

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 2014



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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,

At the church that I pastor in the south suburbs of Chicago, adult Sunday school teacher Dave Stewart always leaves time for questions and feedback at the end of his lesson. Like most churches, however, the special time of fellowship that usually ensues isn't something we enjoy after I give the message in the morning worship service. True, our people often respond to my message at the door as they leave, and in phone calls and emails during the following week. But just to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to share what is on his or her heart, we have made our monthly observance of the Lord's Supper a time when our folks can open up to me and the rest of our church family and share things on their mind.

Here at *Berean Bible Society*, we face a similar problem, and I'd like to propose a similar solution. After each monthly mailing of the *Searchlight*, and after each emailing of our *Two Minutes with the Bible* daily devotional, we always hear back from readers who have questions and comments, or who just want to share what is on their mind in response to what they have read. But just to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard, I'd like to revive an old tradition that Pastor Stam started way back in 1970, something he called *Echo Month*. Each September he would call for a great echo of response from readers of the *Searchlight*, and each September the mailman would bring questions, comments, suggestions, expressions of appreciation, and other disclosures of the thinking of our readers.

With that in mind, if the ministry of *Berean Bible Society* has been a blessing in your spiritual life, why not take the time to tell us about it? Your words just might end up in our *Letter Excerpts* page, where they will bless and encourage the hearts of grace believers around the world. We often hear from readers who preface their letters by saying that they've been meaning to write us to express their appreciation for our literature, and that their communication is long overdue. Well, if you are like me and generally don't get around to doing something until the time in which it is due, consider this September to be the due date for your comments, suggestions, and feedback of any nature.

A common myth says that a duck's quack doesn't echo, but modern mythbusters have determined that it does, it is just such a soft sound that it doesn't generate much of a response. But if the ministry of *Berean Bible Society* is positively *resonating* in your spiritual life, we'd love to hear from you!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



Letter Excerpt Extra



Hey! God bless you and the ministry you have. When I was in prison, an inmate gave me a copy of the *Berean Searchlight*. An article in it absolutely made me mad beyond belief. It was entitled, “How Many Gospels Are There?” I had never heard about the difference between the gospels, or about the different programs for Jews and Gentiles. I was angry, confused, and bewildered. But as I continued to read, a fog that I had accepted as the norm began to lift off of my understanding. I came to see why I, and many others, saw contradictions in the Bible. Since then, I have read C. R. Stam’s *Things That Differ* at least four times. The subject matter was hard for me to grasp, as Pastor Stam was such a deep thinker. But now I love to get the *Searchlight* and read it from cover to cover every month.

I have been a believer since I was fifteen. I was saved in a Southern Baptist church where the pastor read from a Scofield Bible. I guess I slid into Antinomianism, which led to prison. God’s chastening brought me back. Prison was good for me. Without it I would have never discovered the *Berean Bible Society*.

Since prison, I have gone back to school, as directed by God, to study addictions counseling. I was called to preach at sixteen, but I ran. Thirty years as a Jonah led to three years in the belly of the beast. But God got my attention, and I have surrendered to His will and purpose for my life. He made school happen even though I wasn’t even thinking that way. I believe He wants me in pastoral counseling. I should finish my BA next summer and MA a year later. I am looking for a fundamentalist seminary for my doctorate work. I live in South Carolina and hope to find an online program if possible. I will move if God makes that clear, however. I have always been a Southern Baptist and agree with their doctrine, except for the need for baptism. I would love to find a seminary that teaches the Word rightly divided. Can you help?

Thank you so much for all you do and God bless.

As the editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who whose faithful contributions enable us to send the *Searchlight* to incarcerated men who cannot support us financially. As you can see, you are making an eternal investment in their lives. We have directed this brother to our good friends at *St. Louis Theological Seminary*.

An open Bible is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. The pages are filled with text, and the central gutter is visible. Overlaid on the lower half of the image is the title "Paul's Heart for Israel" in a white, elegant script font. Below the title, the author's name "By Pastor Ricky Kurth" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background is a dark, warm-toned surface, possibly a wooden table or a dark cloth.

Paul's Heart for Israel

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness” (Rom. 9:30,31).

Well, that hardly seems fair! The Gentiles who weren't looking for righteousness found it, while the Jews who followed after the law of righteousness didn't! There must be some explanation for this—and there is, one that Paul hastens to explain:

“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone” (Rom. 9:32).

The reason most of the Jews of that day didn't receive the righteousness that they sought was because they didn't seek it *by faith*, they sought it by the works

of the law. That is, they thought they could keep the law of Moses well enough to be saved and accounted righteous in the eyes of God. The problem with that was, they had to keep the law *perfectly* to be accounted righteous (Gal. 3:10; James 2:10,11)! We know that the Jews could have—and *should* have—understood this because Paul's declaration in Galatians 3:10 was a quotation from *their law* (Deut. 27:26)!

Does this mean that no one was ever saved under the law? That's a question we hear often here at *Berean Bible Society*, and when we do, we always direct the questioner to the parable that the Lord told to explain how men were saved under the law (Luke 18:10-14). Jews like the Pharisee, who thought they were keeping the law well enough to be saved, were lost. Jews like the publican, who knew he couldn't keep the law well enough to be saved, were

saved! Sadly, the majority of Jews back then followed the example of the Pharisee (Rom. 11:7).

As Paul went on to explain, the Jews who sought righteousness by the works of the law did not attain to it, “for they stumbled at that stumblingstone” (Rom. 9:32). He knew that people would wonder what stumblingstone Israel had stumbled upon, so he hastens to add:

“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:33).

The stumblingstone was a “him,” and we needn’t wonder who it was. Paul is quoting two passages in Isaiah, the first of which identifies the stumblingstone that God planned to lay in Israel as “the LORD of hosts Himself” (8:13 cf. vv. 14,15; 28:16). As you know, “the LORD of hosts Himself” came to this earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the nation of Israel, through their rulers, rejected Him (Matt. 21:42-44). There were, however, those who *did* believe on Him, and they will not be ashamed in the day of judgment.

But what about those who remained unsaved decades later, as Paul penned the words of this epistle to the Romans, the ones who had been persecuting him mercilessly for the past twenty-six years? It would have been easy for the apostle to give up on them, but such was not the heart of Paul!

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not

according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:1,2).

The Jewish zeal of which Paul speaks here was their passion to obtain righteousness by the works of the law. We know this because Paul went on to say:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3).

The righteousness of God of which most Jews were ignorant was the righteousness that the believing remnant obtained by faith (Rom. 11:7). The vast majority in Israel were ignorant of this righteousness, and so went about to establish their own righteousness by the works of the law.

