

# *The* **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2012



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

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# From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Depending on when your monthly *Searchlight* arrives, the Mayan calendar deadline for the end of the world has either come and gone, or else it is looming in the imminent future. All the hoopla that surrounded this gloomy prediction got me to wondering if there might not be some way that Christians could capitalize on yet another failed non-Biblical prophetic expectation. After all, last year when the Rapture failed to take place on the date designated by a popular radio Bible teacher, God's people were able to take advantage of this by pointing out that, when it comes to the Second Coming of Christ, the Bible says that "of that day and hour knoweth no man" (Matt. 24:36). Those that knew the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming were also able to point out that the date of the former is just as unsearchable in Scripture as that of the latter. Surely there has to be a way to similarly benefit from the failure of the Mayan calendar disaster as well.

I wonder if what we are looking for might be found in Isaiah 41:21-24. There, God Almighty thunders forth a challenge to all the false gods of the nations, daring them to "produce your cause," that is, to produce "strong reasons" why anyone should believe they are God. If you are wondering what kind of reasons He had in mind, the Lord went on to say, "let them bring them forth, *and shew us what shall happen...*

"Shew the things that are to come hereafter, *that we may know that ye are gods....*"

This challenge went unanswered in Isaiah's day, of course, for *only the God of the Bible knows the future*, something He has proved over and over again in Scripture, and something that the failed predictions of others serve to magnify.

With all this in mind, why not put together a short mental list of fulfilled Bible prophecies, and mark Isaiah 41 in your Bible? That way when the subject of the Mayan calendar comes up the day *after* the December 21st deadline (as you know it will!), you can capitalize on the biggest non-story of the year by reminding people that the challenge of Isaiah 41 has still gone unanswered, and that the God of the Bible is still the only God worthy of worship. Let's determine to be ready to offer "a word in season" (Isa. 50:4) to all who are disillusioned by the gods of the nations, and are in desperate need of the God who sent His Son to die for their sins.



Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth



# *Twenty-Five* *Years of* **FAITHFULNESS**

By Pastor John Fredericksen

*W*hen the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius destroyed the city of Pompeii in A.D. 79, many people were buried in the ruins. Some took cover underground, and the place became their burial chamber. Those who chose a high hiding place were also unable to escape destruction. But a Roman sentinel was found at the city gate, his hands still grasping his weapon. That was where he had been placed by the captain. While the earth shook beneath him, while the flood of ashes and cinders overwhelmed him, he stood at his post, and it was there he was found a thousand years later.

The Lord tells us in Proverbs 20:6, “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” From these words we can conclude that it has always been difficult to find those who are truly faithful to the Lord. Nonetheless, the Lord has always had a few faithful servants in every dispensation.

The Lord described the brother of Miriam and Aaron as, “My servant Moses...who is faithful in all mine house” (Numbers 12:7). When King Saul had murderous intent, Ahimelech said, “And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David...?” (1 Samuel 22:14). Nehemiah wrote that he gave his brother Hanani “charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many” (Nehemiah 7:2). As we read the pages of the Old Testament record, we find that the Lord had other faithful servants such as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Esther, Daniel, Jeremiah, and many more. Each of these is a real encouragement to us because they prove that men or women from any circumstance or background can serve the Lord faithfully.

God’s Word also cites a number of saints in the dispensation of Grace who were faithful. The testimony of the Apostle Paul was that he was thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ “...for that he counted me faithful,

putting me into the ministry” (I Timothy 1:12). Our apostle of grace was not just faithful for a while, he was faithful in ministry until the very end of his life and was confident of great reward that awaited him in eternity because of his faithfulness (II Timothy 4:7-8). Paul was also publicly thankful for faithful men who served the Savior with him. He described Timothy as “...my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ” (I Corinthians 4:17). He praised Tychicus as “...a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord” (Colossians 4:7).

This emphasis in the Scriptures about being faithful is of great importance. It is obviously a character trait of great value to the Lord and for which there will be great eternal reward for those who choose to walk with the Lord in this way. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul understood this clearly. Therefore, he wrote, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17).

September 1st, 2012, marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pastor Paul Sadler’s full-time ministry at the *Berean Bible Society*. Prior



BBS Board Member Ken Lawson awards Pastor Sadler a 25th anniversary plaque at an intimate dinner held in his honor


to coming to BBS, Pastor Sadler served as the chairman of the BBS board, and he served as a pastor in several grace churches, all of which flourished under his leadership. When the need arose at the *Berean Bible Society*, Pastor Stam asked Pastor Sadler to leave a thriving church in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. Although it was a difficult decision, he and his family answered that call. For several years, he served as Pastor Stam’s right hand man, shouldering most of the daily work. When Pastor Stam retired, Pastor Sadler took the reins of the *Berean Bible Society* and has labored tirelessly ever since.

It has been my privilege to work on the Board of Directors with Pastor Sadler during most of his tenure at the *Berean Bible Society*, so I know this dear friend very well. Like Moses and David, he has been faithful in every task given to him. Like Hanani, he has proven to fear the Lord reverently and to be so faithful that he is worthy of great responsibilities. Like the Apostle Paul, he has been faithful over many years. Like Timothy and Tychicus, he has proven faithful to the sound doctrines of the Word “rightly divided” and to be a gracious man who unassumingly works well with others as a fellow servant.



“...he worketh the  
work of the Lord...”  
(1 Cor. 16:10).

Many of you may not know that, due to tight finances, Pastor Sadler worked for many years, without complaint, under an unbelievably heavy workload. For over ten years he worked without an assistant, attending to correspondence, answering phone calls, writing articles, directing the staff, guiding board meetings, serving as editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, traveling extensively to preach in churches and conferences, and in dozens of other duties. I have often wondered how he managed such an incredible workload but, of course, the Lord enabled him as he faithfully labored “abundantly” year after year. Today, Pastor Sadler still carries an extremely busy schedule of ministry. Many of us who know him are thankful for his steady, consistent, humble, and faithful leadership.

I Thessalonians 5:12-13 instructs us to “know them which labour among you...and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” We share all this information with you for several reasons. We believe you will want to rejoice with us as we acknowledge the service of a very faithful servant of the Lord. We believe the Scriptures teach us to give honor to whom honor is due. The Savior taught this principle and the Apostle Paul practiced it. We believe it is always an encouragement to see godly examples that challenge us to likewise be faithful. We also believe it will be a comfort to know that when you give to the *Berean Bible Society*, you are giving to a ministry with a faithful man at the helm. We invite you to rejoice with us over this milestone in Pastor Sadler’s ministry. 

