

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 1999



THINGS THAT DIFFER

The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism



This writing has long been a light shining in a dark place. There is no question that this volume is destined to become a classic among dispensational works.

CLOTHBOUND

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292 PAGES

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

About five years ago it was brought to our attention concerning the need to establish a Bible Institute to train men and women for the ministry. At the time, we felt there were other organizations within the movement that were in a much better position to tackle the project. While everyone agreed that the need was great, most were reluctant to move forward due to so many obstacles. But this is usually par for the course with an undertaking of this magnitude.

With requests for an Institute becoming increasingly more frequent, the *Berean Bible Society* Board of Directors scheduled an Open Forum from which was formed an exploratory committee who reported to the board. The preliminary work the committee submitted to the BBS Board resulted in a unanimous vote to establish the *Berean Bible Institute*, with Dr. Bedore as its Director. Moreover it has been our desire since the beginning to gradually see the *Institute* become independent of the *Berean Bible Society*. At the last BBS Board meeting the first steps were taken to accomplish this goal. Consequently, the *Berean Bible Institute* now has its own Board of Directors who recently appointed Dr. Bedore as the Executive Director of the school.

We are happy to report that at the end of this month the *Berean Bible Institute* will graduate their *first* graduating class. In addition to going through an intensive training program for three years these students have also been out preaching Paul's gospel for the past year. This has provided them with valuable experience as they prepare to enter full-time Christian service. Furthermore, these students have already begun to candidate at some of our Grace Churches and in all probability will have positions by the time of their graduation.

As we know, most churches are looking for just the right candidate. He must be 35 years old, with 50 years of experience! Of course, he must also have a perfect family and be willing to work for minimum wage or below, with no benefits. This may seem humorous, but we must be careful not to place *unreasonable* demands on those who have sacrificed so much to serve the Lord. Thus, it is our prayer before God that our assemblies will *encourage* these and future candidates in the faith. Let's give them a chance to get established before overwhelming them with problems; they'll come soon enough, Satan will see to that!

Paul M. Sadler
President

From Florida:

"We praise the Lord for His ministry through you folks there and pray His Word will continue to go forth in truth and love by His power in you."

From Illinois:

"Please enter my name for a free subscription to the *Berean Searchlight*. I have been a Christian for ten years, but have just recently been introduced to Pauline dispensationalism and I feel like the scales have dropped off my eyes and I can finally understand Him."

From California:

"I have recently opened my heart and gave my life up to our Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful decision that was. Our lives have changed slowly for the better. What a relief to know that we are saved by grace through faith. I would love to learn everything I can but I must admit I am a little overwhelmed and sometimes a little confused. We heard about the *Berean Searchlight* through Joseph and Janell White. They love how you make everything easy to understand. So do I." (We do our best to keep the *Searchlight* readable, understandable, practical, and vital. Ed.)

From Colorado:

"Will you please send 12 copies of your *Triumph of His Grace*. The Pauline fellowship here will use them to further the teaching on the Rapture of the Body. We feel this is an intentionally neglected teaching of God's Word in favor of a tribulation and earthly return of Christ."

From Texas:

"Your publications are always a welcome addition to our personal study of *rightly dividing* God's glorious Word. We also Home School our children and we teach and share with them the importance of knowing what God has done for us. You can't start too soon to teach young ones how to avoid confusion with Law and Grace. Thanks for your wonderful publications and dedication to providing it to us."

From Oregon:

"We know the Lord is still *saving* sinners. We've just had (another) son-in-law who has embraced the *Hidden Gospel* and it has completely changed this man. He was almost *afraid* to hear the *mystery of the Cross* because he wasn't sure he could recognize it and wouldn't be saved. It struck his heart like a lightning bolt." (Lightning bolts usually kill or maim, but in this case it brought new life. Ed.)

From Michigan:

"Thank you for sending me the package of *Searchlights* every month. I hand them out at the GM Plant I work at. God is working."

From Indiana:

"Please send a copy of *The Triumph of His Grace*. There was a lot of *meat* in the book, *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ*. I'm looking forward to *The Triumph of His Grace*. With rightly dividing the Word everything (with lots of help from good teachers) falls into place."

From Minnesota:

"Thanks for fielding my 'many' questions! As someone has said: '*Truth is so obscure in these times and falsehood so established that unless we love the truth, we cannot know it.*'" (Amen! Ed.)

From Kentucky:

"I do thank God for your ministry."

From Ohio:

"I pray for God's continuing guidance for your ministry and thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the *meat* from God's Word you provide. It fills the empty niches that occur from local ministries not preaching and teaching God's Word, rightly divided."

From Oklahoma:

"We thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* you send us so faithfully each month. It is a great blessing to receive your Bible lessons rightly divided."

From Washington:

"I have been receiving the *Searchlight* and benefiting from the articles for about 10 years now. Oh, that the Lordship Salvationists could let go of their *fun and games* religion and learn what Christ is really all about through the study of His Word, rightly divided. It is only then that the fullness of our inheritance is understood and appreciated."

From British Columbia:

"This is a little note to inform you that we are moving. The most thrilling moment of each month for me is when I receive the *Searchlight* in the mail. I read it right through the day I receive it. It goes without saying that this is the most important address change that I will be making during this move."