Paul knew whereof he spoke, for he used to be one of those unbelieving Jews who had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. But now he spoke of “not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, *the righteousness which is of God by faith*” (Phil. 3:9).

We know that “their own righteousness” was of the law, like Paul’s was, because he goes on to say:

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4).

Now when Paul says that Christ is “the end of the law,” he is using the word “end” as we do when we hear a man say that he is going to do something, and we reply, “To what end?” That is, we want to know *the goal* the man has in mind in his endeavor. We

use the word this way when we speak of “the end zone” of a football field, the zone just beyond *the goal line*, the goal that the team is striving to attain. James



used the word this way when he spoke about “the end of the Lord” (James 5:11), that is, the goal that the Lord had in mind while He was testing Job. Peter similarly spoke to his Jewish readers about “receiving *the end of your faith*,” the goal of their faith being, as he went on to tell them, “the salvation of your souls” (I Pet. 1:9).

If it be asked what “the end of the law” might then be in that sense of the word, the goal of the law was *Christ*, and justification by faith (Gal. 3:24)! But as Paul is about to point out in this passage, the righteousness that could be obtained by faith was something that had been available to the Jews going all the way back to Moses. You see, Moses himself described “the righteousness which is of faith” (Rom. 10:6). But before quoting Moses to that end, Paul first quotes Moses’ description

of “the righteousness which is of the law”:

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Rom. 10:5).

If you find this description of the righteousness of the law to be a little vague, let’s consider the words of Moses that Paul is quoting here:

“Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them...” (Lev. 18:5).

When God told the Jews that they had to keep His statutes and judgments if they wanted to “live,” He meant live *eternally*. We know this because when the Lord was asked, “what shall I do to inherit *eternal* life” (Luke 10:25), He replied by talking about the law (v. 26), and then quoted Leviticus 18:5, saying “this do, and thou shalt *live*” (vv. 27,28). Do you see the point? The man asked about *eternal* life, and the Lord quoted the verse that said that if a man did the works of the law he would “live in them.”

Now, while that might sound like a passing Levitical reference that would have been difficult for the Jews to catch, it was actually something that God literally *pounded home* in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Three times He spoke of His statutes and judgments, each time adding, “which if a man do, *he shall even live in them*” (Ezek. 20:11,13,21). How right Paul was when he observed that “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law” in Leviticus 18:5.

But Moses *also* described the righteousness which is of faith:

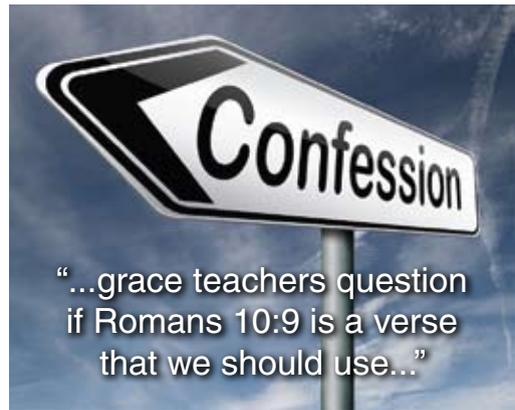
“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)” (Rom. 10:6).

Paul is still quoting Moses in this strange verse, but he is no longer quoting Leviticus. He is rather quoting Deuteronomy, a book whose name means “the second giving of the law.” You’ll remember that the law had to be given a second time because when God first gave it to Israel it was *dead on arrival*. That is, before Moses even got down from the mount with the tables of stone containing the ten commandments, his people had fallen into idolatry (Ex. 32:1-6), prompting Moses to break the tablets of the law to illustrate how they had broken the law (vv. 15-19). God then gave the Law *again* (Deut. 10:1,2), and the second giving of the law is described in the book whose name *means* “the second giving of the law.”

But with this second giving of the law, God (seeing that Israel couldn’t keep the law) added a gracious provision to the righteousness of the law, something that Paul calls “the righteousness which is of faith” (Rom. 10:6). This righteousness is found in a passage in the law that Paul was quoting (Deut. 30:11-14), but to fully understand the quotation, we need to back up to the beginning of the passage, and consider the background of what Moses was saying. It begins:

“...the LORD thy God...will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee” (Deut. 30:3).

Of course, before the Lord could “return” to Israel, He would have to come the first time! As we know, Israel’s God *did* come to them in the person of Christ (Matt. 1:23), in response to the prophecy of Isaiah 35:4, and many others. So when God spoke of returning to gather Israel from among the nations, He was speaking of the Second Coming, a coming in which the Lord would gather believing Jews into their kingdom, where they would live forever with Him.



But to obtain eternal life under the law, we’ve already seen that the Jews had to keep the law *perfectly*. How then could the Jews hope to attain to the righteousness of the law if the standard of righteousness is sinless perfection? Moses went on to explain this in the next verse of the passage that had so captivated Paul’s attention:

“...the LORD thy God...will... bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed...and...circumcise thine heart...to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart...that thou mayest live” (Deut. 30:4-6).

Here God revealed that He planned to circumcise the hearts of believing Jews so that they

could love God with all their heart, effectively giving them a “new heart” that would “cause” them to keep God’s law perfectly (Ezek. 36:26,27) so that they could “live” eternally, as Moses predicted, amid the wonders of the kingdom that he went on to describe (Deut. 30:7-10).

Now as Moses spoke those words, the fulfillment of his prophecy probably sounded far off to his hearers. It seemed as if he were saying that they would have to wait until their God returned to gather them into their kingdom to be accounted righteous. Knowing this, Moses went on to say in the next verse:

“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off” (Deut. 30:11).

Moses was saying that the law that gave them the righteousness and eternal life that they would enjoy in the kingdom was not something that was hidden and so impossible to attain at that time, nor was it something that would only be available to them afar off in the kingdom. He added:

“It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?” (Deut. 30:12).

This is the verse that Paul is quoting in Romans 10:6, a verse that the apostle interprets as meaning, “to bring Christ down from above.” But this hardly seems like an accurate interpretation! Moses spoke of the life-giving “commandment” that was present with them at that time, not up above in heaven. How could Paul legitimately assert that he was

talking about Christ? Well, are not both the Lord Jesus and the commandments of God referred to in Scripture as “the Word”? Wasn’t the psalmist speaking for Christ when he cried, “Thy law is within My heart” (Psa. 40:7,8 cf. Heb. 10:7,8)? When the kingdom is established and the New Covenant is fulfilled for Israel, won’t it be true of them that God will put His law “in *their* hearts” (Jer. 31:33)?

