

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2019



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This month's front cover is the Portland Breakwater Light, in Portland, Maine.

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,

In January 2006, I had the privilege to take a short-term mission trip to the Philippines with Missionary Joe Watkins. I also traveled with Brothers John LaVier, Jr. and Dean Reinheimer. It was encouraging and challenging to see the Lord's remarkable work being done in the Philippines. Their love for the truth and their tireless zeal are readily apparent; the goals they set with respect to organization and structure are lofty; and their undaunted focus on planting local churches is impressive. Traveling from north to south, we visited a number of the Bible schools in the Philippines. We had the opportunity to speak before large classes of young people being trained for ministry and we visited just a few of the more than 400 local churches that have been established there.

As we were driving from place to place, Pastor Watkins would often share his memories of the early days in the Philippines, working with fellow missionary Vernon Anderson and others. One story in particular that left a lasting impression on me. He recalled that he and his wife, Pauline, went to the Philippines on the support of one person who promised to send \$50 a month. But when they got there, the \$50 per month never came. They prayed hard. Not long after, a gift of \$3,500 came from an older woman in the United States, which was which was her life savings. From that \$3,500, they were able to start a Bible school, and from that Bible school, leaders were trained; the leaders, in turn, planted churches, and the ministry expanded. I remarked to Pastor Watkins, "Think of the fruit from that one gift, and how that lady will be rewarded one day because of all the Lord has done from it!" He replied, "That's absolutely right."

This story reminds me of Philippians 4:17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." When we write about giving, it is not just because we desire the gift of money which is needed for this work of faith, but, as it was with our apostle, we "desire fruit that may abound to your account." Giving by the Lord's people yields not only the fruits of ministry, but also yields the fruit of heavenly reward that abounds to the giver's account. Financial gifts in support of the Lord's work will be honored with eternal rewards from our Savior's hand at the Bema Seat.

Please remember *Berean Bible Society* in your regular giving in 2019. Please also consider including *Berean Bible Society* in your estate planning and will. In doing so, fruit will continue to abound to your account for years to come after your homegoing. None of us will ever regret giving to the Lord's work. It will be remembered forever.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Kevin Sadler, President

Berean Bible Society

Conference Schedule

2019

BBF WINTER CONFERENCE, January 26-27, Inverness, Florida
Pastors Kevin Sadler, Ken Lawson, John Fredericksen, and others!
Contact: Ken Lawson (352) 726-9972

ORLANDO SPECIAL MEETINGS, February 3, Orlando, Florida
Pastor Kevin Sadler—Contact: Fred Bekemeyer (321) 303-2480

TUPELO BIBLE CONFERENCE, March 16-17, Tupelo, Mississippi
Pastor Kevin Sadler—Contact: John Smith (662) 706-4086

PHOENIX BIBLE CONFERENCE, March 22-24, Sun City West, Arizona
Pastor Ricky Kurth—Contact: Mark Dilley (623) 377-3071

NORTHEAST OHIO BIBLE CONFERENCE, May 3-5, Ashtabula, Ohio
Pastor Ricky Kurth—Contact: David Adams (440) 992-9008

BEST OF ISRAEL TOUR, May 7-16—Pastor Kevin Sadler, Dr. Robert Nix
Contact: Jim Tollar (262) 255-4750

BBF SUMMER CONFERENCE, June 16-20, Tipp City, Ohio
Pastors Kevin Sadler, Ricky Kurth, John Fredericksen, Jeff Seekins,
Ken Lawson, and others! —Contact: Tim Kenney (937) 325-9316

PENNSYLVANIA SPECIAL MEETING, July 29, York, Pennsylvania
Pastor Kevin Sadler—Contact: Evelyn Ward (717) 755-4222

BITELY BIBLE CONFERENCE, August 2-4, Bitely, Michigan
Pastor Kevin Sadler and others!—Contact: Ken Lyon (231) 689-1941

BBS REGIONAL CONFERENCE, August 23-24, Solomons, Maryland
Pastor Kevin Sadler—Contact: Janna Gestner (301) 866-1616

BBS REGIONAL CONFERENCE, September 20-22, Kalispell, Montana
Pastor Kevin Sadler—Contact: Martha Olechowski (406) 407-8135

ENGLAND SPECIAL MEETINGS, October 12-13, Alcester, UK
Pastor Ricky Kurth—Contact: Marcus Emerson +44 789 762982

There may be changes and additions to these conferences. The BBS website and the BBS app have more comprehensive information on these conferences and will be kept up-to-date.



GIVE THE JEWS CREDIT

(A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HAGGAI)

PASTOR RICKY KURTH

Editor

Perhaps you've heard of the man whose wallet was stolen, along with his credit cards. He decided not to report the loss, however, since whoever stole it was spending less than his wife!

Speaking of credit cards and giving people credit, have you ever heard the expression, "Give credit where credit is due"? I ask because whenever preachers and Bible teachers talk about the Jews, it is almost always in a *negative* way. "You know those Jews shouldn't have murmured in the wilderness." Or, "Those Jews shouldn't have kept falling into idolatry."

Now I'm not saying that preachers *shouldn't* say things like that. Speaking of those very sins among the Jews (1 Cor. 10:5-10), Paul wrote,

"...all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition..." (1 Cor. 10:11).

Well, if those things happened for examples, and preachers never *use* them for examples, how is God supposed to admonish us? So there is certainly nothing wrong with pointing out the sins and

failings of the Jews as faithfully as we point out the failings of the Corinthians and other Gentile members of the Body of Christ.

But having said that, preachers need to be just as faithful to give the Jews credit when credit is due them. And we find a shining example of this as we return to our study of the Book of Haggai.

"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD" (Haggai 1:12).

If you are familiar with this prophet and his prophecy, you know that God had commanded His people to rebuild His temple upon their return to the promised land after their captivity in Babylon. They started out well, but got sidetracked when the king issued them a cease and desist order (Ezra 4:17-22). That's when God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah

to get His people back on track (Ezra 4:24-5:2). And as you can see from Haggai's words here in our text, they responded well to the admonition of their prophets, much to their credit!

A Group Effort

Now when Ezra adds that they resumed work on the temple, "and with them were the prophets of God helping them" (Ezra 5:2), that didn't mean Haggai and Zechariah picked up hammers and saws and helped with the actual construction work. They may have, but these men of God might also have been as inept as I am when it comes to building things. It's more likely that they helped in a *spiritual* way, by reminding the Jews that God's people aren't supposed to obey the king if he orders us to do something *contrary* to God's will. And God wanted that temple built!

