

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2023



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The Purpose of the Berean Bible Society is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply 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 transformation of the Christian life, and to encourage the local church.

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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Back in 2008, Pastor Paul Sadler was still serving as both president of *Berean Bible Society* and editor of the *Berean Searchlight*. At that time, our board of directors realized that there might be a better way to capitalize on the lifetime he had spent studying the Scriptures. He was at the age where his time might be best spent in writing Bible study books that would allow future generations to benefit from the knowledge that those years of giving himself to God's Word had afforded him.

It was then that they appointed me to be the editor of the *Searchlight* in his stead. I'd been brought on to the staff here in 2001 for the specific purpose of easing Pastor Sadler's workload, and I'd already spent seven years helping him by writing articles for the *Searchlight*, speaking at Bible conferences, and responding to the Bible questions that come to us on a daily basis. Assuming his position as editor would free up even more of his time to write books.

Fifteen years have now passed, and our board is faced with a scenario that is similar to the one before them back then. After a lifetime of giving myself to the study of the Word, our board has decided that they would like me to devote more of my time to the work being done on our *Grace Study Bible*. With that in mind, I am currently in the process of training a new grace pastor to be your editor. Pastor Don Hosfeld attended the *St. Louis Theological Seminary*, and has served the Lord in the ministry for seven years now, most recently as pastor of the *Grace Bible Fellowship* in Nokomis, Florida. All that training and experience has made him well-equipped to step into the shoes I'll be leaving behind.

Our hope is that in a few months Don will feel comfortable enough in his new position to be handed the editorial reins. At that time, I'll begin working for BBS from home, a move that will save me over five hours of commuting time per week, and many more hours that I previously spent as editor. And Pastor Hosfeld will now be responding to your Bible questions as well, allowing me to turn even more of my attention to the *Grace Study Bible*. I'll still be writing for the *Searchlight* though, so you haven't heard the last from me!

After we send our reference Bible to the printer, our board would like me to spend whatever years of health and strength I have left to write Bible study books and commentaries. For now, I covet your prayers for all these changes as we continue to engage in something that will never change, our efforts "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery."

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ricky Kurth



The Power of Resurrection Life

This past spring I was out for one of my regular bike rides when I noticed that one of the lawns in my neighborhood was sprinkled with fallen leaves. It caught my attention because that's the kind of thing you expect to see in the fall, not in the spring.

Then I remembered reading many years ago that *oak tree leaves* are so firmly attached that they not only fail to fall off in autumn, they can even weather the ice, wind, and snow storms that ravage them throughout winter. It's only when other deciduous trees begin to rise from their seasonal death in springtime, and buds start to appear on their branches, that the new life of those buds *on oak trees* cause those old dead leaves to lose their stubborn grip and fall to the earth.

What an illustration of how our Apostle Paul tells us to deal with sin! The way to “put off the old man with his deeds” is to “put on the new man” (Col. 3:9,10). In fact, the *only* way to obey Paul's command to be “putting away lying” is to “speak every man truth” (Eph. 4:25). In the same way, a thief is powerless to “steal no more” unless he begins to “labour, working with his hands” to “give” to others (v. 28) instead of taking from them. Nothing but “edifying” speech can rid your life of “corrupt communication” (v. 29), and only being “kind one to another” and “forgiving one another” can oust “bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking” and “malice” from your life (vv. 31,32).

Berean Bible Society founder Pastor C. R. Stam used to love to quote this variation of a stanza that is often attributed to John Bunyan:

“Do this and live,” the law commands,
But gives me neither feet nor hands.
A better word the gospel brings.
It bids me fly, *and gives me wings.*

So let the resurrection life of godliness begin to bud in your life, and you'll find it much easier to drop those leaves of sin. After all, even if a thief *did* manage to stop stealing without getting a job, he'd be nothing more than an unemployed thief. That's a backsliding relapse just waiting to happen. So don't just put your old man out of business. Put your new man to work!
—Pastor Kurth



A Famous Conversation

(An article based on studies that will be reflected in our upcoming *Grace Study Bible*)

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor

Two men were talking one day, and one said, “Last night my wife said to me, ‘You haven’t been listening to a word I’ve said, have you?’ At the time I remember thinking, ‘What a strange way to start a conversation!’”

Speaking of conversations, we’re about to read about a conversation the apostle Paul once had in Israel that was so famous that even the Galatians heard about it over 500 miles away:

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Gal. 1:13).

As you can see, the conversation Paul is talking about here involved more than just his *words*. It included his *actions* as well. Did you know the first word used to define the word “conversation” in older dictionaries is *behavior*? The way new dictionaries *limit* the definition to just our words is probably reflective of how men seem to have forgotten that your

behavior *speaks volumes*. An old saying says: “What you’re doing is speaking so loudly, I can’t hear a word you’re saying.” That’s a good adage for Christians to remember, for if you tell people you’re saved, you should *act* like you’re saved.

But when Paul talked about his conversation “in time past,” he was talking about his behavior *before* he got saved, his behavior in what he calls “the Jews’ religion.” The Jews’ religion was originally *God’s* religion. When God gave it to the people of Israel, it was “*pure* religion and *undefiled*...” (James 1:27). But it got so *defiled* by the people of Israel that Paul couldn’t bring himself to *call it* God’s religion. And before Paul got saved, he was part of that defiling, for his conversation in those days consisted of *persecuting the church*.

A Search for the Church

When we think of the word “church,” we think of a *building*.

But in the Bible, the word almost always refers to a group of God's people. Just don't make the mistake that most Bible teachers make, that of thinking there's only *one* church in the Bible, "the church, *which is His body...*" (Eph. 1:22,23). The Body of Christ *is* a church, of course. It's the church of today, the church of the dispensation of grace.



"...he didn't get his gospel from men...all the men who could have given it to him were afraid of him."

But if it was the *only* church in the Bible, Paul wouldn't have had to *add* "which is His body" in talking about it. The fact that he had to add that qualifying phrase implies there were *other* churches in the Bible that were *not* His Body. God has always had a church of people in every dispensation, like the one we read about in Acts 7:37,38:

"...Moses...was in the church in the wilderness..."

The Jews in the wilderness were a church of God's people, but they weren't the church which is the Body of Christ. That church began with the conversion of the apostle Paul.

If you think about it, a city is *also* a group of people. But when you see the word "city" in the Bible, do you assume it is always

talking about the *same* city? Of course not! Then you shouldn't assume the word *church* always refers to the same church either.