That’s how Paul could say of the life-giving commandment of which Moses spake that he was speaking of Christ, even though Moses was making a clear reference to the law (Deut. 6:6; 7:11; 8:1,11; 10:13; 11:8, etc.). Paul interprets Moses as saying that to be made righteous, Jews didn’t have to wait for their God to return in the person of Christ to establish the kingdom in which He would make them righteous. He was rather affirming that they could be made righteous in the way that Jews were always made righteous under the law, by believing, like the publican, that if they were going to be righteous, God was going to have to *make them* righteous.

This helps us understand the equally puzzling verse that follows in our text here in Romans:

“Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” (Rom. 10:7).

Here Paul is quoting the next verse in the argument that Moses is presenting in Deuteronomy 30:

“Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?” (Deut. 30:13).

Moses told the Jews that they didn't have to cross the sea to bring the life-giving commandment back to hear it, do it, and live eternally, for they had the law in their midst. In interpreting his words, Paul again replaces "the commandment" with Christ, who was the embodiment of the life-giving commandment. But while Moses said that his hearers didn't have to cross *the sea* to be made righteous, Paul interprets him to say that they didn't have to "descend into *the deep*," to bring Christ up from the dead to establish the kingdom for them to be made righteous.

If that sounds like a stretch to you, remember that when the Lord died He went to hell (Acts 2:25-31), that is, the paradise side of hell (cf. Luke 16:19-31; 23:43), in "the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Is the heart of the earth *deep*? Jonah learned how deep hell was when he died.¹ His body was in the fish (Jonah 2:1), but his soul cried to God "out of the belly of hell" (v. 2). "The deep" wherein God cast Jonah is described as being "in the midst of the seas" (v. 3) and Satan's throne in hell, in the heart of the earth, is also said to be "in the midst of the seas" (Ezek. 28:2). So Paul was right, Moses was saying that the Jews didn't have to wait until Christ died and rose from the deep to establish Israel's kingdom for them to know how to be made righteous by faith. That's not what the word of faith preached by Moses was saying.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8).

The word of faith Moses preached was nigh to them, not far off, and Paul here claims that this is the same word he preached! He is making a plea for unbelieving Jews to be saved by faith, a plea based on the writings of their beloved Moses! The law that told the Jews how to be righteous in Moses' day was "nigh" them, not far off; it was in their midst. But Paul's point was that it was *still* around in his day, in the mouths of Jewish teachers (Acts 15:21), and in their hearts in the same sense in which even unsaved Jews loved the law that separated them from the Gentiles. And that was the same word of faith that Paul preached,

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).



Moses made it clear to the Jews of his day that the word by which they could be made righteous by faith was, as he told them, "very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart" (Deut. 30:14). This was something the prophet Habukkuk declared very clearly (2:4) in a verse that Paul quoted to substantiate his message of salvation by faith alone (Rom. 1:16,17; Gal. 3:11), but a verse that was

also quoted in the Hebrew Scriptures to corroborate Israel's gospel of faith plus works (Heb. 10:38). We must never forget that men have always been saved by faith, even under the Law (Heb. 11).

Some grace teachers question if Romans 10:9 is a verse that we should use since Paul's target audience in Romans 9-11 is Israel. But remember, Paul prefaced this verse by talking about "the word of faith, which we preach, *that* if thou shalt confess...." His point here is just to say that men are saved today by faith, just as they were when the law was part of God's plan of salvation. This is similar to his argument in Romans 4, where he contended that salvation was by faith today just as it was when circumcision was a part of God's plan of salvation.

We are aware that this verse is used by many preachers to justify making "altar calls," where the sinner is told that faith in Christ is not enough, that he must also make a public confession of his faith. But the word "confess" here is the Greek word *homologia*, a compound word that means *to say the same thing*. It is a synonym for *believe*. If God says that the Lord rose from the dead for our justification (Rom. 4:25), and I show that I agree by saying the same thing, that means I believe what God said! No wonder Paul begins to close this passage by saying,

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

So it was in Moses' day, so it was in Paul's day, and so it is today. When Paul says that man "believeth unto righteousness,"

it means that he believes in order to *obtain* righteousness. So when he adds that "confession is made unto salvation," it must mean that confession is made to *obtain* salvation, not to testify to it, as many misconstrue it. This confession needn't be made aloud, of course, for then mutes could not be saved. The Greek word for "confess" is translated "acknowledgeth" (I John 2:23). To be saved and obtain God's righteousness, you need only acknowledge that "Christ died for our sins" and rose again (I Cor. 15:1-4).

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:11-13).

At the end of *The Wizard of Oz*, the good witch Glinda told Dorothy that she could go home to Kansas just by clicking her heels, something she had always had the power to do since the beginning. When the scarecrow asked why she hadn't told Dorothy that earlier, Glinda replied it was because Dorothy would not have believed her; that she had to learn it for herself. Similarly, the Jews—like all men—have always had the power to be saved by faith. God help us to help them—and all men—learn this for themselves! 

Endnote

1. For evidence that Jonah was not preserved alive in the whale, see our article "Man Alive!" in the May, 2006 issue of the *Berean Searchlight*, pp. 17-22.

ALABAMA BIBLE CONFERENCE

Dates: October 3-5, 2014

Location:

Forest Park Bible Church

1912 Dauphin Island Parkway, Mobile, Alabama

Guest Speaker:

Pastor Ricky Kurth, *Berean Bible Society*

For additional information, please contact:

