bedore



Pastor David Havard

David handles almost all of our correspondence that is received here at the office, including e-mails. If you have a question concerning the Scriptures or BBS, David’s the one who will be corresponding with you. Pastor Havard is also in charge of our “Fellowship File” for those desiring to be placed in touch with other grace believers (See News & Announcements). As time permits, David conducts “Special Meetings” for us as well.

Fran is my personal secretary who keeps track of me (a full-time job in itself). Besides being our backup receptionist, she makes sure that everyone who donates to the Lord’s work receives a “thank you” letter and a receipt. Since things have a way of slipping through the cracks sometimes, in the unlikelihood that you do not receive a receipt, be sure to call it to Fran’s attention. If you have a credit coming, she’s also in charge of accounts payable.



Mrs. Fran Ochalek



Pastor and Mrs.
Russ Miller

Mrs. Bunny Miller fields phone calls when more than one call is received at a time and is in charge of filling book and tape orders in the mailroom. Should you ever receive a defective book or tape, simply call it to Bunny's attention and she will be happy to replace it without charge. In addition to addressing the *Berean Searchlight*, Pastor Miller is responsible for *Two Minutes with the Bible*. If you would like to place *Two Minutes* in you local newspaper, Russ is the one you'll be corresponding with. *Two Minutes with the Bible* appears in over 800 newspapers across the country.

Kevin is responsible for all of the layout and type-setting of our books and booklets here at BBS. If you find a line missing on a page, something out of alignment or a typographical error, it needs to be brought to Kevin's attention; otherwise the error will be repeated at the next printing. This also includes something that may have been overlooked by our proofreaders.



Kevin Sadler



Pastor Paul
Sadler

Your editor is charged with the responsibility of the *Berean Searchlight*. This means making sure all the deadlines are met. In addition to being an author, there's administrative duties, correspondence, conference ministries, etc. So if you have any suggestions or perhaps a constructive criticism regarding Pastor Stam's or my writings, they should be sent to my attention.

Of course, the members of our staff have many, many other responsibilities. But hopefully those outlined above will help to better assist you when contacting us. We are indeed grateful to God that we have found grace in His sight to serve Him and those of like-precious faith.

Because of His grace,
Pastor Paul M. Sadler

OUR AIM

To help you
understand and enjoy
your Bible



The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

I Peter 4:1-7

By Paul M. Sadler

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

—I Pet. 4:1,2

Why do we suffer? The answer to this question has been a matter of debate since the days of Job. Usually the sorrows of man are a product of his own sinful behavior. But God often has a purpose in suffering. The fact that Christ came into the world to obey the will of His Father is indisputable. Even though the Savior was unjustly treated, He purposed in His heart that He would suffer and die at the hands of evil men before He would ever disobey the will of His Father.

Thus, Peter gives this admonition, “arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.” Like the mighty man of war who takes up a shield to defend himself, Peter’s hearers were to *arm* themselves with the same *attitude* as the Savior. That is, they were to be obedient to the will of the Father. As we know, the world has a special hatred for those who obey the will of God, thus these saints were suffering because they had “ceased from sin.” They were dead to sin; therefore, they refused to allow it to control their lives.

The apostle adds that anyone who refused to cease from sin in their walk “no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

How could they, or we for that matter, enjoy those sins that crucified our Savior? Whatever time they had left after their conversion was to be used in obedience to God.

The Psalmist says, “For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*. The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa. 90:10). A tale is a *story*. There are short stories and there are full-length novels. If, by the grace of God, we live to be fourscore (80) years, this is merely a grain of sand on the shores of eternity.

Peter wanted his hearers to understand that they only had *one* lifetime to serve the Lord. Those years and opportunities that were lost could never be recovered. However, it was in their interest to use “the rest of the time” they had remaining to carry out the counsel of His will. The suffering and hardship they would endure as a result were not to be compared with the glory they will receive in the coming kingdom (I Pet. 1:7 cf. II Pet. 1:11).