From Oregon:

"I found a copy of the *Berean Searchlight* at a Post Office just after dark, outside. I took it home and it has enlightened me to the teachings of Jesus Christ through Paul." (God works in mysterious ways! How's that old saying go? "One man's discard is another man's treasure." Ed.)

From Washington:

"What a blessing it is to find an Internet site devoted to the Word, rightly divided. We live in an area where no such teaching exists and have found it to be a hard situation for us after having been led by God to a Grace Church in 1982. Thank you for your work. Please understand how important it is as an encouragement to those of us who sometimes get to feel we are the only Christians anywhere who believe as we do. It is good to be reminded that there are indeed others out there, all over the world, who are convinced of the truth of mystery vs. prophecy, and the distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the Body of Christ."

From Tennessee:

"Thanks to all of you at *BBS* for working so hard to spread the gospel and I really believe *BBS* is an organization dedicated to God's work. I'm not sure how long, but I think it's been close to twenty years since I first heard of *BBS* and I'm so glad I did."

From Minnesota:

"This is the 39th year that I have been on your mailing list. What a feast."

From the Internet:

"I am very thankful for the things that God has allowed me to understand. He has blessed our family greatly with dispensational truth and I believe that your organization has much to do with it. Blessed be the Lord, and may He continue to further bless *BBS*." (Our Internet site has been a busy place lately. Ed.)

From South Carolina:

"Enclosed is our check in the amount of \$... to use where it may assist in furtherance of the *Grace Message*. Enjoy the *Berean Searchlight* each month, but particularly February's of this year, the article entitled: *What Difference Does It Make?* by David M. Havard. As he so profoundly pointed out, there is only one gospel for salvation today, Paul's gospel. To try and attempt to be saved other than by Paul's gospel is futile, as there is no other way in this *age of Grace*. May we continue to proclaim His message to all, until the Rapture or we go home to be with Christ."

From Wisconsin:

"Thanks for sending the *Berean Searchlight*. I appreciate your writings and I'm happy to hear that Pastor Sadler is writing a commentary on Ephesians. I'm thankful for Pastor Stam's commentaries and books that he has written. They are very helpful."

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

The Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period (Part V)

By Paul M. Sadler

THE CESSATION OF THE MIRACULOUS SIGN GIFTS

“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”

—I Cor. 12:31

Confusion is perhaps Satan’s most effective weapon of warfare against the Body of Christ. He uses this weapon so effectively that most are totally unaware of its destructive force. This is certainly the case today with the confusion that surrounds the supernatural sign gifts of the Acts period. Once again, the solution to this and a host of other tactical errors the Church has made is a proper understanding of the Word, rightly divided. This rule of thumb must also be applied to Paul’s epistles, especially in regard to the apostle’s early and later ministries.

As we have seen, there are essentially three reasons for the emergence of the miraculous sign gifts, each of which played a significant role at the beginning of the dispensation of Grace.

First, these miraculous manifestations were a sign to Israel that God was setting the chosen nation aside in unbelief in order to introduce a new program among the Gentiles. This was a sure indication that the blessing of God had been removed from the wayward nation and given to the Gentiles. Since this was accomplished by the close of the Acts period, the sign gifts gave way to the next phase of God’s plans and purposes for the Church.

Second, with the unveiling of the Mystery came the need for a new apostle. Paul, of course, was the one chosen by the Lord of glory to hold this apostolic office. In order to safeguard against impostors, strict guidelines were placed upon those who were called to be apostles. It was mandatory that the one who held this position be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ.

In addition, the signs of an apostle had to accompany the ministry of those who claimed to be apostles. Paul’s apostolic credentials were impeccable, insofar as he had seen the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus and demonstrated *all* of the signs of an apostle (I Cor. 9:1 cf. II Cor. 12:12). Since Paul’s apostleship was a well-established fact by the end of his early ministry, these gifts were *withdrawn*.

Third, these miraculous manifestations also served to draw the attention of the unsaved masses to Christ in a dramatic way. Consequently, multitudes were saved into the Body, thus giving credibility to the gospel of the grace of God. Once the Church came into full bloom the sign gifts gradually faded from the scene.

But *what* exactly brought these miraculous demonstrations to a close or are they still to be sought after today, as some teach? Of course, some will defend their tongues experience until the day they die. But, shall we place experience above the Scriptures? God forbid! It is always essential that

our faith is resting on the firm foundation of the Word of God, rightly divided!

THE END OF AN ERA

“But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away” (I Cor. 13:8).

Shall prophecies fail? By no means; the apostle is referring here to the *gift* of prophecy. Shall tongues cease? Obviously not, for even to this very day tongues or languages are being used as a means of communication. Paul is speaking about the gift of tongues, that is, the ability to supernaturally speak an unknown foreign language for the purpose of imparting the gospel (I Cor. 14:22). The gift of knowledge shall also vanish away, which, as we have seen, enabled the believer to know the mind and will of God in any given circumstance. This is how Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Spirit and kept back part of the price of the possession they sold. He had the gift of knowledge!

Have you ever paused to consider why the apostle selected these particular sign gifts from a long list of others that could have been chosen? We have found that they all bear a direct *connection* to the Word of God. Those, for example, who exercised the gift of prophecy, literally spoke the

Word of God as they foretold future events. The prophet Agabus warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem, for in so doing he would be bound hand and foot with chains. As we know, his words were fulfilled to the letter (Acts 21:10-12).

