

The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 2004



Feature Articles

Studies in the Book of Revelation—Rev. 20
 Pastor Paul M. Sadler 5

Christ and His Body
 Pastor Cornelius R. Stam 11

Overcoming Depression (Part 2)
 Mr. Stephen Shober 17

Departments

BBI Graduation and Awards Ceremony 4

Question Box 16

From Our Mailbag 26

Bible Conferences 28

Spotlight on Grace Churches 29

News and Announcements 30

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.

The *Berean Searchlight* is the official organ of the *Berean Bible Society*, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

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Printing: United Press Inc., Elk Grove Village, IL

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The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), September 2004. Vol. 65, Number 6. The *Berean Searchlight* is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Second-class postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Berean Searchlight*, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756.



From the Editor to You:

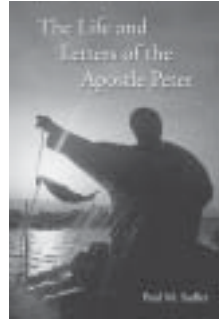


Dearly Beloved,

It's finished!! By the time you receive this issue of the Berean Searchlight *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* will have been sent to the printer. I state in the *Introduction* to the commentary the following:

“The life and letters of the Apostle Peter are a remarkable account of a lowly fisherman who became a household name in Israel. In spite of Peter’s imperfections, the Lord used him mightily to call the chosen nation to repentance. After God’s gracious offer of the kingdom was rejected by the aristocracy in Israel, Peter wrote to those of the dispersion who had received their Messiah. The purpose of his letters was to remind his countrymen that even though Israel was set aside nationally for the time being, ‘the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance’ (II Pet. 3:9).

“During the years I conducted my pulpit ministries it was generally my practice to present a verse-by-verse exposition of the Scriptures. Expository preaching and writing is unquestionably the most effective way to edify those of the household of faith. Although time and space did not permit us to deal with every passage in First and Second Peter, *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* is a commentary that is expositional in nature. We feel the broader treatment of some portions will help the average reader with the flow and sequence of the letters....While there are numerous technical theological works on the subject, this is not one of them. *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* is a practical commentary that we hope you’ll find user-friendly.”



Lord willing, we are on schedule for a mid October release of this timely volume. If you haven’t reserved your copy, there’s still time! It is our sincere prayer before God that this work will be used to dispel much of the confusion that has plagued the Hebrew Epistles. Once again, the solution to the problem is found in a proper understanding of the Word, rightly divided. May these pages be used of God to further conform us to the image of His dear Son.

Yours in His matchless grace,
Paul M. Sadler, President

BBI Graduation and Awards Ceremony

On May 23rd, *Berean Bible Institute* held their 2004 Graduation and Awards Ceremony. Several students received one and two-year certificates, while Georges Craesmeyer, Paul Craesmeyer and Andy Kern graduated the three-year program, and are now well equipped to serve the Lord in whatever capacity they choose.



Georges Craesmeyer
receiving diploma



Paul Craesmeyer
receiving diploma



Andy Kern
receiving diploma



Dr. Bedore's Commencement Address



Some of BBI's students in song



The Graduates

If you have a heart-felt desire to prepare for the ministry, plan now to attend **Berean Bible Institute** next spring. For more information about **BBI's** program and an application, please contact Dr. W. Edward Bedore, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086, or phone: (262) 644-5504, fax: (262) 644-5507, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org.



Studies in the Book of Revelation

Revelation 20

By Paul M. Sadler

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”

—Rev. 20:1,2

With the Lord’s help, we have arrived at the eleventh hour of God’s dealings with mankind in our study. As the Apostle John stood on the threshold of the millennial reign of Christ, he saw an angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit, where Satan will be bound for one thousand years. The old serpent has a long and sordid history. Those he deceived through the ages remind us of Marley’s response to Scrooge in the Dickens’ classic, *A Christmas Carol*: “I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.” It has been said that “every soul that drops into hell at the end of life’s journey goes there because of his own stubborn will, not because of God’s will.”

We do well to remember, it is God’s desire for “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4).

Peter says to his hearers, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).

In the beginning, as God prepared to call worlds into being, one of His first creative acts was the angelic host (Job 38:4-7). This was by divine design. In addition to serving as witnesses to His handiwork, the angels were created to worship the Master Architect of the universe. When Lucifer, who is said to have been perfect in wisdom and beauty, came forth from the hand of God, he originally led the angelic host in these proceedings. As the head Cherub, he was the highest ranking angel in God’s host until by reason of his wisdom and beauty he became filled with pride and sinned against the Most High (Ezek. 28:12-19).

The result of Satan’s fall precipitated a series of *demotions*, the first of which was being *cast out* of the third heaven into the second heaven, where he resides yet today with the fallen angelic host that followed him in the initial rebellion (Ezek. 28:14-16 cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:11,12). In the mid part

of the coming Tribulation period Satan is *cast out* of the second heaven to the earth, where he will roam as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8 cf. Rev. 12:7-12).

At the Second Coming of Christ, prior to the establishment of the millennial kingdom, an angel of the Lord *casts* Satan into the bottomless pit for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). The final chapter of his reign of terror is foretold in Revelation 20:7-10 where we find that he is released from the bottomless pit after the millennium and goes forth to once again deceive the nations. Before the rebellion gains momentum, however, God rains down fire from heaven and brings Satan to ashes before the people as predicted by Ezekiel. The prophet writes:

“Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more” (Ezek. 28:18,19).

When Ezekiel says, “and never shalt thou be any more,” he means that Satan will no longer be a *terror* any more, as the context bears out. Why? At the battle of Gog and Magog, Satan is *cast* into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:7-10).