THE WORLD AND THE BELIEVER

“For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine,

reveling, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*” (I Pet. 4:3,4).

Here Peter carefully distinguishes between the Gentiles and those of the Jewish dispersion to whom he was writing. This is clearly delineated by his usage of the pronouns “we” and “they.” God warned Israel again and again that she was not to commit the abominations of the Gentiles, lest they defile themselves and be cut off like the nations before them (Lev. 18:24-30). For the most part, the history of Israel is a sad commentary of one departure after another. The manner of life of these Hebrews was once so entwined with the heathen that they freely indulged in the same sins.

But the proclamation of the kingdom gospel had a profound effect upon some within the chosen nation. Thousands repented of their sins under the ministry of John the Baptist and believed that Christ was the Messiah of Israel. As they grew in the Lord, they forsook their former life of immorality, drunkenness, and illegal practices. The Word of God teaches us that the believer is never to “conform to this world,” which implies that the unregenerate man does. If a well-known book club endorses *Harry Potter*, before long everyone’s reading the stories, in spite of the fact that they are laced with evil themes.

Thus, when the believer in Christ refuses to conform to this evil world system, the unsaved, as Peter says, “think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*.” Let a man lie, cheat, and steal and the world thinks nothing of it. But let

that same man come to trust Christ, and denounce unrighteousness, and the world thinks he’s gone off the deep end. In the words of Festus, the governor of Caesarea, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.” To which the apostle replied, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of *truth* and *soberness*” (Acts 26:24,25).

The following true story illustrates how the world perceives the Christian community. The ways of the believer seem strange to them:

THE SACRIFICE

After a few of the usual Sunday evening hymns, the church’s pastor slowly stood up, walked over to the pulpit, and before he gave his sermon for the evening, briefly introduced a guest minister who was in the service that evening. In the introduction, the pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends, and that he wanted him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service.

With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak, “A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific Coast,” he began, “when a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high that, even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright, and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized.” The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service started, looking somewhat interested in his story.

The aged minister continued with his story, “Grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life...to which boy he would throw



the other end of the lifeline. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not.

The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves. As the father yelled out, ‘I love you, son!’ he threw out the lifeline to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body was never recovered.”

By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth. “The father,” he continued, “knew his son would step into eternity with the Lord Jesus, and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without Jesus. Therefore, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend.”

“How great is the love of God that He should do the same for us. Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only begotten Son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept His offer to rescue you and take hold of the lifeline He is throwing out to you in this service.” With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room.

The pastor again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief sermon with an invitation at the

end. However, no one responded to the appeal. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side. “That was a nice story,” politely started one of the boys, “but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian.”

“Well, you've got a point there,” the old man replied, glancing down at his worn Bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face, and he once again looked up at the boys and said, “It sure isn't very realistic, is it? But I'm standing here today to tell you that THAT story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up His Son for me. You see...I was that father and your pastor is my son's friend.”

THE JUDGMENT TO COME

“Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick [living] and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (I Pet. 4:5-7).

Since the pronoun “who” is in direct apposition with the participle “speaking evil” (vs. 4), it refers to those of the world who will give an account to God.¹ Both Peter and Paul use similar phraseology regarding the judgment of the “living and the dead.” Interestingly, however, they approach the subject from two entirely different viewpoints. Paul addresses the judgment of believers, while Peter concerns himself with the unbelievers who were troubling those of the dispersion.

Paul writes, “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (II Tim. 4:1). As we know, Christ will *judge* the living at the Rapture (His appearing) who have been translated to glory. But the Bema Seat will also include the other members of the Body of Christ who preceded them in death (I Cor. 15:51,52 cf. I Thes. 4:13-18). Seven years later, at the Second Coming of Christ, the Lord will judge all the prophetic saints who enter into His kingdom. This judgment encompasses the living that survive the Great Tribulation and the dead who are raised in the first resurrection (Matt. 25:1-23,31-34 cf. Rev. 20:6).

