

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

April 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,

As we recently announced, Pastor Sadler has asked me to write a commentary on the epistles of John.

In conjunction with this endeavor, I've been teaching I John in my church, and thoroughly enjoying both my personal review of this epistle and the writing of this commentary.

One thing that keeps coming up in this study is the importance of *rightly dividing the Word of truth*. For instance, John tells his readers that “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments” (I John 3:22). I can't even begin to imagine the heartache that this verse has caused countless sincere believers over the past 2,000 years, as they have wondered why their prayers are not always answered, no matter how well they keep God's commandments. While there are many who say that rightly dividing the Word is interesting, but not very important, in light of this example alone, we would respectfully but firmly disagree.

All of this got me to thinking of the importance of what we do here at *Berean Bible Society*. Our ministry is *built on* the principle of rightly dividing the Word, the Bible study principle that is *vital* to the spiritual health and vitality of “the church which is His Body.” What's equally important, our unique dispensational position is vital to the spiritual health and vitality of the people with whom you come in contact. This is why we offer quantity prices on all of our literature, and why it is not unusual to walk through our mail room and see Kelly prepare orders with more than one copy of each title. Our readers are *excited* about sharing God's rightly divided Word with others, and we are thrilled to be able to provide them with the tools with which to do so.

A few years ago, the pastor of *Grace Bible Church* in Madison, Wisconsin realized that he no longer believed the grace message, and so conscientiously told the church board of directors they either had to change their doctrinal statement or change pastors. Much to their credit, *they changed pastors!* The truth of God's rightly divided Word was important to these faithful men, and they were not about to go back to the religious confusion that envelopes the Church without it.

If you too see the critical importance of our mid-Acts dispensational approach to Scripture, we invite you to support us with your prayers and your finances as we continue to champion the message of grace, the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



A yellow rectangular sign with a black border and the words "NO EXIT" in bold black capital letters. The sign is mounted on a wooden post. In the background, there is a cemetery with several gravestones and trees.

Looking for the Loophole

To many people, it just doesn't seem right that God would punish someone in hell for all eternity, and so they look for loopholes in the Bible's clear teaching about eternal damnation (Rev. 14:11, etc.). They mean well, but they remind us of what the Lord said about the rich man in hell, who pleaded that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers, "lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:28). It is often argued from this that this man had repented, and only a God who was a monster would refuse to release him. As we compare Scripture with Scripture, however, we believe otherwise, especially when we compare the torments of hell to the torments of the Tribulation.

There are many ways to show that the Tribulation will be a time of *hell on earth*, but perhaps the simplest is found when we read that "in those days shall men seek death, *and shall not find it*" (Rev. 9:6). What a picture of hell! You would think that everyone on the receiving end of the unfathomable torments of that day would repent in the hope that God would relent and spare them further torment. Yet despite the fact that men will be "scorched with great heat" (Rev. 16:9), in John's vision, they "blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: *and they repented not...of their deeds*" (vv. 9,11).

In light of all this, we feel the rich man's request to warn his five brothers was not an indication of any repentance on his part—far from it. Like many incarcerated men, he was looking for a loophole in the prosecution's case against him. You see, if Lazarus was sent from the dead to warn his brothers, he could argue that *he* never benefited from such a supernatural warning, making his conviction unjust.

Add it all up, and a more accurate picture of hell appears. Hell is not filled with cries of repentance to which God turns an unfeeling deaf ear. Like the description of the Tribulation we just read, the air is rather filled with the sound of blasphemy, voiced by men who are eternally convinced that God is wrong and they do not belong there.

Fortunately, dear reader, you do not have to go there. Just admit that God is right, that you are sinner (Rom. 3:23) who deserves to die an eternal death for your sins (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14), but that Christ died for your sins so that you don't have to (I Cor. 15:1-4). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



Living the High Life

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

The first in a series of messages on
Living the Grace of God

The world about us talks a lot about “living the high life.” Their suggestions about how to live the high life, however, usually involve drinking alcohol, living an immoral lifestyle, and obtaining as many expensive worldly possessions as possible.

As Christians, we too believe in living the high life. We just happen to believe that the secret to living the high life is found in a Book, not in a bottle. We also believe in *abstaining* from fornication (I Thes. 4:3), and that “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

Perhaps you are reading these words, however, and you are thinking, “I don’t drink, I don’t live an immoral lifestyle, and I’m not covetous. How come it doesn’t seem like I’m living the high life?” Well, to help you discover what might be missing in your life, with this article we begin a series of messages on *living the grace of God*. Before we are through, we trust that you will agree that what you *do* in life has as much to do with living the high life as what you *don’t* do, and that the highest life of all is found in living the grace of God.

What Grace Is

Before we begin, however, if you are new to Bible study, perhaps you are wondering what *grace is*. If so, grace has been well defined as *unmerited favor*, the kindness that God extends to us even though we don’t *merit* or *deserve* it. In the Boy Scouts, the scouts can earn what are called “merit badges” by completing the requirements in specific areas of endeavor. They are called merit badges because the boys *work* for

them, and so they *deserve* these awards when they receive them. God sent His Son to die for our sins, however, when we *didn't* deserve it. *That's grace!*

How to Live God's Grace

But perhaps this explanation of grace has left you wondering how you can *live* the grace of God. Well, once God saves you by His grace, through your faith in the blood of His Son (Rom. 3:25; Eph. 2:8,9), He then asks you to be gracious to *others*; i.e., to be kind to others even when they don't deserve it, just as God was kind to you.

To help you with this, we plan to go through the Scriptures, looking at references to the word *grace*, to learn all the ways that God has been gracious to us, and how we in turn can be gracious to others, thereby *living the grace of God in our lives*. We'll begin in the Book of Acts with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, the apostle of grace, and then consider references to grace found in his epistles. We won't look at every reference to the word, but we hope to consider enough of them to help you see that God never intended for you to be the mere *object* of His grace. In saving you by His grace, His plan was to make you the *channel* of His grace to the lost, and an *exhibitor* of His grace to His children.

After the dispensation of grace began with Paul's conversion, the Bible's first reference to the amazing word *grace* is found in Acts 11:23, where it says of Barnabas that he had "seen the grace of God" in the saints at Antioch. Here we have to ask: if grace is invisible, how did he see it? We believe he

saw it in the same way in which we say that we can "see" the wind. We can't actually see the wind, of course, but we can clearly see *the effect* of the wind as it causes the trees to sway, and your hair to look less like it did when you combed it this morning and more like it did when you first got out of bed.