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT IN RELATION TO THE KINGDOM AGE

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of

the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more” (Rev. 20:1-3).

Although the Apostle John does not identify this particular angel, in all probability it will be Michael the Archangel who the prophet Daniel makes reference to in the context of the first resurrection, which immediately follows the binding of Satan (Dan. 12:1-3). Furthermore, it was Michael and his angels who cast Satan and his angels to earth 3½ years earlier. John records that the archangel is bearing the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. This indicates that he has the *authority* to bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit. Before the nations can be freed from the control of the Devil, he must first be bound. As the Lord has said: “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house” (Mark 3:27).

For one thousand years Satan will be confined to the infernal region below, where a divine seal is placed upon him to insure he will no longer deceive the nations during this period. Seeing that it is God’s purpose to remove the archenemy’s evil influence from the world we can safely conclude that the fallen host will also be confined with Satan in the bottomless pit, or at least be neutralized in some way.

The location of the “bottomless pit” is clearly defined for us in the Word of God. The unseen world known as *hades* in the Scriptures has a region called the bottomless pit, which is the translation of the Greek word *abyss*. This is the “great gulf” spoken of in Luke 16:26. Vine states regarding the abyss: “It describes an immeasurable depth, the underworld, the lower regions, the abyss of *Sheol* [the Hebrew word/Greek *hades*].” In Luke 8:31 the abyss is translated *deep*. Here Vine adds, “The reference is to the lower regions as the abodes of demons out of which they can be let loose” (See Rev. 9:1-12).

The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the binding of Satan in the abyss during the millennium when he states: “Yet thou [Lucifer] shalt be brought **down** to hell [*sheol/hades*], to the sides of the pit” (See Isaiah 14:12-15). Once again, the reason Satan is bound during this period is to fulfill the plans and purposes of God. Since the fall God has placed man under different economies to demonstrate his utter failure. These economies are: innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, and the present administration of grace. The designation we have given to the last dispensation, before the eternal state, is “divine government.” God will overthrow the kingdoms of this world in the coming Tribulation and establish the kingdom of His dear Son (Rev. 11:15).

The millennial reign of Christ will be a theocracy—a government of God. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,

and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). While the *kingdom* has been revealed since the foundation of the world, the Apostle John is the first to tell us that the duration of the “golden age” will be 1,000 years. In fact, he mentions this no less than six times in the space of seven passages here in Revelation chapter twenty. I should add that those who claim this 1,000 year period is not to be taken literally usually have failed to acknowledge Paul’s apostleship and message.



*United Nations Headquarters
New York City, New York*

During the kingdom age, God will place mankind under idyllic conditions. With Satan bound, the nations of the world will no longer be under his control. They will be unshackled from his deceptive powers for the first time in human history. While the *United Nations* has sought to bring peace to the earth since its inception in 1945, it has failed miserably and will continue to fail. This old world will never experience peace until the Prince of Peace returns to establish it. You see, “peace on earth” will be a product of His righteous reign. God will also partially lift the curse from the earth which will result in the eyes

of the blind being opened and men having hundreds of years added to their life expectancy, as witnessed at the dawn of civilization (Gen. 5:27 cf. Zech. 8:4; Isa. 35:1-10; 65:20).

What will be mankind's response to such ideal conditions? We need not to look any further than the chapter under consideration.

THE FUTURE RESURRECTIONS ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

A worthwhile study of things to come is contingent upon a proper understanding of the Word, rightly divided. We must be extremely careful not to confuse the “secret resurrection” with the “first resurrection,” as many are prone to do. The secret resurrection at the Rapture is the hope of the Church, the Body of Christ. This is uniquely a Pauline truth. If we

momentarily lift the special revelation committed to the Apostle Paul out of the Word of God, all other references to the future resurrections pertain to the prophetic order.

Normally the first and second resurrections are mentioned together in prophecy, without reference to the period of time that separates these two great events. For example, the Lord stated during His earthly ministry:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28,29).

Regardless of the respective dispensation they lived under, only the *prophetic saints* will be raised in the first resurrection and be ushered into the blessings of the kingdom. This resurrection is also called the resurrection of life and the resurrection of the just. Those who are partakers of this resurrection, especially the faithful in Israel, are promised to rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests of God (Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 1:6; 2:25-27; 20:4).

John lays special emphasis upon the martyrs of the Tribulation, who will be numbered in this resurrection as well. Unlike any other period in human history, the coming Tribulation will be characterized by *beheadings* too numerous to fathom. America was recently stunned by the brutal beheading of the American engineer in Saudi Arabia at the hands of Muslim extremists, but this is

merely a sample of what lies ahead. Those who withstand the Anti-Christ and refuse to receive the mark of the beast will be the special objects of his indignation. Because these dear saints love not their lives even unto death, they will hold a special place of *honor* in the first resurrection.

Job asked the age-old question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Yes!! God has given us His Word on the matter. The Greek word *anastasis*, or "resurrection," means to "stand up." Some day these old bodies that are lying in their "final" resting place will stand up at God's command. Some will be raised to everlasting life and others to everlasting condemnation. It matters not whether these bodies of humiliation are placed in the earth, buried at sea, or our ashes scattered to the wind—we live in a closed system—everything is being *preserved!* (Neh. 9:6). Which is a greater degree of difficulty, creating man from the dust of the earth in the beginning or raising man from the dust of the earth in the last day?