The church Paul persecuted is what we call *the kingdom church*. We call it that because of what the Lord told Peter in Matthew 16:18,19:

"...thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church... And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven..."

He was telling Peter that after He died and rose again, He would build a church of people in Israel who would live in the kingdom of heaven on earth, and He'd give Peter the keys to that church. That meant Peter was in charge of who got *into* that church, just as the keyholder of any building is in charge of who is allowed to enter it.

Now that didn't mean Peter could say to people, "Okay, I'll let you in, and you, but not you, and certainly not you!" Is that what you see Peter doing in the Book of Acts? No! The "keys" to the kingdom church included "the *key of knowledge*" that Israel's lawyers took away from people, even though they weren't using it themselves (Luke 11:52). In any dispensation, if you want to get into God's church, you have to *know* something. You have to know *the gospel* being preached in that dispensation, and believe it.

And that's what you see Peter doing in the Book of Acts: *preaching the kingdom gospel*, and building the Lord's church. And *that's* the church Paul persecuted, because he didn't believe the members of that church were God's people.

Measuring the Immeasurable

Galatians 1:13 adds that Paul persecuted that church “*beyond measure.*” That phrase always reminds me of the tachometer on my friend’s Harley-Davidson motorcycle. It measures the rpm of his motor, but it only goes up so high. If he exceeds the rpm the tachometer can calculate, he’s pushing the motor *beyond measure*. We say he’s *burying the needle*. And that’s how Paul persecuted the kingdom church! He buried the needle, and persecuted it beyond measure.

Verse 13 also says Paul “wasted” the church—and he means he wasted it in the same way the Mafia talks about wasting someone in the movies. They’re talking about *murdering* someone! That’s just one of many modern phrases that come from the Bible. By Paul’s own admission, he wasted people by persecuting God’s people “unto the death” (Acts 22:4). He had a *very* dark past.

Maybe you do too. Maybe your past is *so* dark that you’re afraid if anybody ever found out about it, you could never serve the Lord. If so, I remind you that *everybody* knew about Paul’s dark past! The Galatians had heard about his conversation, and so had everyone else. But he didn’t let it keep him from serving the Lord, *and neither should you.*

The reason Paul was *reminding* the Galatians about his dark past is that he was trying to prove what he had just said in the previous two verses, that his gospel was “not after man” or “of man” (Gal. 1:11,12). Paul’s dark past *proved* he didn’t get his gospel from men,

because all the men who could have given it to him *were afraid of him*. Right after he got saved, God told a man named Ananias to go see him, and

“Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem” (Acts 9:13).

It’s easy to understand his reluctance here. After all, what the Lord was asking Ananias to do was like asking a Jew to go see Hitler during World War II.



But the point is: Paul’s message was about the Lord Jesus Christ, and nobody who could have *given* him a message about Christ was about to go anywhere near him! That’s just one of many proofs we have that he didn’t get his gospel from men.

We see proof that he got his message *from the Lord instead* when Paul started *preaching* his gospel, and went from being a *persecutor* to being a *persecut-ee*, so to speak. Paul went from being a *waster* of God’s people to being the target of all the *other* wasters in Israel. He knew in advance that that would happen, and there wasn’t a man on earth who could have *made* him make that choice. Only *God* can talk a man into subjecting himself to that kind of lethal persecution.

Cashing in on Killing

Another proof that Paul didn't get his gospel from men can be seen in the next verse of Galatians 1, where Paul says he

"...profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14).

Paul was making *money* in the Jews' religion, and only *God* can talk an unsaved religious leader into walking away from his cash flow.

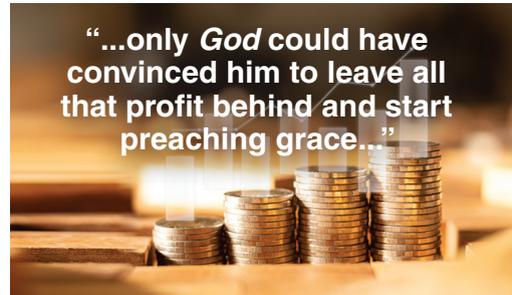
If you're wondering *how* Paul profited in the Jews' religion, the answer might have something to do with how he said he was "zealous." Take a look at the first appearance of that word in the Bible, a place where it's used twice:

"Moses said...Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one... came and brought...a Midianitish woman...in the sight of all... Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle....And when Phinehas...saw it, he...took a javelin in his hand; And...thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly...And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas... was zealous...he was zealous for his God" (Num. 25:5-13).

When the Jews balked at killing a woman who was pregnant with a Canaanite's child, Phinehas was more zealous than his countrymen, for he knew that the demonic seed of the giants she was carrying had to be exterminated.

But if the word "zealous" there is connected with *killing in the name of God*, well, isn't that what

Paul did before God saved him? The law of first mention says that the first time a word or phrase appears in the Bible it often sets the tone for how it will be used in the rest of the Bible, and the Bible's first mention of *zealous* describes the kind of *murderous zeal* Paul engaged in while thinking he was serving God (John 16:2).



How would he *profit* from that? Well, what if there was a *bounty* on the heads of the believers Saul was killing? I can't prove there was, but it would certainly explain how Paul profited from his zeal.

How would he profit *above many of his equals*? Perhaps his equals among the wasters in Israel drew the line at killing pregnant women *and Paul didn't*. That would fit when verse 14 says he was more "*exceedingly*" zealous than his equals.

Cashing in on Grieving Widows

But killing in the name of God wasn't the only way Paul could have profited from being zealous of the traditions of his fathers. Did you ever wonder what Peter meant when he wrote:

"...ye were not redeemed with...silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with

the precious blood of Christ...” (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

Who would ever think you could be redeemed from your sins with silver and gold? The answer is found in a money-making religious tradition found among Paul’s religious fathers in Israel, one the Lord *scolded* them for in Matthew 23:14:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer...”

When it says they devoured widow’s houses, that was a figure of speech that meant *they took all a widow’s money*. It’s kind of like when we talk about eating someone out of house and home. Those unscrupulous religious leaders devoured widows’ houses *by promising to pray for their dead husbands in exchange for money*. Do you have any idea how much wealth Catholic leaders accumulated over the centuries doing that? Catholicism got to be the richest religion in the world, in part by telling widows they’d pray for their husbands to be released from purgatory. The Lord’s words there indicate that this was a tradition that started *long* before Catholic leaders got hold of it.

