

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

March 2012



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

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You can reach us at:

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
PO Box 756
Germantown, WI 53022

Main Office: (262) 255-4750 — Fax Number: (262) 255-4195

Internet: www.bereanbiblesociety.org

E-mail: berean@bereanbiblesociety.org

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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Like anyone who has reached his or her mid-50s, I have my share of regrets, things that I would have done differently with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight.

One thing I have never regretted, however, was the decision I made while still in my teens to serve the Lord in the ministry as a teacher of His rightly divided Word. At that time, my friends were busy preparing for what looked like exciting careers in the secular world, but I had such a burden *to know the truth and to make it known* that it never even crossed my mind to do anything else with my life. During the years I spent as a painting contractor, I worked just enough to keep the bills paid (and the Mrs. happy!) while I gave myself wholly to the study and teaching of God's Word.

I got to thinking about this the other day when my son Jesse came home from high school to say that the Marine Corps had sent a representative to speak to the young men in his class, and challenge them to consider a career in the Marines. While we'd never speak disparagingly of a life spent serving one's country in our armed forces, this got me to thinking about how our young men need to be encouraged to consider the eternal value of a life lived in service of the King of kings.

With that in mind, I would like to call upon each of our readers to keep a sharp eye out for spiritually minded young men in your sphere of influence who show an interest in the Scriptures. It could be that God will use you to encourage some young man to consider training for the ministry. You never know the effect such encouragement might have in a young life. Soon after I became a pastor, Pastor Stam encouraged me to develop my writing skills by composing a weekly article in our church bulletin, and writing has since become an important part of my ministry.

Maybe you're reading these words and you've just lost your job due to corporate downsizing, or some other cause. It is not too late in life to consider the pastorate. If you are retired and looking for something to do with the rest of your life, you should know that our good friend Brother Les Feldick did not begin his national ministry in television and radio until he was sixty years of age. There are still grace churches needing pastors, and grace believers in cities all over the country crying out for a leader to help them establish a local assembly in their vicinity, and you will never know how God can use *you* until you are willing to say with Isaiah, "Here am I; send me."

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



2012 BBS Conference Schedule



- Arizona Bible Conference**, March 23-25, Surprise, AZ
Pastor Kevin Sadler; Contact: Mark Dilley (623) 583-4186
- Canadian Regional Meetings**, March 31-April 1, St. Catharines, Ontario
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Jim Bartkiw (905) 562-7170
- St. Louis Meetings**, April 1, St. Louis, MO
Pastor Ricky Kurth; Contact: Richard Owsley (314) 781-0472
- Grace Bible Church 20th Anniversary**, April 21-22, East Liverpool, OH
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Tom Schneidmiller (330) 385-3777
- Ohio/Pennsylvania Conference**, April 27-29, Ashtabula, OH
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: David Adams (440) 992-9008
- Pennsylvania Bible Conference**, April 27-29, Lebanon, PA
Pastor Ricky Kurth, Bible Teacher David Hobbs
Contact: Bill Schaeffer (717) 949-3020
- Central Tennessee Bible Conference**, May 11-12, Goodlettsville, TN
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Vitis Bailey (270) 384-2731
- Berean Bible Fellowship Conference**, June 16-21, Cedar Lake, IN
Pastors Paul M. Sadler, Ricky Kurth, Kevin Sadler, and many others!
Contact: David Brown (920) 693-3039
- Grace Believers' Bible Conference**, August 3-5, Bitely, MI
Pastors Kevin Sadler, Ed Bedore, Ken Peebles, Ken Lyon,
Dwight Reed, Don Webb; Contact: Ken Lyon (231) 745-9595
- Texas Regional Bible Conference**, September 7-8, Arlington, TX
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Dave Allen (214) 501-3445
- Berean Bible Fellowship Fall Conference**, Oct. 6-7, Martinsburg, WV
To be announced; Contact: Jim Miller (304) 671-1458
- Berean Bible Fellowship Youth Conference**, Oct. 6-7, Martinsburg, WV
Pastor Kevin Sadler; Contact: David Brown (920) 693-3039
- Fall Bible Conference**, October 13-14, Duncansville, PA
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Jim Zaebst (814) 696-4366
- Indiana Bible Conference**, November 3, Middlebury, IN
Pastor John Fredericksen, Pastor Joel McGarvey
Contact: Mike Karnes (317) 984-4799
- Faith Bible Church Conference**, November 4, Steger, IL
Pastor John Fredericksen; Contact: Ricky Kurth (414) 719-0548

The Heritage of the Lord



By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

“A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, ‘Would you like to say the blessing?’

“I wouldn’t know what to say,’ the little girl replied.

“‘Just say what you hear Mommy say,’ the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, ‘Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?’”¹

You just never know what’s going to come out of the mouth of your little ones; they can catch you completely off guard. Our youngest, Tim, when he was about 6 years old, asked Mom, “Where do babies come from?”

Mom responded, “Why don’t you go ask your father?”

After about twenty minutes, he returned and said, “He doesn’t know either.” Mom and big brother, Kevin, enjoyed a good laugh over that reply!

Children are the heritage of the Lord, a gift that is to be enjoyed and cherished. This is why they are to be brought up in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord, which will equip them to avoid the pitfalls of this sin-cursed world. Before we develop this theme, we first need to lay some groundwork.

In addition to companionship, marriage provides the means through which the human race *propagates* itself. Adam and Eve were instructed to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [Heb. *to fill*] the earth.” This command of God has never been rescinded. In fact, following the universal flood, it was reaffirmed with Noah and his family upon their coming to rest on land again (Gen. 9:1).

In the days of Nimrod, when the whole earth was of one language, men sought to unite under the banner that there’s strength in unity, that is, *apart* from God in their thinking. As men attempted to build a tower to circumvent the will of God, He confused their language, scattering them across the face of the earth. This resulted in the formation of the *nations* as we know them today. Since Babel, the greatest barrier among

ethnicities is not the color of our skin, but language.

