

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2018



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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" (2 Tim. 2:15), to *energize* the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

The conference ministry is an important part of the outreach of *Berean Bible Society*. Much spiritual fruit has come from these special times around the preaching of God's Word, rightly divided. There's something about meeting like-minded believers face-to-face and spending time together that so encourages us all and strengthens our faith. Not everyone has met me before, of course, and since I became President of BBS, there have been some who came to a conference where I was speaking to hear the preaching of the Word and also to meet me for the first time. One memorable instance of this in the last year was one gentleman who told me, "I've been reading your writings in the *Searchlight*, and have seen your picture, but I wasn't sure if I liked you or not. But now after meeting you and hearing you speak, I've decided I like you." We had a good laugh together.

We'll be publishing our 2018 conference schedule in an upcoming issue of the *Berean Searchlight*. Both Pastor Kurth and I still have openings for the coming year. If you'd like for us to speak at a weekend conference, or even just come to a Sunday morning meeting at your local church, we would love to come preach the Word, rightly divided, and share about the ministry of BBS. It is the policy of BBS not to invite ourselves places. We wait for the Lord to lead us with your invitation. There is no minimum group size for us to come.

Berean Bible Society also arranges two regional meetings each year in different locations around the United States. When planning these meetings, we look for locations central to where grace believers are spread out and may not have regular fellowship with other like-minded saints. Our hope is to connect grace believers from the same area who might not know of each other, as well as to introduce the attendees to the various ministries of BBS. BBS pays for all the expenses of these meetings; all we need is a person who is willing to be the contact, arrange the accommodations, and answer questions about the meetings.



This past August we had a very encouraging regional meeting in Denver. It brought grace believers together from all over Colorado and Oklahoma. This year we have a regional meeting planned for early October in North Carolina. The arrangements are still being made. Please watch the *Searchlight* for more information. We also plan to have a second BBS regional meeting sometime this year. If you would like to have one in your area and are willing to be the contact, please let us know by calling 262-255-4750 or emailing us at berean@bereanbiblesociety.org.

Grace to you,

Pastor Kevin Sadler, President

Why Paul's Ministry Was So Effective

By Pastor John Fredericksen



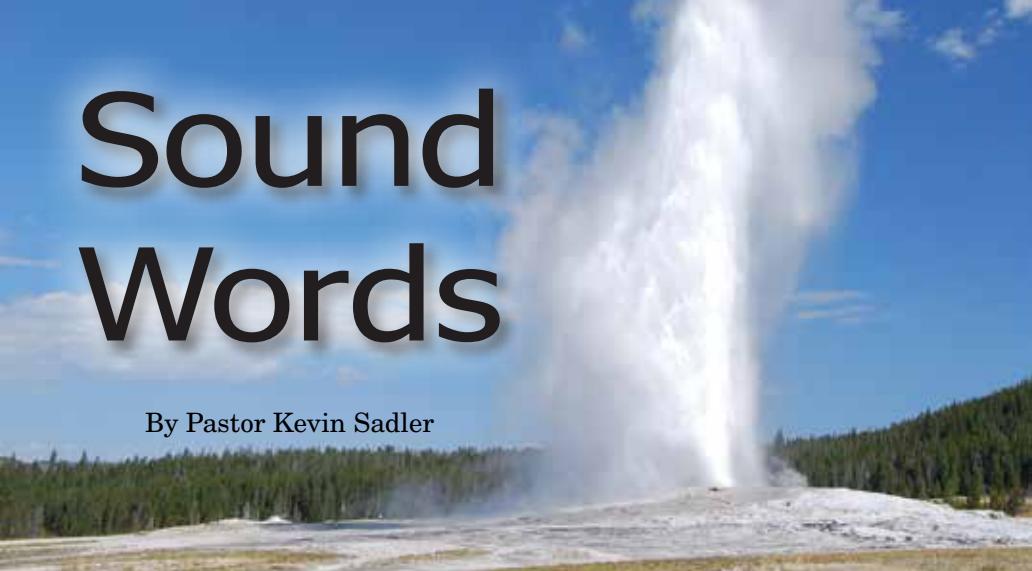
We have Christian friends who have a close relationship with an outstanding Bible teacher. They tell the story of going on a cruise with this teacher. At the time, the husband knew Christ as Savior, but the wife was still unsaved and somewhat leery of letting go of the doctrines learned as a child in her church. The teacher disarmed this lady by seeking her out, sharing a meal with them, being very personable, and lovingly sharing the Scriptures she needed. The end result was that this lady trusted Christ as her Savior, became a vibrant believer, and the couple became lifelong friends with this teacher who had been so used of the Lord in their lives.

Have you ever wondered how the Apostle Paul had such an effective ministry with so many during his lifetime? He gives his testimony about this in the Scriptures. It began with a genuine burden for lost souls. Paul tells us “That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren...” (Rom. 9:2,3). Lost souls seem to be able to sense when one deeply cares for their spiritual welfare. Paul was ready to share the eternal life-giving gospel “in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2). No matter where he was, from prison to the palace, he was constantly giving out the message of salvation by grace alone. He sowed the seed of the gospel frequently enough that many were saved. Paul said, “I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more” (1 Cor. 9:19). His attitude was one of surrendering as a willing bond slave to the Savior; then, he served others, in a spiritual sense, willingly and humbly attending to their needs. Paul approached the lost in a personable way, finding common ground with the lost so he'd have greater credibility when presenting the gospel. He says: “...unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews...To them that are without law, as without law...I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some...” (1 Cor. 9:20-22). Paul was also tireless, working “night and day” (Acts 20:31; 1 Thes. 2:9), in his care and prayer for those he led to Christ.

If you'd like to be more greatly used of the Lord, follow this pattern used by the Apostle Paul and the teacher who reached our friend.

Sound Words

By Pastor Kevin Sadler



Old Faithful is one of the best known and most popular attractions in America. My family went to see it last summer. Explorers came to the area in 1870 and called the geyser *Old Faithful* because of the regularity with which it erupted. It still erupts consistently to this day without any help from man. It doesn't erupt every hour on the hour. Rather, *Old Faithful* erupts approximately 98 minutes after every eruption lasting more than two and a half minutes and 68 minutes after every eruption lasting less than two and a half minutes.

The geyser spews hot water between 106 and 185 feet in the air. The water has been measured at 204° F, while the temperature of escaping steam can be more than 350° F. It is said that, in the early days of the park, people sometimes used the geyser to do their laundry! Explorers, military men, and other visitors would throw their clothes into the geyser between eruptions and wait for them to be

shot back out, thoroughly steamed and much cleaner. According to written reports, woolen garments did not fare well as they were shredded by the geyser, but other types of fabrics, such as cotton and linen, did just fine.

