

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2002



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The Homecoming



Dearly Beloved,

Sometimes life has a way of meandering through various opportunities only to bring us back to a familiar place. There's just something about coming home after a long absence. While things may change over the years, it's still a place where you are loved and appreciated. As it has been said, "home is where the heart is." So, imagine how grateful we were upon learning that we were going to have a homecoming.

Our search for an Executive Administrator ended when Pastor Ricky Kurth accepted the position on a part-time basis. Ricky was our typesetter in the mid-seventies, but left after five years to enter the ministry. In those early years, it became necessary for him to start his own painting business to supplement his income. Although his business has served him well, he feels the time has come to hang up the brush so he can devote more time to the things of the Lord.

In addition to serving as the pastor of the *Faith Bible Church*, Ricky will be assuming the responsibilities as our new Administrator three or four days a week. Between Ricky's pastoral experience and knowledge of the ministries of BBS, he's well equipped to handle the work. This particular position requires someone who has a theological background to address those who challenge the very premise of Paul's distinctive ministry. Consequently, we frequently find ourselves fielding questions regarding Progressive Dispensationalism, Reform Theology, Remnant Theology, etc. But it also must be someone who has a pastor's heart to minister to those who are struggling in the faith or devastated by a tragedy. We believe that Brother Ricky fits these criteria to a "T."

Pastor Kurth and his wife, Barb, live in Steger, Illinois and have two charming children, Melanie, age 11 and Jesse, age 6. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Barb and the kids for graciously loaning us the head of their household. Surely a great recompense of reward awaits them at the Judgment Seat of Christ for their willingness to take part in this ministry.

From time to time, Pastor Kurth will be available for speaking engagements to represent BBS, although this will be on a limited basis due to such a pressing schedule. We should add that Ricky is a well-known conference speaker who has brought many into a fuller understanding of the revelation of the Mystery. Not one to shy away from work, he is already answering correspondence, so feel free to send your questions and inquiries to "Brother Ricky." Welcome home, beloved, it's good to have you back on board!

With a grateful heart,

Paul M. Sadler
President

From Indiana:

"Thank you for holding forth God's Word of Life to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Oh, how wonderful is the grace of God."

From Ohio:

"Thanks again for your faithfulness. I cannot put into words what the *Berean Searchlight* means to me. It meets so many spiritual needs."

From Massachusetts:

"Thanks for preaching the gospel purely and without alteration. We are so very blessed to live in this wondrous age of Grace. Thanks for teaching folks to distinguish among God's different dispensations. How clear His marvelous plan becomes when you learn to divide His Word appropriately. God bless you with all good things and continued fruits from your ministry."

From Wisconsin:

"I discovered recently that the trees are a different color as the light changes, within 5-10 minutes it can change like a sunset does. I often wonder about what beauty the Lord has in store for us in heaven. Evidently the minds we have now could never understand, even if it would be written down for us to read. A special 'thank you' to David Havard—I will always appreciate all the assistance and help he has given in answer to many questions." (Everywhere man sets his foot he is confronted with the design of God's creation. If there is design, it requires that there be a designer. In the event you would like to meet the Architect of all things, please read carefully Colossians 1:12-19 and I Corinthians 15:1-4. Ed.)

From E-Mail:

"Please remove my name from the *Searchlight* mailing list. The present mailings are causing conflict in my household. Thanks for your understanding."

From New York:

"Once again, I have to praise the Lord for the way He has used your insight on the Word, rightly divided. What a big difference it makes when you see the simplicity that Paul speaks of. I was especially blessed with your article by Brother Stam, *Jesus Loves Us So*. It was one of those days when I especially needed a big boost and I read it over and over again. Thanks again for your wonderful periodical, I certainly do enjoy it a great deal."

From Washington:

"More and more I realize how much your *Searchlight* booklet means to me. Rightly divided teaching is nearly non-existent in Wenatchee as well as right application."

From Oregon:

"I give thanks to God for your faithfulness to His Word. I rejoiced greatly for the article, *What Difference Does It Make?* by David Havard." (David is now in full-time law enforcement, but he still stops by to pay us a visit from time to time. Since he's so familiar with our computer systems we are using him as a consultant. This will also help to keep him in touch with the ministry. Ed.)

From Thailand:

"Your *Searchlight* magazine is one of the instruments in God's hand which has done tremendously in spreading the gospel of the grace of God, reconciling the lost world to God through Christ, and establishing the saints in the faith. I am one of the numerous that has benefited from it, including the dispensational book by beloved C. R. Stam, *Things That Differ*. This is a great eyeopener to every seeker of the truth. At last, I am free from the present apostasy that is sweeping the Church now...May the Lord continue to guard and guide your steps by His grace to carefully continue to divide the Word rightly for His glory and the edification of the Body of Christ. My prayers are with you always. Thanks and remain in His grace."

From Illinois:

"I am rereading the book, *True Spirituality* by Brother Stam, a book I read many years ago. I felt like I wanted to read it again. The title *grabs me*. I am amazed how it speaks to me. I am ready to shuck *Pentecostalism* and all the other 'isms' for the *Mystery*. I want to learn it, digest it, and have it become flesh. It just honors God. When I am around church people, I can see they are not sure what they believe, as I have been all my life. So I feel that this book would be very helpful to anyone who is seeking the truth....Glad to know about the *Distance Bible Studies*. They are an answer to the desire of my heart."