So then, the counsel of His will for mankind is to bear children and *fill* the earth. Sometimes multiple births are involved, as we see in the case of Esau and Jacob. A short time ago I came across a humorous story regarding the lighter side of these events:

“A group of expectant fathers were in a waiting room while their wives were in the process of delivering babies. A nurse came in and announced to one man that his wife had just given birth to twins. ‘That’s quite a coincidence,’ he responded. ‘I play for the Minnesota Twins!’

“A few minutes later another nurse came in and announced to another man that he was the father of triplets. ‘That’s amazing,’ he exclaimed. ‘I work for 3M.’

“At that point, a third man slipped off his chair and laid down on the floor. Somebody asked him if he was feeling ill. ‘No,’ he responded, ‘I happen to work for 7-Up.’”²

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4).

The Scriptures have a great deal to say about conception, birth, and how to raise our children. Although there is an impressive array of books written on these subjects, the *Book* is the final authority in these matters.

The moral issues of life and death have always stirred the deepest emotional responses. As the battle over the origin of life continues to rage between proponents of creation and evolution, one thing that has been lost in the discussion is the fact that only life can generate life. Life *cannot* emerge from inanimate things. The *theory* of evolution would have us believe that over billions of years, “out of nothing came something,” which gradually evolved into the complex life forms on earth today.

“The arrow also signifies the need for parents to point their children in the right direction, both morally and spiritually.”



In the article from *Science News*, the author claims that life can originate from lifeless chemicals: “This survival-of-the-fittest scenario takes place even at the level of molecules. On primordial [primeval or dateless past] Earth, chemicals with slight individual variations must have replicated themselves and competed with one another, scientists believe. The successful ones gave rise to the complex biological molecules that serve living organisms today.”³

George Wald, Nobel Prize winning evolutionist and former

professor of biology at Harvard University, emphatically declares, “One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation [i.e. life somehow generated from slime or some other inorganic form] of a living organism is impossible. Yet here we are—as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation.”⁴

Of course, evolutionists often oppose themselves, as seen in Sir Fred Hoyle’s statement: “The likelihood of the formation of life from inanimate matter is one to a number with 40,000 noughts after it.”⁵

Wow! You have to admit that those are some weighty statements. As I read them, a passage of Scripture immediately came to mind: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22). Evolutionary thought lacks any *credible* evidence. It is all based upon assumptions which have never been substantiated, and never will be. Moreover, it should be noted that neither evolution nor creation by the true and living God can be proven scientifically. Consequently, it essentially comes down to a matter of *faith*. Either we must place our faith in the theory of evolution, that life originated in a primitive soup of chemicals, or that God created all things. Because man is fallible and frequently prone to error, we prefer to believe the biblical account of creation.

God created all things in heaven and earth in six literal twenty-four hour days (Ex. 20:11). His creative acts were supernatural and instantaneous (Job 38:1-6; Psa. 33:6-9; 104:1-24). On the

sixth day, God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. However, that lifeless shell of clay only became a *living being* after God supernaturally imparted the breath of life (I Cor. 15:45). Being created in God’s image, man has the ability, as God wills, to *reproduce* life through the natural means of conception and birth. Thus, the marriage relationship provides the God-given, biological mechanism to produce offspring.

WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5).

The sense of this passage is not that David’s mother had committed a sinful act in desiring to have a child. Instead, he declares that *he* was brought forth in a state of iniquity. In essence David is saying, “My mother who conceived me was sinful and I too was sinful from the very start.” Note the personal pronoun “me.” The sense is that, my mother, who was a sinner, conceived *me*, which clearly indicates that life begins at conception.

Biochemists tell us that, at the moment of conception, there “is a complete genetic package programmed for development into a mature adult. *Nothing will be added* except time and nutrition. Each stage of development, from fertilization to old age, is merely a maturing of what is *entirely* there at the start”⁶ (emphasis mine).

“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works;

and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psa. 139:13,14).

Through the Spirit, David was well aware that God had, as he says, “possessed my reins,” that is, He formed all his inward organs, and “covered” or *waved* him in his mother’s womb. Another demonstration of God’s handiwork and foreknowledge is from the prophet Jeremiah:



“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5).

At the very moment of conception, even before Jeremiah was fully developed in the womb, God knew him! Seeing that God is the giver of all life, He knew Jeremiah’s name, character, temperament, and that one day he would come to be known as “the weeping prophet.” Had Jeremiah’s mother had an *abortion*, which is tragically commonplace today, it would have been Jeremiah who was killed! His mother and father

would have never known his name or rejoiced in what God would accomplish through his life. It is my prayer before God that we will live to see the day when life will again be highly esteemed in America as it was in Jeremiah’s time.

“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD; and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Psa. 127:3-5).

Children are the *Lord’s* inheritance; they belong to Him. If He blesses us with the pitter-patter of little feet around the house, He expects us to raise our children to be instruments of praise and thanksgiving. The Psalmist likens children to arrows in the hand of a mighty man; they demonstrate the *strength* of our youth while advancing the fulfillment of God’s purpose to fill the earth. The arrow also signifies the need for parents to point their children in the right direction, both morally and spiritually. “Happy [or blessed] is the man that hath his quiver full of them.” In David’s day, a quiver held twelve arrows. So, happy is the man who has *twelve* children! And all the women reading these lines are going to say, “Oh, my!”

TRAINING UP A CHILD

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye

fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1-4).

Notice that the apostle commands children to *obey* their parents. That is to say, it isn't something that comes naturally to a child. That little bundle of joy is born into sin, and is sometimes mean, deceptive, talks back, throws temper tantrums, and can be downright obnoxious. I recently came across the following thought-provoking description of “Evidences of Original Sin” in the life of a toddler:

“Test this on the toddlers in your home or church!

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If it's in my hand, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
5. If I saw it first, it's mine.
6. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
7. If it's broken, it's yours.”⁷

If you're a parent or grandparent, we need say no more. With the above in mind, how do we *train* our children to obey us?

The popular, humanistic approach of our day says to let children *express* themselves and never spank them, simply because you may inhibit them for life. This philosophy, however, causes children to become assertive and, in some cases, even demanding or out of control. Today, children are running their parents, for the most part. They quickly learn how to *manipulate* their parents to get their way—the sin nature is crafty, even at a young age!

