

The

Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 2004



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

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

I am sure I've shared this with you before, but it's worth repeating. As an author, I have discovered that writing a book is like diving off a high cliff into the ocean below. You don't fully grasp what you're getting into until you've taken the plunge. Sir Winston Churchill said, "It begins as an *adventure*." You can't wait to get started. After thoroughly researching the subject, you choose a title, creatively establish the chapter headings, and pen the introduction. This is *fun!!*

It isn't long however before the work becomes an *obsession*, consuming all of your time. Remember that summer your family drove across country on vacation? After the first day it was as if Dad had turned into a *Jekyll and Hyde*. He drove mile after mile without a break until the family nearly collapsed from exhaustion. Dad was on a *mission*. You see, men have to conquer! "Yep! I made it in 42 hours and 23 minutes—a new record!" Well, this pretty well describes the second stage of writing a book. Your office becomes a cloister that most monks would envy. You become driven!

Just about the time you think you're making headway, the work turns into a *tyrant*. Between trying to turn a phrase differently and writer's block the taskmaster is unrelenting, driving its captive (me in this case) to finish the project. At this point, the famous one-liner comes to mind that every kid who's been on a long trip says: "Are we there yet?" I was recently wondering the same thing. But then, as Sir Winston once said after completing a book, you finally "slay the beast and fling it to the public."

Now that *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* is finished and soon to be sent to the printer, we earnestly pray that it will prove to be as much of a blessing to you as it was for me to write, in spite of the above. Lord willing, we are still projecting a mid-October release. I also want to convey my appreciation to all those who faithfully prayed for us and gave sacrificially to give birth to the message contained in this work. It is indeed our sincere desire that you may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Gratefully yours,

Paul M. Sadler, President

The Teachings of Jesus

By Cornelius R. Stam

In the controversy over “Pauline truth,” not a few Fundamentalists have joined Modernists in attempting to exalt “the teachings of Jesus” (on earth) above the Word of God through Paul. “Which,” they ask, “should bear the greater weight with us, the words of Jesus, or the words of Paul?”

But do they ask this because they truly desire to *obey* these “words of Jesus” and to see them obeyed? No, for they flagrantly disregard and disobey them, from the Sermon on the Mount to the Great Commission.

With regard to the Sermon on the Mount, they do not subject themselves to the law of Moses (Matt. 5:17-19); they do not bring gifts to altars of sacrifice (5:23,24); they do not give freely to all who ask of them (5:42; 10:8,9); they do not refrain from laying up treasures on earth (6:19,25,26); they do not sell what they have and give alms (Luke 6:30; 12:33).

And while professing obedience to the so-called “Great Commission” as “the Church’s marching orders,” they do not proclaim faith *and baptism* for salvation (Mark 16:16); they do not—they *cannot*—perform miraculous signs (Mark 16:17,18); they do not give the Jew first place in their ministry (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), and they certainly do not teach others to observe all things that Messiah on earth commanded (Matt. 28:20 cf. 23:1-3).

They set “the teachings of Jesus” (on earth) over against “the teachings of Paul,” not because they are determined to obey Jesus, but because they are determined to minimize that which God has “magnified”—the authority of Paul as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13).

They seek to exalt the teachings of the earthly Jesus above those of Paul because they have closed their ears to the oft-repeated and Spirit-inspired claims of Paul that the *glorified* Lord spoke *again* from heaven, to and through him, committing to him “*the* dispensation of the grace of God” and the program for the day in which we live (Acts 20:24; 22:6-10,17-21; 26:12-18; Rom. 11:13; 15:15,16; 16:25,26; I Cor. 3:10; 11:23; 15:3; II Cor. 5:16; Gal. 1:1,11,12; 2:7-9; Eph. 3:1-4,8,9; 6:18-20; Phil. 4:9; Col. 1:23-27; I Thes. 4:15; II Thes. 3:14; I Tim. 2:5-7; II Tim. 2:7-9; Titus 1:2,3, etc.).

They have forgotten the stern rebuke the Galatians received for failing to recognize Paul’s teachings as a message from the risen, exalted Christ (Gal. 1:6-12). They have taken lightly Paul’s words to the Corinthians:

“...if I come again I will not spare: since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me...” (II Cor. 13:2,3).

They have distorted Paul’s inspired admonition as to *his own writings*:

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing...from such withdraw thyself” (I Tim. 6:3-5).



Studies in the Book of Revelation

Revelation 14:6-12

By Paul M. Sadler

When was the last time you heard a sermon on the perils of hell? You will probably have to search long and hard in the archives of your memory to find one occurrence. Sadly it is a forbidden subject in the Church today, although historically this has not always been the case. The Lord, more than any other, warned His hearers about the perils of hell, where the fire shall never be quenched (Mark 9:43-48). With the soul of Felix hanging in the balance, Paul did not shrink from his responsibility to tell the Governor about the judgment to come. Jonathan Edwards preached one message on the subject and sparked the *Great Awakening* in America. Robert Morgan gives us this account of that memorable day:

America's greatest theologian is often identified as Jonathan Edwards, a New England pastor of the 1700s. Edwards was brilliant. At the age of six he studied Latin. He entered Yale when not quite thirteen and graduated when barely fifteen. He was ordained at age nineteen, taught at Yale at twenty, and later became president of Princeton. Harvard granted him both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree on the same day.

But he is best known for *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*—the most famous sermon in American history. He preached it on Sunday, July 8, 1741, while ministering in tiny Enfield, Connecticut. A group of women had spent the previous night praying for revival. When Edwards rose to speak, he quietly announced his text was Deuteronomy 32:35, "...their foot shall slide in due time..." Edwards neither gestured nor raised his voice. He spoke softly and simply, warning the unconverted that they were dangling over hell like a spider over the fire.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger: The unconverted are now walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen.

