

# The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 2002



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*Editor:* Paul M. Sadler; *Composition and Layout:* Kevin J. Sadler

Questions, comments, book orders? You can reach us at:

*Berean Bible Society*  
 N112 W17761 Mequon Road  
 PO Box 756  
 Germantown, WI 53022

*Berean Bible Society* Main Office: (262) 255-4750  
*Berean Bible Society* Fax Number: (262) 255-4195

Internet: <[www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)>  
 E-mail: <[berean@execpc.com](mailto:berean@execpc.com)>

*Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., CST*

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# From the Editor to You:

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Dear Friends,

While Pastor Sadler is busy ministering the Word in the Philippines, it's my privilege to greet you for him in the name of the Lord Jesus, and share with you a word about my first few months back here at BBS.

Many things have changed since I first worked for *Berean Bible Society* twenty years ago. The new location here in Germantown, Wisconsin, has placed us in the midst of a veritable community of Grace churches in the Milwaukee area. Computers have streamlined the ministry, enabling us to accomplish more work in less time than ever before. The *Searchlight* is composed entirely on screen in a way so efficient it makes me feel positively pre-historic when I remember the T-square and board I used to do the layout work "back in my day"! And our website ministers God's Word rightly divided to people literally all over the planet, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

But while many things have changed here in the past two decades, some things remain the same. The spiritual paintings and motto plaques that encouraged me as a young man now adorn the walls of this new facility. Pastor Stam's piano is still here, and while he himself can no longer come to play it, I'm often encouraged to hear one of our young *Berean Bible Institute* students playing in between their classes.



And then there are some things that I am *especially* glad to see have not changed. Our commitment to "the gospel of the grace of God" remains firm. The office is still staffed by faithful, dedicated people who take their jobs very seriously. Books and booklets continue to go out on a daily basis to help people understand and enjoy the Bible. And the *Searchlight* still brings its monthly message of grace to thousands, many of whom have no Grace church in their area to attend.

Finally, I was touched to see that yet one more thing hasn't changed around here. Each day's mail continues to bring contributions from hard-working people who continue to give sacrificially and dependably to the work here on a regular basis. People whose lives have been unshackled by God's grace and who are eager to see others come to an understanding of God's Word, rightly divided. We thank you for your participation in this ministry. We pray that when you write that check each month, you truly feel that you are a part of us, for that's the way we feel about you.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth

**From North Carolina:**

"Just a quick note to let all of you know how much I appreciate each and every one of you. As a new Grace believer, I appreciate the material packet your ministry sent me very much. I also appreciate the online back issues of the *Berean Searchlight* and the Bible study archives being made available for download and study. The monthly issue of the *Berean Searchlight* is such a blessing. I look forward to a long and lasting fellowship with the *Berean Bible Society*. May God continue to richly bless you as you labor for the Lord."

**From Florida:**

"Still enjoying the *Searchlight* as much as ever—over 30 years now. It has such depth, unlike any other Christian periodical. In my Baptist Church, I can contribute in my Sunday school class what I've learned of dispensational truth. It's accepted and I'm so grateful for that. Thank you Pastor Sadler for all your articles."

**From Alabama:**

"I am a grace believer with no local resources. Please send the *Berean Searchlight* so that I may learn more. I began to learn to rightly divide several years ago and your publications have been very helpful."

**From the Internet:**

"I have profited greatly from your ministry, especially from Brother Stam's writings. He has a wonderful grasp of the Scriptures and the harmony thereof."

**From Pennsylvania:**

"Thank you for your Bible study articles as well as the rest of your material. It is helping me dramatically."

**From Washington:**

"I'm so thankful for ministries like yours that so faithfully continue to proclaim the precious truths of His grace thru the Word, rightly divided. May our faithful God continue to bless you in your effort for Him."

**From Maryland:**

"I moved away from my parent's house within the last year and I really miss reading your pamphlet monthly. Thanks so much in advance for adding me to your mailing list."

**From the Internet:**

"I have sent you money for the last few years for the *Searchlight* I receive in the mail, but they all collected dust for years. But now that I have had time to read all of them, they have really touched my heart. It is amazing how when you have nothing, the only thing you go after for help is the Lord. Well, hope you keep writing articles."

**From Arizona:**

"The *Berean Searchlight* gets better and better. Thank you for having me on your mailing list."

**From Ohio:**

"Will you please send me a copy of the December 2001 *Berean Searchlight* if at all possible. Somehow I've lost my copy and this is disheartening as I try to keep every issue so that I can refer back to them and share them with others as resources. The articles on 1st Peter have been especially interesting. Thank you and may God richly bless you."

**From Florida:**

"I'm married to a beautiful ex-Baptist who is now challenged to read the *Searchlight* on the sly!"

**From Illinois:**

"I would like to thank you for your monthly *Searchlight*. It has encouraged my husband to read the Bible and to help us both grow in God's Word and understand God's wonderful gift of mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. Keep up the offering of this free booklet. Enclosed is a check to help in this cost."

**From Georgia:**

"I am currently borrowing *Searchlights* from a friend. Well, I want my own. Please put me on the list."

**From Indiana:**

"Thank you for all you are doing for the Body of Christ. Your books have helped me more than you will ever know. Keep up the good work."

**From the Internet:**

"First off let me say that it is my pleasure to be able to support your great website with what little I can afford at this time. Keep up the great work that you all do, we love your monthly *Searchlight*."