Probably most of us have had this same experience at one time or another while shopping at a supermarket: You pass a mother, leisurely pushing a cart down an aisle with a sweet little three-year-old enjoying the ride. The next time you pass them, this little guy has turned from Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde, screaming at the top of his lungs because he wants out of the cart. Desperate, mom tries reasoning with her little one, if that's possible: “Honey, mommy's going to tell daddy.” He already knows, though, that daddy will only raise his voice.



As the screaming intensifies, she attempts a new tactic: “If you stop crying, mommy will buy you an ice cream cone.” Normally this means he gets his way, plus the ice cream treat!! By now, she is headed for the exit as she tries the sympathy approach: “You're going to make mommy cry.” Meanwhile, you're standing there thinking that someone should be crying here, but it should not be mom. *Embarrassed*, she finally gives in and finds herself chasing her persistent little guy through the store. He has effectively *expressed* himself.

As we have seen, children are a *gift* from the Lord; therefore, they should be a blessing, not a cause

for concern. They must be properly *trained* during those early developmental years or the parents will reap a whirlwind when the children reach their teen years. The mistake most parents make is waiting to administer disciplinary action until after their son or daughter turns fifteen. The crucial period for training a child to be *obedient* is from birth to about ten years of age. There is a timeless principle found in the Book of Proverbs that, if applied consistently, will save parents a lot of heartache:

“Train up a child [Heb. na’ar—infancy to adolescence] in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Interestingly, Solomon uses the term *train* here rather than *teach*. Of course, we teach our children the difference between right and wrong on a daily basis, but they must be *trained* to apply what they have been taught. The Hebrew word *train* has the idea of molding the character, drilling, making obedient to orders. Parents are to establish *rules* of acceptable behavior for their children to obey, and if they fail to be obedient, the proper disciplinary action should be administered. It is sad to say that, most times, the family pet is more obedient to instructions than the children who live in the same house.

According to the Scriptures, the proper form of *discipline* should be the application of the *rod*. “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15). In short, a good spanking at the *seat* of the matter effectively

teaches the child that there are *consequences* for breaking the rules. Although most parents feel like their hearts are being torn out, it is far better for godly parents to discipline their children than to have the *State Department of Corrections* do it when they become young adults. They won’t be as understanding.

Moms and dads must never allow their children to *embarrass* them in public, although it has happened to us all. The remedy at our house was always to go around the corner when in public and give a spanking on the spot for unruly behavior. Once your children are embarrassed a couple of times, they won’t be so inclined to act up. I know, I know, those crocodile tears can tug at your heart. But which would you prefer: that your children shed tears as a result of your loving discipline while they are growing up, or for you to shed tears over their *rebellious* actions when they come of age?

While a child ought to be disciplined consistently, he should *never* be abused in any way. Children should obey out of love and respect, not fear. Paul adds, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). This phrase may seem passing strange at first, especially since mothers spend the lion’s share of the time with the little ones. But ultimately the fathers will be held *accountable* at the Judgment Seat of Christ in regard to whether or not their children were brought up in the things of the Lord.

George Webster Douglas wrote these insightful words: “A father

is neither an anchor to hold us back, nor a sail to take us there, but always a guiding light whose love shows us the way.”

Considering that fathers have a tendency to be overbearing, Paul cautions dads to be very careful that they don’t provoke or *exasperate* their children. Fathers are prone to let things slide for months until something triggers an overreaction, which results in some form of unreasonable discipline. We call this *changing* the rules, which leaves children confused.

Imagine if you attended a baseball game and every inning the rules of the game *changed*. Instead of three strikes and you’re out, the batter is given five strikes before he’s out. But when the home team comes to bat, the umpire revises the rules, making two strikes an out. Before long, you would be so frustrated that you’d throw your hands up in *exasperation*. This is oftentimes exactly what happens in the home. Once the rules are established, they



must be applied *consistently*. If the kids aren’t permitted to swing from the chandeliers, then if they are caught doing so, they should be *immediately* corrected.

HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER

Both fathers and mothers have a God-given responsibility to *teach* their children the ways of the Lord—not simply drilling them with the Scriptures or merely imparting a bunch of facts, but encouraging them to make the Word of God a part of their lives. The best teacher always serves as a *guide*. There’s a little passage tucked away in the Old Testament that will help give us some direction:

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:5-7).

Although these instructions were given to Israel, under the law, we can glean from this passage a time-honored principle. Our walk through life gives us thousands of opportunities and object lessons to share the *handiwork* of God with our children. Here are some suggestions:

If you’re *sitting* around a crackling fire at home, it’s a great time to teach those little ones who have gathered at your feet how God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. Think of it, not a hair on their heads was singed. If you’re *walking* along the rim of the Grand Canyon, what a great opportunity to share with the kids that the Grand Canyon wasn’t carved out

by the Colorado River over billions of years as evolutionary geologists tell us. Rather, for the most part, it was formed in the days of Noah when God judged the earth with a cataclysmic *universal flood* (Psa. 104:6-9; II Pet. 3:4-6).

If mom and dad pray before they retire every evening, the little ones soon learn the importance of prayer. As they grow up, challenge them to pray about what area of *full-time* service the Lord might use them for some day. Around the breakfast table in the morning, the conversation might go something like this: “Just think, heaven could be astir at this very moment. Perhaps *today* is the day the Lord will return.” If your children are yet unsaved, the thought that they will be left behind can be a powerful tool to lead them to Christ.


“Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:2-3).

There are two benefits when children honor their parents. Paul begins verse 3 by stating, “That it may be well with thee.” In short, if a child honors his parents, he will have a clear conscience that he has done right by them and also has glorified God in the process. The second benefit is the promise of long life: “thou mayest live long on the earth.” This does not mean that all young people who die at an early age necessarily dishonored their parents. It does mean that those who honor their parents will *escape* many of the perils of life that could shorten their lives.

