

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 1999



AUTUMN BOOK SPECIAL

I Corinthians

By C. R. Stam

Like the Church today, the Corinthian believers were superficial in their perception of the truth and unbelievably permissive in their moral conduct. Also, as a congregation, they despised Paul's apostolic authority. Thus, the intent of this epistle was to correct the unruly conduct of these saints.



II Corinthians

By C. R. Stam

It is interesting indeed to note how many profound doctrines are discussed in *II Corinthians* in contrast to all the rebukes, corrections, instructions, etc., found in *I Corinthians*. Two of the greatest of these are, perhaps, the New Covenant and the doctrine of reconciliation.



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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

It has been said that the “Christian faith is a singing faith.” My, how believers enjoy lifting their voices in song. And that is as it should be, for the apostle says, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). I love to sing, the only problem is I can’t carry a note in a bucket. Therefore, no one has a greater appreciation for a good singing voice than I do.

So, imagine our delight when we learned that our dear Brother Charles Nichols had recorded an assortment of *grace melodies*. We have felt for years that this was long overdue. Ask any one that has ever heard him sing at our national Grace Conferences and they’ll agree. Charles has a baritone voice that is sure to lift your heart into the heavenlies.

Accompanied by Jenny Keshan at the piano, Brother Nichols has chosen to favor us with hymns such as: *What Grace Is This, Great is Thy Faithfulness, My Tribute, Down From His Glory, He Giveth More Grace, and Ten Thousand Angels*. There are fourteen selections in all. For those who are interested, we are pleased to announce that these messages in song are now available through the *Berean Bible Society*.



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Paul M. Sadler
President

From Michigan:

"We praise God for your ministry. May our Lord Jesus Christ greatly use you in your labors for Him. The Lord bless and protect, guide and direct you and your ministry."

From Washington:

"Our congratulations to all that are involved as you reach this very important milestone at *Berean Bible Institute*....Thanks be to God for the results that will accrue to the account of *BBI* for time and eternity because of God's faithfulness to us all."

From Illinois:

"Thank you for faithfully sending the *Searchlight* to my father....Now in his 80's, he left the Pentecostal Church, where he preached some times, and found the truth of rightly dividing the Word. Since he knew the Bible, the pieces fell into place. Thank you and our Lord Jesus Christ." (You're never too old to learn more about the Mystery or to be used of the Lord. Moses was 80 when God chose him to be the Deliverer of Israel. Ed.)

From Massachusetts:

"Please keep teaching God's grace message—the only appropriate vehicle for salvation in these present times. Thank you for taking a much-needed stand for the truth."

From Kansas:

"Here comes a widow's mite to encourage you in the Lord's work. Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight* you are sending me regularly. I read them from cover to cover. May the Lord bless, reward, and meet all your needs from His bounty. I do pray for the ministry. Let Him help you to abound in His work."

From Alabama:

"Thank you so much for being there! I appreciate and thank each of you for all the laborious time and effort it takes to make the books, tapes, and other materials that are available."

From the United Kingdom:

"My wife and I really appreciate your explanation of the Scriptures. Also, we do thank you for your faithfulness in sending us the *Berean Searchlight*. We do read it from 'Quiver to Quiver.'" (Being English myself, I often work on the *Searchlight* over a spot of tea. By the way, have you ever heard of "Sadler teapots?" Ed.)

From Colorado:

"Just to let you know *BBS* has a special place within our hearts. My twin sister introduced you to me (1995) and we've used the *Searchlight* as a means of fellowship. Since 1997 many miles have separated her family and mine. First, it was across the country; now she resides in Naples, Italy with her husband and two girls. Please note our new address. We found a lovely Grace Church just 10 miles away. The pastor is James Harley. We enjoy the good fellowship. How God has blessed us again."

From Wisconsin:

"Greetings in the name of our Lord. Sure do enjoy the *Berean Searchlight* and share it with many. Thank you so much."

From Arizona:

"Please put this anywhere it can be used most. Thank you for your vision and steady work for our Savior. We know that many souls are won for Christ and many others are rejoicing in the message of the Mystery and Pauline epistles."

From New York:

"Many thanks for your insight on the Word, especially this last issue on *baptism*. So many have been so confused on that; it is so sad. You people have been a blessing to us with your *Searchlight*. It sure makes sense when you separate God's dealing with Israel and the Body of Christ. Keep looking up! God loves you! We pray for you and your work always."

From Ohio:

"I am presently incarcerated at... prison but I am very interested in your books and study booklets. I had the opportunity to read one of your books, *Things That Differ*, and it opened my eyes to some truths concerning God's Word.... This must be the time that the Holy Spirit decided to reveal a much better understanding of God's Word so I thank you for writing this material because it will help to advance my study."