From the Internet:

"Thank you *Berean Bible Society* for your ministry. It has helped me study God's Word rightly divided at a young age of 13. Thanks again!" (Remember J.P., you're never too young to serve the Lord. Ed.)

From Texas:

"Thank you so much for the many articles you put out teaching the wonderful grace of God as revealed to the Apostle Paul—especially the *Berean Searchlight*. Even though it is hard for me to read the new format with glossy paper, I manage to read it from 'cover to cover' each month."

From Iowa:

"Enclosed is \$.... for you to use as you have need. Our prayer is that many will come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and that God will bless you in your work of winning souls for Christ."

From West Virginia:

"Enclosed is a donation to help the wonderful work you are doing for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May God's blessing be on each of you. We enjoy the *Searchlight*. Keep us in your prayers for we are babes in Christ."

From South Africa:

"I have been reading the *Berean Searchlight* for several years and have thoroughly enjoyed it. My husband and I have taken tremendous leaps in understanding and are continuing to grow. Thank you and we thank our Lord for all of you who have a part in it. The messages are truly a blessing. We now have a new address. Please keep on sending the *Searchlight*. We are not near a church or other people that share the deeper understanding of our Lord's Word. It will be much appreciated."

From Florida:

"I will be 85 on May 6th but I still live by myself and do all my housework and sometimes I do some yard work. I am so thankful for the *Berean Searchlight* and books I have from you all. I still enjoy reading books that I have had for some time; I always learn something. Besides, I stay in my Bible more, which has helped me understand that Paul is for us. I don't see why it hasn't been found or discovered before it was. I can never thank the Lord Jesus Christ enough for what I have learned. What a blessing it is to know the truth." (At the opposite end of the spectrum, we are never too old to serve the Lord. Ed.)

From Ohio:

"Thank you for the *Searchlight* and making so many books available. Also now the Bible studies."

From Tennessee:

"What an encouragement your e-mail was! People are hungry to hear the gospel of grace here in Murfreesboro. Many of them have labored under legalistic teaching all their lives. When they hear of our position in Christ, it brings freedom and joy. They are amazed to see the difference between God's earthly program and heavenly program. If the Lord Jesus carries, maybe we will get a chance to meet at a future conference."

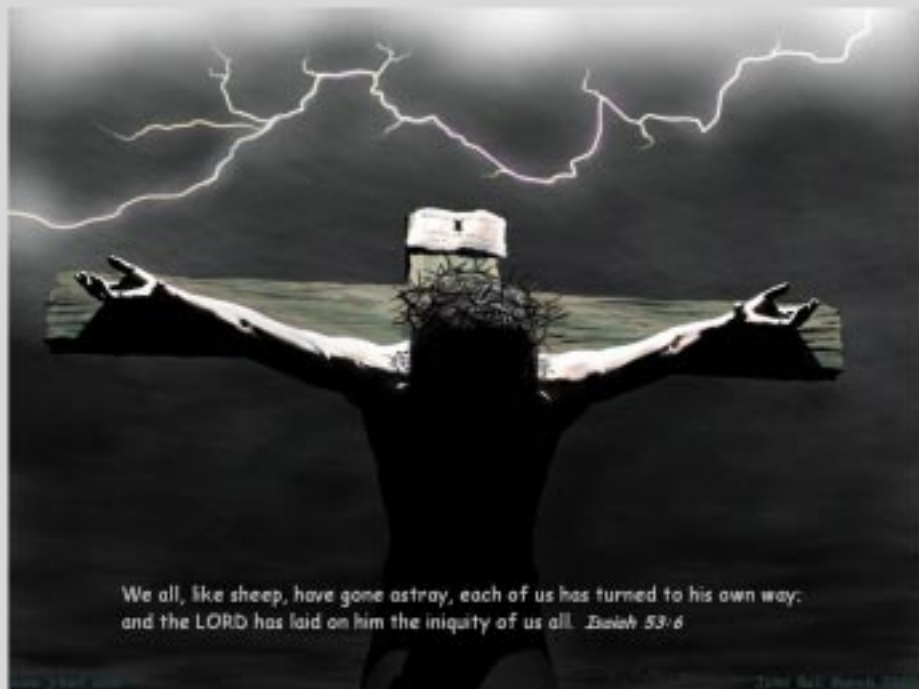
"These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." —Acts 17:11

The Shadow and the Reality

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."



"Then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."



We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. *Isaiah 53:6*

Christ and Him Crucified

The Preaching of the Cross

By Paul M. Sadler



With Peter's ship, *The Teaching about the Cross*, beginning to take on water, it became necessary for us to abandon ship. As we walk across the causeway of the Book of Acts, we are now going to be sailing with the Apostle Paul. Paul will bring us to our final destination. We are about to sail across the deep waters of the finished work of Christ, which is uncharted territory prior to the Pauline revelation. As we plumb the depths of these waters, we are going to find that the Apostle Paul was the *first* to show us the significance of the death of Christ. He proclaimed the Cross as *good news!* There is always one of two responses to this message; either it's received with thanksgiving or it's rejected as mere foolishness!

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness;

but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." —I Cor. 1:18

The term "preaching" is not one of the typical words the apostle uses when referring to the proclamation of the Cross. For example, in II Timothy 4:2, Paul instructs us to "Preach the Word." Here the apostle uses the Greek, *kerusso*, which signifies a herald. It refers to the one who announces clearly and loudly the entrance of the King. In like manner, we are to give a clear presentation of the gospel of salvation. Interestingly in I Corinthians 1:18, Paul employs the term *Logos*—the Word. So then, it is the *Word of the Cross*, which is the power of God unto salvation. It is the apostle's objective to contrast the Word of the Cross with the word of man.

