

The

Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2003



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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

In anticipation of the *Berean Bible Institute* leaving the nest and soaring to new heights, the *Berean Bible Society* Board of Directors has undertaken another much needed project. For the past year we have been laying the ground work for the development of a complete line of Sunday School Curriculum—K-12. Initially the Board established a fact-finding committee to explore the feasibility of such an enormous enterprise. They were also charged with the task of producing trial lessons, with take-home papers, visual aids, and handwork.

The Board worked closely with Pastor Jeff Seekins, who chaired the committee, in the appointment of LeAnn Beauchamp, Sally Payne, Jim Gray, Bonnie Lawson, and Ann Dickey. The BBS Board was so impressed with their work that it was decided to make the *Sunday School Program* an official arm of the ministries of the *Berean Bible Society*. Since the committee has effectively carried out its purpose it was disbanded, with our heartfelt thanks. We are presently in the process of appointing an administrator, staff writers, graphic artists, proofreaders, and consultants.

This project has been long overdue. While lessons have been put into print by many of our Sunday School teachers, there is a pressing need to produce a standard set of materials for all age groups. We have spoken to those who have attempted the project over the years, but for one reason or another had to reluctantly discontinue the work. Their counsel has been invaluable, especially in regard to only producing materials for *one* age group at a time. We believe this to be sound advice; therefore, we plan to begin with the *Junior* department.

Even though these materials are being produced in a Sunday School format, they can easily be adapted for homeschoolers, vacation Bible schools, and five-day clubs. As each stage is completed we will offer the curriculum in both a printed and CD format. Before the committee completed their labor of love, they began compiling a bibliography of Grace Sunday School lessons that are currently available. This will help to bridge the gap during the various phases of the project.

If you are interested in helping fund this undertaking, please designate your gift: "Sunday School Curriculum." We'll keep you posted!!

Yours because of Calvary,

Paul M. Sadler, President

Adam and Christ

What mankind lost in Adam's fall has been recovered in Christ. If you, therefore, reject Christ as your personal Savior, you are indeed lost. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

First Man—Adam (I Cor. 15:45)	Last Adam—Christ (I Cor. 15:45)
<i>Miraculous Beginning</i> Adam was created by God on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26,27)	<i>Miraculous Beginning</i> Eternal Son of God was conceived miraculously and born of the virgin (Luke 1:26-35)
<i>Perfect Man</i> Innocent with a mutable righteousness (Gen. 1:26,27)	<i>Perfect Man</i> The righteousness of God who knew no sin (Rom. 3:26; II Cor. 5:21)
<i>Giver of Life</i> Gave life to his offspring (Gen. 5:3,4)	<i>Giver of Life</i> Gives eternal life to all those who trust in Him (Rom. 6:23)
Testing resulted in disobedience and failure (Gen. 2:16,17; 3:9-12)	Testing resulted in obedience and victory (Luke 4:1,2; Phil. 2:7-9)
Suffered the judgment of God for his sin (Gen. 3:17-19)	Suffered the judgment of God at Calvary for our sins (II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:9)
In Adam all is hopeless (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12)	In Christ we have hope He is our hope (I Cor. 15:22; I Tim. 1:1)

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Revelation 1:1-10

By Paul M. Sadler

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

—Rev. 1:1,2

With God’s help, we plan to present a brief overview in the coming months of the future Tribulation. The purpose of this study is to dispel the notion that the Church, the Body of Christ is the subject of the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation. We will also be exploring the coming events of the day of the Lord to further enhance our appreciation of the grace of God. Having a fuller understanding of these matters will cause us to bow our knee in humble adoration to the One who has promised us deliverance from the wrath to come (I Thes. 5:9).



It is the consensus of most in Christendom that the Book of Revelation is a sealed book that cannot possibly be accurately interpreted, due to the nature of the numerous visions and symbolic language. Consequently, those who desire to study this biblical record are discouraged to do so since it cannot be understood. This, of course, is unsound reasoning simply because the very first verse of the record teaches otherwise:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John” (Rev. 1:1).

This is the revelation (Gr. *apokalupsis*), the revealing, the *unveiling* of Jesus Christ according to prophecy. Unlike the Four Gospels where Christ is portrayed as the lowly suffering servant, here He is presented as the Judge of all the earth, prepared to pour out His wrath upon His enemies. This is the revelation that was *shown* to His servants that must soon come to pass. As we are going to see, John will closely adhere to this theme throughout the book.

Of course this revelation must be distinguished from the one Paul received. He says concerning his gospel: “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12). The revelation (Gr. *apokalupsis*) given to the Apostle Paul reveals Christ according to the Mystery, which has to do with our

exaltation with Him in the heav- enlies. Today, we know Christ as the God of all grace who has de- clared a ceasefire with this Christ- rejecting world. As a result, *amnesty* is being offered to all those who will trust Him as their Savior. But God's declaration of grace and peace will soon give way to a declaration of war, as the Book of Revelation plainly sets forth. Whatsoever God has separated, let no man join together; thus, it is essential that Paul and John's revelations of Christ are not intermingled.