Peter, on the other hand, deals with the judgment of the *unsaved* living and dead when he states: “Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.” The “unsaved living” who are alive at the Second Coming of Christ will be judged at the beginning of the kingdom and cast into outer darkness (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 13:36-43; 25:31-33,41-46). The “unsaved dead” of all ages will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Peter adds a statement here that has perplexed many for generations. “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit” (vs. 6). While some advocate that the unsaved will be given a second chance after death, such an extreme teaching is foreign to the Scriptures. For “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

Whenever confronted with a difficult passage, the broader and the immediate context become critical to the proper interpretation. The chapters and passages leading up to this particular verse have been dealing with *suffering*, especially in relation to the unjust treatment of these Jewish believers. In fact, some had experienced unspeakable atrocities, as we have seen. Surely the world was unworthy of these precious souls.

“The ‘unsaved dead’ of all ages will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).”

“For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are [now] dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” There is little question here that Peter is speaking about *believers*. The gospel was preached to them, they believed, and they were called upon to suffer and be rejected like their Savior. As victims of miscarriages of justice, these saints were falsely accused and judged according to *man’s* judgment. Thus, because of their testimony, some had suffered martyrdom for their faith. But death was not the end, even though the silence of the grave gave that impression. These saints were *alive* and well and serving the Lord in a disembodied state.

Peter was on a firm foundation for the Lord had taught him to “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to

destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). These unjust rulers who had maliciously cut short the lives of these innocent souls will one day stand before the righteous Judge of all the earth. Little wonder Peter says, “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (I Pet. 4:17-19).

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (vs. 7).

Through the Spirit Peter knew that the mercy of God was about to

depart from the chosen nation. The sound of Titus’ chariots would soon be heard in the distance as the end drew near. There may have still been a glimmer of hope that the dispensation of grace would be quickly brought to a close and these saints might live to see the Lord return in glory to conquer their enemies. Therefore they were to watch for His soon return and pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” With the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD, these words patiently wait to be uttered again by future Israelites in the coming day of the Lord.

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* by Kenneth Wuest, Vol. II, page 113.

Question Box

“Pastor, I have a friend who is of the conviction that grace teaching gives us a license to sin. Any suggestion how I might confront this unsound reasoning?”

Which is a higher motivation to live for the Lord? Law—“Thou shalt not...” or Grace—Christ loves us and gave Himself a ransom for our sins. To which Paul adds: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

While your friend may believe that grace gives us a license to sin, just the opposite is true. Grace teaches us to renounce ungodliness. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [age]*” (Titus 2:11,12). “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

—Pastor Sadler

Gratitude Overflowing

By Cornelius R. Stam



“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”

—II Cor. 4:15

It is said that the word “thanksgiving,” in one or another of its forms, flows from the heart and pen of Paul more than 50 times, while in all the rest of the New Testament Scriptures it is found only 21 times. Since the size of the rest of the New Testament is about two and a half times that of Paul’s epistles, this makes the ratio 6 to 1. That is, for every time some other New Testament writer uses the word, Paul uses it *six times*. This is probably correct, for Paul’s epistles are indeed filled with thanksgiving.

DISRESPECT AND INGRATITUDE

What a contrast this was to the pagan world about him! Long centuries before, the Gentiles who “knew God...*glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful*” (Rom. 1:21). Their attitude was that of *disrespect and ingratitude*. The result:

“...[they] became vain in their imaginations [or reasonings], and their foolish heart was darkened.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

“And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image make like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Vers. 21-23).

How superstitious and stupid intellectual man can be! Five hundred years of paganism showed its results in the great moral and spiritual depravity of the Egyptian dynasties. The Egyptians were intellectual people (Acts 7:22). They knew secrets that we moderns know nothing of. We do not know how they built their great pyramids and it is said that no engineer today would know how to build one. They knew also how to embalm their dead so that the mummies of many of their dead are still, after 3500 years, in existence in museums in Chicago, New York, London and elsewhere.