The Cross to the natural man is mere foolishness—why, it's absurd to think that God would take on a human form, be crucified, and rise again in order to redeem mankind! To the natural man this is beyond the realm of reason. Therefore, Paul challenges the world to step forward and match its wisdom and knowledge with the wisdom and knowledge of God.

"Where is the wise [intelligentsia]? Where is the scribe [doctor of the law]? Where is the disputer [debater] of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (I Cor. 1:20).

Paul summons the world to answer these age-old questions, if they will. Where did man come from? How can he be made right with God? What is his purpose in life? What is his final destination?

The natural man's attempt to answer these questions apart from God is like the man who's blind, searching in a dark room for a black cat that doesn't exist. The world's philosophy to the above is as follows:

1. *Origins*: In the dateless past, out of nothing came something, out of which life eventually emerged from the bogs of primeval seas. Over a 5-billion year period, this one cell entity called an amoeba evolved into a complex multi-billion celled being called modern man.

2. *Justification*: If my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds on the scales of life, God will accept me into heaven when I die.

3. *Purpose*: On one side of the coin, the epicurean philosophy is, "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die." After all, you owe it to yourself to indulge in everything the world has to offer. On the other side of the coin, the stoic says you must devote yourself to fleshly inhibitions to find fulfillment in life.

4. *Eternal Destiny*: Most unregenerate men deny that there is life beyond the grave. In the words of Carl Sagan, the famous astronomer, "Death is the end!"

According to the Word of God, in the beginning *God* created man in His image (Gen. 1:26 cf. 2:7). John Milton said: "The greatness and sacredness of man's soul is attested by two facts: First, the creation of his soul in the image of the eternal God; and second, the price that had to be paid for the redemption of his soul." Today, man is justified by the grace of God through faith in the finished work of Christ, apart from works (Rom. 3:24 cf. I Cor. 15:1-4). Upon conversion, man's chief end in life is to glorify God, with whom he will spend eternity in the heavens (Rev. 4:11 cf. Col. 1:5).

The world by human wisdom will *never* know God! Thus, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). The phrase "foolishness of preaching" is the rationale of the skeptic—it's nothing but foolishness to them. But the preaching of the Cross is to those who are saved a demonstration of the power of God. It convicted us of our sins and brought us to salvation. The power of God transformed our lives!

UNLIMITED REDEMPTION

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:3-6).

The preaching of the Cross clearly teaches us that Christ died for *all*. The term "will" in this passage has the sense that God "desires" all men to be saved. If He willed it, then every man would be saved. Here again we have the sovereignty of God and human responsibility intersecting one another. God, in His sovereignty, convicts man through His Word, yet He never violates man's will. Man is responsible to believe the good news that Christ died for his sins.

Paul adds, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." A mediator is one who stands between two parties, he technically represents both sides. What better representative could the Godhead and man have than the person of Christ? He is perfectly suited for the task at hand, simply because He is God manifested in the flesh. Christ is the perfect Redeemer!

When Christ came into the world He gave Himself a *ransom* for all. In biblical times, the “ransom” was the price paid to purchase a slave out of slavery. In similar fashion, Christ stepped into the slave market of sin to redeem us back to God. While our salvation is free, it did not come without a cost. The ransom the Father required was blood, the precious blood of His dear Son. According to Paul’s gospel, the scope of redemption is *unlimited*. Christ gave Himself a ransom “for” *Gr. huper* “on behalf of” all. A provision has been made for *all*, which is confirmed in II Corinthians 5:14: “If one died for all, then were all dead.”

May I inquire, is there anyone reading these lines who does not believe that *all men* are dead in trespasses and sins when they enter this world? (Eph. 2:1-3). If you agree, then you must also agree that Christ died for all because this is the argument of this passage.

“We plead guilty to preaching a gospel of blood! The Bible is a book of blood; it’s woven throughout the pages of the sacred record.”

According to I Timothy 2:6,7 these things were “to be testified in due time” through Paul’s apostleship. As he says, “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle.” You see it was given to Paul to explain the *significance* of Calvary. He was the *first* to reveal that Christ is the mediator between God and man, the *first* to teach that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, the *first* to show that we have redemption through Christ’s

shed blood, even the forgiveness of sins, the *first* to make known that Christ died for all, the *first* to reveal that Christ was the propitiation for the remission of sins that are past (prophetic saints), through the forbearance of God. A failure to acknowledge this truth is to anticipate revelation, which does a great injustice to the Word of God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13,14).

As the Apostle Paul brings us within view of heaven’s glory, we are going to learn that our passage has been bought and paid for by the shed blood of Christ. The Word of God is unmistakably clear that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Dear ones, we must never underestimate its value in our redemption. There are those who would rob us of this wonderful truth. The liberals deny it, the new evangelicals avoid it, but we who seek to defend the faith thank God for the precious blood of Christ. We plead guilty to preaching a gospel of blood! The Bible is a book of blood; it’s woven throughout the pages of the sacred record.

On June 6, 1944, commonly known as D-Day, the tide of World War II turned in favor of the Allies. General Eisenhower had assembled one of the largest invasion fleets in history. While political and military strategies played a role in the victory at Normandy Beach, our young men who courageously fought and bled and died for the cause were essentially the ones who conquered

the enemy. We owe these men a great debt of gratitude for their heroism. The Second World War was won because many of our troops paid the ultimate price.