**From Iowa:**

"We pray that many will come to know Christ as their Savior through the *BBS* work. We thank God for His many blessings."

**From the Internet:**

"I do appreciate the *Berean Searchlight*...Believe me, it has always been a great help to me as all the other literature has."

**From Tennessee:**

"My wife, son, and I, would like to thank you for doing God's work in such a clear and concise manner. We enjoy your magazine each month and as most, look forward to its arrival. God has blessed you all in doing His work. You really have II Timothy 2:15 down pat. May our Lord and Savior bless this ministry always."

**From Florida:**

"We are praying for you all and praise the Lord for His work through you all there."

**From Wisconsin:**

"I am very thankful for your ministry of the Word of God rightly divided."

**From the Philippines:**

"I met the President, Pastor Sadler, here in the Philippines....He is a great man of God, all of us were blessed by his message."

**Comments about the "Grace Library CD"****From Indiana:**

"I recently saw a copy of the *Grace Library CD*. It is a tremendous product. I really think it is a great tool." (Many, many thanks to our dear friends Tony & Barb Sistelos for all their hard work in bringing this CD to fruition. Ed.)

**From Washington, D.C.:**

"This CD appears to be more than I could have hoped for. I live in a small apartment and do not have space for a good library. This CD is the solution!"

**From Minnesota:**

"The feature of the CD I like especially is the ability to adjust the print size of the books."

**From Wisconsin:**

"We were really excited to see this Bible reference on CD. We have a Bible conference fast approaching, and my husband wanted to have a few on display. You probably will get more orders as a result."

**From Virginia:**

"Our family owns and operates a local Christian bookstore, a Christian mail order catalog service, and a Christian website literature ministry. We were thrilled that you have a CD 'Grace Library.' We are sure that some of our customers would enjoy learning about such a wonderful tool."

**From Colorado:**

"Thank you for your ministry and the great resource CD. I'm telling all my friends about it!"

**From Brazil:**

"We pray the CD will be a blessed study tool for many, and for many years to come." (See the ad for *The Grace Library CD* on page 22. Ed.)

"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

# My Job is God's Will?

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

**“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters...  
doing the will of God from the heart” (Ephesians 6:5,6).**

Surely what was true of servants and their masters applies equally to employees and their employers. Thus our text suggests that Christians involved in secular labor are “doing the will of God.” Of course, Paul says that we are to labor and work with our hands *“the thing which is good”* (Eph. 4:28). So unless you are an abortion doctor or some such thing, when you go to work, you are *doing the will of God*, and your work clothes are just as holy in the eyes of God as the vestments that Aaron wore when he entered the presence of the Lord, whether you wear a white collar or a blue collar.

Is it possible then that secular employment will earn *rewards* for Christians at the Judgment seat of Christ? The Apostle Paul says *yes!* If such labor is done “not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart,” and if it is done “as to the Lord, and not unto men,” then Paul unequivocally asserts “that of the Lord ye shall receive *the reward of the inheritance*” (Col. 3:22-24).

There is even evidence to suggest that those involved in secular labor who then faithfully support the ministry can look forward to rewards *equal* to those given to Christians directly engaged in the Lord's work. God instructed Moses:

**“And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to the battle, and between all the congregation” (Num. 31:27).**

When “wicked men” tried to ignore this plain command of God (I Sam. 30:22), David insisted:

**“...as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall part alike” (v. 23-25).**

Secular labor constitutes half of the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:9,10), and is also a commandment of *grace*. When the Thessalonians got so excited about the Rapture that they quit their jobs in eager anticipation, Paul twice reminded them that he had “commanded” them *not* to do this (I Thes. 4:11; II Thes. 3:10). He then re-issued the command (II Thes. 3:12) and further commanded them to “withdraw” from any who wouldn't obey these commands (II Thes. 3:6-10). Thus we see that working for a living is *a commandment of God* given to members of the Body of Christ through the Apostle Paul.

Finally, if you are considering entering the Lord's work, you should know that throughout Scripture, God called to His service men who were *already* demonstrating their faithfulness and dependability in secular employment. God called Moses when he was tending his father-in-law's sheep, Gideon as he was threshing wheat, David as he was shepherding his father's flock and several of the apostles as they were fishing or mending their nets.



# The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

## II Peter 2:10-14

By Paul M. Sadler

On the morning of December 7, 1941 the Japanese navy launched a surprise attack on the United States Pacific Fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor. The day following the attack President Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress to request that a declaration of war be made against the Empire of Japan.

“Yesterday, 7 December 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.



U.S.S. Arizona Memorial

“The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

“It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government had deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives were lost....”

Japan had purposely misled the United States for ill intent. As the Secretary of State negotiated in good faith, the Japanese navy had the Pacific Fleet in their crosshairs. It was a bitter *betrayal* of our trust.

False teachers operate under the same type of disguise. They earn the trust of the sheep of God only to betray it for their own evil purposes. Peter rolls out the sixteen inch guns, as it were, as he continues to expose these workers of iniquity.

### THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF FALSE TEACHERS

**“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But**

**these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.”**

—II Pet. 2:10-12

The role of the shepherd is to protect the sheep, a task that Peter took to heart. As he diligently watched over the flock, Peter warned his readers how false teachers walk after the lust of the flesh, and “despise government.” In other words, they hate all forms of *authority*. These unscrupulous leaders are self-willed and refuse to be accountable for their actions. Nevertheless there is always accountability in the Lord’s work. Even Paul himself reported back to the spiritual leaders at Antioch after each of his apostolic journeys.