Edward's voice was suddenly lost amid the cries and commotion from the crowd. He paused, appealing for calm. Then he concluded: *Let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of the Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom.*

Strong men held to pews and posts, feeling they were sliding into hell....Throughout the night cries of men and women were heard throughout the village, begging God to save them. Five hundred were converted that evening, sparking a revival that swept thousands into...[glory].¹



The so-called conventional wisdom today is that someone might be offended if such a thing was preached publicly. But isn't it a dereliction of duty to not sound the alarm? Suppose a house is burning and the occupants are sound asleep—what would your response be? Would you casually walk away, fearing you may disturb them from their slumber? We assure you the consensus of the five hundred who heard Jonathan Edwards on July 8, 1741, was this: Thank God he had the courage to tell us we were sinners and in danger of the hellfire judgment to come!

If the unbeliever refuses to receive God's gracious offer of reconciliation and blatantly rejects Christ as his personal Savior he must be warned as to what lies ahead. We do a great disservice to the unsaved by allowing them to leave this life thinking that death is the end. Death is merely the entryway either into everlasting life with Christ or everlasting

condemnation with the Devil and his angels.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”
—Rev. 14:6,7

As the events of the Great Tribulation run their course, the Mark of the Beast will be a major turning point in the affairs of mankind, as we have seen. Shortly after its introduction an angel is seen flying through heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel. A chilling sight to say the least! The everlasting gospel is a gospel of judgment. In that day it will be good news for those of the household of faith that God's wrath is about to be poured out without mixture on His enemies. It will no longer be tempered with mercy and grace.

The hour of decision has come! The choice is clear, believe God and worship Him or worship the image of the beast and suffer the eternal consequences. This will be the last opportunity for the inhabitants of the Tribulation to be saved, as they dangle precariously over the fires of hell by one thin thread of human existence. If there is any question whether or not God wants His servants to warn the unsaved about the

danger of hell, this should settle the matter. The warning of the messenger of God is indisputable:

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image” (Rev. 14:9-11).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFERNAL REGION BEYOND

The Lord said of those who offend a little one who believed on Him that it would be better for them to have a millstone tied around their neck and be cast into the sea. He then added: “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43,44).

The term *hell* here is the Greek word *gehenna*, defined as a place of burnings. According to Thayer, “Hell is the place of the future punishment called ‘Gehenna’ or ‘Gehenna of fire.’ This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction.” Hell is a *place*—not a state of mind! It is an everlasting

fire that was originally created by God for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). This passage indicates that hell came into existence shortly after the fall of Satan but before the fall of man. When man followed Satan in his rebellion against God, he placed himself in jeopardy of the horrors of this region.

Although the fires of hell have been raging since the beginning of creation, this infernal realm will remain *unoccupied* until the Great White Throne Judgment. Before the unsaved are cast into the Lake of Fire, it must first be determined what degree of punishment they will suffer for their evil deeds (Matt. 11:20-24). There is, however, one exception: the Anti-Christ and false prophet who deliberately lead multitudes to perdition. They will be judged at the Second Coming of Christ when the Lord returns in a flaming fire of vengeance (II Thes. 1:8). They will be the *first* to be cast into this inferno. One shudders to think that after one thousand years they are still suffering in this flame (Rev. 19:20 cf. 20:1,10). Beloved, one thousand years will be but a grain of sand on the eternal shores of this judgment.

There are some who are convinced that the fires of hell are merely symbolic. However, if God prepared this everlasting fire, then it has to be real. This is confirmed by our Lord when He delivered the parable of the *Wheat and Tares* to His disciples. A parable is brought alongside a truth to illustrate it by comparison, as demonstrated in the mysteries of the kingdom:

Story (Matt. 13:24-30)

- He that soweth is
- The field is
- The good seed is
- The tares
- The enemy that sowed them
- The harvest
- The reapers
- The tares are gathered and burned in the fire.

Reality—Truth (Matt. 13:36-43)

- the Son of Man.
- the world.
- the children of the kingdom.
- are the children of the wicked one.
- is the devil.
- is the end of the world.
- are the angels.
- “The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all...them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire.”

It has been well said, *every* element of this parable represents *something different*. Every element, that is, except *the fire*, which is said to represent “*a furnace of fire*.” The “fire” in this parable is not symbolic at all.

The suffering and *torment* of hell is real as well. Those who blaspheme God and receive the Mark of the Beast in the coming day of the Lord will be doomed, without hope of reprieve. According to the Spirit of God they “shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night” (Rev. 14:10,11).

When the Great Physician came to Capernaum, a centurion pleaded with the Lord on behalf of his servant who was at home sick of the palsy. The centurion was careful to add that his servant was grievously *tormented* due to this condition. We can safely conclude here that the “torment” this servant was experiencing was

very real. The same will be true of those who are sentenced to the Lake of Fire. In fact, the identical Greek word for *torment* is used in both cases (Matt. 8:6 cf. Rev. 14:10). This is further substantiated by the parable of the *Wheat and Tares* that we touched on a moment ago. The Lord said of those who are cast into the furnace of fire that they would experience “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” According to the Scriptures, they will be fitted with a resurrected body that will make it possible for them to live in an eternal state of judgment (Dan. 12:2 cf. John 5:29).

Today when the unsaved die, they descend into the lower parts of the earth to a place called *hades*. They remain there until the judgment to come, at which time this unseen realm will be emptied into the Lake of Fire. *Hades* gives us a glimpse of what lies ahead for the unsaved. You will recall in Luke 16 that Abraham said to the rich man who was suffering in torment:

“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good

things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented” (Luke 16:25).

“Son, remember!” Even though the rich man was in a realm beyond time he could remember the past. He was able to recall how he had mistreated Lazarus. He pleaded with Abraham to send someone back from the dead to warn his family “lest they come to this place of torment.” Like a bad dream, the unsaved will remember the times they brushed aside the gospel, thinking it to be nothing more than an idle tale. Regret is a terrible thing; it will leave them with a sinking feeling of what could have been. “If only I would have believed the gospel!” Hell will be a living nightmare of regrets.

Charles Spurgeon believed that unbelievers will also remember and remember well those who deceived them and brought them into this judgment. He was convinced that the “gnashing of teeth” in hell will be directed toward those who were responsible for misleading them through lies, humanistic philosophy, evolution, strong drink, drugs, etc. (Matt. 13:42). A fearful thought! Of course, essentially they will have no one to blame but themselves. The acceptance or rejection of the gospel is a *personal* decision.