As I sat waiting for *Old Faithful* to erupt, I thought how that would be a good title for any believer, and especially grace believers. It would be the highest compliment to be called "old faithful." We know that faithfulness pleases the Lord, and that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). The Word calls us to faithfulness to Christ and the truth of the revelation of the mystery. We see that challenge for us in this verse and in 2 Timothy 1:13,14, and 2:2.

The Form of Sound Words

"Hold fast the form of sound words..." (2 Tim. 1:13).

"Hold fast" the Apostle Paul wrote. "Hold fast" means to retain, to keep firmly in mind,

to grasp and not let go. “Hold fast” is in the present tense in the Greek and is an imperative or a command, something we are commanded by God to do continually. Paul is making an appeal to faithfulness and conviction with these words “hold fast.” Paul wanted this instruction to be an ongoing part of Timothy’s life from that day forward. This is not only for Timothy; it is a command for all the Church, the Body of Christ.



What we are to hold tight to is “the *form* of sound words.” The Greek word translated as “form” means a model, a pattern, a design to duplicate. In 1 Timothy 1:16, Paul writes, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” “Pattern” is translated from the same Greek word (*hypotuposis*) as “form” in 2 Timothy 1:13. In 1 Timothy 1:16, “pattern” describes how each conversion that has occurred since Paul’s conversion under grace has likewise been by Christ saving sinners by His

grace, “mercy,” “longsuffering,” and that we just “believe on Him to life everlasting.” Our salvation and that of everyone who has been saved in this dispensation of grace follow the same pattern as Paul’s.

The “form” or pattern in 2 Timothy 1:13 that is to be followed is that of “sound words.” We get our word *hygiene* from the Greek word (*hugiaino*) translated as “sound.” It means healthy, wholesome, and uncorrupted. Like Timothy, we the Church need to hold fast to the pattern of healthy doctrine not mixed with error. This teaches us that there is sound, healthy doctrine to be followed and held onto, and there is unhealthy, unsound teaching around us to be avoided.

We are commanded here to hold fast to *doctrine*, the sound words and teaching of the Bible, rightly divided. This is a call to know the teaching of the Bible. Many in the Church don’t know doctrine, are not grounded in the Word, and are even taught that doctrine is not important. This verse says differently. Doctrine, knowing and standing for the proper teaching of the Word of God, is vitally important. The reason most people don’t have the courage of their convictions with the Word of God today and can’t and don’t hold fast to the form of sound words is that they don’t know doctrine. They don’t know the Word well enough to have a firmly-held belief or opinion. They don’t understand that the Bible is a Book with a plot, an overarching story which

unfolds progressively as God dispensed His plan and Word to humankind.

The Lord said in Matthew 22:29, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” Not knowing the Scriptures can and does lead people into error. And you can’t fully experience the power of God in your life without knowing the Word. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 is a commentary on our times:

“For the time will come when they will not endure *sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”



Many want to hear nice speeches, stories, and words that tickle their ears and make them feel good about themselves. They don’t want to hear things that might offend, or to hear that one thing is truth and another thing is error. In contrast, Paul says to hold tightly to sound, healthy doctrine from God’s Word. To hold to it, you need to know it. And to know it you need to read it, study it, and hear it being taught.

We are commanded to hold fast to the standard of sound, wholesome words, to be committed to the proper theological structure that results from a correct interpretation of Scripture. Paul is telling us to have a sound, correct theology and to hold fast to it.

God’s people need to be grounded in sound doctrine because God’s sound truth is what leads to a spiritually-sound, healthy, Christian life. Sound doctrine is the basis for sound character and sound living. A godly character and life is built upon the bedrock of sound doctrine found in God’s Word, rightly divided, and our knowledge of it, our faith in it, and our obedience to it.

Timothy was also to hold fast to the pattern of the “words” and expressions by which sound doctrine is conveyed and learned. Sometimes it is suggested in the Church that we should abandon expressions such as “the blood of Christ,” and not talk about sin or hell, because it might offend someone. It’s also been suggested that we should not use terms such as “mystery,” “rightly dividing,” or “dispensation,” because people don’t know what we are talking about. Save those terms for Adult Sunday School or Bible studies, they say, or we will drive people away. “Mystery,” “rightly dividing,” and “dispensation” are “sound words” from God’s Word. Not using the Scriptural words ultimately leads to the abandonment of the truth which is communicated by these terms. How are people ever going to learn what they mean unless they hear them? Paul commands Timothy to “hold fast,” to retain, cling to, and never let go of the form of sound words, which are sound expressions of the faith.

The importance of “sound” expressions also carries over into those expressions that we often

hear from those who fail to rightly divide the Word. Telling people to “endure unto the end,” “seek ye first the kingdom of God,” or “take up your cross and follow Me” is language and verbiage used under the gospel of the kingdom. We need to be careful to use the sound words of grace to keep the gospel for today clear and not confused with the gospel of the kingdom. Today under grace, we simply tell people to trust the gospel that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. We are saved by grace through faith alone. That is the gospel found in the letters of Paul. These are the sound words of grace for today.

The Sound Words of Paul

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me...” (2 Tim. 1:13).

Paul clearly defines what he means by “sound words” when he writes, in verse 13, “sound words, *which thou hast heard of me.*” This verse gives us the definition of what “sound words” and healthy doctrine are for this present age and dispensation: the contents of Paul’s epistles, the truth contained in the mystery. “The form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me” speaks of the outline of doctrine for this dispensation as revealed to and through the Apostle Paul. The risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ revealed to Paul alone the mystery, which contains the body of truth and divine ordering of man’s conduct and responsibilities for “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:1-9).

Paul had taught this to Timothy and thus he “heard” it from Paul directly. We hear it too, by the Word, when we read, study, and learn Paul’s epistles (Eph. 3:4). Paul’s message of grace are the “sound words,” the pattern, the model for healthy doctrine today. Timothy was to hold fast to this sound doctrine of grace that he had heard and learned from Paul (2 Tim. 3:14). Paul’s sound words were to serve as a model, a pattern for Timothy to proclaim and live by, and not just for Timothy, but the entire Body of Christ. Everything that Timothy taught was to harmonize with the outline of the truth of God’s grace that had been given to him by Paul. This pattern of the truth proclaimed in Paul’s letters is the standard by which all teaching is to be tested today. All Scripture is to be taught in light of Paul’s message of grace.

We need to know God’s truth for today. In order to hold fast to the form of sound words, we need to be grounded in the message of grace found in Paul’s letters and know it backwards and forwards so we can defend it, so we can recognize error and unsound words, and so we can live by the sound truth for the Church the Body of Christ.

A Proper Attitude

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

Sometimes a knowledge of the truth can cause some to be proud and obnoxious when they stand for it and make it known. Paul teaches to Timothy the proper

attitude that we should have when conveying the truth: “in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” We are to hold fast to the truth with a proper attitude toward God: “in faith.” As we “hold fast...in faith,” we need to have faith with conviction, not doubting and vacillating with an attitude of “I think I know what I believe, but I’m not positive. I was surer a few weeks ago, but then I read something, and now I don’t know for sure anymore.” Holding fast to the truth “in faith” means remaining steadfast.