THREE IMPORTANT KEYS

A key gives access, if it's the right key! The same is true re- garding spiritual things. There are three important keys that un- lock the complexities of the Book of Revelation. *First*, it is essen- tial to have a well-rounded knowl- edge of the prophetic Scriptures, which unfold God's purpose for the earth. The Book of Revelation is merely a *continuation* and further development of prophecy. Hence, "blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this *prophecy*" (Rev. 1:3).

It has been correctly said that the fruits of Revelation are found in the roots of prophecy. We be- lieve the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. The Scrip- tures interpret themselves if we leave them in their natural setting. Interestingly, most of the symbol- ism that has been a stumbling block to many in the Book of Revelation is explained in other portions of the Word of God. Sometimes it is defined in the very book itself.

For example, John saw the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (lamp

stands) holding seven stars in His right hand. Thankfully we are not left to our own imagination as to the proper interpretation. The seven golden lamp stands are seven churches in Asia and the seven stars are seven angels (Gr. *aggelos*) or messengers of these seven assemblies (Rev. 1:20). As you can see, the symbolism in the book gives way to a literal inter- pretation when we compare spir- itual things with spiritual things.

The Book of Revelation plays a very important role in prophecy, simply because it gives us a chro- nological order of future events not found in the Old Testament. John, under the direction of the Spirit, gathers up all the Old Testament prophecies concerning things to come and places them into a time sequence, which shows the reader when each prophetic event will transpire. He then gives us impor- tant connecting *links* never before revealed. We know, for example, the kingdom was foretold by the prophet, but John is the first to reveal that the duration of it would be 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4).

Although John digresses from time to time, chapters 1 through 10 primarily address the first 3½ years of Jacob's Trouble. With so many events unfolding in the middle of the Tribulation period he spends the better part of four chapters (11,12,13,14) describing the abomination of desolation. In chapters 15 through 19 John deals extensively with the horrors of the Great Tribulation, which is brought to a close by the Second Coming of Christ. Then in chap- ter 20 the apostle dramatically draws back the curtain on the judgment to come, followed by the

eternal state on earth in chapters 21 and 22.

Second, we must also have a proper grasp of Paul's apostleship and message. Failure to do so will only serve to frustrate the grace of God. Clearly the Mystery is disconnected from the future prophecies of the coming day of the Lord. We are living in God's *unprophe-sied* age of grace. This is why every attempt to predict the Rapture of the Church on the basis of the prophetic timeline has failed.

“The Book of
Revelation is merely
a *continuation* and
further development
of prophecy.”

Probably some will read this next statement in disbelief, but it is nevertheless true if we understand Paul's gospel—no Old Testament prophecy is being fulfilled today. We agree the world is heading in that direction and will even concede the stage is being set. But wisdom says we must stop here for this reason: After the Rapture, once the prophetic clock begins to keep time again, prophecies will be fulfilled in rapid succession, seeing that they are all interrelated with one another. For example, the prophecy that the Anti-Christ will stand up in the Temple and declare himself to be God is dependent upon the fulfillment of a foregoing prophecy that the Temple will be rebuilt.

Since we have escaped the wrath to come, it was not needful for Paul to instruct the members

of the Body of Christ to heed the warnings found in Matthew 24. The Rapture is an unprophe-sied event; therefore, there are no signs, times or seasons that will precede the Lord's imminent return for the Church. Little wonder the apostle says to those at Thessalonica, “comfort one another with these words.” He would have never made this statement if we were going through any part of the coming Tribulation. This helps clarify why the Body of Christ is never mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

Third, we must ascertain the correct method of interpretation. Theologically, the *Preterist View* says the Book of Revelation applies specifically to the problems and persecutions of the early church, which existed at the time of the writing. In other words, the prophecy has already been completely fulfilled. This view defies reason, logic, and most importantly any credible evidence.

The *Historical View* says the record symbolically describes the chronological sequence of historic events in the Church. A modified form of this position states that the seven churches in Asia represent seven historical stages of the Church the Body of Christ. According to this view, we are currently living in the Laodicean age. While this is perhaps the most popular position among dispensationalists, it too leaves much to be desired. The problem here is we are left with man's interpretation of Church history, which itself is questionable at times. We prefer to leave the final authority in such matters with the Scriptures themselves.

We believe the *Futuristic View* aligns itself most closely with the

record given to us by the Apostle John. This view says the entire Book of Revelation is futuristic. One thing in favor of this position is that both biblical history and the Scriptures seem to clearly support it. It is generally accepted that the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation around 95 A.D. Ussher, who developed the dating system that bears his name, concurs. He was one of the first to date the books of Holy Scripture by meticulously comparing both secular and biblical documents at his disposal.

By the time John wrote the *Apocalypse*, the blessing of God had completely departed from Israel. The Temple and Jerusalem had already been destroyed by Titus and the sacrificial system lay in ruin. Both Paul and Peter have suffered martyrdom, and the majority of those saved at Pentecost under the kingdom gospel are now with the Lord. This raises the question: To whom was John writing? While the Church, the Body of Christ is the means through which God was channeling His blessing at the time, we know John was directed by the Spirit to confine his ministry to the *circumcision* (Israel) (Gal. 2:9).