From the Internet:

"I have been receiving the *Berean Searchlight* for a couple of years now, with a sad break in the middle. I just wanted to thank you for your faithfulness to your calling and proclamation of His Word, rightly divided. I was being drawn into Covenantal Theology because the form of Dispensational Theology with which I was acquainted kept falling into contradictions. It seemed that a 'literal' hermeneutic just would not work consistently. But thanks to your publications I have come to see how the dispensation of Grace began, not with Pentecost but with the conversion of Paul and his ministry. I cannot convey the change that this has made to my understanding of so many things." (One of the principal laws of hermeneutics is, you always take a literal interpretation of the Scriptures unless the context demands otherwise. Ed.)

From Tennessee:

"I feel like your ministry is the work of the Lord and I pray for you. I have been helped so much through the books and tapes, etc. I've had more time lately being by myself and they are helping me cope with the loss of my dear husband of almost 46 years. Thank you Brother Sadler, you make everything so easy to understand. I enjoy the *Searchlight* so very much. God bless all of you at the *Berean Bible Society* and *Berean Bible Institute*."

From Arizona:

"I look forward to the *Berean Searchlight* each month, always learning more of the wonderful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

From Wisconsin:

"I enjoyed the 'Obsession with the Antichrist' article and agree totally. Remember when some were teaching that the Rapture had to be in 1988 because Israel would be 40 years as a nation in 1988 (1948-1988). Well, we are still here, aren't we? You should write a short article about the *Millerites* in the early 1800's. Miller had many hundreds dressed in white garments awaiting the Lord's return." (Understanding the Word rightly divided takes the guesswork out of interpreting the Scriptures. Ed.)

From Pennsylvania:

"Thanks for the great work that you have been called to do. Enclosed is an order form for some books and booklets, also a gift of \$... each for *BBS* and *BBI*. Wish it could be more."

From Washington:

"Just a note with the enclosed gift to thank all at *BBI* for a good year in teaching ministry. How vital a Bible Institute is in carrying out our *Grace Commission*." (Notice Brother Moen said, "Grace" not "Great" Commission. AMEN! Ed.)

From New York:

"Many thanks for your tracts and especially the *Full Knowledge of the Mystery of God*. I have so much appreciated your insight on the Bible. How I wish I had known these truths before.... We pray that we can reach more people for the Lord Jesus through your wonderful work even though we are a minority. But to God we are a majority. I pray for you always that God shall keep our hearts in perfect peace."

"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

The Present Obsession With the Anti-Christ (Part III)

By Paul M. Sadler

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

—II Thes. 2:7,8

The ultimate goal of Satan is to be worshipped as God. This diabolical plot is called the *mystery of iniquity*. While the world is going about its business, the evil one is methodically working behind the scenes to undermine the authority of God. God has established a chain of command that if closely adhered to gives *stability* to governments, the Church, and the home.

Interestingly the apostle says, “the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” If that was true in Paul’s day, how much more so today! The *rule* of civil law that was once highly revered now only serves to measure the depth of blood that runs in our streets. As we draw closer to the Rapture, lawlessness will become more commonplace as mankind slides down the slippery slope of rebellion. Eventually Satan will bring the world to a place of utter and total *chaos*.

With the stage set, the Anti-Christ will be standing in the wings prepared to take control of the affairs of men. The only *event* hindering Satan from fulfilling his objective is the Rapture. God will not allow him to carry out his

program of evil until He has completed His plan and purpose for the Church, the Body of Christ. To say otherwise is to confuse the two programs of God, which are mutually exclusive of one another. When this present program abruptly comes to a close at the sound of the trumpet, Paul says, “And *then* shall that Wicked [one] be revealed....” In other words, the man of sin will not be revealed until *after* the Rapture.

Beloved ones, we are not of the night. We are the children of the day, that is, the day of Christ; therefore, it would serve no purpose for us to know the identity of the Anti-Christ. In fact, there is strong evidence that not even those living in the early part of the Tribulation will know his true identity—something he’s sure to conceal as long as possible. So then, the exploits of the man of sin belong to the future day of the Lord, from which the Church is promised *deliverance* (I Thes. 5:1-9).

THE LAST WORLD DICTATOR

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thes. 2:8,9).

Notice the apostle clearly makes reference here to *two* monumental events, both of which are *destined*

to change the course of the world. The first has to do with the appearing of the Anti-Christ at the beginning of the Tribulation. This is confirmed by the statement, “even him, whose *coming* is after the working of Satan....” The fulfillment of this declaration will set the prophetic clock in motion once again. But Paul is careful to add that the Second Coming of Christ will bring his reign of terror to a swift end. Hence, “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His *coming*.”