The Great Pyramid at Gizeh is a marvel of geometry, astronomy, and engineering, a permanent record of geometric facts, and a living proof that the ancients had an amazing knowledge of astronomy. Joseph A. Seiss calls the Great Pyramid “the oldest and greatest existing monument of intellectual man.”¹

But think of the superstition and fear involved in their *worship* of the hawk, the bull, the cow, the cat, the frog, the baboon, the jackal, the crocodile, and other beasts and reptiles! To these the Egyptians prostrated themselves, bringing them sacrifices to placate them when angry or ill-tempered. And to this we must add religious rites so vile that they are deeply repulsive to the Christian mind and heart. Little wonder, for five centuries before this,

“God...gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves” (Rom. 1:24).

God did not instill unclean desires; He simply gave them up to *“the lusts of their own hearts.”*

The record further states:

“[They] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...” (Ver. 25).

Again, the results:

“For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in *their lusts one toward another; men with men* working that which is unseemly [Lit., shameful], and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Vers. 26,27).

Ah, but surely all this had changed a great deal by the time of Paul, for it was then that the great Greek philosophers stepped forth, those men after whose wisdom modern western culture is said to be patterned. But *was* it so different in Paul’s day? Listen to his not-very-complimentary description of the wise of his day, as they gathered at Ephesus, that seat of learning where the goddess Diana was worshipped. To the Christians who lived there, he wrote:

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles [i.e., the unsaved Gentiles] walk, in the vanity of their mind,

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17,18).

Again, the moral result:

“Who being past feeling [Lit., calloused], have given themselves over to lasciviousness, TO WORK ALL UNCLEANNESS WITH GREEDINESS” (Ver. 19).

Had the pagan world changed so much by the time Paul arrived on the scene? Indeed, has it changed even since then? Have not pagan philosophies gained amazing headway even in “Christian” America? And have they not brought their sex-madness with them? Are there not millions here in America who *“work all uncleanness with greediness”*?

EARTHEN VESSELS

But how did Paul combat heathenism in his day? And how should we combat it in ours? First, we should recognize, as Paul did, that we are nothing in ourselves and that the power to bring light and salvation must come from God. Referring in the passage we are considering to “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), he says:

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (Ver. 7).

We do not put diamonds and rubies and other precious items in “earthen vessels.” They are too fragile. They are too easily broken and crushed. Yet God has deposited “this treasure,” the riches of His grace, in “earthen vessels”—*us!* Why? So that when hearts and lives and homes are changed by the gospel, it may be evident that the power was *“of God, and not of us.”*

Some people think that Paul was “the strong, bold type,” but not so. To these same Corinthians he wrote:

“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (I Cor. 2:3).

Nor was his moral background such as would inspire respectful attention. True, he had been conscientious and religious but, in his unsaved state, also ruthless and cruel, *“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord”* (Acts 9:1). Thus he says,

“...I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious...” (I Tim. 1:12,13).

Paul had been anything but faithful to God, to his Messiah, or to his people, but he was divinely enabled and *counted* worthy, as God entrusted him with the dispensing of the riches of His grace to a doomed and lost world. Thus, when these riches yielded great dividends, it was evident that the results were not due to Paul’s oratory or his persuasive powers; they were *of God*, for the instrumentality employed in defending and dispensing this treasure was altogether disproportionate to the amazing effect produced.

SATAN’S ATTEMPTS TO CRUSH THE EARTHEN VESSEL

And now let us see how Satan, in the case of Paul, sought to crush the “earthen vessel.” In II Corinthians 4:8-14 we have the story of the Apostle’s struggles—and his victory in Christ. It is replete with metaphors, some taken from the Corinthian games, with which his readers were so familiar.