## MP3 Audio Additions

If you like to listen to online Bible studies, we’ve added several new series to our lineup, messages presented by BBS president Paul Sadler. These newly-added topical messages on dispensational themes are sure to shore up your understanding of God’s rightly divided Word.

Just click on the “MP3 Audio” link on our website, and be sure to have your Bible and a notebook at hand!



# A Christian Never Surrenders...

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

From a message delivered on June 20th at the 44th Annual Bible Conference of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* in Cedar Lake, Indiana.

Complete this sentence: “A police officer never surrenders his...?” I always thought that the answer was his *weapon*, but I got a different answer from our good friend Doug Cox. A policeman with over thirty years of experience, Doug says that a policeman never surrenders *his radio*, for it is his only way of communicating with headquarters.

Similarly, a Christian’s only way of communicating with his “headquarters” in heaven is *prayer*. Sad to say, Christians often surrender their “radio” when they abandon their prayer-life. And when they do, they are being disobedient to God, who speaking through the Apostle Paul, says we are to...

**“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2).**

Did you notice here that Paul doesn’t tell us to *begin* to pray? He just assumes that we’ve *been* praying, for he knows it is natural to *start* praying after you get saved. It is natural to want to thank God for saving your soul, and to ask the question that Paul asked moments after his conversion: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). If you have never asked the Lord this all-important question, maybe it is time you did!

But now, after assuming that we have *started* praying, why would Paul assume we’d ever *stop*? We believe it is because he knows there are things that *cause* Christians to stop praying. For instance, when they ask for things in prayer and don’t get them, they often stop praying. Here it is important to rightly divide the

word of truth, of course, and to remember that, in the dispensation of grace, God is not giving us “all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer” (Matt. 21:22).



Besides, we shouldn't always be *asking* for things in prayer. When my son Jesse and I visited John F. Kennedy's grave in Arlington National Cemetery, a huge stone engraved with his famous inaugural quote reminded us to “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” That's a good principle to remember when it comes to your prayer-life as well! It is okay to ask for things in prayer, since Paul says to “let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). Just don't forget to ask what *you* can do *for the Lord*, as Paul asked on Damascus Road.

### Never Surrender Your Prayer-Life

If you are thinking that it is not important to continue in prayer, consider this. There aren't too many things that the Bible tells us to “continue” in. We are told to continue following the Lord (I Sam. 12:14), to continue in the Word (John 8:31), and to continue in the faith (Col. 1:23). If you think that it is important to continue in these

things, then we would suggest to you that it is *equally* important to continue in prayer, or else Paul wouldn't use the same word when exhorting us to continue to communicate with Headquarters.

Paul says the same thing in Romans 12, but here he adds a word when he tells us to be “continuing *instant* in prayer” (v. 12). That means to be ready to pray at the drop of a hat! Remember how quickly Nehemiah prayed (Neh. 2:4,5)? If you remember the story, you know that this faithful man of God was in a *dangerous* situation. You wouldn't think you'd have to be told to be instant in prayer at times like that, you would think that it would come naturally! But in tough situations, we are often quick to *panic*, and *worry*, and *fear* instead.

Paul's exhortation to “continue in prayer” explains what he means when he elsewhere tells us to “pray *without ceasing*” (I Thes. 5:17). Did you ever wonder how Paul expects us to pray while reading the newspaper? If so, you should know that “pray without ceasing” is not an instruction to pray while sleeping, it is an exhortation to *never give up* praying, to *continue* in prayer.

And while you are at it, remember to “watch in the same” (Col. 4:2). Watch *for what*? We believe he means that we should *watch for answers to prayer!* When Peter was arrested, God's people prayed (Acts 12:1-5), but when God answered their prayers, they couldn't believe it (vv. 12-16)!

Of course, we are not told that they were praying for his release. They may have been praying for him to maintain his testimony to



the bitter end, with no thought that he might be spared in the wake of the execution of James (vv. 1-3). If so, this underscores the importance of watching *carefully* in prayer, for God does not always answer prayer how and when we expect!

Watching in prayer *also* means *to watch for certain dangers*. The Lord warned the Jews to “watch therefore: *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*” (Matt. 24:42). If you are wondering why that makes His coming sound more like a *threat* than a promise, the Lord went on to explain that the Hebrew believers to whom He was speaking had to watch and endure faithful to the end to be saved (Matt. 24:43-51 cf. v. 13). That’s why He told them to “watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33).

But the Apostle Paul used the word *watch* in different ways. He told the Ephesian elders to watch for false teachers (Acts 20:29-31), and he warned Timothy to watch for the tendency among God’s people to forsake sound doctrine for “fables” or *stories* (II Tim. 4:3-5). If you are looking for something to watch and pray about in the dispensation of grace, *watch and pray about things like this!* If it is true that “the price of freedom is eternal vigilance,” it is also true that the price of your *spiritual* freedom and liberty in Christ is eternal vigilance regarding the truth of God’s rightly divided Word!

Next, notice that Paul says to watch “with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). How will that help? We believe the reason that people leave the truth of the grace message for error is that they are not thankful for what they have in Christ.

For instance, they sometimes leave the message for religious experiences, such as speaking in tongues. If you are thinking that no one would ever leave grace truth for tongues, we know one man who did. Others leave the grace message for the religious experience of water baptism. You say, “Oh, please! No one would ever leave grace truth for water baptism!” Tell that to the grace church whose pastor returned to his Baptist background just a few years ago.

If you are thinking that these men were not grounded in the grace message, *you’re right!* That’s why Paul tells us to be “rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith...*abounding therein with thanksgiving*” (Col. 2:7). He knew that thanksgiving would help us stay rooted and established in the faith, so he then goes on to remind us of all that we have for which to be thankful. For example, if we know that we are “complete in Him” (Col. 2:10), we won’t be swayed when our Pentecostal friends tell us that our spiritual life will not be complete until we speak in tongues. Likewise, if we truly believe that we are “buried with Him in baptism” (Col. 2:12), we won’t be longing to be baptized in water. We need to watch and pray and be thankful for what we have in Christ.

### **Never Surrender the Truth**

**“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” (Col. 4:3).**

After telling the Colossians to watch and pray, Paul invites them

to pray for *him* as well. While you cannot pray for Paul today, you *can* pray for those who preach his gospel!