According to prophecy there will be seven years between these two great prophetic events. During this period Satan hatches his evil plot to overthrow the plans and purposes of God. He is the great *counterfeiter*. As God sent His only begotten Son to the earth to redeem mankind, Satan will send the man of sin to deceive the nations of the earth. We also witness the manifestation of the satanic trinity during the Tribulation:

God the Father (I Cor. 8:6)—The Dragon—Anti-God (Rev. 13:4)

God, the Son (Rom. 9:5)—The Beast—Anti-Christ (Rev. 14:11)

God, the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4)—The False Prophet—Anti-Spirit (Rev. 16:13)

Shortly after our departure to glory, “nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences....” These aren’t isolated clashes, but global conflicts. Normally it takes years to address these types of problems through diplomatic channels. However, once the Anti-Christ appears on the scene he’ll have viable solutions to all the world’s ills. In fact, he will single-handedly bring

a time of “peace and safety” to the earth (I Thes. 5:3). This isn’t by chance, but design. For as the apostle says, his *coming* is “after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” He is the rider of the *white horse* who will go forth conquering his enemies with the swiftness of an Alexander the Great. Those who name the name of God in that day will perish at the edge of his sword (Rev. 6:2,9-11 cf. 13:6,7).

As the Anti-Christ rises to world prominence, one of the means he uses to deceive the nations is *signs* and *wonders*. Interestingly, the Greek words *semeion* (signs) and *teras* (wonders) are the same terms used for the miraculous manifestations that our Lord performed during His earthly ministry. Therefore, we have little doubt that these miracles will be authentic. To suggest otherwise would be to cast a shadow of doubt over the authenticity of our Lord’s miracles. Although Satan is a created being, he does possess unbelievable

powers. In a moment of time the devil flashed all the kingdoms of the world before our Lord stating, “All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it” (Luke 4:6).

While the Beast and the False Prophet are mere mortals, the dragon will empower these workers of iniquity to perform the miraculous. Even the very elect will be deceived. Perhaps the most

amazing demonstration of this power is seen shortly after the Anti-Christ is assassinated in the *middle* of the Tribulation. John records, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3). Although it is questionable that Satan can restore life, it appears God allows him to do so in this case, that He might demonstrate the glory of *His* power at the Second Coming of Christ.

We are not told how long the Beast remains in the Abyss after being slain, but we can probably safely surmise it will be three days and three nights. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (Rev. 17:8).

Carefully note, the Beast "that was," before his assassination; "and is not," his absence from the earth during the period he's in the Abyss; "and yet is," his miraculous raising from the dead. Unlike Christ, who resurrected from the dead, the Anti-Christ is merely *resuscitated* similar to the widow's son of Zarephath and Lazarus. Here again Satan is seeking to imitate the things of God. The Anti-Christ will be slain, be raised

from the dead, and ascend from the lower parts of the earth. Sound familiar?

Upon being revived from his mortal wound, the Apostle John adds this commentary about his reappearance: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." This sounds like a riddle wrapped in an enigma. The "seven" refers to the seven original Mid-East kings and kingdoms that will form an alliance with one another, which makes up the heart of the Anti-Christ kingdom. After the Anti-Christ, who was numbered with the original seven, returns from the dead he's called the *eighth* because there's something dramatically different about him—he's the very embodiment of *evil*.

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and...

he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Rev. 13:5,6).

It is at this point in time the Anti-Christ enters the temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be *God*. This is the "lie" Paul speaks about in II Thessalonians 2:10-11. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

"After the Anti-Christ... returns from the dead...he's the very embodiment of *evil*."

Some teach, based on this passage, that those who reject the gospel of salvation today will not have another opportunity to be saved during the Tribulation. This would mean then that very few would be saved in the coming day of the Lord, since the message of Christ's redeeming love has reached around the world today through every medium imaginable. Yet, the record is clear that a great multitude, "which no man could number" will be saved during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-15).

After the Rapture, the program of God will *immediately* revert back to prophecy. Thus, Paul briefly shares with us here in II Thessalonians 2:10,11 the prophetic order of things following our departure to glory. Dear ones, it is imperative that we understand the immediate context in which these passages are set is the coming *day of the Lord*. Consequently, those who reject the "truth" in verse 11 are rejecting the truth of the kingdom gospel. Insofar as the terms of salvation will change in the future Tribulation, God graciously gives the world another opportunity to be saved.

However, two things must be remembered. First, they will return to the Great Commission in those days, which gives Israel a position of preeminence over the Gentiles. This greatly diminishes their exposure to the gospel. In other words, the Gentiles will once again have to be saved through Israel. Second, the clock is ticking. The inhabitants of the world will only have three and one-half years before the Anti-Christ requires the mark of the beast, 666. Without

this mark no one will be able to buy or sell. However, the moment those who worship the Beast receive the number of his name, they are *eternally damned*, without hope of reprieve (Rev. 13:15-18 cf. 14:9-11).

To those who reject both the *gospel of grace* and the *kingdom gospel*, God will send strong delusion to believe the lie, that is, the Anti-Christ is God! Paul's reference to *strong delusion* here is to be understood as "a working of error or inward working of delusion." Hiebert comments: "It should be noted that God does not send them 'error' as such, but rather an inward working of the inevitable consequences of error. They will fall under the influence of a power working within them which leads them farther and farther away from the truth. Since they deliberately chose falsehood in defiance of the truth of God, God subjects them to the power of error they chose. God uses their choice of evil as the very instrument to punish their sin."¹ (See Prov. 5:22,23).