**“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers...And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1-3).**

**“And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they [Paul and Barnabas] were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed [reviewed] all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:26,27).**

God has ordained elders in the local assembly as a safeguard against hirelings who come among the flock of God. This is one reason why they’re called overseers (Acts 20:28-30). As we know, there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors. But one of the marks of a false teacher is that he desires absolute power. He will rarely submit himself to the authority of others, such

as a board of elders, or if he does, he will make sure those around him can be easily manipulated.

So flagrant are these workers of iniquity, Peter says that “they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” The word “dignities” here denotes magnificence, excellence, glory, praise, honor, good report, etc. These false teachers speak evil of that which is good and holy. They recklessly take the Lord’s name in vain and openly slander the true servants of the Lord. In our modern day vernacular we’d call them “loose cannons.”

Interestingly, Peter adds, “Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.” The angels that report the irreverent behavior of these false teachers perform their duty with reverence before the throne of heaven. These angels, who are far superior, decline to bring railing accusations against them, unlike the workers of iniquity who arrogantly flaunt their authority. The angels submit themselves to the authority of God, who will judge all things in due time.

Jude also exposes the *disrespectful* conduct of these “wells without water,” conduct which is not even named among the angels.

**“Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 8,9).**

Even Michael the Archangel, the general-in-chief, *respected* the authority of Satan when he contended with him over the body of Moses. Although Michael is one of the seven spirits who stands in the presence

of God, Lucifer is greater in authority. We must remember, he was one of the original cherubims, the highest angelic creation of God. Therefore, Michael dared not to bring a charge against him, but rebuked him in the Lord. Undoubtedly, the devil wanted to enshrine the body of Moses to entice Israel into idolatrous worship of the great Deliverer, who was revered by the chosen nation. Obviously the Lord intervened, resolving the dispute based upon the statement found in Deuteronomy 34:5,6: "And He [Jehovah handing the shovel to Michael, as it were] buried him [Moses] in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

### THE REWARD OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

**"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot [luxuriousness] in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children" (II Pet. 2:12-14).**

We normally associate rewards with those that faithfully serve the Lord. But there is also a reward that awaits the ungodly who take pleasure in unrighteousness. These are brute beasts that have no morals whatsoever. Both Peter and Jude speak with a united voice that these beasts are filthy dreamers whose eyes are full of adultery.

"We normally associate rewards with those that faithfully serve the Lord. But there is also a reward that awaits the ungodly..."

They cannot look upon a woman without desiring to be with her in an inappropriate way. Peter adds, they "cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls." The adulterous ways of these false teachers had apparently influenced the unstable among the kingdom saints to think this was an acceptable lifestyle. But this type of sinful behavior for a believer has even graver consequences, as Charles Swindoll vividly points out:

Your mate will experience the anguish of betrayal, shame, rejection, heartache, and loneliness. No amount of repentance will soften those blows.

Your mate can never again say that you are a model of fidelity. Suspicion will rob her or him of trust.

Your escapade(s) will introduce to your life and your mate's life the very real probability of a sexually transmitted disease.

The total devastation your sinful actions will bring to your children is immeasurable. Their growth, innocence, trust, and healthy outlook on life will be severely and permanently damaged.

The heartache you will cause your parents, your family, and your peers is indescribable.

The embarrassment of facing other Christians, who once appreciated you, respected you, and trusted you, will be overwhelming.

If you are engaged in the Lord's work, you will suffer immediate loss of your job and the support of those with whom you work. The dark shadow will accompany you everywhere...and forever. Forgiveness won't erase it.

Your fall will give others a license to do the same.

The inner peace you enjoyed will be gone.

You will be unable to erase the fall from your (or others') mind. This will remain indelibly etched on your life's record, regardless of your later return to your senses.

The name of Jesus Christ, whom you once honored, will be tarnished, giving the enemies of the faith further reason to sneer and jeer.<sup>1</sup>

The world cannot contain the volumes that could be written on the heartache adultery has caused. My friend, beware, lest you find yourself in the embrace of this deadly sin that destroys relationships. There is only one thing for you to do, *flee* like Joseph, who left his cloak in the hand of Potiphar's wife. You see, Joseph understood that this wasn't merely a sin against his master, but more importantly against God (Gen. 39:5-12).

The passion of Peter to expose these false teachers is unprecedented. He hurls one volley after another hoping to dislodge their influence. Peter warns those who may consider following their adulterous ways and luxurious lifestyle, at the expense of the saints, that they will one day stand before the Judge of all the earth who will render to every man according to his deeds.

We are reminded of the Psalmist who wrestled with *why* the ungodly prospered in the world, whereas he lived uprightly and struggled to make ends meet. It was almost too painful for him to bear, until he went in the sanctuary of the Lord, which proved to be an eye-opening experience. "Then [he says] understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psa. 73:17-19).

*To Be Continued!* 

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## Endnote

1. *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart* by Charles R. Swindoll, *W Publishing Group*, Nashville, Tennessee, Pages 19 & 20.

## Peculiar People

"A Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest....He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible...and knows that which passeth knowledge."