Whether we believe the Book of Revelation was written at an early or later date is really a moot point, if we understand the writing to be entirely futuristic. John would have naturally handed down the book to the few kingdom saints that remained in his day so it could be placed with the canon of Scripture. This, however, in no way diminishes from the fact that the main thrust of the writing is *future* Israel.

Those who may have reservations about John addressing future Israel should remember that the same is true of many Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming Tribulation. In fact, nearly half of the Book of Daniel falls into this very category. So then, the seven churches to whom John is writing are seven future Jewish assemblies located in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:11). Theologians who reject the futuristic view have recognized some of the thorny issues associated with teaching that John was writing to seven churches in his day. Consequently, they were compelled to spiritualize these churches, interpreting them to be seven stages of Church history. Once again we are to always take a literal interpretation of the Word of God unless the context demands otherwise. Here, of course, there is little question that these are *literal* Kingdom assemblies.

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

The world has always had an insatiable desire to know the future. Even Hollywood has sought to capitalize on this with movies like *Back to the Future!* With man's fallen nature, you can be certain that if he were able to predict the future it would be for evil purposes. Thankfully God has hidden these things from man, except for what He has chosen to reveal to us regarding things to come. Only the living Word of God gives an accurate account of future events—all other mediums are the devices of Satan.

In the Book of Revelation Christ is the *alpha* and the *omega* (Rev. 1:8). *Alpha* and *Omega* are

the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. So Christ is the beginning and the ending. He knows the end from the beginning because He has planned and purposed all things according to the counsel of His will. In essence, this is the very foundation of prophecy. As an eminent Bible teacher has said: "What is prophecy, but history written in advance."

Although time travel is impossible for man, nothing is impossible with God. He is eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present. Just as Enoch and Phillip were transported to another place in a moment of time, the Apostle John was carried away in the Spirit to the future day of the Lord (Acts 8:39,40 cf. Heb. 11:5). And you thought your vacation last summer was the trip of a lifetime! Does all this sound farfetched? Not to the believer who views it through the eye of faith! What saith the Scriptures?

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet" (Rev. 1:10).

This is John, the beloved, who laid his head on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper. He was one of the twelve apostles of the kingdom, and as far as we know he was the last surviving member of the group when he penned these words. He had been banished to the isle of Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian.¹ The banishment was meant to be a

death sentence for the aged apostle, but God turned the ill intent into an unforgettable revelation of His dear Son.

As a Hebrew addressing Hebrews, John identifies himself with his kinsman after the flesh. He was their brother and companion in troublous times. If we consult the original here we learn that the definite article precedes the noun, tribulation; consequently, John was their companion during "the" seven-year Tribulation and the Millennium that followed.

These are the things "which must shortly come to pass" spoken of in verse 1. The reference is to those who will be living at that day. This is confirmed for us by the apostle's next statement: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Tradition teaches that the Lord's day is Sunday, which is the day Christians worship. However, this is foreign to the Scriptures. The Lord's day or *day of the Lord* is a clear reference to an extended period of time which includes: seven years of tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit, the judgment of Israel and the nations, the Millennial reign of Christ, the battle of Gog and Magog, and the Great White Throne Judgment. As John was transported to this future day he was seated in the balcony, as it were, and recorded all the events that unfolded before his very eyes.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

A special blessing is reserved for those living at that day who

read, hear this prophetic vision preached, and *obey* the words of this revelation. Seeing that there are a number of key prophecies which must be fulfilled at the very beginning of the Tribulation, it is impossible for any believer past or present to “keep those things” recorded in the Book of

Revelation. One of these prophecies has to do with the ministry of the two witnesses....

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. Domitian (81-96 A.D.). See *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners & Customs*, Howard F. Vos, pages 602 and 603.

Who Am I? Revealed!



Probably most of our readers solved the puzzle, “*Who Am I?*” that appeared in last month’s issue. If you didn’t, the answer is a whale of a tale! The little five letter word that appears only four times in the Scriptures is “whale.”

Allow me to give a brief word of explanation. All plant, animal, and sea life were created before Adam. “So I was made before man.” While the whale has fins, it does not have “arms, or hands or feet.” As we know, Adam gave this great sea creature its name, but it did not have the capacity to know Adam or his name.

The reason “thousands of me go in fear” is because God has placed the fear of man upon His creation after the flood (Gen. 9:1-3). Even today whales are rarely seen in their natural surroundings, which explains the author’s statement: “But seldom on earth appear.”

The key to the riddle is found in the next rhyme: “Later, for a purpose God did see, He placed a living soul in me. But that soul of mine God did claim, and from me took it back again.” This is an obvious reference to Jonah being swallowed by the great sea monster, “He placed a living soul in me,” then being spewed out, according to God’s purpose.

One of the by-products of whaling is oil, which was used for lamps. Hence, “and to men I once furnished light, thousands of people both young and old did by my death bright lights behold.” Since this sea creature doesn’t have a spirit it is unable to believe “the Bible and its teachings.” Hope you enjoyed unraveling the mystery!
—Pastor Sadler

This month we are beginning a multipart series on the subject of *Grace*. These messages were handed down to your Editor in the form of “shorts” as Pastor Stam used to call them. It is our sincere prayer that these articles will be used of the Lord to bring you into a fuller knowledge of His will. —Ed.