This leads us to ask: has God's grace had an effect in *your* life? If so, are you *showing* the effect of His grace in your life? If you are not quite sure how to do so, let's consider how the saints here in Acts 11 showed God's grace in *their* lives. We believe that Barnabas was able to see the grace of God in them when these believers who had received God's grace "turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21), thereby showing *the effect* of God's grace in their lives.

The Effects of God's Grace

Now for some people, turning to the Lord involves turning *away* from the sins of the flesh. Before they were saved, they were engaged in things like drunkenness and fornication, but when they got saved, they turned away from their past life. They stopped going to bars and houses of ill repute, and started going to church. It's easy to see the grace of God in people like that!

Perhaps you are thinking, “But that’s not *my* testimony! I was a *good* person, a *religious* person! For *me* to turn away from *my* past life, I’d have to stop going to church, and stop being good! How do *I* turn to the Lord? How do *I* live the grace of God and show it in *my* life?” Well, we’ll admit that it is harder to show God’s grace in such cases, but it can be done. How can we be so sure? We believe it is what happened here in Antioch.

You see, the believers that Barnabas had seen turn to the Lord weren’t Gentiles, they were Jews. If you know this passage, you know that the church at Antioch was established by believers who had gone forth “preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only” (Acts 11:19), and Jews weren’t generally known for sins like drunkenness and fornication—Gentiles were! When Paul talked about “we who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:15), he didn’t mean that Jews didn’t sin. He meant that Jews weren’t usually guilty of the carnal sins of the flesh that in those days were more generally associated with the Gentiles. Do you remember how James was willing to welcome Gentiles into the fellowship of God, but suggested that they be warned to abstain from fornication (Acts 15:20,29)? This stipulation would not have been necessary had the Gentiles not been *famous* for fornication (I Cor. 5:1).

With that in mind, when the Jews at Antioch turned away from their past lives, they must have turned away from sins of another sort. We believe our next reference

to grace will give us some insight into the kinds of sins associated with Jews in that day.

In Acts 13, Paul preached to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia, and “persuaded them to *continue* in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43). We believe that in telling these ones who were *saved* by grace to *continue* in God’s grace, Paul was telling them to *live* God’s grace by turning away from their past lives, thereby *displaying* the grace of God in their lives.

To find out the kind of sins from which Jews needed to turn in that day, let’s compare what the *unbelieving* Jews did at Antioch. When they saw multitudes of Gentiles come out to hear God’s Word, “they were filled with *envy*, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul” (v. 45).

While Gentiles were generally associated with fornication in that day, we believe Jews were generally associated with *envy*, especially envy of the Gentiles, as they were here. Think back to when the Lord reminded His Jewish hearers of how Elijah and Elisha had ministered to needy Gentiles, despite the cries of the needy in Israel. The Jews to whom He spake these words were so provoked to jealousy that they tried to kill Him (Luke 4:25-29). They weren’t just envious, they were *crazy* with envy; they were *murderously* envious.

Is envy a sin? Well, it is not a sin of the *flesh*, but in speaking about sinful “lusts,” Paul talks about “the desires of the *flesh and of the mind*” (Eph. 2:3). While most people would consider sins of the mind to be lesser transgressions than sins of the flesh, we

believe God is just as eager to see His children turn away from these seemingly lesser evils. If you don't think so, you are unaware of the damage that a sin like envy can do. Don't forget that the Jews delivered the Lord to Pilate to be crucified "for envy" (Matt. 27:18). Don't you think God would have you turn away from a sin that resulted in the murder of His only begotten Son?

The Testimony of God's Grace

Now we have to admit, turning away from sins of the mind doesn't make for as spectacular a testimony as turning away from sins of the flesh. When you say, "I used to be *envious*, but then I got saved," that somehow just doesn't pack the same punch as, "I used to be a *drunken fornicator*, but then I got saved." However, those who are only guilty of sins of the mind are often guilty of the sin of self-righteousness, and we personally believe God *hates* this sin, perhaps more than any other. Remember, the Lord was very kind to sinners who had fallen into sins of the flesh, but He *lambasted* the self-righteous Pharisees up one side and down the other (Matt. 23:13-36). Yes, we believe God would have us turn away from sins of the mind as well as from sins of the flesh.

Before you got saved, maybe your sin was *pride* or *covetousness*. Why not live the grace of God by turning from your sinful past? Perhaps your sin was *wrath*, or *strife*. You can't even begin to live the grace of God until you too turn away from your sinful past and learn to be the sanctified believer

that the blood of God's Son was shed to make you.

Our next reference to the word *grace* finds Paul and Barnabas "speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the Lord, which of His grace" by granting "signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:3). Back in the day when God was still working signs and wonders, He used such miraculous *works* to testify that the *words* spoken by His apostles were true (II Cor. 12:12).

Now how about you? When *you* testify to the word of His grace, do *your* works testify that *your* words are true? We know you can't perform miraculous signs and wonders, but you can display signs of His grace that will make men wonder.

For instance, when a man with a severe temper gets saved and learns to control it, do you think that causes men to wonder how he was able to overcome his sinful past? This writer has a friend who got saved, and his wife later testified that she immediately knew something was up, for he suddenly began being nice to her!



Not surprisingly, she too came to know Christ a short time later—all because her husband started *living the grace of God*.

That's how important living God's grace is to *others* in your life. Now let's consider how important it is to *you personally*.



Recommended to God's Grace

In our next reference to the word *grace*, we read that Paul and Barnabas “sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled” (Acts 14:26). If you know your Bible, you know that this speaks of what happened in Acts 13, where the church in Antioch *ordained* Paul and Barnabas to the ministry (vv. 1-3).

If you've always wondered what ordination to the ministry is all about, its not terribly complicated. In our own day, when a local church has a man that they would recommend to others for the ministry, they ordain him. A man's ordination certificate testifies that his home church *watched him closely* for a number of years, and not just to determine his ability to teach the Word of God. It means they watched him *personally*, to see if he *lived* the grace that he preached. We often tell young men that if they feel they could be used of the Lord in the

ministry, the place to start is by *living the grace of God*.

Even if you don't aspire to a pastoral ministry, the Apostle Paul speaks warmly of being “a vessel unto honour, *sanctified*, and meet for the Master's use” (II Tim. 2:21). That doesn't mean you have to be *perfect* to serve the Lord. It just means that in the measure that you are able to set yourself apart unto the Lord (which is the meaning of the word *sanctified*), in that measure God can use you to serve Him.