But did you notice that Haggai makes special mention of a man named *Zerubbabel*, saying that *even he* obeyed the voice of the Lord? He was the "governor of Judah" (Hag. 1:1). That means that Haggai's words had even reached the highest office in the land, and stirred the heart of Israel's civic leader! But when the prophet mentions that Israel's high priest *also* joined the people in resuming work on the temple, that means that *everyone* from the governor to the priest to the people pitched in. If that sounds heavenly, that's because all of this is a type of the coming kingdom of heaven on earth.

In that kingdom, a believing remnant will be back in the

promised land, as we see pictured in Haggai's day, and everyone from the governor on down will obey the voice of the Lord. And we know that what we're seeing here in Haggai is a type of all that, for after the Jews finished building the temple, God told Zechariah to do something *else* that was a type of the kingdom:

"Take of them of the captivity...which are come from Babylon, and...take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest" (Zech. 6:10,11).

If you know your Bible, you might be wondering why God would instruct His prophet to set "crowns" (plural) on the head of the high priest. The high priest was only supposed to wear *one* crown (Ex. 29:6 39:30,31), one that would identify him as the spiritual leader of the nation. So why would God have Zechariah place *two* crowns on His priest's head? Well, the only *other* man in Israel to wear a crown was *the king* (2 Kings 11:11,12), the political leader of the nation. So God had to be telling Zechariah to crown Joshua *both priest and king*.

Mixing Politics and Religion

The problem with that was, priests in Israel *weren't allowed* to be king, and kings weren't allowed to be priests! Saul lost his throne when he dared offer an animal sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:9-14). So why would God want His high priest crowned with two crowns, one to make him priest and one to make him king, now that Israel

was back in the land? Surely it was to illustrate something that will be true in the kingdom, something that God was asking His prophet to act out by crowning His high priest with two crowns.

“...grace believers... sometimes wrongly conclude...we don’t have to fear God under grace.”

F E A R

God often asked His prophets to act out their prophecies (cf. Acts 21:10,11), something that was not always easy for them to do. I mean, imagine being told to walk “naked and barefoot three years for a sign...upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia” (Isa. 20:1-3). In those days, the Jews were looking to those nations to save them from the Assyrians, so God had his prophet illustrate how those nations couldn’t help Israel, for the king of Assyria was about to lead *them* away captive, “naked and barefoot,” as well.

Or imagine being told not to cry when your wife dies, as “a sign” to your people (Ezekiel 24:15-24). In this case, Nebuchadnezzar was about to destroy Israel’s temple, and He didn’t want them crying about it. It was their own disobedience that was bringing that judgment upon them, so God was saying, as it were, “When it happens, don’t come crying to Me.”

Well, that’s what God was doing with Zechariah. He was having him act out a prophecy. In the coming kingdom, when redeemed Israel is back in her land, the Lord Jesus will be *both* priest and king to His people, as Zechariah went on to prophesy in the very next verses, saying,

“Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH... He shall build the temple of the LORD...and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne” (Zech. 6:12,13).

That Branch is Christ, as we see in Jeremiah 23:5:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

If it sounds strange to call Christ a branch, remember we talk about having a family “tree.” Well, in the Lord’s family tree, He was a branch in David’s family. And as Zechariah says, in the kingdom of heaven on earth, He will be both priest and king.

And Zechariah *also* says that the Lord will “build the temple of the LORD.” So when Zerubbabel and Joshua went back to work building the house of God, Israel’s governor and high priest were acting out *their* part in this prophetic picture of the kingdom, just as Zechariah acted out his part when he crowned Joshua with two crowns. Zerubbabel and Joshua typified how Israel’s Priest-King will rebuild His temple in the kingdom.

But now, if the Lord is going to be both king and priest to Israel in that day, and rule the world from Israel, this means that He will be both the spiritual and political leader *of the entire world*. If that sounds heavenly in light of the political corruption found in literally every government on earth to some degree, it should! That's part of what will *make* the kingdom *to be* heaven on earth!

And if you think that sounds positively *dreamy*, you don't have to lust after Israel's kingdom to partake of this blessing. The Lord is already the spiritual leader of your life. If you'll also make Him the political leader of your life, the *king* of your life, and let Him hold o'er your being *absolute sway*, as the hymnist wrote, you can have a little bit of heaven on earth *right now*, in *your* life! If you don't believe me, try it and see! What have you got to lose?

The Fear of God

Now when Haggai says that the people feared the Lord (Hag. 1:12), they feared with good reason! The prophet had just finished pointing out to them that God was already beginning to *judge* them for not rebuilding His house, chastening them in ways that He had warned them would come whenever they disobeyed Him (1:6 cf. Lev. 26:14-33; Deut. 28:15-41). And they knew their Bible well enough to know that both of those passages end with a promise from God that He would allow them to be taken into captivity if they ignored His initial judgments. And they had just come *out* of captivity. The thought

of going *back* into captivity struck fear in their hearts!

Now grace believers who know that God doesn't punish us with physical chastisement when we disobey Him sometimes wrongly conclude from this that we don't have to fear God under grace. But then they come across verses like Philippians 2:12, where Paul tells us to "work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling*." After that, they often write us here at *Berean Bible Society* to ask why we should fear God under grace.

Well, the reason you should fear God under grace is: you should be afraid to *presume* on His grace. You ought to be afraid to grieve the God who says that He won't chasten you physically if you disobey Him. You ought to be afraid to grieve the Spirit that seals you (Eph. 4:30) "unto the day of redemption," in the same way a godly husband fears to grieve the wife who has likewise promised never to leave him. That's why it is very Pauline to say to one another, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*" (2 Cor. 7:1).

As we read on in our text, God says,

"Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD" (Hag. 1:13).

Did you know that Haggai is the only man in the Bible that is called "the LORD's messenger"? All of God's prophets and apostles were His messengers, of course, since they all delivered a message from Him to His people.

But Haggai is the only one given this spiritually-prestigious title.



That's because he is called the Lord's messenger "in the Lord's message." The Lord's message to Israel was, as Haggai went on to say, "I am with you." That was the central message of God to Israel throughout His dealings with them. It was *the* message He wanted His people to hear from Him, so *the* message was delivered by a man called *the* messenger.

On One Condition

But there was something they had to remember when it came to God being with them, as Azariah the prophet warned them:

"The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him...but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15:2).

Under the Law, God being with the people of Israel was *conditional*. He was with them *as long as they were with Him*. But don't let preachers put *you* under that condition, for "we are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:15). You're not under the law of conditional blessing. God is with you whether you are with Him or not—*another* reason not to grieve Him.