Another area where the Devil will weave his tangled web of deception is in regard to the False Prophet. Like the Holy Spirit who speaks not of Himself but glorifies the Son, the False Prophet will exalt the man of sin. He will cause the whole earth to worship the Anti-Christ. The False Prophet is able to accomplish this by a set of carefully orchestrated miracles.

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of

those miracles [Gr. *semeion*] which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.... And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev. 13:13-15).

In the Old Testament the prophet Elijah called fire down out of heaven to turn the heart of the people back to the true and living God. Here, the False Prophet calls fire down from heaven to turn men away from the living God to worship the image of the beast that he miraculously causes to speak.

THE KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (II Thes. 2:8).

During the latter part of the Tribulation God will call His people into the wilderness where He protects and nourishes them for three and one-half years (Rev. 12:13-17). Apparently, near the end of this period the Anti-Christ discovers where Israel is hiding. He wastes no time assembling an army that would dwarf anything known to man today. Destination: the valley of Megiddo outside of Jerusalem. The plan is simple: wipe the chosen nation from the face of the earth. What he fails to understand is, like the Egyptians of old, God is going to draw him into the jaws of death.

There have been many great battles since the dawn of mankind, but there is one battle yet


to be fought that will be unlike any other before it—*Armageddon!* As the Apostle John stepped to the edge of this arena he saw the armies of the earth. They extended across the plain of the east as far as the eye could see. Then he looked heavenward and beheld another *white horse* whose rider that sat upon him “was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war....and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Rev. 19:11,14).

This is the *Second Coming of Christ* that will bring an end to the Anti-Christ's reign of terror. Christ will utterly destroy him with the brightness of His Coming when He returns in power and glory with the host of heaven. The scene will cause men's hearts to fail within them. “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations...and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” This is a true demonstration of *power*; His almighty power. What a scene! The carnage will be so enormous that the blood is said to run to the horse bridles for two hundred miles (Rev. 14:14-20).

He who deceived the world and caused millions to be damned will

“There have been many great battles...but there is one battle yet to be fought that will be unlike any other before it—*Armageddon!*”

not be permitted to merely suffer an untimely death. Both the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet are cast *alive* into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. 19:20). As Christ overthrows the kingdoms of this world and establishes His kingdom of righteousness, Satan will be bound during the Millennium. Interestingly, when he is cast into the lake of fire at the end of the thousand years, the biblical record states: “where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

A correct understanding of the Word rightly divided and “things to come” will keep us from being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. If someone claims to know the identity of the Anti-Christ our response should be, “But what saith the Scriptures?” As a member of the Body of Christ I’m looking for the Upper-Taker, not the undertaker. Thankfully we have been *delivered* from the wrath to come! 

Endnote

1. *The Thessalonian Epistles*, D. Edmond Hiebert, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, pg. 319.

QUESTION BOX

“I found a contradiction in the Bible about Judas’ death—Matthew 27:5 cf. Acts 1:18. Could you please address this matter in the Searchlight?”

After Judas sought unsuccessfully to return the 30 pieces of silver that was paid to betray the Master, the record states,

“And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5).

But Peter seems to contradict Matthew’s account when he says,

“...and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18).

We believe the two accounts are easily reconciled. Undoubtedly Judas hung himself from a high place such as a tree near the edge of a cliff. Apparently the branch or rope was unable to bear the weight of his body, thus it broke and he fell headlong onto the jagged rocks below. Whether Judas died by hanging or due to his fall is incidental. The fact will forever remain that he can never wash his hands of the blood money he received from the Chief Priest to betray our Lord.

Clearly both narratives are true; however, they must be viewed together to receive the full picture.

—Pastor Sadler

The Greatest Sights of the Bible

By Cornelius R. Stam

One of the most amazing facts about the Bible is the universality of its attraction and application. Unlike any other book, it holds *universal* interest and fills a *universal* need—all races find it equally appropriate and helpful. The rich, the poor; the educated, the illiterate; the old, the young; the seasoned theologian and the little child—the Blessed Book fits them all. It answers their gravest questions; it fills their deepest needs.

Now, the Bible was not meant to be merely a book of drama, but it is filled with drama from start to finish. It deals with God and the devil, with heaven and hell, with creation, its ruin and redemption. It depicts man, created in the image of God, ruined by the fall and doomed to judgment, but shows Christ, in infinite love, bearing the penalty for man's sins, so that he might be forgiven, justified and glorified.

The Bible presents one dramatic sight after another, from the creation of the first heaven and earth to that of the new, but we deal here with several that, it seems to us, stand out above all the rest.

THOU FOOL!

The first of these great sights is depicted for us in Psalms 53:1-3:

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.

“God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if

there were any that did understand, that did seek God.

“Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

It is generally supposed that the first sentence of the above passage refers to the atheist, the one who (professedly, at least) does not believe there *is* a God. Actually, however, it refers to mankind in general, to man as he is by nature, and a careful examination of the sentence itself, as well as a reference to the immediate context will prove this to be so.