May we ask you a personal question? Would anyone recommend *you* to the Lord's work? There are all kinds of ways to serve the Lord, and all of them begin and end with *living the grace of God*.

We are reminded of Paul's ordination in our next reference to grace, where in Acts 15:40 we learn a couple of things about living the grace of God. After the blowup between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark in this chapter, the brethren in Antioch did not hesitate to recommend Paul to the ministry *again*. You see, they knew that living the grace of God sometimes means making tough decisions, and they knew that Paul was not being ungracious in refusing Mark a chance to redeem himself so soon after his earlier unfaithfulness. Neither they nor Paul had yet seen the signs of maturity in Mark that his uncle Barnabas had no doubt already noticed.

To his credit, however, Paul *was* willing to give Mark a second chance once he was convinced of the turnaround the young man had made in life, and eventually

Paul learned to value the young man's service for the Lord (II Tim. 4:11). That made him a lot like God, for our God is a God of second chances, as He showed with Moses, David, Jonah, and Peter, just to name a few.

Now how about you? Has someone in your life proved undependable in the past? Are you willing to give that person a second chance? How about a third chance? How many chances has God given you over the course of your Christian life to prove your dependability? How many times have you proved unreliable?



It is said that after years of experimentation in the development of the first light bulb, Thomas Edison was finally ready to make one. He and his team worked 24 hours straight, after which he handed the finished product to a young boy to take upstairs. The boy was so understandably nervous that he dropped the bulb and it shattered on the floor. After the team spent *another* 24 hours making a duplicate bulb, to whom do you think the great scientist handed it? Anybody but that boy, right? No, he knew the boy would never get over it if he didn't trust him again. In the same way, God has graciously extended *you* many

second chances to prove yourself faithful after your many failures; all He asks is that you *live* His grace by extending the same opportunities to others.

Testifying to God's Grace

Our final reference to the word *grace* in this lesson is found in Acts 20:24, where Paul said of the afflictions that lay ahead of him,

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

We conclude this message with this reference simply because you cannot be said to be *living* God's grace unless you are *testifying* to God's grace. If you are thinking that your inability to testify to God's grace *well* gives you an excuse not to do so, think again. If God wanted His grace proclaimed by men who would always do it well, He would have committed the gospel of His grace to angels, not to Paul and the likes of us. Angels would always know exactly what to say when sharing God's grace with a lost sinner, and they would surely never say the wrong thing.

Rather than choosing them, however, “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world...the weak things...things which are despised” (I Cor. 1:27,28). If you are wondering why, Paul goes on to explain that it was so “no flesh should glory in His presence” (v. 29). You see, if a perfect angel made a perfect presentation of the gospel to a lost sinner, who would get the credit when the

sinner believed it? The angel, of course! But when *you* come along and testify to God's grace in your bumbling, stumbling way, *God* gets all the glory when the gospel is believed.

So while it is natural to think that if we can't do a good job of presenting the gospel we should just remain silent, rest assured that the success of the gospel does not rest on *you*. You're just a tool in the Master's hand.

After finishing high school, this writer worked in his father's tool and die shop for a few years, where we were quick to complain about the age of the ancient machines that we were expected to use to machine steel to within a thousandth of an inch. The Pratt & Whitney lathe was built in 1903, for crying out loud! But I'll never forget how Dad responded to our complaints: "Anyone can do good work with good machinery; it takes a *craftsman* to do good work with poor machinery."

The point? When it comes to saving souls, *your God is a craftsman*. The salvation of souls depends on *Him*, not on you. You're just a tool in the Master's hand. You may not be a good testifying machine, but God has given you a *Book* that is the finest "Machine" ever made for the salvation of lost souls. Even the likes of *you* can lead a soul to Christ with a Tool like this.

In conclusion, you should know that testifying to God's grace is the only way you can finish your course "with joy," as Paul did (Acts 20:24). Dear Christian friend, we're all going to finish our course someday. The only question is this: are you going to finish your course with *joy*, or with *eternal regret*? Do you want to end your life looking joyfully back on a lifetime of testifying to His grace, or sorrowfully regretting the opportunities you left by the wayside out of fear of saying the wrong thing? The choice is yours. 

Pennsylvania Bible Conference

Location: *Kenbrook Retreat Center*
190 Pine Meadow Road, Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Dates: April 27-29, 2012

Guest Speakers:

Pastor Ricky Kurth, *Berean Bible Society*
David Hobbs, Bible Teacher

Theme: *The Birthday of the Church*

For additional information, please contact:

Bill Schaeffer 717-949-3020 or email hitnmis@verizon.net



A Guilty Conscience

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

Four of our grandchildren have a large high-spirited dog named Molly. Molly is like most dogs; she loves to eat and romp with the kids. But she also likes to roam the neighborhood, crashing through the neighbor's flowerbeds and vegetable gardens. Needless to say, a dog her size could do a lot of damage in short order. To correct the problem, Kevin and Jessica purchased an electronic collar. They merely set the transmitter in the house to all the boundaries of the yard. When Molly approaches one of the borders, her collar begins to beep, and then the unit gives her a mild shock when she gets too close to the perimeter. It didn't take Molly long to realize that, when she hears a beeping sound, she knows to stop before she gets zapped.

Along these same lines, God has put an *invisible beeper*, a conscience, inside every human being, which warns us when we're

about to do something wrong. At his second appearance before the Diet of Worms, Martin Luther stated about his stand, "To go against conscience is neither right nor safe."

"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:13,14).

The term *impute* in this passage is an accounting term; it simply means "to put to one's account." While men sinned during the period between Adam and Moses, they were not held accountable for those sins because God had not yet given the commandments that prohibited them. This does not mean that they were any less guilty of sin or any less deserving of eternal judgment. It is important to remember that, during this period, men were living under the dispensation of *conscience*; therefore, they were

without excuse. This is what Paul means in Romans 2:

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Rom. 2:14,15).

Conscience means “to know” or “with knowledge.” Under that dispensation, conscience was to govern mankind. It required men to do all known good, and abstain from all known evil.

After Adam and Eve had sinned, “they *knew* that they were naked” and consequently, they sewed figs leaves together to cover themselves (Gen. 3:7). In other words, their consciences were activated to know the difference between good and evil, and right and wrong. They knew they had sinned against God and felt guilty as a result of it.