“Two men who lived in a small village got into a terrible dispute that they could not resolve. So they decided to talk to the town sage. The first man went to the sage’s home and told his version of what happened. When he finished, the sage said, ‘You’re absolutely right.’ The next night, the second man called on the sage and told his side of the story. The sage responded, ‘You’re absolutely right.’ Afterward, the sage’s wife scolded her husband. ‘Those men told you two different stories and you told them they were absolutely right. That’s impossible—they can’t both be absolutely right.’ The sage turned to his wife and said, ‘You’re absolutely right.’”¹

While many around us are indecisive, compromising, unwilling to take a stand, and willing to tolerate error, “in faith” we need to be decisive and have conviction, and be assured that what we believe is true and “hold fast to the form of sound words,” as revealed to Paul.

“In faith” also means we need to depend on the Lord when we stand for the truth. We need His strength, His wisdom to be faithful and hold tightly to the truth for today. If we depend on ourselves to hold fast to the truth, we will falter and fail. If we depend on the Church to help us hold fast to the truth, the influence of not following the majority can cause us to slip and turn away. Instead, “in faith,” we need to keep our eyes on the Lord as we stand for the mystery, and in His strength we can “hold fast.”

We are not to be doubting or depending on ourselves, and we’re also not to be loveless, brash, cold, and insensitive with the truth. We are to “hold fast the form of sound words...in faith *and love* which is in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 4:15 tells us to be “speaking the truth in love.” We are to hold fast to the truth with a proper attitude toward God: “in faith” and with a proper attitude toward man: “in...love.”

Out of “love” for others we hold fast and stand for the truth of the mystery. In doing so, we benefit *believers* so they might understand their Bibles and live stronger Christian lives according to what God is doing today. Out of “love” for others we hold

fast and stand for the mystery to benefit *unbelievers* as well, so they might hear the pure gospel of grace by faith in Christ alone, and not of any works. Holding fast in love keeps us from presenting the mixed, muddled, blanderized, unsound gospel that comes from mixing elements of Israel's program, the law, and the gospel of the kingdom with the gospel of pure grace. This unsound presentation can hinder people from trusting the true gospel for today which saves their souls from hell.

Guard the Treasure

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us”
(2 Tim. 1:14).

In verse 12, Paul says the Lord “is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Here in verse 14, he reminds Timothy, “That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost.”

The words “thing which was committed unto thee” is one Greek word (*parakatastheke*) and means a deposit or a sacred trust placed alongside. At the end of his life, Paul was concerned about the preservation of the truth that had been committed to him in his ministry. In faith, knowing “whom I have believed” (v. 12), Paul entrusted the safekeeping of his message, the mystery, to the Lord, trusting Him to keep and guard and preserve it through His people. Paul then reminded Timothy also that this deposit had been entrusted to him through the years of training and teaching

by Paul. It was now Timothy’s personal duty to safeguard it by the power of the Holy Spirit Who indwelt him.



When you deposit a check in the bank, you entrust the entire banking system to keep your money safe from those who might try to take it. And so Paul deposited his message to Timothy, entrusting him to keep the message safe from those who would try to water it down or attack it or take it away. In verse 14, the deposit that is the mystery is called “that good thing.” The Greek word translated “good” means excellent, choice, rich, valuable, or precious. The message that was revealed to Paul is a *precious* deposit.

It is precious because of all the things it reveals: Christ’s exalted position in the heavenlies and His heavenly ministry; salvation by grace through faith alone; being members of the Body of Christ with Christ as our living Head; being declared righteous in Christ; being children of God; our heavenly calling; the blessed hope of the Rapture; our spiritual blessings and exalted position in Christ in the heavenlies, to name just a few. It is a good, excellent, rich, precious message.

As with any treasure, this valuable message needs to be guarded. The term “keep” means to watch, guard, and preserve safe and unimpaired. Timothy needed to guard the message and defend it against attack, as do we. Attacks against the mystery do come from those outside the church, but more so from those within the church. Sometime the attacks are overt, but more often they happen very subtly.

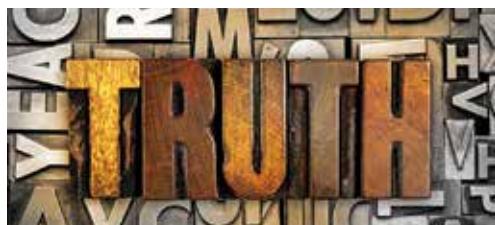
In 1 Timothy 6:20, Paul says a very similar thing: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.” Timothy needed to preserve the truth from corruption or destruction. Paul wanted Timothy to be a defender of the faith, a guardian of the truth. We need to be too.

The same Greek verb for “keep” is used of the shepherds on the night of Christ’s birth, who were “keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). They were keeping their eyes open for wild animals that might sneak into the flock to harm or kill the sheep. The same Greek word for “keep” is also used for soldiers guarding Peter in prison (Acts 12:4).

Paul is telling Timothy, and the Body of Christ, to keep our spiritual eyes open, to be watchful, and to protect and preserve the truth like a shepherd or a prison guard on duty. The word “keep” is another command for the Body of Christ. It is imperative that we do so. For the good of the church, we are to carefully watch and protect the precious deposit of Paul’s message of grace so that it is not lost, compromised, distorted, nor mixed

with the gospel of the kingdom, the law, or simple, outright error.

From the beginning of human history, Satan has opposed God’s Word, His plans, and His purposes. Satan hates Paul’s gospel and the heavenly hope and calling for the Body of Christ, and he fights against it, hoping to blind people to it. As we guard the truth, we should *expect* attacks against it and not be surprised when they happen. We shouldn’t be surprised at the opposition to Paul’s message that we receive from people in the church and from family and friends.



“Not using the Scriptural words ultimately leads to the abandonment of the truth which is communicated by these terms.”

This is a spiritual battle. The mystery is simple and clear to us who have seen the truth, but Satan fights hard to keep others from seeing it. When we encounter opposition to the truth, Paul encourages us, in this epistle of 2 Timothy, to be faithful. In 1:8, he exhorts us to be “partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God,” and in 2:3, to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

Timothy was not to protect and guard this deposit in his own

strength but by the very power of God, “by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us,” verse 14 says.

Pastor and radio preacher Charles Swindoll writes this: “If a minister took this command seriously enough, he...would feel overwhelmed. Imagine the President of the United States giving you the responsibility to guard the nation’s gold reserves at Fort Knox. ‘Here’s a rifle with a few clips of ammunition. Guard the treasure. It’s all up to you!’ Anyone in his right mind would be terrified. If, on the other hand, he said, ‘Guard the treasure. You have the entire military forces at your disposal,’ you would have better than a fighting chance.”²

We are assured along with Timothy that we are not left alone to protect the sound words of Paul’s gospel for today. We have the almighty power of God living within us always, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, to give us the strength and power to carry out this instruction to “hold fast” and “keep” the precious deposit.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul shows how Timothy was to preserve and perpetuate the truth: by

committing and passing this deposit on to faithful men who in turn would pass it on to others. This is the means by which the Holy Spirit keeps and preserves the truth: by it being passed down from generation to generation.