Today if we desire enlightenment on “things to come” we must diligently search the Scriptures. So then, the gift of prophecy has given way to the *written* revelation. In like manner, if the believer is seeking the mind and will of God it is no longer conveyed through the supernatural gift of knowledge, but through the written revelation. The gift of tongues was the vehicle through which prophecy and the knowledge of God were communicated in oral form. But it, too, became inoperative with the completion of the Scriptures.

Consequently, God speaks to us today through His written revelation. Even in

Paul’s day the original manuscripts and copies thereof were already being circulated among the churches for the saints to read and study (Col. 4:16 cf. II Tim. 4:13). Through the centuries thousands of translations have been produced in nearly every language. And with the invention of the printing press the Word of God is now available around the world.

THAT WHICH IS PERFECT

“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (I Cor. 13:10).

Those of the Charismatic persuasion normally interpret the above passage accordingly: "When Christ, who is the perfect One, comes, then the supernatural gifts will be done away at which time faith, hope and love will abide throughout eternity." In short, they teach the continuation of the sign gifts until the Rapture and therefore those who do not possess these gifts are looked down upon as living in carnality. Need we remind our Charismatic friends that the Corinthians were anything but spiritual minded, yet they exercised these gifts to the glory of God. You see, it was not a matter of one's spirituality; rather these gifts were given according to God's plans and purposes at that time.

The pressing question here is this, when were these gifts withdrawn? Paul is very clear that a change was indeed in the wind: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: *and yet show I unto you a more excellent way*" (I Cor. 12:31). The apostle instructs the Corinthians that, for the time then present, they should choose to exercise the most profitable gifts, such as prophecy. But they were to understand that these miraculous manifestations would soon give way to something far *superior*.

The time line for this change is given to us in I Corinthians 13:10. If we consult the Greek we find the construction of this verse is in the neuter gender, which indicates an inanimate object is in view, such as a book. The translators did a superb job of carrying this thought over into the English as well. This is important for the mere reason that if the person of Christ is the subject of this passage

the construction would require the masculine gender. To be grammatically correct the verse would have to read, "But when He who is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." However, since the noun "that" is in the neuter gender we believe that the passage should be interpreted in the following manner:

"But when that [the Word of God, in particular Paul's epistles] which is perfect [Gr. *Teleiosis* 'Completion—an end accomplished as the effect of a process.'] is come, then that [supernatural sign gifts] which is in part [the incomplete way] shall be done away."

In other words, with the completion of Paul's epistles the sign gifts vanished away. This interpretation is in keeping with the grammatical construction of the passage and even more importantly with the *context* and experience. The position is reinforced further when we remember that it was given to the Apostle Paul to fulfill or *complete* the Word of God insofar as extent (Col. 1:25). He completed the Scriptures in regard to the *Mystery*.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11).

Interestingly, Paul uses two illustrations to confirm his argument. He begins by contrasting *childhood* with adulthood—the immature with the mature. When our youngest, Timothy, was about three years old he was cute as a button. Of course, that's a papa speaking.

One day my wife was sewing across from Kevin's room when she heard a voice faintly say: "Do you need help?" Apparently Kevin, who was a teenager at the time, had gone downstairs but forgot to turn off his electronic baseball game. After about five minutes it repeatedly says, in intervals of fifteen seconds, "Do you need help?" Just then Timmy came scampering down the hallway when he heard this mysterious voice from his brother's bedroom—"Do you need help?" He slowly pushed the door open and *softly* said, "He'll be right back!!" Now a seasoned veteran in these things, Timothy obviously knows the difference between an electronic voice and the real thing.

In like fashion, the sign gifts were the *immature* way. When we became adults we put away all our childhood toys. Hence, our immaturity was gradually replaced with a fuller understanding of things once we became adults. Thus, the supernatural gifts were put aside with the maturing of the dispensation which came with the completion of Paul's revelation.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face..." (I Cor. 13:12).

Here the apostle uses a mirror to further illustrate his argument. Unlike mirrors today, in biblical times they were often pieces of metal from which one could barely make out his image. Similarly, the sign gifts were like looking into

an ancient mirror; they were an indication that everything had not yet come into focus. Therefore, with the advent of God's written revelation further *clarity* was given so we could see, as it were, face to face. That is, God made it possible for us to see more clearly the whole counsel of His will.

THE PRINCIPLE OF REPLACEMENT

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13).

Whenever God takes something away from His children He always replaces it with something infinitely better. Thus, upon withdrawing the sign gifts, which were temporary in character, God has replaced them with three crowning *graces* that will abide throughout the remainder of the dispensation. As we have seen, some claim that these three *graces*

"...the supernatural gifts were put aside with the maturing of the dispensation which came with the completion of Paul's revelation."

won't be realized until eternity. We, however, beg to differ with them.

Paul says, now abideth faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The keystone in the arch of grace is *faith*. I have never seen or audibly spoken to the Lord face to face, although I do look forward to that day. Nevertheless, I have faith that He exists based upon the living Word of God. However, when I step into the glory of His presence my faith shall turn to *sight*.