Cain *knew* that God required a blood sacrifice, but he did evil in the sight of the Lord and brought an offering from the fruit of the ground. He sinned and had to deal with the guilt of his decision (Gen. 4:5). God would not receive Cain’s offering because it came from the earth, which had been cursed. Abel, on the other hand, responded to God in faith and brought what God required of him.

God is teaching us that, even though there was no Law between Adam and Moses, we are to understand that conscience was their guide, for they were “a law unto

themselves.” As a result, they were without excuse. You see, God is demonstrating that, no matter what dispensation He has placed man under—Conscience, Law, Grace—all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

With this in mind, Paul adds, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Even though the Law of Moses hadn’t been implemented at that time, death still reigned supreme in that, eventually the people died. But that raises this question: if the sins of men were not charged to their account, why did death still have mastery over them? Simple: they had sinned in Adam, which is true of the entire human race. Since we are Adam’s posterity, we are all born in him. He is our federal head. What was true of him is true of us as well.

God, in His infinite knowledge, sees what we are unable to see. When Adam reached for that forbidden fruit, we were in him; consequently, we are identified with his sin. Another example of this principle is found in Hebrews 7:9,10. So then, the trio of death—physical, spiritual and the possibility of eternal death—reigned because we have all sinned in Adam. This also explains how a newborn, who has never committed one sinful act, sometimes dies due to complications. They sinned in Adam! Personally, I believe God has made a very special provision for these little ones (II Sam. 12:22,23).

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound” (Rom. 5:20). The Law magnified

sin! It shined a spotlight on it to show man how exceedingly sinful he really is. When the Law says, “Thou shalt not steal,” man’s natural response is to question the law rebelliously and disobey it. When you tell a toddler that he is not allowed to open the basement door and then move out of their range of sight, he will put his hand on the door knob and look to see if you’re watching. You see, it shows us that there is a natural tendency to do wrong. God magnified that a hundredfold when He gave the Law. Once again, it was to demonstrate that all are sinners in word, thought, and deed.

From the beginning, *conscience* has been woven through all the ages and dispensations. It is what’s known as a trans-dispensational truth. But we find it interesting that there is very little emphasis placed on conscience under the Mosaic system, which shouldn’t surprise us (Heb. 9:9). The commandments served as the

conscience of the people of God in time past: “Thou shalt not...,” “This do and thou shalt live...,” “If you hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes...” There was a law or statute to govern every step of their lives.

When we turn to the Gentile epistles, Paul makes frequent references to the conscience under grace. Today we have liberty in Christ, but we are never to use that liberty for an occasion to the flesh, whether it’s to entertain impure thoughts or commit an immoral act. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust. The Law demands; grace beseeches! As God implores us to walk worthy of our calling, He uses His Word, the Spirit, and our consciences as an early warning system, to assist us in living a life that is well pleasing to Him. Remember and remember well: it’s a dangerous thing to disobey your conscience. 

Central Tennessee Bible Conference

Location: *Goodlettsville Nazarene Church*
400 Loretta Drive, Goodlettsville, Tennessee

Dates: May 11-12, 2012

Guest Speaker:

Pastor John Fredericksen, *Berean Bible Society*

For additional information, please contact:

Pastor Vitis Bailey at 270-384-2731 or
Mrs. Patsy Davenport at 615-851-7490



Heaven

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

There is a passage of Scripture found in the Book of Deuteronomy that beautifully captures the attributes and providential care of our heavenly Father.

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him [Jacob]” (Deut. 32:11,12).

Ever since ancient times, the eagle has symbolized power, strength, courage, and immortality. Although Benjamin Franklin lobbied to make the turkey our national symbol, our Founding Fathers were persuaded that the eagle was a far more suitable representation.

The mother eagle normally builds her nest on the side of a sheer cliff where there is little danger of predators reaching it. When her young are old enough to leave the nest, she instinctively swoops down, hitting it with one of her enormous wings, which

pushes them out of the nest. Usually, these little ones are able to fly without any problem. Occasionally, though, one or two of her young will begin to tumble through the air because their wings are not fully developed. But before they can plunge to their death, the mother eagle will swoop down and safely bear them up on her wings and return them to the nest.

Our heavenly Father, in like manner, watches over His own. If we are faltering in the faith, He is able to lift us from the depths of despair according to the riches of His grace. He does so through His Word. In the words of the Psalmist, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). “The lamp of [human] understanding throws its beams far, but there are depths of darkness too deep and dark for them; and they are the wisest who know its limits and do not try to use it in regions where it is useless.”¹

The lamp of God's Word shines far beyond human understanding, illuminating things for us that would otherwise be impossible to discover. This is especially true of the *hereafter*. It reveals what will lie beyond the grave. The Scriptures answer every question that inquiring minds want to know! What is heaven? Where is it located? Who resides there? Will there be recognition in heaven?

If you are planning to move to Canada, you would want to learn everything you can about that country before you relocate. How do I get there? What type of government do the Canadians have? What is my responsibility as a citizen? What language do they speak there? Who will my neighbors be?

So it is natural to want to learn everything we possibly can about *heaven*, as members of the Body of Christ. As Paul says, "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

"HEAVEN IS A WONDERFUL PLACE"

When it comes to heaven, the natural man has his own twisted concepts of its meaning. Some believe there is no heaven; it is merely in their thinking a human invention, a realm of dreams, but not reality. In the words of the infamous Karl Marx, "Religion is the opium of the masses." Others are convinced that the only heaven we will ever see is right here and now! This was also the same philosophy of those in Paul's day: "let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (I Cor. 15:32). I may



be missing something, but this old earth is far from heaven. While it has signs of what once was, it is under the curse of God. "The world is a stormy sea, whose every wave is strewn with the wrecks of mortals that perish in it."²

You see, if the natural man accepts the fact that there is a heaven, he's also faced with the reality of hell, which is something he would rather not contemplate.

The clear line of teaching throughout the Word of God is that heaven is a *place*. Solomon believed in its reality. As he stood before the altar in the temple he stretched his hands toward heaven and offered a lengthy prayer to God that included the following statement:

"And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive" (I Kings 8:30).

Heaven is a tangible realm! It is the abode of God, which doesn't diminish whatsoever from His omnipresence. After the Lord's resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and said to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for

a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39). When the disciples “handled... the Word of Life” (I John 1:1), it was clear to them that He had an actual body which they could see and touch. When the Lord ascended after His post-resurrection ministry, He entered heaven in the same resurrected body. This can only mean that, like the Lord’s body, heaven is a tangible place. What is true of one must also be true of the other.