EVERLASTING CONDEMNATION

Some years ago I had a Universalist stop by the office to pay me a visit. Of course, he tried to convince me that God will resurrect all the unsaved and eventually reconcile them to Himself. Therefore not one single person

will be lost—all will be saved in the end. While he did believe the unsaved would be judged, it was only in the form of a disciplinary action. After all, he said, “If Christ died for the sins of the world, then the world will ultimately be saved.” He was quite adamant that the unsaved would never suffer everlasting punishment for their sins. This is heresy pure and simple!

It is true that God loves the world and Christ died for all and whosoever believes in Him shall be saved (Rom. 5:8; I Cor. 15:1-4; II Cor. 5:14,15). In time past, the blood of the Passover lamb was shed in each Hebrew household, but the death angel only passed over those houses where the blood was applied to the lintel and the doorpost; all others perished. In like manner, while God has made a provision for all, the meritorious work of Christ is only *applied* to those who place their faith in Him. For example:

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22).

Notice that the righteousness of God is available to all, but it only benefits those that believe Christ died for their sins, was buried, and rose again. Paul says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” which means those who are not in Christ are under condemnation.

Let no one deceive you into thinking that because God is a God of love He would never condemn the sinner to everlasting punishment. Those who teach this do not understand the holiness and justice of God. The infinite holiness

of God demands an infinite penalty for sin, if the One who bore their sins is rejected. This is why the Lord more than any other warned men of the hellfire judgment to come. To the unbelieving He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels....And these shall go away into everlasting [Gr. *aiōnios*] punishment: but the righteous into life eternal [Gr. *aiōnios*]" (Matt. 25:41,46).

According to our Universalist friend "everlasting" isn't everlasting punishment after all. In regard to the unsaved he tried his best to prove that "forever and ever" will one day have an end. I asked him if he believed a lost soul received eternal life when he believed the gospel (I Tim. 1:16). He replied, Yes! I then asked if he believed God is the everlasting God (Rom. 16:26). Again he replied in the affirmative. Why, I asked, would we conclude that when the term "everlasting" is applied to God and believers it means eternal but when it applies to the unbeliever it doesn't? The exact same word is used in all three cases in the original. He responded by saying that he had an appointment and couldn't stay any longer.

UPHOLDING OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Beloved, we have been saved from the wrath to come because we fled to the foot of the Cross where the blood was shed, that we might have life and life more abundantly. Sadly, the vast majority of humanity is on the road that leads to eternal destruction. The Apostle Paul says of those who travel this path: "Who shall

be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (II Thes. 1:9). This is the most fearful thing of all about hell; it is the "second death," eternal separation from God.

Today God is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to Christ. At Calvary, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself and is not imputing their sins to them at this time. Therefore, "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Tell the unsaved today before it's too late!

Mark these words and mark them well, those who die in their sins must suffer the eternal consequences. Satan has scared the Church into silence on this matter for fear of offending someone. But which is more profitable for the unbeliever, to be offended by the truth and perhaps come to know Christ, or for him to not be offended and end up in the Lake of Fire due to his sins and the Church's failure to warn him. Brethren, let's speak the truth in love that the unbeliever might have an opportunity to ponder his eternal destiny.

May God help us to uphold our responsibility to tell the lost that God loves them and Christ died for their sins. If they reject this wonderful offer, do not hesitate to warn them what is in store if they continue in their rejection. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus!

To Be Continued! 

Endnote

1. *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes* by Robert Morgan, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, Pages 502 & 503.

Tracy and his wife Brenda have five children and have been serving in Bratislava, Slovakia with UFM International since 1996. Tracy has written several evangelistic tracts in Slovak and preaches regularly on city streets with a sketchboard. Together with 3 other couples they have started a small church, *Spolocenstvo Milost (Grace Fellowship)*, which they would like to see grow and multiply to the glory of God. Tracy attended *Dallas Seminary* in the early '90s and came to understand the uniqueness of Paul's gospel through a fellow seminary student and also through some books by C. R. Stam which were in the seminary library.

Family Ties

By Tracy Lesan

Jesus Christ's statements about how He came to divide families have to be one of the most difficult parts of the entire Bible. He said:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me (Matthew 10:34-37; see Luke 12:49-53).

Elsewhere He adds, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

Two real-life situations demonstrate well the kind of devotion Jesus was calling for. One man whom Jesus had called to follow Him asked Jesus for permission to "bury [his] father" first, to which Jesus replied, "Allow the dead to



bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-60). A second man declared to Jesus his resolve to follow but then asked for permission to first "say good-bye to those at home". Jesus' response was shocking, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (v. 61-62).

"REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND!"

As is clear from the preceding verses, Christ's teachings about "discipleship" in general and about "hating" and leaving family in particular all have to do with "the kingdom of God". Numerous times the prophets of the Old Testament spoke about a future day when a descendant of David would set up a great kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth in which God's chosen people, Israel, would be specially blessed in their land and

be a channel of blessing to all other nations (for example, see Isaiah 11:1-10; Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ezekiel 37:1-28; Joel 2:12-27; Micah 4:1-8; Zechariah 8:1-23). Centuries later John the Baptist, Christ, and the twelve apostles in their respective ministries to the Jews all proclaimed “the gospel of the kingdom”, the good news that this kingdom promised by the prophets was finally “at hand” or very close to being established (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7) because Jesus, the promised King, was present on the earth to get everything prepared for it. Even after His resurrection Christ taught the apostles for 40 days about this kingdom, and the apostles were eagerly anticipating its “restoration” (Acts 1:1-6).

In order to be accepted as Christ’s disciples and enter the kingdom, the Jews at that time needed to turn back to God in repentance (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 6:7-12) and make some challenging acts of commitment. Christ called on the people to obey the Mosaic Law, even “the least” of the commandments, so that their righteousness would “surpass” that of the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees whom God had rejected (Matthew 5:17-20; 23:23-27; see 19:16-19; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). He also commanded His followers to sell their possessions: “So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:33); “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity” (12:29-33). To leave one’s

family, if the family rejected the kingdom call, was another necessary commitment.