The Dispensation of Grace

Mystery or Prophecy?

By Cornelius R. Stam

We have often insisted that while the prophets “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow,” they knew nothing of the present period of grace which lies between our Lord’s suffering and His kingdom glory.

“The dispensation of the grace of God,” we read in Ephesians 3, was “a mystery” only made known “by revelation” to Paul, some years after the rejected Christ had returned to heaven. In verse 5 he says that “in other ages” it was “not made known.” In verse 8 he calls it “the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” In Romans 16:25 he says it was “kept secret since the world began.” In Colossians 1:26 he insists again that it was “hid from ages and from generations.”

But there are still thousands of sincere believers who do not see this. They think that the prophets predicted *the reign of grace* as well as *the reign of Christ*. Thus they lose some of the joy of that great surprise of grace which God planned for sinners “before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9), but “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

One of the Scriptures which troubles them most is I Peter 1:10:

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who *prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.*” They say that this proves conclusively that the dispensation of Grace was prophesied beforehand and was no mystery at all.

But here again we must distinguish between grace in a dispensation and the dispensation of Grace. Peter is not speaking of the *reign of grace* here, but of the grace that will prevail during the *reign of Christ*. This is clear from the 13th verse, where he exhorts his Jewish Christian brethren, “Hope to the end for the *grace* that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”

Remember that like Christ on earth, Peter was a minister of “the Circumcision” (Rom. 15:18; Gal. 2:7). His message to the believing Jews had the kingdom reign of Christ in view.

The prophets had clearly predicted that God would judge the world for rejecting His Son and would enthrone Christ in spite of them. He did not do this immediately, however. In matchless mercy, He deferred the judgment and offered salvation to all who would receive it as a free gift through the merits of Christ. And so, while

Christ is not yet reigning, grace reigns. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign" (Rom. 5:21).

An over-abounding grace is the outstanding characteristic of God's dealings with man in "this present evil age."

When Saul of Tarsus became the leader of an organized rebellion against Christ, God in love reached down to save him, choosing him as the very agent through whom He would proclaim grace to a lost world.

Listen to his testimony and his message:

"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but...the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant" (I Tim. 1:13,14).

"Not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Rom. 5:15).

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:7,8).

"Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

"And God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Cor. 9:8).

"For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving

of many redound to the glory of God" (II Cor. 4:15).

Do you wonder why we say that an over-abounding grace is the outstanding characteristic of God's dealings with man in "this present evil age"? Surely *grace is reigning*. Otherwise the thunders of God's judgment would roll and He would bring in the reign of Christ.

"Surely grace is reigning. Otherwise the thunders of God's judgment would roll..."

Though, in his first epistle, Peter told the believing Jews to "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," he later learned something of that greater grace which God was to manifest in deferring the judgment of the nations and the reign of Christ, and, as we shall see, he learned it from Paul.

As Israel refused to repent and Christ did not return, some began to cry "*Where is the promise of His coming?*" (II Pet. 3:4).

Peter now answers this beautifully. He says "*Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" And note, this is not a lame explanation offered today at the *close* of the age of Grace. This statement was made at the *dawn* of the age.

Peter goes on, "The Lord is *not slack* concerning His promise, as some men count [it], slackness;

but is *longsuffering* to us-ward, *not willing that any should perish*, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:8,9 cf. I Tim. 1:16 “all longsuffering”). So the delay must not be counted *slackness* on God’s part, but *longsuffering*, and since “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” this delay might continue for any amount of time, even though the signs of the last days had already begun to appear (Acts 2:16,17).

How did Peter know this? He certainly didn’t find it in prophecy.

Before we quote the significant closing words of his epistle let us remember Paul’s word in Ephesians 3:1-3. “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of *the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the Mystery....*”

How beautifully this harmonizes with the closing words of Peter’s second epistle! He tells them not to count the delay *slackness*, but says “...account that the *longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you*” (II Pet. 3:15). No wonder he says in the closing verse “*But grow in grace!*”

Peter has learned why “the revelation of Jesus Christ” is being delayed. May we learn it too. God is waiting because of “His great love,” because He is loathe to judge.

How long He will continue to wait we cannot tell. We can only say to the unsaved, “*We then, as workers together with Him, beseech*

you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain....Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:1,2). And to the saved, “*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” (Eph. 5:15,16).

THE MEANING OF GRACE AND HOW THIS AFFECTS US

Ask the average believer what the Bible word “grace” means, and he will doubtless reply “*un-merited favor.*”

Actually, however, grace is much more than this.

Subjectively, it is that loving attitude, or disposition, on God’s part, from which all His kindness toward us flows.

Objectively, it is all the kindness that flows from His love toward us.

Thus we read in Ephesians 2:2-6 that we were “*the children of disobedience*” and therefore “*by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*”

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

“And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Note: This passage begins with those who were “children of disobedience” and “children of wrath” and, saving them “by grace,” gives them a position in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus!

