

The

Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2003



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Pastor Stam's Memoirs



Dearly Beloved,

I had the privilege of knowing Pastor Stam for nearly thirty years, seven of which I served under him here at BBS before his retirement.

Brother Stam was cut from a different fabric. In defense of Paul's apostleship and message he was fearless, tireless, unmovable, and sometimes could appear to be unreasonable. But this is the nature of *pioneers*. They are a no nonsense type of leader who lay the axe to the root while others are content to observe from a distance. Brother Stam had little time for those who were all too willing to compromise Paul's gospel on the altar of appeasement. Until the day of his death, he stood without apology for the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

Having worked so closely with Pastor Stam, there was also a warm and tender side to this gentle giant. He spoke often of his father and mother's influence in his life, especially his father, who became his mentor in the early years of ministry. When he learned John and Betty had suffered martyrdom in China he was heartbroken at the news. Of all his brothers and sisters, he was the closest to John. On one occasion he shared with me that when he met his first wife, Henrietta, it was love at first sight. He always spoke of her affectionately and missed her deeply after her departure to be with the Lord. It was about five years later that he married Ruthie, who watched over him like a mother hen. He often said of Ruthie that she was all "sunshine." On the day of her homegoing he wept openly.

Touching moments! This is but a small sample of the life and times of Pastor Stam that he recorded for us in his *Memoirs*. Brother Stam requested that I write the final chapter of the book so the story of his life and ministry would be complete. Of course it is an honor to do so, but a humbling task indeed.

As noted in our Spring Communiqué, we plan to only print 1,000 copies of this work since it is not a Bible commentary. The *Memoirs* will have a classical deep blue hardcover with gold embossing and contain approximately 125 pages, with pictures. With God's help, we hope to release this volume near the end of October; therefore, we are now receiving orders. **The price of this work is \$12.00, plus \$3.00 to cover postage and handling.** Be sure to reserve your copy as soon as possible!

Yours in His Service,

Paul M. Sadler, President

Salvation: Do You Have It?

By Pastor Dan Sheridan

Grace Community Church, Lake Villa, Illinois

Salvation: The Qualifications

A long time ago a man asked the question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). First of all, God saves the following kind of people: "sinners" (Rom. 3:23), "ungodly" (Rom. 4:5), those "without strength" (Rom. 5:6), His "enemies" (Rom. 5:10).

If you do not think that you are any of the above, you cannot be saved. If you still think you're good enough, you cannot be saved. God does not save good people, or people trying to earn their way to heaven. You must come to God God's way.

Salvation: The Basis

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified **freely** by His **grace** through the **redemption that is in Christ Jesus**" (Rom. 3:23-24). God saves sinners on this basis:

1). **Freely**. It does not cost the sinner anything. It is free. You can't earn salvation by being good, and you cannot lose salvation by being bad. God does not require any works from a sinner. Good works do not make it easier, and bad works do not make it harder to get saved. It is FREE, FREE, FREE! God justifies the sinner freely. Justification is the act whereby God declares a person righteous, even though that person in himself is not righteous.

2). **By His Grace**. That means that it comes from the heart of God without finding anything in the recipient that would draw out His grace. Grace is all that God is free to do for the undeserving sinner because Christ paid for our sins on the Cross. If we have to work for our salvation, then salvation is not "by His grace." If we can earn it, why did He die?

3). **Through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus**. Salvation is free to the sinner, but it cost God everything! Free is not cheap. As a matter of fact, salvation is the most expensive thing that has ever been paid. The cost of salvation was that Almighty God had to become a man and die in the sinner's place. The cost was infinite! Webster defines "redemption" as follows: "The act of procuring the deliverance of persons or things from the possession and power of captors *by the payment of an equivalent*." Sin against an infinite God requires an infinite payment. No man or church or works of any kind can pay this debt. The debt has been fully paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ. It would be the highest insult to offer to God your good works or religion in view of the fact that His Own Son suffered on the Cross to pay for your sins.

So to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Stop making excuses, and place yourself in the "Qualifications" category, and receive the gift of salvation God has provided.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"I declare unto you the gospel...by which also ye are saved...Christ died for our sins...was buried, and...rose again the third day" (I Cor. 15:1-4).

In the Eye of the Storm

By Paul M. Sadler

DAY BY DAY

“Day by day and with each passing moment, strength I find to meet my trials here; trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure, gives unto each day what He deems best—lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, mingling toil with peace and rest.



“Help me then in every tribulation, so to trust Thy promises, O Lord, that I lose not faith’s sweet consolation, offered me within Thy holy Word. Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting, e’er to take, as from a father’s hand, one by one, the days, the moments fleeting, till I reach [my heavenly home].”

Most of our great hymns of the faith were borne out of *adversity*. Like the gentle mourning dove that coos, they convey a message in song that streams forth from a broken heart that has found consolation in our Heavenly Father. The hymn, *Day by Day*, written by Lina Sandell, is a classic example. When Lina was a little girl she recalled how she rarely spent time with other children her age. Rather, she enjoyed sitting in her father’s study talking about the things of the Lord. Her father was the well-known and beloved pastor of a parish located in Froderyd, Sweden.

As the flames of revival swept across Scandinavia, Lina, now 26, accompanied her father on a speaking engagement at Gothenburg. For some unknown reason, the ship upon which they were traveling lurched to one side, tragically throwing her father overboard. He drowned before her very eyes. You may want to read her words again in light of her loss. The Apostle Paul would have suffered the same fate, but for the providence of God. Such times have a way of showing us our true *character*.

PAUL THE TRAVELER

“And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band.”
—Acts 27:1

The Lord had commissioned Paul to go far hence unto the Gentiles, but Paul’s heart’s desire was that Israel might be saved. It seems that he never forgave himself for persecuting the church and laying it waste. He thought within himself if he could simply return again to Jerusalem he could reach his countrymen for Christ. But the Lord

had forewarned him that they would not receive his testimony concerning Him. Nevertheless, the apostle disobeyed the will of the Lord believing he could reach them for Christ if given another opportunity (Acts 21:4-14; 22:18-21 cf. Rom. 10:1).

Since God never imposes His will upon ours, He *allowed* Paul to return to Jerusalem, but it was with catastrophic results. God interrupted the ill-advised plan of James and Paul's cooperation in it. We believe, had not the Lord *intervened*, the apostle would have lost his life at the hands of his countrymen (Acts 21:17-36). The lesson here is clear: disobedience has consequences!