For example, a young man who heeds the warning of his parents

that speed kills will never lose his life because of driving too fast. If a daughter obeys her parents never to get into a car with a stranger, the likelihood of her being a murder victim is greatly diminished.

Parents should consider taking their ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year-olds to a rescue mission. I’ve preached a number of times at the *Pacific Garden Mission* in Chicago and came away profoundly touched by the experience. You witness firsthand how the sins of immorality, alcoholism, gambling, and drug abuse destroy lives. We thank God without ceasing that many of these poor souls have come to know Christ, but they must live with the consequences of their *disobedience*.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph. 6:1). 

Endnotes

1. St. Louis Inspirational Christian Connection, <http://gatewaytojesus.com/humorouschurchstories.html>, (Feb. 2012).
2. Sermon Illustrations, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/children.htm>, (Feb. 2012).
3. Karen F. Schmidt, “Evolution in a test tube: harnessing Darwin’s theory to design new molecules,” *Science News*, Aug. 7, 1993.
4. George Wald, “The Origin of Life,” in *The Physics and Chemistry of Life* from the editors of *Scientific American*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), p. 9.
5. Fred Hoyle, “Hoyle on Evolution,” *Nature*, Vol. 294, No. 5837 (Nov. 12, 1981), 148. (Sir Fred Hoyle is a well-known British mathematician, astronomer, and originator of the steady-state theory of the origin of the universe.)
6. *Voice for the Unborn*, Fremont, CA, June-Aug., 1979.
7. Deb Lawrence, Missionary to the Philippines with SEND International, *Prokope*, November/December, 1992, p. 3.

The Epistles of John

No Time to Lose (I John 1:1-4)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

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“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (I John 1:1).

The abruptness with which John opens this epistle might best be explained with the following analogy: Imagine hearing that a killer is on his way to murder your best friend. Since the phone calls you make to warn her are going unanswered, you hope to catch her online, and so you sit down to write her an email. Would you begin this email with a long, flowery introduction, inquiring about your friend’s health, asking about her family, etc., before getting to the purpose of your letter? Of course not! You would immediately type out in capital letters, “A KILLER IS ON HIS WAY TO KILL YOU!” Well, as John writes to these people who are heading into the

Great Tribulation, he too has no time for a long introduction! After all, *the Antichrist* is on his way to kill them! Knowing this, he gets right to the point.

He begins by speaking of Him who was “from the beginning,” referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, and speaking of His eternality in a way similar to the manner in which he opened his gospel (John 1:1,2). Reading this, Hebrews who knew their Bible well would recall the prediction of the prophet Micah, that *Messiah* would be “from of old, from everlasting” (5:2). John is beginning this epistle by affirming that *Jesus was the Christ!*

Here the reader may be thinking, “If John is in such a hurry to warn them about the Antichrist, why is he speaking to them about the Lord Jesus Christ?” We feel there is a method to the apostle’s apparent madness. We believe he

knew that the best way to warn people about the Antichrist was by talking about the real Christ. John no doubt shared our conviction that the best way to identify error is to teach the truth.

When this writer first started out in the ministry, we taught a series of messages on the cults, followed by another series on the major religions of the world, such as Buddhism and Islam. While we faithfully pointed out where these religions were in error, these days we believe that the best way to combat error is to simply *teach the truth*. If you know the truth, you won't be fooled by error!

Nowadays while out shopping, if you pay for an item with a \$50 bill, the clerk will often check the authenticity of your bill with a special marker that instantly identifies it as genuine or counterfeit. Before the advent of such markers, however, federal agents were trained to spot counterfeit bills *by thoroughly familiarizing them with genuine legal tender*. This is what John is doing in his opening verse—exposing and identifying the Antichrist by speaking of the examination that he and his fellow apostles had given the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back in the day, those federal agents used all of their senses to identify forgeries. They would snap and crinkle the paper to determine if the bill in question *sounded* like U.S. currency. They would examine it with their eyes, under a magnifying glass, to see if it *looked* like the real deal. They would feel it to determine if it *felt* like real money should

feel. Interestingly, John states that he and his fellow apostles gave all these same tests to Jesus Christ, to see if He was the real Messiah!

John speaks first of that which they had “heard” of Him, and implies that He had said the things that the prophets predicted Messiah would say. He goes on to speak of what they had “seen” with their eyes, implying that they had seen Him do the things that the prophets predicted He would do.



“If you know the truth, you won’t be fooled by error!”

Then, having already spoken about how they had *seen* the Messiah, John goes on to talk about how they had “*looked upon*” Him. Far from repeating himself, he speaks here of how they had *examined* the Lord. The phrase “looked upon” is sometimes used this way, as in the first time this phrase is used, in Genesis 6:12.¹ Here we are told that “God looked upon the earth” to decide whether it was “corrupt” enough to destroy. Anthropomorphically speaking, this would require more than a glance to determine. To let it be

known that He had *carefully investigated* the human race before deciding to nearly exterminate it, Moses says that God *looked upon* it. This is also the meaning of this phrase in I John 1:1, where John uses it to remind us that he and his fellow apostles *had carefully watched the Lord for three years* and were convinced that He was the Messiah.

But how did having “handled” the Lord prove that He was their Christ? How would they know how a Messiah was supposed to feel? Well, while handling Him could not help them determine whether or not He was the Christ, it *could* help them establish that He was not a ghost, or a spirit. This is going to be an issue in the Tribulation, a time when John says that “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ *is come in the flesh* is not of God,” but is rather “the spirit of anti-christ” (I John 4:3). For Antichrist to claim that *he* is Israel’s Christ, he is going to have to argue that Israel’s Messiah has not yet come in the flesh.