If asked, we grace pastors would all ask you to pray for us as Paul suggested, “that God would open unto us a door of utterance.” This figure of speech is still used today when people say that “God never closes a door without opening a window.” The problem with that kind of thinking is, who wants to crawl through a window? How many of you have ever locked yourself out of your house and have had to resort to this less-than-dignified method of obtaining entrance into your home? Well, let me tell you, a window wasn’t nearly big enough for what Paul had in mind! He was looking for open doors of opportunity to *speak the mystery of Christ*.

What’s that? Without a doubt, the mystery of Christ is Paul’s distinctive message, the message that was “*kept secret* since the world began” (Rom. 16:25), which was decidedly different than Peter’s message, which was “*spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets* since the world began” (Acts 3:21). But here Paul is speaking about a specific *aspect* of the mystery, an aspect he identifies as one “for which I am also in bonds” (Col. 4:3). In the parallel passage in Ephesians, he likewise asks for prayer for utterance to speak the mystery, but he specifies that he is asking for prayer “to make known the mystery of *the gospel*,” the gospel that Christ died for our sins (Eph. 6:18-20; I Cor. 15:1-4).

Now if I were Paul, I’d be praying for open doors, all right. If you were in prison, you’d be praying for

open doors too! But notice that he was not praying for open doors to get out of prison, he was praying for open doors to *speak the gospel*.



“...God doesn’t always open the doors to life’s prisons, but in every prison in life, He can open doors for the gospel.”

How about you? What are you praying for in *your* prison? You may not be behind bars, but many of God’s people feel imprisoned by depression, loneliness, physical affliction, a bad marriage, a bad job, or a bad life in general. Are you praying for open doors to get out of your prison, or are you praying like Paul for open doors to speak the gospel within your prison? “What good will that do me?” Well, God doesn’t always open the doors to life’s prisons, but in every prison in life, He can open doors for the gospel. And if your heart is right with God, you’ll be more than satisfied with that.

But there is a bonus in learning to pray like this, for you’ll soon find such a prayer outlook to be very therapeutic. We are told that before the Spanish Civil War in the 1930’s, there was an epidemic of neuroses. Psychiatric offices were flooded with people who were consumed with themselves and their own personal problems; but the war cured all that, as people had to stop focusing on themselves. The point? If you suffer

from depression, or loneliness, or are languishing in any other kind of prison, we know just the war in which you can engage for help. Get in the battle *for the souls of men*. Pick up the sword of the Spirit of God's rightly divided Word and wield it against the death grip that religion has had on God's people for 2,000 years now. You can languish in your own personal prison if you want to, but God is offering you a way out.

If you want to know how serious Paul was about speaking the mystery, remember that he was in prison for preaching it, and yet asked the Colossians to pray that he might have *more* opportunities to preach it. In other words, he longed for more occasions to do the very thing that got him thrown in prison in the first place! Is that how you feel when speaking the mystery brings a little tribulation in your life? Do you pray for *more* open doors?

We already have more opportunities than Paul ever dreamed of! We live in a land of religious freedom, with more ways to get the gospel out than ever before in history. If Paul saw how many open doors we have, he'd salivate like a pit bull in a room full of burglars! Are you taking advantage of your opportunities? If you are shy, get on the internet, where you can speak the mystery in complete anonymity.

We need to pray for open doors to speak the mystery of the gospel *and the mystery of the grace message*. I don't like to think about people spending eternity in Hell, but I also don't like to think about Christians in this life wallowing in the man-made hell of *religion*.

If you don't think religion can be hell on earth, we'll let you read some of the e-mails we get from religious people who are unsure of salvation, living in abject fear and misery. Others live in despair because they can't make heads or tails of the contradictions that are *rampant* in God's Word when you don't rightly divide it. Still others are bent over under a load of overbearing rules with which some legalist has burdened them. People are crying out for *answers*, answers that *only we have!* Are you praying for open doors to make those answers known? A lot of Christians are praying for open doors to speak the gospel. If grace believers don't pray for open doors to speak the mystery, who will?

The reason Paul prayed for open doors to speak the mystery was, as he says,

**“That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Col. 4:4).**



The word “ought” here is the past tense of *owe*, as in *how much do I owe God?* We owe God a moral and spiritual debt for saving us (II Cor. 5:14,15), and like Paul, we owe a debt to *people* as well (Rom. 1:14,15). Some of you couldn't sleep at night if you had unpaid debts; that's how you should also feel about your unpaid *spiritual* debt to God and men. Veteran

missionary Vernon Anderson was once caught crying in the middle of the night, weeping for the *lost souls of men*. How about you? When is the last time you *wept* for the lost and confused multitudes all about us?

### Never Surrender to Sin

Along with their prayers for the lost, Paul asks the Colossians to...

**“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5).**

“Them that are without” are the unsaved, who are “without Christ” and “without God” and “without strength” to do anything about it (Eph. 2:12; Rom. 5:6). Walking in wisdom toward them involves conducting your life in such a way that they believe you when you tell them you’ve been saved from your sins. This is important if you want them to believe you when you tell them how to be saved from *their* sins.

If you are looking for advice on how to build a building, would you consult a book written by the man who built the Leaning Tower of Pisa? If you want to win the World Series, would you seek advice from anyone from the Chicago Cubs? Likewise, no one wanting to know how to be saved from their sins is going to ask someone who is living in sin. If you are going to talk the talk, you must walk the walk. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “What you are doing shouts at me so loudly, I cannot hear a word you are saying.”

*Walking in wisdom* explains what Paul means in the parallel passage in Ephesians 5. In both passages, he speaks about

walking in such a way so as to redeem the time, but rather than speaking about walking in wisdom, there he says to walk “circumspectly” (Eph. 5:15,16). The prefix *circum* means “all around,” as in the *circumference* of a circle. The suffix *spect* means “to see,” which is why eyeglasses are sometimes called *spectacles*. Put it all together, and *circumspectly* means to walk *carefully*, looking all around in your life to make sure you don’t do anything that would dishonor the Lord. That’s walking in wisdom toward them that are without!

The Greek word for *circumspectly* is translated in some pretty challenging ways! A form of this word is used when, speaking of Apollos, we read that “Aquila and Priscilla...expounded unto him the way of God *more perfectly*” (Acts 18:26). If you want to walk circumspectly, you have to walk *more perfectly* than others. A slightly



different form of this Greek word is used when Paul said, “after *the most straitest* sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5). The word “straitest” means *strictest*, and the use of this Greek word here suggests that to walk circum-spectly we must walk as *strictly* as possible.