Here's a contemporary example to illustrate our point. The Scriptures are clear that the believer is not to be *unequally yoked* with the unbeliever, whether in business partnerships or marriage (II Cor. 6:14,15). But it is not uncommon to see an attractive young Christian girl engaged to a young man who looks and smells like he just fell off the turnip truck. In addition to being unsaved, he wouldn't know what responsibility was if it were staring him in the face, having never worked a day in his life. You begin to wonder what this girl is thinking! But there is rhyme and reason behind her thought process, though misguided.

You see, the woman instinctively wants to *nurture*, so she firmly believes that she will be able to mold this young fellow into a well-groomed, responsible, church-going man who will eventually trust Christ. But there is one major problem: she will have to disobey God's will to accomplish

her purpose, a decision she is sure to regret. Nine times out of ten this type of marriage relationship ends in heartache and divorce.

While some tend to place Paul on a pedestal, he was not beyond stepping out of the will of God. He was a man of like passions as we—he, too, had feet of clay! Consequently, this one act of disobedience cost him dearly. He was imprisoned for two years as a result. These were lost years for the most part, years he could have *more effectively* ministered among the Gentiles. But thankfully God uses us in spite of our shortcomings and failures. Shortly after Paul was imprisoned, the Lord appeared to the apostle so he wouldn't languish in despair.

“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (Acts 23:11).

“Be of good cheer.” Imperative mood: the Lord *commands* Paul to be courageous and confident, for the hand of God was still upon his ministry. Although the apostle had testified of the Lord under the auspices of the permissive will of God at Jerusalem, it remained the directive will of God for him to continue his ministry among the Gentiles. Hence, “so must thou bear witness also at Rome,” at Rome's expense mind you. There are times that God uses the unbeliever to accomplish His purpose, as demonstrated here. Interestingly, Paul is never said to be a prisoner of Rome, but rather a prisoner of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:1). The Lord makes Paul His prisoner at this point in time

and sends him to Rome, a Gentile city *far* from Jerusalem.

Having been bound over for trial at Rome, Paul is placed on a ship in the custody of a Roman centurion named Julius. There is good reason to believe that they may have known one another prior to the voyage. One thing we know for sure, Julius did not believe the apostle was a flight risk, since he allowed Paul the liberty to visit with the brethren at various stops along the journey.



As the voyage progressed they first experienced contrary winds, then an unsettling calm as they sailed under Crete. Thankful to have arrived at Fair Havens, the Captain and crew made arrangements to sail to the northwest side of the island to Phenice, which is a haven of Crete, where they planned to winter. But it was already late fall, when sailing on the Mediterranean could be hazardous. Thus, Paul, who was a seasoned traveler, stepped forward to advise against such a plan.

“Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading [cargo] and ship, but also of our lives” (Acts 27:10).

Of course the Captain and the owner probably surmised that Paul was merely a prisoner who was in no rush to get to his own execution. More importantly, there

was wine, women and song at the next stop, commodities the world craves. But the apostle was speaking from experience, not selfishness. He had already suffered three shipwrecks and spent a night and a day in the sea; therefore, he was well aware of the grave dangers (II Cor. 11:25).

Here we see something of the *character* of Paul, which can be very helpful in our Christian experience. What was true of him should be true of us as well. This is what he means when he says to the Corinthians, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1). You see, Paul is more than merely the pattern of the longsuffering of God in salvation, he is also God’s pattern of how to walk well pleasing unto the Lord.

THE CHARACTER OF PAUL

The apostle became the central figure on the voyage from this point forward. Paul was a man of *conviction* who wasn’t afraid to speak his mind. Morally, he had no trouble, as some do today, distinguishing between right and wrong in both spiritual and physical matters. When he stood before the Sanhedrin and was falsely accused of sedition and insurrection, he responded: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). In other words, he did what was right! He knew the charges against him had no merit whatsoever.

A young pastor approached a senior minister of the gospel with a serious concern. He shared with his elder friend how some of the brethren were spreading malicious

lies about him. The venerable old pastor asked, "Son is any of it true?" "No sir! Not a word of it." "Then don't worry about it! Their sin will find them out soon enough. The important thing is that you have a clear conscience about the matter."

Looking over the circumstances he now found himself in, Paul perceived it would be wrong to set sail and continue the journey, not merely because of the time of the year; he also sensed they had an ulterior motive. The Captain and crew wanted to continue the voyage to the next Port of Call so they could winter there in sin. In both of the foregoing cases, the apostle stood his ground in the face of opposition. We, too, must always stand up for what is *right*, whether it is wrongdoing in the local assembly, or in defense of Paul's apostleship and message. The key word here is *conviction*.

As you read the record, once Julius agreed with the Captain to resume the journey, Paul didn't press the matter. This is an indication that the apostle was a man of extraordinary *tact*. Webster's defines "tact" accordingly: "a keen sense of what to do or say in order to maintain good relations with others or avoid offense." Those who demand to be heard and refuse to leave an issue rest only serve to erode their credibility in the eyes of others. Oftentimes it is merely a matter of *pride* to have their way.

It has been said, "Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy." For "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city" (Prov. 18:19). Thus, Paul was careful never to be offensive for

the sake of offense. It was his desire to keep the lines of *communication* open with those he engaged. This earned the apostle a level of respect and gave him a hearing on weightier issues, even though the response may not have always been favorable. When these principles are violated it only serves to alienate the hearer.

We've all encountered those who have had such a bad experience with the gospel that they won't even give you the time of day when you endeavor to share it with them. The lesson here is this, we should faithfully share the gospel, but we should never attempt to badger someone into believing it, although some have done their level best to do so. Once we have put the unbeliever into a defensive posture he will be less receptive the next time someone has an opportunity to share Christ with him.



Another area in which we must be cautious is not to be overbearing when sharing Paul's gospel. Don't be like the car salesman who takes your keys and won't return them until you agree to purchase a new car. Personally, I never return to these types of dealerships. It is incumbent upon us to speak the truth in love. Simply give the brethren a clear, *concise* presentation of the Word, rightly divided, without insulting their understanding of the Scriptures.