Verse 8: *“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed.”* The words “on every side,” or “all around,” are expressive. The Apostle was hard-pressed, as by a wrestler seeking to suffocate his opponent with his

hold—yes, hard-pressed, *but not crushed!*

“We are perplexed, but not in despair.” He himself testified that *“we know not what we should pray for as we ought”* (Rom. 8:26). But he was “not in despair,” for he knew that the Holy Spirit *does* know what is good for us and pleasing to God (Rom. 8:26,27). What an encouragement the Spirit’s intercession should be to us who likewise, so often, find ourselves not knowing how to pray! We need not “despair” that our adversary will succeed in crushing these earthen vessels if we simply trust God for the outcome.

Verse 9: *“Persecuted, but not forsaken.”* The metaphor seems to be that of one pursued, harassed, by wild beasts. Constantly pursued by Satan’s henchmen, plotted against, waylaid, hunted down, surrounded by enemies (I Cor. 15:32 cf. II Cor. 1:8), he was not abandoned or left to perish, for in life *or in death*, deliverance and victory were his (II Tim. 4:17; Phil. 1:20,21), so that spiritually he could say what Daniel said of his physical circumstances after a night in the lions’ den: *“My God hath...shut the lions’ mouths”* (Dan. 6:22).



“Cast down, but not destroyed.” Evidently a metaphor from the boxing ring. In fight after fight, the count had seemed to pronounce the end—6,7,8,9! but God had again raised him up to go on fighting the

good fight of the faith. The above phrase has been rendered, “knocked down, but not out”!

By this time the Apostle had already suffered almost constant persecution, as II Corinthians 11 tells us.

Five times he had received “forty stripes save one” (II Cor. 11:24). Why does not the record simply say “thirty-nine stripes”? Because the Romans had a law on their books which said in effect: “Don’t give a man forty stripes; you will kill him.” So they gave him “forty save one.”

Three times he had been “beaten with rods” (Ver. 25), those terrible clubs that could break a man’s spine or leave him terribly disfigured.

Once he was stoned (Ver. 25)—and left for dead, and who cannot see, as they read II Corinthians 11, that repeatedly his very life stood in jeopardy.

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

It should be noted in Verses 10,11 that the Apostle bore in his body “*the dying of the Lord Jesus...always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.*” Why? Because, as an ambassador for Christ, he appeared before men “in Christ’s stead,” i.e., instead of the rejected Christ. Men would not have Christ, so the Lord sent Paul—and us—as His ambassadors.

In Colossians 1:24, he declares that he suffers to “fill up *that which is behind [or still remains] of the suffering of Christ,*” for His Body’s sake. He, of course, refers not to our Lord’s vicarious sufferings, for these are complete and all-sufficient to save the sinner, but rather to the fact that our Lord, now glorified in heaven, is still despised and blasphemed and hated on earth. But who suffers this hatred? Paul did; we do! We stand before men “in

Christ’s stead.” One of the greatest evidences that the present dispensation is “the dispensation of the grace of God” is the fact that the Book of Acts closes with the Apostle of grace in prison.

From Psalm 2 and Acts 2, it is evident that at Pentecost the stage was set, as it were, for the outpouring of God’s wrath upon the nations—and *the* nation Israel. This was the next number of the prophetic program.

But God, so “rich in mercy,” in “His great love wherewith He loved us” said, “Not yet!” and saved His chief enemy on earth, making him both the herald and the living example of His love and grace. And—mark well—when man declared war on God and threw His ambassador into prison, God did *not* make a counter-declaration of war, but *left* Paul in prison, to be beheaded by the enemy. Thus our Lord waits in grace, as a Royal Exile—waits to judge this world, meanwhile letting us, His ambassadors, take part in “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10) as we plead with men to be reconciled to God.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

“Having the same conflict which ye saw in me [at Philippi] and now hear to be in me” (Phil. 1:29,30).