To walk in wisdom toward them that are without we must also *not judge them for their sins* (I Cor. 5:12,13). We are called to be *witnesses*, not *judges!* If you don’t know the difference between a witness and a judge, please do us all a favor and stay out of the courtroom! You’ll never hear anyone on the witness stand say, “Guilty! I sentence you to thirty years;” we are likewise here to witness for the Lord, not judge the unsaved for their sins. To do otherwise is to be wasting the time that Paul says you should be redeeming.

### **Never Surrender Your Time**

Time is something of which each of us enjoys the exact same amount. If you have ever be-moaned the fact that other Christians are smarter than you are, wealthier, or have more talent, etc., you can take comfort in the knowledge that no other believer on the planet has a moment’s more *time* than you. What are you doing with your time? You are no doubt familiar with Psalm 90:10, where Moses observes that, generally speaking, “the days of our years are threescore years and ten,” but did you ever read the conclusion that he drew from this observation? Two verses later he finishes his thought by remarking, “so teach us to number our days,

that we may apply our hearts unto *wisdom*” (v. 12), the kind of wisdom in which you must walk toward them that are without.

Beloved, you must redeem the time *because time is running out!* You need to wake up and smell the obituary column, for one day you are going to have a starring role in it. Studies have shown that Christians tend to live longer than the unsaved since, as a rule, they don’t smoke or drink or engage in other life-shortening activities. What are you doing with your extra time, wasting it or *redeeming* it?<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the number one way in which we must walk in wisdom toward the unsaved is in the area of our *speech*, which brings us to the final verse of our text:

**“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6).**

Paul has saved the most important thing for last. The words you speak affect the lost more than anything else. That’s why Paul says that your speech must be *always* “with grace.” Grace is *unconditional love and acceptance*, which goes back to the idea of not judging the unsaved for their sins. That old saying, “you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar,” is true in the spiritual realm as well.

### **Never Surrender Gracious Speech**

Perhaps the hardest part of this exhortation is that little word *always*. We don’t always *feel* like speaking graciously to the lost, but Paul says we must! If you are always crabby and critical of the

lost, then suddenly sweet when you witness for the Lord, unbelievers can see right through this. You must be gracious in *everything* you say; you must have a *grace accent*. Your colloquial accent can be heard in literally every word you speak, and tells people where you are from. Peter's accent revealed that he was a citizen of Galilee, which exposed him as a follower of the Lord (Matt. 26:73). Does your speech betray *you*? Does it tell people you are a follower of the Lord, a citizen of *heaven* (Phil. 3:20)? Are you a grace minister (Eph. 4:29)? You may not be a grace *pastor*, but you can minister grace unto others if you let your speech be always with grace, "seasoned with salt."




In this context, we believe *salt* refers to that which is the opposite of grace, since these two things seem to be set in contrast to one another. Grace is the unconditional love and acceptance that God gives us despite our failures. But His grace is seasoned with salt, in that He accepts us in Christ but encourages us through His Word to do something about our failures. In the same way, we need to love the lost unconditionally, and not judge them for their sins, but to season this grace with

salt by letting them know that God cannot accept them in their sins, and wants them to trust in the One who can save them from their sins.

Just remember, your speech is to be *seasoned* with such salt. You know what happens when you add too much salt to a dish. When you over-season a meal, it leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and if all you ever talk to unbelievers about is their need to be saved from their sins, you can leave a bad taste in their mouth as well. If you'll rather *season* your speech with salt, you'll "know how ye ought to answer every man."

Please notice what Paul does *not* say here. He doesn't say that you'll always know *what* to answer every man. You can study the Bible for 60 years and still not always know the answer to every question the unbeliever might pose. But if your speech is always with grace and seasoned with salt, you'll always know *how* to answer every man.

Did you know that every sacrifice in the Bible was salted (Lev. 2:13)? As we bring this article to a close, God is asking you to make a sacrifice. He is asking you to sacrifice the way you usually walk and speak around the lost, and adopt a consistently godly walk and gracious speech instead. Are you willing to make that sacrifice? Are you willing to surrender all in your life that is displeasing to Him? Why not pray about it *right now*? 

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### Endnote

1. See our article *Trafficking in Time* in the May, 2011 issue of the *Berean Searchlight*, at [www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org).

# The Long Journey

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

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“The Apostle Paul was perhaps one of the greatest travelers of his day. He visited many lands, and saw many new scenes in different countries. When he returned he wrote a great deal in his epistles, which were widely read by the early churches. And yet, in all the writings of the apostle, there is not one line that is descriptive of the scenery of the countries through which he passed; not one line telling of the wonders of the architecture of his day; not one line describing the customs of the people.

“Is this not singular? There is a reason for it. The apostle was ‘blind.’ As he travelled about he was blind to all else but one thing. On the way to Damascus, when he met the Lord Jesus, he was blinded by the vision of His great glory, and from that time on he could see nothing but Him and tell nothing but the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

## AN AGE-OLD TRADITION

**“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:1,2).**

Matthew’s account of the journey of the wise men is like the Apostle Paul’s account of his own travels. Like Paul, the wise men traveled far and wide, yet Matthew writes not a word about the unique beauty of the desert, not a word about the vast expanse of land they traversed, nor how they journeyed before they arrived in Jerusalem. Although they had many nights under an open sky, there is not a word about the magnificence of the starry heavens, for they had seen His star in the east and, from that time forward,

they set their faces toward Jerusalem, desiring only to worship the King of the Jews.

The focus of the wise men was on Christ, plain and simple, which is obvious from their inquiry, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” We pause here to ask, can the same be said of us? Is Christ the focal point of our lives? Do we long to please Him in our Christian walk or is our every waking moment occupied with Facebook, Twitter, and iPods? **Challenge:** Think for a moment how much time you spend on social media and compare it with the amount of time you spend studying the Word of God, praying, and enjoying fellowship with the saints. You may be surprised. These are questions that will have a profound effect on us throughout eternity.



While the story of the wise men contains many wonderful truths, they have been overshadowed by the traditions of men (Col. 2:8), which serve only to render the Scriptures ineffectual. Holiday hymns and Christmas cards at this season of the year always present the wise men as three kings who came from the East, following yonder star. Moreover, we are led to believe that the star guided

these men of renown to Bethlehem, where they worshipped the Christ-child on the same night He was born. The basis of this assumption is largely the famous hymn, “We Three Kings of Orient Are,” which, incidentally, barely contains an ounce of truth.