Christ had made the truth known to Paul. Paul gave it to Timothy. Timothy was to pass it on to faithful men. Those faithful men were to pass it on to others, and on and on. We are to keep this succession going today, keeping and preserving the mystery by committing it to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

May the Lord give us the eyes to see the importance of this instruction to “hold fast the form of sound words,” and to guard the precious deposit, and to pass the truth on to others. In this new year, may we resolve to be “old faithful” to the truth of the mystery and stand for it, and to be the “faithful” who will teach others also about this precious truth of the grace of God. □

ENDNOTES

1. David Moore, from *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Sermon Illustrations/Indecision, accessed December 5, 2017, www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/i/indecision.htm.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s New Testament Insights—Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), p. 169.

“The very best of men are only men at the very best. Individually and collectively we all fail, and knowing this, true Bereans will search the Scriptures daily to check into the teachings of even the greatest men of God.”

—C.R. Stam

"Father Forgive Them"



By Pastor Jim Harley, *Community Bible Church*, Lena, Wisconsin

In Luke 23:33 we read the stark reality of what the world, both Jews and Gentiles, did to the Lord Jesus Christ, very God from eternity past to eternity future. They took the sinless Son of God and crucified Him on a Roman cross of execution!

Israel had looked for a "Moses" leader (Deut. 18:15-19) who would wield His shepherd's staff and get Israel released from Gentile bondage and servitude. Moses told Pharaoh "let my people go!" And even though Pharaoh hesitated and later regretted the act, Pharaoh let the nation of Israel go. We read about this in the Old Testament, and how Israel looked for another who would be like Moses and tell the Gentiles (Romans) let my people go!

Israel did not know the Scriptures as well as they thought they did, as we see from 1 Peter 1:10-11, which states, "of which salvation the prophets have inquired and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come onto you: searching what, or what matter of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

The work of Christ that the prophets wrote about must have perplexed them as they wrote it. "What could this possibly mean?" they thought, as they studied their own writing given to them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They studied the writings of the other prophets, who also wrote about Christ. Peter said they searched diligently, wondering what this could possibly mean. We know that they had a fair understanding of the glory that should follow, for Job and others knew that God would ultimately gain control of this earth from Satan and establish his earthly kingdom, which was "the glory that should follow."

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

Job and others believed in a literal, physical resurrection to experience the glory of God. Remember Joseph, before he died, gave directions where to bury his body so he would be resurrected in the holy land of Israel (Gen. 50:25). What really threw these prophets as they read the Scriptures was the sufferings of Christ! What could that possibly mean?

There was ample Scripture on the details of His suffering in such passages as Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53, which explicitly tell of the crucifixion of Christ. But before we get too hard on these Old Testament prophets, let's look at a disciple that was a close companion of the Lord Jesus Christ, who spent three years with him, and showed he was looking for the *glory* of Christ without the sufferings. In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asks His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" Impetuous Peter burst forth with the right answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Peter recognized that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture in the same stature of Moses. So he was thinking His presence in Israel would result in *glory* that should follow in Israel, just as it did in Moses' day. So how could this same Peter deny Israel's Messiah, no less than three times, showing that he did not understand the sufferings of Christ?

Peter, in 1 Peter 1:10-11, said the prophets did not understand how this all fits together, and he knew from first-hand experience. As we continue in the next few verses in Matthew 16:21-23, we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

"Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Peter had absolutely no idea of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, though he had accompanied Him three years. What Peter did not know was the sufferings of Christ. He, like the aforementioned Old Testament prophets, could not fathom such a thing. Yet it was the only way to accomplish man's salvation, destroy the devil (Heb. 2:14) and those aligned with him, and usher in the glory that should follow. The cross had to come before the glory!

Israel, looking for a "Moses" to come, could not see that very God would take on flesh to die the death of the cross. John's words in John 1:29 were so very accurate as John baptized Jesus to identify with Israel



and the rest of fallen humanity. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

After the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, He was buried, and three days later was risen from the grave. It’s interesting how Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ in Romans 1:4: “and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” This says Jesus was shown to be who He was by the resurrection from the dead.

The groundwork for all this was laid in the Lord’s earthly ministry, as Jesus had just driven the moneychangers out of the temple. In John 2:18-22, “Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building and wilt Thou rear it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body. When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the Word which Jesus had said.”

In Acts 1:3, Jesus taught His disciples in His earthly ministry how it all fit together, “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that was to follow” (1 Pet. 1:11). In just ten days after His departure to heaven, the Holy Spirit would be given to them, empowering them to testify about Jesus Christ accurately and in power. Now this takes us back to where we started this article in Luke 23:33 where they took Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, up Mount Calvary, where they crucified Him between two criminals:

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.”

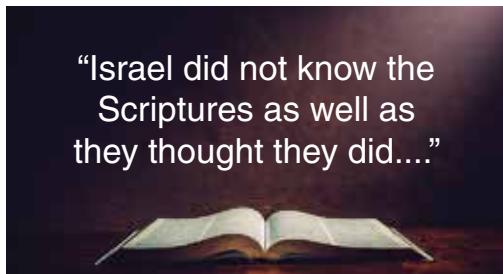
That God the Father would give His only begotten Son to die upon the cruel cross for Israel’s sins, and the sins of the whole world, is hard to fathom, but He did.

What we read in verse 34 is almost harder to believe!

“Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do....”

Jesus Christ prayed to His Heavenly Father to forgive the people of Israel of this crucifixion, because they did not understand the *plan of God*. We don’t have to wonder or speculate if God the Father forgave Israel, the Book of Acts declares that He did. The number of

“Israel did not know the Scriptures as well as they thought they did....”



apostles was brought back to 12 with the choosing of Matthias to replace Judas, and the main spokesman, Peter, preached the prophecy of Joel, proclaiming that Pentecost was the “last days” for the nation of Israel, which would very soon lead up to the Tribulation and then the thousand year reign of Christ upon this earth.

Peter now understood the sufferings of Christ *and* the glory that should follow. The Prophets and Apostles did not understand the sufferings of Christ, but looked for the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 1:10,11). But once they came to understand the sufferings of Christ, why didn’t Israel experience the glory that was to follow?

Israel rejected the forgiveness of Jesus Christ from the Cross, as He prayed in Luke 23:34, “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” They showed the rejection of the Holy Spirit in the stoning Stephen in Acts 7, blaspheming the Holy Spirit and committing the unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31-32).