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). This passage clearly states that there will be 1,000 years between the first and second resurrections. John is the only writer of Holy Scripture who makes this fact known. With this in mind, the unsaved of all ages are the subjects of the second resurrection. This resurrection is also called the resurrection of damnation and the resurrection of the unjust. The unbeliever will be fitted with a *resurrected body* in which he will continue to exist amid the

eternal flame of the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

C. H. Spurgeon once addressed a group of unbelievers and said these soul-searching words:

"There is a real hell, as truly as you have a real body—a fire exactly like that which we have on this earth, except this: it will not consume you though it will torture you. You have seen asbestos lying amid the red hot coals, but not consumed. So your [resurrected] body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn forever without being consumed."

Unsaved friend, we plead with you before God to flee to the foot of the Cross where the precious blood of Christ was shed for you. Flee now before it's too late! God loves you and Christ personally died for your sins to keep you from going to this terrible place of torment. Mark these words and mark them well, if you continue in your stubborn rejection of the Savior your sins will send you to the lake of fire, with absolutely no hope of reprieve. Christ is the only one who can save you from an eternity of regrets. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

THE LAST CONFLICT

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the

beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. 20:7-9).

With the separation of the wheat (believers) and tares (unbelievers) at the beginning of the millennium, there will be believers who enter into the kingdom in their natural bodies. The Scriptures are also clear that they will bear children. If you are wondering whether or not it is possible for those in natural bodies and resurrected bodies to coexist in the kingdom, you will find it helpful to read Luke 24:36-45. Needless to say, the offspring of those who enter into the kingdom will be responsible to trust Christ as their Savior. According to Zechariah, many will indeed respond to the gospel and be saved from among the nations. “And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee” (Zech. 2:11).

“We must be extremely careful not to confuse the ‘secret resurrection’ with the ‘first resurrection’....”

The millennium will also produce a great multitude of unbelievers, the number of which, John says, will be like “the sand of the sea.” The unregenerate of that period will reluctantly submit themselves to the righteous rule of Christ, but when given the opportunity they will show their true colors and rise up in rebellion against the very One who could

save them. Thus when Satan is loosed from his prison in the unseen world after the millennium, he once again deceives the nations and leads them to perdition.

Robert Govett gives these insightful reasons for the binding and loosing of Satan in connection to the millennial reign of Christ: (1) “To demonstrate the foreknowledge of God who foretells the acts of men as well as His own acts.” (2) “To demonstrate the incurable wickedness of Satan.” (3) “To justify eternal punishment, that is, to show the unchanged character of wicked people [who reject Christ] even under divine jurisdiction for a long period.”

The last great conflict of the ages will be led by Satan himself as he arrays the nations in battle against Christ and the beloved city of Jerusalem. How long, you ask, will the longsuffering of God forbear the sinful ways of mankind? The answer is found here in God’s response to the nations’ rebellion to the righteous reign of His dear Son. As the storm clouds of war begin to gather, the Father sends fire down from heaven which utterly obliterates His enemies in the sight of the saints.

Unlike the battle of Gog and Magog foretold by Ezekiel in which the enemies of God descend from the north before the millennium, in the conflict after the millennium the forces of evil come from every direction—“the four quarters of the earth.” A comparison of Ezekiel 38,39 and Revelation 20 plainly shows that these are two entirely different battles, although Satan’s object is the same, to destroy the people of God!

To Be Continued!



This is the fifth and last of a series of articles that first appeared in 1950 in *Truth* magazine, published by *Milwaukee Bible Institute/Worldwide Grace Testimony*, now the *Grace Gospel Fellowship*. These articles have never before appeared in the *Searchlight*.

Christ and His Body

By Cornelius R. Stam

“Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular” (I Cor. 12:27).

The most wonderful truth in all the Word of God is that which concerns the relationship between Christ and the Church of this dispensation, called “His Body.”

To understand this distinctive truth, however, we must first learn that the words *Church* and *body*, as they are rendered in the Authorized Version, are *not* always synonymous.

THE TERMS “CHURCH” AND “BODY OF CHRIST” EXAMINED

The word *Church* (Gr. *ekklesia*) is a *general* term and is *interdispensational* in scope. It means simply *a called-out group, or assembly*, and God has had His called-out people in every dispensation. Israel under Moses was called “the church in the wilderness” by Stephen (Acts 7:38). Our Lord instructed those of His day how, if a sinning brother could not be reasoned with, they might, as a last resort, “tell it unto the Church” (Matt. 18:17). At Pentecost “there were *added*...about three thousand souls” and “the Lord *added* to the Church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:41,47).

The word *ekklesia* is not, of course, found in the Old Testament since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but it is significant that it is found in reference to Israel some sixty times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

The word *Church*, then, is a *general* term for God’s called-out people in every age.

The word *body* (Gr. *soma*) is an entirely different word in the original. It may refer to any physical body, but when applied to “the Body of Christ,” that Body of believers of which we are members, it is a *particular* term and is distinctly *dispensational* in character.

How it can be argued, for example, that the Body of Christ had its historical beginning at Pentecost, when Pentecost was the fulfillment of *prophecy* and the Body of Christ is not even mentioned until Paul, has always puzzled us. The Messianic kingdom was prophesied throughout the Old Testament Scriptures; it was proclaimed “at hand” during our Lord’s earthly ministry and *offered* for Israel’s acceptance at Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit, likewise, was prophesied by Joel and others, and at Pentecost Peter said: “*This is that...*” Even the great period of

tribulation was predicted by the Old Testament prophets and at Pentecost Peter declared that the signs of that dread day had begun to appear.

“...the Body is not mentioned anywhere in the Scriptures until we come to the writings of Paul....”