Likewise, in God's war against sin, He has conquered the enemy by the shed blood of Christ. When we consider Christ's coming into the world to redeem mankind, we are immediately faced with what appears to be an insurmountable problem. How can God's only begotten Son enter the human race without sin? After all, human parents who are sinners can only reproduce sinful offspring. The answer is found in Hebrews 2:14:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Here is a classic example as to why it is so important to consult the original languages at times, to arrive at the proper sense that the Spirit of God initially intended. Thankfully, we don't need to be Hebrew or Greek scholars, simply because the work has already been done for us by those who are gifted in these languages. God has not left us without assistance!

When it states that the “children are partakers of flesh and blood,” the term “partakers” is the Greek word *koinoneo*, which denotes “to share in common or to share fully.” Thus, the human race shares something in common—flesh and blood—through which has passed the sin nature. But the Spirit of God is careful to draw a distinction between the human race and Christ's identification with humanity.

“He also Himself likewise took part of the same.”

Notice Christ is said to have “took part” of the same. The Greek word here is *metecho*, denoting “to share or participate in, but not fully.” Through the miraculous conception and virgin birth, Christ laid *hold* of human flesh without inheriting the sin nature. Since “the life of the flesh is in the blood,” we can safely assume that His blood was not tainted with sin. This certainly cannot be said of us. The life of the flesh is in *our* blood only in the sense that the blood coursing through our veins keeps us alive to sin another day. Little wonder Peter calls it “the *precious* blood of Christ” (I Pet. 1:19). It is the antidote for the disease of our sins.

While this is denied by some, we believe Christ literally shed His blood at the Cross. When the priest in Israel poured out the blood at the foot of the brazen altar, it symbolized the foot of the Cross, where the blood of the Lamb would one day drip (Lev. 4:32-34). Blood is an interesting paradox: murderers attempt to get rid of it, God cleanses our sins with it. This crimson thread is woven throughout Paul's epistles leaving us with a tapestry of redemption.

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:8,9).

Today God is justifying ungodly sinners on the basis of the shed blood of Christ. In this context, justification means to be declared eternally righteous by God. Justification is a legal term. For example, if a prisoner is brought before the bar of justice there is only one way he can be justified. He must be found **NOT GUILTY**. If it is proven he is not guilty then he is a just man.

But let us consider another case. A man commits a federal crime and is found guilty and sentenced to death. The President of the United States can *pardon* him, but he can never *justify* him. Even though the man is pardoned, he is still a criminal guilty of the crime. There is *no way* to justify him or remove his guilt.

But wonder of wonders, we are found guilty before the bar of God’s justice, yet we are justified by God’s grace. The law points its bony finger into our face and says, “You are a sinner, guilty as charged, and therefore condemned to die” (Rom. 3:19,20). As the sentence is about to be read, Christ says to the Father, “I will bear their guilt and punishment.” Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. He took our place!

God did not *overlook* the penalty of our sins—the death of Christ *paid for it*. Our sins and guilt were placed upon Him, and His righteousness was imputed to us. In Christ, we are *guiltless* before God, accepted in the Beloved One, and delivered from the wrath to come. This is the wrath of God we would have experienced at the Great White Throne Judgment and subsequent sentence to the Lake of Fire. By God’s grace,

“God did not *overlook* the penalty of our sins—the death of Christ *paid for it*.”

we are beyond the reach of God’s righteous judgment. As the apostle declares, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU


“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). As the apostle pondered the character of Christ through the prism of the once-for-all sacrifice, he was moved to write, “Let this mind be in you.” In other words, be compassionate, humble, generous, forgiving, etc. Christ loved the unlovely. Allow me to illustrate:

George Whitefield, in one of his travels, found himself at an inn one evening. To his surprise, in the next room there was a company of gamblers. Their language was terrible. Whitefield and his friend spent a little time in prayer and reading the Word, and then he said, “Before I retire, I must go in there and testify to those men,” and he did. He went into the other room and told them about the Lord. They listened, but by the time he got back to his room, they were as bad as ever. His friend said to him, “Brother Whitefield, what did you gain by that?” And he said, “I gained a soft pillow. I can now go to sleep.”¹

George Whitefield had a burden for lost souls. He loved the unlovely. Even though his words appeared to fall on deaf ears, he could rest easy

that evening having shared the gospel and warned these ungodly men of the judgment to come. I fear sometimes that believers are so busy majoring on minors that they fail to realize that lost souls are slipping away to a Christless eternity, while they are trying to prove a point.

May the lesson that we learn from Calvary be this: a humble heart is one that can be greatly

used of God. As it has been said, "The humble person is not one who thinks meanly of himself; he simply does not think of himself at all! *Humility* is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it!" THE END! 

Endnote

1. Edward Drew, *Studies in the Pauline Epistles*.

Next month we will begin a verse-by-verse exposition of II Peter!

Question Box

"I would like for Pastor Sadler to address the question, who has gone to heaven in the past? Did Enoch and Elijah really go to the heaven of God's throne, or did they just disappear and end up in Sheol, or somewhere else? Thank you!"

We believe the Scriptures teach that both Enoch and Elijah were translated to the unseen world, located in the center of the earth. As we know, the *Sheol* of the Old Testament is the *Hades* of the New Testament. In time past, *Hades* was divided into two parts—paradise and torment (Luke 16:19-31). Since the sins of the prophetic saints were merely atoned for, and not removed prior to Calvary, those who left this world descended into paradise, including Enoch and Elijah.

