

The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2000



From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

It's great being grandparents! My wife and I have enjoyed every minute. If children are a heritage of the Lord, then grandchildren are a twofold blessing. Little Cody just turned one year old and it's been a fascinating adventure. The signs around our house range from "grandchildren—spoiled while you wait" to "Grandma and Grandpa's parking space, all others will be towed."

These little ones keep you on the move. This is probably ordained of God so we older folks don't rust away in our rocking chairs. Have you ever noticed that grandchildren seem to have a propensity for dismantling things? I guess this has a way of sharpening our reaction time. The other day Cody somehow activated the fax machine. He then turned and ran as if he were shot out of a cannon. The next thing I knew he was heading up the stairway before I finally caught up with him. Grandpa's mind doesn't work that fast; it was still back at the fax machine. My wife is convinced that the Lord created naps, not so much for the little ones, but for mothers and grandparents.

One of the great things about being grandparents is that you can have a bundle of fun with your grandkids, spoil them *a little*, then send them home with Mom and Dad who have the primary responsibility of raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Of course, grandparents should always reinforce what the parents are doing in the home by setting a *godly example* for their grandchildren to follow. This influence will, many times, bring them to Christ early in life. By the way, we just learned the good news that a second grandchild is on the way—*how about that!*

It is difficult to express how much we *love* this little guy, but the experience in some small way helps you have a fuller appreciation of how much God must love us. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should believe the gospel. God spared not His own Son but sent Him to the Cross, where the blood was shed that we might have life and life more abundantly. A provision has been made for *all*, but to be the beneficiary of God's gracious offer of salvation you must believe that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again.

May I take this opportunity to convey my sincere thanks for your prayers and faithful support to keep the light shining to a world of lost sinners. Only eternity will bring forth the glory of how many souls have been saved and established in the faith as a result of your labor of love.

Affectionately, in Christ,
Grandpa & Grandma Sadler

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The *Berean Bible Society* is an organization for the promotion of Bible study by means of newspaper series, recorded Bible lessons, and the distribution of Bible study literature. It is a non-profit organization, a work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends.

The *Berean Searchlight* is the official organ of the *Berean Bible Society*, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

Editor: Paul M. Sadler

Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

Printing: United Press Inc., Elk Grove Village, IL

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

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

Internet: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>

E-mail: <berean@execpc.com>

The *Berean Searchlight* (ISSN 0005-8890), August 2000. Volume 61, Number 5. No subscription price. The *Berean Searchlight* is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by the *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Periodicals postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Berean Searchlight*, N112 W17761 Mequon Road, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756.

From Pennsylvania:

"Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* you are sending regularly. I really enjoy the articles. May the Lord supply all your needs according His riches in glory."

From Washington:

"I have enjoyed your books over the years. I have shared them with friends. Thank you for putting them out."

From California:

"I enjoyed the March issue of the *Berean Searchlight* very much. The pictures and testimonies of all the board members and other people who are a part of *Berean Bible Society* (so very interesting). I love the Bible messages by Stam, Paul Sadler and others. Thanks for the *Berean Searchlight*. God's blessing to all of you." (Anticipating a good response to the 60th Anniversary issue, we ordered an additional 750 copies. They went faster than flapjacks in a lumber camp! Ed.)

From Pennsylvania:

"Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight*. It is so helpful as we study His Word, rightly divided."

From California:

"My mother has been enjoying your ministry for years. She introduced me to the *Berean Searchlight*. I have been made aware of the need to rightly divide the Word of God. There is so much needless confusion in this regard as evidenced in the church where my husband and I attend. Thanks for the opportunity to obtain these books and your attention to my requests."

From North Carolina:

"Just a token of appreciation for the great enlightenment you make possible. I love your *Searchlight* and the other material you send out. This grace message is such a benefit to me in my personal life and a great help in my teaching. Thanks for all the help in understanding God's Word, rightly divided."

From Ohio:

"Thank you so much for your encouragement from your writings in the booklet, the *Berean Searchlight*. I especially enjoyed the article on *That Precious Deposit* by Pastor Sadler. I just had surgery and I was reading your March magazine. How right you are, who takes the Son of God has everything. Amen! Keep up the great writing. Our prayers are always with those who *rightly divide the Word*."

From Iowa:

"We appreciate your publication the *Berean Searchlight*."