Today, under the dispensation of grace, Israel is set aside until after the Rapture of the Church, because she rejected Christ’s forgiveness. Israel’s falling is seen in Israel’s three murders:

1. John the Baptist—Israel allowed it.
2. Jesus Christ—Israel demanded it.
3. Stephen—Israel committed it.

Israel is set aside in unbelief today in the dispensation of God’s grace. Paul, in 1 Corinthians, shows the importance of the sufferings of Christ, and how it brought victory to believers in the defeat of Satan:

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:7,8).

God turned the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from something Israel was to repent of (Acts 2:22-24,36-37) to the gospel message that is to be believed today in grace. This is the work of God for man today (1 Cor. 15:1-4). 



Download the BBS app! It works on all Apple and Android smart-phones and devices, and is available from the app stores. It has links to the BBS website, Facebook, and Twitter. You can also read the *Searchlight* on it as well as the daily *Two Minutes with the Bible*, and the weekly *More Minutes with the Bible*!

God's Waiting Room



“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psa. 27:14).

The half-joking prayer, “Lord, I need patience, and I need it RIGHT NOW,” isn’t too far removed from how we approach matters of spiritual growth and living out the will of God in our life. Life is full of waiting: waiting for your phone to charge; waiting in line at the grocery store; waiting in a traffic jam; waiting for a job; waiting for the right spouse; waiting for test results; waiting to be old enough to drive. Steve Farrar of Men’s Leadership Ministries says, “Waiting is like eating gravel. Nobody in their right mind wants or likes to do it.” Waiting is difficult.

The culture we live in is one that doesn’t like to wait. We like instant and fast everything—instant downloads, instant messaging, instant coffee, instant prints, fast-food restaurants, faster internet, fast phones. However, there are many times along our journey through life when God says, “Wait here.” And what looks like 15 minutes turns out to be 15 months, or even 15 years.

The Bible provides numerous examples of people who waited on the Lord. Abraham waited for decades to have the son that God promised him. Joseph had to wait in prison. Moses waited for 40 years on the backside of the desert, tending sheep, before leading the children of Israel out of captivity in Egypt. The Israelites then had to wait 40 years to enter the Promised Land. Simeon waited for the birth of the Messiah. Paul waited during his time of preparation in Arabia.

Waiting is a part of God’s plan and purpose in our lives, and resisting God’s timing and trying to get ahead of the Lord can have serious consequences. Abraham and Sarah found this out when they ran ahead of God, with Hagar bearing Ishmael instead of waiting on God’s promise (Gen. 16).

God works while His people are waiting. Time is not wasted in God’s waiting room. Waiting on the Lord renews our strength (Isa. 40:31). God often uses these times of waiting to prepare us for what lies ahead. Oswald Chambers writes, “We are apt to think that everything that happens to us is to be turned into useful teaching...We shall find that the spheres God brings us into are not meant to teach us something but to make us something.” In those waiting times, God both teaches and makes us something; in us He cultivates patience, Christ-like character, and hope as we trust Him through those times. As we read in Romans 5:3-5a,

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.”

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION

The Word of God teaches, “The wages of sin is death.” When Christ stepped across the stars into this world of sin and woe, death was powerless over Him. Christ knew no sin! He was the sinless, spotless Lamb of God; therefore death could not lay its icy grip upon His shoulder.

Tell me then, how is it that, at the end of His earthly ministry, He’s suffering and dying in shame and disgrace? You see, Christ wasn’t dying for His sins, for *He knew no sin* (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 3:5). He was dying for *your sins* and *my sins* upon that cruel tree. Our sins and iniquities were laid upon Him that He might redeem us back to God through His precious blood.

Now God turns to a lost and dying world with the good news of Calvary. Simply believe that Christ died for your sins *personally*, and rose again the third day, and God will wonderfully save you from the wrath to come, according to the riches of His grace. Do you know the joy of sins forgiven? If not, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 15:3,4).

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler

A Call to Order

Paul told the Corinthians to “let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). We know that this would include even our final arrangements, for God said to Hezekiah, “*Set thine house in order*; for thou shalt die, and not live” (2 Kings 20:1). Surely God is pleased when “a good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children” (Prov. 13:22), but He is *also* pleased when good men and women remember the Lord’s work in their last will and testament as well.

With that in mind, if you are blessed by the ministry of *Berean Bible Society*, why not consider remembering BBS in your final arrangements? If you will, these words from the pen of our Apostle Paul will take on a new meaning that is sure to warm your heart:

“For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ” (Col. 2:5).

—Pastor Kurth



THE MAKING OF AN APOSTLE

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

When the movie *Star Wars* debuted in 1977, the special effects were considered so revolutionary that the film's release spawned a follow-up documentary called *The Making of Star Wars*. This explanatory work gave fans of the movie a behind-the-scenes look at how the dazzling special effects were created.

In the Scriptures, the apostleship of Paul was similarly considered so revolutionary that he was frequently forced to explain how it was that he had been made an apostle. For instance, men must have been saying that he was called to be an apostle *by the will of men* and not by the will of God, or he wouldn't have had to introduce his last epistle by writing,

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:1).

If you are wondering how anyone could have argued that Paul's apostleship was *of men* and not of God, his opponents found it easier to make their case than you might think. After all, the word “apostle”

means *sent one*, or *one who is sent* (cf. Mark 3:14), and Paul's antagonists could point out that *he* was “sent” by “certain prophets and teachers” (Acts 13:1-3)—in other words, *by men*.

But those who would mark the beginning of Paul's apostleship there with those men in Antioch are forgetting that long before Paul was sent forth by these men, *the Lord Himself* spoke to him on Damascus Road about “the Gentiles,” adding, “unto whom now *I send thee*” (Acts 26:17). Clearly, Paul was made an apostle *on the very day of his conversion*.

If it be insisted that Paul's apostleship began in Acts 13, I would submit that even there God made it clear that He approved when those men sent Paul forth as an apostle, for in the very next verse we read that he was *also* “sent forth *by the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 13:4). This is similar to how the eleven apostles selected Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26), but God put His stamp of approval on their choice when those apostles were “filled with

the Holy Ghost" immediately afterward (Acts 2:4). In both cases the selection of these apostles *by men* was authenticated *by the Holy Spirit*.



The Making of a Servant

But it takes more than a divine appointment to make a man an apostle, it takes a humble willingness to serve the Lord as well. Paul exemplified just such a spirit when he did not object to leaving the name Saul behind (Acts 13:9). If you're wondering why he might have objected to this, it was because the name "Saul" means *desired*. You'll remember that when the people of Israel "desired a king...God gave unto them Saul" (Acts 13:21). But the name "Paul" means *little* or *small*. An unsaved man like Saul of Tarsus would never have changed his name from *desired* to *small*, but after he got saved, *he no longer wished to be desired of men*. From the moment of his conversion, he wanted to look *small* in the eyes of men so that the Lord would loom *large* in their eyes.