“We three kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar;

“Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

“O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,

“Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect light.”<sup>2</sup>

Charming! But our theology should never be drawn from hymns and Christmas cards, but from the Word of God that is given to us for “correction” (II Tim. 3:16), and in this particular case, there is a great deal of correction that is needed. We have always been of the persuasion that, not only should we preach the truth, we should also sing the truth, otherwise we are sending a mixed message to those to whom we minister.

To learn who the Magi were, from whence they came, and the significance of their visit, we must rely solely upon the Scriptures.

## KINGS AND WISE MEN

**“Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king” (Dan. 2:2).**

**“For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon” (Dan. 2:12).**



The Scriptures *never* call the wise men who came to visit the Christ-child *kings*. As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit takes great care to distinguish between these two positions of authority, as an examination of the record in Matthew confirms.

**“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem” (Matt. 2:1).**



“...our theology should never be drawn from hymns and Christmas cards...”

Kings traditionally rule over a domain, demanding obedience of their subjects. But who were these wise men and where did they reside? Stepping back in time, we receive some helpful insights from the prophet Daniel. The book that bears his name divides the wise men into four classifications: magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and the Chaldeans (Dan. 2:2 cf. 2:14,24). Their expertise was in the study of the heavens; we know, for example, some were skilled *astronomers*, while others of their company practiced *astrology*.

Many scholars agree that the Magi were able to predict solar and lunar eclipses with amazing accuracy. Their knowledge of science, agriculture, and mathematics gave them entrance into the courts of kings, which meant

they exercised a great deal of political influence. They were the intelligentsia of their day.

The wise men of Babylon had a very high regard for Daniel, due to the fact that he had been instrumental in saving their lives when they were unable to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Apparently Daniel had a golden opportunity to teach at least some of the Magi about Israel’s true and living God. Through the Spirit, he revealed to them how a Deliverer was to come, and their background understandably taught them to *watch the heavens* for a sign. It is also advantageous for us to remember that, after the Babylonian captivity ended, a large contingent of Jews remained in Babylon. Therefore, the testimony of the Holy Scriptures continued to have an impact in that area of the world for generations.

So then, comparing Matthew Chapter 2 with Daniel Chapter 2, we conclude that the wise men were *not* kings, but rather astronomers and astrologers who studied the stars. We also know they were *Gentiles* who were evidently from Babylon, considering that they saw the star in the east. This is corroborated by the fact that, under the Law, Israel was never permitted to have wise men who relied on human wisdom to foretell the future. Israel was to rely solely upon Jehovah for divine direction in their lives.

The parallel here with today is almost uncanny. Astrology is still practiced and we are surprised to find that there are Christians who often dabble in it unwittingly. Every newspaper has a column called a *horoscope*, which,

unknown to many, is based on the signs of the Zodiac, which are used by astrologers in foretelling events of a person's life or to determine personality traits. It may



appear to be harmless when you check your sign but, in reality, it is dangerous for this reason: in time you will find yourself consulting your horoscope to discover what the day will supposedly bring. And anything that takes the place of the Word of God in our life as a believer is to be avoided.

### **“YONDER STAR”**

**“Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:2).**

In all probability, the wise men were still in Babylon when they saw the star in the east, which was cause for jubilation. In those days, one didn't just climb aboard a camel and make tracks across the desert. Supplies had to be purchased, families had to be informed, a route had to be planned, and arrangements had to be made to outfit and assemble a caravan.

This consideration in and of itself leads us to believe that there were more than three in

the company who made the long journey from the east. Presumably, there was a considerable group of Magi, accompanied by soldiers, servants, and beasts of burden. The Magi always traveled with pomp and splendor, being the professional astronomers and scientists of that day.

This explains why upon their arrival, King Herod “was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” And to further complicate things, these honorable men of the east inquired concerning the birthplace of the King of the Jews. Clearly the nation was asleep at the switch, as they say, evidenced by the actions of Herod who immediately assembled the chief priests and scribes to demand “of them where Christ should be born” (Matt. 2:4).

While the wise men saw the star in the east on the night Christ was born, contrary to popular belief, they did *not* follow yonder star to *Bethlehem!* If the Magi followed the star, then why stop at Jerusalem to inquire as to the newborn King's whereabouts? Mark these words and mark them well: it was not necessary at this point in time to have the star guiding their way. They had already reasoned quite rightly that the King of the Jews would be born in the land of the Jews. So they would naturally come to Jerusalem, the city of God, to begin their search for the Holy One of Israel.

Inquiring on behalf of the wise men, Herod interrogated the Jewish leaders as to where Christ should be born. They, of course, revealed to him from the Scriptures that it was to be in Bethlehem of Judaea (Matt. 2:5,6). The plot thickens as Herod plays

along in hope of getting his wicked hands on the newborn King. The audacity! Herod was the King of the Jews, or so he thought! There was an element of practical, temporal truth in this, but he was not the rightful heir to the throne of David, and he knew it. Herod therefore commanded these men of the east to go to Bethlehem and, when they found this King, to bring him word that he too might come and worship Him.



As the Magi headed south out of Jerusalem, to their astonishment, the star *reappeared*, redirecting them to the place where they would indeed find and worship the Christ. We believe the “star of Bethlehem,” probably the Shekinah glory of God, was a *supernatural event* on the night the Magi first saw it. This was confirmed when the star miraculously *reappeared*, guiding these weary Gentile travelers to their destination. When the star appeared the second time, their hearts overflowed with gladness. So it is of little wonder that, when they saw it again, “they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Matt. 2:10). It is obvious that they wouldn’t have been so elated if they had been following the star all along.

## A CHANGE OF PLANS

**“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was” (Matt. 2:9).**

This passage informs us that the reappearance of the star must have directed the wise men *away* from Bethlehem to another location, causing a change in plans. This deserves our most thoughtful attention, because Mary and Joseph had departed from Bethlehem—where, indeed, Jesus was born—approximately two years prior to the arrival of these eastern visitors. As we will see, there are at least two observations that substantiate the validity of this conclusion.

First of all, according to Luke, after Mary and Joseph left Bethlehem, they journeyed north to Jerusalem.

**“And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22).**

Having accomplished the requirements of the Law of Moses, the Scriptures reveal that Mary and Joseph departed from Jerusalem and returned home to *Nazareth*, where they were living at the time (Luke 2:39). The Magi were unaware of this; therefore, God supernaturally guided these visitors to the city of Nazareth, where they finally found the Prince of Peace.