“...proper interpretation and application of the Bible is not just something for ‘theologians’ in seminary classrooms to be concerned about. It’s absolutely crucial for all of us and for every area of our lives!”

Most Christians are in agreement that these teachings of Christ apply to us today and need to be obeyed. Yet at the same time they sense the obvious difficulty of obeying them literally, so they say that we need to “balance” what these verses say with what other verses in the Bible say. They then conclude that Jesus must have just meant that we need to be *willing* to do those things. Jesus does not require us to actually sell our possessions and leave our families, it is commonly explained, but He wants us to be *willing* to do so and, especially, to not value such things more than Him.

I admit that such an interpretation sounds good and would definitely make Jesus’ commands much easier to obey. The only problem is that this is not at all what Jesus said. There is no hint in those verses that mere willingness was all that was necessary. The two men referred to above who were not allowed to part with their families before coming to

follow Christ certainly could not have applied Christ's commands so loosely. We must let the verses say what they clearly say. There is nothing to "balance". We can accept them or reject them, but we don't have the right to change them so that they say what we want them to say.

Taking His words at face value, it is clear that Christ expected His listeners to do exactly what He said. That is why the first disciples in Jerusalem really did leave their families and possessions to follow Christ (Matthew 19:27; Luke 19:1-10; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32). They could not let any person or thing on earth hinder them from entering the kingdom which, at that time, was so near. And to encourage His disciples in their commitment Christ promised that, when the kingdom will be established, "all these things" [i.e. food, clothes, houses, and family] and "many times as much" will be awarded to those who will have sacrificed all to enter it (Matthew 6:33; 19:28-29; Luke 12:31).

After Jesus' death and resurrection which had to take place before the kingdom could come (Luke 24:25-26; see 1 Peter 1:11), the twelve apostles were given the authority to offer the kingdom to Israel. They promised that, if the Jews would repent, Jesus would then return to earth from heaven and bring in "the times of refreshing" and the "period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:17-21). In other words, if Israel as a nation would turn back to God and choose to follow their

resurrected Messiah and King, they would finally receive their promised kingdom with its glorious blessings. It was a time of great anticipation and urgency. Everything depended on the nation's response.

A CHANGE IN GOD'S PLAN

As we know from the Book of Acts the Jews as a whole continually rejected this final call to repentance. As a result Christ did not return to earth, and the promised kingdom did not come. Then an important change took place. Instead of blessing His chosen nation, God chose to turn away from them in judgment and sent the apostle Paul to inform them that God was "turning to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:44-49; 18:5-6; 28:23-28). In the present age since Israel's "fall" (Romans 11:11) God has been doing a new work with a new group of people—the Church, the body of Christ, in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Galatians 3:28). This is the group to which all Christians belong today. Christ will, indeed, establish the prophesied kingdom and fulfill all God's promises to Israel in the future after He returns to the earth (Matthew 19:27-30; 25:31). But at the present time He has a different plan and a different set of promises for us.

Because of this change in God's program from Israel to the "Church which is His body", some of the things Christ taught while He was on earth have also changed and, therefore, do not apply to us today. Christ Himself made these changes known through Paul, the "apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans

11:13; see 15:15-16). In Paul's letters we read about several "mysteries", truths concerning the new Church which had been previously "kept secret" and "hidden in God" until Christ revealed them directly to Paul from heaven. Even "the word of God" or "gospel" which Paul preached was a "mystery" (Romans 16:25-27; Colossians 1:24-29; Ephesians 6:19; see Titus 1:1-3) which the risen Christ gave to Paul so that he could proclaim it to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:6-2:10).

One of the new features of Paul's gospel has to do with the Mosaic Law. Though the Law used to be the absolute standard of God's righteousness, Paul explains that God is "now" (don't miss that important little word!) offering people a new kind of righteousness which is "apart from the Law" (Romans 3:21). On the basis of Christ's death for our sins and resurrection, God is willing to accept as righteous all those who do nothing more than believe in Christ and in the good work which He has done. Our own good works in obedience to the Mosaic Law or any other legalistic system are wholly excluded from salvation (Romans 3:19-4:5; Galatians 2:21; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-7). Also, those who have been saved through faith in this gospel or good news are not "under" the Mosaic Law in the sense that they must obey all its commands. Instead, they are "under grace" and are to follow a new set of commands and teachings (Romans 6:14; 7:1-6; see Galatians 3:23-26; Ephesians 2:11-16; Titus 2:11-12).

God's instructions regarding family relationships have changed

as well. Far from exhorting Christians to leave their families, Paul teaches them to stay with and be devoted to their families. Husbands must "love [their] wives just as Christ also loved the church", and wives are to be "subject" to their husbands "as the church is subject to Christ" (Ephesians 5:22-25; see Colossians 3:18-19). Men who desire to be elders in the local church must "manage [their] own household well" (1 Timothy 3:4-5; see Titus 1:6). Young women are to "love their husbands...[and] children" and to be "workers at home" (Titus 2:5). Young widows should "get married, bear children, [and] keep house" (1 Timothy 5:14). Even Christians with unsaved spouses are to remain with their partners with the goal of leading them to salvation (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). Paul also commands Christians to provide for their families financially (1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8, 16), which clearly requires that they not leave their families and not give all they have to charity!

THE DANGERS OF CONFUSION

Most Christians since the first century, probably without even thinking about it, have accepted Paul's teachings on family life as the basic biblical standard. That is good! Certain individuals and groups, however, have put more emphasis on Christ's teachings on discipleship and have tried in varying degrees to apply them literally. I met some members of such a group a year ago during one of our regular evangelistic outreaches on the street. They called themselves "disciples" and drew

their whole theology of sacrificing possessions and family relationships from Jesus' teachings in the gospels. I had some long conversations with them, and it was in response to them that I originally wrote this article.

In their desire to be true "disciples of Christ" these and other well-meaning people over the years have actually sold their possessions and abandoned parents, spouses, and children. Others have resolved to join a monastery or to never save money. Worst of all, some people, including the "disciples" I met, actually believe that such acts of commitment are necessary for salvation.

"God's instructions
regarding family
relationships have
changed...."