—A. W. Tozer

## The Gospel Brings Forth Fruit in All the World

By Cornelius R. Stam

**“Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:**

**“As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;**

**“Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit” (Col. 1:6-8).**

### A DEAR FELLOW SERVANT

Epaphras was evidently the evangelist whom Paul had sent to Colosse to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God, and who had now returned to tell Paul the wonderful results. Actually Paul was not surprised that a church had already been founded there with a group of believers rejoicing in Christ, for the gospel produces “fruit” wherever it goes.

All this brings up a very interesting and a very hotly debated point. Did Paul's gospel of the grace of God actually get to “all the world,” as he says here?

### THE PROFESSING CHURCH

To the apostle Paul was committed the greatest revelation of all time. It is called “the mystery,” or “secret,” and it was made known by “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” It is God's great “eternal purpose,” and to Paul was entrusted, in connection with this *sacred secret*, “the dispensation of the grace of God.” His ministry superceded that of Peter and

the eleven. Solemn recognition was given to this very fact by the leaders of the Twelve, including Peter himself, as they gave to Paul and Barnabas “the right hands of fellowship,” acknowledging Paul's divine commission to go to the Gentiles. They agreed that since the favored nation had not yet received their message, they would confine their ministry to their own nation. Read it in Galatians 2:2-9.

Now in connection with this commission, Paul was also the divinely appointed “minister” of the church of this present dispensation, called in Colossians 1:18,24, *the Body of Christ*. No other Bible writer has a single word to say about the Church which is Christ's Body. None of the other apostles mention it. Not only would we seek in vain for such phraseology in their writings, but we'd seek in vain for any discussion of the subject, for they do not discuss the Church of which believers today are members. But Paul, who wrote more books of the Bible than any other writer, deals consistently with those truths which concern the Church which is His Body. It is sad to say that this great revelation and the glorious truths associated with it have been largely lost to the professing Church.

The largest segment of this church ignores these facts, though they are clearly set forth in her own Bible. She insists that the true

Church of today is the perpetuation of that which was founded by Christ while He was on earth. And consistent with this she holds that she is laboring to fulfill the so-called great commission given to Peter and the eleven, requiring water baptism for the remission of sins, and claiming to possess miraculous powers.

The Protestant Church, while boasting freedom from clerical or religious tyranny, has by no means emerged entirely from the shadows of the dark ages. She also still clings to the traditional teaching that the Church today is the perpetuation of that to which our Lord referred in Matthew 16 when He said, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church" (16:18).

The Protestant Church in general believes that the Church is God's kingdom on earth. She, too, seeks to carry out the so-called great commission, the commission given to Peter and the eleven—though half-heartedly, for she can't make up her mind whether water baptism is, or is not, necessary for the remission of sins, and she's also confused and disagreed as to whether or not she possesses the miraculous powers of the so-called great commission.

### **EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN**

Rather than recognizing the distinctive character of Paul's position as *our* apostle, most Protestants think of him as simply *one* of the apostles, along with Peter and the eleven. In this the Protestant Church has assumed a very weak position. For if Paul is to be considered one of the twelve, it can easily be proven that Peter, and not Paul, was appointed their chief. Just read Matthew 16:19 and several other passages, especially in the

book of Acts. Since Christendom has strayed so far and so long from the great Pauline revelation, she has lost sight almost completely of the vastness of Paul's ministry, and his influence, and the extent to which she once became known in the world.

An example of this is found in what Bible scholars in general have done with Titus 2:11. It is correctly agreed that "epiphany," the original word for "appeared" in this verse, means a conspicuous or an illustrious "shining forth." And that the phrase "all men" doesn't mean each individual, singly, but all men collectively, all mankind. But few can believe that even under Paul's ministry the gospel of the grace of God shone forth to all mankind, or that its proclamation ever became worldwide. They conclude that Paul couldn't have meant that. And so they change this verse to read that the grace of God bringing salvation for all has appeared, when that is not actually what it says. It says what the Authorized Version renders it to say:

***"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).***

Now apart from Paul's statement in Titus 2:11, there is a great deal of Scriptural evidence that this message did shine forth to all the known world.

### **ALL NATIONS, ALL THE WORLD, AND ALL CREATION**

Before we go into that evidence, there are three phrases used in the so-called great commission given to the eleven, later made twelve, that indicate a *worldwide* scope in ministry.

**Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] *all nations*..."**

**Mark 16:15: “Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to every creature [Greek, *all creation*].”**

Three important phrases: *all nations*, *all the world*, *all creation*. Remember them, because we’re going to come back to them.

The Twelve apostles were sent to all nations with their gospel of the kingdom. The blessing was to go to “all the world” through Israel with Christ as King, and when this was completed, here is what Matthew 24:14 says would happen:

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto *all nations*; and then shall *the end* come.”**

Now we know that the “end” of that administration has not even yet come. That dispensation was interrupted by God, and because the favored nation rejected the King and His kingdom, God concluded all mankind now in unbelief, to raise up another apostle, Paul, sending him forth with “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

### **“MADE KNOWN TO ALL NATIONS”**

Surely no one even superficially acquainted with the book of Acts, or the epistles of Paul, would question the fact that some time *after* our Lord’s commission to Peter and the eleven, Paul was sent forth as an apostle of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind.

