

*The*  
**BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2013



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

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# From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last month I spoke with you about the value of publishing excerpts from some of the negative letters that we receive here at BBS. Our Letter Excerpts (see Page 26) generally feature comments from readers who agree with our doctrinal position and are excited about having come to an understanding of Paul's gospel. But as we pointed out, hearing from those who oppose our position helps remind us that we are in a battle with the many who resist the truth.

If reading that editorial caused you to wonder whether we *respond* to such letters, the answer is yes! We don't want the opponents of Paul's gospel to think that we have no answers when they challenge us with arguments from the Scriptures, for as you know, the message of God's rightly divided Word is *the truth* of God's Word, and so it can answer any and all objections that men might raise against it.

But I don't want you to get the idea that we spend all our time responding to such antagonists. After one or two exchanges of correspondence, it is usually pretty clear whether or not someone is going to be open to the truth. After that, I generally remind the writer that I have a clear mandate from God Himself to reject a heretic "after the first and second admonition" (Titus 3:10), and that to continue in fruitless correspondence beyond that would be disobedience to Him.

Frankly, I used to wonder why that verse was in the Bible, for as a younger man, I always enjoyed the endless exchange of letters that dealing with such adversaries always generated. When I rejoined the staff here at BBS in 2001, I immediately plunged into spirited exchanges with any and all challengers to our faith. But as these exchanges grew long, I soon noticed that sincere letters with earnest inquiries about our message began to pile up as I continued to labor with those who showed not the slightest flicker of moving from their erroneous positions. It was then that I remembered Titus 3:10, and realized that God spoke those words so as to warn pastors and teachers like me not to squander the time that God says we should be redeeming.

I share these thoughts with you as this new year dawns because God calls on *all* believers to be as good a steward of our time as we are of our money. If the person with whom you are sharing the truth shows no sign of wanting to receive it, there are plenty of believers out there who are *searching* for the words that only you can share with them.



Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth

# Only Going through the Motions

By Pastor John Fredericksen



Throughout much of the Old Testament, God's people, the nation of Israel, had a very shallow, distant walk with the Lord. Even though given the unique privilege of having God's written Word available, the Lord told the prophet Amos, "they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments" (Amos 2:4). This did not mean they completely ignored the Scriptures. In some cases, they simply neglected the Word. Often they only went through the motions of having it read to them without internalizing the truths of God and allowing it to change their daily lives. In other cases, after time in a distant, meaningless walk with the Lord, they completely abandoned the sacred Scriptures to worship false gods made by the hands of men.

Israel still had priests, but when God's true prophets came with a message too close to home, they responded with words such as, "prophecy not again any more" (Amos 7:13). Resistance, even anger and violence, was a frequent response. Yet, in many cases, they still worshipped the Lord, but only in a half-hearted way that the Lord would simply not accept. Therefore, God's message to them was, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt offerings...I will not accept them...Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols" (Amos 5:21-23). Even worship toward the Lord can be meaningless, or worthless, to the Lord. This is so when worship is offered with a cold heart, only going through the motions, and without seeking to be continually transformed into the person God wants His child to become (Rom. 12:1-2).

*Why would the Lord not accept their worship?* It boils down to the explanation recorded in both Isaiah and Matthew: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. 15:8; Isa. 29:13). Simply going through the motions of worshipping the Lord is not enough. He desires that we come to Him in sincerity, with biblical truth being paramount, allowing His Word to transform our lives, and desiring a daily walk that knows Him in a real, close, and meaningful way.

Believer, don't settle for just going through the motions of worship. Come to the Lord with a genuine desire to know Him intimately, be "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29), and do His will. Then, and only then, will your worship of the Lord be truly pleasing to the One who gave His life for you.

# THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION OF A NATION

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Two thousand years ago, God gave the nation of Israel “the spirit of slumber” (Rom. 11:8 cf. Isa. 29:10) in response to her unbelief, a state of virtual, spiritual death (cf. Matt. 9:18,24) in which the nation has lain for nearly two thousand years now. The resurrection of Lazarus is a dramatic type of the *spiritual* resurrection that the nation will someday experience at the Lord’s hand when He returns to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. If you are not familiar with New Testament types and imagery of this sort, we feel you are in for a real treat as we consider the powerful story of the raising of Lazarus with the nation of Israel in mind.

## A Sick Friend

Our story begins with a message that the Lord received from Lazarus’ sisters that read, “he whom Thou lovest is sick” (John 11:3). We know that it is sometimes taught that no believer who

is the object of the Lord’s love will ever be sick, but such is not the case!

As an object of God’s love, Lazarus was a type of the nation of Israel (Deut. 7:7-9), whom God loved “with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). How safe and secure does that make *you* feel, now that you know that “the love of God is shed abroad in *our* hearts” (Rom. 5:5) as well? Your *friends* might stop loving you, your *family* might disown you, but not God!

Lazarus’ sickness is a picture of the spiritual condition of the nation Israel, of whom Isaiah once wrote that “the whole head is sick” (Isa. 1:5). This spiritual sickness was brought on by the nation’s sin and rebellion in Isaiah’s day. In our Lord’s day, His people were also sinfully sick, and about to die the virtual death that Paul later diagnosed in Romans 11:8. Lazarus typified this serious spiritual condition when he too was sick nigh unto death.

ST. JOHN, 11

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give if thee.

23 Jé sus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Mâr thâ saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jé sus said unto her, I am that resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mâ ry her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jé sus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Mâr thâ met him.

31 When she therefore saw that he was dead, she said, Yea, Lord, I know that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

32 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mâ ry her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

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55 When she therefore saw that he was dead, she said, Yea, Lord, I know that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Since Lazarus died soon after the Lord heard he was sick, why did He say that “this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (John 11:4)? Well, when the nation of Israel crucified the Lord, they appeared to be as good as dead. Indeed, many modern Bible teachers say that the nation died in the eyes of God that day, and will never rise again, and that God gave all of her promises to us! We know that such is not the case, of course, for God vowed that He would *never* give up on Israel (Jer. 4:27; 5:18; 30:11; 31:35-37; 46:28), and someday, when the Lord raises the nation from this sickness that is not really unto death, He will be “glorified thereby,” as we see symbolized here with Lazarus (John 11:4).

### **A Delayed Response**

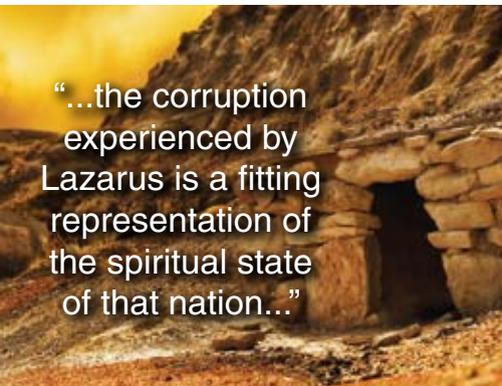
After hearing that His beloved friend was sick, the Lord waited two days before going to help him (vv. 5,6). That’s a funny way of showing that you love someone; with friends like that, who needs enemies? But the Lord’s purposeful delay ensured that Lazarus would be dead four days by the time He arrived to help him, and thereby greatly increased His glory when He raised him from the dead. This typified how the Lord allowed His nation to continue on in sin, eventually reaching the state of virtual spiritual death, thereby greatly increasing the glory that will someday be His when He raises Israel from her virtual spiritual death at His return.