Pastor Jim Tollar at 251-348-7889 or email: jimmissysam@hotmail.com



Central Indiana Regional Bible Conference

Date: Saturday, November 1, 2014

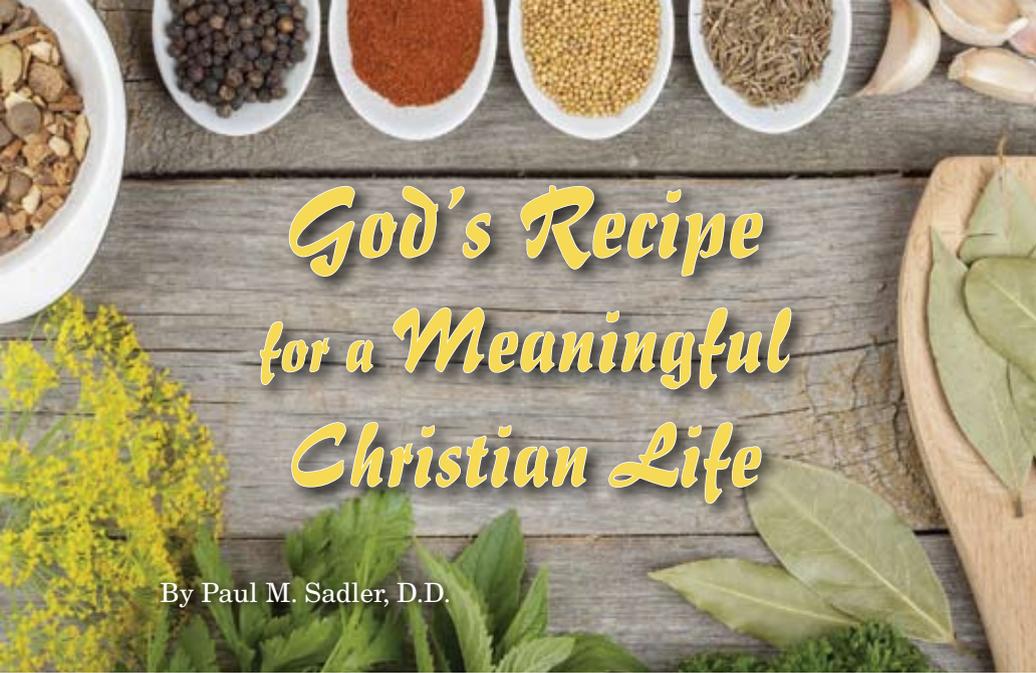
Location: *Das Dutchman Essenhaus Restaurant*
240 US Hwy. 20, Middlebury, Indiana

Guest Speakers:

Pastor Joel McGarvey, *Bible Doctrines To Live By*
Pastor Kevin Sadler, *Berean Bible Society*

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

Luke and Darlene Hunt at 260-774-9300
or email: thehunts@centurylink.net



God's Recipe for a Meaningful Christian Life

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

A passage found in Deuteronomy beautifully captures the attributes and providential care of our heavenly Father: “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him [that is, Jacob]” (Deut. 32:11,12). Ever since ancient times, eagles have symbolized power, strength, courage, and immortality. Although Benjamin Franklin lobbied unsuccessfully (thankfully) to make the turkey our national symbol, our forefathers were persuaded that the eagle was a far more fitting representation.

The mother eagle normally builds her nest on the side of a sheer cliff where there is little danger of predators reaching it. When her young are old enough to leave the nest, she instinctively swoops down, hitting them with one of her wings, which causes them to

fall from the nest. Usually, these little ones are able to fly without any problem. However, occasionally one or two of her young will begin to tumble through the air because their wings are not fully developed. But before they can plunge to their death, the mother eagle will swoop down and safely bear them up on her massive six-foot wing span.

In similar fashion, our heavenly Father watches over His own. If we are faltering, He is able to *lift* us from the depths of despair according to the riches of His grace. In addition to being infinite in wisdom and knowledge, God is also all-powerful, as witnessed in the resurrection of His dear Son. This source of power is now at our disposal to perform that which is acceptable in His sight (Phil. 3:10). But how do we access this *power* source so it will have a positive influence on our everyday Christian experience? We believe

it is accessed by the Spirit of God working through the Word of God. The power of the Word changes lives (Heb. 4:12).

STEALING

“Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28).

I suppose we could understand these words being written to the Corinthians—but to the Ephesians? Amazing! The Ephesians were the spiritual giants of their day. They had acknowledged Paul’s apostleship and message, and were known throughout the world for their faith in Christ. Yet there were some among them who apparently were *stealing*. This only serves to remind us that the *old nature* is not eradicated on this side of glory. Even the most spiritually minded believer can fail and find himself lapsing back into old habits.

An ongoing battle rages within our members. Paul says in this regard: “For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Rom. 7:19). If we are honest with ourselves, every believer can relate to that. The apostle admonishes the Ephesians to, “put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22,24). In short, we are to yield to the *new man*. This is achieved by rendering obedience to the Word of God. That’s why the apostle instructs

those who were living careless lives at Ephesus to, “Let him that stole steal no more.”

Of course, stealing is taking something that does not rightfully belong to us.

Kent Crockett tells the story of how “Years ago, one of the employees at a bank in Kansas was putting money in the ATM machine and accidentally put \$20 bills in the \$10 slot, and \$10 bills in the \$20 slot. So when people pushed \$10, they got \$20, and when people pushed \$20, they only got \$10.



“You can finish this story yourself, if you know how people act. All the people who were short-changed \$10 came into the bank complaining and demanding that the bank pay them back. But guess what? Not one customer who got *too much* money came into the bank to return the money. They just drove away without saying a word. That’s called ‘stealing.’ Stealing is trying to provide for yourself illegally.”¹

There are literally thousands upon thousands of ways to steal from our fellow man. When a lender has loaned money in good faith, but the borrower has failed to pay the unpaid balance, he has stolen from the lender. Here in the Midwest a bank employee

embezzled one hundred fifty thousand dollars over a ten-year period to finance her opulent life style. She is now facing forty years in prison for theft.

The employee who arrives twenty minutes late for work and leaves ten minutes early every day has stolen ten hours from his employer by month's end. Those who borrow things and fail to return them to their neighbor are also guilty of stealing. Personally, I stopped borrowing things years ago, simply because every time I did, something always seemed to go wrong. Then I was faced with the obligation to have it repaired before I returned it.

God has created us as creatures of *habit*. Consequently, we give little thought to the mundane things of life because they become second nature to us over time. The years that I pastored churches, I seldom had to inquire if a particular family was in attendance at services. Every family had their favorite pew—if it was vacant, they were absent—simple as that! Unfortunately *sinful* behavior can become habitual as well. To reverse this downward spiral of sin, we must apply the Word of God to the *root* of the problem. The Word of God always has the solution, if we allow it to speak to our heart.

What is the biblical solution to the sin of stealing? Work! “Let him that stole steal no more.” Notice that the apostle doesn't end the sentence here, as we are going to see. Simply telling someone to stop stealing is like telling an alcoholic to quit drinking. He may muster enough willpower to abstain from the bottle for a week before finding himself back

on another binge. That's why the campaign a few years ago to “Just Say No” to drugs was such a miserable failure. You see, God's principle of *replacement* must be applied if there is to be a meaningful change in behavior.

In the case of stealing, God instructs those who struggle with this sin to “let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good.” This serves a twofold purpose: First, his time is *occupied*, drastically diminishing the opportunity to steal. The old adage, “Idle hands are the devil's workshop” is truer than we may think. Second, if he earns an honest living, he can purchase what he needs or wants, plus have the satisfaction of supplying for his family.

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (II Thes. 3:10).

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Tim. 5:8).