From Missouri:

"I just listened to both of the testimony messages by Pastor J. C. O'Hair and Pastor Charles Baker. It was fascinating and a blessing to hear the voices of those so important in the recovery of the gospel of the grace of God....May God and our Savior continue to bring along such men to lead and teach us who are saved. I pray that you continue to grow in your audio Internet ministry and that the saved and lost alike find their way to the BBS site." (Although these two pioneers of the faith have been with the Lord many years, they "yet speaketh" through their tapes and writings. Ed.)

From Minnesota:

"Here is a small gift to help spread the word about the Mystery. It has helped me understand the Bible, rightly divided."

From Maryland:

"I want to thank all of you for continuing to send me the *Berean Searchlight*. Thanks, too, for the many books I have acquired from your society, especially those by Pastor Stam and Pastor Sadler, which enlighten us about the *revelation of the Mystery* and the importance of *rightly dividing the Word of truth*. Again I want to thank you for the blessings I have received from your literature."

From Pennsylvania:

"We're thankful for your faithful ministry and each month the gift of the *Berean Searchlight*." (These dear folks traveled well over an hour to attend the meetings we recently held in Erie, PA. We hope to see *you* at the next conference. Ed.)

From Illinois:

"Thanks for your ministry of God's grace rightly divided. Keep up the good work."

From Iowa:

"Enclosed is \$... to help send out the *gospel of the Grace of God*. Our prayer is that many will come to Christ as their Lord and Savior. We pray that God will bless and guide you and supply all your needs. We thank God everyday for His many blessings and we know we are saved by Christ's finished work at the Cross, cleansed by His shed blood for our sins."

From Indiana:

"I've been enjoying the *Berean Searchlight* all these years and may God continue to bless your work."

From New York:

"I had to say hello and a word of thanks and appreciation for your *Searchlight*, especially the article on *Itching Ears*. It was so true and on the mark. We have all Catholicism and many liberal Protestants here and it is hard to witness, but our God is surely still sovereign. As we know, we are on the winner's side. I pray for you always and thank God for your work and marvelous insight—they are a blessing."

From Wisconsin:

"Thank you for sending the *Berean Searchlight*. I enjoy reading and learning from them. I have enclosed a check of \$... to help a little in your ministry of the Word of God, rightly divided."

From Pennsylvania:

"Thank you for the help *BBS* has been to us in understanding God's Word according to the Mystery."

From Florida:

"I have been receiving the *Berean Searchlight* for many years and look forward to getting it each month. I thank you for your faithfulness in sending it."

From Tennessee:

"I'm sending along \$... for the publication of the *Searchlight*. I appreciate you sending it to me. This isn't much but I wanted to send it to you to help with mailing the books out. I appreciate your work."

From Iowa:

"Enclosed is my regular check to help you get God's Word out to the world. I enjoy the *Searchlight* so much and share it with my friends at church. They enjoy it too. It goes through many hands before coming back to me. Thank you so much for getting the Word out to the world." (Normally, additional *Searchlights* are available every month upon request. We can't think of a better way to introduce someone to the ministries of the *Berean Bible Society*. Ed.)

From New York:

"Hope this can help in some small way. Thank God for this ministry. In the near future, I will be able to give more."

From Illinois:

"Thank you so very much for your ministry. My husband and I look forward to receiving the *Berean Searchlight*. Please find enclosed an offering for your ministry."

From Indiana:

"I'm telling others about your teachings and sharing my books with them....I hope some day you will send someone in our area to fellowship with."

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

The following account was sent to us by a godly mother who turned an unsettling experience into a spiritual lesson on rightly dividing the Word of truth. We trust it proves to be a blessing. —Ed.

Mountaintop Experiences



Yesterday we took our children to the White Hill Mountains in New Hampshire to go skiing. This was our first time skiing in the mountains and we were awestruck at their immensity. Our son, Thomas, could barely wait to “hit the slopes” and was soon happily skiing on the baby hill. He soon mastered the slope and questioningly pointed towards a larger baby hill. Smiling at his enthusiasm, I nodded my head in agreement from inside the lodge.

What I did not realize, until I looked up just as his little eight-year-old body sat down on a ski lift that would take him twenty minutes up to the very top of the mountain (and the Black Diamond trails), was that he had *not* pointed to the baby hill. In fact, he had not had the baby hill in mind or sight—his eyes had been firmly fixed on the ski lift. After helplessly pounding the window, I had to anxiously watch him being lifted high into the sky, his legs happily swinging, until the clouds hiding the peaks took him from my view. God alone was with him as he skied down the mountain. My little boy finally appeared, thrilled at the experience (and wanting to go again!).