But if Paul’s religious fathers in Israel had a softer heart than he had, and didn’t pray too many widows out of house and home, he could have exceeded their zeal when it came to *that* tradition as well, and profited *big time!*

And all of this gives us even *more* proof that Paul’s message was not of men, for only *God* could have convinced him to leave all that profit behind and start preaching grace, a message that

left him nearly *broke* most of the time. And as we read on in Galatians 1, Paul begins to tell us *how* God convinced him to leave those money-making ways behind:

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace” (Gal. 1:15).

When Paul says God separated him *from his mother’s womb*, we have to ask if he was speaking literally or figuratively, for that phrase is used *both* ways in the Bible. In one instance, it’s used both ways *in one verse*. Job said,

“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither...” (Job 1:21).

Job came out of his mother’s womb *literally* when he was born. But he said he planned to *return* to his mother’s womb when he died. If I were Job’s mother, I think I’d have something to say about that. These days you hear a lot about young people who graduate college but can’t find work, so they move back in with their



parents. But this would be taking it a bit too far, don’t you think?

Back When the Womb Was a Safe Place to Be

Job is obviously using a figure of speech. Let me ask you: When you die, where do you “return,” as Job said there? God told Adam:

“...dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).

When you die, they bury you and you return to *the earth*. So Job’s mother’s womb was an idiom for what men call “Mother Earth,” interestingly enough.

And Paul was using a similar figure of speech in Galatians 1. Did you notice he didn’t say, “You’ve heard of my conversation in the Jews’ religion, how I profited in the Jews religion, but God separated me from the Jews’ religion”? Instead he said, “You’ve heard of my conversation in the Jews’ religion, how I profited in the Jews religion, but God separated me *from my mother’s womb*.” He was using a figure of speech. His mother’s womb *was the Jews’ religion*.

Do you remember which *branch* of the Jews religion Paul belonged to? He tells us in Acts 23:6, where

“Paul...cried out...I am a Pharisee...”

My old dictionary says the word “Pharisee” comes from Hebrew words meaning “separated one.” The Pharisees considered themselves *so holy* that they weren’t just separated from the lowly Gentiles as God insisted that *all* Jews should be. Pharisees thought they were even separate from *other Jews* who they thought to be less pious, in a class by themselves. Isaiah 65:5 is a prediction *of them*.

So when Paul says God separated him from his mother’s womb, he’s making a play on words. He’s saying, as it were, “I was a Pharisee, a separated one, but God separated me from the separated ones!”

And Paul had a *reason* for making this play on words. It was to emphasize how *comfortable* he was before he got saved and started preaching grace. He was as safe and as comfortable in the Jews’ religion as he was when he was in his mother’s womb. Only *God* could have caused him to leave such comfort and security. The thought of being separated from his mother’s womb in the Jews’ religion wouldn’t have pleased *him* before he got saved, *but it pleased God!*

Now here I should point out that when Paul says God called him by *His grace*, that proves he wasn’t saved by the kingdom gospel under the kingdom program, as is sometimes taught. God called Paul by *grace*—the same grace He used to call *the Galatians*, as we see when Paul told those dear saints,

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal. 1:6).

Paul was called and saved by the same grace that saved the Galatians, the grace found in the *dispensation* of grace. But after that, the Galatians went the opposite way that Paul had gone. Paul went from his mother’s womb in the Jews religion of the law to grace. They went from grace to the Jews religion of the law!

And in this dispensation, if you’re heading in the opposite direction from the way Paul went, you’re heading in the wrong direction. If that’s what you’re doing, the only way you’re going to be able to serve the Lord effectually is to turn your ship around, and begin following Paul as he followed Christ. 



Coals of Fire

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
BBS President

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:19-21).

Have you heard what the waiter did to his enemy to exact revenge? He served him right! This joke is similar to what Paul teaches in these verses. We need to serve our enemies and do what is right. God instructs the Body of Christ to “avenge not yourselves,” that taking personal revenge is impermissible for the believer. Rather we are instructed to leave room for divine retribution. We are to give no place to our own wrath, but we are to give a wide place for the wrath of God.

“Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,” refers to Deuteronomy 32:35, where the Lord declares, “To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompence.” The reason we should not avenge ourselves is that only God has the right to avenge. Vengeance is divine ground. And it is divine ground, because as William R. Newell (1868-1956) insightfully put it, “God’s ‘vengeance’ must require that infinite knowledge of conditions, of motives, of results upon others, which God, the just Judge, alone possesses.”¹

Paul next teaches the Church, not merely to refrain from vengeance, but to perform acts of benevolence by grace. Our duty is to treat our enemy with love and kindness and show it in practical ways. Paul quoted Proverbs 25:21 as an example of what to do: if your enemy is hungry give him something to eat, or if he is thirsty give him something to drink. The believer is not to try to destroy an enemy by revenge and violence, but rather to convert them by love and grace.

An act of grace toward our enemy heaps “coals of fire” on our enemy’s head. Coals of fire on one’s head would be painful, as would

an act of kindness to one who has done us wrong. Surprising your enemy with kindness can make him ashamed of his hostility and his actions. It can produce the burning pain of remorse, shame, guilt, and a convicted conscience. And the reflection caused by this pain can lead to a change of heart.

Grace teaching in Paul's letters often does not stop with just a prohibition against doing evil but rather goes beyond to an exhortation to do good. Thus, Paul wrote that we should not only "be not overcome of evil" but take the additional positive step to "overcome evil with good." We are "not overcome of evil" by not giving in to bitterness and the constant pursuit of retaliation, which can consume our lives and thinking. Rather, we "overcome evil with good." And Colossians 3:13-14 explains the good that can overcome the evil in our lives:

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

"Stephen Tschiderer, an army medic, met his enemy's bullet before he met his enemy. While patrolling the dangerous streets of Baghdad, Tschiderer was shot in the chest by an enemy sniper. Although he was knocked to the ground by the impact, Tschiderer was saved by his bulletproof vest.