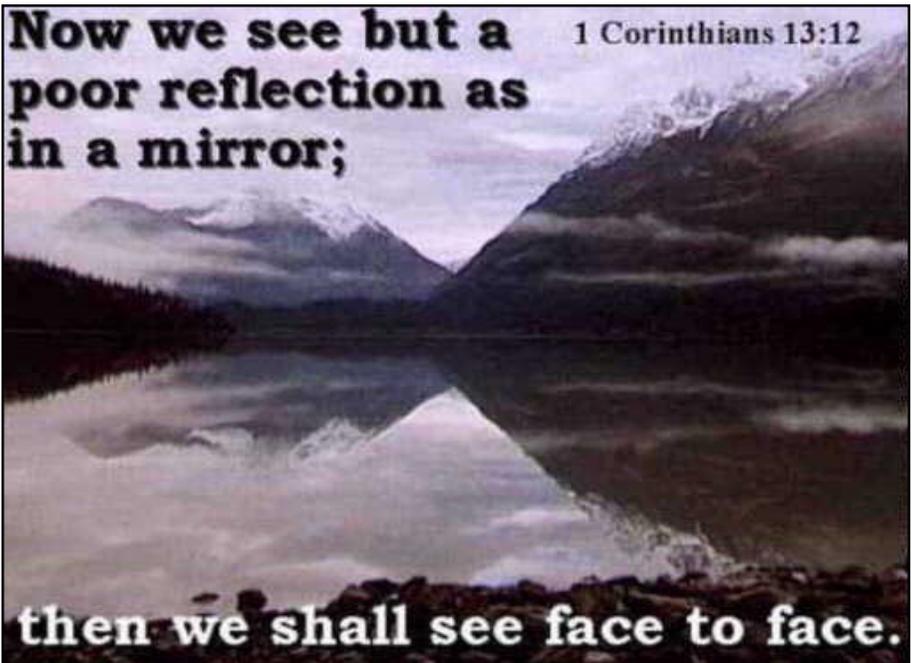
If faith is the keystone, then *hope* is the bow in the arch that reaches from the beginning of our Christian experience to the end. Our hope is Christ who will someday soon shuttle us to glory on the Rapture express. (As you can see, my years of traveling through major metropolitan cities are beginning to effect my thought process!)

Christ is our surety of the resurrection, translation, eternal life, reigning position and heaven. Once we are called home to heaven our hope will become *reality*. We will no longer hope to behold heaven after we are there and gaze upon its beauty. As Paul says, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24).

The final jewel in the crown of grace is *love*. Love is the bond that holds the arch of grace together.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ's sacrificial death at Calvary is the greatest love story ever told. Do you know the love of God in Christ Jesus? If the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts as the Book of Romans teaches us, should we not love one another and bear one another's burdens as members of the Body of Christ? This redeeming love will one day bring us to glory where we will abide *forever*.

The supernatural sign gifts of the Acts period have passed with the transition period and NOW abides *faith, hope and love*. The mark of a genuine assembly is not if they speak in tongues, but do they exhibit faith, hope and love in accordance with Paul's gospel. AMEN!!



THE LIGHTHOUSE

“Thank you Lord, for the Lighthouse
that brought me safely in
to Your loving harbor
far from the rocks of sin.

“This vessel was in peril
and then I saw the light
that guided me to safety
through the storms of night.

“Temptations waves were raging
and it just was not clear
in the darkness and confusion
the way that I should steer.

“So thank you Lord, for the Lighthouse
when in the billows I was tossed
if it hadn't been for Jesus
this soul would have been lost.”

—R. K. Cecil

QUESTION BOX

“Why is it that you never refer to yourself as Rev. or The Rev.? I must add that I totally agree with not using that title.”

In the Old Testament the term “reverend” is an *adjective*. “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: holy and *reverend* is His name” (Psa. 111:9). Here it describes the *honor* of His name. The name Jehovah was so high, so holy, so *revered* that the Jews changed the pronunciation of it fearing the curse of the law:

“And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD [Jehovah], he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger...” (Lev. 24:16).

According to the Scriptures, we are to hold those who have rule over us in high regard (Heb. 13:17). While they should be worthy of honor, the fact is, the very best fall short. Furthermore, we never want to leave the impression that “*The Reverend*” is in any sense the final authority. Rather it is our desire that the believer study the Word of God, which is the *final* authority.

Since the designation of “reverend” is a lofty title that only God is worthy of, we believe those who minister the gospel should avoid its use. We should, however, give due *respect* to the office of the pastor, elder, and teacher, each of which are ordained by the Spirit of God.

—Pastor Sadler

Y2K—Hype, Hysteria, Hope

By David M. Havard

Historically, the turn of the century has always brought out self-styled prophets who start prognosticating about the end of the world. Such hysteria is only increased because next year will not only bring in a new century but also a new millennium. If the events of the past are any indication, we can expect the number of doomsday and prophetic cults to increase as we approach the end of 1999.

Times like these call for discernment on our part. “Prophetic” predictions are wrong because they are based on a wrong presupposition. The so-called seers or prophets are ignorant of history (not to mention their ignorance of the Pauline revelation and that we are not in Israel’s prophetic program). Although the year 2000 sounds conveniently ominous for them, the next millennium does not actually start until 2001.¹ In addition, they forget that the person who established our Julian calendar miscalculated by 3 years. This means that the 2000 year anniversary of Christ’s birth occurred in 1997 (to the discredit of many prophetic preachers who say that the Lord is going to come back in 2000).