Signals are very important to correctly discern. Our son could have died because I incorrectly read his. God is signaling (directing), believers today to follow a program that is *uniquely* Pauline. Unfortunately, to the detriment of the Church, most Christians follow the pointed prophetic hand of God and do not see that His plan for the Jewish nation has been interrupted. Just as Thomas did not belong on a ski slope that was meant for a certain type of skier, Christians are attempting to walk in a specifically Jewish program, thus putting their Christian walk in peril.

Unlike Thomas, the results of living in the wrong program are not mountaintop experiences. Believers are trying to claim promises not directed to them, causing doubt and confusion. Recently, our newspaper ran an article titled, “Death of a Believer.” It quoted Mark 16:17-18 and stated, “members believe that serpent handling is one of the Biblical signs that true believers must follow.” Pastor John Brown died from being bitten by a rattlesnake he was handling in what he thought was obedience to God’s Word.

Brethren, we are so thankful for you that labor that others might know how to build on the right foundation. Though we are a great distance from any “grace” churches, we are blessed and nourished by the wealth of tapes, books, and videos you have provided. Know that your efforts are bearing fruit on Cape Cod.

After we first came to understand the Word, rightly divided, I often pondered why our Christian walk was so wonderfully exciting and our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ so enriched. Then I read Colossians 1:27, “what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Thank you for your ministry.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Sandy Evans

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter (Part VI)

By Paul M. Sadler



“For all flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man like the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and its flower falleth away” (I Pet. 1:24).

If Paul is the apostle of grace, surely Peter is the apostle of *hope*, and understandably so (I Pet. 1:3,13,21). Peter lived to see the diminishing of Israel. The chosen nation was once the light of the world, but due to her disobedience her light had grown dim. With the blessing of God nearly removed from the nation, all that remained was *hope* for those of the remnant. The consolation of believing Israel was the hope of the resurrection. Although Peter’s hearers were going to pass through the furnace of affliction, they were to never allow anything or anyone to shake their confidence in the fact that the promises of the kingdom would be

fulfilled in the resurrection at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:3,4,13).

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

With Paul’s Gentile ministry gaining superiority by this time, it may have caused some among the dispersion to become *discouraged*. Apparently a small number began slipping back into their former manner of life. Peter responded by saying, “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:14-16).

According to Peter, before these saints came to Christ, their lives were characterized by “lasciviousness [indecenty], lusts [longing for that which is forbidden], excess of wine [drunkenness], revelings [rioting as a consequence of drunkenness], banquetings [binge drinking], and abominable idolatries [worshipping the gods of the Gentiles, which included frequenting temple prostitutes]” (I Pet. 4:3). In the original language all six of these sins are

in the plural, which indicates that each sin manifested itself in a multiplicity of ways.

But now that these saints had been brought into a new relationship, as the children of God they were to *abstain* from those former things that dishonored God. They were to be holy as He is holy who called them into His service. Notice, they were not to “become holy” but “be ye holy.” In short, settle in your minds once and for all that you are going to live for the Lord.

The irreverence for the holiness of God today is appalling. Men recklessly refer to Him as “That Spirit in the sky” or “The man upstairs.” Such statements demonstrate how ignorant men are regarding the character of God. Mark these words and mark them well, they will one day *tremble* in His presence. God is perfect, holy, and all those who come into His presence must be perfect, therefore, cleansed from their sins. Isaiah gives us an unforgettable glimpse of the holiness of God.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke” (Isa. 6:1-4).

Isaiah saw the Lord upon His throne high and lifted up. In other words, God is *sovereign*. He holds a position of preeminence over His creation, simply because He created all things in heaven and earth. In all probability, the train that filled

the temple was the angelic host who worships Him day and night. We know for certain that the Seraphims cry, “Holy, holy, holy” before the throne. Since three is the number of completion in the Scriptures, we can safely conclude that the character of God is perfect. Isaiah’s *reaction* to what he saw, and heard, and felt is revealing.

“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Amazing! Remember, Isaiah was a prophet of the Most High, a godly man, yet when he came into the presence of God’s holiness his utter sinfulness was the first thing that came to mind. It has been correctly said, “a right view of the holiness of God will lead to a right view of sin.”

This is the message that Peter sought to convey to his readers: If they wanted to serve God, who is holy, they were to model themselves after Him by *separating* from those sins that once so easily beset them. In short, their manner of life was to be beyond reproach. To which Peter adds, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear”¹ (I Pet. 1:17).