In the New Testament, there are three who have a firsthand knowledge of heaven: “the Lord from heaven” (I Cor. 15:47); the Apostle Paul, who was caught up into the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2-4); and the Apostle John, who appeared there to receive the revelation of the coming judgment (Rev. 4:1-3).



God resides in the third heaven, which is at times referred to as the heaven of heavens. In the words of Solomon, this is the dwelling place of God, from which all blessings and judgments originate. It is a realm of *constant* activity, especially in regard to the angelic host who worship God in all His glory (Neh. 9:6; Rev. 7:11,12). If you think your house is busy, the goings and comings of the ministers

of God from this region would make your home seem a very calm place by comparison. Their activity in time past is well documented for us (Dan. 10:12-14; Luke 1:19; 2:8-15; Acts 12:11).

The third heaven is also where Christ is said to be seated on the right hand of God. It is interesting that Peter and Paul in their respective messages view the throne of God in a completely different way. Peter taught that Christ was seated on the right hand of His Father until all His enemies were made His footstool. Both Peter and John depicted God’s throne as a throne of judgment (Acts 2:25,33-35; Rev. 6:16,17). Paul, on the other hand, received a new revelation from the Lord of glory. It is significant that he presents Christ as being seated on His Father’s right hand, where He is carrying out His heavenly ministry to the Church (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:1-4). Today, the throne of God is a throne of grace (Acts 20:24; Heb. 4:16).

Where Is Heaven Located?

Astronomers tell us that the sun is the center of our solar system, which few would dispute. It is interesting, though, that God created the earth on the first day of creation, but waited to create the sun, moon, and stars until the fourth day. We believe this was by design. God was demonstrating that He could sustain His creation apart from the sun; therefore, the earth is of a greater worth to Him than that fiery ball in the sky called the sun.

The earth is the *center* of God’s plans and purposes. In the words of the Psalmist, “The earth is the

LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psa. 24:1). It was on this planet that God placed man to have dominion over the earth. This is where Christ came to die for the sins of the world. With this established, God would have us understand that the heavens and the heaven of heavens are in relation to the earth. Heaven, then, is always up!

If you were to travel around the world in eighty days, as the song goes, wherever you stopped for the night to rest, whether it's New York, Paris, Jerusalem, Hong Kong, or Manila, the heavens would always be overhead. You will never be beyond the view of the first heaven where the birds fly, the second heaven where the sun, moon, and stars appear, or the third heaven, if God were to open the veil briefly for you to see the spiritual realm, as He did for Elisha's servant (II Kings 6:16-18) or Stephen (Acts 7:55,56).

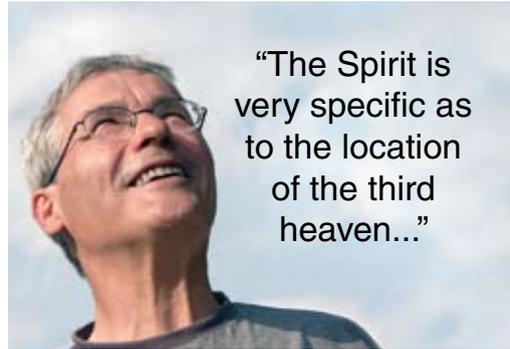
The Spirit is very specific as to the location of the third heaven in which we will spend eternity. In fact, He takes us through three "time zones," all of which corroborate this for us. In the Lord's discourse with Nicodemus in John Chapter 3, He leaves no room for doubt as to its location.

Time Past: "And 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).

As a sidebar, the Lord states that He came down from heaven, but then adds, "even the Son of man which is in heaven." This is a reminder that Jesus Christ is God! At the same time Christ was

ministering to His own here on the earth, He was also in heaven. That can only be said of God, Who is omnipresent!

The above passage speaks for itself, but the Lord gives us further confirmation that heaven is not only a place, but that it can always be said to be above us. Paul, for example, had a life-changing experience when he was *caught up* to the third heaven where he saw and heard things so astonishing that he was at a loss for words to describe them. Furthermore, he was not permitted to speak about the experience and was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from becoming boastful. What he witnessed, though, would have been in accordance with his special revelation about the Age of Grace.



Time Present: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven**. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was **caught up into paradise**, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:2-4).

The Apostle John was transported in the Spirit to the throne of God where he as well saw many unbelievable sights. But it is important to remember that his visit to the third heaven was to testify of the source of the coming wrath of God according to prophecy.

Time Future: “After this I [Apostle John] looked, and, behold, **a door was opened in heaven:** and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **Come up hither**” (Rev. 4:1).

To paraphrase Solomon’s words, a threefold cord is not easily broken. These three appearances in the third heaven were made known by three different witnesses, at three different times, during two different administrations.

Will There Be Recognition in Heaven?

There are two notable distinctions between the two programs of God regarding the hereafter, both of which have to do with the *hope* of believers. In the twenty-third Psalm, David, whose hope was earthly, was willing to go, but wanting to stay. Contrariwise, the Apostle Paul taught that believers today have a heavenly hope, and as a result he was willing to stay for the sake of the Church, but longing to go, which he knew would be much better (Phil. 1:23,24).

A book could be written on misconceptions about heaven. The majority of these have been handed down from generation to generation, but they have absolutely no Scriptural basis. Here are some common examples: we will one day become angels in heaven; Peter stands at the pearly

gates to determine who will enter; we will float on clouds, playing harps for eternity; there will not be recognition in heaven. These are well-known folklores that Satan uses to divert attention away from the Word of God.



In the eyes of the world, everyone who dies goes to heaven. But the fact of the matter is that only those who place their faith in Christ will be the eternal residents of this glorious realm. But will we know one another there?

Recognition in the hereafter is a principle that transcends all the ages and dispensations, whether we’re talking about the disembodied state or after the resurrection. For example, Saul knew Samuel when God allowed the prophet to return from paradise years after his death. The rich man of Luke 16 recognized Lazarus, who appeared with Abraham, and requested that the patriarch send Lazarus with some water to cool his tongue.

Paul also makes a strong case that we will know one another in the hereafter. The apostle says to the saints at Philippi,

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall

change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3:20,21).

This particular passage substantiates that our identity will be preserved in the resurrection. After our Lord was resurrected from the dead, He appeared to His disciples in the upper room. When He entered the room, He first calmed their fears with words with which they were very familiar: “Peace be unto you!” They immediately recognized the Lord and rejoiced when they **saw** Him (John 20:19-21).