God’s grace to us as sinners was great indeed, for:

“In [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His [God’s] grace*” (Eph. 1:7).

But now, having given us a position *in His beloved Son*, God’s grace goes out to us in still greater measure.

Ephesians 1:6 declares that God has “made us accepted [Lit., “engraced us”] in the Beloved.” “The Beloved”! What a name for the Son of God’s love!

Beholding us in Christ, God loves us and delights in us more than any father ever delighted in his son, or any grandfather in that precious grandchild.

Thus, while in Ephesians 1:7 we read that we have “*redemption...the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,*” in Ephesians 2:7 we see these riches of grace increased to us “*exceedingly,*” now that we occupy a position “in the Beloved”:

“That in the ages to come He might show *the exceeding riches of His grace...*”

How?

“...in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”!

What a prospect! Through the ages of eternity God will lavish His loving kindness upon us to demonstrate to all the universe “*the exceeding riches of His grace*”!

THE NATURE OF GRACE

To a young Christian who kept bemoaning his failures and lack of spiritual growth, and wondering how God could love him, a more mature believer responded substantially as follows:

“When I leave here and return to my home I will pick up my little baby girl and put her on my knee.

Tired as I am, I will dandle her on my knee and, somehow, looking into that darling face and those pretty blue eyes, I will soon feel rested and refreshed.




“This is strange, in a way, for she does not love me. She doesn’t even know what love is.

“She doesn’t appreciate my problems and has no sympathy for me. My heart can be burdened with grief or filled with anxiety, and my mind vexed with difficult problems, but she doesn’t even know or care. She just keeps gurgling and giggling at the attention I lavish upon her.

“She doesn’t contribute one cent toward the needs of our family; indeed, she costs me a great deal of money and will for years to come. Yet I *love* that child more than I can say. There is no sacrifice I would not make for her; no good thing I would not gladly give her.”

Such is the grace of God towards us, His children. It does not depend upon our faithfulness to Him or our appreciation of His love to us. He loves us with an unspeakable love and keeps lavishing upon us “the riches of His grace” simply because we are *His children* in Christ, the Beloved.

And strangely, is it not precisely this fact that proves to be our greatest incentive to give ourselves to Him in loving service and sacrifice! 

Pastor Joel Finck is well known across the country as a church planter, but some may not be aware, especially if you're a newcomer, that he is also the Executive Director of the newly formed *Parsons Publishing Company*. Joel has authored a number of books, the latest entitled, *Advanced Questions About the Grace Message*, from which the following excerpt was taken. —Ed.

“Are the Twelve Apostles in the Body of Christ?”

By Joel W. Finck

In this article, we will ask the question, “Are the twelve apostles in the body of Christ?” It is important here for the reader to understand that this question is not whether the twelve apostles were saved or lost. Rather, the question pertains to whether the twelve apostles were transferred into the body of Christ when the new dispensation was revealed to Paul, or whether they remained a part of Israel’s kingdom program. A third alternative is that they obtained sort of a “dual hope,” receiving the benefits and blessings of both the kingdom program and the dispensation of grace.



To some, the question itself may seem irrelevant or even ridiculous, much like the proverbial debates of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. But before examining the evidence of Scripture on the subject, let us first show the importance of the issue. It certainly would not matter to us whether God chose to place the twelve apostles into the body or not. God can do as He pleases, and it would not affect the wonderful blessings of grace which we enjoy as members of the body of Christ. However, seeing the twelve apostles (and all kingdom saints living at the time) as part of the body of Christ raises HUGE questions with regard to their teachings and writings. For example, if Peter was added to the body of Christ after the dispensation of grace was revealed to Paul, are we to take Peter’s epistles as instructions to the body of Christ? Are we to understand that Peter is telling the body of Christ that we are “a royal priesthood, (and) an holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9a)? If so, what “nation” are we? And how does Peter’s statement that “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21a) square with Paul’s affirmation that Christ sent him “not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 1:17a)? And with regard to the return of Christ, Peter has his readers “Looking for and hastening unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be

dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:12), whereas Paul tells us to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

The two positions regarding this question are known as the “twelve-in” and the “twelve-out” positions. In answering the question of whether the twelve apostles were added to the body of Christ we will present Scriptural evidence that they were not, and we will answer objections to the “twelve-out” position.

Perhaps the most striking distinction between God’s plan and purpose for Israel and His plan and purpose for the church, the body of Christ, is the positions they occupy (and will occupy for all eternity). It has often been said that Israel’s was an “earthly” hope. By this, we do not mean that their hope and destiny is unspiritual in any way. When Christ establishes His kingdom, it will be a very spiritual kingdom, but it will take place upon the **earth**. Zechariah prophesies that some day “the LORD shall go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...” (Zechariah 14:3,4a). Then he goes on to say, “And the LORD shall be king over all the **earth**: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9). And who is the “LORD” who will do this? It is none other than Jesus Christ Himself! He speaks of this in Matthew 25:31, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” And to the twelve apostles He promises, “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). All of this is in accordance with God’s great kingdom promises to Israel that “the meek shall inherit the **earth**” (Psalm 37:11a; cf. Matthew 5:5) and “the righteous shall inherit the **land** and dwell therein **forever**” (Psalm 37:29).