But to help Lazarus rise from the dead, the Lord planned to return to Judaea (v. 7), prompting the apostles to remind Him that it would hazard His life to do so (v. 8). To overcome their reluctance to go help Lazarus, the Lord “answered” them (v. 9) with a peculiar answer, saying: “If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him” (vv. 9,10). What kind of answer is that? Well, elsewhere we read that “*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother...walketh in darkness*” (I John 2:10,11). Thus the Lord is telling the apostles that He had to go to help Lazarus *because He loved him*.

How much did they have to love their brethren? They had to be willing to die for them (I John 3:11-16). This, then, was an additional thought that the Lord was trying to convey to them with these puzzling words. *They* were telling *Him*, “If You go back to help Lazarus, You’ll die,” so the Lord responded by reminding them that He loved Lazarus enough to die for him. This was symbolic of how He loved Israel so much that He was willing to die for her as well. John’s later quotation of these words in his epistle shows that, while they seem cryptic to us, the meaning was clear to him.

But with these words, the Lord was also teaching them why *they too* needed to be willing to return to help Lazarus. Their concern for the Lord’s safety was no doubt

legitimate but, in light of their desertion later at His arrest (Matt. 26:56), we can assume that their concern for Him was accompanied by a fear for their own safety due to their association with Him. The Lord gently reminded them that Lazarus was not just *His* friend when He spoke to them of “*our* friend” in the next verse (John 11:11).



“...the corruption experienced by Lazarus is a fitting representation of the spiritual state of that nation...”

All of this was an important part of the training that He was giving them in preparation for the Tribulation that they would have lived to see if God had not interrupted His prophetic program with the dispensation of grace. In that day, laying down their lives for their brethren (I John 3:16) will involve helping them with food and clothing (v. 17) once they are unable to buy these things without the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16,17). Antichrist will surely execute any who aid and abet those who do not take his mark (John 16:2), and the apostles needed to learn to help their brethren at the risk of their own lives, as the Lord was trying to teach them with His own example. This was not optional (John

15:12,13); it was something they had to do—unless they wanted to stumble later.

### A Needless Trip?

Did you ever wonder why the Lord decided to “go” to help Lazarus (11:11)? As you know, He could have raised him from a distance (cf. John 4:46-53), but that would spoil the type of the future resurrection of Israel from her spiritual death. You see, to raise His people from the dead, He would first have to die and raise Himself from the dead (10:18), and every other time He said He had to “go” in the Gospel of John, He was talking about dying and rising and *going to His Father* (7:33; 13:33,36; 14:12,28; 16:5,7,10,16,17). This is why He decided to “go” to help His friend. You see, He could not legitimately raise Israel from the virtual death their sins had caused until He had paid for their sins.

Still trying to talk the Lord out of returning to Judaea, the twelve pointed out that, if Lazarus was sleeping (11:11), then the best thing to do would be to let him rest (v. 12). The Lord knew that Lazarus was already dead and told them so (vv. 13,14), adding that He was glad He was not there to save him, “to the intent ye may believe” (v. 15). The apostles *already* believed on Him, of course, from the time of His very first miracle (John 2:11; Matt. 16:13,16), but their faith was in constant need of being increased, as a later miracle evidenced (Luke 8:22-25).

It was at this point in our story that Thomas tried to convince his fellows to return to Judaea and

die with the Lord (John 11:16), a strong statement of faith that stands in stark contrast to his later unbelief (20:24,25). But he was just living up to his name, for the Hebrew word translated “twins” in Genesis 25:24 is the word *teomin*, and “Didymus” was a Greek name that meant *twofold* or *twain*. This apostle was like two different people, sometimes strong in faith and sometimes not so much—much like we ourselves!

### Some Symbolic Decay

On their arrival in Judaea they learned that Lazarus had been dead four days (John 11:17). In the Bible, the third day is associated with resurrection (Hos. 6:2). The Lord rose on the third day (I Cor. 15:4) because corruption sets in on the fourth day, and God had vowed that He would see no corruption (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:31). But as a type of Israel, the corruption experienced by Lazarus is a fitting representation of the spiritual state of that nation that began back then and has continued to this very day.

But it wasn't supposed to be that way. The first person the Lord raised from the dead had just died (Mark 5:22-35). The next person He raised had been dead a little longer, and was on his way to the grave on his funeral “bier” (Luke 7:14). With Lazarus, the Lord was about to raise a man who was dead so long that his body was corrupting. All of this was symbolic of how the longer Israel rejected the Lord, the more corruption they saw, and the greater the miracle that would be needed to raise her from her spiritual death.

We have a word for the kind of “comfort” the Jews came to give Lazarus’ sisters (John 11:19). We call it a funeral, a time when family and friends come together to mourn the loss of a loved one.



However, Lazarus was a type of Israel’s spiritual death, and God had made it very clear in time past that Israel was *not* to be mourned when her sins caused her to fall into spiritual death. Remember, when she was about to fall into the virtual death of her seventy-year captivity in Babylon, Jeremiah was told *not* to mourn for her (Jer. 16:5).

And so it is that these unbelieving Jews who came to mourn for Lazarus are a type of the unbelieving Jews who, to this day, mourn the virtual death of their nation as they wonder why God is not protecting them with the kind of miracles they read about in their sacred Scriptures. God would much rather that they, as He said, “look upon Me whom they have pierced, and...mourn for *Him*” (Zech. 12:10), as they someday will.

### Spiritual Virgins

When Martha and Mary “heard that Jesus was coming” (John

11:20), this makes them a type of believing Hebrews who, at the end of the Tribulation period, will hear that the Lord is coming again. Remember, they lived with their brother, and no mention is made of husbands for either of them, so we can assume they were virgins. This makes them a type of the *spiritual* virgins mentioned in Revelation 14:3,4, the Tribulation believers who had not “committed fornication” with “the great whore...Babylon the great, the mother of harlots” (Rev. 17:1-5), the church of the Antichrist.

When Martha heard that the Lord was coming, this virgin young woman “went and met Him” (John 11:20). That should remind you of the ten virgins “which...went forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matt. 25:1), and how “there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; *go ye out to meet him*” (Matt. 25:6). If you have ever wondered why there are ten virgins for one bridegroom in this parable, it is because they represent all of the Hebrews who will someday marry the Lord (Rev. 19:7-9).