A PERILOUS PREDICAMENT

Despite the many wacko theories about the year 2000, there does remain a very real problem known as Y2K. Not in recent memory have three small letters

spelled such big trouble. A year ago, there were only a handful of people warning about the upcoming problem known as Y2K. But as we begin to rapidly approach the year 2000, more and more voices are crying out to warn us about Y2K.

THE PROBLEM

Just what is Y2K? Y2K is short for Year 2000—Y stands for year, 2 for 2, and K for kilo or thousand, or Y2K. Without going into a lot of detail, the problem is that many older computer systems will interpret 00 as 1900 instead of 2000. Depending on who you listen to, Y2K will be either just a minor inconvenience or the end of the world as we know it.²

At the risk of oversimplifying the issue, only computers that do calculations based on a date function will have significant problems with the year 2000. For example, here at the *Berean Bible Society*, my computer is used primarily for word processing and desktop publishing. There are no calculations involved. It would not affect my writing if my computer thought it were 1900.³ However, if I were running an accounting application where the date is used to calculate payments, interest, or other financial information it would make a big difference if the computer were not Y2K compliant.

Much has been said about embedded chips. We are warned that everything from our microwave and VCR to our car and the elevator at

the office will not work because of old embedded chips.

But despite the hype, the truth is that very few, if any, household appliances and cars will fail because of embedded chips. If they do, we revert to the manual override (such as on a computer controlled thermostat in a home). But when it comes to embedded chips, you don't have to take my word for it. Edward Yourdon, one of the first to warn about Y2K problems had this to say:

"If an embedded system does not provide a human operator, or end-user, with a means of setting 'current year' information, or changing that information, then it's unlikely that the embedded system is aware of, or dependent on, the year."

The problem with embedded chips will not be in your home or car but in industrial operations such as refineries, power plants, defense systems, and such. The embedded chips in these applications could indeed cause problems with far-reaching implications. The problem is that no can know for sure how severe or widespread these disruptions will be.

THE PROGNOSIS

Some people think that Y2K will not be a problem for them because they do not have a personal computer in their home or business. While they may not be impacted directly, they will most likely be affected indirectly by the problems caused in corporate and

government (federal, state, and local) computers.

It is probable that we will have some disruptions in the delivery of governmental and utility service because of Y2K related problems⁴. Most experts who have studied the issue agree on this point. But how widespread, how long, and how severe any problems, disruptions, or outages will be is hotly debated.

Mark R. Hettler, author of *A Biblical Perspective on the Y2K Computer Problem* said:

"Predictions as to the consequences of this failure to fully correct

"...one of the biggest problems in trying to assess the Y2K problem is discerning between the hype and the truth."

the problem vary widely. Some believe that the Y2K computer problem will result in the end of western civilization as we have known it, the end of a way of life comparable to the impact of the American Civil War on the southern United States or the Nazi

occupation on much of Europe. Others predict a disruption in services no greater than what might be brought about by a heavy snowfall, if even that...Although it is impossible at this time to predict the precise consequences of the Y2K computer problem, it is safe to say that there will be some sort of disruption to life as we know it."

Unfortunately, one of the biggest problems in trying to assess the Y2K problem is discerning between the hype and the truth. Some companies, who could be drastically hurt by Y2K problems, do not admit to the extent of the

problem. For example, if an investment firm knows of upcoming problems they may not admit it for fear of people withdrawing their money; the government may not admit to the extent of the problem for fear of starting a panic.

Other companies and individuals stand to profit from the Y2K mania and do what they can to make the problem worse than perhaps it really is. We see religious leaders predicting the apocalypse and selling videos or books on how to prepare, or survivalists telling us that the entire system is going to collapse and conveniently offering to sell us freeze-dried food, gold, or ammunition.⁵

PRUDENT PREPARATIONS

While the experts debate the details of potential Y2K problems, we are left wondering what we should do. What kind of preparations, if any, should we be making?

While we are commanded not to worry (Phil. 4:6-7), this does not mean that we should not prepare for what we may reasonably expect to happen. Proverbs 22:3 tells us that a wise man foresees trouble and prepares for it, but a fool ignores the warning sign, goes his merry way, and suffers for it (see also Prov. 6:6-8).

A biblical example of preparedness is Joseph. He was warned by God of an upcoming famine and he wisely used the intervening time period to lay aside provisions (Gen. 41:34-36, 47-49). He did not sit back, do nothing, and expect God to miraculously provide, and neither should we. Preparation is not a lack of faith. The Apostle Paul says that if any will not provide

for the needs of his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8).⁶

As with most everything, there are two extremes—do nothing or do everything. We do not want to overreact and adopt a siege mentality, but neither do we want to do nothing and suffer for it.

Some like to compare potential Y2K problems to that of an upcoming storm. If we are warned that a storm (blizzard, hurricane, tornado) is coming we make prudent preparations.

It seems to be wise to prepare as you would for any other type of disruption. As a minimum, it is a good idea to have enough food, water, cash, and alternative method of heating and lighting on hand to last for 3-7 days in case of power outages or similar disruptions.⁷ The *Federal Emergency Management Agency* and the *American Red Cross* are making these same recommendations:

“While surveys show most Americans do not expect their lives to be severely disrupted, a significant minority say they are planning big investments of time or money to protect themselves. And the *American Red Cross* advises the public, as a precaution, to have enough food and other staples on hand to endure disruptions of several days to a week.” (Tues., Feb. 9, 1999, NY Times.)