It is very significant that the three terms—*all nations*, *all the world*, *all creation*—employed in the commission to Peter and the eleven, indicating its worldwide scope; these same terms are also used in Paul’s epistles in connection with his ministry. Only, whereas the twelve *never* got to all nations, all the world, and all creation with their message, Paul

*did* with his. In closing his epistle to the Romans, he says:

**“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,**

**“But now is made manifest, and by [the prophetic Scriptures], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, *MADE KNOWN TO ALL NATIONS* for the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:25,26).**

There you have it. It is now *made manifest* and *made known* to *all nations*. In Colossians 1:6 Paul speaks, as we have seen, to these Colossians about “the truth of the gospel”:

**Verse 6: “Which is come unto you, as it is in *ALL THE WORLD*; and bringeth forth fruit....”**

**Verse 23: “...Which ye have heard, and which was preached to *every creature* [*ALL CREATION*] which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”**

There you have those three phrases again: all nations, all the world, all creation. Arguments may be advanced to prove that the gospel of the grace of God didn’t actually reach all the world or all creation. We do not deny that to those addressed “all the world” would doubtless mean all the *known* world, and “all creation” would likewise mean all creation *as they knew it*. But the point is—now get this carefully—that whatever these terms mean in the so-called great commission to Peter and the eleven, they must also mean in these statements by Paul, for the terms are exactly identical in the original. And as we have seen, Peter and the Twelve *did not* get their message to all the world, all nations, and all creation, *but Paul did*. 

# The Security of the Seal

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(From a message preached at *Faith Bible Church*,  
Pastor Kurth's home church in Steger, Illinois)

**“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).**

What does it mean to be “sealed” by the Spirit, and how secure does this seal make us? Words mean things, and we are not allowed to ascribe arbitrary meanings to Bible words. But a careful study of the Bible use of this word “seal” will develop it’s meaning for us and fortify our faith.

In Esther 8:8, the king of Persia ordered that a decree be issued, and commanded: “*seal it with the king’s ring.*” When the king’s ring was pressed against the hot wax that sealed a document in those days, the sealed scroll then bore an imprint that *identified it with the king.* Similarly, when you and I were baptized into Christ the moment we believed the gospel, we were *identified* with Christ, and to this day we bear the unseen imprint of the Holy Spirit. And while I like to identify with our Chicago sports teams *only until they start losing*, how good to know that God remains identified with us even when we grieve Him!

Esther 8:8 also teaches us that a decree sealed with the king’s ring “*may no man reverse!*” Not even *the king himself* could overturn an order sealed with his ring. How reassuring to know that no matter how we grieve His Spirit, *God Himself* cannot reverse the eternal destiny of a believer that bears His seal. When Daniel was tossed into the lion’s den, the king sealed the

den with his own signet “*that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel*” (Dan. 6:17).

Moving on in our study of the seal, we see that Job enjoyed absolute confidence in his security (Job 19:25-27) because he knew that his sin was “*sealed up in a bag*” (14:17). He knew that no one could break the seal of God and release his sin. But how much *more* secure should we feel! Christ has done more than seal *our* sins in a bag, He has “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Heb. 9:26) and sealed *us* with His Spirit!

Next in our study of the seal, Jeremiah 32:9,10 tells us that Jeremiah bought some land and “sealed” the deed, here called “the evidence of the purchase” (v. 11). Well does this writer remember as a young boy sending away for prizes advertised on the back of cereal boxes. The prizes were “free,” but required two or three “proof of purchase” *seals* found on each box of cereal. That’s what the Spirit is for us, *proof* that our pardon has been *purchased* by the blood of Christ, “evidence” that could be presented were we ever to be called to stand before God’s bar of justice.

Just as there were “witnesses” (v. 10) to Jeremiah’s purchase, we know that there were *angelic* witnesses to the purchase of our redemption, holy ones who watched in wonder as the Son of God purchased our redemption on Calvary, then rejoiced when we believed the gospel (Luke 15:10) and *sealed the deal.*

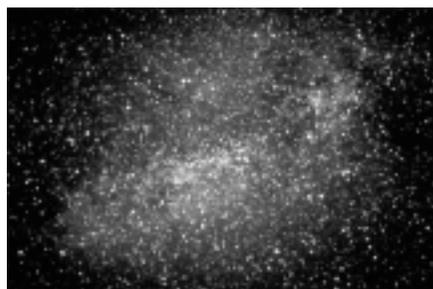
The evidence of purchase in Jeremiah's day came in two parts, "both that which was *sealed* according to the law and custom, and that which was *open*" (v. 11), an open deed left available for examination in the event of land disputes, and a sealed deed kept safe for security purposes. These deeds were *identical*. We know that criminal embezzlers often keep two *different* sets of books—one to show the authorities, and one that accurately reflects their wrongdoing! But Jeremiah's land deeds were the same, "both that which was sealed...and that which was open," reminding us that, while our Spirit seal is invisible (since "your life is hid with Christ in God"—Col. 3:3), our public lives should read the same as our title deed, for our open seal is "known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2,3). The Apostle Paul put it this way:

**"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this SEAL, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19).**

Jeremiah's land deeds were placed "in an earthen vessel" for safekeeping (Jer. 32:14). Likewise, God placed the proof of *our* purchase *within us*, within these jars of clay that make up our physical bodies (Gen. 2:7; II Cor. 4:7). Wouldn't Jeremiah's deeds have been safer in the temple? Well, which lasted longer, Israel's temple or *the Dead Sea Scrolls* found recently after nearly two thousand years—in *earthen vessels*! God knows *precisely* what He is doing when He leaves your seal in the earthen vessel of your physical body, for it is secured by the power of His almighty arm.