But the parable of the ten virgins teaches us that, at the Second Coming of Christ, it will not be enough just to be a spiritual virgin. Believing Hebrews will also have to be equipped with the “oil” of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit came at Pentecost, of course, but He will come again in the Tribulation, when God picks up with Israel where He left off with them, after the dispensation of grace comes to an end. When Martha went out to meet the Lord after she heard that He was coming, she

represents the spiritual virgins who will be filled with the oil of the Spirit when the Lord returns for His Bride, who will then go out to meet Him when they hear that He is coming.

Where did Martha go to meet Him? Well, she lived in Bethany (John 11:1), so we know that’s where the Lord was returning to help Lazarus. That means when Martha went out to meet Him, He was on His way to Bethany. This is a picture of how, when the Lord returns, He will return to this little town. Remember, before He ascended into heaven, “He led them out as far as to Bethany,” and *from there* “He was...carried up into heaven” (Luke 24:50,51). And, as the angels predicted, “this same Jesus...*shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11), and part of what they meant was that He will return *to Bethany*. If



you know your Bible geography, you know that Bethany is right near the mount of Olives, where the Lord will touch down (Zech. 14:4).

### **Announcing the Coming**

How will believing Hebrews hear that the Lord is coming?

Well, believing Hebrews heard about the Lord's *first* coming from John the Baptist, who called himself "the friend of the bridegroom" (John 3:28,29). If only there was someone like John who could announce the Lord's Second Coming. Oh, wait, there is! As you may remember, John was sent by God "in the spirit and power of Elias... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17) by announcing His coming to people who were later "prepared for the Lord" with the oil of the Spirit at Pentecost, and God plans to send Elijah to announce the Lord's Second Coming in similar fashion (Mal. 4:5).

By now you may be wondering why a spiritual woman like Mary (Luke 10:38-42) did *not* go out to meet the Lord with her sister. Well, notice that while Martha went out to meet Him, "Mary sat *still* in the house" (John 11:20). Her stillness is a picture of death (Job 3:11-13), making Mary a type of believing Hebrews who will be lying still in their graves when the Lord comes, while Martha represents believing Hebrews who will be alive and remain to the Lord's Second Coming. Mary is a type of believing Hebrews who will have died before He comes, and so will not be able to respond to Elijah's announcement of His coming until they are raised from the dead.

When Martha said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21), she was not complaining, as most commentaries suggest. Lazarus had died the day she sent Him word that he was sick, and since Bethany was a day's journey from

where the Lord was in Bethabara (John 10:40 cf. 1:28), Martha knew He couldn't have come in time to save her brother. In this, she is again a type of believing Hebrews at the Lord's Second Coming, who naturally will not complain when He comes! Rather, just as Martha expressed faith that He could raise her brother from the dead (John 11:22), so the believing remnant will have every confidence in the Lord's ability to raise Israel from the spiritual death that has gripped her for 2,000 years now.

### **The Lord's Inheritance**

One of the things for which the Lord will "ask of God" (John 11:22) in that day is the Gentile nations (Psa. 2:8). Thus in Martha's statement of faith, she again represents believing Hebrews, who will greet the Lord with the earnest expectation of reigning with Him over the Gentiles in the kingdom of heaven on earth (Rev. 2:26,27). When the Lord assured Martha, "thy brother shall rise again" (John 11:23), this reminds us of how the Lord will someday say to Israel, "Awake...shake thyself from the dust" of 2,000 years of virtual death (Isa. 52:1,2), "and the Gentiles shall come to...the brightness of thy rising" (60:1-3).

All this is contrary to the popular notion that God washed His hands of Israel after she crucified His Son, and will never again have anything to do with her, choosing to strip her of all of her blessings and give them to us Gentiles. If that's what He did, then like Lucy Riccardo, God will have some "splainin" to do when Israel rises from her spiritual

death only to learn that God has given her promises to someone else! The truth, of course, is that God did *not* give us Israel's promises. The Body of Christ is a separate people, with a separate calling, a separate program, and a separate hope.

Martha knew that her brother would "rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24) along with all believing Hebrews who die before the Lord returns for them. She knew this *from the Scriptures* (Psa. 49:14,15; Dan. 12:2). But did you ever wonder why the Lord went on to assure her that He Himself *was* "the resurrection, *and the life*" (John 11:25)? It is because believing Hebrews who die before the Lord comes will need Him to be the resurrection, but believing Hebrews who live to see His coming will need Him to be "the life" (cf. John 14:6). You see, Hebrew believers who live through the Tribulation "shall never die" (John 11:26).



When asked if she believed His words, Martha responded with a strong affirmation of her conviction that the Lord Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of God" (John 11:27). This was the gospel

of salvation at that time. Today, in the dispensation of grace, it is not enough to have the kind of "faith in His name" (Acts 3:16) that Martha exhibited here; today we are required to have "faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25), i.e., faith in His death, burial, and resurrection for our sins (I Cor. 15:1-4).

### The Lord's Call

But if Martha represents Hebrew saints who will live to see the Lord's Second Coming, and Mary represents Hebrew saints who will die before the Lord comes again and will need to be raised from the dead, why does John tell us that it is Martha who tells Mary, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee" (John 11:28)? We believe what we are seeing pictured here is similar to when God told Ezekiel, "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, *hear the word of the LORD*" (Ezek. 37:4).

It is heartening to read that when Mary is told, "the Master is come, and calleth for thee," she did not need to ask *which* master was calling her. Can you say the same? Remember, "whosoever committeth sin *is the servant of sin*" (John 8:34), and "to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, *his servants ye are to whom ye obey*" (Rom. 6:16). It is well to be able to call *the Lord* our Master (John 13:13).

Mary represents Hebrew saints who will be lying in the grave when the Lord comes, so naturally "as soon as she heard" that the Master was calling her, "she arose quickly, and came unto Him" (John 11:29), just as those lying

in the graves will do in that day (John 5:28,29). Now how about you? Oh, sure, you'll rise from the dead at the Rapture, for that depends on the Lord, not on you. But in the meantime, "if ye live after the flesh, *ye shall die*" (Rom. 8:13a). If this has happened to you, if your spiritual experience has shriveled up and died because you've been living after the flesh, why not heed Paul's call: "Awake

thou that sleepest, *and arise from the dead...*" (Eph. 5:14)? Why not follow Mary's lead and arise "quickly," and come back to the Lord as soon as you hear His call? If you will, you'll be eternally glad that you did!

*To Be Continued!* 

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### Endnote

1. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 16:13).

## Question Box

*"Is the new wine in Mark 2:22 the dispensation of grace?"*

No, the dispensation of grace was a mystery that was not revealed until Paul (Eph. 3:1-3). That means it cannot be found hidden in the Lord's parables, for it was still "hid in God" at that time (Eph. 3:1-9).