But now, I have a question for you. If you know this passage, you know that the Jews hadn't actually resumed building the temple yet. It isn't until we come to the *next* verse in Haggai's prophecy that the prophet describes how they returned to the job site:

"And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God" (Hag. 1:14).

Well, if they didn't continue building the temple until verse 14, how could God say that He was with them in verse 13? According to his fellow prophet Azariah, God *couldn't* be with them unless they were with Him, right? So how could God say He was with them if they hadn't yet rejoined Him in His building project?

To answer, we have to peek ahead to the next verse in our text, where we learn *when* they resumed work on God's house. Haggai says it was

"In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king" (Hag. 1:15).

When it says they strapped on their tool belts again in the 24th day of the 6th month, that's 23 days after Haggai started preaching (cf. 1:1). And don't forget what Haggai told them to do to get started:

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house..." (1:8).

So if God says He was with them in verse 13 because they “obeyed” Him before they resumed work on the temple in verse 14, we can only conclude that they must have at least obeyed the prophet’s *initial* instructions and had gone to the mountain and obtained the wood needed for this rebuilding project. And when God saw them do that, *He saw that they were with Him.*

What a precious lesson for us! Whenever we fall away from walking with the Lord, the way back to serving Him always seems like a long, formidable trek. But nothing could be further from the truth! The truth is, once you determine to resume living for the Lord, God is fully aware of the first few stumbling steps you make as you resume your walk with Him. He’s been watching and waiting for those first few faltering steps as eagerly as new parents watch and wait for the first steps of their firstborn child—and He is as *delighted*



with those first steps as they are. So if *you* have fallen away from walking with the Lord, take heart—and take a few steps! The way back to serving Him is not nearly as long as it seems.

Get Stirred Up!

Finally, when Haggai says that “the LORD *stirred up* the spirit” of the governor, the high priest, and the people (Hag. 1:14), don’t forget *how* God stirs people up.

When we hear God say, “I will stir up the Medes...and Babylon...shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. 13:17-19), don’t get the idea that God reached into the heart of Darius, king of the Medes, and forced him to attempt a daring assault on Babylon against his better judgment. Since the Bible never says that, it is more likely that someone showed him Daniel’s prophecy that the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians would be the ones to topple the seemingly invincible fortress of Babylon (Dan. 2:39 cf. 8:20), and armed with this assurance, his heart was stirred to launch the offensive that brought an end to Babylon’s world dominance (Dan. 5:26-31).

Beloved, God never forces anyone to do anything against their will. When He wants something done, He always uses His Word to accomplish it. And it was the Word of God that came to Israel through Haggai and Zechariah that stirred God’s people to finish the work on His temple.

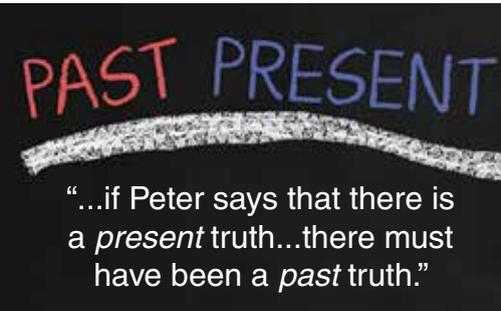
But that means that if *you* don’t feel stirred up about the things of the Lord, if you seem to have no interest in being involved in the work of the Lord, you need to get in the Book and *stay* in the Book! God doesn’t have a “Plan B” when it comes to piquing your interest in serving Him. He works only through His Word in your life as well.

Get to Church!

If you need help in getting stirred up, I would encourage you to get to church, for it is a pastor's job to get God's people stirred up with His Word! Look what Peter said to his Jewish hearers in 2 Peter 1:12,13:

"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

"Yea, I think it meet...to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."



Did you notice Peter said *they already knew* the things of which he was about to remind them. Beloved, you may know the Word of God well, but don't think that means you can stay home from church. A pastor can *get you stirred up* about the things you know! Of course, if you don't have a local grace church, and God's Word isn't stirring you up to start one, you may have to move to where there is one. But it would be worth it! Imagine being able to get *stirred up* about the Lord *every week!*

By the way, did you notice Peter said that his readers were "established in *the present truth*"? That's a good verse to show to

people who oppose dispensational truth on the grounds that "truth is truth, the truth never changes." Ever heard that? But if Peter says that there is a *present* truth, that means there must have been a *past* truth. The past truth he had in mind was the old covenant of the law, and the present truth of which he was speaking was the new testament of grace. But as a member of the Body of Christ, the truth in which *you* need to be established is the more *specific* grace truth of *the mystery* (Rom. 16:25).

By the way, when Haggai mentions that "the remnant of the people...*came and did work in the house of the LORD*" (Hag. 1:14), that's the second time he has mentioned the remnant in a favorable light. In verse 12 he described how "the remnant of the people, *obeyed the voice of the LORD.*"

This reminds me of how Daniel mentions "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" *thirteen times* in Daniel 3, repeating their names over and over, most likely because he was so very proud of the way they refused to bow to the will of the king when he ordered them to worship his image. Haggai no doubt found equal pride in the way the faithful remnant was heeding his words and returning to the service of God, and so he mentions their faithfulness again in verse 14.

Get to Work!

There was certainly good reason to be proud of them. You see, in speaking about the remnant, you might be wondering how

small a remnant we're talking here. Well, if you know your Bible, you know that when Cyrus told the Jews they could return to their homeland, only around 50,000 out of a nation of probably *millions* took him up on his gracious offer (Ezra 2:64,65). When most of their countrymen chose to lag behind in Babylon, and went not with them to the work, they could easily have concluded, "We're too small a group to build a temple for the Lord." They knew that when Solomon built the original temple, the nation of Israel was a whole lot bigger and a whole lot wealthier, and they were now a whole lot smaller and poorer by comparison.

But they *didn't* say, "We're too small," *they just started building*. They didn't look at how small they were and how big the job was; they looked at the size of their God and concluded, "We got this! We can do it!"

And that's the spirit God's people need to have today as well. Don't ever think that your church is too small to build the temple of today, "the church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22,23). Don't ever get discouraged that the grace movement is among the smallest of the small when it comes to religious groups in the world. Just roll up your sleeves *and get to work*, and leave the rest to Him! 

Question Box

"If it was Paul who revealed that Christ gave Himself a ransom 'for all' (1 Tim. 2:6) as opposed to the "many" in Israel (Matt. 20:28), how do we explain John 1:29?"