Since the attractions of the world were drawing some of these saints back into its clutches, Peter warns them about the judgment to come. In this context, the apostle is making a clear reference to the judgment of Israel at the dawn of the kingdom age. As they pass under the rod, every man will give an account of himself before God (Ezek. 20:34-37 cf. Mal. 3:2,3,5). Consequently, they were to pass the time

of their sojourning here with *fear*, not the dread which a prisoner has before his abusive captors, but a *reverential* fear that they might displease the Father.

They were to walk in fear, for the day would come when they will be judged, not according to their standing among men, but according to their works. God is not a respecter of persons. This was an old Hebraic expression very familiar to Peter's audience (Deut. 10:17). In God's sight, it matters not if one is rich or poor, bond or free, politically connected or socially an outcast. God is *impartial*, and will judge in righteousness the deeds, and actions, and motives of those who stand before Him.

REDEMPTION

Another motive for godly living was the unfathomable cost of their redemption. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18,19). Of course, these believers knew firsthand about the horrors of slavery, with which this term *redemption* was closely associated. The buying and selling of slaves was a common practice in the Roman Empire. It is interesting that occasionally a slave would be purchased by a friend and set *free*.

Peter uses this to illustrate how they had been redeemed from the slave market of sin, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Redemption was by no means a foreign concept to Peter's hearers. Historically, the chosen

nation was required to redeem her children, twenty years of age and upward, with a half shekel



of silver. The rich were not permitted to give more or the poor less (Ex. 30:11-16). The ransom price was the same regardless of their status. Those of the dispersion were already familiar with this process, but Peter wanted them to understand it was the blood of Christ, not silver, that had been offered to redeem them back to God, therefore, they were to live accordingly. A grateful heart is an *obedient* heart!

Notice they were also redeemed from something else. Namely, a vain manner of life that had been handed down to them through the traditions of their *Jewish fathers*. As it has been said, "the way had been beaten broad and smooth by the feet of many generations." For example, our Lord demonstrated the deadening effect of the traditions and commandments of men from which they were now gloriously redeemed.

"Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them...For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:3-9). Tradition is an enemy of truth!

The theme Peter follows in these passages is one his readers could easily relate to. Note how he says they were bought with the "precious

blood of the lamb without blemish and without spot.” Interestingly, the Apostle Paul never once uses the term “lamb” in his epistles, nor does he ever make a reference to Christ as the “Lamb of God.” He was in no way slighting the Redeemer, but understood that such terminology and phraseology was closely identified with Israel’s sacrificial system. Since this system was foreign to the Gentiles they naturally would have had to study the Old Testament before they could fully appreciate how the redemptive work of Christ was woven throughout the types and shadows.

When Peter states that Christ was as a lamb without blemish and without spot *his* hearers would have *immediately* made the connection with the Passover. Every member of the Hebrew family had grown up meticulously observing this annual feast. It looked back to the night prior to Israel’s exodus from Egypt.

“Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep” (Ex. 12:3-5).

Notice the progression here from “a lamb” to “the lamb” to “your lamb.” We move from the indefinite to the definite and from the impersonal to the personal. In order to escape the judgment of the firstborn each household was required to take a lamb—not just any lamb mind you,

it had to be *without* spot and blemish, the fulfillment of which is Christ who was the sinless spotless Lamb of God. After the lamb was slain, the Israelites were to strike the blood upon the lintel and the two doorposts of their home. The blood on the lintel naturally dripped to the threshold of the doorway. If we take the points of reference where the blood was placed and connect them with vertical lines and horizontal lines, we have the position of the Lamb of God as He hung on the Cross.

It was not enough to merely shed the blood of the lamb, it had to be *applied* to the doorposts to escape the destroyer who went throughout the land of Egypt slaying the firstborn. God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Those who remained in their dwellings were under the blood, safe and secure in the everlasting arms. In like manner, the believing remnant that Peter addressed was in Christ redemptively, thus they were under His precious blood. Therefore, the judgment of God will pass over them.

Peter adds, “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (I Pet. 1:20,21). While foreknowledge and foreordination are two entirely different subjects, they do work in tandem with one another. As God peered down the corridor of time, as we know it, He foreknew that man would follow Satan in his rebellion. In the eternal counsel of God it was foreordained that Christ would be the redeemer of mankind. Think of it,

before the foundation of the earth was laid, before the sun, moon and stars graced the heavens, the whole plan of redemption was predetermined by God.

It is comforting to know that this hell-deserving lump of clay we call humanity was not an afterthought of God, but a forethought. In the mind of God, Christ was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. As the ages unfolded, at God's appointed time, Christ was miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, consequently, He was untainted with the sin of Adam. Hence, the sinless spotless Lamb of God! As we know, by one man's disobedience sin entered and death by sin. Although there were millions upon millions of men between Adam and Christ, the Lord from heaven is called the *second* man (I Cor. 15:47). You see, the *man* Christ Jesus was the one who would redeem mankind from sin and death through His precious blood.