This would end the abuse of welfare in our country as we know it. Many able-bodied people receive assistance from state and federal agencies (another form of stealing) who should be earning a living. Usually, they end up wallowing in the mire of self-pity and wonder why they suffer from depression. A full day's work is the remedy for this ill. It gives a sense of purpose, worth, and accomplishment. Now, please don't misunderstand me, I believe there are many handicapped, indigent, and elderly who *legitimately* need this help. Even in Old Testament times, God made provisions for

those who had various maladies. Often they were placed by the temple gate where those who passed by could give them a gift (Deut. 15:11 cf. Acts 3:1-7).



“Is your...speech profitable or like the sound of nails screeching across a blackboard?”

Interestingly, many of those whom God called into full-time service were *working* at the time of their call. Moses was *tending* the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro at Mount Horeb when the Lord appeared to him in the midst of a burning bush (Ex. 3:1,2). Gideon was *threshing wheat* by the wine-press when the angel of the Lord commissioned him to deliver Israel from the hands of the Midianites (Judges 6:11-16). David was *keeping watch* over his father’s sheep when he was called home so that Samuel might anoint him king (I Sam. 16:10-13). Our Lord called Peter and Andrew while they were *fishing*. And later that same day, he appointed James and John disciples as they were *mending* their father’s nets (Matt. 4:18-22).

Clearly, God honors the work ethic. We often fail to remember that *before* the fall, God had planted a garden in Eden that Adam was responsible to “dress” and “keep” or guard (Gen. 2:15). To “dress it” means that he tilled the ground and attended to the trees, and in so doing, the earth brought forth her fullness. This

would have brought him genuine satisfaction and fulfilment, which is true of work today, even in a sin-cursed world. When Satan fell, it created the danger of the Tempter coming into the garden to take advantage of our first parents. Therefore, God placed Adam on *guard* duty to protect the garden from this very type of intrusion.

Before we leave this subject, Paul gives another incentive to those who are given to stealing. He adds, “that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). Stealing is a selfish act! Giving a helping hand to someone is an unselfish act. In other words, holding down a steady job provides the means and the opportunity to share generously with others in need.

CORRUPT COMMUNICATION

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

I would probably question the need for Paul to address our manner of speech, except for the fact that I have overheard Christians whose filthy mouths would make an unbelieving sailor blush. Yes, believers, sad to say, sometimes stoop to vulgarities to be accepted by unbelieving friends and family members. They have themselves convinced that it makes them appear more macho. Actually, it *grieves* the heart of God, not to mention exposing their immaturity in the faith.

The apostle says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out

of your mouth.” Notice, it doesn’t say only let a little “corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” God says, **none!** The term “corrupt” in this passage is the Greek word *sapros*, meaning: “rotten, worn out, unfit for use, worthless, bad.” This word was closely identified with the marketplace in biblical times where the fruits and vegetables were sometimes said to be spoiled or rotten. Corrupt speech is a direct product of a *corrupt* nature.



James informs us: “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.... For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea...hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:6-8).

Remember the last time you spilled something hot and burned your hand. You probably sang a tune that you would be embarrassed to repeat. The mouthpiece of our old nature is the *tongue*. James teaches us that it is *untamable*. Man can tame lions, tigers, and bears, but the natural man will never control his unruly tongue. Our words can either be used for good or evil—a single word from a deranged dictator can end the lives of thousands of innocent victims.

Dr. W.A. Criswell effectively illustrated how the *tongue* is a blazing fire that destroys everything in its path:

“There are many people who have never set fire to a man burned at the stake, they have never clapped their hands at the shrieks of those who in agony were being torn apart by a ferocious lion in some coliseum. There are people who have never beat the drums to drown out the agonizing cry of those who were offered to the fiery god of Moloch, but there are people without number who assassinate friends, neighbors, and acquaintances by untrue tale-bearing, vicious and evil words...I do not think there is anyone of us who hasn’t felt the sting of unkind words.”²

Believers are to put off the old tattered garments of sin, and put on the new man. Thus, unwholesome language is uncharacteristic of spiritually minded believers. It is unbecoming of Christ to use the vulgarities of the world. Our *speech* should be “that which is good to the use of edifying.” It is to be wholesome, encouraging, and that which builds up and never tears down. With those, for example, who were struggling spiritually, Paul could have spoken down to them or criticized their lack of faith. Instead, the apostle shares how he sought to place himself *sympathetically* in their shoes that he might better communicate the gospel.

He writes these heartwarming words: “To the weak [spiritually] became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save [deliver] some”

(I Cor. 9:22). Paul, by no means compromised his own convictions, but he was desirous to change the attitude of those at Ephesus who were living in sin.

Speech that edifies may sometimes include admonition. Paul frequently found it necessary to admonish the saints, but he never sought to offend merely for the sake of offense. Rather, he spoke the truth in love. As problems arose in the churches of his day, it was the apostle's custom first to commend the saints before he corrected them. Paul opens his letter to the Corinthians accordingly:

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints....I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 1:2,4).

Then he lowers the boom, regarding the divisions and contentions among them.

“Now I beseech you, brethren...that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10).

The apostle also reminds the Ephesians that their speech ought to “minister grace unto the hearers.” Our communications with others should always be characterized by *graciousness*. It is fairly easy to be gracious when others treat us with respect. The real test comes when we find ourselves the target of someone's unjust criticism. While others may raise their voice and say inflammatory things they will probably regret, we should never stoop to their level. My experience has been

that the mature believer during a time of crisis is the one who controls his anger, and *graciously* responds in a Christ-like manner (see Luke 4:22).

Question: Is your manner of speech profitable or like the sound of nails screeching across a blackboard? Always remember, “You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.”

IN SUMMARY

Our ministry to others should always include a word of encouragement, but, sadly, there are times that we need to admonish those who are grieving the heart of God by their actions. Paul did! While the world speaks of a “new normal” today where anything goes, this does not give believers a license to steal, in whatever forms that may take, or to use filthy language. We are to live lives that are beyond reproach, which does not mean we will never fail the Lord. We all stumble! But Paul never allowed himself to wallow in the quagmire of past failures and shortcomings. He had learned, as should we, the importance of the following truth:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended [attained]: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13,14). 

Endnotes

1. www.kentcrockett.com
2. W.A. Criswell, *Expository Sermons on the Epistle of James*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975, p. 63.

BIBLE CONTRASTS



By Pastor David Adams

First Grace Gospel Church, Ashtabula, Ohio

PROPHECY: God's program set forth in the Gospels and early Acts concerned a kingdom prepared "*from the foundation of the world*" (Matt. 25:34). That plan was something "*which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:21).