Jeremiah was told to place his deed in an earthen vessel, "that

they may continue many days" (Jer. 32:14). *How many days?* Well, Israel was about to be *overrun* by Babylon, meaning that even though Jeremiah held the deed to the land, the property would be out of his control for *seventy years*. When Jeremiah questioned the Lord about the wisdom of His command to buy the land (v. 24,25), the Lord assured him that the captivity would someday end, and the land would no longer be out of his control (v. 44). How this reminds us that when the Lord Jesus redeemed *us*, He knew that even though He would hold the deed to our hearts, we would be out of His control *for about seventy years* (Ps. 90:10). Thankfully He, like Jeremiah, went ahead and made the purchase anyway!



We learn more about the Bible meaning of the word "seal" in Ezekiel 28:12, where it is said of Lucifer, "Thou *sealest up the sum*, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Here we learn that something that is sealed is *perfect* and *complete*. Not a single thing could be added to Lucifer to make him *wiser* or *more beautiful*. Similarly, God has not needed to add a single star since the original creation, since in the beginning He "sealeth up the stars" (Job 9:7). And wonder of wonders, not a single thing needs to be added to believers today who are sealed with the Spirit, for we are "*complete in Him*" (Col. 2:10).

In Jeremiah's day, both the seller and the buyer of land had to affix their seal to the deed to testify to the transaction. But what about the transaction of our redemption? John 3:33 says:

**“He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.”**

How does a man “set to his seal” that God is true? Simply by *receiving His testimony* and *believing on Christ* (v. 36).

And speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, John 6:27 says, “Him hath God the Father sealed.” To what could John be referring to but our Lord's experience at His baptism when “the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him” (Luke 3:22). If this be the case, the conclusion we can draw from this is almost too precious to believe. If the “seal” with which God the Father sealed our Savior is the Holy Spirit, then you and I are sealed with the same seal with which *the Lord Jesus Christ* was sealed. If *that* doesn't make you feel secure, I'm not sure what will!

But why would the Lord *need* such a secure seal? Perhaps in some sense this would enable Him in His humanity to bear the awful load of sin that was placed upon Him at Calvary. If this be so, we have further proof that we need never fear the loss of salvation due to our sin. If all the sins of all the world were not sufficient to break *His* seal of the Spirit, then surely *your* comparatively small load of sin will never avail to break *your* seal of the Spirit.

Romans 4:11 teaches us that Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Abraham's

seal was a wonderful illustration of our own in two blessed ways. First, circumcision was *irreversible*, reinforcing our conviction that *our* seal is likewise permanent and irrevocable. Second, Abraham's seal went with him wherever he went. I'd forget my head if it weren't attached to my shoulders! And just as sure as getting pulled over by a policeman the day you forget your wallet, you know you'd die the day you forgot your seal, if it was something you had to remember. Bless God, *it isn't!*

In Revelation 7:1,2, John describes how in the coming Tribulation four angels will be given power “to hurt the earth and the sea.” But before they can act, they are told, “Hurt not the earth....*till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads*” (v. 3). Imagine how *secure* those believers will feel with the visible seal of the Lord “written in their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1). Many believers today refuse to believe in their seal because they cannot see it, but I don't know of *any* believer today who refuses to breathe the air because he cannot see it. Believers today can and should enjoy the same assurance as these 144,000 (v. 4), for while our seal is not visible, “we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7). Our spiritual seal is just as real as their visible one, just as our spiritual circumcision and our spiritual baptism (Col. 2:10-12) are just as real as Israel's *visible* circumcision and baptism.

These 144,000 sealed ones offer us dynamic proof of the security of our seal. Revelation 12 describes how in the middle of the Tribulation they are “caught up unto God, and to His throne” (v. 5). We see them next standing with the Lamb in the heavenly Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1),

“redeemed *from the earth*” (v. 3), just as we will be someday (Rom. 8:23; 13:11), and *they haven't lost a single sealed one!* They *still* number 144,000! Likewise, at the Rapture, the Lord will not misplace a single sealed member of “the church which is His body.” Talk about “signed, sealed *and delivered!*”

“...the soundness of the believer's seal depends not on his works but on the solemn promise of God.”

Sometimes the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer is challenged with the notion that while our seal renders us safe from *external* dangers such as Satan and his host, God's seal of the Spirit cannot protect us from *within*, from *ourselves*. An alligator's powerful jaws can exert 3,000 pounds of pressure per square inch *when closing*, but once closed can be held shut with a man's bare hands. It is argued by some that God's seal works the same way, protecting us mightily *from without*, but helpless to keep us sealed should we sin too much *from within*.

Obviously, our Lord's seal in John 6:27 was designed to protect Him from *external* dangers, for there was certainly no danger that He would sin from within and break the seal. So what assurance do we have in Scripture that God's seal cannot be broken *from the inside out*? Surely this is powerfully answered in Revelation 20, where we are told that during the millennial kingdom God will take the devil and “shut him up and *set a seal*

upon him” (v. 1-3). Imagine Satan's frustration when after a lifetime of failing to break the seal of individual believers *from without*, he finds *himself* sealed up and helpless to break the seal *from within!* My dear Christian friend, if even *the devil* with his awesome power of evil can't break God's seal from within, what makes you think you can with your comparatively puny power of evil? In a great type of Christ, Noah was told to seal the ark “*within and without with pitch*” (Gen. 6:14). Once “the Lord shut him in” (Gen. 7:16), no water was going to get *in*, and no one was going to get *out* until it came time for *God* to break the seal and release the sojourners into the new world.