To counter this, John says that they had *handled* Him. While we are sure the disciples hugged and handled the Lord before His death, do you remember how He proved that He was not a spirit after His resurrection? He invited the apostles to “*handle*” Him (Luke 24:39 cf. John 20:27)! Having handled Him before and after His resurrection, John is able to testify to his readers that the Lord Jesus was the real Messiah, and since he and the other apostles had *heard*, and *seen*, and

studied, and *handled* Him, they were thoroughly convinced that *Christ had come in the flesh!*

As we know from John 1:1, the Lord Jesus is sometimes called *the Word*; but why would John call Him “the *Word of life*” here? Surely it is because, as everyone knows, the One that they had heard, and seen, and handled *died*, and Antichrist will no doubt argue that He is *still* dead. John counters this argument by referring to Him as “the *Word of life*,” a title that refers to the Lord’s *eternal* life, the life that was made manifest after He rose from the dead. Speaking in parentheses to expand upon the *eternal* life of the Word, John says:

“(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)” (I John 1:2).

That which is *manifest* is the opposite of that which is *hidden*, or *secret* (Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17). During the Lord’s *physical* life, His *eternal* life was hidden, but “was manifested” when He conquered death and arose from the tomb. So when John goes on to say of *this* life that “we have seen it,” he is not repeating what he had affirmed in Verse 1. There he spoke of how he had “seen” the Lord’s *physical* life; here he speaks of how he had “seen” the Lord’s *eternal* life. That is, after stating that he had seen the Lord’s *human* life, he now insists that he had likewise seen the Lord’s *divine* life.

We see further evidence of this when John says that he was

writing to “bear witness” of this life. While the apostles were called upon to be “witnesses of *all things* which He did” (Acts 10:39), there was *one thing* the Lord did that men doubted more than any other—He rose from the dead! Not surprisingly, the apostles are called witnesses of the Resurrection *eight times* (Luke 24:46-48, Acts 1:22, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:30-32, 10:40,41, 13:30,31). This then is what John had in mind when he said he was writing to “bear witness” of the Word of life.

But John didn’t just write to *tell* these Jews about the Lord’s eternal life, he also claimed to “shew” it. How? He and the other apostles showed the Lord’s eternal life in *their* lives. Remember, when the Lord’s enemies came to arrest and crucify Him, “all the disciples forsook Him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56). Like most men, they were naturally afraid of death! But when we find them preaching boldly at Pentecost a short time later, it was obvious that they had *lost* their fear of death. How’d that happen? Well, the Lord had *told* them not to fear death (Matt. 10:28), but when He rose from the dead He *showed* them they needn’t fear death! The apostles in turn showed the Lord’s eternal life *by not being afraid to die*.

Is it important to show people things, as well as tell them? One of my favorite memories of my childhood school days involved a daily feature called “Show and Tell.” Students would bring an object to school and tell their classmates all about it. When my son was young, we took his grandfather fishing,

and Jesse reeled in a large *clam*, which he naturally brought to school for Show and Tell. He could have *told* the class about the clam without showing it to them, but that would not have been nearly as effective. Likewise, he could have *shown* them the clam without telling them about it, but that would have left them wondering where it came from. No, when it comes to completely conveying a message, you just can’t beat Show and Tell!

The point? When you *tell* people that you have been saved from your sins, do you also *show* them by not *living* in sin? When the apostles thought the Lord was dead, they returned to their old lives (John 21:3). How about you? If you return to your old life of sin after you are saved, it tells people that you don’t really believe your Savior is alive, or you wouldn’t grieve Him so with your sin (Eph. 4:30). You may have been too shy to participate in Show and Tell as a child, but you now have the opportunity to show and tell the world that the Lord Jesus Christ has saved you from your sins.

John concludes Verse 2 by saying that the Lord’s eternal life was something He enjoyed “with the Father” before the world began, but “was manifested” to the apostles when He rose from the dead. Having finished his elaboration on the eternal life of Christ, he then closes the parentheses and goes back to talking about what he had “seen and heard” of the Lord:

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that

ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (I John 1:3).

When you “declare” something, you make a *declaration*, and a declaration has been defined as a *formal statement of facts*. Before the Revolutionary War, King George knew his American colonists were asserting their independence, but they made a formal statement to that effect in *The Declaration of Independence*. Some of the signers of this document paid for this declaration with their lives. Likewise, when James, Peter and John declared what they had seen and heard in formal statements that became part of the Word of God, tradition tells us that Peter and James paid for their declarations with their lives.



So why would John risk *his* life to make a declaration like this? Why would any of the apostles go on record to make such official statements about what they had seen and heard? As John told the Jews to whom he was writing, it was “that ye also may have fellowship with us.”

We use the word *fellowship* to describe the warm and friendly

interaction of God’s people at church and other such gatherings, but here the word means much more than this. John did not risk his life with the official declaration of this epistle just so the Jews to whom he was writing could join him for a potluck dinner or an ice cream social. The word *fellowship* here is talking about *salvation*, something John makes clear when he adds, “and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son.” John enjoyed a *saving* kind of fellowship with the Lord. It is *this* for which he was willing to risk his life with the official declaration of this epistle, to afford others the opportunity to enter into the fellowship of eternal life with him and with the Lord.

If you think we are reading too much into the word *fellowship* here, notice that John concludes this portion of Scripture by adding,

“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (I John 1:4).

The fellowship we enjoy at church functions is joyful, but the only thing that brings *fullness* of joy is *salvation*. See those words, “and these things write we unto you”? The beloved apostle uses similar words to conclude this precious epistle when he says, “These things have I written unto you... *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*” (5:13). If in the beginning of the epistle John claims to be writing that their joy might be full, and at the end of the epistle he claims to have written that they might know that they have eternal life, then putting two and


two together tells us that fullness of joy comes in knowing that you have eternal life!

Do *you* know that *you* have eternal life, right now, as a present possession, or are you just *hoping to get* eternal life someday when you die? If you think you can be saved from your sins by doing good works, you can never be *sure* of salvation, for you can never be *sure* you've done *enough* good works to satisfy God. That's why the Apostle Paul says that salvation is "of *faith*, that it might be by *grace*; to the end the promise might be *sure*" (Rom. 4:16). While you can never be sure you've done enough to satisfy God, you can be sure that *Christ* did enough to satisfy God when He paid for your sins on the Cross.

Speaking of God and the travail of soul that His Son endured


on Calvary, Isaiah declares that "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be *satisfied*: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities" (53:11). Why go on hoping, when you can be sure your sins are forgiven and an eternity with Christ lies before you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"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). 