MYSTERY: But God's program set forth by the Apostle Paul was a "*mystery which was kept secret since the world began*" (Rom. 16:25). This plan was a "*mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*" (Eph. 3:9). It presents a people chosen "*before the foundation of the world*" (Eph. 1:4).



SAVED WITH WORKS: When asked what one must do to escape God's coming wrath, John the Baptist told people to share, be honest, kind, and content with one's wages (Luke 3:6-14). When asked what one must "*do to inherit eternal life,*" Christ on earth told the young ruler that he must keep the commandments and "*sell all... and distribute unto the poor*" (Luke 18:18-24).



SAVED BY FAITH ALONE: What did the Apostle Paul reply when asked by the jailer at Philippi, "*what must I do to be saved?*" "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:30,31). In salvation, grace and works don't mix (Rom. 11:6). Salvation is by grace through faith, "*the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Eph. 2:8,9).



WATER BAPTISM for salvation was practiced in the Gospels and early Acts. John the Baptist came "*preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*" (Luke 3:3). The resurrected Lord



Jesus reaffirmed the necessity of water baptism to salvation when He commissioned the apostles saying, “He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Spirit-filled Peter at Pentecost repeated the same requirement to “all the house of Israel.” “Peter said unto them, Repent, *and* be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for* the remission of sins” (Acts 2:36-38).



SPIRIT BAPTISM alone puts the believer in Christ for salvation today. Does not God’s Word through Paul’s pen clearly say that “by one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body”—the Body or Church of Christ? (I Cor. 12:13). And in a passage where everything is spiritual are we not told that there remains *only* “one baptism” for today? (Eph. 4:3-6). That one is clearly Spirit baptism.



ANSWERED PRAYER was guaranteed by Jesus Christ in the Gospels. To His disciples He promised “every one that asketh receiveth” (Matt. 7:8). “And *all things*, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22). “And *whatsoever* ye shall ask in my name, that will I do...If ye shall ask *any thing* in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13,14).



UNANSWERED PRAYER is seen in the Apostle Paul’s life. Concerning his “thorn in the flesh” Paul wrote, “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee...” (II Cor. 12:8,9). God’s Word further tells us that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:26). And that God “is able to do exceeding abundantly *above* all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). Would you rather have whatsoever you ask, or exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or even think?



ALL HEALED: While on earth Jesus Christ healed all who came to Him and sent His disciples to do likewise (Matt. 10:8; 15:30,31). After His resurrection He said His followers were to “lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:18). After Pentecost all the sick who came to the apostles “were healed every one” even by Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15,16). Later “God wrought special miracles” through the Apostle Paul, even healing at a distance by handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11,12).



MANY UNHEALED: But later Paul himself remains unhealed though he prayed to be healed (II Cor. 12:7-10). Paul tells Timothy to take a little wine as medicine for his stomach because he’s often ill (I Tim. 5:23). Another co-worker is left behind sick by Paul (II Tim. 4:20). Paul clearly states that the whole creation now has continuing pain, including even believers who “have the firstfruits of the Spirit”—all together wait for the future redemption of the physical body (Rom. 8:22,23).

FORGIVE FIRST was the requirement for forgiveness in the Gospels.

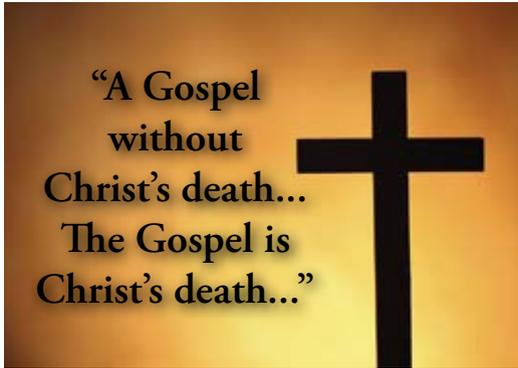
After the Lord's Prayer, Christ explained, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not...neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:12-15). When Peter asked how often to forgive, the Lord told of someone who did not, and incurred wrath and torment. Christ said this would likewise happen to all who did not forgive from the heart (Matt. 18:21-35). God's people were to forgive others in order to be forgiven by God.



FORGIVE AFTER being forgiven is the rule given by the Apostle Paul. Believers are commanded to be "forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). God already has "forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). Therefore Christians are to be "forgiving one another...even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13). Believers today are to forgive others just as God has already forgiven them.



SELL ALL was God's program in the Gospels and early Acts. No personal provision was to be made (Matt. 10:9,10). Christ's disciples were commanded to "sell that ye have" (Luke 12:33). The same was demanded of the ruler who asked how he could inherit eternal life (Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22). This same program ruled in early Acts when believers "had all things common and sold their possessions" (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34). But by Acts 11:29 those who had sold all needed relief. They needed material help through the rest of the New Testament (Rom. 15:26, et al.).



PERSONAL PROVISION is urged by the Apostle Paul. The believer is exhorted to provide for himself and his own family, else he "is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). It is assumed there will be rich believers. Such are charged not to trust in their wealth but be willing to share (I Tim. 6:17-19). God's rule for giving today is voluntary, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not...of necessity" (II Cor. 9:7).



COMING TO EARTH: Throughout the Old Testament God's people looked for the Lord to come and "stand at the latter day *upon the earth*" (Job 19:25; Zech. 14:4). In the Gospels and early Acts this same hope was in view—that Jesus Christ would come back to earth and set all in order (Matt. 24; 25; Luke 18:8; Acts 1:11; 3:20).



And the hope after the future horrors of the Book of Revelation is the Lord's return to smite and rule the nations of the earth (Rev. 19:11-16).



COMING IN THE AIR: But the Apostle Paul's letters present the Body of Christ with a heavenly hope. All believers during this present age "shall be caught up [raptured] together...to meet the Lord *in the air*: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:17). Moreover believers today are told they have a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6). They are blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).



MANY MEATS FORBIDDEN: During other ages God limited the diet of His people. At Creation, God commanded men to be vegetarian (Gen. 1:29,30). After Noah's Flood people were told, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." But living flesh and blood were not to be eaten (Gen. 9:3,4). Later on the Jewish people through Moses were forbidden to eat various animals. For example, "the swine [pig]...is unclean to you; of their flesh shall ye not eat, and...not touch" (Lev. 11:1-8).



ALL FOODS ALLOWED: God's Word through the pen of the Apostle Paul tells believers they may eat anything. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." It is a latter times false doctrine to command "to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received...of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:1-5).