Will God ever break *our* seal? Not until it is time to usher us sojourners into *our* new world! We have a dramatic picture of this in Romans 15:26, where Paul talks about the collection that he had taken among the Gentile churches “for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” Whilst this money was in Paul's hands, it was *sealed and absolutely safe and secure*. Even though Paul was “in prisons more frequent” than just about anyone (II Cor. 11:23), and bribing your way out of prison was commonplace in that day (Acts 24:26), you wouldn't catch Paul misappropriating funds for his own personal use to save his life! Speaking then of his plan to deliver this money personally to Jerusalem, he tells the Romans in Verse 28:

**“When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”**

Paul determined to make sure that the transfer of this sizeable collection was *sealed air-tight* to the possession of the people for whom

it was taken. What a lesson for all those who handle the Lord's money today! And what a picture of the sacred transfer that will take place at the Rapture! We have seen in this study that the seal of the believer in this life goes infinitely beyond what the world calls "hermetic," but what happens when it comes time for us to be ushered into the new world? Ah remember, Paul says that you and I are "sealed *unto* the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30), that is, "the redemption *of our body*" at the Rapture (Rom. 8:23). There will be no last minute fumble when the Body of Christ is joined to the host of heaven, for the Lord Jesus Himself will have "sealed to them this fruit," this fruit of the church which is His Body. Just as our nation's space shuttle remains *sealed* until it docks with the space station, even so the individual believer today will remain *sealed* unto our rendezvous with eternity.

"...we must be careful to '*grieve not* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.'"

The very *honor of God* is at stake in this matter of the security of our seal. II Corinthians 1:20 says that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, *unto the glory of God by us*." What are some of these unconditional promises that we have in Christ? Well, Verse 22 speaks of God....

**"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."**

If God's promise were broken and sealed believers were somehow

lost, God would get no glory "by us." Indeed, the loss of a single Spirit-sealed saint would be a thrust at His integrity, for the soundness of the believer's seal depends not on his works but on the solemn promise of God. We know this is so because Paul does not make mention of the Spirit's seal exclusively to the spiritual Ephesians, but here includes the carnal Corinthians when speaking of this precious blessing. Thus we know that the most backslidden believer need never fear that he has sinned too deeply, broken his seal, and endangered his soul.

This is why we must be careful to "*grieve not* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." When God's Spirit was "grieved" at man before the Flood, God vowed to "*destroy*" man from the face of the earth (Gen. 6:6,7). When Israel "grieved" the Lord for forty years in the wilderness, God swore in His wrath that that generation would not enter the Promised Land (Ps. 95:10,11). But, when you as a believer grieve Him at His heart, your seal remains intact as the Spirit just stands there and *takes it*, choosing to respond with *grace*, not *wrath*. How it behooves each blood-bought believer to tremble at the thought of presuming upon such grace.

Imagine a Christian Secret Service agent, assigned to protect a president that continually took the Lord's name in vain. This president *knows* that his speech *grieves* the agent, but he could care less! Until one day the agent *saves his life!* Surely *now* he will amend his speech! But no, he continues to blaspheme and the agent, though grieved, continues to keep him safe. Before you holler, "What an ingrate!", remember that when you sin against the

Spirit that saved you and keeps you sealed, you have more in common with this ungrateful president than you would care to admit.

What is it *specifically* that grieves the Lord? Well, if Paul had warned us not to grieve “the *Lonely Spirit*,” we would know not to ignore Him and make Him to feel left out. If Paul had cautioned us not to grieve “the *Shy Spirit*,” we might grieve Him by

showering Him with the same attention as our Pentecostal friends! But it is “the *Holy Spirit*” that Paul tells us not to grieve, and His name says it all! It is the *ungodly* and *unholy* behavior of the context (Eph. 4:25-31) that grieves Him at His heart. Thus may each of us determine in *our hearts* to “*grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*” 

## Question Box

*“How would you differentiate between God’s instruction to Israel to purge Canaan of the various people groups located there and radical Islam’s jihad to purge the world of infidels?”*

Many a Christian has wondered about God’s instructions to Israel to exterminate whole peoples in Canaan (Deut. 20:16,17), but there were reasons for this genocide, reasons that do not exist today.

When fallen angels took wives from among the daughters of men, they produced a race of giants in the early earth (Gen. 6:1-4). The purpose of the Flood was to *exterminate* that demonic race, Noah’s family being spared since he was “perfect *in his generations*” (6:9), i.e., not infected with this cursed seed. Genesis 6:4 describes *another* outbreak of giants that appeared “after” the days of the Flood, as Satan tried again to pollute the seed of the woman, frustrate the promise of Genesis 3:15, and prevent the birth of the Messiah. But since God had promised He would never again destroy the world with a flood (Gen. 9:11), it was left to the sword of Israel to wipe out this second eruption of giants, including Goliath, Og (Deut. 3:11) and many others (Num. 13:32,33; II Sam. 21:16-22). This explains the seemingly heartless instruction to Joshua to exterminate the squatter nations that were sent there by Satan to contest the claim of Abraham’s seed to the land. No such conditions exist on earth today, thus any program that calls for the deaths of “unbelievers” is foreign to the Word of God rightly divided.