I usually share two passages that appear to contradict one another in the Scriptures, which they have probably wondered about themselves. If I sense they are sincerely interested, I give them

some literature that they can read in the privacy of their own home without feeling threatened or intimidated. The key word here is *tact*.

As we continue the narrative, just when the crew thought they had accomplished their purpose, a storm loomed on the horizon. Not just any tempest mind you, but one that strikes fear into the heart of any sailor, a *northeaster!* This type of a storm produces gale force winds that can easily capsize a ship.

“And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive....And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away” (Acts 27:15,20).

If you study the record carefully it is obvious that this was an impressive ship capable of carrying 276 souls, cargo, and tackling. Be that as it may, that old ship was up one side of the waves and down the other as the crew encountered the perfect storm. It was all they could do to pull the skiff to safety when the ship started to take on water. They used “helps” to literally tie the vessel together to keep it seaworthy. With the waves sweeping over the bow and the helps unable to keep the water out, it became necessary to lighten the ship, which was accomplished by throwing the cargo overboard, followed by the tackling. When the sun and stars failed to appear for days, the crew lost their bearings and along with it any hope of surviving the ordeal.

“But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them,

and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship” (Acts 27:21,22).

As all on board faced what appeared to be the inevitable, Paul stepped forward. The man who walks with God is never affected by circumstances; he rests in the sovereignty of God, that He is working all things out after the counsel of His own will. In this case the Lord intervened to reassure Paul that he would appear before Caesar and all those with him would be spared.


Even though the apostle shared this news with the crew, some on board decided to take things into their own hands and abandon the ship. They attempted to lower the skiff into the sea under the guise that they were lowering the anchors. Here the apostle exercised *sound judgment*. Rather than alert the other crew members which might well have resulted in a riot, Paul informed the centurion and the soldiers as to the intention of these seamen. He knew soldiers were men of action. Time was of the essence! Once Paul informed Julius that they could not be saved if these men abandoned ship, the soldiers responded immediately and cut the ropes. This shows us that Julius held the word of Paul in high esteem, especially after his warning came true. It would not surprise us to see Julius in glory some day.

Paul also demonstrated good judgment by encouraging the men to eat after fasting fourteen days.

Even the hardiest of men would be weak after such an ordeal. He knew they were going to need every ounce of strength they could muster to swim to shore, if need be. Therefore, after he *gave thanks* to God, he took some bread and broke it and ate in the presence of them all. This scene has been called “The meal in the storm.”

In times of crisis, it is the spiritually-minded man who maintains his composure, as we see here with Paul. The storm may rage around him, some may even abandon him, but his confidence is in the Lord, who is a present help in time of need. Like Paul, we, too, must be objective in the Lord’s service. Unfortunately we’ve all endured

those times in the local church when the tension was so intense you could cut it with a knife. But while others may lose their composure, and say things they will probably regret later, let us be of the number who honor and glorify the Lord in our actions and manner of speech. The key words here are *sound judgment*.

Had those in authority initially heeded the counsel of Paul they would have avoided the perils of the sea, which can be unforgiving. The same is true today, spiritually speaking. Sadly, the reason the faith of some has suffered shipwreck is due to their rejection of Paul’s apostleship and message. 

Question Box

“A comment on your Editor’s note of March 2003—you explain that: ‘the historical beginning of the Church, the Body of Christ took place in mid-Acts with the conversion of Paul.’ Can you please explain Romans 16:7: ‘Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.’ Does this verse indicate that the Church, the Body of Christ started before Paul?”

When Paul states, “Andronicus and Junia...were in Christ before me,” he is speaking *redemptively*. Those of the household of God, no matter what economy they were redeemed under, are essentially saved by faith on the basis of the precious blood of Christ. Hence, they (kingdom saints) and we are both in Christ redemptively (Rom. 3:24,25).

As members of His Body, we have the added blessing of being in Christ *dispensationally*. We are a new creation “in Him,” which is uniquely Pauline. Thus, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one *in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28). The conversion of Paul marked the historical beginning of this new creation.

—Pastor Sadler

Unanswered Prayer

By Cornelius R. Stam

"Do you believe in prayer?"

The writer was asked this question some time ago by a woman who had prayed in vain for the recovery of her sick husband.

"No," I replied, *"I do not believe in prayer. But I do believe in a God who hears and answers prayer."*

The woman's question reminded me of my childhood days.

One day at school a playmate showed me a beautiful fountain pen.

"Where did you get it?" I asked.

"Lucky stone," he replied simply, and taking me to a hill nearby he found a smooth brown pebble and showed me how to use it.

Closing his eyes he threw it into the air over his head and said solemnly, *"Lucky stone, lucky stone, bring me luck."*

"Is that all you did?" I asked.

"Sure, I tried it yesterday, and this morning I found this pen. Eddie showed me how. He found a quarter the same way."

Needless to say, I found a good many "lucky stones" that afternoon and went through the ceremony again and again.

But, I didn't find a thing! even though I walked about with my eyes almost glued to the ground!

The next day I found my friend, and Eddie too, and asked them: Had I done it the right way? Had

I used the right kind of stone? How long are you supposed to wait before you find something?

It was not long before I had completely lost faith in "lucky stones." When the boys kept inquiring about my luck I scoffed, *"G'wan, I don't believe in that stuff!"*



This incident came back to me when I was asked *"Do you believe in prayer?"*

Millions of people, saved as well as lost, are positively superstitious about prayer. They try it. If their requests are granted they say, *"I believe in prayer. I have found that it works."* But if their requests are not

granted they begin to doubt—as though prayer in itself ever had any power or efficacy.

Of course, not all Christians are superstitious, but this only adds to the difficulty. Many sincere and thoughtful believers have trusted and claimed certain written promises from the Word, only to find those promises unfulfilled in their lives. As a result they have found themselves struggling against the feeling that God is not faithful. This is a far more serious difficulty.

To these, and to all believers who have been tempted to doubt God because of unanswered prayer, we offer God's wonderful solution to the problem.

PRAYER PROMISES

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22).

“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

Wonderful promises! Meditate upon them for a few moments. “ALL THINGS—WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer, believing!” “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching ANYTHING THAT THEY SHALL ASK!”

Wonderful promises, indeed! Yet who can deny that they have proved more *discouraging* than *encouraging* to many sincere Christians?