We should appreciate these people for their fervor and zeal. They have a sincere love for God and desire to please Him. They are willing to do almost anything "for the sake of the kingdom". Yet at the same time we should say that their actions are wrong because they are out of line with the Bible's commands for God's people today. And those who require acts of commitment to Christ for salvation are proclaiming a false gospel of faith and good works combined and are, therefore, under a curse (Galatians 1:8-9).

This issue is a good example of how proper interpretation and application of the Bible is not just

something for "theologians" in seminary classrooms to be concerned about. It's absolutely crucial for all of us and for every area of our lives! Zeal is important, but it must be "in accordance with knowledge" (Romans 10:1-5), in accordance with God's plan for the present age as He revealed it to and through the apostle Paul. Mixing the teachings God intended for us today with teachings intended for others of a different era has led to much confusion in the body of Christ and, sadly, to much hardship and strife as well.


SERVING GOD IN THE FAMILY

Does this mean that we Christians today have it easy compared to the faithful Jewish disciples in the first century? Are we free to just "eat, drink, and be merry" and live however we please? No way! God does not want us to be consumed with sinful pleasures and passions "that are on earth" but to be focused on "the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1-4; see Philippians 3:17-21). God does not want us to seek earthly possessions and riches but to be "content" with the most basic provisions of "food and covering" (1 Timothy 6:6-10; see Philippians 4:10-13).

Of course, God wants us now to be wholly devoted to Him just as He wanted the Jews 2000 years ago to be wholly devoted to Him. But our situation is entirely different. God is not now working to fulfill His promises regarding the earthly kingdom like He was then. That kingdom is not "near" now like it was then. It is not

surprising, therefore, that God wants us to show our devotion to Him in an entirely different way.

So don't sell all your possessions! And whatever you do, don't abandon your family! To do so would be to "deny the faith" and be "worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8)! Rather, let us

serve Christ by being wise and generous with our possessions and, especially, by serving our family. To be devoted to our spouses and children and parents in obedience to Paul's teachings is one of the most important ways we can "honor" God and His word today (Titus 2:5). 

Question Box

"Should we encourage people to pray 'the sinner's prayer' to be saved?"

The Bible never tells us to *pray* and be saved, but it often bids men to *believe* and be saved (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9). You can be saved without praying, but you cannot be saved without believing. True, it sounds like Hosea gave Israel a "sinner's prayer" to pray in Hosea 14:1,2:

"O Israel, return unto the Lord...*take with you words, and...say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously....*"

But this is surely more along the lines of our Lord's response to the apostle's request to teach them how to pray:

"And He said unto them, When ye pray, *SAY, Our Father which art in heaven...*" (Luke 11:1,2).

The Lord was not dictating words that He meant for them to repeat verbatim. We know this from Matthew's account of this exchange, where He added:

"But when ye pray, *use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do...*" (Matt. 6:7).

This means the Lord was only offering a *model* of prayer, not mandating a precise script. Surely Hosea was doing the same. Prayer is a *work*, it is something men can *do*, and salvation today is "*not of works*" (Eph. 2:8,9). If we ask a sinner to pray a certain prayer to be saved, he may later be unsure that he prayed it correctly, using just the right words. That's why salvation is rather "by grace" and "through faith":

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; *to the end the promise might be sure...*" (Rom. 4:16).

We should be careful not to require more of the sinner than God Himself asks in His Word. —Pastor Kurth

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

The question is often asked, is the account of the rich man and Lazarus a historical account or is it a parable? Is it the true story of two men who lived and died during the time of Christ's earthly ministry or is it a made-up story used by the Lord to drive home a point? I believe that the evidence is that it describes an actual history of these two men.

By definition, a parable is a **true-to-life story** used to illustrate or illuminate a truth. This is true even if all of the details never occurred exactly as presented in the story. They are special stories that may, or may not, reflect historical events. Nevertheless, they must be true-to-life. By true-to-life we mean that a parable must be based on a real-life situation that the hearers are familiar with. In other words, the story itself has to be based on events that could have happened, whether they ever actually did or not.

Our English word "parable" is a transliteration of the Greek word παραβολη (*parabole*). It is a derivative of παραβαλλω (*paraballo*), which comes from two Greek words παρα (*para*) and βαλλω (*ballo*). Παρα means alongside or by the side of. And βαλλω means to lie, or to place, something. Thus, a parable is a story put down beside a truth in order to illustrate that truth through comparison. Therefore a parable must be a true-to-life story in order for it to have any meaning to those who hear it. To try to use a fanciful story containing elements that have no basis to the world in which men and women live would only serve to confuse people rather than providing them with spiritual light. A simple survey of the Lord Jesus' use of parables reveals that He always used things commonplace to daily life, such as the building of houses, storing old and new wine, sowing seed, weeds growing along with the crop, yeast permeating bread dough, hidden treasure, fishing, monetary debts, unforgiveness, vineyards, family life, weddings, a barren fig tree, a lost coin, an unjust judge, etc. While His hearers may not have made the connection to the truths the Lord was pointing out, they needed no explanation as to what the stories were about because they involved common everyday things to which they could relate. When the hearers of the parables perceived that there was an analogy between the story and their own situation, they were prompted to think about it, hopefully to respond by faith to the truth illustrated. Parables can be extraordinary and even shocking, but never unrealistic or fanciful.

When we come to the account of the rich man and Lazarus, we find a situation different from what is found in any of the parables. The



Lord Jesus' hearers could understand the contrast between the lives of a rich man and a poor beggar. It was common to see beggars sitting by the road hoping for a handout, and they could easily identify the folks who had more than enough wealth to live comfortably. Then, as now, there was a stark

difference between the lives of those who have an overabundance and those with nothing. Although we can still grasp that there is a great difference between the lifestyles of these two men, the vastness of the "great gulf" between them is often lost to us because of the welfare and social services provided by the government. This is not the case in many third world nations today where people are literally starving to death. Regardless, the contrast in this story is the reversal of that gulf after the death of these two men.