All of this is captured in the phrase, "but was manifest in these last times for you." What *was* manifest? The coming of the Savior: His birth, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into glory according to prophecy. Basically, Peter was saying to his countrymen that they were the beneficiaries of what God had foreordained before the foundation of the world. Thus, the faith and hope of these saints was not resting in the broken promises and traditions of men, but in God who is able to save them to the uttermost.

BEING BORN AGAIN

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:22,23).

Although many Acts 2 dispensationalists tend to interpret Peter's reference "seeing ye have purified your souls," with water baptism, we believe the apostle is confining his thoughts to the spiritual side of things, rather than the ceremonial. Because their souls had been purified

by the redemptive work of Christ, they were to love one another with an unfeigned or unhypocritical love. A genuine love never says one thing in person and then turns around and launches arrows of criticism from afar that pierce the heart with many sorrows.


"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14).

These saints were *born again*, not of the corruptible seed that perishes, but of the incorruptible Word of God. You will recall our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Poor Nicodemus was still operating in the realm of the earthly. He wondered how it was possible for a man to enter again into his mother's womb. The Master enlightened him with these words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

"It is comforting to know that this hell-deserving lump of clay we call humanity was not an afterthought of God, but a forethought."

Here we learn two things must simultaneously take place to be born again. To be born of the water clearly refers to the Word of God. In fact, water is sometimes used as a metaphor for the Scriptures. Paul states, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:26). So the Word of God must be received with all readiness of mind, in conjunction with the operation of the Spirit, who convicts and regenerates a lost sinner who has believed the gospel.

"For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth forever." As Peter quotes from Isaiah, he was seeking to remind his readers that the ways of man are *temporal*. "For all flesh is as grass." Of course there are various types of grass such as Kentucky bluegrass, rye, crab, etc. Some men may ascend far above their peers in attainments. They may be cultured or wealthy while others are ingenious and creative. The glory of their accomplishments is sometimes quite impressive. But they are like the flower of the field; they are soon swept away like the autumn leaves before winter.

As the winds of change gently blow across the withering field of humanity it is not long before man's words and deeds are forgotten, but the Word of God *abides* still. Even though the workers of iniquity have sought to ban it, burn it, and mock it, the Word of God continues to tower over the wrecks of time. Surely God has *preserved* His Word in the original languages from which has come thousands of translations in every language and dialect under the sun. "And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you," Peter says. Clearly the context of chapter one leaves us with little doubt that the gospel they had heard preached and readily received was the kingdom gospel. 

To Be Continued!

Endnote

1. "The present articular participle *ton... krinonta*, 'the one judging,' may stress the present continuing judgment that God exercises, or the articular participle may specify 'the attribute or office' 'Him, who is the judge.' The latter interpretation portrays God as the moral governor of the world, the former draws attention to His present judicial dealings with His child. Both truths are latent in the expression...." *First Peter, An Expository Commentary* by D. Edmond Hiebert, Moody Press, Chicago, page 88.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that William Carey labored unremittingly for *seven years* as a missionary in India before, by God's grace, he won his first soul to Christ? But in the years following: what showers of blessing! Christian churches and orphanages all over India still bear witness to the blessing of God on his ministry.

It is natural to become "weary in well doing," but remember that God promises that "we shall reap"—reap spiritual fruit from our labors and investments—only "if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

What Could He Say?

By Cornelius R. Stam

It must have pleased the Apostle Paul, in writing to the churches, to be able to express thanks to God for what had been accomplished in them and through them.

To the Roman believers he wrote:

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that *your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*” (Rom. 1:8).

The Ephesian epistle appears to have been an encyclical letter. At least it is the most impersonal of all his letters, so we would not expect it to contain any such word of commendation as the above.

To the Philippians, however, he exclaimed:

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy” (Phil. 1:3,4).

What a church they were! *Every time* he thought of them it was with thanksgiving! *Every time* he prayed for them it was with joy! How faithful they had been in their witness for Christ; how generous-hearted in their care for him and the work he represented! And in all this they had not changed since “the first day” he had been with them (Phil. 1:5 cf. 4:10-16).

For the Colossian believers too, he thanked God, though he had never seen them, and prayed for them without ceasing:

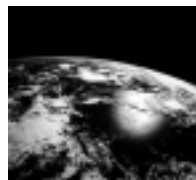
“Since we heard of *your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints*” (Col. 1:4).