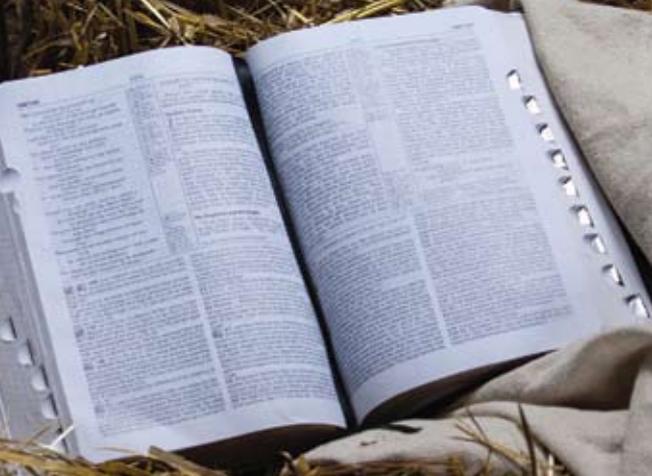
Wine is a type of the Holy Spirit, for both are associated with *joy* (Zech. 10:7; 1 Thes. 1:6), and new wine is a type of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. You'll remember that when the apostles were "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4), men thought that they were "full of new wine" (2:13).

With the parable of the bottles, the Lord was saying that the new wine of the Holy Ghost could not be put into the "old bottles" of Israel's religious leaders; it must rather be put in the "new bottles" of His "little flock" (Luke 12:32).

New wine is first mentioned in the Bible when Israel was gathered back into her land after her captivity (Neh. 10:39; 13:5,12), a type of Israel's future gathering back into her land for the kingdom, and so it is associated with the kingdom that was taken from Israel's apostate leaders and given to the little flock (Matt. 21:43). New wine was withheld from Israel when she rebelled against God (Isa. 24:7; Hos. 9:2; Joel 1:5,10; Hag. 1:11) and was given when she was obedient (Prov. 3:5-10), and so it will be given in the kingdom (Joel 3:18; Zech. 9:17; Matt. 26:29) when God's Spirit will "cause" them to walk in His ways (Ezek. 36:27).

—Pastor Kurth

# A Great Mystery



By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

**“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law” (Gal. 4:4).**

The Apostle Paul makes reference to the birth of Christ more frequently than any other writer of Scripture. While Matthew and Luke deal with the subject more extensively, Paul brings it to our attention more often. It was the prophets of old who foretold the birth of Christ, followed by the Gospel writers, who give us a detailed picture of the night of His arrival at Bethlehem. But it was the Apostle Paul who was the first to show that the reason Christ Jesus *came* (His birth) into the world was to save sinners (His death) (I Tim. 1:15). To Paul alone was revealed the secret of the gospel of grace, which unlocked the significance of the Cross on behalf of the sinner.

Based on references to the fact that Christ “knew no sin” and “gave Himself a ransom,” we know that Paul assumes his readers understood that Christ was born of a virgin. The very premise of the finished work of Christ at Calvary is based on the *virgin birth*. This fundamental of the faith is one of the foundation stones that undergird our entire Christian heritage. While one does not necessarily have to be aware of this fundamental truth to be saved, one who is saved will never deny it. To ensure that we don’t take anything for granted, we would like to take you on a journey through the Word to reinforce your faith in this precious truth.

## **THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

Since the beginning of civilization, conception and birth, with all

their mysteries, have captivated us. Like the trembling heart of a captured bird, our emotions take over when we hold in our arms a newborn that finally decided the womb had just become too uncomfortable. As if that were



not enough to touch the soul, I recently came across some interesting facts and figures on unusual births. They would probably fall into the category of *strange, but true!* One account in particular that caught my attention proved to be a well-documented fact:

“The greatest recorded number of children born to one mother in the world, according to the *Guinness 2004* world records is 69. In 27 pregnancies, the first wife of Feodor Vassilyev of Russia gave birth to 16 pairs of twins, 7 sets of triplets and four sets of quadruplets. She also holds the world record for giving birth to the most sets of twins and sets of quadruplets.”<sup>1</sup>

Most women just reading that would have to take two aspirins and lie down for an hour! While this many births are amazing, we would classify the children born

to the woman in Russia a natural occurrence. However, when contemplating the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Christ, we are dealing with the *supernatural*. This supernatural event was necessitated due to the destructive force of *sin*. It is a fact of life that cats have kittens, dogs have puppies, and human parents can only produce sinful offspring. The shocking reality of this is brought to mind every time I stand beside a small white casket at a funeral home. When an infant dies, it testifies of the truth that all have sinned in Adam (Rom. 5:12). But we give thanks to God that He has made a gracious provision for those little ones.

When we came forth from the womb, we were born in sin. Should anyone question that, allow me to ask, “Have you ever had to teach your child to do wrong?” I don’t know about your children, but mine always seemed to be into something they shouldn’t! Years ago, while Kevin was still at home, our youngest son, Tim, was playing with a window shade when it shot up suddenly just as my wife was entering the room. She jokingly said, knowing who the culprit was, “Whoever did that is going to receive a spanking!” Tim, who was three years old at the time, pointed to the other side of the room, to his brother Kevin, and said, “He did it!” You see, children *naturally* follow the unrighteous path of lying, cheating, and stealing. As parents, we must discipline our children to abhor wrongdoing and to follow after righteousness.

The philosophy of most parents today in child-rearing is to reason with their children. “Time out!” “Promise mommy that you won’t do that again.” If this doesn’t



work, and it rarely does, the next tactic is a threat: “I’m going to tell your dad when he gets home.” Back in my day, that wasn’t an idle threat. It was enough to strike fear into the heart because, as sure as the sun sets, I was going to be disciplined at the seat of the matter. Today, children already know in advance that dad isn’t going to do anything either. Unrestrained, the sin nature in a child who is never disciplined will result in a whirlwind of heartbreak down the road.

We are witnessing firsthand today the fruits of this philosophy. The disappearance of discipline in the home has resulted in a society of young people who have the attitude that anything goes—flash-mobs, bullying, unbridled immorality, mass murders, destruction of property, etc. Mark these words and mark them well: either discipline your children while they’re young or the Federal Department of Corrections will do it for you when they are older.

But how was God to bring His Only Begotten Son into the world without contaminating Him with the disease of our sin? God devised a plan which has left medical science baffled while, at the same time, leaving the household of faith jubilant. Our heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom, caused the Holy Spirit to overshadow Mary such that she conceived miraculously (Luke 1:35).

We should pause here to add that, when the Roman Catholic Church refers to the “Immaculate Conception,” they are referring to *Mary* being miraculously conceived without the stain of original sin. There is absolutely no Scriptural support whatsoever for such a teaching. Although *Mary* is to be highly esteemed among women, by her own admission, she recognized her need of a Savior, thus acknowledging that she was a sinner. Only sinners need a Savior! In her own words, she stated, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in **God my Savior**” (Luke 1:46,47).

It was *Christ* who was supernaturally conceived and born of the virgin without the stain of original sin. *Mary* conceived the Christ-child without ever knowing a man. Seeing that God knew there was no danger of the sin nature being transferred from *Mary* to her unborn child, it indicates to us that the sin nature is transmitted through the seed of the father. My wife was always diligent to remind me of this every time our children misbehaved when they were growing up! By one turn of the wheel, God accomplished a twofold purpose:

He not only brought His Son into the world, giving Him a body that was prepared for Him (Heb. 10:5), the Father also preserved His Son from being tainted with the sin of humanity (II Cor. 5:21).