First it will be noted that the words “*There is,*” in our *Authorized Version*, are printed in italics. This indicates that they are not found in the original, but were supplied, we believe erroneously, by the translators.

Second, the words “*The fool*” are given special emphasis in the original. It is an exclamation.

Third, this opening sentence tells us, not what the fool *believes* or *thinks*, but what he *says in his heart*.

Thus the sentence should actually read: “The fool! [He] has said in his heart: ‘No God.’”

It is not that he does not believe there *is* a God. An examination of the first chapter of Romans makes it extremely doubtful that there is anyone who does not believe this. And James 2:19 tells us that even the demons believe this—and *tremble*. The idea here is rather that man by nature

wants nothing to do with God. In Romans 1:28, Paul, by the Spirit, says practically the same thing about the human race: *“They did not like to retain God in their knowledge...”*

Man excludes Him from *business*, explaining many a questionable transaction with the argument: “Well, business is business; you can’t bring religion into that.” And as to his *social relationships* and pleasures, “Ah,” he says, “we’ve got to have *some* fun.” And *education*? “Let *us* decide what is truth,” he says, and so the poor human mind is made his highest court of appeal. And *politics*? “Why, you don’t take *God* into politics, except to talk a bit religiously where it will win votes. If you took God into consideration in the actual running of government or international politics, it would ruin everything.” And so, in the great International Security Council held in “Christian” America some years ago, the chairman, an American, requested all present to engage in a few moments of silent—*meditation*! Russia’s delegates were present. We didn’t dare ask *God*’s help in *prayer*. And even in *religion* man’s efforts, his good works and his solemn rituals, have all but displaced God Himself.

Thus it is that God is pictured in this first great sight, as looking down from heaven upon the human race and exclaiming: “The fool! He says in his heart: ‘No God.’”

But why is it that man by nature does not want God in His life? This same passage gives the answer:

“Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity” (Ver. 1).

It is *sin* and the resulting sense of blameworthiness that has separated man from God. And this applies to all: *“There is none that doeth good.”*

But it is even worse than that, for the passage goes on to say:

“God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand; that did seek God” (Ver. 2).

He scoured the earth, as it were, to see if there were any who understood the seriousness of their plight and would seek *His* help. But again the answer was: *“No, not one.”*

“Every one of them is gone back; they are *altogether* become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one” (Ver. 3).

Paul gives us the essence of this passage in Romans 3:11,12, where he interprets it thus:

“There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God.

“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

This is not reckless talk. History and human experience bear witness that it is true. Do you recall what Adam did after his disobedience in Eden? What *should* he have done? He should have sought for God and cried: “O, God, I have sinned. Is there any hope? Is there any help?” But instead he ran and hid. He didn’t seek God; God had to seek him, and call: *“Adam, where art thou?”* And when God finally found him, his explanation was: *“I was afraid...and I hid myself.”*

And the whole human race has followed Adam’s example. Instead

of seeking God's forgiveness and help, man by nature runs and hides. He says: "No God." He is *afraid* of God. This is not true only of *some* men; it is true of *all* men, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. "There is *NONE* that seeketh after God." It is man's greatest folly to keep avoiding God and running from Him, yet he continues to do so.

Thank God, we *need not* hide from Him, for He Himself has paid the penalty for sin and looks upon all mankind in grace, ready to save and to bless. But before we look at this brighter side, we must witness the second of these greatest sights of the Bible: the crucifixion of Christ.

THERE THEY CRUCIFIED HIM

Who can deny that one of the very greatest sights of all history is that which took place on Golgotha's hill, where the Son of God was nailed to a Cross to die in agony and disgrace between two malefactors? We quote here a small part of the sacred description of the event:

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

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.

"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God.

"And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar,

"And saying, If Thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself.

"And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:33-38).

The record relates further how the sun was darkened from the sixth hour until the ninth, after which the Lord committed His spirit to His Father and died. And it continues:

"Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned" (Vers. 47,48).

Let us try to place ourselves, in our imaginations, at the scene of the event, standing, as it were, among the onlookers.

See the Holy One, who has gone about doing nothing but good; healing the sick, casting out demons, preaching good news, now nailed to a Cross as a vile criminal!

And see what they are doing to Him. Soldiers part His garments among them and throw dice for His vesture (Cf. Matt. 27:35). They mock Him and offer Him vinegar and gall to drink (Cf. Matt. 27:34). The rulers deride Him, saying: "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke 23:35). Even one of the criminals being executed with Him, rails at Him, saying: "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself—*and us*" (Ver. 39).

But the multitude, that great throng of onlookers, simply "stood

“Nothing in all history has laid bare the sinful heart of man like the conviction and crucifixion of Christ, the Son of God.”

beholding” (Ver. 35). This word “beholding,” in the original, indicates a continued and prolonged gaze. They just stood there transfixed, as it were. Great numbers had been healed and blessed by Him, and now, they ask themselves, how can this be? How do men *dare* to treat Him so? How is it that this Mighty One is now hanging there, writhing in pain and covered with humiliation? Will He perhaps yet come down from the Cross suddenly and scatter His enemies?