"And it came to pass, as they [Elisha and Elijah] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2:11).

Although the record states that Elisha saw the chariot of fire take Elijah into heaven out of his sight, it does not say that the prophet was caught into the presence of God to abide with Him. The holiness of God would have forbidden this at that time. This is confirmed by our Lord when He taught Nicodemus the following: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13 cf. Acts 2:34). We must also remember that the prophetic saints had an *earthly* hope and calling (Job 19:25,26; Psa. 37:7-11; Matt. 5:5; 6:10).

—Pastor Sadler

Three Times When the Lord Wouldn't Answer

By Cornelius R. Stam

A GENTILE WOMAN IN TROUBLE

(Matt. 15:21-28)

Mark's account of our Lord and the Syrophenician woman describes how Jesus had sought to conceal Himself from the public but "could not be hid" because this woman, whose daughter was being tormented by a demon, had heard of His presence and had sought Him out.

In her distress she cried, "*Have mercy on me,*" but she did not fail to recognize His royal position, addressing Him, "*O Lord, thou son of David.*"

"But He answered her not a word" (Matt. 15:23).

He who had gone about the cities of Israel helping the oppressed; He who had always been so quick to respond to the appeals of the needy, did not even answer this poor soul. And He could be silent with emphasis! "*Not a word*" did she receive in response to her cries of distress.

His conduct was an open rebuff. He evidently did not mean to show kindness or even courtesy to this woman.

His disciples may have understood His action, for the woman was a Gentile. Nevertheless, interceding for her, they "*besought Him, saying, Send her away,¹ for she crieth after us*" (Ver. 23).

"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Ver. 24).

Mark well, this was said to His *disciples*, for He still declined to speak to the woman. He was driving home a lesson she had to learn—that she had no *claim* on the Son of God, no *right* to expect help from Him. God had given up the Gentiles long ago when, at the tower of Babel, they had made it clear that they did not even wish to retain Him in their knowledge.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient"² (Rom. 1:28).

"Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me" (Ver. 25).

The word "worshipped" here is strong in the original. Literally, the woman came and prostrated herself before Him. Falling down at His feet, she begged for His help.

At this pathetic plea the Lord was constrained to address her, but still by no means consented to *help* her. She must first learn the lesson He had begun to teach—yes, and we must learn it too; that is why this incident is recorded for us in the Scriptures.

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles...were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:11,12).

This is why the Lord seemed so obstinate in His dealings with the Syrophenician woman. Even now, He addresses her only to point out why He should *not* help her. For the third time we find that negative word “but” used. First she had cried for help, ***“BUT He answered her not a word.”*** Then His disciples had interceded for her, ***“BUT He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*** Now she falls at His feet and begs for the help that only He can give.

“But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to dogs.”

“And she said, Truth Lord...” (Ver. 26,27).

Ah, she has learned the lesson and has frankly acknowledged her unworthy position. And here her faith shines as she points out that, while indeed she has no *claim* on Him, He *may*, if He will, show *mercy* to her. The story is told of a woman whose son, a soldier in Napoleon’s army, had been condemned to death. As she pleaded with the Emperor to have mercy on her son, the Emperor said: “But he doesn’t *deserve* mercy. This is his second serious offense.” “But sire,” the woman came back, ***“it would not be mercy if he deserved it;”*** at which Napoleon issued her son’s pardon.

Yes, we too must learn this lesson. As we have seen, the Gentiles are strangers from the covenants of promises (Eph. 2:12). These promises pertain to Israel (Rom. 9:4).

Even during the kingdom reign of Christ, when the nations are finally brought to Messiah’s feet, it will not be in fulfillment of any promises made to *them*. It will be in fulfillment of promises made to *Israel*. This is clearly brought out in Romans 15:8,9:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision³ for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy.”

And so the woman continued pleading:

“Truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

It should be noticed that our Lord had really used the diminutive for dog, as the original brings out; the equivalent of our word “doggie.” This was the first hint of the compassion He had in His heart for her and she was quick to take it up. He had spoken of ***“casting”*** the children’s food to the little dogs. She, in turn, had acknowledged her place but had argued: Could not the master let a few crumbs ***“fall”*** from his bountiful table for the little dogs to get? Did he not have a *right* to do this?

What a plea! What faith in both His love and power! Think of calling the casting out of a demon ***“crumbs from the master’s table!”*** She had showed a keener appreciation of Christ’s power to bless than could be found anywhere in Israel. How could we expect the story to close in any other way than it does?

“Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

A JEWESS IN TROUBLE

(John 8:1-11)

We pass now from the story of the Gentile woman to that of a Jewess, also in trouble, but trouble of a very different nature.

Our Lord had spent the night in the Mount of Olives, His customary place of prayer, and had come, early in the morning, to the temple where the people gathered to hear Him teach.

The scribes and Pharisees had come early, too, but from a very different motive. While the Lord had been in the Mount of Olives, they had been about the most disgraceful business.

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had set her in the midst,

“They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act” (John 8:3,4).

Had they had an honest zeal to “clean up Jerusalem,” there might have been some excuse for their conduct. But they had no such lofty motive. They had sought and apprehended this woman, not because they had been so shocked at her conduct or were so zealous for God’s holy law. They were out to “get” Him whose holiness had shown up their hypocrisy. And to attain their purpose they had stooped to this. These base characters, really farther from God than the woman they had caught in sin, now “set her in the midst” *not* mainly to humiliate *her*, but *Him!* What despicable iniquity the human heart, yes, the religious heart, is capable of!