"In company with the combat team that tracked down the sniper, the soldier discovered his assailant had been wounded. At this point, loving one's enemy was no longer a theoretical concept. The enemy was directly in front Tschiderer, wounded and in need of prompt medical attention. Only moments earlier, the sniper had put Stephen Tschiderer's heart between the crosshairs on the scope of his rifle and pulled the trigger, fully intending to end Tschiderer's life. Tschiderer could have roughed him up. He could have simply walked away and justified his actions. Instead, Tschiderer treated and dressed the wounds of the man who had tried to take his life."²

This soldier demonstrated under pressure the discipline of being not overcome with evil, of not giving in to feelings of vengeance, but overcoming that evil with good. We must remember that God showed His love and kindness to His enemies by sending His own Son to die for us; thus, we are followers of God as we likewise show love and kindness to our enemies (Eph. 5:1-2).

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). 

1. William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1938), p. 476.
2. "Soldier Treats Attacker's Wounds," *Preaching Today*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2005/august/soldiertreatsattackerswounds.html>.

What Happened to Israel?

Romans 9:1-33

(Taken from episode 172
of *Transformed by Grace*)

PASTOR KEVIN **SADLER**
BBS President

Romans 9-11 are logically placed in Paul's letter to the saints at Rome. In Romans 1-8, Paul spelled out many, many wonderful promises that are ours in the Church, the Body of Christ. And Romans 8 concludes with the words of comfort, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

A logical thought arises from these verses: What about Israel? Have they been separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus? What about all the wonderful promises to them? Will they all still be fulfilled? That is what Paul addressed in Romans 9-11 under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit.

This is something that should concern us, the Body of Christ, because if God was unfaithful to even *one* promise He made to Israel, then we have every reason to be concerned about all the promises He has made to us under grace. But there is no need for concern; God is faithful. He will literally fulfill *every* promise He made to Israel.

God's Love for Israel

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

"That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:1-5).

After proclaiming God’s love for believers in Christ (8:38-39), Paul begins chapter 9 by sharing his great love for his kinsmen after the flesh, the Jews. He wrote about his “great heaviness and continual sorrow” (9:2). Great heaviness and sorrow are intense emotions that are typical in mourning a loved one who has died. Out of Paul’s *deep* desire for his countrymen to believe and find life in Christ, he experienced these powerful emotions.

Paul was so concerned about the lost souls of his brethren, the Jews, that he was willing to be “accursed from Christ” (v. 3), or to give up his life in Christ and take their place in the lake of fire, so that they could be saved. But Paul states that he could only “wish” for this, because such a thing is not possible (cf. Rom. 8:35-39). We are secure in Christ the moment we believe and nothing can ever take away our salvation.

Paul’s love for Israel and profound desire for them to be saved reflects God’s love for them—God, Who desires all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). And Romans 9:4-5 remind us what a privileged position Israel had before God. As Deuteronomy 7:6 describes of Israel, “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

In Romans 9:4-5, Paul recounts Israel’s past unique blessings as God’s chosen people, and he lists eight of them.

1. “The adoption”

Israel had the blessing of the placing of sons (Exod. 4:22), having a legal standing as the full-grown, firstborn sons before God and, thus, heir of all God promised.

2. “The glory”

Israel had the glory of God’s presence leading them through the wilderness, as well as having the Shekinah glory of God residing in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

3. “The covenants”

Israel had the covenants God made solely with her. The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants promised Israel that she would be a great nation in a great land, having a kingdom with an everlasting throne.

4. “The giving of the law”

Israel had the blessing of God’s law being given to her and her alone at Mount Sinai. This was a peculiar honor, and by giving it to her

God intended to make Israel a holy people.

5. “The service of God”

Israel was a royal priesthood, having the high privilege of serving God as ministers of His law; they had the service of God in the temple and all of its sacrificial and all of ceremonial system.

6. “The promises”

Israel was given rich promises concerning her coming Messiah, His reign of peace and righteousness over the earth, and Israel’s pre-eminence among the nations in His kingdom.

7. “Whose are the fathers”

Israel is “beloved for the fathers’ sakes” (Rom. 11:28). For the sake of the fathers of the nation—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—God would ever love them and keep His promises to them.

8. “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever”

In fulfillment of the covenants and promises, Israel had the greatest privilege of all, of God’s own Son, the One Who is over all and God in flesh, coming to and through Israel.

The vast majority of Jewish people today, and throughout the dispensation of grace, would agree with Paul and acknowledge all these blessings, *up to the last one*. This greatest, most important blessing, sad to say, they would reject. As we follow Paul as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1), we have a heaviness and sorrow at Israel’s unbelief and a desire that they trust Christ and be saved, just as we do with people of all nations, ethnicities, and races.

God’s Mercy and Compassion on the Nations

“Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

“That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

“For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;)

“It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

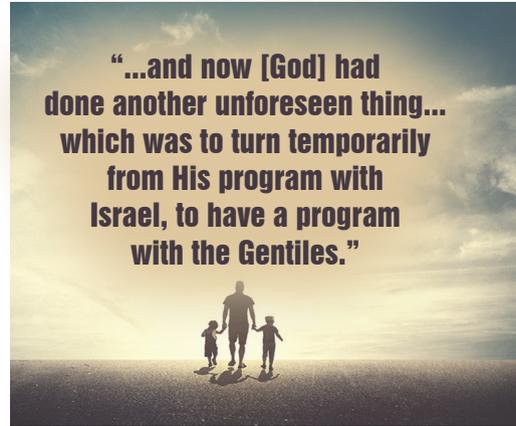
“For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom. 9:6-15).

Paul begins a discussion of what happened to Israel, by defining what true Israel is “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (v. 6). In other words, not all Israelites are saved Israelites, and simply being of the Jewish bloodline doesn’t mean you are a true Jew (Rom. 2:28-29); that is, it doesn’t mean that you are saved.

Paul argues further, “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children” (Rom. 9:7). To prove this point, Paul gave an illustration from the Hebrew Scriptures. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was Abraham’s firstborn, but he was the son that the patriarch had with Hagar, his wife Sarah’s handmaiden, when Abraham and Sarah did not wait for God’s promise to be fulfilled. Isaac was the son Abraham had with his wife Sarah and was the son God promised that they would have, even in their old age.

Isaac was the chosen seed of promise through whom God would fulfill His covenant to Abraham, and not through Ishmael the firstborn. Of course, Christ later came through Isaac and his seed. Paul used this example to prove to the Jews that, although they might be Abraham’s seed, as Ishmael was, this doesn’t mean they’re children, or heirs, as Isaac was. And if they’re not children, they can’t inherit the promise of eternal life. Only Abraham’s true

children, or the believers among his multiplied seed, will forever inherit the land God promised to Abraham.