CHRIST CAME FOR ISRAEL: Before Jesus' conception, Mary was told He would be given "the throne of His father David" and that "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:32,33). During His earthly ministry Christ declared, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). From Pentecost, Peter repeatedly reaffirmed this by preaching only to "Ye men of Israel," to "all the house/People of Israel" (Acts 2:22,36; 3:12; 4:10). Peter further declared that God exalted Christ "for to give repentance to Israel" (Acts 5:31). And Paul says "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision [Jews]" (Rom. 15:8).



CHRIST CAME FOR ALL: The Apostle Paul tells us "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. 10:12). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing [charging] their trespasses [sins] unto them" (II Cor. 5:19). Paul further declares that in Christ Jesus "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).



A GOSPEL WITHOUT CHRIST'S DEATH was preached during Christ's earthly ministry. Jesus Christ and the Twelve "went throughout every city and village" of Israel "preaching the gospel" of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1; 9:2,6). After over two more years of gospel preaching, Christ told those same Twelve that He would soon be delivered to those who would torture "and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again." Yet "they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (Luke 9:43-45; 18:31-34).



THE GOSPEL IS CHRIST'S DEATH plus His burial and resurrection according to the Apostle Paul. He declares "the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also we are saved." The Gospel Paul received and delivered is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-4).

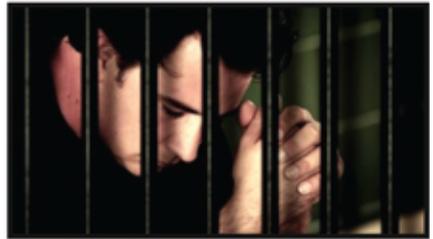
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That Explains It!

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Did you ever wonder why nominal Christians give you grief when you insist that salvation is by grace through faith alone apart from any good works (Eph. 2:8,9)? The Apostle Paul understood the reason that men troubled him for proclaiming this message, and he came up with the perfect illustration to help the Galatians understand it. Speaking of the two sons of Abraham, he observed:

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal. 4:29).

When we look up the passage that Paul is quoting here, we learn that Ishmael “persecuted” Isaac by “mocking” him (Gen. 21:9). And, if you know the story, you know why Ishmael was giving his younger brother grief. When Abraham got tired of waiting for God to give him the son He had promised, he took matters into his own hands and fathered a child by his wife’s servant, intending to make Ishmael the heir that God had promised (Gen. 17:18). God rejected this notion (Gen. 17:20,21) and eventually gave Abraham the son that He promised through the miraculous birth that Abraham’s wife Sarah gave to Isaac.

Ishmael was thirteen years old (Gen. 17:25) when Isaac was weaned (21:8), and based on his father’s assurance that he would be his heir, he had doubtless worked very hard to be worthy of his inheritance. Then suddenly there appeared this interloper, this young child Isaac, whom Sarah rightly declared would be her husband’s heir (Gen. 21:10), and God agreed (v. 12). That meant that after all Ishmael’s hard work his inheritance was now going to be just *handed* to this infant who hadn’t done a thing to earn it other than to be born the child of promise.

Now, if you can’t relate to the anger that Ishmael felt toward the newly-declared heir, I certainly can! When I was twelve, I asked my father to buy me a Schwinn *Fastback* Stingray bicycle. He informed

me that I was old enough to work for the money that would be needed to make such an expensive purchase. He then reminded me that I could work as many hours as I wanted at his tool and die shop. To help me out, he graciously bumped my salary up to 50 cents an hour (he had started me out at 15 cents an hour!). But while I was working and saving for my \$75 bike, my younger brother learned to ride a bike, and was *given*—a Stingray bicycle! I remember feeling angered that he had just been *handed* something for which I was having to work so long and hard!

That explains how Ishmael felt about Isaac, which in turn explains how professing Christians feel about those of us that champion the cause of salvation by grace through faith apart from works. Such “Christians” are angered at the notion that the salvation for which they themselves are working so long and so hard is being offered so freely to men and women who haven’t done a thing to earn it other than to be born again a child of God’s promise (Gal. 4:28).

How should we respond to such religious animosity? Paul answers in the opening words of the very next chapter in Galatians: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (5:1)! It has never been easy to stand for the pure, unadulterated gospel of the grace of God, but as the old hymn of the faith expresses so very well, “it will be worth it all when we see Jesus”! 

Question Box

“If only Noah was pure in his generations (Gen. 6:9) and the rest of the race had to be exterminated due to the infiltration of the fallen angels (6:1-8), why did Noah bother to preach to them?”

Everyone assumes that Noah was a preacher of the gospel, but he was “a preacher of *righteousness*” (II Pet. 2:5). He didn’t preach an invitation to be saved, he preached a message of condemnation of unrighteousness, for “*all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12) and so God vowed to “destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life” (6:17).

This is similar to how, when the Lord later preached to the fallen sons of God who had infiltrated humanity (I Pet. 3:19), He didn’t preach *the gospel* to those fallen angels incarcerated in the “prison” of hell. He rather preached a message of *victory*, informing them that their plan to pollute the seed of the woman to prevent His birth had failed.

—Pastor Kurth



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Arizona:

"I am very blessed by your magazine. I have a doctorate in Biblical Studies...and I am amazed to be learning about dispensations...the false requirement of water baptism, as practiced by mainstream Christianity. I have often seen the differences in the Pauline epistemology vs. Petrine, or Johanian, and the gospel as a whole; but I never, ever imagined the Word was naïvely being interpreted incorrectly, and not being 'rightly divided.' Dispensations do seem to make sense...When do you see the Christian church as starting, Acts 2 or later?"

From our Inbox:

"I've received the hard copy of *Things That Differ* and thus far, I've found it the most informative book dealing with dispensationalism I've ever read, more so than Larkin or Scofield. I see that I will, after an initial reading, have to *study* the content because I can see this is the only logical and Scriptural view of the faith."

From California:

"I've been looking for a good way to describe the advantages of right division and this *Two Minutes* article is it! Rightly dividing the cargo is the only way to evenly load the ship to prevent it from listing or sinking." (Aye, aye, matey!—Ed).

From our Inbox:

"Amen, to that [article exposing Euthanasia], Pastor Sadler. All life is sacred as created by God."

From Alabama:

"I already believe the doctrine of dispensationalism. I believe it because it is the only one that makes sense. I spent my twenties and thirties in covenant theology and found it very lacking. I dropped out of seminary and church for several years because covenant theology was so bad. Prayer, Bible study, and preachers like Les Feldick...opened up my eyes to what I had been missing. For the past several years I have read every dispensational teacher I could find. I bought C. R. Stam, J. C. O'Hair, and Charles Baker books from a bookstore that used to be in Jasper. Berean books!"