Having set the woman “in the midst” they proceed to remind the Lord that Moses commanded that such should be stoned, demanding, “*But what sayest thou?*” (Ver. 5).

These men were diabolically clever. They reasoned: He is always talking about forgiving sinners. He says that the publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom of God before us (Matt. 21:31). Now we will force Him either to acknowledge that this woman should be stoned or to openly champion immorality by taking the part of a harlot against Moses.

Now this Jewess had a great initial advantage over the Gentile woman of Matthew 15. In Romans 3:1,2 we read,

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

It was a great honor to be entrusted with the written Law, the revealed will of God—and it was a great responsibility too; a responsibility which, if violated, would change her position from one of distinct advantage to one of distinct *disadvantage*. And this is exactly the situation in which this Jewess found herself.

Indeed, this was why the Law had been given to Israel. The Gentile had already been proven hopelessly depraved; now God gave the Law to Israel to prove that the Jew was no better—that the sons of Abraham were, after all, the sons of Adam too! Thus that which had elevated her positionally above the Gentiles had brought her down again to the same level. She had *broken* the Law and it had condemned her.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19).

The Law is the great leveller of mankind. No one can boast in its presence.

Thus this Jewess now stood condemned before the holy Son of God. The Gentile woman had earnestly sought access to Christ's presence, but to stand before Him was the very last thing this Jewess would have wished for.

Actually, it was a blessing in disguise for this woman that she had been made so conspicuous. It taught her, in another way, the same lesson which the Syrophenician woman had had to learn: that she too stood without claim before the Son of God, without a right to anything but His condemnation.

But our Lord proposed to teach her accusers this lesson too; these "just persons who needed no repentance" and had boasted again and again that they were the children of Abraham (Luke 15:7).

Ignoring their demands, He stooped to write on the ground, all the while "standing in the midst." What He wrote we are not told, but the act itself reminds us that the ten commandments, too, were written with "the finger of God" (Exod. 31:18). But they were not to be ignored and went on demanding that He give His verdict in the matter. "So, when they continued asking"—*they got what they asked for!*

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (Ver. 7).

It is suggested that the words "without sin" here do not mean without *anysin*, but without the sin in question, i.e., "Let him that is free from *her* sin first cast a stone at her."

Amazing reply! Withering rebuke!

Consider it carefully: He had not ignored the Law or taken a sinner's

part against Moses. He had not denied that the woman *deserved* death by stoning. He had simply pointed out that *they* were in a rather poor position to bring the charge, since their own hands were soiled. Yes, the woman *should* be stoned—and *so should they!* Thus they themselves were caught in the trap they had set for Him.

"The Law is the great
leveller of mankind.
No one can boast
in its presence."

Having made His reply the Lord stooped down to write on the ground again and let that simple sentence do its work.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (Ver. 9).

What a combination we have now! A great sinner and a great Savior!

"When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (Ver. 10,11).

What other course would one have expected the Lord to take? The scribes and Pharisees had brought this woman to Christ to judge, but now they were not even there to press the charge. They had left the courtroom in the middle of the trial!

“Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more!”

This was what really mattered. What the scribes and Pharisees said or thought about her really mattered nothing now; *He* had freely forgiven her. And thus she had received help from Christ, not because she belonged to the chosen race for, condemned by the Law, she had forfeited all claim to consideration on this ground. He had helped her, just as He had helped the Gentile woman—in His own sovereign grace.

But the question may well be asked at this point whether this free pardon of a convicted criminal was quite in accord with *justice*. And to bring the question nearer home: Is God’s free forgiveness, yea, justification of sinners who believe on Christ today, quite in accord with justice?

In Deuteronomy 25:1 Moses, in the name of God, strictly charged the judges of Israel:

“If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.”

This is basic justice; the premise upon which the execution of law in any land is founded. It is so fundamental that one wonders why it need be stated.

In Job 8:20 we find Bildad the Shuhite saying to Job,

“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He help the evil doers.”

And to this Job answered,

“I know it is so of a truth” (Job 9:2).

In Proverbs 17:15 God tells us how He feels about those who would break up this very foundation of justice:

“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.”

This is why all the sinner’s turning over of new leaves, all his good works and religious performances, all his penance and tears and prayers fail to make him acceptable in the sight of God.

But what is this we find as we examine the rest of the record? Did not God condemn the righteous in the case of Christ? Is it not true that God allowed Him to die in shame and disgrace on Calvary’s Cross for sins He had never committed? Do we not read that *“it pleased the Lord to bruise Him”* and *“He hath put Him to grief”* (Isa. 53:10). Is it not written that *“[God] hath made Him to be sin?”* (II Cor. 5:21).

And what is more, does not God Himself justify the wicked every day and even *offer* them free forgiveness and justification, no matter how guilty? Do we not read in Romans 4:5,

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

How can *He* do this without violating the basic rules of justice?

This question brings us to still another occasion on which our Lord declined to answer. And here we will find why our Lord could help both the Gentile and the Jew and why, even today, He can justify “him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26) and still maintain perfect justice.