"...John seeth Jesus...and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John was a prophet (Luke 7:28), and the prophets didn't always understand their own prophecies (1 Pet. 1:11), *especially* when it came to "the sufferings of Christ." God knew that this would probably trouble the prophets, so He comforted them by explaining that "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things" that they prophesied (v. 12).

We know that no one who heard John make his statement understood that Christ would die for the sins of the world, for some of the 12 heard it, but didn't understand it (Luke 18:31-34). Not even Satan understood it (1 Cor. 2:7,8), or else he wouldn't have instigated Judas to betray the Lord (Luke 22:3,4).

So the ransom Christ made for all men might have been *prophesied* in John 1:29, but it wasn't "testified" until the "due time" came for Paul to be "ordained a preacher and an apostle" (1 Tim. 2:6,7). —Pastor Kurth

8 Tips to Achieve a Godly Mindset

PASTOR KEVIN **SADLER**
BBS President

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

Proverbs 23:7 teaches that as a person “thinketh in his heart, so is he.” And it has been rightly said, “Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character. . . .”¹ Our actions, habits, and character stem from our thinking. In order for us to have *godly* actions, habits, and character, we need to think like Christ (Phil. 2:5) and allow God’s Word to guide our thoughts and renew our minds (Rom. 12:2).

In Philippians 4:8, the Apostle Paul spells out eight things that contribute to a wholesome, Christ-like thought life. Paul does not name any negative or evil thoughts to be avoided, but instead stresses positive, good things which will enrich our spiritual lives and give us a godly mindset. “Whatsoever” and “if there be any” introduce each one, which teaches us that many things could be included under each term.

1. **“Whatsoever things are true.”** God wants us to focus on truth, things that are real, reliable, genuine, and true in character.
2. **“Whatsoever things are honest.”** God desires that we think on things that are honorable, noble, worthy of respect and reverence.
3. **“Whatsoever things are just.”** God’s will for us is to think about things that are right and good according to divine standards.
4. **“Whatsoever things are pure.”** God wants us to think on things that are morally clean, holy, innocent, and wholesome.
5. **“Whatsoever things are lovely.”** God would have our mindset to be dwelling on things that are acceptable, pleasing, beautiful, kind, and endearing.
6. **“Whatsoever things are of good report.”** God’s will is that we think on things admirable and worth talking about.
7. **“If there be any virtue.”** In other words, we are to think on anything of spiritual, physical, or moral excellence.
8. **“If there be any praise.”** Our thought life is to dwell on anything praiseworthy and worth recommending to others.

Paul writes, “think on these things.” The Greek word translated “Think” means, in this context, to consider thoughtfully, to dwell in careful reflection. Our thoughts and actions are connected, and as we fill our minds with these things we will, in turn, be people who are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. The key to godly living is godly thinking.

This verse has been called “the briefest biography of Jesus Christ.” As we think on things that are “true,” we understand that Christ is “the Truth.” Christ is “honest,” honorable, and worthy of all our respect, awe, and adoration. Christ is “just,” righteous, and good. Christ is “pure,” holy, and wholesome. Christ is “lovely,” acceptable, and pleasing. Christ is “of good report,” the most admirable, about whom we tell others. Christ is virtuous and excellent in every way. Christ is worthy of all praise. Christ is the highest One to occupy our thoughts. And keeping Christ on our minds is fundamental to our spiritual growth.

All these things to think on in Philippians 4:8 are also true of the Bible. As we think on our Bibles and let its truths dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16), we will live out Philippians 4:8, and it will elevate our thoughts, actions, and character for our good and God’s glory. 

1. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, New Testament Volume 2* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications Ministries, 2001), p. 95.

“By the grace of God I am what I am!” This is the believer’s eternal confession. Grace found him a rebel—it leaves him a son. Grace found him wandering at the gates of hell—it leads him through the gates of heaven. Grace devised the scheme of Redemption—and it is grace which carries out that scheme... The thickets of Eden would have proved Adam’s grave, had not grace called him out. Saul would have lived and died the haughty self-righteous persecutor, had not grace laid him low. The dying thief would have continued breathing out his blasphemies, had not grace arrested his tongue and tuned it for glory.

Salvation is of God—of grace—of free grace. From the germ to the fruit, from foundation to top-stone—it is of grace, free grace, altogether and only.
—D. L. Moody



GRACE



Our Union with **CHRIST** and the **NEW HEART**

PASTOR KENLAWSON
BBS Board Member

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:1-4).

THE HUMAN HEART

December 3, 1967 marked a milestone in medical history. Dr. Christian Barnard of Cape Town, South Africa, successfully performed the first human heart transplant. This was followed a short time later by a similar heart transplant by Dr. Michael DeBakey of Houston, Texas. These early transplants were only moderately successful because the patient’s natural defense systems began attacking the new hearts as foreign invaders. With the use of trial and error, advanced technology, and better anti-rejection drugs, the outlook for heart transplant patients improved. Meanwhile, the heart surgeons who were icons in the medical community became media superstars, and they used that publicity well to raise funds for their heart clinics.

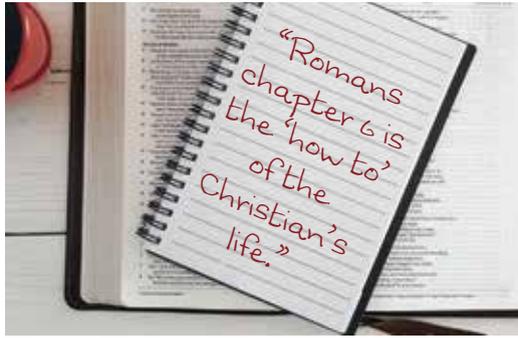
While being interviewed on a nationally–televised talk show, Dr. DeBakey told of the intricacy of the human heart, and then added, “Only God can create a human body.” While these doctors were catapulted to almost godlike status, they had to confess that there was much they did not know about the heart, and could, at best, only promise their patients a limited number of quality years.

GOD AND MAN’S HEART

As we read the pages of the Holy Bible, we soon learn that God Himself also specializes in heart surgery. While He created the physical heart which pumps the blood that keeps us healthy, as the Great Physician, He is much more interested in implanting a new heart in

man which will be humble and submissive to His will, and which will also bring an eternity of great fulfillment to His soul.