The hearers of this story could follow the contrast between these two men right up to the moment of their deaths. At that point, however, the situation changes drastically. The outcome was something that they could not relate to any life situations that they had ever witnessed. The state and location of the departed soul was beyond their life experiences, or what is commonly known to be true by experience. The circumstances described go beyond the realm of the parable. That does not mean that it isn't a true-to-life story, however. Physical death is a natural part of the life experience of all mankind, but what takes place afterward is hidden from those who have not yet experienced it. In this account of a beggar and a rich man, the Lord was revealing the reality of what takes place following physical death to drive home an important truth. We should mention at this point that even if it was a parable, the place referred to as Abraham's bosom and the account of what took place in there would have to be based on reality for it to have any meaning.

Following are some reasons that this should be considered a history of two real men and not a parable.

1. Parables are true-to-life, but hypothetical, illustrative stories. The names of specific individuals are never given in them, but here the names of three men are given; Lazarus, Abraham, and Moses. Also mentioned are the "prophets" who were also real people. (*"Moses and the prophets"* is a general term for the whole Old Testament that refers to its human authors).

2. It does not have the normal form of a parable with an introduction, analogy story, and application. Instead it is in the form of the narration of a real-life story given for the purpose of illustration.

3. It does not use the principle of comparison in a way that is characteristic of parables.

4. The discussion between the rich man and Abraham is not consistent with the parabolic style found in the Scriptures.

5. It seems obvious that in relating this particular story when He did, the Lord Jesus was using a real-life account that many of those listening to Him that day could readily relate to it because they actually knew, or at least knew of, the two men involved. The rich man's brothers may have even been in the audience.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STORY

The main point of the story of the rich man and Lazarus is that an individual's wealth and social standing, or the lack thereof, is not necessarily an indication of that person's spiritual standing before God. Many of the Jews believed that the fact that they had accumulated wealth that afforded them social status and prominent positions in the religious community proved that they were under the blessing of God. They also thought, according to their logic, that those who were poor were under the curse of God. They no doubt appealed to the promises made to Israel in the Law of Moses concerning the blessings of prosperity for obedience to God's Law and the curses of poverty because of disobedience, failing to recognize the national rather than the personal nature of those promises (see Deut. 28:1-45ff.; etc.). They were also ignoring the many warnings found in "Moses and the Prophets" that were directed towards the leaders of Israel who selfishly misused their power and wealth (see Isa. 56:10-12; Ezek. 34:1-4ff.; Micah 3:1-4; etc.).

To challenge their seriously flawed thinking, the Lord Jesus told the parable of the unjust (or dishonest) steward (Luke 16:1-13). The main point of this parable was that the dishonest steward, who represented the Gentiles, was wiser than the "*children of light*," a reference to the sons of Israel, who were to be a channel through which God's light would reach the Gentiles, i.e., the nations of the world (Isa. 42:5-7; 49:5-6; 60:1-3; 62:1-3). The true Light of the World is Jesus Christ Himself (John 8:12), who is the Messiah of Israel. In the prophetic program, the only avenue through which the Gentiles can come to the Light is through the nation of Israel (Isa. 60:1-3; Zech. 8:20-23). The point of this parable was that those who were striving

after riches were actually self-serving rather than servants of God. He was calling on them to choose between the two, saying: *“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [money]”* (Luke 16:13). The implication was that those whose priorities were based on accumulating wealth were demonstrating that their hearts were not right with God (cf. Matt. 6:19-21).

On hearing Him, the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, scoffed at the Lord (Luke 16:14), who then accused them of being self-righteous and trying to press, or force their way into the Kingdom on their own terms (Luke 16:15-16). That is to say, they were counting on their self-proclaimed righteousness to open the door of the Kingdom to them. Jesus plainly declared that the terms of the Law were solid and could not be circumvented. The principles underlying the Mosaic Law express God’s character, and therefore the Law is more enduring than the whole of creation (Luke 16:17). He then revealed their hypocrisy by pointing out that their attitude about divorce and remarriage was not in line with God’s purposes (Luke 16:18; cf. Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9).

The key to understanding the point that the Lord is making in telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus is found in verses 15 and 16; *“And He said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it”* (Luke 16:15-16).

Though their self-justification might gain them favor among men, it would not gain God’s favor because He knew what was in their heart (cf. Jer. 17:9-10). The things that men hold in high regard, things that gain them position and respect among men, are disgusting to God. In truth, the love of money reveals a covetous heart that has given its allegiance to “mammon” rather than God (cf. I Tim. 6:10).

In the Law and the Prophets, a general term for the Old Testament Scriptures, is found the promise, or proclamation of God’s coming Kingdom on earth, which Israel was waiting for. John the Baptist came on the scene to introduce the Messiah, who would usher in the Kingdom Age, to Israel (John 1:26-34). After being baptized by John Jesus Christ began His public ministry by saying, *“The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel”* (see Mark 1:9-15).

Of course, the Jews, especially the Pharisees, knew that entrance into the Kingdom was conditioned on obedience to God’s Law. To drive home His point about how the money-loving Pharisees were misusing their wealth, to their own peril, the Lord told the true story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man wasn’t lost because he had

wealth, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor. This was a matter of the heart with the focus being on the rich man, not Lazarus.

The rich man's failure to help Lazarus, a fellow Israelite, revealed that he had a wicked heart, a non-repentant heart. By refusing to provide for the poor beggar sitting at his gate, the rich man was rebelling against God who, through Moses, had given Israel specific instructions on how those with resources were to treat their poor fellow countrymen (see Deut. 15:7-11). They were to open their hands wide in providing for the poor and needy in their land. This man showed that he did not love the Lord God of Israel with all of his heart, soul, and might as commanded by the Law (Deut. 6:4-5; cf. Mark 12:28-30). The evidence of this was that he did not love his neighbor, who in this case was Lazarus (Lev. 19:18; cf. Matt. 22:34-40). Although he thought he could force his way into God's Kingdom, his heart attitude, which was demonstrated by his actions, proved him to be unworthy to enter.

“...whether it is historical or parable, this story is based on truths from which we can learn certain facts about the state of those who have experienced physical death.”

When he asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers about what awaited them beyond death's door if they did not repent, *“Abraham saith unto Him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them”* (Luke 16:29). If, like the rich man, his brothers would not heed the warnings found in God's Word, from Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe someone who had been raised from the dead. This proved to be true as even after His own resurrection the leaders of Israel rejected the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. It is sad to say, but for the most part mankind has continued to reject Christ as savior, even until today.