THE SON OF GOD BEFORE HIS ACCUSERS (Matt. 26:62,63; 27:12-14)

This time it is the Lord Himself who is in trouble. He stands on trial

for His life before the representatives of Hebrew and Roman Law. Think of it! *They* sitting in judgment upon *Him!*

First He stands before Caiaphas, the Jew, charged with all sorts of crimes.

“And the high priest arose, and said unto Him, *Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?*”

“*But Jesus held His peace...*”
(Matt. 26:62,63).

Next He stood before Pilate, the Gentile, while the multitude, including Israel’s rulers, clamored for His death.

“And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.”

“Then said Pilate unto Him, *Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?*”

“And He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly”(Matt. 27:12-14).

But why did He not answer? Why did He stand there speechless, taking the blame for sins He had not committed? Picturing the scene one feels like crying: Lord, answer for thyself! Tell them the truth! Expose the wickedness of these contemptible creatures!

Surely the Lord could have given a thousand answers and have tied His accusers up in a thousand knots. Knowing all about them, as He did, He could have uncovered evidence which would have sent them fleeing from the scene.

Why did He not do so? Because He had come into the world especially to die for man’s sin. As He had taken His place *with* sinners at His baptism by John (Matt. 3:5,6,13-15) so now He was to take the place *of* sinners in condemnation and death.

Some have wondered why Isaiah pictures Him as a sheep before His shearers, dumb and opening not His mouth, when as a matter of fact He said many important things at His trials. The answer is that when *accused* He held His peace and took the blame. Indeed, had the sinners of all ages been there and accused *Him of their sins* He would not have said one word in self defense. Yes, and had you and I been there, charging Him with *our* sins, seeking to shift the blame for our sins upon Him, He would still have remained speechless—so infinite was His love for us; so great His determination to bear our judgment for us. See Him standing there! Yes, He *is* guilty; not in Himself but as *our representative*, for He stands there, not merely *for* us, but *as* us, taking the full responsibility for our sins. Thus God can dispense grace to sinners because He dispensed judgment upon sin at Calvary.

“...had you and I been there, charging Him with *our* sins...He would still have remained speechless—so infinite was His love for us...”

Neither the Syrophenician woman nor the fallen Jewess understood all this, of course, for it had not yet taken place. Indeed, God’s great purpose in Calvary was to be *“testified in due time”* through the Apostle Paul, some years after the crucifixion (I Tim. 2:4-7). Nevertheless it was the basis on which he could justly help both women, and it is the basis on which He has ever justified sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Unsaved friend, will you call on God to save you for Jesus' sake? He is ready to save you, but you must call. Will you do it now?

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe...

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,⁴ through the forbearance of God;


“To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be

just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded” (Rom. 3:20-27).

Hallelujah! The Law brings Jew and Gentile down to the same level and grace accepts them there!

“For there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:22,23).

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Rom. 10:12). 

Endnotes

1. From His reply it seems evident that they meant He should grant her request and dispose of her case.
2. Lit., *becoming*.
3. The Hebrew race.
4. Cf. “*But now*” (Ver. 21) and “*at this time*” (Ver. 26). We now know how God could justly forgive “*the transgressions that were under the first testament*” (Heb. 9:15).

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

The Counterfeiter

According to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, Satan desires to be like God:

- Satan had his own Trinity—the devil, the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 16:13).
- He has his own ministers—“the ministers of Satan” (II Cor. 11:14,15).
- He has formulated his own theology—“doctrines of demons” (I Tim. 4:1).
- His ministers proclaim his own gospel—“a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you” (Gal. 1:7,8).
- He has his own communion service—“the cup of demons... and the table of demons” (I Cor. 10:21).
- He has his own throne and worshippers (Rev. 13:2,4).

—J. Oswald Sanders

Eternal Life, The Gift of God

By Russell S. Miller

Suppose I knew of a financial benefactor who was giving away one million dollars to every one that personally contacted him. I told my parents about this, and they collected their million; my sisters collected theirs, after I told them of course; and my brothers-in-law all received their generous portions. Of course I told my wife, and every one in her family, about it. All our relatives, friends, and many, many strangers contacted this gracious benefactor as per instructions, and received their million dollars.

But I never told you!

What would you think about my actions in this matter, if I had not told you about this wonderful gift? Would you not have a right to be *very angry* with me and wonder why *you* were left out?

Now please do not think that I am angry with any one, for such thinking could not be farther from the truth. No, not at all.

This is an illustration of what God seeks to convey to a lost and dying world. Only it's not a mere million dollars, nor is it billions of dollars that we are discussing here. It is a portrait of the love of Christ:

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

The Lord does not promise earthly wealth, but He has promised "*eternal life*" to all who will believe on His Son, worth more than all the money in all the world:

"For the wages of sin is death; but THE GIFT OF GOD is eternal life

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

Yes, my dear friend, I trust that you also can now see how important, how *really* important, this gift is that God wants to give you!

The Apostle Peter describes the gift of God as more valuable than the precious metals that men covet after.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18,19).