As we search the writings of the Apostle Paul for us Gentiles, there is one passage of Scripture that deals systematically with the mechanics of spiritual heart surgery. Romans chapter 6 is the “how to” of the Christian’s life. Although Paul centers on Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, he does not deal with initial salvation from the punishment of sins which results from forgiveness. He dealt



with that previously in Romans 3:21-5:11, with the great themes of sin, judgment, God’s love, faith, grace, redemption, justification, and reconciliation. Here he begins to teach on the issue of the believer’s sanctification (or separation) with the view to produce fruit unto holiness. It answers the question, “Now that I am saved from the penalty of sin and have eternal life, how can I live a life pleasing to God?”

The answer is nothing short of radical heart surgery. The heart (or *kardia*) in Scripture is used to stand for man’s entire inner personal life, and includes his mental, moral, and spiritual activity. It covers his intellect, emotions, thoughts, desires, conscience, and will. It is the seat of man’s sinfulness, but also the sphere of Divine influence. There is a pure heart, and an evil heart of unbelief (2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 3:12).

Although Paul does not write in terms of the word “heart” in Romans 6, the teaching is surely there in force as he writes of indwelling sin (the old heart), as well as partaking of Christ’s resurrection life (the new heart).

He begins by raising a rhetorical question, which is really an objection raised by his critics concerning what they thought was the “fatal flaw” of his teaching of grace. “*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*” People always raise this question when they begin to grasp the teaching of grace. But instead of rejoicing in it, they jump to a wrong conclusion. They think grace teaching takes a soft stance on sin, or even gives people a license to continue in it. Paul had written, “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” (Rom. 5:20). The legalist reasoned something like this, “Paul, if it is true, as you say, that God’s grace increases much more to deal with man’s sin, why not continue to allow sin to run free in order for God’s grace to shine through even more gloriously.” Paul answers with the strongest “No!” in the Greek language. The King James version translates it as “*God forbid!*” Today we might say, “No, no way!” God protests sin as it is against His holy character. Then Paul asks his own challenging question, “*How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*”

He is not expressing the impossibility of living in sin, but rather how illogical and contrary to God's purpose it would be for believers to do so since we have died to it. The reason for the cross was especially to separate man from his sinning.

THE BAPTISM THAT COUNTS

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?” How this passage has suffered from the intrusion of a water baptism ritual, thus losing the full force of its teaching! Water is not mentioned in these verses, but “read into” by the minds of many. Actually, the word “baptism” in verses 4 and 5 means “identification with” or “initiation into” something, in this case Jesus Christ. To be identified with Christ means that we become one with Him. To be initiated into Christ means that we are united to him as our Source. This must be a spiritual baptism since a water ceremony could not place us into Christ or be the source of holiness. It is not a baptism into water, or a church denomination, that makes the difference, but a baptism into Christ Himself.

In Bible times, when the color faded from a piece of cloth, they would send it to a fuller and who would dip or immerse the cloth in a dye. After a time, it would be removed and hung up to dry. In the process, the cloth would take on itself the color of the dye, and become one with it. Spiritually speaking, we can apply this in a similar way to our baptism into Christ. If one insists on immersion as the definition of baptism, then it is an immersion into Christ, by the Spirit, thus making us one with Him (1 Cor. 12:12-13).

This “oneness” extends beyond His death to His burial and resurrection, for verse 4 goes on to say, *“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* When Christ died, there is a very real sense in which we died with Him. When He was buried, we were buried with Him. And when He rose from the dead, we rose with Him. This actually happened almost 2000 years ago when Christ died and rose again, but it is not made a part of us personally until we believe the gospel of grace.

This is where it starts to get deep, because we cannot appeal to human experience to prove this. We do not feel it or perceive it with our senses. The only way that we know about it is by reading about it in the Word of God, and that takes faith. I do not know how God put me to death with Christ 2000 years before I was born, but I believe it because He said it. The problem is our perspective. We live in the present; God inhabits eternity. We see a little sliver of human history; God sees the end from the beginning. There is nothing too hard for God. Our union to Christ is what Bible teachers refer to as “positional truth.” All believers have a present position in Christ as being united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Perhaps a better word for “buried” in verse 4 is “entombed,” as Christ was not buried under ground, but placed in a sepulcher from which you could walk on level ground. This positional truth is more than just theory, because Paul takes it and teaches us how we can translate the position into everyday, practical living in righteousness.

THE ROOT AND THE FRUIT

In Romans 6, Paul does not address “sins” (plural), but “sin” (singular). Sins refer to acts of sin that people commit. (Paul dealt with this in chapters 1-5). Sin deals with the *root source* within us that causes us to commit acts of sin. Many Bible students find it helpful to think of sin here as “the sin nature” or as verse 6 says, “our old man” (self). Sin is the root; sins are the fruit. It is truly wonderful to know that God saved us from the punishment of sins by forgiving our sins (plural) through the blood of the cross. Now He wants to save us from the power and dominion of sin (singular) in our Christian lives. Christ not only died “for sins” but He also died “unto sin once,” thus breaking the power of the sin nature over us.

You may say, “I must have missed something, for I know I am saved, but I still struggle a lot with sin. It sure doesn’t seem like I am dead to it.” Be encouraged for Paul dealt with the same problem (Rom. 7:15-24). God apparently allowed Paul to experience the failure of Romans 7 that He might be an excellent teacher of God’s solution in Romans 6 and 8.

You see, everyone seems to think that the answer to sin in a believer’s life is to appeal to will power, or to legislate against it. However, Paul wrote “...to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18b). If the holy apostle could not will the victory over sin, neither can we. Another way is to set up rules and regulations against it, but that only serves to inflame sin within us and provoke it to life. *“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [evil desire]. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died”* (Rom. 7:8-9).

So much for legislating moral goodness. Many have found that when they put up a sign like, “Don’t touch wet paint,” people are prompted by something within to do that very thing. Then they wise up and print something like “Please don’t touch wet paint.” Now it is in the form of a polite request rather than an order. Even when the law is successful in restraining outward acts of sin, the sin nature simmers beneath the surface waiting for the opportunity to express itself.

To be continued next month. 📖



True and Faithful Words

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
BBS President

An excerpt from our newly released *Revelation, Volume 4*. To order a copy, see the special offer on page 29.

“Behold, I Make All Things New”

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:5).

A new voice speaks in verse 5 and, for the second time in the Book of Revelation, it is the Lord Himself speaking (Rev. 1:8). “He that sat upon the throne” is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away” (Rev. 20:11). The throne He sits on, in the immediate context, is the Great White Throne. With the removal and casting of all unbelieving sinners into the Lake of Fire to suffer for their sins forever, and with the old earth and old heavens of sin passed away, the Lord then declares, “Behold, I make all things new” (21:5).