But to “the church which is his body” (see Ephesians 1:22,23), Paul writes, “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in **heavenly** places in Christ” (Ephesians 2:6). And to the Philippian believers, “For our conversation (lit. ‘citizenship’) is in **heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). And, of course,

some day “the Lord shall descend from **heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be

caught up together with them **in the clouds**, to meet the Lord **in the air**: and **so shall we ever be** with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). Paul refers to all of this as our “blessed hope” (see Titus 2:13).

With all of this in mind, our question ought to be, how could the twelve apostles possibly be members of the body of Christ when they were promised to live on the earth forever, yet the “body” is promised to live in heaven?

Another reason to view the twelve apostles as separate from the “body” church is the distinctive nature of their apostleship. Paul emphasizes this distinction in Galatians 2:8, “For he that wrought effectually in **Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision**, the same was mighty in me **toward the Gentiles**.” On this basis, an agreement was reached, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Galatians 2:9). If they were all members of the body of Christ, in which “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek” (Romans 9:12a), then why did the apostles maintain this distinction? The answer is that, while the “new creation,” the body of Christ was already under way with the ministry of Paul, the many “circumcision” believers still remained to whom God had promised an earthly, kingdom hope. God did not go back on His word to them, therefore Peter, James, and John agreed to continue their ministries with them.

Going right along with this, Paul actually names the two groups of saints which existed during this time of transition from kingdom to grace in Galatians 6:15,16, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creature** (or, ‘creation’).” This “new creation” in which circumcision and uncircumcision no longer avail is none other than the body of Christ, also known as the “one new man” made up of Jew and Gentile who have been reconciled into “one body” (see Ephesians 2:15,16). Then Paul pronounces a blessing on them, “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them” (Galatians 6:16a). But so as not to leave out that other group of saints which still existed at that time, Paul adds, “and upon **the Israel of God**” (Galatians 6:16b). Who is the “Israel of God?” None other than “the circumcision” to whom Peter, James, and John agreed to confine their ministries (Galatians 2:9).

It is sometimes asked by “twelve-in” proponents whether those who were under the dispensation of promise came under the law when it was given, and if so then why not transfer those under the kingdom program into the body of Christ. The answer to the first question is, obviously, yes. The people from the dispensation of promise were placed under the law. But this is because the law was “added”

to the promise, therefore it is not an entirely new program, but merely an adjustment to an already functioning plan. Paul explains this in Galatians 3:17, “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” The dispensation of grace, on the other hand, was an entirely new program, not just a modification or further revelation of a previous program. Therefore we would not expect people from the previous dispensation, who were already promised a certain set of promises and a future hope, to be transferred to an entirely different set of promises and a different hope.

“...are we to take Peter’s epistles as instructions to the body of Christ?”

Now, to put our “twelve-out” position to the test, we shall consider some of the “twelve-in” arguments and objections and examine them in the light of Scripture.

1. 1 Corinthians 1:2 says, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Then 1 Corinthians 12:13 states, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” It would appear that Paul is considering “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ” to be members of the “one body.”


This sounds quite convincing at first glance except for an important fact: while Paul refers to “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ” in 1 Corinthians 1:2, he is not addressing them when he states that “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Note carefully that in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul simply states that the Corinthian believers are “called saints” right along with “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ” (the words, “to be” are italicized and therefore not in the original text between the words “called” and “saints”). Paul’s whole point is that the Corinthian believers are just as much “saints” as believers anywhere, regardless of which program they belong to. It is interesting that Paul ends the verse, “both **theirs** and **ours**,” which supports the idea that there is some sort of distinction between “body” saints and “kingdom” saints....

6. Paul’s kinsmen, Andronicus and Junia were “in Christ” before him (Romans 16:7). Therefore, they must be included in the “body” spoken of in Romans 12:5.

Two things must be remembered in response to this point. First, being “in Christ” is not necessarily the same as being “in the body of Christ.” While it is true that the phrase, “in Christ” is almost exclusive to Paul, Peter does use it as well (1 Peter 3:16), and it is often used in a redemptive sense rather than the dispensational sense of being in the body of Christ. Secondly, Paul is not saying in Romans 12:5 that every believer living at that time was a member of the body of Christ. Back in Romans chapter two, Paul addresses the Jew (Romans 2:17) and speaks at length what it meant for a Jew to be considered righteous: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is a* Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28,29). It is true that Paul is referring to the circumcision of the heart, but the individual in question is still a **Jew**, a distinction which is done away in the body of Christ. Yet, as Paul wrote this, there was still a group of believers who were truly Jews in that they were not only from a Jewish heritage, but they had also received spiritual circumcision of the heart by faith in their Messiah. Andronicus and Junia were a part of this group....

10. There were doubtless many local churches which included people who became believers before the new dispensation began and those who were saved afterward. If they belonged to separate groups and had different hopes (the rapture for body saints versus the second coming for kingdom saints) there would be constant confusion in teaching and preaching.