The Bible clearly teaches that we are all "sinners" (Rom. 3:23), *lost* and *dying*, and in desperate need of the "Savior" (Titus 1:4). Jesus Christ, of course, is our only Savior. There is no other Savior for mankind. If you miss Him, you will have missed everything! This is why the Apostle Paul declared that salvation can *only* be obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

"Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

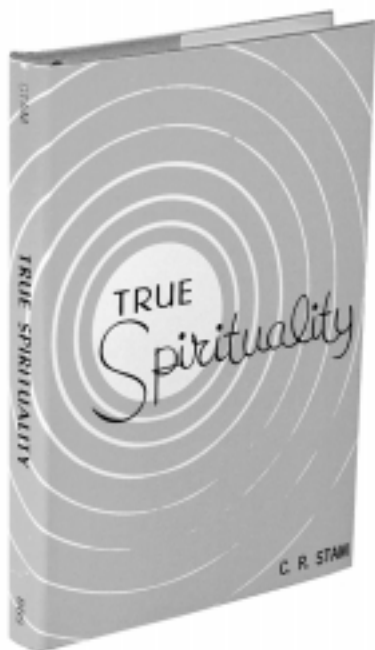
This is also why the Apostle Paul exhorts us to trust Christ as our Savior:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31).



True Spirituality

By C. R. Stam



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Christian living*

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is far above the intellectuals
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*Shows the importance of striking a
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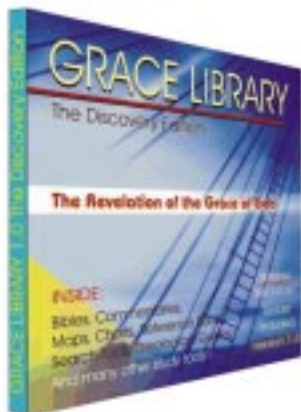
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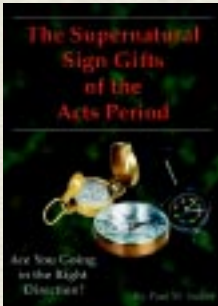


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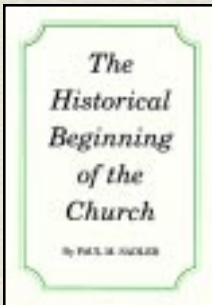
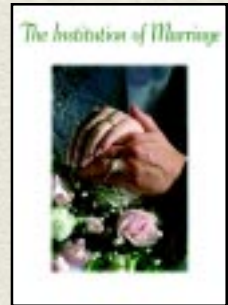


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THE BBI BYLINE

To Live is Christ

By Kevin J. Sadler

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

What does it mean “to live is Christ”? I believe it means that a person’s *main focus* in life is to live for the furtherance of His glory and praise. This focus is brought about as a person yields to Christ and to His Word in every area of their life.

This is what the Apostle Paul experienced in his own life. Christ was Paul’s main reason for living. And this is to be our experience as well. Because living for Christ is life in its truest sense. There is *nothing* more worthy to live for than to live for Christ. There is *nothing* better for us to devote our lives to. As II Corinthians 5:15 says, *“He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”*

In living for Christ we must exercise the mind of Christ: having a surrendered will before God, being obedient to His will, and denying self (Phil. 2:5-8).

The statement has been made and is applicable to this verse: “Life is what you are alive to.” This world vies for our attention, but Romans 12:2 tells us to *“be not conformed to this world.”* We must keep our focus on the Savior (Heb. 12:2) and

be alive unto Him, otherwise it is too easy to be caught up in the ways and thinking of this world.

The things of this world are temporal as II Corinthians 4:18 tells us: *“the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* How many different things can the world come up with that could be put after: “For to me to live is...”? Business? Money? Pleasure? Sports? Politics? etc. These are what this world has to offer and *all* of these things are temporal and bring only temporal satisfaction. But the significance of a surrendered life lived for Christ, in complete humility, bears an *“eternal weight of glory”* and an everlasting reward (II Cor. 4:17).

What we do with our life, how we spend the time each of us is given, bears *eternal* significance before God. For the believer, “to live” gives us the opportunity to live for Christ, to magnify Him through our lives (Phil. 1:20). And “to die” is to be *with Christ*, which is why it is “gain” and “far better” (Phil. 1:21,23 cf. Psa. 16:11). As Romans 14:7 puts it, *“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”*

Don’t Forget! Spring Semester begins January 28, 2002!

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOMETHING TO PONDER IN THE NEW YEAR: “God has promised forgiveness to those who believe, but He has not promised tomorrow to those who procrastinate.” The road to Hell is paved with good intentions. “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!*

SNOWBIRD CONFERENCE: The *Fellowship Bible Church* will be holding their Annual Spring Bible Conference on February 15-17, 2002. *Fellowship Bible Church* is located at 310 N. Hiawassee Road, Orlando, Florida. The guest speaker this year is Pastor Ivan Burgener, President of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*. The theme for these meetings is: *Edification from Ephesians*. For times of services and directions, please contact Pastor Dave Siegmann at (407) 294-0020 or e-mail <davesiegmann@hotmail.com>. All are welcome!

WINTER RETREAT: The *Grace Bible Church* is planning to hold their Annual Bible Conference on February 22-24, 2002. The assembly is located at 111 N. Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, Florida 34293. The guest speaker this year is Pastor Ivan Burgener, President of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*. The theme for the conference is: *Paul and the Gentiles*. For times of services, write or call Pastor Elvin C. Myers (941) 496-8051. E-mail <whitey64@juno.com>. If you get cabin fever Nokomis/Venice is a great place for a winter vacation!

LOOKING AHEAD: For those who are planning their summer itinerary the *34th Annual Berean Bible Fellowship Conference* is scheduled to be held at the *Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center*, Cedar Lake, Indiana on June 15-20, 2002. The theme this year is: *Justified By Grace—Romans 1-8*.

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

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Sandra Hughes of Erie, Pennsylvania. The *Erie Land Lighthouse* is located in Erie, Pennsylvania.

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