But where in the Old Testament is there any prediction of the formation of a joint Body of Jewish and Gentile believers with a position at God’s right hand in the heavenlies? Where did Christ or His apostles even mention it during His earthly ministry? Where is even the term “Body of Christ” found until we come to the writings of the Apostle Paul?¹ What right, then, have we to assume that the Body of Christ had its beginning at Pentecost? The signs of Pentecost heralded the “*last days*” of prophecy; the *consummation* of Israel’s glory in “the day of the Lord;” they did not mark the *first days* of “the Church which is His Body.”

The supposition that the words *Church* and *body* are synonymous in Scripture has led to great confusion. Some, seeing Israel referred to as *the Church* in the Old Testament, have concluded that the Body of Christ had its historical beginning with Abel or Adam. Those referred to above, however, finding the word *Church* in Acts 2 and connecting this with Christ’s statement: “I will build

my Church” (Matt. 16:18) have supposed—less consistently—that the Body had its beginning at Pentecost. Many good Bible expositors, including even Dr. C. I. Scofield, have sought to point out distinctions between “Israel and the Church,” when the fact is that Israel once *was* the Church, as we have seen from Acts 7:38.

The distinctions, properly, should be made between Israel and *the Body*, between the Church of *that* day and the Church of *this*.

Let us be careful, then, about our terminology. The word *Church* is a *general* term and is *interdispensational* in scope, while “the Body of Christ” is a *particular* term and is distinctly *dispensational* in scope, since it is the product of “the dispensation of the grace of God.”

THE FORMATION OF THE BODY

Probably more “church members” today are interested in the establishment of Christ’s kingdom than are interested in the completion of the Body. This is because they have not been instructed in Pauline truth, the truth concerning the present dispensation.

God is not establishing Christ’s kingdom on earth today. The King and His kingdom were rejected 1900 years ago. Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand as a royal Exile from earth. Believers today are *translated* “into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13); and “our citizenship is *in heaven*” (Phil. 3:20).

Indeed, the Church which is Christ’s Body came into existence as a result of Israel’s *rejection* of

Christ and the *postponement* of the establishment of the kingdom on earth. It was when Israel had rejected Christ both in incarnation and in resurrection; when she had closed her eyes and ears to all the overwhelming evidences of His Messiahship and had begun to wage war against Him, that *“grace did much more abound”* (Rom. 5:20). Gradually setting Israel aside *as a nation* along with the other nations, God now began to form “the Body of Christ,” composed of individual Jews and Gentiles reconciled to God by faith in His rejected Son.

“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all” (Rom. 11:32).

“And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16).

WHEN DID THE BODY BEGIN?

The Body of Christ had its historical beginning with Paul, before he wrote his first epistle.

That it began with Paul, not with Peter or before, is evident from several important facts:

First, as we have seen, the Body is not mentioned anywhere in the Scriptures until we come to the writings of Paul, and it is the great subject of his epistles.

Second, the Body of Christ is a *joint* Body, composed of Jewish and Gentile believers alike, with no difference, positionally, between them.

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs [joint-heirs], and of the same Body [of a joint-Body], and partakers [joint-partakers]

of His promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph. 3:6).²

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles...” (I Cor. 12:13).

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-28).

This is very different from the program of prophecy and the so-called “great commission” in which Israel is given precedence over the Gentiles (See Isa. 60:1-3; Zech. 8:13,23; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:25,26).

Third, the Body is made up of *reconciled* Jews and Gentiles as we have seen from Ephesians 2:16. Now we cannot reconcile friends. *Reconciliation* postulates *alienation*. This is why the message of reconciliation was not preached, nor the Body formed, until God had begun to set Israel aside along with the Gentiles. *“The casting away of them”* opened the way for *“the reconciling of the world”* (Rom. 11:15). Nor is there any indication of the setting aside of Israel until Paul is raised up.

Fourth, Paul distinctly states, by the Spirit, that the Body of Christ is a “new man” and a “new creation.”

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [Gr. there is A NEW CREATION]: old

things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:16,17).

“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace” (Eph. 2:14,15).

This “new creation” and “new man” stand in contrast to Adam and the old creation. Having concluded all in unbelief, God now offers to take the fallen sons of Adam and make them a new creation in Christ.

Fifth, the Apostle further states that God’s purpose concerning the formation of the Body of Christ was kept a secret until revealed through him.

“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:4,5).

“[His Body, Ver. 24] whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God;

“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints” (Col. 1:24-26).

That the Body had its beginning before Paul wrote his first epistle is also evident, from the fact that he speaks of it in his early epistles as having already

been brought into existence and refers to the mystery as having already been revealed.

(See, as to the Body: Rom. 12:4,5; I Cor. 6:15; 10:17; 12:12,13,27. As to the mystery: Rom. 2:16; 16:25; I Cor. 2:7).

THE CAPSTONE OF DIVINE REVELATION

When the Apostle Paul writes to the Colossians that it was given to him to “fulfill [complete] the Word of God” (Col. 1:25), he means that the truth of the Body is the filling up of the divine revelation. More of the Bible was doubtless written later, but these later writings simply supplied further details and instructions concerning an already prophesied period of time. But the glorious mystery of the Body is the capstone of the divine purpose and revelation. Here we have the highest truth in all the Word of God. The Body is called, in Ephesians 1:23, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all,” and we who have received grace to trust Christ during this age of His rejection should humbly thank God a thousand times a day that He has seen fit to give us the most exalted position contemplated for the redeemed anywhere in the Scriptures.