From our Inbox:

"I was incarcerated for a white collar crime for 20 months. Your ministry was very kind to send me the monthly publication. I needed to hear grace because I was in a system that constantly was condemning me. Thank you so very much for your teaching...I am thankful we have a God who restores and wipes the slate clean, adding to us Christ's immeasurable righteousness." (Prisons aren't the only places where believers are condemned. It happens in churches as well.—Ed).

From our Inbox:

"Thanks, Pastor Sadler, for your wonderful and thoughtful response that really took a lot of your time to compose. I believe you hit the nail on the head! Your response lets me know that I have done the right thing."

From West Virginia:

"I came across C. R. Stam's book *Things That Differ*, and was shocked that here was a man teaching what I had discovered on my own...then I came across the *Searchlight* and was so thrilled that there were many who agreed with my conclusions, that I was not losing my mind...church elders could not answer my questions...but God answered them...through those such as C. R. Stam...and I have found great peace and confidence...."

From our Inbox:

"I'm a grace believer living in the Baptist belt. I thank God for BBS! Over two years ago I asked God to show me the truth. Not what man had to say, but what He said is the truth. Shortly after that I discovered BBS! Rightly dividing the Word was it! Thank you and praise God for BBS!"

From Tennessee:

"Your commentary on the *Book of Philippians* could be read over and over—the saints are missing a blessing if they don't have this book in their libraries. You are truly blessed as you sit and write—what a gift you have." (Surely I am unworthy of such praise, but we do pray that God will use this work to the praise of His glory.—PS).

From Georgia:

"Another great issue! Pastor Kevin does such a GREAT job on the layout and formatting. It really looks good. A few people I know always comment on how wonderful the monthly magazine looks. The articles are great as well. I keep BBS in my prayers so that the Word of God, rightly divided, may continue to go out from your headquarters. It is a MUCH-needed message for today!"

From Pennsylvania:

"Our *Berean Grace Fellowship Annual Conference*...was the highlight of our weekend. The pastors gave pointed messages that moved our hearts as they stirred us to get up and move out for the Lord and not let others do the work we are to do...thank you so much for these men of God who were so willing to...teach us God's Word, and...a big thank you to their families having shared them with us."

From Texas:

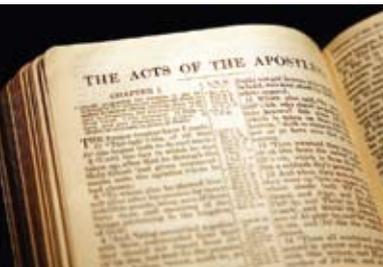
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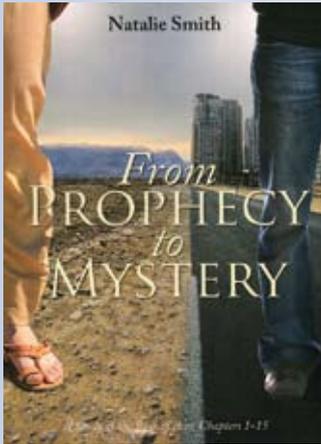
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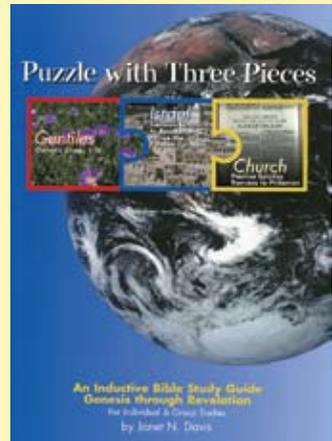
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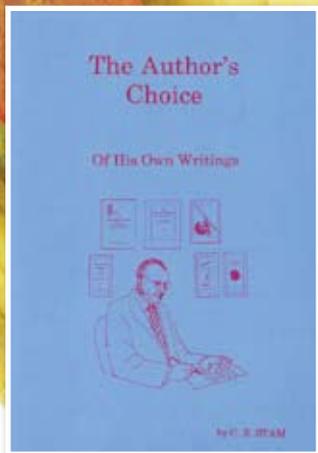
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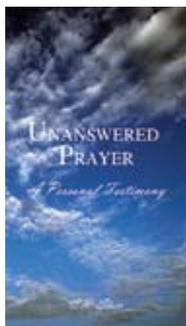
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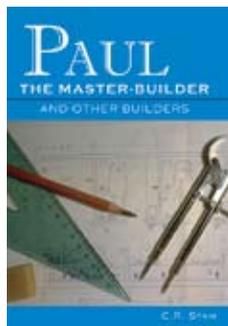
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News and Announcements

Hail to the Chiefs! Two grace ministries are sporting new leaders this year, and both of them covet your prayers. First, Pastor Dwight Anderson was recently appointed the Executive Director of *Prison Mission Association*. PMA provides free, rightly divided Bible lessons for our brethren behind bars. To learn how to support and pray for their ministry see the display ad on page 23. Then, BBS's own Pastor Kevin Sadler was recently elected president of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*. If you enjoyed their conference in Cedar Lake, Indiana, this past June, why not make plans to attend their conference in Inverness, Florida, in January? To learn more visit bereanbiblefellowship.weebly.com.

Alabama Conference: The saints at *Forest Park Bible Church* have invited your editor to spend the October 3-5 weekend with them reveling in the riches of God's grace—and they said you could come too! Of course, the polite thing to do would be to let Pastor Jim Tollar know that you're coming. You can email him at jimmissysam@hotmail.com or call him at 251-348-7889.

Evangelism Conference: This biannual *Bible Doctrines To Live By* event will be held October 10-12 at the *Holiday Inn* in Cumberland, Maryland. The speaker roster of Joel McGarvey, Paul M. Sadler, Brent Biller, Jim Zaebst, and Cal Lowder is different than what we announced last month but is just as sure to bring an understanding of the Scriptures to your mind and a challenge for evangelism to your heart. Visit www.bibledoctrines.org to learn more, or just contact Jan Bultema at 616-785-3618.

Facebook Friends: When BBS's Facebook page got started, your editor acquired a personal page so that we could check BBS's page from home. Now we feel bad every time we turn down a "friend" request from one of our readers, for we don't mean to hurt anyone's feelings, but we just don't do Facebook, or LinkedIn, or any other form of social media. But we can still be reached in a more personal setting by emailing us at berean@bereanbiblesociety.org, or by phoning us at (262) 255-4750.



Recently a prisoner wrote to ask a Bible question, and also asked if we could put the *Marblehead Lighthouse* in Sandusky, Ohio, on our cover. He wrote: "I used to sit on the rocks by that lighthouse listening to the waves crashing into those rocks...It would mean a lot to me."

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