The announcement in verse 5 is introduced in the same manner as verse 3: “Behold!” The

Greek word translated as “Behold” (*idou*) means look or see. The Lord told John to look and see how He had made all things *new*. The things John “saw” in this chapter were “a *new* heaven and a *new* earth” (v. 1), and “the... *new* Jerusalem” (v. 2). John was to observe these things with the understanding that, because of them, all things had been made new by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, the Lord commands John to write it down. These new things that John was seeing were sources of hope and joy for God’s people, the nation Israel. He needed to record what he saw. These new things are for Israel’s eternal blessing: for her to live in the new earth with the curse of sin removed and God’s presence dwelling on the earth with them in the new Jerusalem. Out of God’s love and care for believing Israel, He wanted a written record for her to read and know about her eternal hope.

John needed to write about what he *saw* and what he *heard*. He was to make a record of the “words” that the Lord spoke about making all things new and the words that He was about to say in verses 6-8. These words are “true and faithful.”

At the Lord’s Second Coming, John records that “I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True...” (Rev. 19:11). Christ is Faithful and True, and the words that He speaks are “true and faithful” (Rev. 21:5). His words are, in truth, *God’s* words. They are established in truth, worthy to be believed, and can be completely trusted. All who read the words that John wrote are given strong confirmation that the Lord *will* accomplish His purposes and promises.

God is faithful and true (1 Cor. 1:9; Rom. 3:4). Like the God who inspired it and revealed it, the Word of God is faithful and it is truth (Psa. 119:138; John 17:17). God will keep and fulfill *every* promise He has made to the nation Israel regarding her eternal hope on the earth. God will keep and fulfill *every* promise He has made to the Church, the Body of Christ, regarding our eternal hope in the heavenlies. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “For all the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen...” (2 Cor. 1:20). Everything will come to pass just as God has said and revealed in His Word. As believers in Christ, we have much to be thankful for and look forward to because God is faithful and true to His Word.

“It Is Done”

“And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6).

“It is done” implies absolute finality. Because Christ is faithful and true, Who “calletth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17), He can say, “It is done,” before it is done, because it will happen exactly as He says. John Walvoord rightly says of the words, “It is done”: “This statement does not mean that there are no future works of God but that a major work has been brought to completion and that the works now relating to the eternal state are beginning.”¹ The Lord is pointing forward to a new, permanent condition that has arrived.



NOT VALID

“In that day, the gospel of the grace of God will *not* be valid.”

The One on the throne Who is speaking claims the names of God: “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.” The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal I AM, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (cf. Rev. 1:8). He is fully God. He is infinitely qualified as God to declare the end of something and

the beginning of something new. God started history and He will end it. And He will initiate the eternal state....

As the old saying goes regarding the future in our day-to-day experience, "I don't know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future!" The Lord holds the future. He is in control. We can draw great comfort in our lives in knowing this is true and trusting Him. We also draw comfort that we have a future, a bright one in Christ in the heavens! Israel is being shown here in the Book of Revelation that they too have a bright hope on the new earth. And all of it will come to pass exactly as the Lord has said, because He is "true and faithful."

"The Fountain of the Water of Life"

The Lord next says He "will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." During His earthly ministry, the Lord said something to the Samaritan woman at the well that was very similar: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Later, in Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, the Lord taught in the temple, "saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe

on Him should receive...)" (John 7:37-39).

The Apostle John, who wrote these verses from his recollection of the Lord's life and ministry, must have been reminded of these words when the Lord spoke from His throne about the water of life. Salvation and life eternal is beautifully portrayed by the Lord as His giving life-giving water freely to those who are in need and who thirst. As the Lord said, "I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me *shall never thirst*" (John 6:35).



The "water of life" in Revelation 21:6 is both symbolic and literal. It is *symbolic* of the Holy Spirit and eternal life that is given to all who trusted Christ and God's provision of salvation under Israel's program. It is also *literal* water of life that flows from the new Jerusalem: "And he shewed me a pure river of *water of life*, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). This *literal* water of life will also be given freely to those who inhabit the new earth for eternity.

“He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things”

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev. 21:7).

The true and faithful words of the Lord continue as He makes a blessed promise to “he that overcometh.” This Book will be directly applicable after the Rapture of the Church, the Body of Christ, during the Tribulation. Believers in that day, if they can stay alive, will need to overcome to the end of the Tribulation. The Apostle John reveals for us in his epistles that the overcomers are those who are born again—those who believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4,5).

The overcomers are those who are saved under the gospel of the kingdom, believing that Christ is the Son of God (John 20:31). The overcomers are those who will overcome Satan during the Tribulation. They will overcome Satan’s powerful coercion to take the mark of the Beast to be able to buy and sell. The overcomers are those who overcome the world and its majority and strong social pressure to follow the Antichrist. They are those who will abide in Christ (John 15:1-7) and in His love (vv. 9,10), and love one another (vv. 12,17), and overcome the hatred of their persecutors and of Satan

(vv. 18-21) during the horrific 70th week of Daniel. The overcomers will remain loyal to Christ either to the end of their lives in martyrdom or to the end of the seven-year Tribulation....

The overcomers of the Tribulation period have rich promises and blessing awaiting them in the Kingdom on the earth: no second death, to be clothed in white raiment, to sit with Christ in His throne, to have their name confessed by Christ to the Father, the right to eat of the tree of life, etc. (Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21).

In fulfillment of His promises to them, the One Who is faithful and true tells them that, in the eternal state, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” They will inherit everything that Christ had promised them. He will be their God forever. They will be His sons forever. In that eternal position as sons, they are heirs. Thus, they receive an inheritance. And it is a *rich* inheritance when you receive an inheritance from “He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold,” is “alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18).

The Unbelieving Unforgiven

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

In contrast to the blessings of eternal life, joys, and inheritance in the new Jerusalem among believers, we find the unbelieving in

the Lake of Fire, those excluded from the new heaven and new earth in the eternal state. They have no inheritance. God will not be their God. They will not be His sons. They are forever in the presence of sin, darkness, and evil, experiencing the torments of the Lake of Fire and the second death.

The unforgiven are listed by the sins that marked their lives on earth.

“Fearful”: the cowardly unsaved, those who were more fearful of the disapproval of people than of God, and so were afraid to trust God’s Word.

“Unbelieving”: all the unsaved who never trusted God’s provision for salvation in their lifetimes. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6). They have displeased God forever because they never placed their faith in Him or His Word when they had the opportunity.

“Abominable”: the unsaved who practice abominations; vile, detestable people who are completely caught up in wickedness and evil of all sorts.