May I say to you that if you are looking for happiness in life, you might want to follow Paul's example, for that is the only path of joy for a child of God. It's human

nature to want to be desired by men, but it is an evidence of *divine* nature in a man to be willing to look small in the eyes of others so they desire the Lord instead. And it was in that path of life that Paul found the joy that he never could have known as Saul.

If you know your Bible, you know that the *other* Saul in Scripture pursued a *different* path in life. King Saul started out looking small in his own eyes, but soon got too big for his britches and fell into rebellion against God. When God sent Samuel to anoint him king (1 Sam. 9:15,16), the prophet told him,

"...on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee...?"

"And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjaminite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" (vv. 20,21).

As you can see, Saul considered himself less than the least of all the Jews in Israel, and unworthy to be anointed their king. But later, after Saul sinned and rebelled against God, Samuel told him,

"When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?"

"...Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord...?" (1 Sam. 15:17-19).

Do you see how King Saul traveled a path in life that was the complete *opposite* of that traveled by the Apostle Paul? We know that, as Saul of Tarsus, Paul began his life as someone who

was desired of men, for he later wrote,

“...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

The word “yet” here clearly indicates that Paul *used to* please men during his notorious career as Saul of Tarsus. The reason politicians and religious charlatans try to please men is to become *desired* of men, and Saul was a little bit of both. But he went from thinking himself worthy to be desired of men to thinking of himself as “less than the least of all saints” (Eph. 3:8). And he did it, as he said to the Philippians, that “Christ shall be *magnified* in my body” and loom large in the eyes of others (Phil. 1:20).

If you’re still seeking to please men in order to be desired of them, why not give some serious consideration to Paul’s admonition to “put on...humbleness of mind” (Col. 3:12) so God can send *you* forth as His ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20). Remember, when Saul was little in his own sight, God could use him. But all that changed when he became big in his own eyes, thinking, as it were, “I’m the king of Israel, so I can do as I please.” Similarly, it is when you start thinking that you are the king of your life and can do as you please, that they can stick the proverbial fork in you, for spiritually speaking—*you’re done.*

The Making of a Messenger

It also takes *a message* to make a man an apostle, and our text describes the message God gave Paul as “the promise of life”

(2 Tim. 1:1), that is, *eternal life*. This promise was one “which God, that cannot lie, *promised before the world began*” (Titus 1:2). When Adam sinned, it didn’t catch God off guard and force Him to wonder, “What am I going to do now? I know! I’ll have my Son die for men’s sins!” Rather, He knew before the foundation of the world that men would sin, and *planned* to have His Son bear our sins “in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). This allowed the Father to make this promise of eternal life to anyone who would accept His terms of salvation in any dispensation.

In time past, this promise was limited to believers in Israel. God told the father of those people,

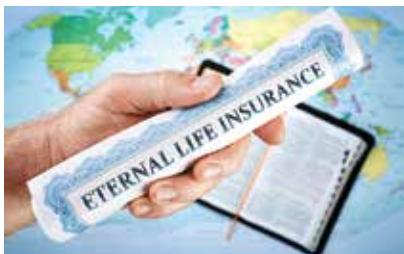
“I will give unto thee, and...thy seed...the land...for an everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8).

For Abraham to possess the promised land forever, he was going to have to *live* forever. Inherent in that promise was a promise of eternal life!

**“...he wasn’t
hoping for
some
last-minute
reprieve
from the
governor...”**

Many centuries later, the Apostle Paul explained how Gentiles like us get in on that promise by *grace*, saying,

“...if ye be Christ’s, then are YE Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29).



Heirs according to what promise? The promise of eternal life!

Now, extreme dispensationalists object when we mid-Acts dispensationalists point out connections like this with the people of Israel. But beloved, there's only one kind of eternal life! And believers in Israel could say that God promised it to them, and we can say that God promised it to us as well! This is because God's promise of eternal life for both peoples are based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, something that Paul could say happened "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3,4), but something he could also say took place "according to my gospel" (2 Tim. 2:8).

Here we must pause to remind ourselves who it is that is talking about this promise of life. As Paul penned these words in the opening line of his last epistle, he was in prison *on death row*. He knew, as he wrote later in this epistle, that "the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4:6). But he wasn't hoping for some last-minute reprieve from the governor, promising him a few more years of *physical* life. He was looking beyond this life to the next life. He

was looking past any hope of life from the governor to "the hope of eternal life." Thus it was a man who knew he was about to die who was talking about the promise of life. How precious "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" grows the nearer we get to the end of life's road.

The Making of Disciples

"To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (2 Tim. 1:2).

The making of an apostle will inevitably lead to *the making of disciples*, and Paul had one in Timothy. Timothy was raised on the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15), but we know he didn't believe them and become a kingdom saint because the apostle calls him "my own son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2). That shows that Paul was more than just Timothy's *instructor*, he was his spiritual *father* (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15). We know Paul led him to the Lord during his first trip to Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:6-20), for when he returned to those cities, Luke tells us that "a certain *disciple* was there, named Timotheus" (Acts 16:1).

Now it is significant that Paul calls Timothy his "dearly beloved" son (2 Tim. 1:2), for whenever the apostle used that phrase he was always asking God's people *to do something*, as we see in the following examples:

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath..." (Rom. 12:19).

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10:14).

“...dearly beloved...I fear...lest there be debates, envyings, wraths” (2 Cor. 12:19,20).

“My brethren dearly beloved...stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:1,2).

“Paul...unto Philemon our dearly beloved...I beseech thee for my son Onesimus...if he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account” (Phile. 1:1,10,18).

When Paul exhorted the saints to obey his instructions by reminding them that they were dearly beloved, the apostle was reflecting how today, in the dispensation of grace, God asks us to obey Him because we are dearly beloved of *Him*. This is a dispensational principle called *grace motivation*. Under grace, we are motivated to serve the Lord by His love for us.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

The Making of Our Motivation

As you can see, under grace Paul exhorts us to serve the Lord because of His love for us—that is, because we are beloved of *Him*. That’s the opposite of the way things were under the Law, when God told the people of Israel that He would love them *if they served Him*, saying,

“...if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them...the LORD thy God shall...love thee, and bless thee...” (Deut. 7:12,13).

Under the Law, the people of Israel were beloved of God *if they obeyed Him*. But under grace, we *already* have God’s unconditional love, we are *already* “beloved of God” (Rom. 1:7) and “beloved of the Lord” (2 Thes. 2:13). In spite of our unholiness, His blood *has made us* “holy and beloved” in God’s sight (Col. 3:12). We are exhorted to obey Him *because* we are beloved of *Him*. That’s why Paul told the Corinthians,

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).



“This is a dispensational principle called grace motivation.”

Here Paul was saying that we already *have* the promise of the Father’s unconditional love that God pledged to the people of Israel under the New Covenant he had just quoted (2 Cor. 6:18 cf. Jer. 31:9), and we should obey Him *because* of it.