### **MARY AND JOSEPH AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

**“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 1:18).**

The intertwining of the events between Mary and Joseph lends additional credence to the veracity of the virgin birth. Prior to the miraculous conception, Mary was espoused (betrothed) to Joseph. The law of the betrothal mandated that the man and the woman stand together in a public place with family members and witnesses. The priest or rabbi would then officiate, uniting the couple *legally* in marriage. However, while the man and woman were then legally husband and wife, according to the betrothal agreement, they were to return to their respective parents’ homes for one year. They were not permitted to have sexual relations until the time of their separation was fulfilled. Carefully note that Mary and Joseph are called husband and wife in the betrothal, but Joseph *knew her not* until after she had brought forth her firstborn son (Matt. 1:19,24,25).

The purpose of the betrothal was twofold. First, it was to give the man the opportunity to prove himself by securing a livelihood and providing a house for his

bride to be (doesn’t sound like a bad idea for young people today!). Secondly, the woman was being tested morally to ensure she wasn’t pregnant, thus leaving her blameless to carry out her role as a faithful wife. If she failed this test of the betrothal she was to be put to death by stoning (Deut. 22:23,24).



**“...we accept by faith that Christ was *wholly human* and *wholly divine*.”**

As we know, it was during this waiting period that Mary was found with child (Matt. 1:18). Joseph naturally concluded that Mary had been unfaithful. What other conclusion could he have drawn? It appears from the record that Mary never attempted to try to explain her plight. How could she? She instead left the delicate matter in God’s hands; only He could intercede on her behalf to make Joseph see the truth.

Heartbroken, Joseph determined to put her away privately (Matt. 1:19). He could have easily summoned witnesses and made a public example out of her, which would have resulted in her death. But Joseph chose to give her a bill of divorcement to dispose of the matter *privately*. It is clear from this that Joseph loved Mary from

the depths of his heart! He would have been perfectly justified in having her put to death, but love never seeks revenge, it endures all things (I Cor. 13:7).

A close examination of this sequence of events teaches us that Joseph's desire to put Mary away confirmed the fact that the child was not his. This stands as another testimony to the virgin birth, seeing that, in the face of two or three witnesses a thing shall be established. We have Mary's testimony, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). Joseph's desire to "put her away privily [privately]" declares the child was not his (Matt. 1:19). Finally, we have the word of the angel who appeared to both Mary and Joseph announcing that the virgin would conceive and bring forth a child (Luke 1:27-35; Matt. 1:20,21).

### THE SCRIPTURES AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

**"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).**

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Scriptures foretold the virgin birth 750 years before it actually took place. Amazing! Bearing in mind that prophecy is always fulfilled to the letter, we have the full assurance that God keeps His promises. Therefore, we can rely on the record that God has handed down to us. Isaiah was the first to proclaim to Israel that, when the Redeemer came, He would be born of a virgin, which would be a sign to the nation. It is important to

remember that the Jews always require a sign.

Detractors have fallen all over themselves in their attempts to discredit the Book of Isaiah.



They look upon this prophecy as just one example of the numerous problems with the writing. Since the concept of the virgin birth is preposterous to them, they have devised a way around this passage. The Hebrew word for virgin here in Isaiah is *almah*, which can refer to a woman who has never known a man, or a maiden who possibly has known a man, or even a newly married woman. In fact, some of the newer translations render *almah* as *young woman*, which we believe is an inferior rendering. The eye of faith would naturally see that Isaiah meant a virgin who had kept herself pure; after all, what kind of "sign" is it for any young woman—or a newly married woman—to be pregnant? The skeptic, on the other hand, prefers the rendering to be *young woman*, thus denying the miracle of the virgin birth.

Since the religious opponents of this truth will perish with their liberal views, we will pledge our allegiance to the true and living God Who *cannot* lie! We find it

particularly interesting that the Holy Spirit has built a safeguard into the Scriptures so that our faith might be based on substance rather than the mere speculation of men. When we compare Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:23, it is obvious that Matthew is quoting Isaiah when he states, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child...” Here the Holy Spirit pulls out all the stops, as it were, to safeguard the virginity of Mary. As we have noted, the Hebrew word *almah* can refer to a young woman who is a virgin or a maid who has been with a man. But the Greek word *parthenos* translated *virgin* in Matthew 1:23, only refers to a woman who has *never* had intimate relations with a man, without exception.

The names and titles given our Savior also tell of the uniqueness of His coming. Isaiah writes, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...” (Isa. 9:6). Notice, if you will, that Isaiah makes a distinction between a Child being *born* and a Son being *given*. The “child” points us to Christ’s birth, when He took on the form of a Servant the night Mary delivered Him in Bethlehem. His earthly name was to be Jesus (Jehovah saves), because He was to taste of every facet of human life, “yet without sin.” You will notice that, when Isaiah refers to the Son, he does not say He was *born*, but rather *given*. The Spirit’s shift here in the declarative clause to “a Son is given” is telling. The Son we are introduced to is the eternal Son of God Who was *given* to the world—“from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psa. 90:2b). Consequently, His name,

Emmanuel, means, “God with us” (Matt. 1:23b). These two names of our Savior combine in a united voice to declare that God was manifest in the flesh. Although it goes far beyond human comprehension, we accept by faith that Christ was *wholly human* and *wholly divine*. This is a great mystery! The virgin birth, then, was the instrument God used to accomplish this mighty purpose.

### A FINAL THOUGHT

Many in Christianity have been reluctant to speak out on the virgin birth, but may God embolden us to defend its truth as one of the cardinal teachings of the Christian faith. After all, our very salvation depends upon it. We must never lose sight of the fact that God’s ways are not our ways—nothing is impossible with God!

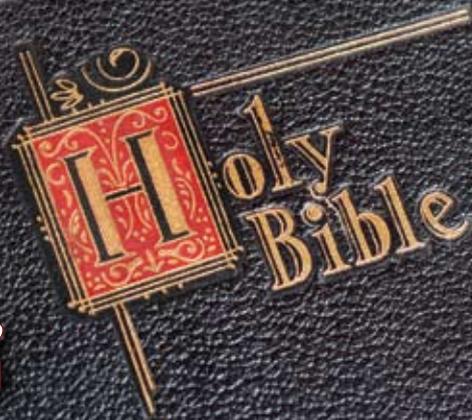
If Christ was not born of the virgin, then He inherited the sin of Adam, which would mean the death He was dying on the Cross was in payment of His own sins! We thank God, however, that the Lord was born of the virgin and “*knew no sin*” that He might be the Sin-Bearer for those who believe. The death He was dying on that Cross was not His death, but *ours*. The sins of the world were laid upon Him, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21). May we pause this holiday season to give thanks to our Heavenly Father “for His unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15). 