“Murderers”: the unsaved who knowingly and purposely kill; malicious and savage killers. They “are of [their] father the devil, and the lusts of [their] father [they] will do. He was a *murderer* from the beginning...” (John 8:44).

“Whoremongers”: the unsaved who practice fornication and other forms of sexual sins; the sexually immoral. “For this ye know, that no *whoremonger*, nor unclean person...hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for

because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:5,6).

“Sorcerers”: the unsaved who traffic with evil spirits, who are involved with witchcraft, people of the occult and satanism. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, *witchcraft*...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

“Idolaters”: the multitudes of unsaved whose worship has been directed toward a material object which represents to them some spiritual reality or higher power. The Apostle Paul wrote that “covetousness...is *idolatry*” (Col. 3:5). Even the adoration of material possessions and giving them a place ahead of God is considered idolatry.



“Liars”: unsaved people who are compulsive deceivers, false witnesses, false teachers; those who practice deception for gain. They “are of [their] father the devil, and the lusts of [their] father [they] will do. He...abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a *liar*, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

The second death, eternal death, will be pronounced on all these unbelievers at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:14,15), because they have died in Adam and in their sins: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

Again, the Book of Revelation will be used in the future Tribulation period. It reminds the reader of the certain consequences of not believing in Christ. Universal salvation is *not* taught in God’s Word. But as we see in this chapter of this Book of the Bible for people in the Tribulation period, there remains a universal invitation for all who thirst to drink the water of life by faith in Christ. In that day, the gospel of the grace of God will *not* be valid. The gospel of the kingdom will be what saves their souls. If they will trust the gospel of the kingdom and repent, confess their sins, get water baptized, and believe that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), they will be saved from their sins and hell.

The final destiny of all unfor- given, unbelieving people from

all the ages is “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8)....All the unsaved will be punished for their sins and tormented in the Lake of Fire forever and ever. The clear teaching of Scripture is that sin results in death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; James 1:15). As a result of their *sins* all these souls will experience the second *death*, which is eternal separation from the presence of God in the Lake of Fire.

If you are reading this book and have not trusted Christ as your personal Savior, we beg you to do so before it is too late. Under the dispensation of grace, you are saved from your sins and the Lake of Fire by just trusting that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:3,4). The moment you trust this good news you have the free gift of salvation, a home in heaven, and eternal life in Christ. 

Endnote

1. John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980), p. 316.

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BBS Letter Excerpts

From Indiana:

“Pastor Kevin, your lessons on marriage have really helped my marriage. Such a blessing! I just finished the infinite God lessons you did, and wow, you really have a way of painting a picture on just how big our God is! You speak with so much passion and conviction, and I really appreciate that.”

From Mississippi:

“I live in a small town in Mississippi...I’ve seen your television ministry *Transformed by Grace* several times on the CTN network...on DirecTV at 5:00 p.m. on Mondays. I’m enjoying the show and am also encouraged by your simple biblical teaching style that’s easy to understand and to follow along with. At times you even do so with a smile that’s infectious and nice to see...God bless you Pastor Sadler and continued success in your ministry and all that you do in life.”

From Namibia, Africa:

“*Things That Differ* helped me solve and ease many, if not all, of the studies I started many years ago... It explained how to get to the core of the problem of why we have so many churches, and how to solve this...I can now take on big issues and make them simple to understand. I made a promise to God regarding it, and a few years passed and I did nothing. It is really bothering me so in the past week it came to my mind to go back to where it started: *Things That Differ*.”

From West Virginia:

“September is Echo Month!...I could go on for pages on the spiritual blessings your printed sermons and magazine have been in my life. The *Searchlight* penetrates the darkness of prisons across the nation, and I am one of those that has benefited...I have been a student of C. R. Stam for years....”

From our Inbox:

“That helps a ton! Thank you...A lot of the questions I encounter during Bible study are answered by your website and the *Searchlight*. Very cool stuff.”

From Ghana:

“I have been following you for many years. I like your teachings and I love your explanation. I am a pastor in Ghana, and I need a little help to spread the gospel.”

From Oregon:

“I have...30 years of knowledge thanks to BBS’s *Searchlight* magazines. I just read the Bible cover to cover for the first time in my life... Can I be ordained?...I’m...just a man who wants to *step up*.” (Great! But BBS doesn’t ordain men, we leave that up to local churches. –Ed.)

From Illinois:

“I’m praying every day for you all. I so appreciate your work and effort and attitude in getting the amazing grace of God out there, and desiring to show to all the fellowship of the Mystery.”

From Oregon:

“The Apostle Paul said, ‘...I could wish...myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh’ (Rom. 9:3-5). Now I read in the last four issues of the *Searchlight* (August-November) that our dear brother in Christ, Kevin Sadler, has the same burden for my people, Israel, as our Apostle Paul, and it warms my heart. Very encouraging. Praise the Lord!”

From South Carolina:

“I studied through your presentation on baptism in the *Searchlight*... Your teachings are a great source for training and reference. I will be passing them on to others when the topic comes up...I just wanted you to know that you are making a difference in the lives of others.”

From our Inbox:

“Thank you so much for your response!!! It was so very helpful. Also, your sharing Galatians 3:8 was an eye opener for me concerning the gospel preached to Abraham. Thank you for highlighting that. I see that now.”

From Washington:

“One of my pastors let me borrow Pastor Stam’s book *Man, His Nature and Destiny*. It has been a massive help as a close friend of mine has gotten caught up in some deceptive doctrines.”

From Guam:

“I rejoice with you in...Paul’s distinct Gentile apostleship, and the proclamation of the revelation of the mystery....Our precious deposit is being spread far and wide all over the South Pacific and beyond.”

From Wisconsin:

“Enclosed is the quarterly pledge from *Friendship Congregational Bible Church*. Thanks for the awesome service you provide for Biblical Education!”

From Pennsylvania:

“We enjoyed your message [at the November Duncansville, PA Bible Conference]. Pray every day for you all. Look forward seeing you again. Until then, keep looking up!”

From North Carolina:

“A close friend and I have deeply enjoyed at first Bullinger’s *The Foundation of Truth*, and then later Cornelius Stam’s *Things That Differ, No Other Doctrine*, two volumes of *Acts*, etc. We are seeing how great our traditions have blinded us...We are encountering resistance from some in our gatherings, so we would appreciate anything that will answer our critic’s objections.”