The lesson we glean from this account is significant in regard to our interaction with other believers who oftentimes are steeped in tradition. We have an obligation

to expose tradition for what it is—a killer of truth. In so doing, we will deliver them from the bondage of unsound teaching. Tradition portrays three kings kneeling at the manger in Bethlehem, but the Word of God declares that the wise men did not arrive to pay homage to the newborn King until years later at *Nazareth*.

Another indication that the Magi came to Nazareth is found in Matthew's Gospel, where we read that they entered a *house*, not a stable (Matt. 2:11). With this in mind, let us not overlook the fact that, when they entered the house and "saw the *young child*," they worshipped *him*, not Mary, as some teach. The night that Christ was born, He is referred to as a babe (Gr. *brephos*; Luke 2:12,16) in Bethlehem's manger; however, two years later, He is referred to as a "young child" (Gr. *paidon*; Matt. 2:13). Thus the Holy Spirit meticulously differentiates between these two outstanding events in our Lord's life.

### GIFTS FIT FOR A KING

**"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11).**


It is interesting to note that Joseph is not mentioned when the wise men arrived, whereas he is mentioned when Christ was born. This too supports the conclusion that these two accounts are not one and the same.

Since these eastern travelers were bearing three gifts, it has

been conjectured that there were only three who had made the journey. But cannot one man give three gifts? We believe it is more probable that there were a large company of wise men who had pooled their resources to bring these valuable gifts—gifts fit for a King!

Upon their entrance into the house, they immediately fell down and *worshipped* the young child. It has been correctly said that right worship is always the basis for right giving, right learning, and right service.

May we not hope that Christ was now their King—and *Savior*? We believe He was just that. The Holy Spirit has given us this account of the wise men as an important lesson. While the adoration of the shepherds is representative of saved Israel, the visitation of the Magi represents the salvation of the Kingdom Gentiles (Isa. 56:6-8; 60:1-3).

It's a shame that tradition has robbed many of the true wonder of the Magi's visit, but thanks be to God for the authority of His Word that sets us free from these entanglements! Our long journey to see the Lord face to face, like that of the wise men, will soon end, but in our case, it will end with the sound of the trumpet! 

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### Endnotes

1. Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*, (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1990), p. 807; illustration #3447, authored by R. A. Jaffray.
2. *Favorite Hymns of Praise* (Wheaton, IL: Tabernacle Publishing Company, 1973), no. 80, "We Three Kings of Orient Are," composed and written by John Henry Hopkins, Jr. in 1857 and first published in 1863.

A photograph of a man in a light blue button-down shirt speaking to another man whose back is to the camera. The man in the foreground is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a church or a community center.

# The Witness Within

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

*From our upcoming commentary  
on the Epistles of John*

**“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son” (I John 5:10).**

When John speaks here of “the witness,” He is referring to “the witness of God” that he mentioned in the previous verse. He then goes on to explain here that this witness was something that the believer had “in himself” at that time. We believe John was referring to the Holy Spirit who had filled Hebrew believers (Acts 2:4), enabling them to live sinless lives (I John 3:9). That sounds like a pretty good witness, wouldn’t you agree? What greater witness could God give that someone had eternal life than a supernatural power to live completely free of any and all sin?

In the present dispensation of grace, of course, we cannot live sinless lives. But do you think maybe in the measure that you live free of sin, in that measure you can be a good witness to the life within you? Now we’ve probably made you feel bad, thinking of how often you may have fallen into sin and how, if you had only been a better witness, more people would have believed the gospel through your testimony. Well, while it is always good to be the best testimony you can be, you can stop beating yourself up. Don’t forget, John and the rest of the believers at Pentecost *couldn’t sin at all*, and yet there were still people who refused to believe on Christ in their day. We know that there were people who refused this indisputable testimony, since John goes on to say that “he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.”

Now, no one in their right mind would ever *knowingly* call God a liar, yet John insists that this is what men did when they refused to believe “the record that God gave of His Son,” a record he defines in the next verse:

**“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (I John 5:11).**

The “record” that men refused to believe is that God had given these believers eternal life. If you are wondering how men could *see* that God had given these believers eternal life, it wasn’t in the miracles that they performed, for miracles have never been an evidence of eternal life. Remember, Pharaoh’s magicians worked miracles, as did Judas, and in the coming Tribulation Antichrist will work them as well (II Thes. 2:9). No, the eternal life of the saints at Pentecost could be seen *in the sinless lives they lived*. When people refused to believe the overwhelming testimony of *this* record, John says that in so doing they were calling God a liar.

When John says that eternal life is found “in His Son,” we should mention that eternal life is not in Christ in the same way it is in us. Eternal life is in us because we received it as God’s free gift. The Lord Jesus, however, was not a *receiver* of eternal life; He was, and still is, a *giver* of eternal life (I Cor. 15:45). And the eternal life that He gives us



“There is a lot of talk these days about ‘multitasking,’ but no one is better at it than God...”

is *His* life, *divine* life. You are never going to have God’s *power*, or His *wisdom*, but if you have His Son, you have His *life*! Think about that! That means that *God Himself* will not live one day longer than you will. The thought is enough to take your breath away!

Seeing that eternal life is found in the Son, it is not surprising to read what John has to say next, in words similar to the ones he used in his Gospel (John 3:36):

**“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:12).**

There is a lot of discussion among grace believers about whether Hebrew kingdom saints *had* the Son as a present possession, but we believe that this verse and others like it clearly show that they had the Son, and in having Him, as it says here, they had eternal life.

If you are like most people, you probably think a lot about all the things you don’t have in life. You may not have money, or intelligence, or power and influence, but if you have God’s Son, you have eternal life—and isn’t that all that matters? If you could trade your eternal life for money, intelligence, power and influence, and all the other things in life you might not have, would you make the trade? Sometimes we just need to stop and remember that, of all the people on this sin-cursed planet, we are most blessed.

As John nears the end of this epistle, he pauses to summarize the entire letter with this observation:

**“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (I John 5:13).**

In this brief summation, John admits to two reasons for having written this epistle. The first reason was to convince all those who have believed on the name of the Son of God that they have eternal life, with indisputable proof that allowed them to know *for sure* that they had it. This proof included their inability to sin, which showed that they loved God with all their heart, as the Law demanded for salvation. This proof also included the sharing of their worldly goods with their neighbors at a time when there might not be enough food to feed themselves, which proved they loved their neighbors as themselves, the other thing the Law demanded for eternal life.