In this connection it should be noted, first of all, that the Body of Christ is more than an organization; it is a *living organism*. As necessary and Scriptural as organization is in the professing Church on earth, we should always remember that the true Church of today is made up of believers inseparably and eternally united to the living Christ

in glory. And this Body *grows* in its dimensions, as one believer leads another to Christ and spiritually, as all believers come into a fuller knowledge and appreciation of the truth.

“In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21).

“But speaking the truth in love... grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

“From Whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying [building up] of itself in love” (Eph. 4:15,16).

Another blessed truth in this connection is that *all* true believers belong to this Body, even our individual *bodies* being called the members of Christ. And because we are the members of Christ, we are members one of another; each having some different function in the Body, to be sure (Rom. 12:4; I Cor. 12:14-26), but all equally members of it and of one another.

“So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:5).

“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (I Cor. 6:15).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free” (I Cor. 12:13).

“Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular” (I Cor. 12:27).

“There is one Body” (Eph. 4:4).


How this should make us love one another! How it should break down denominational barriers! How it should overcome personal differences! This bond should be most precious to us when we reflect that it is our union with Christ that makes us members one of another.

Finally, we should never forget that Christ, Christ alone, is the Head of the Body. We, the members, must always be subject to Him, ready to respond instantly to His will.

“And He is the Head of the Body, the Church...that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

“...Christ is Head of the Church... the Church is subject unto Christ...” (Eph. 5:23,24).

And this clearly implies that He will plan the very best for us; that His will for us will not be grievous.

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church” (Eph. 5:29). 

Endnotes

1. It is true that Paul speaks of those who were “in Christ” before him (Rom. 16:7) but here, as in many other places, the term has a moral connotation. These believers stood before God morally in Christ, since their sins had been imputed to Him and His righteousness to them. Thus we too have redemption “in Christ” (Eph. 1:7). This term is also used in an affirmative sense, as in our Lord’s upper room discourse: **“Abide in Me” (John 15:4)**. This has the idea of belonging together as one. But in neither of these cases are men said to be in Christ as “members of His Body.”

2. “Fellowheirs,” “same body” and “partakers” all have the same prefix in the original.

Question Box

“How do I answer those who teach that water baptism is required for salvation?”

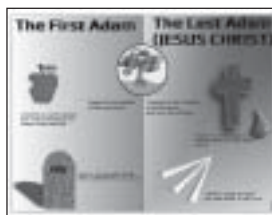
Those who teach this are being *scriptural*, but not *dispensational*. When water baptism was a part of God’s program, it was undeniably *for salvation* (Mark 1:4; 16:16; Luke 3:3). Thus it was half of the kingdom gospel that required: *“Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38). However, our Apostle Paul (Rom. 11:13; 15:16) declared, “Christ sent me not to baptize, *but to preach the gospel.*” If water baptism was *still* part of the gospel when Paul wrote those words, how could he preach the gospel *without* baptizing?

Water baptism is a *work*, it is something you can *do*, and Paul states clearly that salvation today is *“not of works”* (Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 4:5). He says that we are saved by “the washing of *regeneration*,” not by the washing of baptism (Titus 3:5 cf. Ezek. 36:25; Heb. 10:22).
—Ricky Kurth

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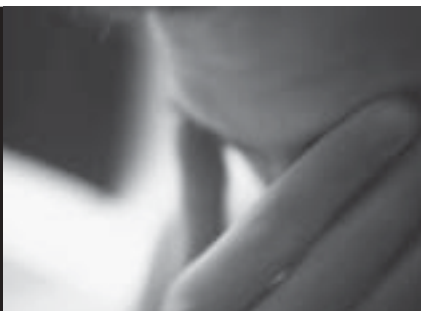


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This article is Part 2 on the subject of depression; please refer to last month's *Berean Searchlight* for Part 1 concerning foundational issues related to depression.

Overcoming Depression Biblically and Naturally (Part 2)

By Stephen Shober, *BBS Board*



THERAPEUTIC CONSIDERATIONS

This article will consider botanical medicine, medications, proper lifestyle, nutrition, thought processing, and spiritual direction—the most common causes of depression. Some consider botanical or pharmaceutical medications for depression to be “mind-numbing” or “feel-good” drugs. This is unfortunate because such medications only help a depressed person feel more “normal” (a non-depressed person would feel worse or no change).

If depression were primarily spiritually induced, people should not get better from medications because medications do nothing about the spiritual problem. If the medications merely treat the symptoms and do not get to the root spiritual cause then the depression should always come back once the medications are stopped, which is not the case.

Botanical Medicines: The Scripture makes it clear that because of sin the earth today is not yielding its strength (Gen. 4:12). As a result of this Romans 8:22 says, *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”* Knowing this, the Lord has made special provisions for us. Psalms 104:14 says, *“...and herb for the service of man:...”*, which means the botanical (herbal) kingdom was designed for the many services of humans, including medicine.

Often herbal products are slower acting than pharmaceutical medications, but the advantages of herbal supplements is that they can often affect a cure (rather than just address symptoms) and the side effects are minor compared to pharmaceutical drugs. Herbs can be considered **the medicine from God's pharmacy**. The most important and well tested herbs to consider in connection with depression are:^{1 4}

- St. John's Wort (SJW): relieves depression, anxiety, apathy, sleep disturbance, anorexia, and feeling of worthlessness. All these symptoms are caused by low serotonin and SJW increases the level of serotonin in the brain.
- Ginkgo biloba: improves blood flow and function of the frontal lobe. Ginkgo increases the ability of serotonin to do its job in the brain.
- 5-HTP: a plant extract that is just one step from becoming serotonin—the brain readily makes this conversion. It raises the level of serotonin and other brain neurotransmitters. This product overcomes the genetic problem that does not allow for the conversion of tryptophan to 5-HTP.