But there is more: In II Corinthians 4:10, the Apostle declares that he bears about in his body “*the dying of the Lord Jesus,*” that “*the life also of Jesus*” might be made manifest in his body. Remember, the Lord Jesus died *and rose again*, and, as Paul ministered for Christ, he did not only share “the fellowship of His sufferings” but also “the power of His resurrection.” As men saw him preach the gospel, they did not see a whipped, defeated man before

them, but one who was animated by the glory of the message of *life* which he proclaimed. Paul did not cower before death; he trusted in “*God, who raiseth the dead*” (II Cor. 1:9). He had been “*in deaths oft*” (II Cor. 11:23); he had to face it almost constantly, “*always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in [his] mortal flesh*” (II Cor. 4:11).

“So then, death worketh in us, but life in you” (Ver. 12).

The idea is that his having been constantly delivered to death for Christ had borne its fruit in them. Death working in him had wrought life in them!

And he meant, by God’s grace, to go right on proclaiming Christ and His grace, for he had “the same spirit of faith” as the Psalmist, who said (in Psa. 116:10), “*I believed, therefore have I spoken*” (Ver. 13). Unlike so many men of God today, who are dominated by “the spirit of fear,” Paul declared: “We having the same spirit of faith...*we also believe, and therefore speak*” (Ver. 13). Paul had placed his trust, not merely in one who would keep him physically safe, but in the One *who raises the dead!* (Ver. 14). Long ago he had answered the college professors and their senior students who had come running up, all out of breath, scoffing that according to biology and half a dozen other sciences, resurrection from the dead is *impossible!* His devastating reply to them was simply:

“Thou fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened [brought to life] *except it die*” (I Cor. 15:36).

“Look about you,” he said: “Resurrection impossible? *You are surrounded by it!*”

Our Lord had said the same thing during His earthly ministry:

“Paul’s heart often sang with thanksgiving for those whose hearts and lives had been changed through his ministry...”


“Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except a corn [grain] of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit*” (John 12:24).

GRATITUDE OVERFLOWING

Back now to our original text:

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (II Cor. 4:15).

Paul’s heart often sang with thanksgiving for those whose hearts and lives had been changed through his ministry, but this thanksgiving was being—certainly was *meant to be*—multiplied *in them*: “*that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*” “Redound,” here, means to greatly exceed. God’s *abundant* grace is *enhanced by our thanksgiving!* In Romans 5:20, “where sin abounded, grace did *much more abound,*” or “*exceedingly overflow,*” but here “abundant grace” is made to *abound still more,* or shine still more brightly, “*through the thanksgiving of many.*” Indeed, the joy of heaven will be the gratitude of the redeemed for the infinite grace of God in saving and glorifying them!

It is God’s eternal purpose “*that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:7) and it will be our joy to praise Him for His grace through all eternity. 

BBS & BBI SPRING CONFERENCE AND SPEAKING SCHEDULE

Grace Community Church

Bible Conference

Location: *Grace Community Church*
2625 Industrial Park Drive
Bedford, Indiana

Dates: March 16-18, 2001

Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

Contact Person:

Pastor Dave Wilson (812) 277-0520

Grace Bible Fellowship

Special Meetings

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Cicero, Indiana
(North of Indianapolis)

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Theme: *The Bride of Christ*

Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

Contact Person:

Mike & Roberta Karnes (317) 984-4799

Old Bethel Bible Church

Bible Conference

Location: *Old Bethel Bible Church*
Old Bethel Road
Alpha, Kentucky

Dates: March 23-25, 2001

Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

Contact Person:

Pastor Vitis Bailey (270) 384-2731

Northern Indiana Regional Meetings

Location: *Holiday Inn*, I-94 & US 421
Michigan City, Indiana

Date: Saturday, April 7, 2001

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Ricky Kurth, Pastor of *Faith Bible Church*, Chicago Heights, IL
Joe Watkins, Director of *Things to Come Mission*, Indianapolis, IN
Paul M. Sadler, President of *Berean Bible Society*, Milwaukee, WI