Being true-to-life, whether it is historical or parable, this story is based on truths from which we can learn certain facts about the state of those who have experienced physical death. This is true even though teaching these things is not the main purpose the Lord had in telling it. Being based on truth, the facts learned from the experience of the rich man and Lazarus are consistent with what is found in other places in Scriptures. From this passage we know that:

1. After physical death, individuals continue to exist in a state of personal consciousness (vv. 22-25ff.; cf. Rev. 6:9-10).
2. Having experienced physical death, the individual's destiny is sealed. There is no opportunity to cross over from

the place of utter hopelessness to a place of hope after physical death (vv. 25-26).

3. Hades is not a figure of speech but a real place of suffering to which the unsaved go to await the final judgment (vv. 23-24). They will stay there until the time of the resurrection to condemnation when they will be consigned to the Lake of Fire forever (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

4. There is a place, referred to here as Abraham's Bosom, which is a place of comfort and joy (v. 25). The saved go there until the time of their resurrection unto life. This place is also referred to as "Paradise" in the Scriptures (cf. Luke 23:39-43). Originally it was a partitioned section of Hades, but was moved to heaven after Christ's resurrection. Paul speaks of being "*caught up into paradise*" (II Cor. 12:4). This implies that Grace saints and Kingdom saints may jointly occupy Paradise until the time of their respective resurrections.

5. After physical death, unsaved individuals will have regretful memories of the past and knowledge of their hopeless future (vv. 25-28).

6. After having died, individuals go to Hades or Paradise and are not able to return or send back messages to those still living (vv. 26-28). Samuel, Moses, and Elijah are exceptions, having been sent by God as special envoys. No one can return by an act of their own will. The Scriptures leave no possibility for reincarnation and spiritism.

7. Neither the saved or the lost will cease to exist, nor will they exist without form between physical death and the resurrection. Both have a temporary form of some kind that enables them to see, speak, hear and feel (vv. 22-25). No doubt this form is of a spiritual nature and substance, but nevertheless, it is a tangible form with a recognizable human likeness.

To Be Continued!



BBI's Fall Semester begins August 23, 2004!

For more information about **BBI**, please contact Dr. W. Edward Bedore at their **new address: Berean Bible Institute**, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Dr., P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086-0587, or phone: (262) 644-5504, fax: (262) 644-5507, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org.

***"Only one life; 'twill soon be past.
Only what's done for Christ will last."***



Spotlight on Grace Churches

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Pastor(s): David Adams—Pastor
James Zaebst—Associate Pastor

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7:00 p.m. Sunday Evening Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Thursday Bible Study & Prayer

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“Lately I have really begun to understand the Grace message. I feel I have been set free from condemnation. I can finally feel I am accepted—not by me but through Christ who did all *for* me. *I praise Him!* I’m sending a check to use as you would for the ministry.”

From Washington:

“I am partially disabled, and about to be retired. I am seriously considering relocating to your area so as to attend *Berean Bible Institute* to work toward a meaningful use of my life in service to the Lord and His Word, rightly divided. As I’m approaching 62 years of age, am I foolish to aspire in this with a hope of achieving a measure of success and useful function?” (You are never too old to serve the Lord. See Exodus 7:7.—RK).

From Indiana:

“I’ve just recently (4 months) been learning how to rightly divide the Bible. It has been awesome! The Bible makes much more sense to me now!”

From South Carolina:

“I’ll be watching your website for information on the soon-to-be-available Bible study materials for children. It was a thrill to go through *Growing Up in Grace* with my 2nd grade daughter. She has retained a great deal from these lessons and we are both hungry for more. Currently, I am having to use and rightly divide lessons from the Regular Baptist Press. Well, that does make me study harder!”

From Cameroon:

“From 1995 up to now the Grace message has been booming in our country. The *Searchlight* has been a blessing to the life of many. The wonderful message of Paul set us free from denominationalism and churchianity. It is wonderful to be in the movement of grace. Little wonder my eyes are opening every day into the mystery of the gospel of the grace of God. Keep up the good fight for the recovery of the Word, rightly divided.”

From Ohio:

“I grew up in a grace church, but a few months ago had a thought that maybe what I was taught my whole life wasn’t right. Truly, what the Lord knew I needed was the book ‘Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ’. It became so much more clear to me why the water isn’t necessary for us today, along with other very insightful information. I have two friends lined up to read it next. One is a Baptist and one is Catholic.”

From Arizona:

“I have been reading the *Searchlight* for 15-20 years and still enjoy Brother Stam’s articles. Just because he has been promoted doesn’t mean I can’t still be edified by his knowledge. I was brought up a Catholic, and I suppose I am extra reluctant to believe or do something unless I can read it from the Apostle Paul.” (An excellent reluctance!—RK).

From West Africa:

“To the writer of this daily segment: I couldn’t agree with you more on this subject. We are truly living in troubled times. Praise God for true Christians who are not caught up in the hype of modernism and the new evangelicalism that is sweeping the world and drawing a vast majority of believers in with them.”

From Illinois:

“Thank you for your reply; it was by far the best answer I had ever received and it was truly encouraging. I printed a copy of it. You should see my library and you would realize how much I sought to find answers. Every book, the same thing: faith always produces works.”

From Colorado:

“Janet Davis, who wrote ‘Puzzle With Three Pieces,’ was my Bible study teacher 38 years ago in Saginaw, Michigan. That’s where I learned the Grace message.” (See Page 24 for information about this study guide.—RK).

From Kentucky:

“I pray that the Berean cult gets a revelation that God is not limited to your ideas. If you don’t believe God can heal, that’s up to you, but don’t destroy someone else’s faith in the process. Oh yeah and on the fact that tongues have ceased, get a clue! That which is perfect is come’ is not speaking of the completion of the N.T., if it were then we would not ‘know in part’ anymore. If you say this is wrong then you’ve made yourselves better than Scripture. To claim the ceasing of tongues is to say that you know all mysteries. Why in I Corinthians 14 did Paul say that he spoke in unknown tongues? If tongues have ceased then we are in a different dispensation than the apostles were in and I want to know what dispensation that is!”