Endnote

1. Other references where the phrase *looked upon* implies more than a casual look can be seen in Exodus 39:43; Leviticus 13:25,27,43,50; 14:48; Proverbs 24:32; Daniel 1:13; Zech. 12:10; Mark 14:67; Luke 22:56,61.



St. Louis Meetings

Location: *St. Louis Bible Fellowship*
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Dates: Sunday, April 1, 2012

Guest Speaker:

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FINISHING THE RACE

By Tracy Lesan

Tracy and his wife Brenda are grace missionaries in Slovakia.

Spiritual Dropouts

Unfaithfulness among Christians is a prominent theme in Paul's letters. The churches of Galatia were deserting Paul's preaching for *a different gospel* (Gal. 1:6-9). The Corinthian church was similarly wavering in its stand for the gospel (2 Cor. 11:1-4) and was also plagued by a multitude of problems: group rivalries (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4), extreme sexual immorality (5:1-5; 6:12-18), lawsuits (6:1-11), drunkenness at the Lord's Supper (11:17-22), disorderly worship (14:23), and denial of the doctrine of resurrection (15:12-18).

The letters to Timothy tell of even more spiritual casualties. Paul refers to certain ones who had professed some *false knowledge* and, in so doing, had *gone astray from the faith* (1 Tim. 6:20-21). Due to *the love of money* others had *erred from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows* (6:10). Still others had *rejected a good conscience and suffered shipwreck in the faith* (1:18-19). Two of these shipwrecked Christians, *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander*, were in such bad condition that Paul had to *deliver them over to Satan, so that they might learn not to blaspheme* (1:20). Another, or perhaps even the same, *Hymenaeus* was teaching along with *Philetus* that the promised resurrection had already taken place, and with this false doctrine they were *overthrowing the faith of some* (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Apostasy in the churches at this time was so rampant that *all* the believers in Asia, including *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*, turned away from Paul and his teaching (1:15).

By the way, this widespread departure from the truth during Paul's lifetime (2 Tim. 1:15) should put an end to the faulty, though extremely widespread, notion of the "pure and faithful early church." There has never been such a period in all of church history! It should also give us a healthy distrust of the teachings of those "early church fathers" from the 2nd to 4th centuries whose writings are constantly

appealed to still today in defense of all sorts of doctrines. It's likely that at least some of these "fathers" were the spiritual descendants of *all those in Asia* who had, long before, turned away from Paul and that they continued to propagate the very *philosophies, traditions of men, legalistic elementary principles of the world, and doctrines of demons* which Paul had warned about (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). Though we can glean much valuable information from them, we should never let their comments determine our interpretation of Scripture.

Demas' desertion must have been particularly heartbreaking for Paul. A few years earlier, the apostle had sent greetings from Demas to the Colossian church (Col. 4:14). Later, he again sent greetings from Demas and referred to him as a *fellow worker* (Phile. 24). But now he reports to Timothy that Demas, too, has deserted him, *having loved this present world* (2 Tim. 4:10).

What do we say about all these disobedient believers? Did they lose their salvation? Or by their lack of fruit did they show that they'd never truly believed? Or did they at some later time come back to the truth and, thus, prove their election?

Only a deficient understanding of salvation or a dangerous underestimation of the Christian's spiritual warfare would compel us to draw such conclusions. The Scriptures guarantee eternal life for all who have received the gift of salvation through faith in Christ, even those who are disobedient (and who of us isn't?):

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:29-30; see also Rom. 5:9-10; 8:38-39; Eph. 1:5; 4:30).

But the Scriptures give no guarantees regarding the believer's fruitfulness and perseverance, only scores of exhortations and warnings! Christians are involved in a fierce struggle against their flesh, Satan, and his world system, and the danger of failure is ever present:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:10-12).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

No wonder Paul feared for their welfare (2 Cor. 11:3; Gal. 4:11; 1 Thes. 3:1-5)!

Eternally secure Christians, even those actively involved in proclaiming the gospel like Demas, can become spiritual dropouts. In fact,

there's virtually no limit to the depths to which they can fall when they're entangled in the devil's snares or the flesh's lusts (1 Cor. 5:9-13; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). One commentator aptly remarks:

[T]he New Testament is altogether clear that maintaining our faith in God involves a struggle whose outcome is not guaranteed simply by the fact that we're saved. Instead, fighting the good fight of faith is what the spiritual conflict is really all about. To think otherwise is to invite defeat on the spiritual battlefield.¹



“Are you still in the running?”

He also adds: “The Christian’s warfare is not a charade in which there are no defeats. The voyage of faith is not to be undertaken in the naive notion that shipwreck is impossible for a true believer.”²

For some, the problem is destructive theological error. For others, it’s gross immorality. For even larger numbers, it’s the subtle attractions of the world and mani-

fold distractions of *everyday life* (2 Tim. 2:4)—seemingly little things which so easily neutralize spiritual fervor. As a result, the children of light sometimes look just like the children of darkness (1 Cor. 3:3). Or even worse (1 Cor. 5:1). And we can leave dark stains on the reputation of our Savior and his Church.

Crossing the Finish Line

Thankfully, God has given us in the Apostle Paul a role model to follow, a fellow runner just like we who has successfully completed the course ahead of us and helps show us the way. When Paul first wrote about *running the race* of the Christian life (1 Cor. 9:24-27), he had already served well as an apostle for several years. He had been God’s instrument in the conversion of large numbers to Christ and the establishment of several churches. Impressive points for anybody’s resume! Yet that wasn’t enough to guarantee victory. He knew that there was still a long road ahead and that even he could still be *disqualified*.

It wasn’t until death was tapping at the door that Paul could finally be sure of gaining the victor’s *crown*:

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:5-8).

The now aged Apostle is writing his last words to his beloved disciple and partner, Timothy. He's suffering in jail once again for the "evil" of preaching God's Word. He's weak. He's cold. He's about to die. And he's alone. Everybody has left except for Luke (2 Tim. 4:11). In such a situation most of us would probably be full of anger or self-pity. But not Paul. His mind is occupied with loftier matters.