To the beloved Thessalonians too, he could write with joy:

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

“Remembering without ceasing *your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father*” (I Thes. 1:2,3).

And their *faith* and *love* and *patience* of hope had all grown by the time he wrote his second epistle to them (See II Thes. 1:3,4). How such demonstrations of the Spirit’s working must have gladdened the apostle’s heart!



“...what if he [Paul] were to write to us today? Could he salute us with joy and with thanks to God for our testimony, or for our faithfulness....Or would he have to write cautiously, knowing how little we deserved such commendation...”

But what is this we find in the salutation to the Corinthian believers, in I Corinthians 1:4? Here he is very cautious, as he writes:

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.”

Note carefully: He does not say he thanks God for the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. He rather thanks God *on their behalf*, that God has been so *gracious* to them.

This was a letter of reproof, and II Corinthians the follow-up. God had saved them and had enriched them with various supernatural gifts of the Spirit, but these gifts had caused them to become puffed up and contentious and careless about their conduct as Christians.

So the apostle thanks God only for *the grace given to them*, and earnestly reproofs, rebukes, and exhorts them to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives. What more could he say?


As we come to the salutation to “the churches of Galatia,” we are struck with the total absence of *any* word of commendation. As with all the churches, he *wishes* them grace and peace, but then immediately launches into a stern message of reproof and disputation. Indeed, he does not hide from them his deep misgivings over their spiritual condition, saying: “*I am afraid of [concerning]*

you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain...I stand in doubt of you” (Gal. 4:11,20).

As with the Corinthian believers, so with the Galatians, we ask: What else could he do? What more could he say? Should he have praised them when they had “fallen from grace,” when “the blessedness” they once had known had been forfeited for a legal program that God had set aside?

And what about *us*, my friend: *you and me*? What if the Apostle Paul, that faithful warrior for “*the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*”—what if he were to write to *us* today? Could he salute us with joy and with thanks to God for *our* testimony, or for *our* faithfulness and generosity toward the Lord’s work, or for *our* faith, love and patience of hope? Or would he have to write cautiously, knowing how little we deserved such commendation, or, worse still, would he have for us only words of reproof, rebuke and exhortation, standing in anxious doubt of our very salvation?

May God help us to face up to these matters thoughtfully and prayerfully, and to *act* upon them with resolution, so that any letter from Paul to *us* would contain those blessed words:

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” 



The photographs so far taken of the moon and Mars provide at least one reason why God’s plans call for a new heaven as well as a new earth!

—Mats R. Suilenroc

The Blood of Jesus

By Jim Humphrey

Recently, a friend of mine told me about observing someone praying to God “by the blood of Jesus” that a fight between two people would be stopped. I understand that praying this way for any number of things is a common practice among some people. This set me to question the justification, rationale, and basis for using the blood of Jesus this way. And so the purpose of this article is to examine the legitimacy, according to the Bible, for the use of this term when praying to God for something.

Leviticus 17:11 teaches “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for the soul.” The blood that was spilled upon the altar signified death and thus made atonement.

BLOOD, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are many passages that refer to blood in the New Testament and a review of each such passage reveals that, in general, when we see blood it stands for death. For example, in Matthew 23:30,31 Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that they were hypocrites because they say “if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets.”

In Matthew 26:26-28, we read, that as they were eating, “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And

he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for the remission of sins.”

Pilate is recorded as having washed his hands, saying “I am innocent of the blood of this just person,” referring to the fact that he was not responsible for the death of Christ. Then, all the people answered Pilate, “His blood be on us, and on our children,” referring to their gladly taking responsibility for the death of Christ (Matt. 27:24,25). These are but a few examples of how blood refers to death in the New Testament.

JESUS CHRIST’S BLOOD BOUGHT OUR REDEMPTION

When someone invokes “the blood of Jesus” in their prayers for something they believe should be done, they are actually invoking the sacrificial death of our Lord for their purposes. However, a review of the references to the blood of Jesus in the New Testament reveals that the death of Christ has no relation to supplications for such things. And so, to what does the blood of Jesus refer?

First of all, the blood of Jesus, that is, His death, opened to us the way of salvation from our sins. His blood redeemed, or purchased, our salvation. Romans 3:24,25 tells us “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in *His blood*, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.”

Ephesians 1:7 tells us, "In Whom we have redemption through *His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Romans 5:9 informs us, "Much more then, being now justified by *His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." I John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the *blood of Jesus Christ* his Son cleanseth us from all sin." See also I Peter 1:19 and Hebrews 2:14.