Contact Person:

Mr. Dan Sanborn (219) 465-1165

Altoona Bible Church Ordination Service

Location: *Altoona Bible Church*
3017 Union Avenue
Altoona, Pennsylvania

Date: April 8, 2001

Guest Speaker:

Pastor David Havard
Executive Assistant at the *Berean Bible Society*

Contact Person:

Pastor Ken Peebles (814) 942-2131

Friendship Bible Church Spring Bible Conference

Location: *Friendship Bible Church*
100 South Adams
Friendship, Wisconsin

Dates: April 28-29, 2001

Guest Speaker:

Dr. W. Edward Bedore
Executive Director of the *Berean Bible Institute*

Contact Person:

Pastor Steve Hamilton (608) 339-9522

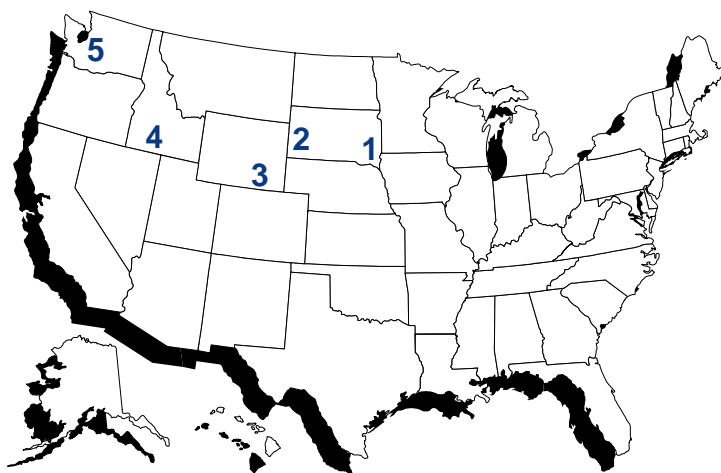
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Pastor Paul M. Sadler

- (1) **May 4** (Friday Evening)
Grace Community Church
5800 W. 49th Street, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Contact Person: Pastor George Flegal (605) 361-3393
- (2) **May 6** (Sunday Services)
Grace Bible Church
23751 Pine Haven Drive, Rapid City, South Dakota
Contact Person: Pastor Joel Finck (605) 341-3257
- (3) **May 9** (Wednesday Evening)
Grace Chapel of Laramie
1316 Canby Street, Laramie, Wyoming
Contact Person: Pastor Dennis Moore (307) 745-5801
- (4) **May 12** (Saturday—Morning & Afternoon)
Best Western (Cavanaugh's)
1357 Blue Lakes Boulevard, North, Twin Falls, Idaho
Contact Person: Mr. & Mrs. Floyd Kaufman (208) 543-4049
- (5) **May 19** (Saturday—Morning & Afternoon)
Berean Bible Church
2345 N. 185th, Seattle, Washington
Contact Person: Roy Moen (425) 778-9781





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Pastor Curt Crist

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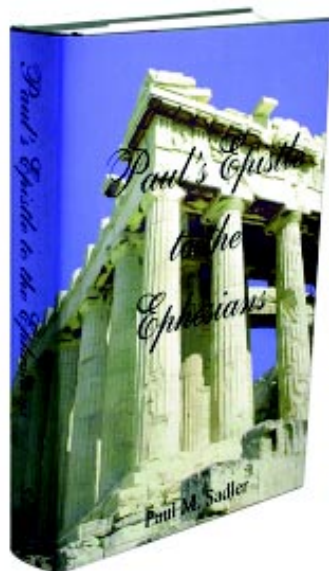
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Where is the One True Church?