From California:

“I introduced...*Things That Differ*...to my son...He read it over and over, until the book was all dog-eared and tattered. I asked him why he read the book so many times, and he said, ‘I wanted to make sure I got it, I needed to be sure I understood it...You really found something valuable, Mom.’ He now wants to read this book to his colleagues at work.” (Always listen to your mother! –Ed.).

From Florida:

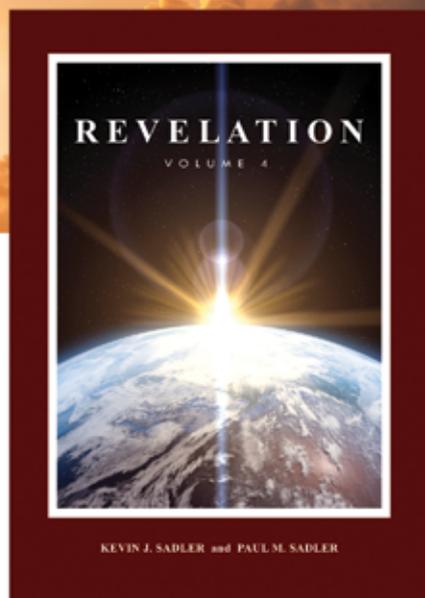
“I love your *Searchlight*! You share the message of grace so well. May the Lord continue to use you to help people understand the difference between Israel and the Body of Christ.”



“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.”
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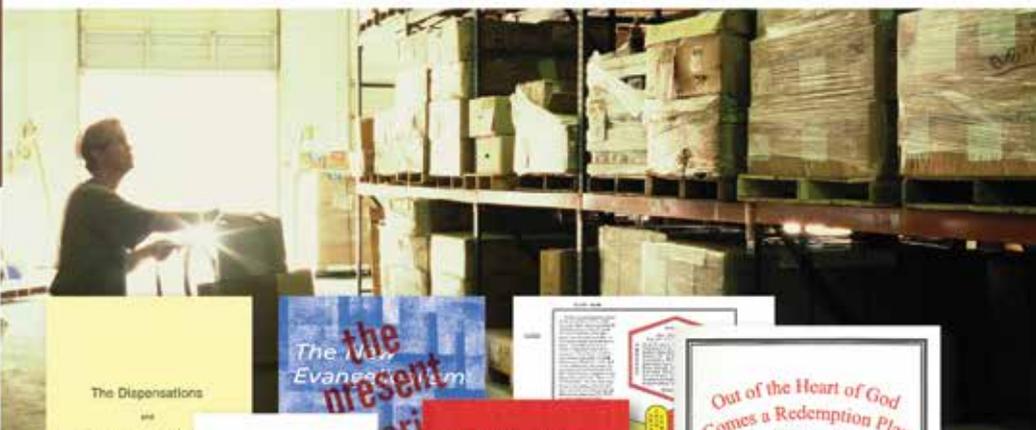
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News and Announcements

The First Lady of Grace Musicians is now with the Lord. Our dear friend Virginia Shriver may best be remembered by our readers as the pianist at the annual *Berean Bible Fellowship* conferences in Cedar Lake, Indiana. Your editor will never forget how she could really rattle the rafters during the crescendo of “Wonderful Grace of Jesus.” Afterward, her husband, Pastor Harland Shriver, would stir our hearts with a message from God’s Word. Ginny is now reunited with him, and playing command performances before the King of kings.

Social Media Advancement: Those of you who follow *Berean Bible Society* on Facebook will want to know that we also now have a presence on Twitter and Instagram. We want to emulate the Apostle Paul’s “no man left behind” policy, and so we will continue to explore every available avenue to reach people with his message, using whatever social media forum they favor. “Ye also helping together by prayer for us” (2 Cor. 1:11).

Fans of Philemon have reason to rejoice now that your editor’s recent series on Paul’s most personal epistle has joined the ever-expanding library of MP3 audio and MP4 video messages available on our BBS website. Whether you want to plumb the riches of God’s grace by studying the Word topically, or delve into the mine of Scripture in a verse-by-verse study of a particular book, our online library has got you covered. Just go to www.bereanbiblesociety.org and click on the “Bible Study” tab, and choose between the “audio” and “video” message links.

Read Your Bible Through in 2019! Grace believers know that Paul’s epistles are God’s specific Word for us today, and so we tend to focus on them. However, Paul *quotes* the Old Testament so much that it is often difficult to understand his words without a working knowledge of Israel’s Scriptures. So continue to focus on Paul’s epistles, but avoid the myopic malady of spiritual tunnel vision by downloading a daily Bible reading plan from the internet, and get started without delay. After all, it is our Apostle Paul who insists that “*all Scripture...is profitable*” for us (2 Tim. 3:16).

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

BBF Winter Conference, January 26-27, Inverness, FL

Tupelo Bible Conference, March 16-17, Tupelo, MS

Phoenix Bible Conference, March 22-24, Sun City West, AZ

Best of Israel Trip, May 7-16, 2019

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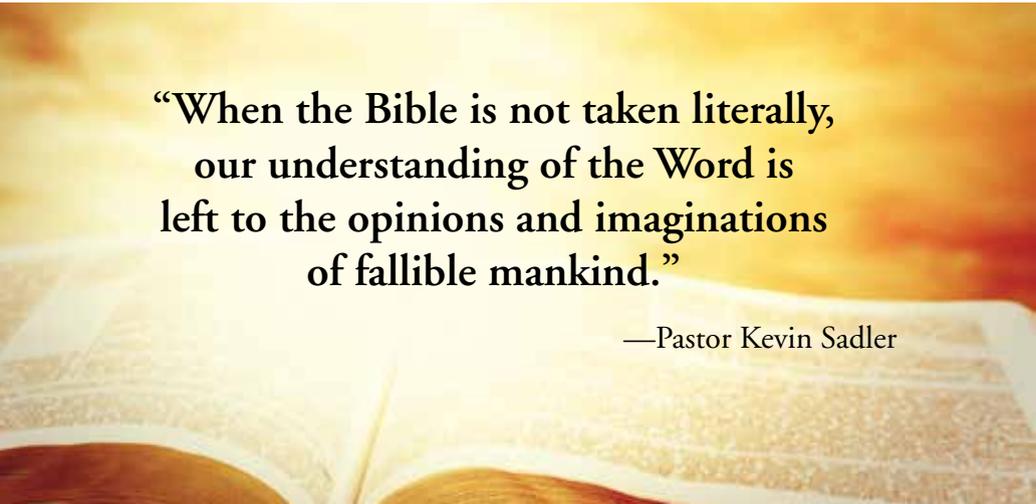
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of fallible mankind.”**

—Pastor Kevin Sadler