Paul teaches that we share with other believers the remembrance of Christ's death until He comes for us when we partake of communion (I Cor. 11:23-25). It was our Lord Jesus Christ's shed blood, His death, that saved us from sin and gave us eternal life with Him.

JESUS CHRIST'S BLOOD GIVES US ACCESS TO GOD

Secondly, His blood, that is, His death, has provided us an access to God that mankind never had before. Ephesians 2:12,13 teaches, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the *blood of Christ*." Hebrews 10:19 reads, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood of Jesus*."

Before Christ's death, Gentiles had no hope of access to God. The Jews did have access, but then only by and through their high priest. And he could enter into the holy of

holies in the temple only once a year, and then with the blood of animals for the remission of sins for himself and the people. Now, by the blood of Jesus, that is, after His death, we all, both Jews and Gentiles, can have direct access to God.

The blood of Christ has redeemed us from sin and given us access to God. We can thank God that we have access to Him through or by the blood of Christ, but our prayers should be made in His Name, and not by His blood (Eph. 5:20).

THE MISUSE OF GOD'S WORD

The Word of God becomes distorted if terms and expressions from it are misunderstood and misused. This causes confusion among God's people and takes their minds from the truth. The plan of Satan has always been to twist God's Word and make it mean something it does not in an attempt to make people stray from the truth. We see this in his first recorded contact with mankind in Genesis 3:1-5. There we read that Satan approached Eve. She told him what she heard from Adam; what God had said about eating the fruit of a particular tree in the garden. This had been God's Word to Eve at the time, which she was to have taken by faith.

Satan did not deny outright what God said. Instead, he brought into question the *interpretation* of God's Word. He told her she would be as gods, knowing good and evil, if she ate of the fruit that God had forbidden. And so it has been ever since that people have followed Satan's lead and have misused the Word of God for their *own* purposes.

"Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9).

Whereas at the very beginning of the Bible we observe the misuse and abuse of God's Word by Satan, it is interesting that at the end of the Bible we find a clear message as to the penalty for such misuse and abuse. God has let us know His will regarding how His Word is to be used many places in the Bible. But, through the Apostle John in Revelation 22:18,19 He reveals: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

These words may be written directly in reference to the Book of Revelation, but their application cannot help but extend to the entire Word of God. At any rate, they remind us to be very careful of how we use His Word, how we interpret it, and how we teach it.

CONCLUSION


From Moses we learn the lesson that Jesus Christ was to be struck but once, that is, He was to suffer and die once. In Exodus 17:6, Moses was instructed by God to strike the rock in Horeb and as a result life-giving water would come out for the children of Israel to drink. The rock was a type of Christ in that Christ was to be struck only once. "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). Moses sinned, as recorded in Numbers 20:8-12, when he disobeyed God by striking the rock a second time, instead of speaking to it as commanded. As a result,

"We are to pray directly to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Nowhere in the Bible are we instructed to pray for things by the blood of Jesus. To do so is a misuse of a wonderful truth. Jesus, the perfect man (For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, Col. 2:9), died on the Cross carrying all our sins on Himself. The work of that death and His blood was carried out then and we are forever grateful for what His precious blood did for us. It redeemed us from our sins and so bought our salvation, and it allowed us to have *access* to Almighty God.

But, thank God, our Lord Jesus Christ is dead no longer. He is risen triumphant and He sits at the right hand of God making intercession for us at this present time (Rom. 8:34). In fact, it is through Him that we have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph. 2:18). He is the Head over all things and we believers are His Body (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-19). We are to pray directly to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't, as Moses did, strike the rock the second time by praying to God by the blood of Jesus that long ago completed its wonderful work. We pray to God in the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Praise God!!! See also Philippians 4:6,7; I Timothy 2:5,6; Hebrews 7:25. 