Actually, Paul recognized this situation and tried to avoid it as much as possible. This is why he wrote, “Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation**” (Romans 15:20).

The whole “twelve-in, twelve-out” discussion seems to be one of dispensational consistency, and to hold a “twelve-in” position begs one final question: If it was God’s plan to transfer the twelve apostles into the body of Christ when Israel rejected the kingdom offer, and then use them to teach, instruct, and write to the body of Christ in their epistles, **WHY DID GOD RAISE UP THE APOSTLE PAUL?** 

For the rest of the story, you can purchase this new release directly from *Parsons Publishing Company* at: 30448 427th Ave., Tabor, South Dakota 57063 for \$9.00 (includes shipping & handling) or visit their website at: www.parsonspublishingcompany.com.



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*Our lives are but fine weavings
That God and we prepare,
Each life becomes a fabric planned
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*We may not always see just how
The weavings intertwine,
But we must trust the Master's hand
And follow His design,*

*For He can view the pattern
Upon the upper side,
While we must look from underneath
And trust in Him to guide...*

*Sometimes a strand of sorrow
Is added to His plan,
And though it's difficult for us,
We still must understand*

*That it's He who fills the shuttle,
It's He who knows what's best,
So we must weave in patience
And leave to Him the rest...*

*Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why—*

*The dark threads are as needed
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.*

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory...of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7).

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Hosted By:

Grace Bible Church, Evansville, Indiana

Location: *Marriott Hotel*
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Pastor Paul Sadler, *Berean Bible Society, Milwaukee, WI*

Pastor Dick Ware, *Grace Bible Church, Oshkosh, WI*

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upon the ministry of the Word of God
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"Almost two years ago a dear friend my husband works with gave me a copy of your *Berean Searchlight* magazine. At the time it had an article in it that helped me through a rough time. I was so comforted by it that I read the rest of it cover to cover."

From Florida:

"We are a strong Christian family growing and learning more about the Lord Jesus every day....A copy of the *Berean Searchlight* (February 2003) was given to us and we loved it. We learned so much about not beating ourselves up when we sin, but taking the love of God and His grace and going forward and not repeating that sin. The love and grace of God is truly amazing. However, we know that compromising with the world is Satan's way in. If you could, please put us on your mailing list for the *Berean Searchlight* and send us a list of Berean churches in Florida."

From the Philippines:

"I was saddened but at the same time glad that Pastor Stam is now with the Lord, which is FAR BETTER. There he is beyond the reach of his critics and the power and presence of sin....Many criticize him that he was not a soul winner, and I really don't know; the testimony of his close friends can testify to that was my reply. All I know is that I became more aware of the urgency of winning souls with the right Biblical and dispensational motive, message, and method through his ministry. I thank him for that." (We beg to differ with Pastor Stam's critics that he wasn't a soul winner. While he was called to be a pastor and author, we know firsthand that he won many to Christ. In fact, he frequently spoke at large evangelistic tent meetings in the early days of his ministry. Ed.)

From Illinois:

"I want to thank you for your ministry, publications, and for the *Searchlight*. It has been an invaluable tool for my personal growth as a believer, and for my ability to share the grace of God, rightly divided."

From Washington:

"I wish that twenty years ago I had read about the dispensations and understood them. It makes a lot of sense to me....I have shared some of the knowledge of the dispensations with other people, and it is having a good impact on their lives."

From Illinois:

"Thank you for your teaching on the Wednesday Crucifixion. As a former Catholic, saved now by the grace of God, I was taught if I did not attend the Mass on December 25th, I would commit a mortal sin and go to hell. As I study the Scriptures, I have come to realize the Mass contradicts the Scriptures." (Sadly, one of the ways Satan blinds men to the light of the glorious gospel is through religion. Ed.)

From the Internet:

"I want to thank you [Pastor Kizonas] for your article in the *Berean Searchlight* on *When Did the Gift of Tongues Cease?* I have studied this subject before, but never in the way that you brought it across. By putting the writings of Paul in order helped it make perfect sense. Thanks!"

From Colorado:

"Several years ago I introduced some friends to BBS's position on 'rightly dividing' and it has really taken hold of them. In fact, they distribute *Things That Differ* to others, as well as other literature. They especially like to challenge pastors with this book."

From the Internet:

"I appreciate your warm welcome to 'the fellowship of the mystery.' I have to admit that I have a far less than perfect understanding of it at this point, but our gracious Lord is surely bringing me to a fuller knowledge of it. What a marvelous body of truth! It opens up so much of the Word of God to me that it is surely among the richest blessings of God upon my life up to this point in my Christian experience. Pastor Stam, Lord bless his memory and his contribution to the saints, Pastor Sadler and others have been such rich and unselfish teachers! Thanks be to God for them."

From Cameroon:

"Thank God for His grace and mercy towards us here in Cameroon. The *Grace Gospel Church* in Cameroon is growing and spreading the good news of the Word rightly divided in the towns and villages."