It is a fearful sight, and the more so as God darkens the heavens, while His Son cries: *“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”* and the earth quakes as the great veil in the temple is rent in two (Luke 23:44,45).

Little wonder that this part of Luke’s account closes with the words:

“And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.”

In city mission work we have seen mental patients, in great distress of mind, beating their breasts with their hands. This is what that great multitude of onlookers did. They were dumbfounded and distraught, and well might they be, for, at the persuasion of their rulers many of them had had a

part in that awful murder. And as the crucified One committed His spirit to His Father, they smote their breasts and returned to their homes. They wished to see no more.

And, mark well, if this were as far as the Bible went regarding the death of Christ we might well smite *our* breasts, for our condition would then be hopeless indeed. This, doubtless the greatest event of all time, would be one of unmitigated horror were it not for the revelation of God’s purpose in it. Nothing in all history has laid bare the sinful heart of man like the conviction and crucifixion of Christ, the Son of God. No crime was ever so cruel, so vicious or so utterly and completely wicked. None was ever perpetrated against one so high and holy.

A short time later we find Peter accusing the “men of Israel” of that awful crime, as he says:

“...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:22,23).

“...ye delivered [Him] up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

“And killed the Prince of Life...” (Acts 3:13-15).

This is what Peter had to say about the Cross at Pentecost under the so-called “great commission,”

and, let us settle it in our minds: if this is our view of the Cross we still know as little about “the gospel of the grace of God” as Peter did at that time.

In “that great sight,” as Luke describes it and as Peter, at Pentecost, speaks of it, there is nothing but fear, reproach and condemnation.

But the third of these greatest sights is, thank God, as bright and filled with hope as the two former ones are dark and forbidding.

CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR

“But we see Jesus, who was made [for] a little [while] lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).

This passage has baffled many a commentator. It seems to depict Christ dying *twice*: once on earth and once in heaven. First, it says, He was made lower than the angels to suffer death, and *now* we see Him “crowned with glory and honor, *that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*” Actually, however, these are *two aspects* of His suffering and death.

It was Paul who, some time after Pentecost, was commissioned to proclaim a new and wonderful message about the death of Christ; to show the Cross in a new light.

The fact that Christ should die as a Substitute for others; that He should die in the place of those who deserved death, was not always a glad message. As we have seen, Peter *blamed* his hearers for the death of Christ and called

upon them to “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

But Paul, by the grace of God, revealed both Christ and His Cross in a new light. To the Corinthians he wrote: “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, know we *Him* no more” (II Cor. 5:16). He was henceforth to proclaim Christ in the glory of His finished work, exalted “far above all,” and dispensing the merits of His crucifixion to a world of sinners, offering them reconciliation and justification because He had paid for their sins at Calvary.

Do you see it? Christ *was* made, for a little while, lower than the angels to suffer death. That is what the apostle speaks of as “Christ after the flesh.” But *now* we no longer know Him so. *Now* we see Him crowned with glory and honor that, by the grace of God, His tasting of death might be (i.e., be recognized to be) *for every man.*

I can still recall a series of Sunday afternoons when “Aunt Lottie,” an elderly woman who helped mother take care of her large family, showed us pictures of the trial and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. I can still hear her say sadly: “Wasn’t it a pity! Wasn’t it too bad!”

Yes, it *was* a pity, and worse, that religious bigots and cruel heathen should unite to outrage the Son of God and nail Him to a tree, but, thank God, it was all in His great plan of redemption. This is why Paul’s epistles contain so many passages in which the Cross is spoken of as a victory and a blessing *for us*. In Romans 3:24 he declares that believers are:

“...justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

In II Corinthians 5:21 he says:

“For He [God] hath made Him to be sin for us, [Him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

It was on this basis that he could say to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch:

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38,39).

And it was on this basis that Peter could *later* write:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Pet. 3:18).

Peter, of course, learned this from Paul, as both agree (See Gal. 2:2; II Pet. 3:15,16; etc.). Let us then ever thank God for “the preaching of the Cross” through Paul, the chief of sinners saved by grace. In this great message we now see the crucifixion of Christ in a new light, as the gracious payment for our sins and the means by which He triumphed over Satan and death. The Victim is now seen as *the Victor*. This is why Paul’s “preaching of the Cross” is also called “*the gospel of the glory of Christ*” (II Cor. 4:4).

Reader, have you seen the Cross in this light? If this was not God’s purpose in Calvary, then why did He allow it? If God could allow vile sinners to outrage and crucify a good and holy man, let alone His own Son, for no good reason, then

right is surely on the scaffold and wrong on the throne. Then what’s the use of anything? What does it matter how we live—or die?

But we are *responsible* to accept this message and trust Christ as our Savior. To reject it is to insult the Holy One who so graciously stooped to bear the penalty for *our* sins. To reject it is to imply that we do not *need* His mercy and grace; that we would rather settle our own account. This brings us to another, really *two* more, of the greatest sights of the Bible.

EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

“Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him” (Rev. 1:7).

Whether men like it or not, the Lord Jesus Christ, so long despised and rejected on earth, will return to this scene to take control. This earth will not be forever a scene of marching armies and bitter wars, of trouble and sorrow and sickness and death. Nor will Christ’s holy name be always blasphemed here. The rebellion will not go on forever.

We are well aware that many ridicule the very idea of the personal return of Christ to this earth, but we can endure their sneers. Peter predicted more than nineteen hundred years ago that some would presume on God’s grace in delaying the judgment, and would say: “*Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*” (II Pet. 3:4).

But it is contrary to reason, as well as to the written Word of God, that He should have no better plan than to allow this world to continue forever in its present condition, and His coming to earth again, as described in the passage above, is the first step in the fulfillment of His prophesied purpose to take personal control.¹

What a striking contrast this sight presents to that which we first considered! There God looks down upon all mankind; here all men are looking at Christ. And what a contrast to the second sight! There the multitudes look on as Christ is nailed to a Cross; here they see Him returning in glory. And again, what a contrast to the third great sight! There Christ is seen in heaven, dispensing grace and forgiveness to all who will receive it. Here He is seen returning to earth to deal in judgment with those who have rejected His grace.

Revelation 19:11,12 further describes this scene. It shows heaven opened and Christ returning, to *"judge and make war."* What a contrast between His loving proclamation through Paul: *"Grace be unto you and peace,"* and this coming to *"judge and make war"!*

But we repeat that this is but the first step in the fulfillment of His purpose to take personal control. Unlike the present dispensation, the chief characteristic of the kingdom reign of Christ will not be grace, but *justice*. In Psalms

2:8,9 we read the Father's words to the Son:

"Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen [Lit., nations] for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Jeremiah 23:5 adds:

"...a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

And Revelation 19:15 says:

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron."

And this is not all, for *after* one thousand years of His righteous reign on earth, He will judge the unbelieving dead, "small and great," from His "great white throne."

Here the millenium-long scene of judgment is completed. All the believ-

ing dead having already been raised and blessed, the unbelievers of all past ages are now raised to stand before Him in judgment and suffer the awful consequences of their sins.

What a sight! The earth and the heaven flee away and the rejectors of God's grace find themselves standing face to face with *Christ*, for the great Judge is none other than the Savior who died at Calvary for their sins.


"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

"Unlike the present dispensation, the chief characteristic of the kingdom reign of Christ will not be grace, but *justice*."

“And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (John 5:22,27).

Whatever the significance and character of the lake of fire into which the unbelieving will finally be cast, we may fairly conclude that it is the burning wrath of divine love spurned.

Thank God, we need not be in the number of those who shall see Him and wail; who, a thousand years before the time, shall cry to the rocks and the mountains: *“Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb”* (Rev. 6:16).

In this present dispensation He is still presented as the One who “by the grace of God” has “tasted death for every man.” Let us go back to that third great sight then, and really take it in, trusting and rejoicing in Him who, in love and grace, tasted death for *us*. Let us fix our eyes on Him, “crowned with glory and honor in heaven,” and “able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.” 

Endnote

1. He will, however, have previously come “from heaven” into “the air,” to catch away the members of His Body (See I Thes. 4:13-18).

THE BBI BYLINE

Let Us Continue

By Dr. W. Edward Bedore
Executive Director, Berean Bible Institute

At the heart of the reformation that began in Martin Luther's day was a call for a return to faith in the Scriptures alone as the supreme and final authority for doctrine and Godly living. It was essentially a call for men and women to turn away from the supposed authority of a man-centered organized religion and back to God's Word. The five-fold battle cry of the Reformation was *Sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone); *Solo Cristo* (by Christ alone); *Sola Gratia* (by Grace alone); *Sola Fide* (by Faith alone); and *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone).

While we speak of Luther, Calvin, and others as being the leaders of the Reformation, it is more accurate to say that the Apostle Paul brought about the protest (from which we get the word Protestant) that resulted in the Reformation. It was the rediscovery of the truth of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and His finished work of redemption as revealed in Paul's epistles, that ignited the flame that spread across Europe in the 16th century

and changed history. It is more than interesting that the early writings of the Reformers were for the most part commentaries on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, for it was the rediscovered doctrines of grace found there that empowered their movement.

However, the Reformation was never finished but has stalled, and is now rolling back down the hill into the valley of doctrinal confusion, because of the failure of the Church to acknowledge and proclaim the distinctiveness of Paul's God-given apostleship and message of grace.

We are thankful for those men who were willing to stand, and die if necessary, for the truths of grace that they did understand and proclaim. But now, let those who have learned to "*rightly divide the Word of truth,*" and understand that those vital truths are part of the Dispensation of Grace committed exclusively to the Apostle Paul, pick up the mantle of the Reformers and boldly make known "*Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery.*"

When is the best time to start preparing for the future?
As every journey begins with the first step,
now is the time to start.