Reading these verses, many of God’s children have been encouraged to ask for physical healing, daily employment, deliverance from temptation and many other things in prayer, believing, but have been deeply disappointed to find their requests ungranted. Such experiences have often left deeper scars on the lives of believers than their fellow men observe.

Before seeking the explanation to this fact let us first be wholly honest and acknowledge it to be a fact.

There was a time when my own faith was rudely shaken by this vexing problem. We had been holding open air meetings for many weeks without seeing any results. How we longed to see precious souls saved! Before going out one day my co-worker asked, *“Do you believe Matthew 18:19,*

that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven?”

I said, *“God knows I want to believe it.”* So we got down on our knees to ask for souls, claiming this promise. As we prayed I could not forget that the Lord had graciously helped one who had cried *“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”*

We arose from prayer that day with peculiar confidence. We knew before we had even begun to preach that God would give us souls. But—He didn’t!

“Surely what God says to us is infinitely more important than anything we might have to say to Him.”

Few people stood around and there was no indication that anyone was at all impressed by our words. We agreed, of course, that we shouldn’t expect to see fruit immediately. Perhaps we would find out later that God had answered our prayer.

But we did *not* find out that God had answered our prayer and I, for one, felt it deeply. This had happened before, too often, and now I found myself struggling against doubt and rebellion.

Thank God, Philippians 1:6 is blessedly true: *“...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it....”*

If Philippians 1:6 were *not* true this might have been the end of

my Christian life, but as it was I was only driven to my knees again and—*finally to my Bible!*

Is it not strange that we generally place more importance upon prayer than upon Bible study! How often the question has been asked from the pulpit, “*How many of you have spent half an hour in prayer today?*” Yet rarely does the preacher ask “*How many have spent half an hour with the Word today?*” Is prayer then more important than the study of the Word? Surely what God says to us is infinitely more important than anything we might have to say to Him.

As this dawned upon me, I went once more to the Word. I realized that I had simply taken verses here and there and had claimed their fulfillment without any regard to the context, without even inquiring whether those promises had been made to *me!*

I had not obeyed II Timothy 2:15, and I was supposed to be one of God’s workmen! I had ignored the very verse in which He Himself had told me how I might be “*approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.*”

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

It was not long before I knew I had the answer to my heart’s problem. My difficulties vanished as I began to practice II Timothy 2:15. And not only did they vanish, but I came into the possession of the greatest blessing of my Christian life, the key to so many

problems—the knowledge of the mystery of God’s purpose and grace. This, and this alone, is the answer to the problem we have been considering. But, before we go into this, let us consider briefly some popular explanations.

POPULAR EXPLANATIONS

Some time after I had come into the knowledge of “the mystery,” a special meeting was called by one who, though he had been saved for many years, had found his faith sorely tried by the same perplexing problem.

He invited a popular preacher to address a group of Christian workers on the question of unanswered prayer. I was one of those invited.

The preacher went through the same familiar explanations I had heard so often—explanations which certainly never satisfied *my* heart.

He said that there may be a *divine factor* in unanswered prayer. That is, God may, *for His own good reasons*, deem it best not to grant some request, as in the case of Job.

Then too, he went on, there are human factors to take into consideration, such as sin harbored in the heart (Psa. 66:18), selfishness (Jas. 4:3) and a spirit of unbelief (Jas. 1:6,7), all of which, he said, would result in unanswered prayer.

Then he came to the climax of his message. How could we be *sure* our prayers would be answered?

He asked us to turn to Mark 11:22-24,

“And Jesus answering saith unto them, have faith in God.

“For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

From these verses he urged us to put away all known sin and selfishness and reap the blessed results of *believing* prayer.

But I felt like asking, “What about the divine factor? Suppose I pray in true faith, and God, for His own good reasons, deems it best *not* to grant my requests as in the case of Job!?”

How I longed, that day, to breathe into his ear and into the ears of all those present, the solution to the problem—*the mystery!* But he had already turned a deaf ear to that glorious message.

THE SOLUTION

We agree, of course, that harbored sin will hinder prayer and that selfish requests *should* remain unanswered, but these present no difficulty. The problem is why sincere believers, seeking honestly to live for Christ and praying in humble faith, should so often find their prayers unanswered.

Granting that human failure enters into the question of unanswered prayer, is it not a fact that many, living in conscious fellowship with God, eager to do His will and confidently believing their requests would be granted have

been discouraged, not to say disillusioned by unanswered prayer? They had rested in the promise that whatsoever they asked in prayer, believing, they would receive. They asked, believing, and did *not* receive.



The answer to this problem, as to so many problems, is a *dispensational one*.

Have you ever noticed where the “whatsoever” promises are found? They are found only in one small portion of the Bible—that dealing with our Lord’s earthly ministry (though they are *referred* to in the Hebrew Christian epistles).

Never in the Old Testament, nor in the Pauline epistles do we find that “*all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*”

Why is this? Simply because these promises had to do with the establishment of Christ’s kingdom on earth. These are the conditions which will prevail during His reign and He proclaimed them as part of “*the gospel of the kingdom.*”

We do find in Isaiah 65:24,

“And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

This is a wonderful promise, indeed, but it has not been used

very intelligently by Christians in general.

How many sincere Christians have quoted this passage after receiving some blessing without even asking for it! They have said, "How true God's Word is! Didn't He say *'Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear?'*" However, few quote this verse when they have struggled long in prayer without receiving an answer from the Lord!

But suppose that through some strange circumstances we should see a wolf and a lamb feeding together and I should quote the *next* verse, and say, "How true God's Word is! Didn't He say *'the wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock?'*"

Would I be using the Word of God intelligently? Of course not. You would say, "Yes, the Word of God *is* true, but Isaiah 65:25 does not apply to *this*. It speaks of the kingdom reign of Christ when this shall be the *rule*, when wolves and lambs, lions and bullocks, as well as men shall get along together." And you would be right. That whole portion of Isaiah 65 speaks clearly of Messiah's reign. It is concerning this period of time that we read, *"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear."* It is not strange, then, that we should find "whatsoever" promises in connection with *"the gospel of the kingdom."*

Certainly it is not the *rule* today, among God's people, to receive the answers to our requests

before we even make them, nor even while we are presenting them. Far more often we have the experience of David who cried, "How long, O Lord, How long?" And surely we need David's advice, "Wait patiently for Him," for God does not generally answer before we call.