As Paul wrote in verse 8, “That is, They which are the children of the flesh [or Ishmael], these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise [or Isaac] are counted for the seed.”

The other point Paul is making with this illustration is that God has worked in surprising ways according to His perfect will, such as “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Rather than through Abraham’s firstborn, it was through Abraham’s second, miraculous son that God would fulfill His covenants with Abraham. This was to demonstrate to Israel how God had done unexpected things in her past, and now He had done another unforeseen thing according to His sovereign purposes, which was to turn temporarily from His program with Israel, to have a program with the Gentiles.

To further reinforce this, Paul used the example of Jacob and Esau. Abraham’s son Isaac

also had two sons. Their names were Jacob and Esau, and they were fraternal twins. As with Ishmael and Isaac, the question is this: Which one would be the heir? Which one would inherit the promises made to Abraham by God? The firstborn or the second son?

Paul explained in verse 11 that God chose before they were born, not based on any good or evil things they had done, but according to His purposes and will, that “the elder shall serve the younger.” Esau was born first; Jacob was born second. Esau became the father of the nation of Edom; Jacob became the father of the nation of Israel. And in the end, as God said to Rebecca, the traditional order was reversed, and Esau, the elder, served Jacob, the younger.

The blessing and promises made to Abraham went through Jacob, the younger. Thus, the Edomites were another seed of Abraham that didn’t end up being Abraham’s heirs. Paul is showing the Jews again that being of the seed of Abraham, *even through Isaac*, does not mean that they were a child or an heir or had a claim to God’s promises to Abraham.

Paul is teaching all of this because his “heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1). Paul hoped to reach his countrymen by showing them that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (9:6). He was explaining that they needed to personally believe in Christ to be a child of

God, a true child of Abraham, and to have eternal life.

There’s a principle we find even now in Paul’s reasoning with the Jews, that just being of the seed of Abraham doesn’t make you a child of God. Similarly, we hear people say that their parents or grandparents were Christians so they are Christians too. This doesn’t make any difference whatsoever in whether one is going to heaven. Salvation is not passed on as a genetic trait. Each person must trust Christ as Savior to be saved.



Again, Paul used this illustration of Jacob and Esau, and the elder serving the younger, to show that God may indeed choose to go against the norm. And by grace, God has done the unexpected by setting His chosen people aside for a time in their unbelief, to bring the Gentiles to the forefront and inaugurate a program with the nations. The judicial basis for God turning to the Gentiles is that God can do whatever He pleases to do as Sovereign God. Referring to Exodus 33:19, Paul wrote, “For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom. 9:15).

God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and God will have compassion on whom He will have compassion—in this case, on us Gentiles. And praise God that He did! By His mercy and compassion, God has chosen to have a program in which He is giving people of all nations, including Israel, the opportunity to be saved by grace through faith alone in Christ and to be given a heavenly home, blessed with all spiritual blessings.

“As He saith also in Osee [Hosea], I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living God” (Rom. 9:25-26).

Verses 25-26 teach that Israel is going through a time of not being God’s people. But Paul makes it clear that, while God has turned to the Gentiles, Israel has not been set aside forever. After God concludes this program with the Gentiles and turns back to Israel, God will again call Israel “My people” (in the Tribulation,

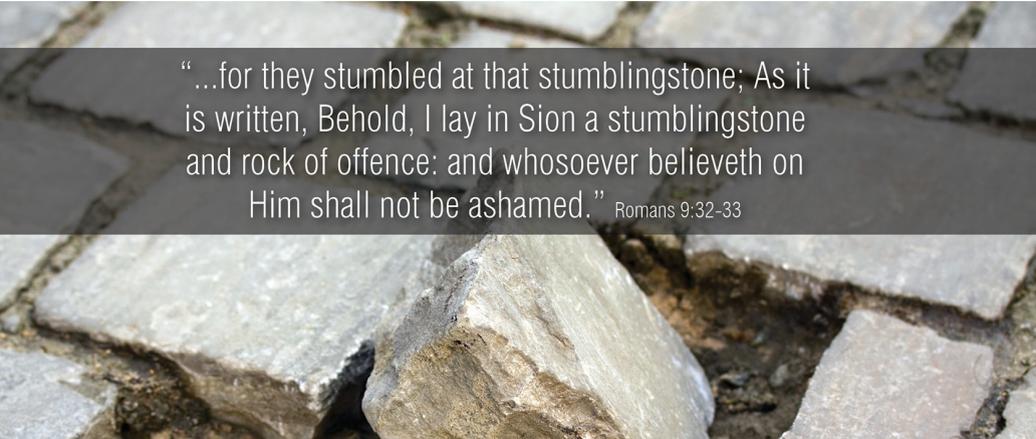
the Kingdom, and eternal state) which were not His people (during the dispensation of grace). God will again call Israel “beloved” and her believers will “be called the children of the living God.”

The period of Israel being considered “not My people” and “not beloved” by God is only temporary. One day, following the Rapture of the Body of Christ, Israel will again be God’s people and His beloved as He restores His program with Israel and makes her the chief nation and a blessing to the whole earth.

The Stumblingstone

“...For they stumbled at that Stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a Stumblingstone and Rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:32-33).

What happened to Israel? Israel fell. She tripped over a Rock, a Stumblingstone. The Stumblingstone and Rock of offence is a “Him” according to verse 33. The “Him” is the Lord Jesus Christ. In fulfillment of prophecy, Christ came to Israel “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).



“...for they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” Romans 9:32-33

He proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, taught the Word of God, raised the dead, caused the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear, all demonstrating that He was Israel's Messiah and King. But Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, and did not believe in Him. Israel's rejection of Him ultimately led to the Cross.

At Pentecost, after Christ arose and ascended to heaven, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to Israel, Who powerfully bore witness to Christ's resurrection and identity as Israel's Messiah. However, Israel persisted in their rejection of Christ to the point that Israel's leaders stoned Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5). Israel stumbled at the Stumblingstone and fell in her unbelief of Christ at that time.

However, instead of Israel's fall resulting in the prophesied 70th week of Daniel, which is the seven-year Tribulation period, God temporarily set His program with Israel aside and ushered in a never-before-revealed dispensation of the grace of God in which He has turned to the Gentiles. Thus, God raised up a new apostle, Paul, and revealed to him "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25), and He sent him to the nations to make this message of grace known.