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### Endnote

1. Anne Hart, <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/3978800> (accessed Nov. 2013).

# Christ and the Gentiles



By Pastor Ken Lawson

One of the most valuable studies any Bible student can undertake is to trace God's dealings with the Gentiles of different ages through the Word of God. Although the subject is far too vast to cover comprehensively in this short paper, we can, by God's grace, lay a general groundwork for further personal study. This article will touch upon God's dealings with the Gentiles (non-Jews) in prophecy, mystery, and in the coming kingdom.

As most of you already know, almost all of the Bible, except for Paul's epistles, pertains primarily to the nation Israel. And yet the Gentiles occupy key positions in God's plan for the ages.

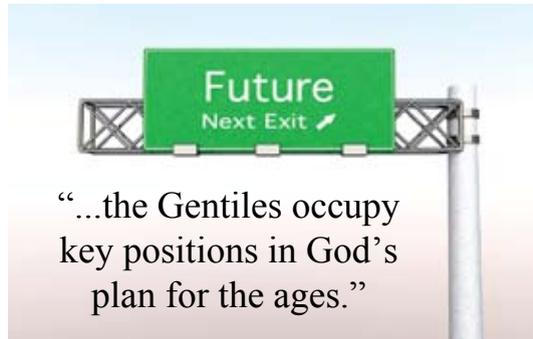
To begin our discussion, how many times have we heard some devoted believers say, "My, how wonderful it would have been to have lived in the day of Jesus and walked with Him and heard from His very lips the gracious words which He spoke!" How disturbing it often is for them when they learn that our Lord would have had nothing to do with them, being Gentiles! But such a shock often is used of God to prompt more questions and further Bible study.

Many people have the vague idea that Jesus was sent to minister to all men alike, and that there was no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. This view simply does not fit the Biblical account of His ministry on earth. Paul wrote that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). Here we have the inspired statement from the apostle of the Gentiles as to the purpose of our Lord's earthly ministry. "The circumcision" refers to the Jewish people and "the fathers" to the Old Testament fathers of Israel. His "confirmation ministry" is recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

From what these books tell us, Jesus ministered to only two Gentiles during His lifetime. One was a woman of Canaan whose daughter was grievously vexed with a demon and the other was a centurion who loved the Jews and built a synagogue for them (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 7:1-10). It is noteworthy that our Lord did not go to them, but they came to Him. Both were commended for their great faith by which they reached over a dispensational wall, as it were, and received a blessing which did not belong to them. (Compare Rom. 9:4,5 and Eph. 2:11-13). Further, we see that when Christ sent out His twelve apostles, He commanded them saying, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5,6).

Even at the end of the Lord’s ministry, certain Greeks came to Philip and said, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” There is no evidence that these Gentiles ever gained an audience with our Lord, but He simply stated, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Surely, Jesus’ implication was that the Gentiles would be included in the “much fruit” which would be brought forth from His death. In fact, after the demonstration of the centurion’s great faith, Christ drew a striking contrast between future Gentiles of faith and unbelieving Israelites: “...many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out...” (Matt. 8:11,12).

So why did Christ avoid dealings with the Gentiles at this time? Was it a lack of love and concern for them? Was it an issue of racial superiority? Perish the thought! The key can be found in Jesus’ statements concerning His purpose in the ministry. Throughout the book of John, He repeatedly said that He was sent to speak the words and do the will of His Father. And what was the Father’s will? Jesus said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The promises made to the fathers in the Old Testament prophecies had to be confirmed and fulfilled in history. The veracity of God’s Word was at stake. There were marvelous provisions made for Gentile salvation and blessing in God’s prophetic plan with Israel. The nations would be blessed by Israel’s rise to power as they acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Messiah. God tells us that Israel was to be and still shall be “named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God” (Isa. 61:6).



The nation of godly Jews will rule and judge from Jerusalem over all the earth with Christ and the twelve apostles, and the Gentiles (nations) will reap tremendous benefits thereby. “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come and seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:22,23).

Until these prophecies are brought to pass, “It is not meet [fitting] to take the children’s bread [redeemed Israel’s blessing], and cast it to dogs [Gentiles]” (Matt. 15:26). God is a God of order, and He has a foreordained sequence of events which must be followed before Scripture can be fulfilled and His plan brought to fruition.

All of this is a far cry from what God is doing among the Gentiles today. What happened to Israel and her blessings? Paul explains that because of unbelief they were broken off and they stumbled at the stumbling stone (Christ) (Rom. 9:32; 11:20). In this present dispensation of grace, God is doing something among the Gentiles which was not foretold by any of the prophets. He is forming a body of believers, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, who are reconciled to Himself by the cross-work of His Son. Today Israel’s national priority and privileges are held in suspension. There is now no difference between Jew and Gentile, whether they be in Christ (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11) or out of Christ (Rom. 3:9,19,23; 10:12).

Unlike past and future dispensations, God’s program for the Church which is His Body focuses on Gentile blessing through Israel’s fall from favor (Rom. 11:11). However, their blindness to the things of Christ is not permanent. It is only “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written” (Rom. 11:25,26). “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (11:33).

In conclusion, Gentile blessing, from the call of Abram to the law of Moses, the Tribulation, and the prophesied Kingdom has been and will be through God’s chosen people, Israel. The grand exception to this principle is what God is doing among the Gentiles in the present dispensation of the grace of God. This is what Paul called the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-27).

Have you taken advantage of God’s mercy to you? Do not do as Israel did and stumble at the Stumbling Stone! The truth of the gospel is simple and clear. Christ died for you and rose again. Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. May this short study encourage you to dig deeper into this subject to discover related truths and make them your own. 



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## A Consistent Walk with the Lord

By Pastor John Fredericksen

Daniel is one of the very few in Scripture about which nothing negative is ever written. In fact, only his virtues are extolled. *What was his secret?* Among his best qualities were confidence in God, boldness before the lost, and “an excellent spirit” (5:12). But the greatest attribute of Daniel’s testimony was an unwavering daily walk with the Lord. Regardless of his busy schedule representing the king or even the consequence of death for continuing to pray to his Lord (Dan. 6), Daniel absolutely would not allow anything to deter him from his consistent time with the Lord. This was the foundation that made Daniel a great man of God, able to rise above any circumstance, have a spotless testimony before the lost, and to be greatly used of the Lord. These qualities did not happen by accident or because of efforts in the flesh. Daniel was the godly man he was because of his regular quiet time. There is no substitute. Are you satisfied with your daily walk with the Lord? If not, renew the habit of prayer and study today! HE is waiting for you.