But when our Lord reigns in the kingdom things will be vastly different. He will have control over man's three greatest enemies—the world, the flesh and the devil.

The world?

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

The flesh?

"The child shall die a hundred years old" (Isa. 65:20).

That is, he that dies at one hundred years old shall be considered a child.

The Devil?

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit..." (Rev. 20:2,3).

What a changed scene! *"The times of refreshing!"* In those days the Lord will no longer hide His face, but heaven will be opened to the earth.

It was all this which our Lord had in view when He preached *"the gospel of the kingdom."* It was this which Peter had in view when he cried, after Christ had gone to heaven,

"Repent...the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you" (Acts 3:19,20).

But the kingdom was rejected. God did *not* send Jesus and the times of refreshing did *not* come, indeed have not *yet* come.

The age in which we live is, to a superlative degree, an *evil age*. Paul calls it, "*This present evil age*" (Gal. 1:4). It is the age of the rejection of the Son of God. It is the age when the world has been given up to the wrath and judgment of God.

It is only because of "the exceeding riches of His grace," that the vials of His wrath have not yet been poured out upon this rebellious race, for "the rulers of the darkness of this age" hold sway and "the god of this age hath blinded the minds of them that believe not" (Eph. 6:12; II Cor. 4:4).

Our blessed Lord cast out Satan, the oppressor of this fallen world, and offered man deliverance, but lo, man did not want to be delivered. Satan is the *god* of this age. Today Satan still reigns by the will of man and the sufferance of God. (See John 12:31, 16:11; II Cor. 4:4).

But God overrules. He "*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*" (Eph. 1:11).

This present evil age is also the age of grace. Some years after Pentecost, Paul wrote these wonderful words:

"Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20,21).

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32).

"And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).

Neither man nor Satan knew it, but this was God's eternal purpose in Christ. It was a *mystery*, "*kept secret since the world began*" (Rom. 16:25), "*in other ages was not made known*," (Eph. 3:5), "*hid in God*," (Eph. 3:9), "*hid from ages and generations*," (Col. 1:26), "*the unsearchable riches of Christ*," (Eph. 3:8), "*His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*" (II Tim. 1:9).

Still, God waits in mercy while His ambassadors go forth with the message of reconciliation, God's offer of grace to a lost and ruined world. (See II Cor. 5:16-21 and read carefully).

And what about prayer in this age of abounding sin and overabounding grace? Does God promise to grant whatsoever we ask in prayer believing? He does not. Even Paul had to learn this. (See II Cor. 12:8-10). He offers us *something better* and more perfectly suited to our circumstances.

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR PRAYER LIFE

What Christian cannot freely quote Romans 8:28!

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

But how *few* Christians can quote Romans 8:26! Yet Romans 8:28 cannot be fully understood or appreciated except against the background of Romans 8:26.

Romans 8:28 tells us what “we know.” Romans 8:26 tells us what “we know not.”

Now let us consider them together:

“...we know not what we should pray for as we ought...”

“...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

How wonderfully this fits our present circumstances!

In “the darkness of this age” it would be calamitous if we received whatever we asked in prayer, believing. Indeed, a large proportion of the time, “we know not what we should pray for.” We must get down on our knees and say, “Lord, the way is dark. I cannot see one step before me. I do not even know what to ask.”

But though “we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;” “He maketh intercession for the saints,” and God works “all things together for good” to us.

The highest expression of faith is found in Paul’s words to the Philippians (4:6,7).

“Be careful [anxious] for nothing!

“But in everything

“By prayer and supplication,

“With thanksgiving,

“Let your requests be made known unto God

“And...”

“And” what?

And “*Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive?*”
NO!!

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [garrison] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Here is ample proof that God is not deaf to the cries of His children in this age. He wants them to pour out all their hearts before Him. There is nothing He does not wish to hear about. He says, “Tell me *everything* and be anxious about *nothing* for I’ll work it *all* out for your good.” He who loves us is working out our future!

How foolish then to say, “What’s the use of praying if we do not receive what we ask for?” It is because of the very darkness of this age that we must be willing to leave the outcome with Him.

He is the Head of the Body and, remember, the head always does the thinking.

Learn this lesson and “*the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*”

“*For we walk by faith not by sight*” (II Cor. 5:7). We walk (or should walk) by faith even though we see no public demonstrations as were seen at Pentecost. We walk by faith even though our requests are not granted. We walk by faith even though things *seem* to go against us for *we know* He is working all things out for our good.

Not for our present apparent good, perhaps, but certainly for our eventual, eternal good.



Does this satisfy you, Christian friend? If not, let us ask one simple question in closing.


WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

If you were offered either a \$1.00 bill or a \$10.00 bill, which would you choose?

If, in this age of darkness and sin, God should offer you either *whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing,*

or exceeding abundantly above all you could possibly ask, or think, which would you choose?

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

“Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20,21). 

Unanswered Prayer is now in its 32nd printing. It is by far one of Pastor Stam's most popular booklets. For a limited time you can purchase **10** of these booklets at the special reduced price of **\$3.00**. Please add \$2.00 for postage and handling. This is a great way to share the truth about prayer, dispensationally, with a friend.

Pastor Dennis Kizonas is the *Executive Director of Grace For Today*, a national radio ministry, which reaches tens of thousands with the gospel of the grace of God weekly. Dennis is a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, as well as a gifted teacher of the Word, so we're sure you are going to profit from his insights on the subject of tongues. —Ed.

When Did the Gift of Tongues Cease?

By Pastor Dennis Kizonas

No one was more “charismatic” than the Apostle Paul. He wrote to the Corinthian church that “they came behind no other church” when it came to the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:7)—no church had more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit than the Corinthian church, yet Paul says that he spoke in tongues more than all of them (1 Cor. 14:18)!

No one was more charismatic than Paul, yet the Lord revealed to him that those sign gifts were going to cease:

“whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away” (1 Cor. 13:8).¹

Here Paul writes of the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy and the gift of knowledge (see 1 Cor. 13:1-2) and states that the Lord Jesus had revealed to him (1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; Gal. 1:11,12) that a time was coming when these sign gifts were going to cease to operate.

The question has always been: when? When would these gifts cease? This study focuses on that question—when did the sign gifts cease?