From Minnesota:

“Your article on ‘How to Worship God in the Dispensation of Grace’ by Pastor Kiszonas was one of the best I have ever read. We enjoyed it so much we shared it at our Bible study.”

From North Carolina:

“I’m so grateful to God that He allowed me to live long enough to hear the wonderful gospel of His wonderful grace as preached first to me by my pastor, Dennis Kiszonas, in the Bible Study at the YWCA on 3rd Avenue in Brooklyn. Please send the *Searchlight* to my incarcerated grandson. I pray that he will learn that there is freedom in Christ even behind bars when you learn the Word, rightly divided.”

From Michigan:

“I’m just writing to let you know how much I enjoyed the February *Searchlight*. ‘Your Reasonable Service’ by Pastor Kiszonas was fantastic! I fear I have not been as faithful as I ought to be in supporting the work of those whose work has truly changed my life. So I intend to begin today by promising to send a monthly offering.”

From Pennsylvania:

“If God’s Word is our sword, many people today are carrying around a dull and broken penknife! Thanks for your efforts to sharpen and polish.” (BBS stands for ‘Berean Bible Sharpeners.’—RK).

From Michigan:

“I don’t write often, but each time I do, it’s important I let you know how very valuable the *Searchlight* is to my growth in ‘the gospel of the grace of God.’ The revelation of the Mystery was made clear to me after I found ‘Things That Differ.’”

From Cameroon:

“I am grateful to be amongst those who can drink from the wells of Berean.”

“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

36th Annual Berean Bible Fellowship Conference

Location: Cedar Lake Conference Center
Cedar Lake, Indiana

Dates: June 19-24, 2004

Theme: *The Wisdom of God* (I Cor. 1-8)

Daily Exposition Hour: Pastor Dick Ware

Keynote Address: Pastor Ivan Burgener

Guest Speakers from around the country will be present to proclaim the riches of God's grace!

Music Directors: Mr. & Mrs. Jim Wade

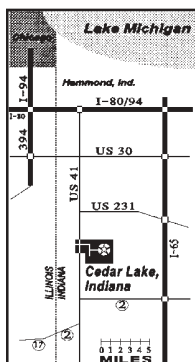
At the Piano: Mrs. Virginia Shriver

Accommodations: BBF recommends that reservations be made early, although accommodations are often available for latecomers. For reservations, write or phone: *Cedar Lake Conference Center*, Reservations Manager, PO Box 665, Cedar Lake, IN 46303, or phone: (219) 374-5941.

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

For additional information or to receive a brochure, please contact:

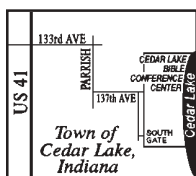
Pastor Ivan Burgener at (618) 344-6741 or
Berean Bible Society at (262) 255-4750



Cedar Lake 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.



If traveling by air into Chicago's O'Hare or Midway airports, call the Conference Center to arrange pickup.

Midwest Grace Fellowship Spring Bible Conference

Dates: June 4-6, 2004

Location: *Miracle Hills Ranch*
Bethany, Missouri

Guest Speakers:

Pastor Harold Collins
Pastor Dan Wolgast
Pastor Kevin Heyle
Ric Jennings, Bible Teacher

Theme: *Disciplined By Grace*

For additional information, please contact:
Pastor Kevin Heyle (816) 520-3943



2003 RMGC Attendees

Rocky Mountain Grace Camp

***Nestled in the Majestic
Colorado Rocky Mountains***

Dates: June 28th - July 3rd, 2004

Location: *Long's Peak Inn*, Estes Park, Colorado

Family Hour Speaker:

Pastor Mike Keshan
Kettle Moraine Bible Church, West Bend, Wisconsin

Cottages and Chalets / Private Baths

For brochures, directions, and additional information, please contact: Pastor & Mrs. James Harley at: (920) 829-6021, or e-mail: rockymountaingracecamp@juno.com.

***Come for an enjoyable week of Bible teaching,
fellowship, relaxation, and sight-seeing!***

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUR DEAR SISTER SIGNE MOEN slipped into the presence of her Savior on February 11th, after nearly 56 years of marriage to her beloved husband Roy, and a lifetime of kindness to all who knew and loved her. She will be mourned and missed by her many friends at the *Berean Bible Church* of Shoreline, WA, where she was a charter member. We know that in the days ahead Roy will find, as countless have before him, that God's grace is sufficient.

EIGHT BOOKLETS BY ROBERT BROCK are now available in Spanish: *The Revelation of the Mystery, Christianity Is...*, *There is Only One Baptism, The Preaching of Jesus Christ, The Body of Christ, Here is Something New for You from God's Word, The Greatness of Salvation, and The Importance of the Apostle Paul*. The price: \$1.00 each. If you have a burden to get the Word of God, rightly divided to our Spanish-speaking friends, you can phone our brother at: 727-867-7893, or write him at: Rightdivisioninc@netzero.com, or at: 6260 12th Street So., St. Petersburg, FL 33705. Brother Brock will be happy to send you information about these booklets, and all the rest of his writings.

SOME HAVE ASKED whether we will ever expand the "Archives" on our website to include all past issues of the *Searchlight*. Such a project would be very difficult, and also unnecessary. In a sense, we have been engaged in this project since Pastor Stam's retirement, for each month we reprint one of his old articles, which is then posted on the website. Because of this, we are well on our way to making all of Pastor Stam's *Searchlight* articles accessible to our readers, especially since many were later incorporated into his books, and so are available in that format.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS to the *Searchlight* have convictions that differ from ours when it comes to punctuation, hyphenation, the capitalization of words, and other areas. As much as possible, we prefer to leave the articles of these writers as they wrote them, out of deference to them and their different convictions. We trust that our readers will not find these variances overly distracting.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Micha Harrison-El of Fayetteville, NC while in Germany on military duty. The *Lindau Lighthouse* is located in Lindau, Germany on Lake Constance, the third largest lake in Europe. Three countries border Lake Constance: Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The lighthouse stands at the entrance to Lindau Harbor.

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“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

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