Notice that John does not assure them that they might someday *obtain* eternal life after they die. He rather asserts that if they had believed on Christ, they *had* eternal life as a present possession. We know that it is often taught that these Hebrew kingdom saints did not possess eternal life, but we believe that they did, in light of this verse and many others (John 3:15; 5:24; 6:54; 10:28; 17:2; I John 2:25 cf. 3:15; 5:11).


John’s other purpose in writing seems a bit perplexing at first. If we remove the middle clause in this verse, it would read,

**“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God...that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”**

On the surface, it makes no sense to write to people who already believe on Christ to try to convince them to believe on Christ! It makes no sense, that is, until we remember that not all who believed on Christ believed “to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39). Some, for instance, just believed on Him “when they saw the miracles which He did” (John 2:23), “but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men” (v. 24), and He knew that they had not believed to the saving of the soul (cf. John 8:30-44; Acts 8:13-23). We believe that this indicates John’s other purpose in writing was to convince those who had nominally believed on Christ to believe on Him to the saving of their souls.

This brings up what we believe to be an important and often overlooked truth. Christians generally believe that there are two kinds of messages, gospel messages for the lost, and Bible teaching messages for the saved. While this breakdown of messages is accurate in many ways, don’t ever think that sinners can’t be saved by hearing the Bible taught. God’s Word is designed to reach the lost and teach the saved simultaneously. For example, while there are many great doctrines

taught in the Gospel of John, the apostle admits that his purpose in writing was “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ...and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31).

There is a lot of talk these days about “multitasking,” but no one is better at it than God, who can preach to the lost and teach the saved, both at the same time. We personally believe that the best way to preach the gospel is not to repeat “Christ died for our sins” backwards and forwards, inside and out. When we *examine* salvation in all of its many facets, we are not just edifying God’s people, we are instructing the lost as to how to be saved. This means that no true Bible-teaching ministry can be justly criticized for not being evangelistic simply because they emphasize Scriptural exposition. 

## Question Box

*“We know that the gift of prophecy has been withdrawn, but how do I argue with a friend who all her life has been able to foretell incidents that actually come about?”*

The Apostle Paul predicted that the gift of prophecy would “fail” (I Cor. 13:8) and, historically, it *did* fail when the Bible was complete. Thus if coincidence cannot be credited for the success of modern “prophets,” Satan is the only other likely cause. Satan does not know the future, other than what he reads in Scripture, but he and his minions *can* know things that you don’t know.

Let’s say a psychic tells you that tomorrow you will receive a visit from your aunt Edna. You haven’t seen Edna in decades, and she hasn’t mentioned a visit, but sure enough, she shows up at your door. How did the psychic know? The “familiar spirits” with whom psychics consort cannot know the future (Isa. 41:21-24), but they *can* know that your aunt has left home and left word with others that she is on her way to visit you.

The Bible warns against consorting with “familiar spirits” (Lev. 19:31), so we know they are real. I further believe they are still active in the present dispensation because, before I was saved, I dabbled with a Ouija board and can attest that something supernatural was at work. But the warnings found in Scripture regarding deceitful spirits are just as important as they ever were, for such things tend to lead people away from the God of the Bible. —Pastor Kurth



# Your Labor Is Not in Vain in the Lord Or Is It?



**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that *your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (I Cor. 15:58).**

Many years ago, my good friend Pastor John Fredericksen gave me a plaque engraved with this text, a plaque that sits on my desk here at *Berean Bible Society* to this day. As I labor for the Lord, it is such an encouragement to me to know that, no matter what, my labor is not in vain in the Lord.

But if that be so, why did Paul tell the Galatians,

**“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal. 4:10,11).**

And what about what the apostle told the Philippian:

**“Do all things without murmurings and disputings...that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Phil. 2:14-16).**

And don't we find the same thought in I Thessalonians 3:5?

**“...I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”**

If it was possible that Paul's labor for the Lord might have been in vain, how could he tell the Corinthians that *their* labor could *not* be? How could the labor of a godly apostle be in vain, but not the labor of the carnal Corinthians?

We believe the answer is found in the context of the verse, where right before telling the Corinthians that their labor was not in vain, Paul spoke to them about the Rapture (I Cor. 15:51-57). In *that* day, when we stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ, *no* believer's labor will be in vain, for *all* of our labor for Him will be richly rewarded.

And so it is that, if the Galatians persisted in their legalism, if the Philippian continued to do things with murmurings and disputings, if the Thessalonians abandoned the faith, Paul's labor among them would have been in vain in *this* life, *but not in the next life!* And if you are feeling discouraged about *your* labor for the Lord because people whom you have led to Him have departed from the faith, or believers to whom you've introduced the grace message have turned their back on that blessed truth, you too can rejoice that *your labor is not in vain in the Lord!*

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



## BBS Letter Excerpts

### **From New Mexico:**

"I have found the truth and it has set me free in Christ! But it is hard to talk to people about right division because they are so content with just listening to the pastor without checking it out."

### **From our Inbox:**

"That makes perfect sense! Ya know, all the questions I have had regarding certain doctrines are so cleared up now, understanding the correct dispensational view!"

### **From Michigan:**

"A couple of years ago, I was introduced to the book, *Things That Differ*, and needless to say, my eyes were opened. Then I started to receive the *Searchlight*, but then I fell away. By God's grace, I was led back to your teachings today. I am very grateful for 'rightly dividing the word of truth.'"

### **From Texas:**

"Thank you for sending the *Searchlight* and for sending John Frederickson to Texas to speak the truth of the Word rightly divided. He very much encouraged me, my family, and friends."

### **From Michigan:**

"I have read *Things That Differ* and I'm completing *Acts, Dispensationally Considered*. For the first time in my Christian life, I think I am actually beginning to understand what it means to rightly divide the Word of truth! Praise the Lord!"

### **From Wisconsin:**

"This booklet on Pentecost is brilliantly and concisely written. It is exactly what I've been looking for to challenge a friend!"

### **From Michigan:**

"I found out about you from a book on *Galatians* by C. R. Stam....That is the most profound book (after the Bible) I have ever read, and I see so many things in the Bible through the book that I didn't see before. I got it several months ago and I'm reading it for the third time. This time it is taking me a long time because I am looking up all the Bible verses so that I can read the verses before and after each verse too. Also I just got the book of *Two Minutes with the Bible* devotionals and already I love it. The reason I love these books is because they say exactly what the Bible says!"

### **From Ohio:**

"This does explain your position admirably. I am impressed with the fact that you answered the question as a gentleman and not sarcastically or in a mean spirit. Because of that, I do plan to research what you said...I am also glad you listed all the Scripture references." (What God has to say in those references is all that matters.—Ed).