Afterward the disciples shared the good news with Thomas, who was not present that day, that they had *seen* the Lord. Thomas, however, refused to believe it until he saw the nail prints in His hands. Eight days later, the Lord appeared again to His disciples, but this time Thomas was present. When he saw the Lord, he was so overwhelmed by the visitation that he declared, “*My Lord and my God!*” There was no question whatsoever in Thomas’ mind that he had seen the Savior and undoubtedly touched the nail prints in His hands, prints that will forever be a reminder of His death at Calvary (John 20:24-29).

Now, if our Lord’s identity was preserved in the resurrection and the brethren recognized Him, then the same will be true of us. This conclusion is based on the fact that our vile bodies will be “fashioned like unto His glorious body” in the coming resurrection. If the Lord’s followers recognized Him, there is no doubt that we will recognize one another in the hereafter. Further evidence is presented by Paul a little later in the epistle:

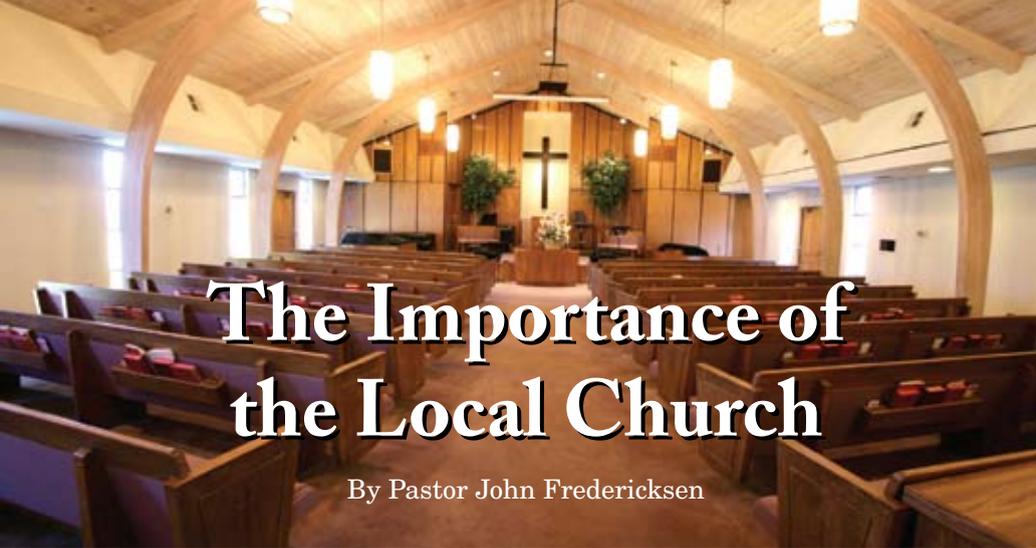
“And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:3).

What’s in a name? The importance of this question cannot be overstated. Of course, we use names to distinguish one person from another. In biblical times, names had specific meanings attached to them, some of which were in fulfillment of prophecy. Today, as in time past, our names are set in stone; they will be with us for time and eternity. If there isn’t recognition in heaven, as some teach, why would there need to be names in eternity? Clearly the names of Euodias, Syntyche, Clement and the other fellow workers of Paul are all recorded in the Book of Life. The reason our names are recorded there is that we will be known in the resurrection by name and appearance, even as we are known here.

I look forward to seeing those with whom I’ve had the privilege of ministering the Word, along with all my family members and friends who believed the gospel. You won’t have trouble finding me at that day; I’ll be the tall one in the background. Yes, even our stature, voice, personality, and mannerisms will all be preserved. See you there! 

Endnotes

1. W. Robertson Nicoll (ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible* (London: A.C. Armstrong, [1903]), Psalm 73, p. 343.
2. D. L. Moody, *Heaven* (F. H. Revell, Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois [1880]), p. 11.



The Importance of the Local Church

By Pastor John Fredericksen

After our personal relationship with the Lord, and then our relationship with family, the most important priority in the life of a believer should be a commitment to the local church. We live in a generation where involvement in a church is often something done when or if we have time for it. In fact, all too often, the saints have more loyalty to secular organizations than to their house of worship. But God's will for us is to make our local church such a priority that everything, after the Lord and our families, takes a back seat. He does not intend for us to be casually involved, but completely committed to a good local church. For many, such a statement may be shocking, but the evidence in Scripture is overwhelming. Our dedication to the local church should be this much of a priority because it is God's will for us, because we need the local church, and because it very much needs us.

COMMITMENT TO A LOCAL CHURCH IS GOD'S WILL

God's emphasis on the local church is unmistakable. There are no less than fourteen references to the "church" in the Gospels, Acts, and Hebrews. These are assemblies of Jewish saints in different locations who had believed in the Savior and had been promised participation in Christ's thousand-year reign on earth. The Lord gave them many instructions about how and why they were to come together, but to drive home the principle that their banding together in a committed fashion was indeed God's will, He gave them the instructions of Hebrews 10:25. They were "*not [to be in the practice of] forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*"

God's *emphasis* on the local church for us today is seen by the fact that every one of the Apostle *Paul's epistles* was written to either a church or the leader of a church. This alone should tell us how important the local church is to the Lord; but there is more. Priscilla and

Aquila are extolled for hosting “the church which is in their house” (Rom. 16:3-5), as was Philemon (Phile. 1,2). The “house of Stephanas” was highly praised because, as Paul says, “they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” in Corinth (I Cor. 16:15). We are told that even the carnal Corinthians came together faithfully on “the first day of the week” (I Cor. 16:2). From these *examples* of dedication and consistency, it is clear that our involvement in a local church should likewise be important, regular, and committed, because it is God’s will for us.

GOD MADE US WITH A NEED FOR A LOCAL CHURCH

We need a church for instruction in sound doctrine. We can, and certainly should, read the Scriptures on our own, but God established local churches to serve as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15). Therefore, good churches will have good teachers who “read [and explain the Scriptures] in the church” (Col. 4:16), and “preach the Word” faithfully (II Tim. 4:2), and have leaders who are “holding forth the Word of life” (Phil. 2:16) as the only standard for our faith. Paul promised Timothy that, when a church consistently does this, it will “save” or deliver “them that hear” (I Tim. 4:16) from bad doctrine and many problems. We need to stand faithfully with a church that truly stands for the truth.

We need a church to strengthen and comfort us. The simple reality is that life is filled with hurts and hardships. It is easy to become discouraged in our Christian walk, or even wander off the road of faithfulness. Knowing this, the Lord ordained that the local church should be a place where the saints find constant encouragement. His instruction for believers is to “comfort yourselves together, and edify one another” (I Thes. 5:11) as we regularly come together. Everyone needs this kind of encouragement. “But woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Eccl. 4:10).