PROPER PERSPECTIVE

Regardless of what may or may not happen with regard to Y2K, our spiritual and mental attitudes are even more important than our physical preparations. History has shown how those who have

lacked adequate physical resources but have the proper spiritual and emotional resources often do better in hard times than those who have adequate physical resources but lack the inner resources to cope with the situation. This is especially true in prolonged hardship situations (such as those who survived Nazi concentration camps and the extended Iranian hostage crisis in the early 80's).

One of the major reasons that we feel distressed in crisis situations is that we are powerless to change the situation. This feeling of helplessness is the primary cause of our mental and emotional distress. We feel that the situation is out of our control.⁸

But as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must never forget that God is in control. Yes, even in the dispensation of Grace, God is still sovereign! We need to remind ourselves that *nothing* can happen unless He ordains it.⁹ In the book of Job (written before the Law—the oldest book in the Bible) we read that nothing can happen to us unless He allows it (Job 1:12, 2:6-7).

Mark R. Hettler in his book *A Biblical Perspective on the Y2K Computer Problem* puts it well when he says:

“Whatever impact the Y2K computer bug is to have on our society can only happen if and to the degree that God ordains. Neither pure chance, nor carelessness, nor organized conspiracy can have any result not in accord with what He intends for this period of time. If it is God’s intention to bless and prosper America during the next few years, no computer glitch can

prevent that. And if it is God’s purpose that America should go through a period of hardship and disruption, all the programmers in the world working around the clock for the next year cannot avert it. We cannot know, at least not with certainty, which is the case, but we can be absolutely certain that God will indeed have His way.”

Despite the number of “health and wealth” preachers who continue to proclaim an erroneous message for today, God has never promised that His own will not go through hardship. God has never promised to maintain us at the typically high American standard of living. Or do we somehow think that believers in other countries are somehow less spiritual or have less faith?

Many of those who believe in the health and wealth gospel frequently go to Hebrews 11 to supposedly prove their point. However, they usually stop reading before they get to verse 36 where we read:

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise” (Heb. 11:36-39).

What God has promised is to use trials to shape our character (Rom. 5:3-5), to never leave us

without his love (Rom. 8:35-39), to not test us beyond our ability (I Cor. 10:13), and to be glorified in our weakness (II Cor. 1:9 & 12:10).

Regardless of what happens in the coming months, if our focus is where it should be in the first place, none of these earthly events will seriously affect us where it really matters—our heart. Like Paul, we are to focus on the eternal, not the temporal things of this earth which are passing away (II Cor. 4:18). This is a transdispensational principle. Throughout the Scriptures, God has told His people to have their attention directed toward eternal spiritual values (Matt. 6:19-21; I Pet. 1:4; I John 2:15-17). The Apostle Paul echoes this admonition in Colossians 3:2 where we read: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Our focus should be on our spiritual realities and blessings in the heavenlies. Talk is cheap, however. Many of us say that this is where our focus is, but the events surrounding Y2K could give us a chance to prove our words.

And what an opportunity for witnessing to the gospel of the grace of God all of this could be! If we can reflect the calmness of spirit and peace of God during turbulent times (whether economic or social), then we may have the opportunity to tell others the reason for the hope that is within us

(I Pet. 3:15). However, if we are just as materialistic and earthly focused as the unsaved person, then practically speaking, we will be no better off than they.

SUMMARY

It is apparent that many computers will not have their Y2K problems fixed in time. While *no one* can accurately predict the severity or impact of Y2K problems, there is agreement that there will be some degree of disruption in basic services.

The Bible tells us that we are not supposed to worry—over *anything*—even Y2K (Phil. 4:6-8). Our hope, regardless of Y2K, should be in Christ and in Him alone! We have God’s promises of His presence, love, and sovereign protection! Yet during this present evil age, we are told to provide for our own (I Tim. 5:8) and

“The Bible tells us that we are not supposed to worry—over *anything*—even Y2K (Phil. 4:6-8).”

Scripture teaches the principle of wise preparation (Prov. 22:3).

We could sum up by saying:

BE AWARE

BE PREPARED

REDEEM THE TIME¹⁰

The bottom line question becomes, “Where do you put your trust?” “Do you *really* believe that God is sovereign and that He is in control?”¹¹ If you trust God, if you believe that He is sovereign, if you are focused on heavenly things, then you have nothing to fear—regardless of what does or does not happen in the months and years ahead. As the old hymn says:

“There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.
There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God;
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us, who wait before Thee,
Near to the heart of God.”

Near to the Heart of God, by
Cleland B. McAfeeto 

Endnotes

1. This is because the first year of our current calendar was “1” not “0” and 1 plus 1000 equals 1001; thus, 1 plus 2000 equals 2001.
 2. They have even made it into a somewhat pronounceable acronym—“teotwawki” (pronounced “tee-oh-tuh-wah-kee”).
 3. As best as we can tell, our computer software and hardware here at *BBS* are ready for the year 2000.
 4. At this point, it appears that over 80% of the banking system will be compliant and more utility companies are saying that they will be ready.
-

The Paradox of Grace

By Cornelius R. Stam

Perhaps we would appreciate the wonder of God’s grace more fully if we viewed it against the background of what He Himself says about the essential principles of justice.