Contained in the revelation of the mystery is the truth that "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever

shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12-13). There most definitely was a difference between Jew and Gentile in times past, but things changed with Israel's fall and God turning to the Gentiles. Now Jew and Gentile are on the same level, and whosoever calls upon Christ and trusts Him as personal Savior is given the gift of eternal life. Under grace, Jews must come to Christ the same way a Gentile does, by trusting the gospel of the grace of God, that Christ died for our sins and rose again the third day (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:3-4).



In order to fulfill His future promises to Israel, God is preserving the Jews in this dispensation, which in itself has been a miracle because of the hatred of so many toward them and the various attempts to wipe them out. Following the conclusion of this age, which closes with the catching away of the Church to heaven, God will pick up right where He left off with Israel, and fulfill *everything* He has promised to her to the letter. He will do this because God is always faithful to His Word and to His promises, promises made both to Israel and to us the Church, the Body of Christ. 

Question Box

“What does the Bible say about tattoos?”

Under the Law of Moses, God’s people in Israel were told:

“Ye shall not...print any marks upon you...” (Lev. 19:28).

Of course, our apostle Paul tells us that God’s people *today* “are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:15).

Having said that, it is important to remember that some of the Law’s prohibitions expressed principles that are binding in any dispensation, such as “thou shalt not kill” (Exod. 20:13) or “thou shalt not steal” (v. 15). God is always concerned when His people break these and any other of His laws that are based on moral issues of that nature.

That doesn’t seem to be the case with tattoos, however. God’s prohibition of body markings is rather based on their association with the customs of the heathen in those days. Notice the context:

“Ye shall not...mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not...print any marks upon you...” (Lev. 19:27,28).

Marring the corners of a man’s beard was evidently a custom found among the heathen at that time, and God didn’t want His people doing something that would associate themselves with unbelievers. But there would be no reason to refrain from rounding the corner of a beard on that basis today.

Similarly, while it may once have been true that getting a tattoo would associate a believer with people of questionable character, this may no longer be the case. Their growth in popularity among even professional people has made it so that each individual Christian must decide for himself if this association issue is a concern.

With all that in mind, the question of tattoos under grace seems to come down to a matter of personal conviction, and in such cases the apostle of grace advises us to be gracious, not judgmental (Rom. 14:3).

—Pastor Kurth

FOR THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST WE HAVE:

“No creed but Christ; No law but love;

No book but the Bible;

No membership but fellowship.”



The Power of the Gospel Revealed to Paul

JIM HUMPHREY
Guest Writer

Since Adam, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” (Rom. 3:23). “As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). That’s quoted from Old Testament passages, including: “For there is **not a just man** upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl. 7:20; Psa. 14:3). So since Adam, it’s been impossible for anyone to be righteous before God by doing works of the flesh required by religion.

But the Book of Romans teaches how those living prior to and after Paul could and can be righteous. Two verses in Romans set the tone:

“For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the **righteousness** of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The **just** shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16,17). (The word “**just**” means “**righteous**” here).

“The Gospel of Christ” is also called “the Gospel of His Son...concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 1:1-3,9). Paul calls it “my Gospel,” and indeed it is, as it was first revealed to him (Rom. 15:19,29; 16:25,26). Consider the following recap or summary of Romans 1:16-17. The Gospel of Christ saved those who believe and continues to save them. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God that saves from eternal damnation. The Gospel of Christ reveals the righteousness of God. The Gospel of Christ was to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The Lord informed Saul (later Paul) when he was saved that he was “a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My [Jesus Christ’s] name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15), and Paul wrote that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). So, what does Paul mean “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” in Romans 1:16?

God promised Abraham that his progeny would be a great nation, and when Israel became such, He informed them what was required to

be righteous by the law He gave Moses. From that time forward, until God revealed the Gospel of Christ to the Apostle Paul, the only way a Gentile could be saved was to join Israel as a proselyte, submitting to circumcision and obedience to the law. This remained true during the time of Jesus Christ's ministry. He said He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt. 15:24), and He told His disciples not to go to the Gentiles but rather to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt. 10:5,6).

But how could the "Gospel of Christ" revealed to Paul apply to so many people who lived prior to him when they knew nothing of him, or the Gospel of Christ revealed to him? The answer begins to unfold when Paul says: "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision [Jews and proselytes] **by faith**, and uncircumcision [the Gentiles] **through faith**" (Rom. 3:29-30).

Note the circumcision were justified "**by faith**"; the uncircumcision "**through faith**." The preposition translated "**by**" (faith) referencing the circumcision is from the Greek "**ek**," which governs only the genitive case and denotes motion from the interior. It is used of time, place, and origin and means "out from; the immediate origin." Thus, Paul is saying that God



shall justify the circumcision (Jews and proselytes) "**by**" or "out from" their faith. In other words, Jews under the law were saved by faith plus works (see James 1:1; 2:14-26; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:21), while under the Gospel of God's Grace introduced by Paul both Jews and Gentiles have been saved through faith without works.

Old Testament and Gospel accounts reveal that most Jews followed the law in self-righteousness. Like the Pharisees during Christ's earthly ministry, they exalted themselves in the works of the law but were not saved. Only those who followed the law by faith were saved.

Paul demonstrated this truth in a sermon given in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia where he addressed men of Israel, and those that fear God (Acts 13:16,26), proclaiming: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Jesus Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39). They had to believe the Gospel of Christ to be justified (rendered righteous); they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

But, again, how were the circumcised (Jews and proselytes) who lived prior to the time Paul preached the Gospel of Christ justified (made righteous) from all things? To understand, I'll use King David and Abraham as examples.

King David lived under the law, but he violated at least three of the ten commandments. He coveted Uriah the Hittite's wife, Bathsheba (tenth commandment), committed adultery with Bathsheba (seventh commandment), and caused Uriah's death, which could be classified as murder (sixth commandment). David knew nothing about Jesus Christ dying for his sins, i.e., the Gospel of Christ revealed to the Apostle Paul, but he knew the righteousness of God. He truly repented of his sins (2 Sam. 12:13), which he expressed in Psalms 51:1-19, which is recommended reading.

David had faith in God's Word and "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). David's hope (earnest expectation) was to be righteous, and faith was the ground on which he stood. Faith was the evidence he could not see. He had no idea the Jehovah God he worshipped and to Whom he prayed would come as a man and die for his sins; nor could he know the Lord Jesus Christ would subsequently reveal to the Apostle Paul the "Gospel of Christ," which revealed how righteousness would be imputed to him.