We need a church for accountability. In effect, a local church can serve the positive function of restraining one another from going down the wrong path. The instruction to the believers at Thessalonica was to “warn them that are unruly” in church conduct (I Thes. 5:14). Titus was to “rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13). The saints were even told to “have no company with” other believers who were callously living in specific sinful ways (II Thes. 3:14; I Cor. 5:9-11). The goal for this discipline was “that he [the wrongdoer] may be ashamed” (II Thes. 3:14), therein being motivated to return to godly conduct and be restored to fellowship. Such actions should be the exception, but it is a good thing for all of us to have others to point us back in the right direction when we get off track.

We need a church for prayer support. We need God’s strength when we are weak, comfort when we are hurting, and intervention when in trial. None of us can successfully live for the Lord by ourselves.

We need saints to encourage us, comfort us, and uphold us in prayer. This is why Paul told the Ephesians to practice “praying always with all prayer and supplication...for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). The prayers of the saints make a difference. Paul told the saints that their prayers helped effect his deliverance from persecution that nearly led to his death (II Cor. 1:8-11), and that “I know that this shall turn to my salvation [release from prison] through your prayer” (Phil. 1:19). We have the rich blessing of prayer support in a local church.



We need a church as a place to belong. Everyone has a need to be accepted, to fit in, and to be needed. Think about it. Beer ads are not really selling alcohol. They are selling the concept of companionship in a group setting. They do so because we have a deep-seated need for this, but God intends that we fulfill this need in a good local church. He told those at Corinth to see themselves as a

human body. One may serve the function of a hand, another a foot, but each had a “need” for the other, so every single individual was “necessary” (I Cor. 12:18-22). They were to see themselves really as one. “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (v. 26). There is great satisfaction in finding a church home where believers are knit together like this. It’s far better than any club. It’s like a family.

We need the church as a place to give love and to serve the Lord. In Hebrews, the saints were encouraged to “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (10:24). The Apostle Paul likewise echoes the same principles. He prayed that the Thessalonians would “abound in love one toward another” (I Thes. 3:12). We surely understand that we need others to love us, but we don’t always think about others needing our love as well. The church is a place where we can “provoke” or encourage each other to be loving. All of us also need to be actively and continually serving the Lord. God saved us “unto [or for the purpose of serving Him in] good works” (Eph. 2:10). It is His will for us to be “zealous of good works” and to “be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 2:14; 3:8), but doing so does not come naturally. Most of us will do very little to further the cause of Christ unless we have a place to serve the Lord, and continual encouragement to keep busy working for God.

THE LOCAL CHURCH NEEDS YOU

Unbelievers and the unchurched can fill positions at the PTA, volunteer fire department, Boy Scouts, and on ball teams. There is nothing

wrong with any of these social organizations, but only believers can serve in the spiritual organization of the local church. It needs your encouragement, ministry, giving, worship, attendance, and dedicated involvement in a consistent, even fervent way. If we as believers do not fill these needs, who will? And if we don't, how will the local church survive? The need is as great as it was in Ezekiel's day when he wrote, "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap...saith the Lord" (Ezek. 22:30,31). As far as the Lord is concerned, your highest calling, other than your relationship to God and family, is to your local church. Be God's man or woman who stands in the gap of need in your local church! Get involved in some aspect of ministry this week. In eternity, you'll be glad you did. 

Question Box

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). The Apostle Paul addresses believers as saints, brethren, and the faithful in Christ Jesus, but never Christians. Should not believers today be more properly called 'grace believers' instead of Christians as so many denominations do?"

The term "Christian" is a title that was originally given to us by the *world*. Notice, the believers were "*called Christians first in Antioch.*" These believers spoke so frequently and affectionately of Christ that the world coined the term *Christians*. Of course, they meant it in a derogatory sense. The citizens of Antioch were famous for their witty quips; they were the punsters of their day. Since this expression has a Latin origin, it was probably the Romans among them who first assigned this name to believers.

Be that as it may, we have no major objection to believers being called Christians, based on Acts 11:26; 26:28, and I Peter 4:16. Today, however, the word is so sweeping that it includes both believers and religious unbelievers. While a *true* believer is a Christian, one who calls himself a Christian may not necessarily be saved. With that said, we prefer the terminology "believer," "saved," "brethren," "saints," or "faithful in Christ Jesus." We would also include the designation "grace believers," the sense of which is drawn from Paul's letters, but it should be remembered that not all believers are "grace" as we understand the usage.

—Pastor Sadler

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BBS Letter Excerpts

From Indiana:

“Thank you for this website! I have learned so much of the gospel of grace through the online articles.”

From Illinois:

“When I finished reading Pastor Sadler’s book, *The Triumph of His Grace*, I could hardly contain myself for joy for the way he presented it.”

From Texas:

“*The Goal of the Godly* was so amazing. Thank you for the meat of the Word you present. I have to admit it tastes real good!”

From our Inbox:

“I want to tell you how much I do appreciate you. I feel already distant from my family due to my rightly dividing the truth...they think I’m off my rocker....Thank you once again.” (Rock on!—Ed).

From Michigan:

“I just started looking into God’s Word for the truth....A little old man that lives down the hill has been trying to get me to read the Bible for over a year now. I finally broke down and asked him where I should start. He just smiled and gave me *Things That Differ*.”

From British Columbia:

“Please pass along to Pastor Kurth my appreciation for his unpretentious and insightful audio teaching on the internet. So refreshing and edifying. I love his jokes, too.”

From our Inbox:

“Thank you so much, Pastor Sadler, from taking time to reply to my query. May God bless you for all that you do (and have done) to help people like me in our understanding of the Word of God, rightly divided.”

From South Dakota:

“I can’t thank you enough for your help. The letter you sent me is great. It will sure be tremendous in my response to my sister-in-law’s article... I knew I needed help. I turned to you and you didn’t let me down.”

From Michigan:

“Just a note to tell you how blessed we were with Pastor Sadler’s messages at the *Bible Doctrines to Live By* Conference. Also the set of books (Pastor Stam’s) which we bought at the conference we have donated to our church library. Any duplicates will be sent to the pastors in Africa.... May the Lord continue to use your ministry.”

From Montana:

“Pastor, I am going to print this answer out and read it several times this afternoon....This is, well, I have no words to tell you yet. I knew somehow that something big was coming today! Praise God! I have chills.”