In Deuteronomy 25:1 it is written:

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

5. For what it is worth, a recent survey conducted on the Internet asked people what they thought would be the outcome of Y2K problems. According to the survey, 5% said it will be a non-event, nothing will happen; 28% said it will result in some inconveniences; 39% believe it will cause severe disruptions; and 27% think it will cause complete chaos.

6. Other examples of preparation: The Israelites in the wilderness had to gather two days worth of manna before the Sabbath (Exod. 16:21-26); the virgins who prepared are called wise and those who did not are called foolish (Matt. 25:1-13).

7. Some are preparing for much longer (1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year) but that is something that you will have to decide for yourself.

8. This is why preparing for potential problems is important. When we have taken action toward a situation we feel less helpless and controlled by the situation. If we do what we can and leave the result with the Lord we will be less worried and frustrated than someone who does nothing.

9. Even the crucifixion of Christ was ordained of God (Acts 4:28); the Jews and the Romans were not acting without God’s consent.

10. Eph. 5:16—make the most of every opportunity for the gospel’s sake.

11. Some verses to reflect upon: II Sam. 22:31; Psa. 11:1; 18:2,30; 20:7; 37:5; 46:1; 56:3-4; 62:8; 78:20; 118:8-9; 146:3; Prov. 3:5-6; 25:19; Jer. 17:7-8; Matt. 6:19-21; 10:28; Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 1:9; Phil. 4:6-7; I Tim. 6:17-19.

Well, of course! This is simple, basic justice! Any deviation from this course would be *wrong!*

The Word itself says in no uncertain terms:

“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 17:15).

Bildad, though a “miserable comforter,” reiterated this basic principle when he said to Job:

“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers” (Job 8:20).

And Job acknowledged this to be so, for he replied:

“I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2).

Yes, here is the rub. It is so. God is perfectly and infinitely just. The slightest injustice is, and must always be, an abomination to Him. But where does this leave *us*? We are sinners by nature and practice. Does this not mean that He *must* condemn and punish us?

The story of grace is the answer to this awful question. Here we find what is certainly a striking paradox: God Himself condemning the righteous and justifying the wicked; forsaking the perfect and helping evil doers.

Behold the spotless Lamb on Calvary, as He cries: *“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”* Behold the Holy One as Judas kisses Him in base betrayal, as wicked men spit in His face, mock Him, smite Him, scourge Him and nail Him to a tree.

And *God*, the Judge of all, does *nothing* to stop them. Indeed, He Himself unsheathes His sword and smites the one person in all history who could truly say: *“I delight to do Thy will, O God.”*

And this is not all, for on the other hand He *saves* the one who is Christ’s bitterest enemy; “a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious.” To *him* He shows “*grace...exceeding abundant*” and “*all longsuffering*.” Indeed, He sends him forth to proclaim to all, that:

“To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the

ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

But how can all this be *right*? The answer is that the One who died in agony and disgrace on Calvary is God Himself—“*God manifested in the flesh*.” There, at Calvary, “*GOD was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Cor. 5:19). It was the Judge Himself stepping down from the throne to the Cross in infinite and matchless grace to represent the sinner and pay for all his sins. Thus the chief of sinners exclaims: “*He loved me and gave Himself for me!*” (Gal. 2:20).

And who will say that *this* is injustice? Injustice? It is justice and more! It is *grace*! He became identified with us and *paid* for our sins that we might be *justified*.

Thus it is that we read in Romans 3:24-26.

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

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins...

“To declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Under the terms of the Law we find God “*showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments*” (Ex. 20:6). But grace is infinitely more: it is the riches of God’s mercy and love to the “*children of disobedience*,” the “*children of wrath*” (Eph. 2:2-4). And, praise His name, it is all in strictest accord with perfect and infinite justice! 

THE BBI BYLINE

To the Praise of His Glory

By Dr. W. Edward Bedore
Executive Director, Berean Bible Institute

From its beginning in 1996 **BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE** has been steadily moving forward toward the time that its first students would graduate. And now that time has arrived. Friday evening the 28th of May, three students will receive the first diplomas to be awarded by **BBI**. This, of course, marks a very important milestone for this ministry. And to say that everyone at the **INSTITUTE** is excited about it is certainly an understatement.

Sacrifice, discipline, and faithfulness were required to reach this goal and congratulations are in order for David Siegmann and Scott and Lisa Metz for their achievement. Please, pray for them as they endeavor to serve God in the work of the ministry.

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE's Graduation and Awards Ceremony will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday evening May 28th, at Kettle Moraine Bible Church in West Bend, Wisconsin. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

***“Only one life: ‘twill soon be past.
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”***

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE was founded for the purpose of helping individual believers prepare themselves for service to God. We seek to do this by providing a full program of Bible and ministry training that gives our students a working knowledge of the whole Bible, grounds them in sound doctrine, teaches them proper Bible study methods, and shows them how to put their knowledge to work in actual ministry. If you have a heartfelt call to be in the ministry, we hope you will consider attending **BBI**. You could be in the class of 2002!