The story is told of a king who vowed to destroy his enemies, then proceeded to invite them all to a lavish feast. After the banquet, the king’s aides asked him what had become of his oath. “I *did* destroy my enemies,” he replied. “I destroyed my enemies *by making them my friends!*” Likewise, God’s only authorized method of destroying unbelievers today is by *making them believers!*

—Pastor Kurth

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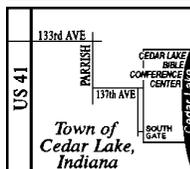
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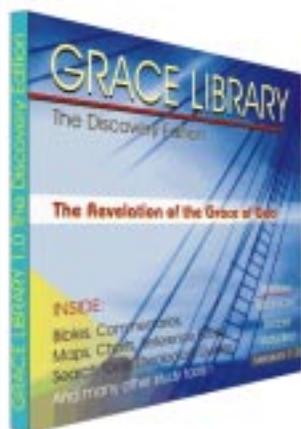
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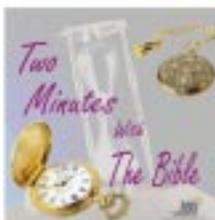
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# Which Part of the Bible is Most Important?

## II Timothy 3:16

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16).**



While the whole Bible is the Word of God and vitally important, all of the Bible does not deal with the same subject matter. In general the Bible is about God's redemptive plan for mankind. Of course, Jesus Christ is the central figure of the entire Bible so, essentially it is about Him, and what He has done, what He is doing now, and what He will do in the future.

To answer the question “which part of the Bible is the most important,” first we must determine which part of God's program do we want to know about. Just as a repair manual for an automobile is divided into sections or chapters that give detailed information for the different parts or systems of the automobile covered in the manual, the Bible is divided into sections which give detailed information about the various

dispensations past, present, and future.

Just as we would not read the section in the repair manual that tells how to change a fuel pump when you wanted to replace a universal joint in

the drive shaft, we should not look to those parts of the Bible that concern the historical aspects of God's dealing with Israel, nor should we try to apply the part that deals with Israel's future (prophecy) to the “dispensation of grace” that we live in today.

Just as a good mechanic will have an excellent overall understanding of how all the parts and systems of an automobile work, we should have a good grasp of the entire Bible. But let us make sure that we are diligent to “*study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Tim. 2:15). It is in Paul's letters that we find God's plan, purpose, and directions for the present dispensation.

Who will be the pastors, Bible teachers, and missionaries of tomorrow? None other than the faithful men and women who are preparing themselves for service today.

### ***Fall Semester Begins August 26, 2002***

For more information about *Berean Bible Institute* contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 40, Germantown, WI 53022, or phone: (262) 255-4094, fax: (262) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>.

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## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**A GRACE WRITER PROMOTED TO GLORY:** Our dear brother C. O. Griggs is now absent from the body and present with the Lord that he loved and served. Chester authored several books proclaiming God's Word rightly divided which BBS helped him publish, but which he himself personally financed. In his last hours, he could be heard mumbling incoherent sentences that his wife recognized as attempts to share the gospel with the doctors and nurses who were attending him! A soldier of the cross to the end, he will be sorely missed. May his dear wife and family find much comfort in the knowledge that he brought light on the Scripture and blessing to many.



**NEW BIBLE CLASS:** *The Country Home Bible Church* of Vail, Arizona would like to extend a warm invitation for those who live in the area and any visiting "snow-birds" to join them in fellowship. Ken Walker, a former grace missionary, is a knowledgeable teacher. The group meets every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. at 531 N. Slate Drive, Vail, AZ. For directions, please contact Millie Kiser (520) 762-5941.

**ANOTHER BOOK ON TAPE:** Brother David Allen has added *No Other Doctrine* to the list of our books he has recorded on audiocassette. This important book is the companion volume to *Things That Differ*. When Pastor Stam taught *Dispensational Survey* at the old *Milwaukee Bible Institute*, material from the first semester of that course went into *Things That Differ*, while subject matter from the second semester later became *No Other Doctrine*. A regular \$14.00 value, we are offering these three tapes in an album for a limited time at a special introductory price of \$10.00.

**BEAT THE SUMMER TIME BLUES:** The *Grace-Believer's Bible Conference* (July 26-28) will be hosted by *The Bitely Community Church*, Bitely, Michigan, where our brother Ken Lyon is pastor. Speakers will include Evangelist Lee Homoki of *Bible Doctrines to Live By*, Pastor Floyd Baker, and Pastor Paul M. Sadler as well as Pastor Lyon himself. Rooms are available at the beautiful *Legends Ranch*. For more information, call Pastor Lyon at: (231) 745-9595.

**ANOTHER SUMMER TIME BLUES BEATER:** The *Holland Bible Conference* (Aug. 25-28) hosted by *Berean Bible Church*, Holland, Michigan. Pastor Paul M. Sadler will bring messages on the theme, *Our Blessed Hope*. For more information, contact host pastor Bob Renberg (616) 399-4410.

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\*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mr. James Bayliss of Scandinavia, WI. The *Little Sable Lighthouse* is located in Pentwater, Michigan.

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