In these days of confinement he's had plenty of opportunity to reflect back on his life and evaluate his service to Christ over the decades. Memories of journeys and cities and crowds and speeches and riots and churches and sermons and letters and miracles and beatings and imprisonments and shipwrecks flood his mind. At last he can take time to fit together the various pieces of his life's mosaic and look at the completed picture. God's Spirit, who's been with him every step of the way, is specially ministering to him during these final hours, enabling him to behold the full meaning of his life and giving him a glimpse of what awaits him behind death's curtain. The inspired caption to the mosaic flows from Paul's pen:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (vv. 7-8).

Paul's been faithful. He hasn't pursued fleshly passions like the Corinthians. He hasn't followed after false doctrine like Hymenaeus and Philetus. He hasn't loved the world like Demas. He's endured great suffering like his Lord. He's fought the good fight and kept the faith. He's been faithful in every way from the start, and now at the finish he's fully assured of his reward, *the crown of righteousness*.

In all of Paul's teaching about reward for Christians, he gives surprisingly few details about what it will concretely involve. For example, he doesn't explain what this *crown of righteousness* is or how it's different from the gift of righteousness which all believers have received (Rom. 3:21-24). And what will it be like for those who don't receive any reward, who are saved, *yet so as by fire* (1 Cor. 3:15)?

Though we're left with unanswered questions, the truths which God has clearly revealed about the future reward should be enough to motivate us to pursue it with unbridled passion like Paul did. His positive example gives us confirmation that the formidable dangers and trials in our way can, indeed, be overcome. And it gives us confidence that the end really is worth it, no matter what.

So what about you? Are you still in the running? 

Endnotes

1. Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Dallas: Redencion Viva; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, Academic Books, 1989), p. 104.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 109.



Here Comes the Just!

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: HE IS JUST, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass” (Zech. 9:9).

When this writer was young, there was a trendy catch phrase among young people that some of you may still remember: *Here comes the judge!* Drawn from a skit on a popular television comedy show, this phrase could be found on many a poster hanging on many a teenager’s wall back in the day. Never having seen the show, we have no idea what it meant, but the phrase comes to mind every time we read the above text. A clear prediction of the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew quoted these words the day He entered Jerusalem on a colt just days before His crucifixion:

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass” (Matt. 21:5).

It is always interesting to see the way in which the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament. When this writer taught hermeneutics (how to interpret the Bible) at *Berean Bible Institute*, an entire chapter of the textbook was dedicated to the subject of New Testament quotations of Old Testament texts. While many theologians find the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament to be problematic in many cases, we taught the students that there is often a doctrinal significance to the changes and omissions found in these quotations, and we believe that Matthew’s citation of Zechariah’s words here is no exception.

Did you notice that in Matthew’s quotation, the words “He is just, and having salvation” are conspicuous by their absence? We feel this omission was purposeful on Matthew’s part, and instructive on our part. You see, at the time Zechariah made his prophecy, there was no doubt in his mind that when the day came for the Lord to fulfill this

prophecy, He would be “just,” and yet “having salvation.” The prophet didn’t yet understand *how* a holy God could give salvation to sinful men and still be “just,” but his trust in God was implicit. He knew that God would never be so unjust as to sweep the sins of men under the rug, and sneak them in the back door of the kingdom of heaven when the devil wasn’t looking.

The Apostle Peter spoke about this very thing in his first epistle. Speaking of the salvation of souls (I Pet. 1:9), Peter added,

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently...” (v. 10).

Peter then went on to make it clear that the prophets did not understand the glory that would follow the sufferings of Christ (v. 11), and that this glory would include the glorious way that God dealt with the sins of men by having His Son *pay for* their sins with His death on Calvary’s Cross. These were some of the things that, as Peter says here, “the angels desire to look into” (v. 12).

Angels love to learn about the Almighty and all of His ways (Eph. 3:10), and we believe that in Old Testament times, they were as clueless as Zechariah and the rest of the prophets as to how the Lord could be “just, and having salvation.” We feel their angelic curiosity about this was symbolized by the cherubim that overlooked the ark of the covenant. As they looked down at the mercy seat below their outstretched wings, they no doubt wondered how the blood of the bulls and goats that was sprinkled there could justly take away the sins of men.


On the day of our Lord’s “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem, it was clear to Matthew that Zechariah’s prophecy was being fulfilled. His Messiah was indeed meek and lowly enough to enter the city of the great king sitting astride a baby donkey. What was *not* yet clear to him, however, was how He could be “just, and having salvation.” We feel that this was the reason he purposely omitted that segment of the prophecy from his quotation.

It was the Apostle Paul who broke the story of how God could be “just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). Speaking of Christ, Paul revealed:

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins...” (Rom. 3:24,25).



Whenever we use our leafblower to sweep the front porch, we never have to lift the welcome mat. The tremendous blast of air from the leafblower is powerful enough to levitate the mat as it blows away all the dust and debris beneath and around it. This always makes us think of how, rather than sweeping our sins under the rug, the Lord Jesus Christ *blew them away* at the Cross on which He shed His blood!

And so it is, if you keep Paul's revelation in mind this Palm Sunday, you can just picture the Lord's entry into Jerusalem on that fateful day, and say with Zechariah: "Here comes the Just!" 

Question Box

"Did the Lord declare all foods to be clean in Mark 7:19, as it says in the NIV? I thought He came to obey and fulfill the Law, not change or negate it?"

"...whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats" (Mark 7:18,19).

At the end of Verse 19, the NIV adds in parenthesis, "(In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.')" These words, which in NIV format appear to be part of the Bible text and not an editorial note, are not in any Greek text. The Lord was not setting aside the Law; He was speaking of the body's natural ability to purge food of impurities.

As we compare Scripture with Scripture, we know that if the Lord had spoken these added words, then Peter would not have spoken these words years later:

"I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14).

If the Lord had pronounced unclean foods clean in Mark 7, Peter would have started eating them at that time, but his words here clearly indicate that such was not the case.