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Smoky Mountain Spring Bible Conference

Dates: May 28-30, 1999

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Mike Keshan, Pastor of the *Kettle Moraine Bible Church*
Dennis Kiszonas, Director of *Grace For Today Ministries*
Paul M. Sadler, President of the *Berean Bible Society*

For brochures and directions, please contact:

Pastor Curt Crist (828) 693-5812 or
David Stallings (828) 696-3253

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11th Annual Spring Conference

Dates: June 4-6, 1999

Location: *Miracle Hills Ranch*
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Theme: *Christian Growth*

Speakers: Pastor John Fredericksen
Pastor David Hill

For additional information, please contact:

Dan Heyle (660) 425-6853 or
Pastor Ken Lawson (217) 623-4014

MAY GOD RICHLI BLESS THESE MEETINGS
TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS!

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June 19-24, 1999

at

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- **Keynote Address:** Pastor Ivan Burgener
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At the Piano: Virginia Shriver

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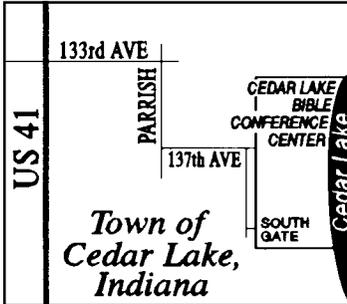
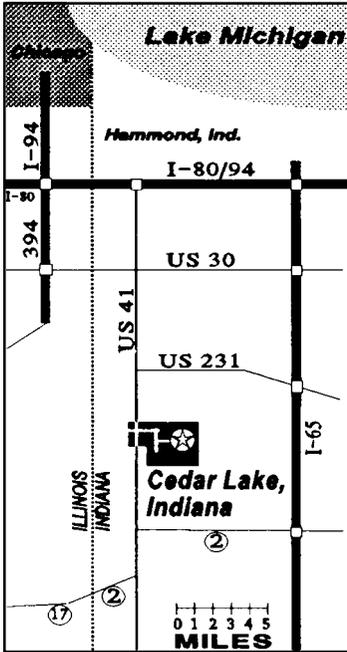
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Facilities for travel trailers, motor homes, and tent camping include electric/water hook-ups, dump station, showers, etc.

How to Get to the BBF Conference:



Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center is located in the town of Cedar Lake, in northwest Indiana, twenty miles south of Chicago.

By Auto: US 41 to Cedar Lake, Indiana:

- At the traffic signal, in Cedar Lake, turn east on 133rd Ave. 3/4 mile to the traffic signal at Parrish.
- Right on Parrish for 1/2 mile to 137th Ave.
- Left on 137th Ave. for 1/2 mile to the Conference grounds. Enter at the South Gate for parking and registration.

By Air: Tri-State Airport Service (708) 396-9900 Buses connect Chicago's O'Hare International and Midway airports with Hammond, Indiana.

Call the Conference Center (219) 374-5941 to arrange pickup in Hammond.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LATE NOTICE: The *Berean Grace Church* will be holding their 4th Annual Spring Bible Conference on May 15th and 16th at the Pleasant Hill Elementary School, 175 South Barker Road, Brookfield, Wisconsin. Theme: "Walking By Faith." The guest speaker this year is Pastor Richard Ware from the *Grace Bible Church* in Oshkosh, WI. For more information or directions, please contact Pastor David Havard at (414) 255-4750 (day), or (414) 376-1834 (evening), or e-mail at <BGBC@grafton.net>.

ADVANCE NOTICE: The *Celebrate Grace Camp* will be held August 1-6 at *San Juan Bible Camp*, S.W. Colorado. The main speaker this year is Pastor David Havard. For reservations and additional information, please contact Jerry Worthley at (719) 276-2469 or e-mail at <tyrone@ris.net>. Happy camping!!

POSTAL SERVICE: With postage, especially *Return Postage*, becoming more expensive all the time, your assistance with the following will help us save time and money:

1. If you move, please notify us immediately of your change of address, remembering to supply your *zip code*.
2. If your name and address on the *Searchlight* is incorrect, please notify us, supplying the correction.
3. We send receipts and acknowledgments for *all* gifts. Should you fail to receive a receipt for any gift you send, please inquire to make sure that we have received it. For those who are interested, the *Berean Bible Society* also provides annual reports for tax purposes upon request.

HELP WANTED: As we prepare to celebrate our *Sixtieth Anniversary* next year we need your assistance. Perhaps you have an interesting story or snapshot you would like to share with us for our upcoming anniversary edition of the *Searchlight*. Of course, the possibilities are *endless*. It could be anything from a dinner experience with Pastor Stam to how you came in contact with our literature. If you plan to send photographs, we request that only a *copy* of the original be forwarded. Please send all replies here to *BBS—Attention: David Havard*. Thanks in advance!

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mrs. Betty France. She is a freelance photographer who we had the privilege of meeting at a craft fair in Milwaukee. The *Umpqua Lighthouse* is located near Winchester Bay, Oregon. We will be sharing more of Betty's work with you in future issues of the *Berean Searchlight*.

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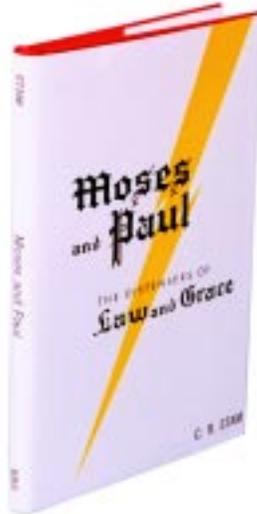
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