From Wisconsin:

“Really been enjoying the *Searchlight* the past few months. I thought the November issue was a grand slam home run!”

From Colorado:

“The Gap Theory’ really excited both my wife and me. Shortly after I took to the grace message, I came across a grace believer that believed what you taught in this article. Unfortunately, he wasn’t able to share many verses as to why he believed this way....Now your article comes and I have verses and a much firmer reason to believe this...having that clearer understanding of the Word does impact my life now....I told my wife that it had been a long time since I read something that has created a real excitement for me spiritually.”

From Nebraska:

“I want to tell you how much I enjoyed ‘The Gap Theory’.... The Spirit led you to hand me a ‘super energy bar’ with that one. The necessity of the age of grace falling within a larger parenthetical period clarified a tension that I hadn’t even realized yet, and resolved it in one fell swoop.”

From Pennsylvania:

“When you wrote ‘The Gap Theory,’ I was thrilled. Finally, I read something that is definitive on where we are in God’s revealed plan.”

From Ohio:

“I am thoroughly enjoying Paul M. Sadler’s book titled *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ!* Valuable information and a pleasure to read! Thank you for this book!”

From our Inbox:

“Thanks to all of you at BBS for the online services. Love it! I do this, read the *Berean Searchlight*, and tune in to Les Feldick. Learn more in a month than a lifetime in a church of confusion!”

From Missouri:

“Like most people, I suppose, I very seldom write you, so be encouraged. I just wanted to say thank you for the joy and strength I have found through all of the BBS ministries over the years. I was introduced to the Berean way by Brother Ed Bedore. In time, the confusion began to vanish.”

From Alabama:

“I want to thank you for sending the *Searchlight* to me, and to donate some money to help in the ministry. Plus, while I was in prison ya’ll sent me a free copy of *Our Great Commission*, and now that I’m out I can pay you for that publication. I thank you for your efforts to help me and others.” (We can’t always help with free materials, but when we can, we know that it is an investment in God’s people.—Ed).

From the Philippines:

“We don’t have a pastor in our church, and being one of the elders, I used to be the one conducting Sunday School and preaching the Word of God to the church members. The *Searchlight* helped me a lot in sharing with them the Word rightly divided.”

From Facebook:

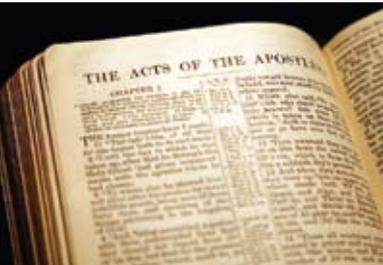
“Excellent article!!! I really enjoy reading these *Two Minute* nuggets of truth and light.”

From New York:

“Please use this donation to bring light into a world that is dark.”

From Arkansas:

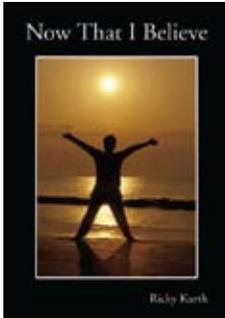
“This *Two Minutes* Bible study came at just the right time for my edification and encouragement, and I want to thank you.”



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

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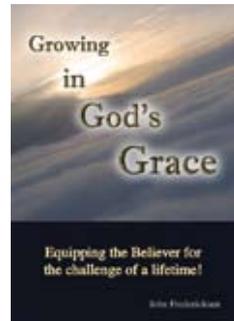
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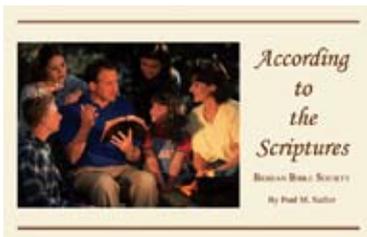


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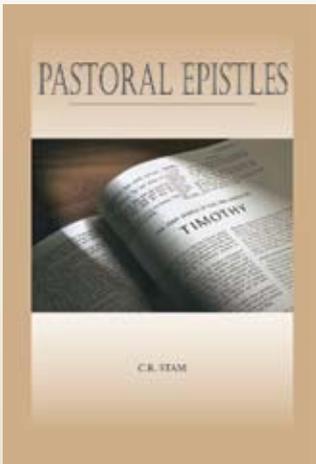
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News and Announcements

Berean Bible Institute exists to train individuals for ministry who will take an uncompromising stand for the Grace Message. To better fulfill this mission, BBI is taking steps to strengthen and expand its programs. Beginning in the fall of 2012, students will be able to earn a two-year Associates Degree in either Biblical Foundations or Biblical Studies. Those pursuing full-time ministry will be able to earn a Bachelor of Ministry Degree in either Pastoral Studies, Missions, Christian Education, or Interdisciplinary Studies. BBI will continue to function as an independent ministry training institute that seeks no accreditation. Please pray for BBI.

Berean Bible Fellowship Conference: The *Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center* in Cedar Lake, Indiana, will once again host this annual blessed event, with grace pastors from all over the country coming together to address this year's theme of *The Preeminence of Christ*. This verse-by-verse study of Colossians will be complemented by Pastor Jeff Seekins' daily Bible Hour messages on *Church Success*. One of our oldest and most popular grace traditions, you'll want to plan your summer around this June 16-21 event. BBF President David Brown (pineridge@tds.net, 920-693-3039) will be happy to answer any questions you still have about the conference after your visit to www.bereanbiblefellowship.weebly.com.

Midwest Grace Fellowship Spring Bible Conference: You don't have to live in the Midwest to get in on the blessing of an annual MGF conference! You do, however, have to mark your calendar for June 1-3, and set your GPS for the *Miracle Hills Ranch* in Bethany, Missouri, where Pastor Ken Lawson and main speaker Joel McGarvey will focus on the theme of *Christ Our All in All*. For more info call Pastor Lawson (217-498-6958).

Looking for a Grace Pastor? Pastor Timothy Board just might be the answer to your prayers! Pastor Board is a 2005 graduate of our *Berean Bible Institute*, and has served an internship under Pastor Jeff Seekins. He has already ministered as an assistant pastor and as a pastor, and he and his wife Lori are open to wherever the Lord might lead them and their four children. For further information, just give him a call at 540-535-9305.



Our cover photo was taken by John Ibbotson and sent to us by Earl Cameron. *Montague Island Light* sits at the highest point of Montague Island in New South Wales, Australia. Now a Nature Reserve, the island was once a fertile hunting ground of the Aboriginal people.

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even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God
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