By Victor Downs

The word church in the Greek is “ekklesia” which means a calling out, an assembly. So wherever believers come together they are by definition a church, a called out assembly. Paul speaks of *the church that is in your house* (Rom. 16:5;



I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phile. 2) referring to the believers who met in the houses of certain individuals in different cities. No organization can claim to be the only true church. And church buildings are where the church meets, but are not “the church.” Distinctive differences in doctrine often separate believers who attend churches of different denominations. The truth is “*Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25), “*Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*” (Heb. 12:2). Jesus Christ did not die for any denomination or church building, He died for our sins (See I Cor. 15:3-4).

Now the question is, how do we get into the true Church, the Body of Christ? Before I answer that, I’d like to say that you can’t get into the Church through confession, water baptism, a priest, praying to statues, communion, good works, church membership, the fact that your parents are or were Christians, etc. None of these things can secure God’s salvation or place you into the Body

of Christ. They may get you into a church membership in a building somewhere, but it will not save you.

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross, and was buried, and was raised the third day, He paid the penalty for the sins of the whole world.

God accepted His payment as a sufficient sacrifice for our sins. If you believe this in your heart, you will be saved. This is what is referred to as believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30-31). Upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). Under grace there is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5 cf. Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3,4).

Under the kingdom program, Israel had to believe that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, repent of their sin (of crucifying the Messiah), and be baptized in water (a purification ceremony), and also keep the commandments. This was not simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Only in the Apostle Paul’s writings do we find the message of salvation by grace through faith alone (See Eph. 2:8-9).

“Do nothing and be lost, or do nothing (but believe) and be saved.” “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*” and become a member of the true church, “*the Church which is His [Christ’s] Body*” (Eph. 1:22-23).

Victor is a former student at *Berean Bible Institute*. He lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he is involved in an effort to establish a Grace church.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION CHURCH PLANTERS: Pastor and Mrs. Joel Finck believe it is the Lord's leading for them to "plant churches." This became evident when they left a growing ministry in 1994 to establish a grace church in Rapid City, South Dakota, with the help of the Stratmeyer and Boyum families. Therefore, it came as little surprise to us when we received word that they are planning to relocate to Yankton, South Dakota to break ground on a new grace work. If you would like to know more about this ministry, you can reach Pastor and Mrs. Finck at 23751 Pine Haven Drive, Rapid City, SD 57702 or phone (605) 341-3257. Let's pray without ceasing that Joel and Linda's labor of love produces much fruit to the honor and glory of God.

FELLOWSHIP FILE: It has been a number of years since we've updated our "Fellowship File" so it may be a good idea to contact Pastor Havard to confirm that the information under your listing is current, especially with all the area code and zip code changes lately.

If your local assembly or Bible Study is in *full agreement* with the doctrinal position of the *Berean Bible Society*, we will be more than happy to add you to our "Fellowship File." Simply send us all the applicable information along with a brief "statement of faith" and we'll make sure that other grace believers are placed in contact with you. Doctrinal Statements are available upon request.

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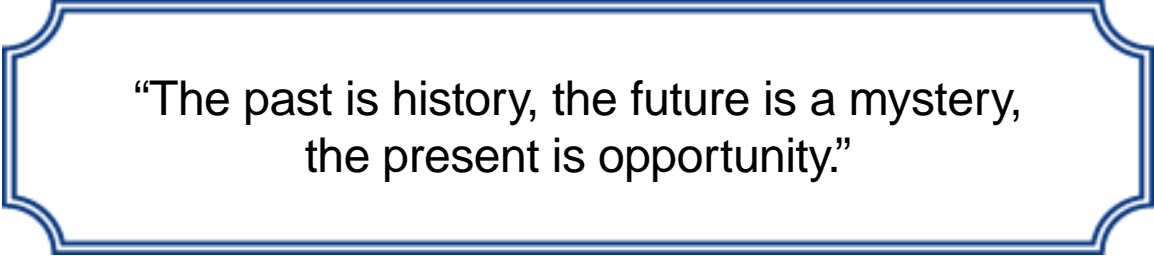
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