From Florida:

"It was in the early 60's that we first heard Pastor Stam on the radio in St. Pete, Florida. Dad said to me (I was only 12 at the time): 'This guy makes the Bible crystal clear. I never heard anything like this.' He used to set his alarm clock to be sure to tune into the radio program, *Bible Time*. We were new babes in Christ at that time." (The mark of a good Bible teacher is not how complex he can make a subject or how intellectual sounding, but how simplistic. Ed.)

From Kentucky:

"Hi! I receive the *Berean Searchlight* for my store to pass out and I wanted to let you all know that we have moved and have a new address. Thanks so much!!"

From Alabama:

"I was reading your article in the February issue of the *Searchlight* and enjoying the same. I would like to be added to your mailing list to receive this fantastic publication. Is it possible to get issues of December and January to get the complete message on *The Judgment Seat of Christ* by Pastor Sadler?"

From Florida:

"I am requesting permission to put Pastor Sadler's article, *The Lord's Prayer Dispensationally Considered*, from the February *Searchlight* on the *Naples Bible Church* web page. I would, of course, give all credits. I very much appreciated the article and would like to share it." (Permission gladly granted! Thanks for asking! Ed.)

From Ohio:

"Thank you again and again for your faithfulness. All the articles are a blessing. Thanks, too, for sharing with us the 'Betty and John Stam' story. My, what love and faithfulness they had for our Lord and each other."

From Pennsylvania:

"I have been getting the *Searchlight* for around 20 years and it has been uplifting for me in my study of God's Word."

From Washington:

"I first learned of the *Berean Bible Society* through Pastor Win Johnson of *Grace Gospel Publishers*. Through the years, by the grace of God, we have come to see much more clearly the truth of the gospel of grace and the knowledge of the Mystery. I am very thankful for the great help and guidance I have received through your ministry."

"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 BBI BYLINE

BBI's Current Student Body

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

We have started the 2003-2004 school year in our new building with 29 students enrolled. More than half of them moved to Wisconsin to attend **BBI**. Three are from Pennsylvania, one from Illinois, two from Michigan, two from Colorado, four from Indiana, one from South Dakota, one from Oklahoma, and two from Brazil. The student body is made up of nineteen men and ten women. Out of the ten men who are married, five of their wives are taking classes along with their husbands. With their ages ranging from eighteen to forty-nine, the average age of our students this semester is twenty-seven. Eleven are attending full-time.

Most of our men students are looking toward pastoral or missionary work after completing their studies. Virtually all of our students have expressed a desire to learn God's Word rightly divided for personal edification and to be equipped to defend the

faith and share God's grace with others.

I hope that this brief profile of **Berean Bible Institute's** current student body will give you some idea about the character of the school. It is not easy to be in a Bible Institute, so please keep our students in prayer as they face the challenges that lay ahead of them.

While our remodeling project on our new building has gone slower than we had hoped, we are far enough along that we are able to hold classes here this semester. For this we praise the Lord. We also give thanks to Him for the many that have volunteered their time and resources to help get the job done. We deeply appreciate each and every one who had a part in making our move into the new building in time for school to start possible.

BBI has gotten off to a good start and we are looking forward to a dynamic first year at our new location.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE: With BBI now settled in their new facility all correspondence, donations, and address changes should be sent directly to the school. The address is: *Berean Bible Institute*, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Drive, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, Wisconsin 53086. The phone number at BBI is: (262) 644-5504/fax: (262) 644-5507. You can also visit their website at: www.bereanbibleinstitute.org. The office hours of the Institute are: Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time.

HOMEGOING: Our dear brother Dee Purdy was promoted to glory on June 17, 2003 after a long battle with cancer. He and his wife, Pam, were a great encouragement to your Editor during the years that I served as the pastor of *Falls Bible Church*. In addition to being a staunch defender of the Grace Message, Dee, was one of the founding fathers of the *Kettle Moraine Bible Church* in West Bend, Wisconsin. One thing that set Brother Dee apart was his longing desire to speak the truth in love. It is our prayer, Pam, that God will comfort you with the full assurance of our blessed hope in Christ Jesus.

MEMOIRS: Pastor Stam's *Memoirs* are expected from the printer any day now. This is a memorable work by Brother Stam that places a fitting capstone on his life-long ministry. We were able to put together an impressive collection of never before seen photographs, which really accents the volume. Lord willing, we hope to have all orders filled and a copy in your hand by the first week of November.

VOLUNTEERS: Like the Marines, we are looking for a few good men and women to volunteer their services. If you live in southeastern Wisconsin and would like to give us a helping hand with mailings, please contact Bunny Miller here at BBS. Normally our volunteers assist us three or four times a year. We should add that it's a great time of fellowship with those of like-precious faith as well.

A SPECIAL WORD OF THANKS: Throughout the year we receive numerous letters and e-mails thanking us for faithfully making known the riches of God's grace. While it is impossible to acknowledge every letter, we do want you to know that your thoughtfulness is a great encouragement to all of us here at the *Berean Bible Society*.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Heidi McLaughlin of Cheektowaga, New York. The *Buffalo Main Lighthouse* is located in Buffalo, New York. It sits at the mouth of the Buffalo River and Lake Erie. Built in 1833, the *Buffalo Main Light* is one of the oldest lighthouses on the Great Lakes.

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