# *Dining with the King*

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

**“...I appoint unto you a kingdom...that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29,30).**

As you can see from these words that the Lord spoke to the twelve apostles, *dining* with the King is associated with *reigning* with Him. We see this same thought in the Lord’s words to Tribulation Jews who will need to overcome the temptation to take the mark of the beast if they want to reign with Christ in the kingdom of heaven on earth:

**“...if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne...” (Rev. 3:20,21).**

If you are wondering what connection *dining* with the king could have to *reigning* with him, the king’s table was probably a place where the king’s business was discussed. This writer is not a member of the Berean Bible Society Board of Directors, but I have dinner with them when they are in town for a meeting. At these dinners, I’ve noticed that board business is always discussed at the table and, based on these discussions, decisions are made later at the official meeting.

We see this connection between dining and reigning typified in the story of Mephibosheth. If you’ll remember, after David became the king of Israel, he wanted to show kindness to any members of the house of Saul that he could find (II Sam. 9:1). When Mephibosheth was brought to his attention (vv. 2-6), David said to him,

**“...I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually” (II Sam. 9:7).**

David went on to give Mephibosheth “all that pertained to Saul and to all his house” (v. 9), and remember, Saul had been king of Israel. In other words, Mephibosheth was given a *king’s inheritance*, and invited to sit at the king’s table and reign with him “as one of the king’s sons” (v. 11). Quite an honor for the grandson of a man who had once been the present king’s enemy.

Some men might take such a tremendous honor for granted, but not Mephibosheth! He later told David:

**“...all of my father’s house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?” (II Sam. 19:28).**

Mephibosheth knew that he had been given such an unbelievably high honor that he felt he had no right ever to ask the king for anything ever again.

Now how about you? May I remind you that what the king did for Mephibosheth is exactly what your King has done for you? God “hath raised us up together” with Christ (Eph. 2:5,6), “and made us sit together in heavenly places



in Christ Jesus,” we who were once members of the family of God’s “enemies” (Rom. 5:10). Just as the Lord invited kingdom saints to sit and reign with Him in the kingdom of His Father, Paul says that we have been invited to sit and reign with Christ in the kingdom of His Father in the heavenlies—to sit with Him in His throne! Speaking of Christ, Paul says that God “hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things *to the church*” (Eph. 1:22). Since God “calleteth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17), you are already seated with Christ at the Father’s right hand, and someday you will reign with Him over the angels (I Cor. 6:3).

In response, you can grumble and complain about your position *in life*, or you can rejoice in your position *in heaven*, and join Mephibosheth in wondering about your right ever to ask anything more of God beyond what He has already done in giving you a King’s inheritance (Eph. 1:11) and seating you at the King’s table “as one of the king’s sons” (cf. Gal. 4:4-7). I’m sure David would have given Mephibosheth anything he asked for, but his heart was so filled with thanksgiving that he felt he didn’t dare ask for more. While we have a clear command from God through Paul to “let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6), before asking God for anything, it might be good to run a “Mephibosheth check” on the level of your gratitude. After all, if God never did anything else for you other than what He has already done for you in Christ, He’s done enough. 



# Letter Excerpt Extra

Every once in a while we receive an encouraging letter from one of our readers that is too big to fit on our *Letter Excerpts* page (See Page 26) but too precious not to share with the rest of our readers. We trust the following letter will bless your heart as much as it did ours.

“Thank you so much for this article [*The Answer to the Problem of Unanswered Prayer*, by Pastor Dennis Kizonas]. I am, from a very early age, a devoted follower of Christ and a believer in the absolute authority and inerrancy of Scripture. I am now 56 years old. About ten years ago, I was hit with a volley of circumstances: loss of a child, loss of job, financial distress, severe health issues, and more. I leaned on God’s promise that if I ask/seek/knock/believe/ask in His name, then I would receive. It didn’t happen, and still hasn’t happened.

“I have struggled over these verses for years and have questioned the faith that my entire worldview is built upon. I have searched for answers but had not found them. I was unsatisfied that James made the promise conditional. This sounded like God was changing the rules of the game, and not just for me, but for the people of the time. No matter where I searched, the only ‘satisfactory’ conclusion was that I had been led astray; these verses could not be true. If they weren’t true, what else wasn’t true? Were they really spoken by Jesus? If so, He must have lied. How could He be God in the flesh? No, He was God and must be misquoted in Scripture. How then could I know which verses were true and which were false? I have had a crisis of faith over the many verses that said essentially the same thing. I stopped reading the Bible, studying, and praying. My worldview was so deeply ingrained that I could not accept any other worldview. I was truly lost without a way to turn, right or left.

“Today I found the article. It was Biblical, it was scholarly, it did not skirt the issue, it was clear and it made sense. I have a Bible college background and have attended Bible-believing churches all my life. I have studied apologetics and have never been presented with this viewpoint so clearly and so undeniably before. You have changed my life and given me hope again. You have been a minister of the Spirit of God and I can’t thank you enough. Please pass my gratitude on to Pastor Dennis Kizonas.”



## BBS Letter Excerpts

### **From Alberta:**

“I just wanted to give you all a hearty *thank you!* I have learned so much in the past few months since discovering your website! It makes so much sense; why did I not see it before, and why don’t more Christians see it? Keep it up!”

### **From Virginia:**

“I finished Brother Stam’s book on *The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism [Things That Differ]* last night and am starting on Brother Sadler’s commentary on Ephesians today. If only I had come into contact with *Berean Bible Society* 35 years ago! Thanks be to our Father for His marvelous grace to us in Christ Jesus!”

### **From our Inbox:**

“Sorry, I recognize bad teaching when I see it. It’s anti-Semitic. Pure and simple....Paul didn’t change anything. He may have been chosen to reveal something new, but never did he change anything. I would love to see the Scriptures that say that Paul changed anything.” (We shared many Scriptures with this brother, to no avail.—Ed).

### **From Washington:**

“Great! Thanks, I needed that, it sure clarifies a lot!...Love your site!”

### **From Michigan:**

“I know you have expenses, and I am still not able to send you any monetary gift, but I sure support you with my prayers.”

### **From Pennsylvania:**

“I love the *Searchlight*, but I will not be able to send any more money on a regular basis. We have now found a ‘rightly divided’ church and will be supporting it....Thank you so much for keeping Paul where he should be—in the Bible, and in your teachings. Not a lot of churches do, especially the one I left, speak of Paul much....I’m praying you will continue your *great work*.” (We always encourage support of your local church *first* if they are preaching Paul’s gospel.—Ed).

### **From Virginia:**

“I have been studying about dispensationalism for many years now. I have read all of Pastor Stam’s books and many of yours. I am a member of a Baptist church, and I am getting the opportunity to share the Apostle Paul’s mystery to many of the members in our Bible study classes. I have also shared with the pastor about the dispensational setting in Acts and the mystery that was revealed to the Apostle Paul. His eyes are enlightened but there is a lot of road to travel. Pray for our journey.”

### **From Michigan:**

“Just finished the first two MP3 sermons on Ezra. They are *awesome!*...Thanks for all the work you do to teach us....We will look forward to the Middlebury conference...I can’t tell you the amount of reading I’ve been doing (my brother too) but once you start on a book or anything by C. R. Stam, you can’t put it down!”