Pharmaceutical Medications: There are times when medications can save a person's life. If botanical medicines do not work (in conjunction with the lifestyle, thought processing, and consideration of other causes) then medications are an option. A short-term use of antidepressant drugs may be needed in order to get the mind operating sufficiently well so that a person can function. Medications generally work by keeping serotonin (or other neurotransmitters) at adequate levels in the brain's synapses. They do not help create increased blood flow or frontal lobe function.

Nutrition: A deficiency of any single nutrient can alter brain function and lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders. The most common deficiencies are folic acid, vitamin B12 and B6. An insufficiency of Omega 3 fatty acids (oils) has been linked to depression. Low Omega 3 oils result in cells throughout the body and brain that do not function correctly, and the mind suffers. The needed Omega 3 oils are found in fish oils and flaxseed oil.^{1 3 4 5 6}

The diet for helping to prevent and correct depression is based upon Biblical insights:

- Increase the consumption of fiber-rich plant foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, and raw nuts and seeds).
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and other stimulants; also avoid foods that cause allergic symptoms.
- A good diet is: low protein, high fiber, low-moderate fat, and high complex carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates do **not** include simple carbohydrates (processed foods, snack foods, white bread, soda). Raw fruit has simple carbohydrates but is good because of the fiber, enzymes and antioxidants.
- Atkins type diets are poor; they actually lead to depression since carbohydrates are needed to get tryptophan into the brain.
- Foods high in tryptophan should be consumed regularly: soy flour, meats/poultry (turkey and chicken), tofu, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, raw nuts, eggs, lentils, and garbanzo beans.

- A good snack before going to bed would be a turkey sandwich on whole grain bread (there is tryptophan in the turkey and the whole grain bread will help keep sugar levels stable and help get the tryptophan get into the brain).

Rule to live by: Eat foods as close to the way God created them as possible: raw, whole, and unprocessed. He created vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, etc. He did not create processed foods or animal meat full of antibiotics and hormones. **Humans cannot improve upon God's bounty!**



Lifestyle: Regular exercise and sleep are essential to combat depression. Exercise at least 30 minutes four times a week. One does not have to jog: but walking, biking, tennis, swimming, gardening, active house/yard work are great. Regular exercise takes time for the effects to be felt, sometimes weeks.

We each have an internal clock that operates on a roughly 24-hour schedule (circadian rhythm). Even mentally healthy people can become depressed if the circadian rhythms are significantly disturbed. Seasonal Affective Disorder is common in the winter months in northern climates because the lack of natural sunlight disrupts these rhythms. Direct exposure to bright full spectrum light can help, or, the serotonin boosting botanical medicines.

A common factor leading to depression is hypoglycemia (low blood sugar); the brain requires a constant supply of blood sugar to function properly. Thyroid insufficiency also causes depression. Women with post-partum depression and those approaching menopause (symptoms often start by mid-30 age) are subject to hormonal disturbances that lead to depression.¹⁵⁷

Biblical Thought-Processing: How we handle bad or disappointing news has a profound effect upon our mental well-being. As long as we believe we are victims, we are not able to achieve full mental health.⁹ Positive thinking is more important for overall health than almost anything else. Negative thinking, on the contrary, can destroy the good done by correct diet and lifestyle.¹⁰ Many depressed people have a tendency to look at the down side of life. It has been said that it is a positive duty to resist melancholy and discontented thoughts as much as it is our duty to pray. Certainly there will always be things

in this imperfect world that give us cause to complain. Often we are helpless to personally do anything about many of these negative things. However, we can focus our mind on the enjoyable and wonderful things of life; this is scriptural, uplifting and therapeutic.

In our self-talk (how we silently talk and think to ourselves) we must replace the negative/compulsive thoughts with Philippians 4:8. But each person must search-out those things that are true, honest, just, pure, etc.—that is the purpose of meditating on God’s Word. As soon as the conscious awareness of an unconstructive negative thought is realized, a positive thought must immediately replace it. This takes practice and preparation, but brings our thinking into captivity. The instruction of II Corinthians 10:5 & 6 is, “...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.” Applying these words to ourselves, we cannot allow ourselves to entertain negative thoughts, even if true, even if we have been wronged (Prov. 12:25, 15:13, 18:14). Nor can we entertain compulsive thoughts (thoughts that just keep running over and over again in our mind even though they may not be negative in nature).

“God loves you just the way you are,
but refuses to leave you that way...”

In the world of secular counseling there has been a shift away from psychoanalysis which was aimed at uncovering “unconscious” reasons for depression. Time was spent on how the individual was raised as a child, and other past events that may have shaped a person’s feelings and behavior. Going through the maze of a person’s past life was thought helpful to present-day healing or identifying causative agents. This therapy has proven less successful than desired. So, a shift has been made toward cognitive behavioral therapy which focuses on the interpretation of life’s events. This is mentioned because secular therapy has, over time, become more closely aligned with what Paul teaches about our thinking, that is:¹

- erroneous interpretations of events and negative automatic thoughts may initiate or perpetuate the depressed mood and
- our focus should not be on the past (finding circumstances or others to blame) but on what one can do differently.

The essential basics of cognitive behavioral therapy are shown below; each person should provide their own verses to make them more personal and meaningful. Whether in the natural world or in the realm of the mind, science comes to the same conclusion as revealed in the Bible 2000 years ago.

1. Locate and identify the negative thoughts or misbelief in your self-talk. "I am no good because things are not like what I expect or want."