Arranging Paul's letters in the order that he wrote them

We begin by setting up a time line of Paul's ministry. Paul was saved in Acts 9 when the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul would go on to write 13 letters in the New Testament—from the Letter to the Romans to the Letter to Philemon. When we remember that Paul is the subject of at least half of the Book of Acts, we realize that half of the 27 books in the New Testament are either about him (The Book of Acts) or were written by him (13 letters).

Paul's letters are arranged in our Bible by two principles: The letters to the churches are put first—nine letters from Romans to 2 Thessalonians, then the four letters written to individuals—from 1 Timothy to Philemon.

The letters are also arranged by length—Romans is longest and is first, then the Corinthian letters, then Galatians, etc. Longer letters are first, shorter ones later.

But to understand when the sign gifts ceased, we need to read Paul's letters in the order that he wrote them. When we arrange the letters in the order that they were written, all becomes clear!

Paul's Letters in the order that he wrote them:

The first 6 of Paul's letters can be fit into the Book of Acts—we can read Acts and then read Paul's letters and we can see where Paul was when he wrote these letters.



Corinth Excavations

The Letter to the Galatians is first

In Acts 13,14 Paul and Barnabas went on their first apostolic journey which took them into Galatia—cities like Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, etc. Soon after Paul returned from this journey he wrote the letter to the Galatians (see Galatians 1:6 where Paul writes to the Galatians and says, you are “so quickly turned.”). Galatians was written soon after Paul returned from that first journey—soon after Acts 14:27. That makes Galatians the earliest of Paul's letters.

1 and 2 Thessalonians

The next letters Paul wrote are the two letters to the Thessalonians. In Acts 17, Paul, on his second apostolic journey, came to Thessalonica and preached there. Many were saved, but Paul was driven out of town. Paul continued on to Corinth where he wrote the two letters to

the Thessalonians. Timothy's return from Macedonia mentioned in Acts 18:5 is also reported in 1 Thessalonians 3:6. And in 2 Thessalonians 2:5 Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his teaching, as if it had not been very long since he had been with them. So the writing of 1 and 2 Thessalonians can be placed into Acts 18 during Paul's ministry in Corinth, and that makes them the second and third letters that Paul wrote.

1 and 2 Corinthians

The next two letters that Paul wrote are the two letters to the Corinthians. In Acts 18 Paul spent a year and a half ministering in Corinth—see Acts 18:11. He later returned to his home base at Antioch (Acts 18:22), and later in his third apostolic journey he arrived in Ephesus (his ministry in Ephesus extends all the way through Acts 19—a period of more than two years, see verse 10). It is here in Ephesus during Acts 19 that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians—see I Corinthians 16:19. Shortly after that Paul traveled to Macedonia (see Acts 20:1 and 2 Cor. 2:13) and that is where he wrote the second letter to the Corinthians.



A Street in Ephesus

Romans

In Acts 20:2,3 Paul arrived in “Greece,” i.e. in Corinth again, and spent three months there enjoying the hospitality of a believer named Gaius (mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:14). In Gaius's home, in Corinth, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans (see Rom. 16:23).

This is the last letter written during the Book of Acts. In Acts 21:33 Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, and would spend the next 5 years in prison, right through the end of the Book of Acts.

So, to sum up what we have seen so far, from Acts 9 through Acts 28 we read of the earlier ministry of the Apostle Paul and find that during these years he wrote 6 of his 13 letters. The order of these first six books is:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Galatians—end of Acts 14 | 4. 1 Corinthians—Acts 19 |
| 2. 1 Thessalonians—Acts 18 | 5. 2 Corinthians—Acts 20 |
| 3. 2 Thessalonians—Acts 18 | 6. Romans—Acts 20 |

In Acts 21 Paul was arrested and remained a prisoner through to Acts 28, and beyond.

The Prison Epistles— Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians

Shortly after the end of the Book of Acts, while he was still a prisoner, now in Rome, Paul wrote four letters—the “prison epistles”: Ephesians,

Colossians, Philemon and Philippians. In each of these letters he writes of his “chains”—see Ephesians 6:20, Colossians 4:18, Philemon 13 and Philippians 1:13.

The Pastoral Epistles—

The letters to Titus, First and Second Timothy

Paul was released from this imprisonment and continued his ministry for a few years, perhaps 3 years. During this time he wrote the three letters known as the “Pastoral Epistles,” because these letters were written to Paul’s co-workers—Pastor Timothy and Titus. Finally at the end of his life he is again in prison. This time he anticipates being beheaded for the Lord and writes the last letter, Second Timothy.

Summary:

We have surveyed the 13 letters written by the Apostle Paul, arranging them in the order in which Paul wrote them:

During the Book of Acts—6 letters:

1. Galatians
2. & 3. The Thessalonian letters
4. & 5. The Corinthian letters
6. Romans

Then after the Book of Acts ends—7 more letters:

The 4 Prison Epistles:

7. Ephesians
8. Colossians
9. Philemon
10. Philippians

Then the 3 Pastoral Epistles:

11. Titus
12. 1 Timothy
13. 2 Timothy

“...Paul tells us that the Lord had revealed to him that these gifts would cease some day.”

Now let’s read the letters in the order Paul wrote them

Having surveyed the 13 letters and having put them into their chronological order, let’s see what they tell us about the question: when did the sign gifts cease?

In the first six letters, all written during the period covered by the Book of Acts, we find that the sign gifts were operating in all these churches. All through the Book of Acts we read of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gift of healing, etc.—for example, tongues and prophecy in Acts 19:6, the gift of prophecy in Acts 21:10-14, the gift of healing in Acts 19:11-12 and 28:8,9, etc.

And in the “Acts Epistles” we read of the gifts operating in the churches that Paul founded. In Galatians 3:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 1 Corinthians

12,13,14, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Romans 12:6—in all these letters we read about the gifts in operation right through to the end of the Book of Acts.

But, during this time in the Book of Acts, the Lord revealed to Paul that the sign gifts were going to cease—1 Corinthians 13:8-12. The gifts were all in operation all through the Book of Acts period and are mentioned in the letters written during that time, but the Lord had revealed that the sign gifts were going to cease at some time in the future.