### From New York:

“I have almost memorized Paul’s Scriptures concerning the mystery revealed to him *only*. Paul’s epistles have made the Bible come alive for me.”

### From Facebook:

“A most encouraging *Two Minutes* article! The Lord knows how to strengthen and encourage us! I am thankful He uses the BBS to reach those of us who can’t find the truth in the churches in our areas. I’m thankful the Lord led me to your website and thus to the truth of His Word! Yes, even the Lord is engaged in this digital age and I am so glad of it!”

### From Puerto Rico:

“Saludos Pastor Kurth! (You need to practice your Spanish for the upcoming conference in PR, LOL)...I am looking forward to meeting you if the Lord will.” (I won’t embarrass myself by even *trying* to speak Spanish!—Ed).

### From Florida:

“Of all the *Searchlights* I have read...the September issue with *Dispensational or Disobedient* by Dave Stewart is one of the best. Of all the past explanations I have used to explain rightly dividing the Word of truth to people, Mr. Stewart gave the best. My heart goes out to him for a great, great article.”

### From Tennessee:

“I would like to say that the article that Dave Stewart wrote was the best that I have ever seen. Please think about putting *Dispensational or Disobedient* into a booklet for sale. If you do, please let me know, because I want to be the first to buy some.”

### From Pennsylvania:

“Many years ago, via a Bible study course that I completed, I learned your method of correctly interpreting Scripture regarding the start/birth of the Body of Christ Church, etc. The final part of that Bible study course was *Things That Differ*, by C. R. Stam....All of these things, as well as your publication, the *Berean Searchlight*, have given me a good understanding of the correct interpretation of Scripture.”

### From Australia:

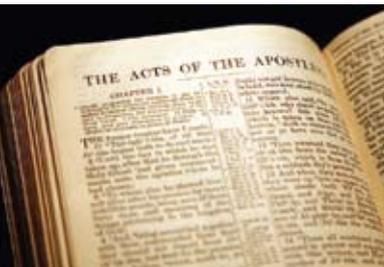
“Thank you for your dedicated ministry. I hope to drop these tracts in my neighborhood. My mission is to spread this gospel and perhaps gather like-minded Christians and non-believers to share the gospel.”

### From Ghana:

“Thanks a lot for your quick response to my question. Ever since my encounter with you, my curiosity has been satisfied. Had I not been curious in clicking on every webpage, I wouldn’t have found the *Berean Bible Society* webpage. Maybe it’s the will of God. I now have a whole lot of answers to most of the questions that bothered and confused me, thanks to your kindness.” (God *will* have all men to come to a knowledge of the truth [I Tim. 2:4]—Ed).

### From Virginia:

“The *Berean Searchlight* has been such a blessing to me! I live in rural Virginia and there is no fellowship of grace believers in my area...but our Lord, our apostle Paul, and I have some blessed times. Thank you for being obedient to our great Head and faithful to the ministry which He has given you.”



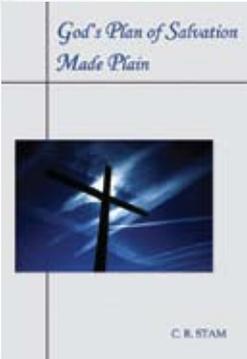
“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

—Acts 17:11



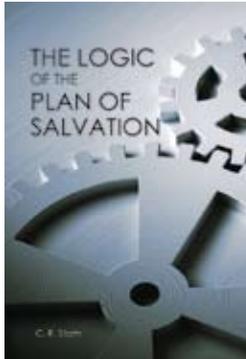
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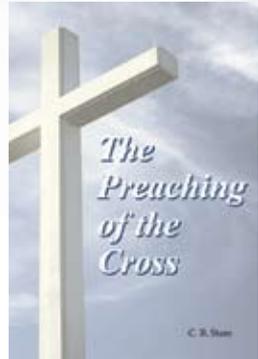
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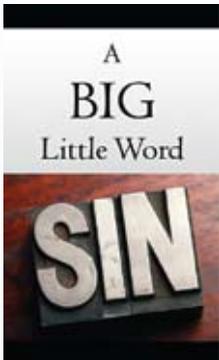
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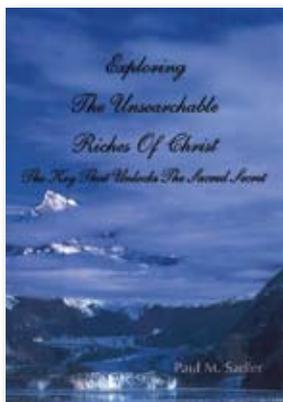
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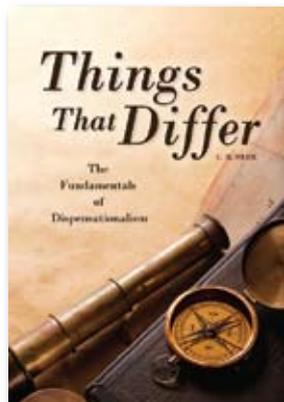
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# News and Announcements

**The General Epistles:** Here at BBS, we often hear from grace believers who aren't quite sure about the dispensational position of what are sometimes called the Hebrew Christian epistles (Hebrews–Jude). If you could use some help with these sometimes puzzling books of the New Testament, just visit our website and click on the "Bible Study" link, then scroll down to the "Audio Sermons" heading. There you'll find five messages by your editor that will give you a brief overview of these important and often challenging epistles.

**Berean Bible Fellowship** knows that some people have to put in for vacation time in January. With that in mind, BBF is pleased to announce that next summer's annual Bible conference will be held June 14-19 in Cedar Lake, Indiana. In addition to invited guest speakers from all over the country, the daily Bible hour teacher will be our own Pastor Paul M. Sadler, president of *Berean Bible Society*. Make your plans now to come see why the annual BBF conference in Cedar Lake makes June the most wonderful time of the year!

**St. Louis Theological Seminary** is branching out to several satellite locations. We recently heard from Brother David Fortner, who is conducting an SLTS ministry in Houston, Texas. If you'd like to study God's rightly divided Word in a satellite seminary setting, you can reach David at [fortnerdavid@yahoo.com](mailto:fortnerdavid@yahoo.com) or at (832) 584-5400.

**New Bible Study:** Our good friend, David Moody, has opened his home to a group of Titusville, Florida grace believers who are meeting Sunday evenings at 5, and Thursday evenings at 7. If you'd like to be a part of what God is doing smack dab in the middle of the Sunshine State's east coast, give Dave a call at (321) 607-2324.

**Our cover this month** features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs and e-mail them with any questions at their website: [www.crestwoodcreek.com](http://www.crestwoodcreek.com).



The *Old Port Washington Light* is located in Port Washington, Wisconsin. In 1935, the Light became obsolete after the Port Washington Breakwater Lighthouse was lit. The tower and lantern room were then removed. In March 2002, a new tower was installed to restore the light to its original appearance.

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**Micah 5:2** “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”