2. Argue against the negative thoughts. "I am not a failure just because I do not meet unrealistic expectations of myself or others."

3. Learn how to avoid rumination (the constant churning of thoughts in one's mind) by immediately changing your thoughts.

4. Replace the negative thoughts the very second they occur with the truth and with empowering positive thoughts and beliefs. "In spite of the sorrow, disappointments and feelings I experience the Lord will help me carry on."⁸

Most depression-causing negative thoughts or misbeliefs enter the flow of self-talk after some loss has occurred. Temporary disappointment or sadness at loss is natural, but it cannot continue long-term without consuming a person.

Don't get caught in the trap of thinking that God has promised us perfect peace at all times; that will come to those in the Kingdom (Isa. 26:1-3). The instruction and blessing of Philippians 4:6 & 7 are applicable for today. Always understand these verses in light of Paul, who had plenty of struggles and afflictions but God brought him through and kept his heart and mind in the process.

Finally, Philippians 3:13 & 14 says, *"...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* Paul is using a runner's analogy to put the past and future in their proper perspective. He says that runners in a race cannot look back to see where the other runners are, for if they do they may stumble or get out of their lane and be disqualified. A runner can only look ahead and stretch forward, making the focus the finish line, not what may be behind.

We are on a track, running life's race. The most incredible thing is that each Christian is the only person on his/her track. One does not have to be all that fast, but steady. The only thing that is behind us on our track is our past (forgetting those things that are behind), with its failures, abuses, hurts, regrets, accomplishments, or fame. If you have your eye on the prize the past cannot hurt/catch you. The past contains the thoughts that Paul says to forget about, certainly do not ruminate about them, if you do you will stumble (have mental problems). He implies a Christian's greatest point of failure in running the race is letting the past keep him/her from running well. Look ahead, stretch forward toward a new day and thank God for all you have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Spiritual Direction: Depression can have a spiritual source if we live in sin, harbor anger or resentment, etc. We have to be willing

to forgive (make the unnatural decision to let someone “off the hook” even though they do not ask or deserve it) just as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us, Ephesians 4:32. (Note, we forgive because we already have been forgiven, not to be forgiven as is the case in the Gospels.)

Regular spiritual exercise (reading, studying, praying, meditation on the Word) requires use of the frontal lobe of the brain and emphasizes communion with God, thinking His thoughts, sensing His presence, and knowing His will. This is active worship and produces the type of brain waves in the frontal lobe that are very helpful for us all, including the depressed. Hypnosis and the trance-like state of Eastern religious meditation are very harmful; they produce the wrong type of brain waves and information bypasses the frontal lobe, leading to possible mind control.³


Sometimes a believer is living for the Lord, serving and honoring Him in all parts of his/her life. Over the years, the Lord blesses that person and they are happy, enjoy good health, etc. Certainly there is nothing wrong with enjoying the blessings of the Lord. But, it can all be taken in a moment, not because of spiritual problems, but because it may be that God is taking (or because of the situation He will take) that person to the next level of maturity—it is perplexing and it hurts. Often growth requires loss or brokenness.⁹ Paul says, “...*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things...*” (Phil. 3:8).



Romans 12:2 says, “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” Transformed in Greek is *metamorphosis* and means a change in form; it implies a struggle like

when a chrysalis morphs into a butterfly. If we do not become changed from the inside-out—if we do not morph—we will be tempted to find external things to satisfy our needs. Transformation is not an instantaneous act of God, it is a **life-long process (journey)**. One does not get transformed by just praying, asking or believing; there is no “microwave” (quick and easy) way to spiritual maturity.

The passive voice in Romans 12:2 means the Holy Spirit will do the transforming for us if we cooperate with Him (listening, yielding, relying...). Expect spiritual advancement, you can always mature more, Philippians 3:15-16. Your imperfections will be revealed by the Holy Spirit so that you may continue to grow and become more complete (not sinless, but well-rounded). Maturity versus infancy is the issue. God loves you just the way you are, but refuses to leave you that way; He wants you to be made conformable to Christ, II Corinthians 3:18.

Our Lord stripped himself of His glory and “...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...and became obedient unto death...” (Phil. 2:7 & 8). His life reminds us of our spiritual growth which often imposes tough lessons, sometimes so tough we shrink back from learning them. It seems we have to learn from actual experience that whatever we depend upon in this life (for joy, comfort, acceptance, etc.), ends up controlling us. God allows and uses life’s events to teach us about misplaced dependencies, so that we finally grasp the concept that **Christ is our one true sufficiency.** 

Endnotes

1. *Textbook of Natural Medicine*, 2nd Edition, J. Pizzorno, ND & M. Murray, ND, Bastyr University.
2. *Unmasking Male Depression*, Archibald Hart, PhD, Word Publications.
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5. *Endocrinology and Naturopathic Therapies*, 4th Edition, D. Powell, ND, Bastyr University.
6. *Naturopathic Gastroenterology*, E. Yarnell, ND, Naturopathic Medical Press.
7. *What Your Doctor May NOT tell you About Premenopause*, J. Lee, MD, & J. Hanley, MD, Time-Warner Publishing.
8. *Telling Yourself the Truth*, W. Backus, MD, & M. Chapien, Bethany House Publ.
9. *The Blessings of Brokenness*, Dr. C. Stanley, Zondervan Publishing House.
10. *Your Health Your Choice*, M. T. Morter, DC, Lifetime Books, Inc.

Disclaimer: This article is not intended to provide medical diagnosis, offer prescriptive advice or substitute for a personal health care provider. Anyone taking prescription medications, or wishing to significantly change his/her lifestyle, is advised to consult with a medical professional with appropriate expertise.