If your desire is to study God's Word and prepare yourself to serve the Lord contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 40, Germantown, WI 53022, phone: (262) 255-4094, fax: (262) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>.

FALL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the *Grace Bible Church* of Altoona, Wisconsin is scheduled to be held at the

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1202 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Dates: October 22-24, 1999

Theme: *"The Greatness of God's Grace"*

Speaker: Joel Finck, pastor of the *Grace Bible Church*, Rapid City, South Dakota

For brochures and directions, please contact:
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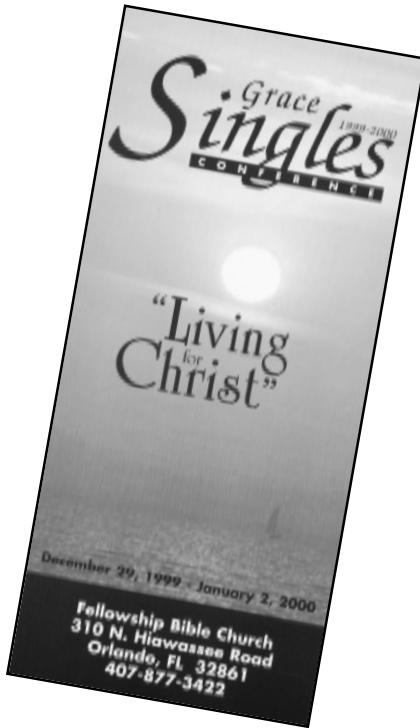
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WE SORROW NOT

"An old Chinese Christian died, and her family greeted the missionary with the words: 'We are so sorry you are not in time to see her alive, but the Lord commanded her presence at 4:00 a.m., and of course, she gladly obeyed. We are all overcome with the honor.' Instead of sorrow there was a hushed sense of awe in that poor home, and they only spoke of her 'exceeding weight of glory.'

"Why should our tears in sorrow flow?

"The Lord recalls His own,

"And bids them leave a world of woe
"for an immortal crown."

—Selected

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW AREA CODE: If you live near a major Metropolitan City you've probably experienced a change in area codes. With the explosion of the Internet, cell phones, faxes, etc., the Phone Company has been scrambling to meet the need. While we dodged the first round of changes a couple of years ago, we weren't as fortunate this time around. S-o-o-o our new area code is **(262)**.

Berean Bible Society Main Office: **(262)** 255-4750


Berean Bible Society Fax Number: **(262)** 255-4195

Berean Bible Institute Main Office: **(262)** 255-4094


The office hours of the *Berean Bible Society* and the *Berean Bible Institute* are Monday through Friday—**9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**, Central Standard Time.

UPDATE: Your Editor is happy to report that his commentary on *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* has been completed. Since this is such a voluminous work it will take at least two months for our proofreaders to go over the manuscript. Then it's off to the printer. Lord willing, we hope to give a release date in our *Thanksgiving Communiqué*.

LATE NOTICE: Your Editor has been invited to be the guest speaker at the *Community Bible Church* in Lena, Wisconsin on Sunday, October 24, 1999. For times of services and directions, please contact: Mr. & Mrs. Jim Riewe (920) 499-6995. All are warmly welcome!

 **DON'T FORGET:** If you have a question, request, or you're simply placing an order it will only be necessary to use the following address: *Berean Bible Society*, P.O. Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022.

Of course, if you are using the *Business Reply* envelope, simply drop it in the mail, all the pertinent information is already provided. **Please note**, however, if you are sending us a *package* it will be necessary to use the street address located on page 3, especially if you are sending it UPS. Heartfelt thanks!

 **JUST A REMINDER** that the new address of the *Berean Bible Institute* is: P.O. Box 40, Germantown, Wisconsin 53022. While the institute is still holding classes here at the facilities of the *Berean Bible Society*, we are happy to report that this is another step toward the school's future independence.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mr. Alan Neubauer. The lighthouse is located on Lake Michigan in Evanston, Illinois.

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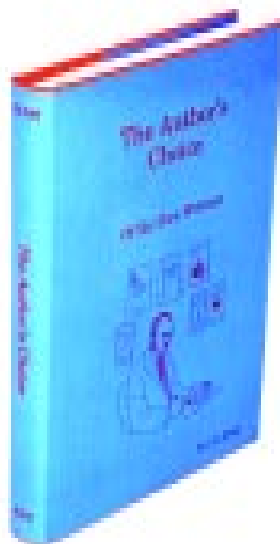
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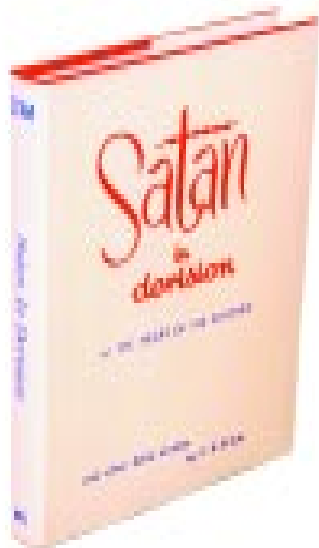
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