God knew David's heart and how He could count him righteous, as He later revealed to the Apostle Paul:

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:21-26).

The "forbearance" of God refers to God's "toleration" of David's sin until the time He Himself paid the price for the "remission" of David's sins on the cross. Simply put, prior to when the Gospel of Christ was revealed to the Apostle Paul, Jews and proselytes were saved by faith in God's Word that they should do the works of the law. They recognized their sin and truly believed God's Word about following the law.

As to Abraham, he lived before God gave the law, but the Gospel of Christ also saved him. Paul writes how God imputed righteousness to Abraham even though he didn't know about the Gospel of Christ:

"He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:20-25).

Whereas David and Abraham were unaware of how their redemption could be accomplished, believers during the past almost 2,000 years have looked back on its accomplishment as revealed to the Apostle Paul;

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:22-24).

All that is required for us today is to believe (have faith in) the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4) and the righteousness of God is imputed to us through faith of Jesus Christ. If you’ve never believed that before, *believe it now*, before it is eternally too late! 

God Wanted Them There

JOSEPH was a stranger in the vile land of Egypt,
BUT God wanted him there to save his people.

ESTHER was a queen in a land that hated Jews,
BUT God wanted her there to save her people.

DANIEL was jailed in a den of vicious lions,
BUT God wanted him there for a testimony.

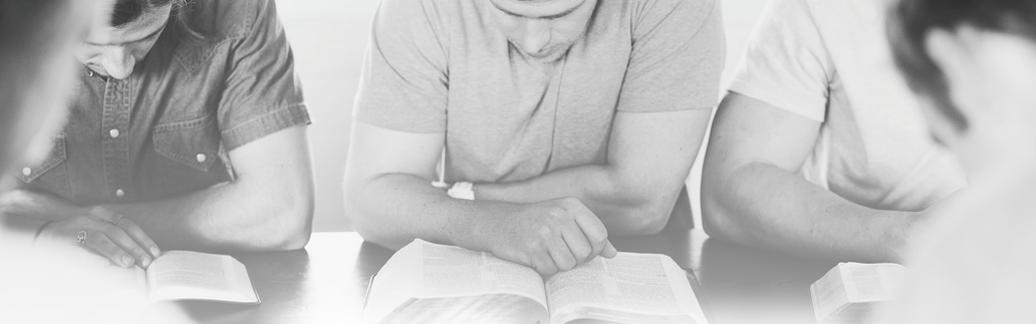
JONAH groaned in a watery grave inside a great fish,
BUT God wanted him there to learn a lesson.

PAUL AND SILAS lay in prison, **BUT** God wanted them there to lead a soul to Christ.

PETER too lay in prison, **BUT** God wanted him there to show His power in answering prayer.

JOHN was isolated on a lonely island, **BUT** God wanted him there to write Christ’s Revelation.

Why does God have **YOU** where you are at this moment?



MAN *to* MAN

The Next Decision

A husband and wife, prior to marriage, decided that he'd make all the major decisions and she the minor ones. After 20 years of marriage, he was asked how this arrangement had worked. "Great! In all these years, I've never had to make a major decision."¹

In reality, we make decisions every day that impact not only ourselves but those around us, from where we will live, what line of work we seek to how involved we are at church. Sometimes, these decisions may seem unimportant, but for some, past mistakes can become reasons for not moving forward. Coupled with pride, something I think as men we can be uniquely susceptible to, the recipe for bad decisions (even no decision at all) is in place. But as we should always do, let us look to Scripture for both direct instruction as well as examples of those who made mistakes, but were determined to *make the next decision right*.

In Galatians 2 (11-14), Paul confronts Peter for making the huge mistake of withdrawing himself from the Gentiles at the appearance of fellow Jews from Jerusalem. What interests me is not that Paul confronts Peter, but what Peter does with the situation. Men often do not respond well to being confronted with their errors. Remember that whole pride issue? But it seems in our example in Galatians that Peter likely responded well. Later, Peter speaks of Paul as a "beloved brother" (2 Pet. 3:15). It appears that Peter didn't let a bad decision prevent him from making the next decision a right decision.

"Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good" (Job 34:4).

As we face what can seem insignificant or even enormous decisions, let us remember that our past does not need to define our decisions. In the Scriptures, we have the whole counsel of God. Will we allow it to confront us as Paul confronted Peter? Will we make future decisions based not on pride, anger, self-worth, or desires, but on God's purpose and will for Christian men?

Maybe you have made some big mistakes; I know I have. But Christ is not calling you to fix past mistakes. He simply wants you to *make the next decision right*.

—Pastor Don Hosfeld

1. <https://bible.org/illustration/major-or-minor-decisions>

BBS

Letter Excerpts



From Ohio:

“Your article ‘Complete in Christ 100%’ in the November *Searchlight* was 100% true! Absolutely excellent!”

From our Inbox:

“I am anxiously anticipating Pastor Ken Lawson’s part 2 of *An Open Letter to a Pentecostalist*. His first letter was amazing. I have read, reread, underlined, and researched Pentecostal doctrinal statements as per 2 Timothy 2:15; and now I need ‘The Rest of the Story!’”

From Washington:

“I recently gave a message using Pastor Don Hosfeld’s article on contrasting the Biblical worldview with the one we are all born with—the humanistic worldview—and how we have to grow in our Biblical worldview, using dispensational thinking to better understand Scripture, and how God has changed His workings with us over time.”

From Oklahoma:

“I look forward to the *Searchlight* every month, as do my wife and my two grown kids. Because of your ministry, my entire family has become grace believers.”

From Texas:

“Will you please send me the *Berean Searchlight*? I have the April issue, and it is written very well. You guys have done your homework and know your stuff.”

From Kansas:

“All the years in church, thinking I was taught right, and I know now that all that teaching was mixing law and grace. No wonder I was confused. But not anymore! I thank the Holy Spirit for teaching me, and guiding me to learn from Pastor Kevin.”

From Mississippi:

“I watch Pastor Kevin every day....I talked to him about six months ago, and he mentioned a free magazine. I get a blessing when I hear him preach....He tells it like I like it.”

From South Carolina:

“We...have never lived near a Grace church. Our family went to Cedar Lake when I was a teenager. My parents were grace believers and wonderful Bible teachers to me. My husband and I get our Bible teaching from your amazing *Transformed by Grace* broadcasts. Thank you for giving us great lessons through the broadcasts as well as the *Berean Searchlight*.”