Virginia Regional Meetings



Location: *Holiday Inn*, 10800 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, Virginia

Dates: August 18-19, 2000

Guest Speakers:

Paul M. Sadler, President of *Berean Bible Society*
Dennis Kiszonas, Executive Director of *Grace For Today*
John Fredericksen, Pastor of *Fellowship Bible Church*

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Jack Intagliato (804) 739-7854



Maryland Regional Meetings

Location: *Days Inn* on Ritchie Highway—Route 2
(Just south of the Baltimore Beltway 695)
Baltimore, Maryland

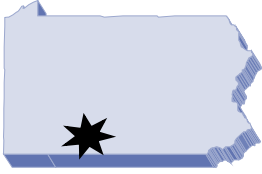
Date: Sunday, August 20, 2000

Speaker: Paul M. Sadler, President of *Berean Bible Society*, Milwaukee, WI

For more information, please contact:

Mrs. Linda Collins (410) 974-0733 or
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Guest Speakers:

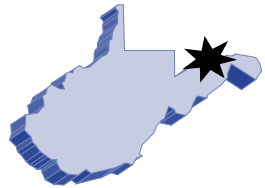
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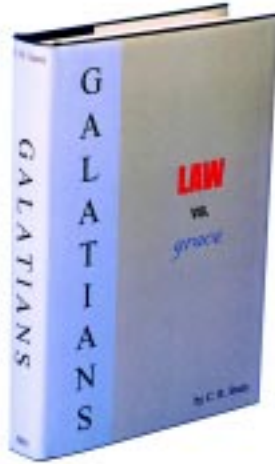
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THE BBI BYLINE

Justification and Justice

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

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

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).

Justification is a legal term which means to pronounce “free from guilt or blame,” to be declared “just.” This means the same thing as to be declared “righteous” or **right** in God’s sight. This is the basis of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. On the Cross He became sin for us (in our place) that we might be declared righteous (justified) in Him (see II Cor. 5:21). Justification then is the legal act by which God declares the believer just.

God can be just (do what is right) and still justify (declare **righteous**) the sinner who places his or her faith in Christ for salvation because “justice” was accomplished

on the Cross. **Justice** means to administer that which is just through rewards or punishment, to give or pay what is deserved. Since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), all sinners deserve to die and be cast into the lake of fire (Rom. 3:10,23; Rev. 20:11-15). Because God is absolutely holy and just, sin must be punished. Justice was carried out on the Cross when Jesus Christ suffered death for our sins. The appropriate punishment for sin was administered on the Cross; justice was done.

So, by the merit of Christ’s substitutionary death for our sins, God can be just (righteous) and at the same time justify (declare righteous) the guilty sinner because his sin was PAID for on the Cross by Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead and is the only Mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5-6). Christ satisfied the righteous demands of the law and so appeased God’s just nature, making the offer of salvation by grace through faith to all who believe possible.

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Dates: September 15-17, 2000 **Location:** Germantown, Wisconsin

Details to be Announced!

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A GRACE BIBLE STUDY GROUP is now meeting regularly at the home of Mike and Roberta Karnes, 705 Pleasant Point Circle, Cicero, Indiana 46034 (North of Indianapolis). For additional information, please contact: the Karnes at: <r.karnes@ATT.com> or phone: (317) 984-4799. May God richly bless these dear folks as they faithfully proclaim the riches of His grace.

BROTHER JEFF SEEKINS recently accepted the call to be the Pastor of the *Community Bible Church* in Tipp City, Ohio. If you live in the area, or are just passing through, Pastor & Mrs. Seekins (Barb) would like to extend a warm welcome to visit the assembly. The church is located at: 1427 W. Main Street, Tipp City, Ohio 45371. For more information, please phone: (937) 667-2710. God's very best to these dear saints as they labor together to share the gospel of the grace of God with a lost and dying world.

NEW CONTACTS: In the midst of adding new features to our web site, we have been pleasantly surprised by the increasing numbers who are visiting the site. The Internet has opened a whole new realm of opportunity for us to make known the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery. So let's spread the word among our family and friends to visit the BBS Internet site located at <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>. By the way, this is a quick way to place an order for books and tapes. Remember to sign our *Guest Registry!*

SCHOLARSHIP FUND: About a year ago the *Berean Bible Institute* established a *Scholarship Fund* to assist the student body with their tuition and book expenses. Since many of our students have had to scale back their work schedules to attend classes, any type of financial assistance helps ease the burden. If you would like to donate to this fund, please designate your gift: *BBI Scholarship Fund*. On behalf of the Institute and the student body—heartfelt thanks!!

LOOKING AHEAD: The *BBF Fall Bible Conference* this year is scheduled to be held *Grace Bible Church*, Madison, Wisconsin on October 12-13, 2000. Theme: *Men of Prayer*. A timely subject, indeed, for the evil day in which we live. For a brochure, please contact Pastor Floyd Baker: <pastorf@itis.com> or phone: (608) 222-5405. More next month!

 **DON'T FORGET:** If you plan to place an order, be sure to use the prices found in the "wholesale" column of our price list on page 26. This is what our readers normally pay unless the book is being offered at an additional discount in our advertised specials each month.

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