The dietary laws of Leviticus 11 were not set aside until the ministry of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 6:14; I Tim. 4:4,5). God used Peter's sheet vision to introduce this change, and teach Peter and his fellow Hebrews that Gentiles were no longer to be considered unclean (Acts 10:28) by teaching them that unclean foods were no longer unclean. —Pastor Kurth

Arizona Bible Conference

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Canadian Regional Meetings

Location: *Beacon of Grace Church*
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Dates: March 31-April 1, 2012

Guest Speaker:

Pastor John Fredericksen, *Berean Bible Society*

Theme: *God's Amazing Grace*

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BBS Letter Excerpts

From West Virginia:

“Finally! I believe I’ve found where I live. God bless this society...there have been doctrines and persuasions thrown at me left and right....But this doctrine...has put the Word in proper perspective. There are some things that automatically click...I’ve been praying for years to be able to sit down and study the Word, because I knew something was missing. I believe now I can.”

From Maryland:

“Thank you for spreading the truth. It seems I am relearning the Bible versus what I have been originally taught!”

From Florida:

“I read a copy of your magazine at my mother’s home in the mountains of North Carolina, and it was wonderful! I’d love to receive it so I can study and share it with my friends. I am an ordained clergyman.”

From Illinois:

“I just read the book *The Triumph of His Grace, Preparing Ourselves for the Rapture* again. Also the epistles of Paul to the *Thessalonians* by Pastor Stam. I cannot tell you in words how they have moved me by the great love which our Lord has for His children. I could hardly contain myself. My tears of joy were overflowing.” (We are offering these two books in a special package for our March book offer. See page 29 for details.—Ed.)

From our Inbox:

“I received your email on baptism, and it was really great. You broke it down very simple to understand.”

From Colorado:

“I read *Important Contrasts in the Bible*, by Pastor John Fredericksen, with great excitement. This is something I have understood for many years, even before I became a grace believer three years ago.”

From Montana:

“What a blessing *What Happened in 1948* is to me. It answered questions I did not even know to ask!”

From Pennsylvania:

“I tried getting the digital version of the *Searchlight*, but I find myself not reading it.” (All who would prefer to go back to receiving a hard copy of the *Searchlight* need only ask, as this sister did.—Ed.)

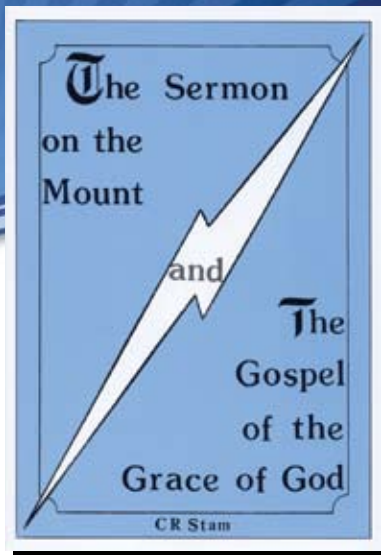
From Kenya:

“My pastor gave me two copies of previous *Searchlights* which I really enjoyed. I was so enlightened by reading the articles, and I have shared much of what I have learned with my fellow youths in my church.”

From Indiana:

“In a few weeks, I will (God willing) celebrate my 92nd birthday. Thank God, He allowed me to live to learn the Word rightly divided, and I owe it all to the *Berean Bible Society*.”

Book of the Month



We cannot, and do not, question that the *Sermon on the Mount* contains the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they were all binding *at that time*, but we hold that later our Lord, from His glory in heaven, suspended that program until a future day, and raised up Paul, the chief of sinners saved by grace, to usher in a new dispensation, specifically named, "*the dispensation of the grace of God*" (Eph. 3:1-3), and that to him was committed "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24), the gospel which we are to proclaim today.

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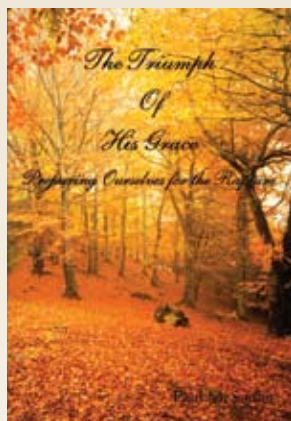
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News and Announcements

Web Site Wonders: BBS Webmaster Richard Church reports that in 2011 our site was visited 405,039 times, with 1,437,549 pageviews. That works out to just over 1,100 sessions per day, and just under 4,000 pageviews per day. This is a 20% increase from the previous year! In addition, there were 83,121 downloads of our MP3 audio messages. Since Richard just started keeping tabs on this traffic, we cannot compare it to 2010, but we hereby call this an encouraging start! Finally, we ended the year with 3,087 Facebook fans, a number that is also up from the previous year, by 33.64%. Thanks largely to Richard's hard work on the site, our Facebook Likes and Comments rose 14.56% with a combined 3,242 of these. Bottom line: a whole lot of truth went out last year, for which we give a whole lot of thanks to God, and to our faithful supporters who made it all possible. Don't you wish you were one of them? Just imagine how good you'd be feeling right now about this encouraging news!

Printing Woes: If you recently received a copy of the *Searchlight* that was so badly cut that some of the text was actually missing, just let us know and we'll be happy to send you a replacement issue free of charge. We apologize for the inconvenience, we have engaged another printer, and we are hoping that such serious printing issues are now behind us.

Calling All Pastors: *Friendship Bible Church* in Friendship, Wisconsin, is looking for a pastor. After many years at the helm of this faithful assembly, Pastor Richard Church will be taking a more limited role in the church's ministries. We can personally testify that when it comes to the diligent study and capable teaching of God's rightly divided Word, Richard has set the bar pretty high at FBC. To find out if you have what it takes to pick up the mantle, contact Dean Weichert at 608-564-2624.

Our cover this month features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs and email them with any questions at their website: www.crestwoodcreek.com.



The cover photo of *Hook Head Lighthouse* is located in County Wexford, Ireland. It is nicknamed "The Great Granddaddy of Lighthouses." Around the early 13th century, the "Tower of Hook" was built as a navigation aid. Monks at that time looked after the signal fire.

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