All of this means that Timothy’s motivation to do the things Paul went on to tell him to do in his letter to him was based on more

than just knowing he was beloved of Paul. His motivation to “be not...ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Tim. 1:8), his incentive to “hold fast the form of sound words” he had heard of Paul (1:13) and keep “that good thing” which was committed to him (1:14)¹ was based on knowing he was beloved of God Himself.

If you are looking for motivation to do those things, if you are looking for incentive to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1), “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2:3), “strive for masteries” (2:5), and motivation to do all the other things Paul told Timothy to do in this epistle, you need look no further than Calvary, where “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). You see, if you are saved, you are “accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6), the beloved Son of God (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5); and if God has accepted you, you should present your body as a living sacrifice that is “acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1,2). As Paul says there, it is the only “reasonable” thing to do.

The Making of a Believer

Finally, did you notice that Paul said that the promise of eternal life of which Paul spoke in our text was found “in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:1). In other words, it was found in a Person, and not in a book. I say that because the Jews in the Lord’s day thought otherwise. The Lord had to say to them,

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life:

and they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

The Jews thought they had eternal life in their Bibles, in the religion that their Bible gave them. The Lord had to tell them, as it were, “You fellas have it all wrong. God didn’t give you a book to save you from your sins, he gave you a book to tell you about a Saviour who would save you from your sins.” If you’re reading this page and you’re not saved, you need to know that salvation isn’t in a religion or in a book, not even in the only book that God ever gave, the Bible. It’s in Christ! The Bible just tells us about Christ.



By now any New Year’s resolutions you’ve made to be a better person have probably failed. You are no more beloved of God than you were at the end of December. Why not believe on the One who was “delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25), the One who only asks that you believe that to be saved and become beloved of God? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). █

ENDNOTE

1. The grace message.

Question Box

"In the November Question Box you answered that it is okay to eat blood. What about Acts 15:20,29?"

When Paul began preaching that Gentiles didn't need to be circumcised or keep the law of Moses to be saved, the leaders of the Hebrew kingdom church were concerned, and convened in Jerusalem to consider the matter (Acts 15:1-6). When Paul later wrote that he "went up...to Jerusalem" to attend this council "*by revelation*" (Gal. 2:1,2), that meant the Lord *revealed* to him that he should respectfully seek approval of his new ministry from the leaders of the Hebrew kingdom church. Thanks to Peter's testimony about *his* experience with the Gentiles (Acts 15:7-11), James gave this approval, saying,

"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God" (Acts 15:19).

But he added,

"But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, *and from blood*" (v. 20).

James perceived the grace that was given to Paul (Gal. 2:9), and so recognized that the new Gentile converts were not under the law. But he wasn't sure what not being under the law would involve! You see, the details of the revelation of the mystery weren't given to him, they were given to Paul. And so, while James perceived that he could not withstand this new revelation from God to accept the Gentiles any more than Peter could (cf. Acts 11:17), he directed that while the Gentiles were not under the law, they should at least refrain from things that members of the Hebrew kingdom church would find offensive.

But we know that James was in no position to determine God's policy in the Body of Christ because Paul later *reversed* the Jerusalem council's directive that the Gentiles "abstain from meats offered to idols" (Acts 15:29 cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-6; 10:23-27). And when Paul *also* taught that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused" when it came to abstaining from meats (1 Tim. 4:3,4), it is clear that the council's instruction that the Gentiles abstain from eating "things strangled, and from blood" was similarly not binding on the Gentiles.

Just remember, while you are free to enjoy blood soup, or other such dishes, Paul makes it clear that you should *not* enjoy them in the presence of someone who is weak in the faith when it comes to their understanding of things like this (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8:7-13; 10:28-33).

—Pastor Kurth

BBS Letter Excerpts



From California:

"I was so impressed with the new *Transformed by Grace* program and how kind and gracious you were. Thank you!"

From Arizona:

"Enjoying Pastor Kevin's morning TV Bible lessons very much!"

From Kenya:

"I have been receiving the *Searchlight* and it has been a very fruitful and inspiring magazine that has helped me grow spiritually and in Christ's service as a Bible college teacher and as a pastor...I now understand the place of the apostle Paul in the ministry of the Church and would like to know more still."

From our Inbox:

"Pastor Kurth...I must say I am really enjoying your studies in Galatians, Colossians, etc. After all these years, the gaps in my theology are starting to be filled by your challenges to compare Scripture with Scripture." (It's the only safe way to study the Bible! -Ed).

From Indiana:

"It is amazing to me that so few people see the difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace, and how rightly dividing answers so many questions concerning contrasting Scriptures. But then again I went for many, many years not seeing the difference as well."

From our Inbox:

"Thank you for this outstanding More Minutes With the Bible [Pastor Paul M. Sadler's *The Believer's Inner Conflict*] that covers things 'where the rubber touches the road' so to speak."

From Maryland:

"Pastor Sadler, we deeply loved being a part of the *Grace Family Bible Church* conference. It was a gift being around like-minded believers. There are many of us! Just not in Maryland. We gained from your messages and enjoyed meeting you and your wife. This was the highlight of the year. Please come back to this area, many more people need to hear the Word, rightly divided."

From Iowa:

"The November issue was exceptionally good. On page 14, Pastor Stam's presentation of prophecy and the mystery is so good. I want to share it with some friends." (Now you can! Pastor Stam's presentation is now available in tract form. -Ed).

From Florida:

"Your article, 'Find It in His Grace,' is the most wonderful thing I've ever read on forgiveness. You ought to make it into a tract."

From our Inbox:

"If we are saved by grace then what did Jesus mean when He said if we don't forgive, God in heaven will not forgive us?"

From Colorado:

"We are enjoying the October *Searchlight* edition. The August conference in Denver was a particular blessing to us. Please accept this contribution for the materials and for your faithfulness to God's Word. You are in our prayers."

From our Inbox:

"Great lesson! Thank you so much for encouragement...there is a great improvement in my spiritual life through your guidance. Last Sunday I was elected as a mercy minister in our church, and now I would ask for more of your guidance."

From Ohio:

"My mother-in-law...has been receiving the *Searchlight*...Recently, my son... ordered his own subscription...as they both like to write notes and highlight sections as they study. Since he ordered his subscription, Mom stopped receiving hers...This has caused some disappointment for her. She loves her *own* magazine...I love the fact that my 14-year-old son took the initiative to order his own and definitely want him to continue to receive it. I would appreciate someone double checking the subscriptions." (Gladly! –Ed).

From India:

"Some time back, we received ten copies of your tract 'Gambling With Eternity,' along with other assorted tracts, from a friend in USA...Recently we distributed them in a heathen festival here, and we were amazed at the miraculous results. Brother, you have some powerful tracts for these last perilous days! Two precious families of about ten people have been led to Christ through your tracts."