When the gift of tongues ceased

Now we turn to the prison epistles, the four letters written shortly after the end of the Book of Acts, while Paul was a prisoner in Rome—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians...and we find that there is not one word about tongues, or the gift of healing. Even where we might have expected Paul to write of tongues in the passage about being “filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians 5:17, he has nothing to say about tongues. And as for the gift of healing, we read of a co-worker of Paul’s, Epaphroditus, who fell seriously ill during this time (Phil. 2:25-30) and Paul no longer had the gift of healing, and was no longer able to heal as he did only a few years earlier in Acts 28:9. The sign gifts were no longer operating at the time that Paul wrote the Prison Epistles.

Tongues in the Pastoral Epistles?

In the 3 Pastoral Epistles, as in the prison epistles, we do not read of tongues or the gift of healing operating at this time. We do read of prophecies that had been made about Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:18 and 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6, but these were given years before. So far as we read in these three letters, we wouldn’t even know that there had been a “gift of tongues.”

And, again, in places where we would have expected Paul to mention the sign gifts, he is silent. When Paul gives Timothy and Titus instructions regarding the choice of men to be elders in the churches, Paul says nothing about the desirability of these men having a gift such as prophecy, or healing, or other sign gifts (see Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Tim. 3:1-10). The gifts of tongues, prophecy, etc. were no longer in operation by the time Paul wrote the pastoral epistles.

It is clear that the gift of healing has ceased because, as in Philippians, Paul was no longer able to heal, even his co-workers. Timothy was suffering stomach problems and frequent infirmities (1 Tim. 5:23) and Paul can’t heal him, doesn’t recommend that he go to a healer in the church, doesn’t send a prayer cloth or a bottle of anointing oil (remember the miracles of some 8 years earlier in Acts 19:11-12). Likewise in 2 Timothy 4:20, Paul has to leave behind his co-worker Trophimus who had fallen sick on the last journey. Paul’s gift of healing (Acts 28:9) was no longer operating in Philippians 2:27, 1 Timothy 5:23 and 2 Timothy 4:20.

Summary

The sign gifts, tongues, prophecy, the gift of healing, etc. were operating all through the Book of Acts, and these gifts are mentioned in the letters that Paul wrote during the Acts period. But when we turn to the letters written after the Book of Acts—the 4 Prison Epistles, and the 3 Pastoral Epistles, we find that the sign gifts either aren't mentioned at all or we see—as with the gift of healing—that they were no longer operating in Paul's life. What he could do in Acts 28, he could no longer do in Philippians, or in 1 and 2 Timothy. He could heal all the sick on the island in Acts 28:9, but he couldn't heal any of his closest co-workers—Timothy, Epaphroditus, Trophimus—after the close of the Book of Acts.

Arranging Paul's letters in the order that he wrote them allows us to see the pattern of truth that is found in the Word of God:

The sign gifts were operating in Acts and in all of the Acts Epistles: Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans.

But in this time period, in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, Paul tells us that the Lord had revealed to him that these gifts would cease some day. And they did, because in the letters written after the Book of Acts, the sign gifts had ceased, just as the Lord said that they would.

The pattern could not be clearer, and the contrast could not be sharper between the earlier letters and the later letters, between the time when all the sign gifts were operating, and the time when all the sign gifts had ceased.

We can now give a scriptural answer to the question that we started with: when did the sign gifts cease?

The answer: The sign gifts ceased at the end of the Book of Acts. There is no record in Scripture of any of the sign gifts operating in any of the letters that Paul wrote after the end of the Acts period, and it is clear that the gift of healing had ceased since Paul could no longer heal even his closest co-workers after the close of the Book of Acts.

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. All references have been taken from the *New King James Version*.

In addition to Pastor Kiszonas' responsibilities at *Grace For Today*, Dennis has recently established a new Grace Assembly in New York City. If you would like more information about the radio ministry, the new assembly, or a copy of the above article in booklet form, you can contact Brother Kiszonas directly at: *Grace For Today*, P.O. Box 798, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108. The ministry can also be reached via the Internet: www.gracefortoday.org.

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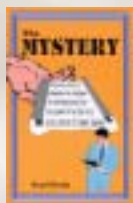
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From Minnesota:

"I ordered (online) the volume *Complete Bible Commentary* by George Williams. I am having it shipped to my fiancée's address. I wonder if it would be possible to put a simple piece of paper in the package that says, "With love, from Vern"? If this is not possible, I understand; otherwise, thanks very much!" (Pastor Kurth responded, "It's like I always say, Bible commentaries are better than flowers any day!")

From Ohio:

"The *Berean Searchlight*, C. R. Stam *Memorial Edition*, arrived in today's mail. We have read it from cover to cover with much gratitude for Pastor Stam and for you and all of your staff at BBS. This is such an appropriate tribute to this dear friend of us all. Congratulations on creating this issue, which we will always treasure."

From Florida:

"My husband and I thank HIM daily for you who are so faithful to proclaim the revelation of the Mystery. BBS is truly God's lighthouse in a dark and confused world."

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"My dad was particularly pleased with the series of articles by Ken Lawson. My friend read them and was thrilled with them as well. Ken's writing is quite clear, and the topics spoke to her heart. She has come to understand the message over the past few years through our discussions and the reading of *Amazing Grace* and BBS publications. Praise the Lord!"

From Colorado:

"You help so many people who are 'weak' in the Word and the Mystery and even God's grace. Thank you, I feel blessed."

From the Philippines:

"We are sending out the *Berean Searchlights* to the IGBI libraries and selected pastors. We like the smaller format...can you believe that this size JUST FITS the envelopes we can buy here!"

From Missouri:

"The believers will surely miss Brother Stam. It is great to have some of his words of wisdom that we can reread from time to time. I heard him when I got saved 51 years ago on a small radio station in Missouri. It was precious to hear him and his love for rightly dividing the Word."

From Michigan:

"I have benefited many times by the articles and sundry items in the *Searchlight*. I would like to order *Collossians*, as it is one of my favorite books in the Bible. I know that I will find many truths that I have not even considered."

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"I'm very thankful for an understanding of the 'Word, rightly divided.' The three or four years that I've been receiving your literature have been the best of my 40 years of experience in the church."

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From Oklahoma:

"We sent the name of Brother...of Checotah, Oklahoma and we understand he is ordering lots of books and loves your ministry. We do, too, and look forward to coming up there to school as soon as our house sells. Our area is in such a great need of a Grace Church. Thank you so much for your part in getting the message out."

From North Carolina:

"Thank you for your wonderful ministry and for keeping Pastor Stam's books in print. They have meant so much to me and others."