Steve Shober is a Naturopath (natural health practitioner) and a member of the BBS Board of Directors. If you have questions about this article, would like more information on the use of herbal products, nutrition or lifestyle issues, or would like a presentation on depression at your church, contact him at: Biblical Health Ministries, 7179 Clover Hill Dr., Waunakee, WI 53597; or shober@chorus.net. Biblical Health Ministries is a non-profit ministry dedicated to teaching God's provisions for our health.

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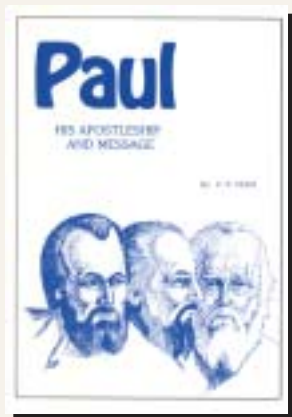
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"I went to a Bible study while I was at my mom and dad's in Michigan, and my uncle was telling me about rightly dividing the Word, and how Paul ushered in Grace. I would like to know more about it. He also told me about the *Searchlight*, and that I could get it just by asking for it, so if I could I would like very much to receive it." (The *Searchlight* remains free, thanks to the support of our faithful friends in the ministry.—RK).

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From Nigeria:

"The brethren here in Nigeria thank you for sharing your materials with them, which have brought many to a fresh awareness of the knowledge and wisdom of God, and renewed minds to a deeper passion for Him."

From Washington:

"It has been a whole year since the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to Pauline truth, and I have steadily grown. You also played a big part in that growth by taking the time to answer my many questions, and I'm grateful. I'm still growing, and I am now able to answer questions from others seeking the truth."

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“Can’t tell you how much I appreciate the *Searchlight*. I introduced my Bible teacher to the magazine. He liked it, and has given out copies to others. My friend now subscribes too—all Baptists, but now seeing different views.”

From Georgia:

“I am an ordained Baptist preacher, a graduate of *Tennessee Temple University* in Chattanooga. While attending TTU, I knew there was an unscriptural mix of Grace age doctrine with law and kingdom doctrine. I began pastoring in 1969 and the book *Things That Differ* helped me so much. The problem was that in each church I pastored, Paul’s message of pure grace was always rejected in one form or another, and was looked upon as evil because it cut their traditions to pieces. I lived in darkness until age 24, yet I now see great darkness in the so-called Bible Belt. Most people in the southeast think it is a place of great light, but it is a place of great human tradition. Tradition is guarded at all cost. Spiritual pride is over and above the Word, rightly divided. Thanks so much for the *Searchlight*.”

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

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Calvary Chapel

Location: 8151 Stuhldreher NW, Massillon, Ohio, 44646

Pastor: Jeff Sanders

Services: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:45 a.m. Worship
6:00 p.m. Youth Groups
7:00 p.m. Wednesday Calvary Bible Institute
7:00 p.m. Wednesday Adult Choir
9:30 a.m. Thursday Ladies' Bible Study

Additional ministries: Camp Berean Way, Vacation Bible School, Men's Prayer Breakfast, Joy Circle (Women's Fellowship), Growth Groups (Home Bible Fellowships)

Contact information: Pastor Jeff Sanders (330) 833-4347
E-mail: CalChapMass@juno.com

www.calvarychapel-massillon.org

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A MIDWEST FALL BIBLE CONFERENCE will be held at the *Grace Church* in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 30,31. Pastor Paul M. Sadler will be the guest speaker. For more information, contact Pastor Philip DuPlessis at (317) 262-8806.

“SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE” is a weekly Bible program that can be seen in Thurston County, WA on TCTV (Thurston Community TV) on cable channel 22 in Olympia/Tumwater or cable channel 29 in Lacey/East Thurston County. The program airs Sundays at 5:30 p.m. and Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., with our good friend Gary A. Smith serving as the author/producer. Gary is currently teaching through the Pastoral Epistles, and welcomes your comments and questions. He can be reached at home at (360) 923-2391, at 9337 Skokomish Way NE#5, Olympia, WA 98516, or at gasmith10@juno.com. Please join us in prayer for this ministry.

MAILBAG LETTER EXCERPTS: These days most of the letters in our *Mailbag* come to us via e-mail. When we know the state from which the letter originated, we give it. However, due to the anonymity of the world-wide web, often we do not. It is then that we must list the sender as “From the Internet.” Thanks for understanding.

EXCERPT INFORMATION: If you would like to contact the sender of one of our “Mailbag” letter excerpts, we do keep these names in our records. However, rather than give their name out to you, it is our policy to send *your name to them*, in this way leaving it up to them if they wish to get in touch with you. We feel that this is the best way to help Grace believers get in touch with one another, and yet at the same time respect the privacy of our readers.

*The picture of *Bodie Island Lighthouse* displayed on our front cover was taken by Pastor Kurth’s sister, Judy Petersen, of Sugar Grove, Illinois. Mistakenly identified by us as *Cape Hatteras Lighthouse* in our June News and Announcements, *Bodie Island Lighthouse* has similar black and white striping and is situated not far from the Hatteras lighthouse on North Carolina’s Outer Banks. Completed in 1872, it was the third lighthouse at this location, the first being built without a foundation and falling to a storm, and the second blown up by retreating Confederate soldiers who feared it would be used as a Union observation post. But the third time’s a charm, and *Bodie Island Lighthouse* remains a functioning U.S. Coast Guard navigational aid to this day.

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“Let my heart be broken by the things that
break the heart of God.”
—Bob Pierce

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