From Georgia:

"I enjoyed Pastor Sadler's *Break with Tradition* article in the October *Searchlight*. I have lots of friends who follow tradition and 'teach what Jesus taught,' following His earthly ministry. I tell them that I am following what Jesus taught; the difference is that I am following His most recent teachings (1 Cor. 11:1; 14:37)."

From Indiana:

"Sure like your TV program on Monday morning!"

From New York:

"Thank you so much for the *Searchlight*. It helps me in my walk with Jesus...It comes straight from the Scriptures...Please keep me on the mailing list until I go to be with the Lord, or we meet Him in the air at the Rapture." (Gladly! –Ed).

From the Philippines:

"I am making outlines out of what I get from the books and articles of BBS. This is my way of being a student of BBS/BBI even indirectly, and of course, rightly divided. I am also making outlines of the topics or articles from *Searchlights* for services. All of these will I also 'commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.' I am a shy person but thanks be to God I received boldness in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thank you all for all of your help!"

From New Jersey:

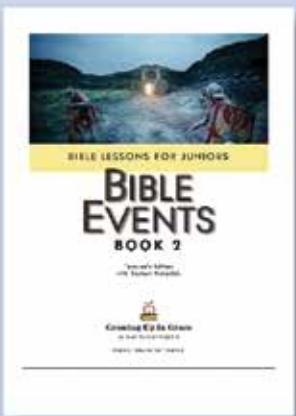
"Just being able to communicate with another believer gives me internal peace. I have had so many questions rolling around in my head and it feels so good to be able to express to another who understands. I have a peace now that I haven't had before."



"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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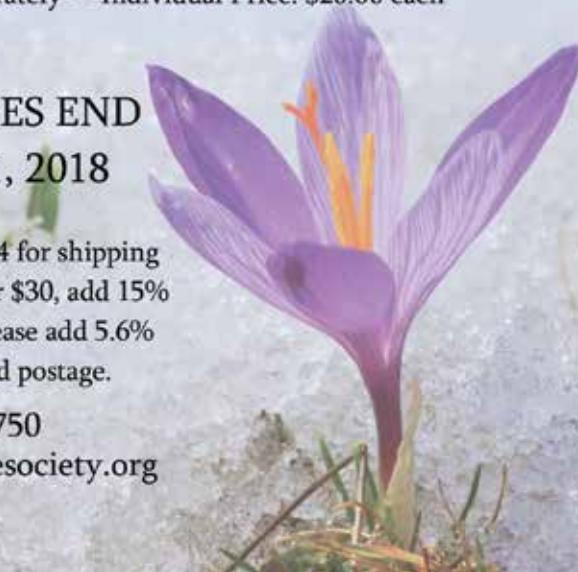
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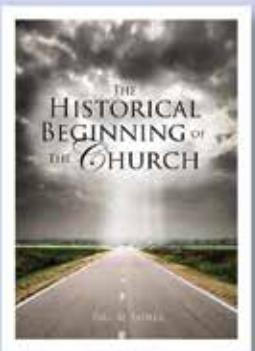
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As we begin a new year, we look forward to a new start in 2018. These books and booklets help us see clearly the beginning of the Church, the Body of Christ.

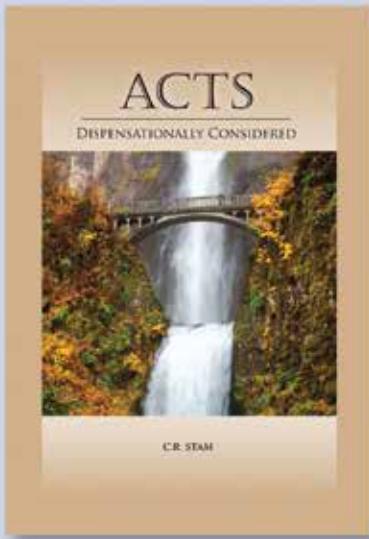
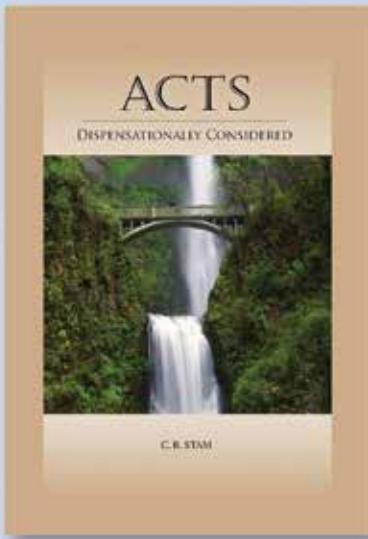


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News and Announcements

A Chance to Join the Team! In November, we announced that Kelly Olesiak is getting married and will be leaving BBS in March. That means a full time position in our mailroom will need to be filled in short order! If you live in the Milwaukee area or are willing to relocate, why not consider joining our ministry? Your duties would include maintaining our literature inventory, preparing orders for shipment, keeping up with the changes that need to be made to our *Searchlight* mailing list on a daily basis, and much more. If you would like to help us “make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,” send your resumé to berean@bereanbiblesociety.org.

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice” (Rom. 12:15): The saints of *Grace Bible Church* of Bowler, Wisconsin, have called Doug LaPoint to pastor their assembly. Doug served for many years as a Bible teacher at *Grace Bible Church* of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, under the ministry of Pastor Paul Turner, who has nothing but good things to say of Doug. Pastor LaPoint and *Grace Bible Church* will now move forward together in the Lord’s work, “ye also helping together by prayer” (2 Cor. 1:11).

More Reason to Rejoice! *Kettle Moraine Bible Church* of West Bend, Wisconsin, has called Aaron Harris to shepherd their flock. Aaron served as the assistant pastor at the *Altoona Bible Church* in Altoona, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Pastor Stewart McClelland. Pastor Harris also serves on the board of directors of *Things To Come Mission*, a ministry of which he will continue to be a part as he takes on this new position of leadership at KMBC.

We’re not ignoring you! If you submitted a Bible question on the “Ask a Question” page of our website and didn’t receive a reply, it is most likely because you didn’t enter your email address correctly. When we reply to a Bible question and it bounces back as “undeliverable,” we know that an incorrect email address was entered, but we are helpless to do anything about it. So if you are still waiting for a reply to your Bible question, submit it again and we’ll do our best to respond in a timely fashion.



On the cover this month, *Marblehead Lighthouse*, built in 1821, is still standing strong as the oldest lighthouse in continuous operation on all of the Great Lakes. Gracefully set on the rocky limestone shore of Lake Erie, this beacon became an Ohio State Park in 1998.

Bible Study Books

C. R. Stam & Paul M. Sadler

(This is only a partial price list, for a full price list
please see our website or contact BBS.)

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|--|---------|
| Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Volume 1 (Hardcover)..... | \$21.50 |
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—G. K. Chesterton