### **From South Africa:**

"Thank you so much! The mid-Acts dispensationalism is for us a great, wonderful message!"

**From Florida:**

"I have been strongly and boldly preaching the Word rightly divided here and, yes, even to the chaplain. His curiosity and willingness to listen has opened doors which, hopefully, in the near future, will give me the ability to teach God's rightly divided Word weekly here at the prison."

**From our Inbox:**

"I am so excited! This answer is much more than I hoped for. I will be studying your letter and the provided Scriptures. I may indeed have more questions as I go through this. My son is in his third year at Bible college, and sometimes that can be a dangerous place to be."

**From Florida:**

"Your article on 'Holy Ghost Power' was magnificent! Ever since I discovered the blessed revelation of the mystery, and how to rightly divide the Word, when explaining to fellow believers how God has withdrawn the sign gifts, I've often been asked how then is God's power manifested in this dispensation of grace. As a matter of fact, when my grandfather was up here to visit, we were discussing how the church is anemic and powerless because there is no power of the Holy Ghost. That's when I told him about God withdrawing the sign gifts. So that's when he asked me how then God is demonstrating His power? And then that's when I began to tell him how, just as you pointed out in your article, God now gives us the power through the Holy Ghost to endure afflictions, boast in our infirmities, glory and rejoice in tribulations, persecutions, and trials, for it is in glorying in infirmities that the power of God rests upon us."

**From Nevada:**

"I'm praying that my friend will bask in His truth and provision, which always completes me in peace of mind! Thanks again, Pastor Kurth, for your calm and soundness of thought, and your readiness to assist and have Scripture verses that apply, and for *just coming alongside!*"

**From Texas:**

"Ever since I've come to an understanding of...how to rightly divide the Scriptures, the Bible has all of a sudden come alive for me, and with the help of the *Searchlight* and the books you sell, it keeps coming alive more and more. I can no longer listen to a sermon on the radio or in church without noticing the distinction between the kingdom and mystery programs. The Bible is so much more exciting to read and dig into." (The truth of the rightly divided Word spoils you, doesn't it?—Ed).

**From our Inbox:**

"I am just having such a great time, Pastor Sadler, going through the books I have purchased through the *Berean Searchlight*. As I told my new Grace friend...thanks for being faithful to stay true to the Grace message. I thank you for the same and for enabling people like me to research out and learn so profitably from the material you have provided. It is wondrous for my understanding and for my walk with the Lord!"

**From Florida:**

"Each issue of the *Searchlight* is like a preacher to me. I get sermons from the Scriptures about law vs. grace. Even though I am under bonds, I feel as though I am a part of a congregation of faith."

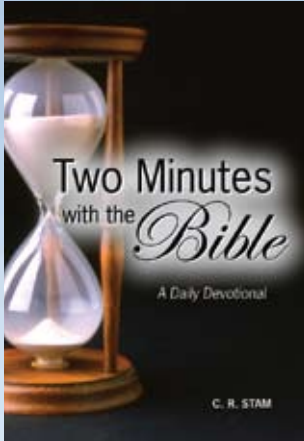


"These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."  
—Acts 17:11



# If You've Got Two Minutes...

God would like for you to learn about His twofold purpose!



## Two Minutes with the Bible

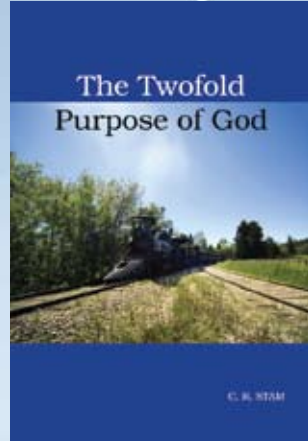
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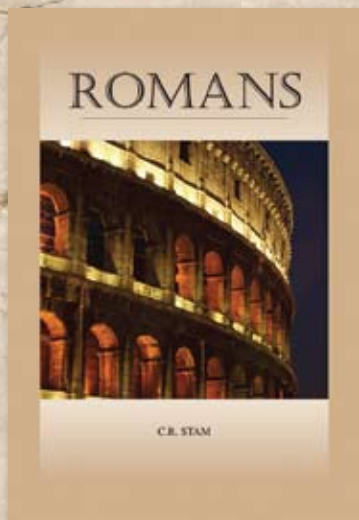
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# News and Announcements

**Pastor Stam's Commentary on Romans** is back in print, and more readable than ever before! We have increased the font type size, which will make benefiting from Pastor Stam's comments much easier on the eyes. However, this improvement has made the volume fifty pages longer, and that—coupled with rising printing costs—has driven the price of this volume up by four dollars. The good news is, we are offering this \$16.50 commentary for a special price of \$12.00 through December 31st. For additional information, see our ad on Page 29.

**If you are wondering** why we ever let any of our titles fall out of print, the answer lies in the amount of time it takes to prepare each volume for reprinting. Our printers no longer accept film copy, which means all of our books have to be scanned and reformatted when it comes time to reprint them. Since it takes money to hire more part-time help to accomplish this goal, this is something with which you can help. Many grace believers make year-end contributions for tax purposes, and while these gifts are deeply appreciated, more regular, monthly support would go a long way toward helping us keep all of our literature in print.

**Literature:** Our dear Brother Ed Crabbe has written a number of booklets that we're sure you'll find of great interest. Ed has been teaching the Scriptures rightly divided for many years, so he has good insights that are sure to challenge your understanding. For a list of booklets and pricing, please contact Ed directly at [EDAssociates4598@gmail.com](mailto:EDAssociates4598@gmail.com) or via snail-mail at E&D Associates, 3356 S. Baldwin Avenue, Fremont, MI 49412.

**BBF Conference in Cedar Lake, Indiana:** If you are among the many employees who must put in for their vacation time in January, you need to know that the 45th annual Bible conference of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* will be held next year from June 15th through the 20th. Next year's theme of *Examples To All That Believe* will enable the speakers to teach the Book of I Thessalonians through, verse by verse. Be sure to visit [www.bereanbiblefellowship.weebly.com](http://www.bereanbiblefellowship.weebly.com) for further information, and make plans to attend today!



This month's cover features the *Seaburn Park Lighthouse* in the foreground and the *Roker Pier Lighthouse* in the background. These lights are located in Sunderland, England. Seaburn and Roker are seaside resorts, home to beaches, promenades, and parks.

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