From Georgia:

“*Transformed by Grace* feeds me, and never leaves me hungry or thirsty!”

From Florida:

“Thank you so much for adding *Transformed by Grace* to our local WYKE TV station, 6pm Monday through Friday. I’m telling everyone!”

From Michigan:

“Wow, did I need that *Two Minutes* lesson [“In His Service”]! I’m retired...but God still has work for me to do. Thanks for being a daily blessing to this old man.”

From Nevada:

“Your *More Minutes* titled ‘You’ve Got to Take a Stand for Something’ was not only good for me to hear but I am going to share it with my home Bible study group.”

From Maryland:

“We really enjoyed the recent Bible conference from Streamwood that was live on YouTube, and hope you do it again.”

From our Inbox:

“I just wanted to thank you so much for answering my questions about forgiveness, that really helped me to understand. I’m going to read it again. You’ve been a blessing to me today.”

From our Inbox:

“Thank you so much, that’s what I thought. Just want you to know I’m 69 years old, and after all of these years, I’m finally able to read and understand my Bible through the teachings of your ministry.”

From our Inbox:

“I enjoyed the ‘Access Your Grace and Joy’ article you sent. I needed that, because sometimes I feel guilty about past sins as a believer.”

From Oregon:

“It’s always a blessing to phone your office at *Berean Bible Society* and hear a willingness to help...looking forward to the new reference Bible!”

From our Inbox:

“Reading *Foundational Truths* as part of daily devotions. Helpful, well written, clear presentation of Paul’s gospel. Highly recommended along with Stam’s *Two Minutes with the Bible*. Fredericksen and Stam are great writers and much appreciated.”

From Virginia:

“Your website has changed my entire life, and I want to give to show my appreciation for how God has used your ministry to open my understanding of rightly dividing the Word of truth with this gift.”

From Wyoming:

“My son requested that I stop driving. I guess being 93 it is time. I sold my car and the extra \$100 you are receiving this month is a portion of that sale.”

From Georgia:

“Enclosed please find \$10.00 for the 8GB USB flash drive with the first 250 broadcasts (audio version) of *Transformed by Grace*. You can’t imagine how overjoyed I was to see that offer. I am 85, no longer able to attend church, and...your efforts to provide a variety of ways to receive your teaching are very much appreciated.”

From Wyoming:

“My former church is the model textbook example of what happens when 2 Timothy 2:15 is not heeded. They are going through another schism or heresy as they say and tragically, neither side knows the blessed truth. That’s why I so cling to you guys and your wonderful ministry! It has brought me total stability and perfect peace of mind.”

BE A BEREAN

“These 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

STEPS TO GETTING MORE BBS ON **ROKU**

- 1 Press the **Home** button  on your Roku remote.



- 2 Scroll up or down and select **Streaming Channels** to open the Channel Store. Scroll down and select **Search Channels** then type in "Berean Bible".



- 3 The channel is **FREE** so after tapping **OK** on the channel, you simply select **Add Channel** to install the channel on your Roku device.



If you have set up a PIN number on your Roku account, you will be asked to provide the PIN before downloading. If you have **NOT** set up a pin, skip this step.



- 4 After adding the Berean Bible Society Channel, it will be in the list of channels under **Home** on the main screen. Scroll down, it will have been added to the bottom of the list of channels.

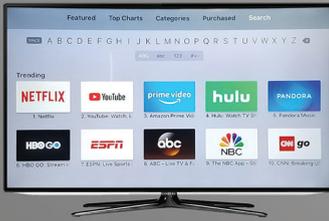
STEPS TO GETTING MORE BBS ON



1 Launch the **App Store** app from your Home screen.



2 Move over to the **Search** tab on the end and type in "Berean Bible".



3 Click on the BBS Network app icon, then click the **Get** button to download the app for free. Then click the **Get** button on the next page to confirm download.



4 To launch it, go back to the **Home** screen and swipe up, down, left, or right on the touchpad until you reach the BBS Network app. Click on the app to launch it.





News and Announcements

California Bible Conference: If cabin fever has a death grip on you right about now, we have the perfect solution! BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler will be speaking at the *Bethany Bible Church* in Banning on March 24-26. Pastor Michael TerBush learned the grace message a few decades ago by reading Pastor Stam's book on water baptism, and he's had a heart for the truth ever since. Here's your chance to meet him, and to hear *Transformed By Grace's* teacher teach in person! Just be sure to let Pastor TerBush know you're coming. You can reach him at 951-285-1878, or at michaelterbush@yahoo.com.

Arizona Bible Conference: If all you can think about right now is how cold you are, we know a way to warm your heart as well as your feet. *Berean Searchlight* editor Pastor Ricky Kurth will be rightly dividing the Word at the *West Valley Grace Fellowship* in Sun City West, March 24-26. This year's edition of this wonderful annual gathering comes with an opportunity to meet Pastor Don Hosfeld, the newest member of our staff here at BBS, who'll be speaking at two of the meetings. You can read more about Don on page 3, and you can learn more about this Phoenix-area conference by contacting Pastor Mark Dilley at (623) 377-3071, or at jjdster@gmail.com.

Pastoral Opportunity: If you're a grace pastor looking for a church, *Grace Bible Church* of Nokomis, Florida, may be looking for you. You can email them at board@GBFCFlorida.com to see if you might be the next pastor of this church of warm-hearted saints in a warm weather state.

Pulpit Supply: If your Midwest grace church is in between pastors, BBS business manager Pastor Jim Tollar is available for guest-speaking engagements. Jim has pastored several grace churches over the years, and has also spent time on the mission field in Kenya. If his name sounds familiar, you may have heard his friendly voice answer when you called us here at the office. If you called with a Bible question, you already know how well versed he is in the truth, and how adept he is at expressing it. If you'd like to talk to him about ministering at your church, he receives emails at jimmissysam@hotmail.com, or you can ring him at (262) 581-6228.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Arizona Bible Conference, March 24-26, Sun City West, Arizona

California Bible Conference, March 24-26, Banning, California

Northeast Ohio Bible Conference, May 12-14, Ashtabula, Ohio

BBF Summer Conference, June 18-22, Tipp City, Ohio

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This is only a partial price list. For a full price list please see our website or contact BBS.

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Three Tenses of Our Union with Christ

Past—Ye were raised with Christ.

Present—Your life is hid with Christ in God.

Future—Ye shall appear with Him in glory.

-J. Sidlow Baxter

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