From Illinois:

"Thank you so much for your help. I am ever so grateful for the work you all do at the BBS in spreading the message of God's saving grace. Your ministry has been a great resource in my development as a Christian."

From the Philippines:

"I was a Covenantalist until I was converted just recently to Mid-Acts Dispensationalism through a Forum site (Theology On-Line). In my readings of the discussions over the internet, I came to know about C. R. Stam. I also came to know that he wrote a book titled: *The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism*. Unfortunately, here in the Philippines, all the Christian bookstores do not have the books by C. R. Stam. I have emailed you to ask for a 'simple' favor; if you could send me as a gift—a copy of C. R. Stam's *Things That Differ* (even used or semi-worn out copy will do), I would be happy receiving that from you. Please let me know if that is possible. Thank you and God bless you." (Thanks to the generosity of the saints, a copy of TTD is on the way! Ed.)

From Tennessee:

"Thank you for the wonderful selection of books, tapes and pamphlets you have available thru both your website and catalog. I have ordered many for the purpose of giving them away. I have a voice Chat Room every day where I read from these books and take questions and answer them. Many who have not heard of the 'preaching of Jesus Christ according to the Mystery' are coming in again and again to listen and many are embracing right division for the first time." (We're praying without ceasing that your zeal for this wonderful truth will be far reaching. Ed.)

From Minnesota:

"Thank you for continuing to send the *Searchlight*. We have profited much from Mr. Stam's ministry and writings. I find them of great value in preparing the lessons for our adult Bible class. I reproduced Pastor Sadler's contrast of the two ministries of Christ for our people to think about. May God bless you as you carry on the work!"

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"I have been receiving *Two Minutes With the Bible* in my e-mail, but for some reason, I didn't get one today! I went and subscribed again. I love getting up every morning and reading the article of the day! Thank you for sending them!"

From Michigan:

"Please accept this small token as a gift of gratitude for the blessing that you all have shared with me in the Word, rightly divided. I have learned so much from you. I find myself always in high anticipation for each and every issue of the *Searchlight*."

"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

What Did Paul Mean, “My Gospel”?

Romans 16:25

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.
Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

At least three times the Apostle Paul referred to the message that he preached as “my gospel.” The questions that should come to our minds are: “Why did he use that exact term? Is it important? Was there something different about Paul’s message of good news (gospel)? If so, exactly what was different about it?” Of course the Scriptures themselves provide us with the answers to these questions.

First, the book of Acts tells us that Paul was not one of the original twelve apostles who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry (see Matt. 19:27-28; Luke 22:28-30; Acts 1:20-26). Just the opposite is true. Paul was a persecutor of those who preached that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah of Israel,

which was the message of the twelve.

In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul clearly and forcefully proclaims that the gospel message he preached was given to him by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Paul’s God-given message is also called the “revelation of the mystery” because it had never been revealed to anyone before. No longer is there a distinction between Jew and Gentile. In Ephesians 3:1-12 Paul claims that the mystery (secret) program of the Dispensation of Grace was given particularly to him. Just as the Law given to Moses, while being God’s Law in every sense, is called the Law of Moses, even by the Lord Jesus Christ (see Luke 24:27,44; John 7:23), so Paul, in like manner, referred to the Gospel of Grace as “my gospel” merely to identify it as the particular gospel revealed to him. We have no reason to be ashamed for referring to the Gospel of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ as Paul’s gospel.

Don’t Forget! Fall Semester begins August 25, 2003!

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.

13th Mid-Atlantic Fall Bible Conference

Location: *White Sulphur Springs*
Manns Choice, Pennsylvania

Dates: September 4-6, 2003

Guest Speaker:

Pastor Dan Sheridan
Grace Community Church, Lake Villa, IL

For reservations, brochures, and more information, please contact: Mrs. Suzanne Potter, 448 Thatcher Road, Martinsburg, WV 25401, or phone: (304) 263-2411.

***May God richly bless these meetings
to the praise of His glory in Christ Jesus!***

Grace Church of Christ

1915 South Main Street
Middletown, Ohio

Date: Sunday Morning, August 10, 2003

Guest Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For more information, please contact:
Pastor Trent Cole at (937) 263-5474

Community Bible Church

1427 W. Main Street
Tipp City, Ohio

Date: Sunday Evening, August 10, 2003

Guest Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For directions and additional information, please contact:
Pastor Jeff Seekins at (937) 667-2710

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A NEW GRACE MINISTRY has been established in Surfside Beach, South Carolina. *Amazing Grace Ministries* is a ministry dedicated to Christ. It promotes the study of the Scriptures, rightly divided, by offering Bible Studies and correspondence courses. AGM also assists Grace Pastors with church planting services. If interested, please contact Pastor George Hawkins at: 1818 Hwy 17 N Suite "C" #342, Surfside Beach, SC 29575, phone: (843) 251-5612, or e-mail: graceministries@mybluelight.com. God's very best as you labor in word and doctrine.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Moving day has come and gone!

The new address of the *Berean Bible Institute* is: BBI, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Dr., P.O. Box 587, Slinger, Wisconsin 53086. The school also has a new phone number: (262) 644-5504. The office hours of the Institute are Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND: About three years 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*, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Dr., P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086. On behalf of the Institute and the student body—heartfelt thanks!!

The Truth That Set Me Free—A Catholic's Search: If you have a loved one who is entangled in the web of Catholicism this little booklet by Maxine Fischer is a must read. This is Maxine's *personal* testimony of how she was delivered from Mary worship when she came to know Christ as her Savior. We will be happy to send you this 28-page booklet for \$2.00, postage paid. Simply write us here at the *Berean Bible Society* with your request. For those who are interested, Maxine also has a website: www.hcis.net/users/heartfelt and e-mail address: heartfelt@hcis.net.



*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mr. Robert Bonheim of Lynchburg, Virginia. The *Diamond Head Lighthouse* is located in Honolulu, Hawaii. Built 147 feet above sea level, the lighthouse can be seen as far away as 18 miles. It is 55 feet high and is located on the side of the extinct Diamond Head Volcano. *Diamond Head Light* is one of the best-known beacon lights in the Pacific, and it warns vessels away from the reefs off Waikiki Beach.

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“The word grace emphasizes at one and the same time the helpless poverty of man and the limitless kindness of God.”
—William Barclay

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