

# The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2007



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

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

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# From the Editor to You:

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Dearly Beloved,

By the time you receive this issue of the *Searchlight* we will be well into the fall semester at the *Berean Bible Institute*. We have eight new students this semester who were all eager to join the student body and begin classes. With these new additions it was difficult to find a seat in Chapel the other evening, which was cause for rejoicing!

Since the inception of BBI I've had the privilege of teaching *Dispensational Survey*, and *Acts Dispensationally Considered*. This year I am presently teaching *Dispensational Survey* which is an overview of the entire Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, in light of the Pauline revelation. I've often commented that every Grace believer should take this particular class, not because I am teaching it, but because of the *content* of the lectures.

As we move through the ages and dispensations I point out how each dispensation follows the same pattern—God's revelation of His will, man's responsibility to obey the known will of God, man's failure, and God's judgment. Of course, when we arrive at the dispensation of Grace, I ask if the Church is faithfully obeying the known will of God to proclaim the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

Before you can walk worthy of your calling you must understand God's marching orders for the Church today.

Most of our new students this year were raised in Christian homes and grew up with the Grace message. The first evening of classes I always ask the students to introduce themselves to the other members of the class and share with us a little about themselves. I was pleasantly surprised when each of the students shared how they had been taught the Grace message by their parents or at their local assembly, but they wanted to more fully understand why they believe what they believe. Wow! With this type of attitude this semester is going to be a breeze.

If the Lord has prospered you beyond your normal giving, please don't forget the *Berean Bible Institute*. BBI like BBS is a faith-based ministry; therefore its existence is dependent upon those who faithfully and sacrificially support the effort to train men and women for full-time Christian service. And, please, pray *daily* for the faculty and student body that God will be glorified in this training program.

Yours in His service,  
Paul M. Sadler, President





# You Can Help the World's Children Grow Up in Grace

By Steve Shober, *GUIG Director*

It is thrilling to know that the *Growing Up In Grace* (GUIG) lessons are being taught to children all around the world. It really touches our hearts to see the faces of those who will be using these lessons, and in the process come to a deeper love for the Lord and His Word.



*Sovereign Grace Church*  
Tagbilaran City, Philippines

We have had international inquiries from Bolivia, Australia, Kenya, Philippines, India, and Canada—and they continue to arrive. This is very encouraging and an opportunity to serve our Lord in a developing missionary effort. The problem we face is the astronomical costs to send the Sunday School binders overseas. These high shipping costs make it very difficult for these needy saints to get the lessons.

To date, it has been sponsors in the States that have paid for the overseas shipments as a gift from people here, as is the case with the church pictured above. We are so thankful for those who have sent Sunday School lessons as gifts to those both in the USA and overseas.

This is an emerging missionary effort in which you can take a part. Please pray about contributing to GUIG so that more believers have access to these lessons. You may contribute to GUIG in general, or specifically sponsor a particular person, church or missionary of your choice. This is a way you can make sure that needy children throughout the world are exposed to the Gospel of the Grace of God. Those who love the Grace message and sponsor this ministry will have an incredible impact on the lives of those who receive it—the face of a child desperate for assistance speaks to us all.

If you'd like to help with this effort, write to: *Growing Up In Grace*, c/o Berean Bible Society, PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022, or call: (262) 255-4750.

[www.growingupinGrace.com](http://www.growingupinGrace.com)

# PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 3:1-9

By Paul M. Sadler

A Chinese Confucian scholar, who had converted to Christ, used the following illustration to demonstrate the *uniqueness* of Christianity: "A man fell into a dark, dirty, slimy pit, and he tried to climb out of the pit and he couldn't. Confucius came along. He saw the man in the pit and said, 'Poor fellow, if he'd listened to me, he never would have got there,' and he went on.

"Buddha came along. He saw the man in the pit and said, 'Poor fellow, if he'll come up here, I'll help him,' and he too went on.

"Then Jesus Christ came. He saw the man and said, 'Poor fellow!' and jumped into the pit and lifted him out."

In the narrative before us, Paul is going to share with the Philippians how there was a time in his life when he was trapped in the pit of religion. But when he met Christ on the road to Damascus, love rescued him from the bondage in which he found himself. Human

religion is summed up pretty well in the cartoon of a Pharisee who is depicted witnessing to a man searching for the truth: "Have you heard of the 4,973 spiritual laws?" We are well served to remember that "without faith it is impossible to please Him."

## A COMMAND OF CHRIST

**"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."**

—Phil. 3:1

As we turn our attention to chapter three, Paul begins with the term "finally." In the original language this particular word doesn't have the idea of a concluding thought, but rather a *continuation* "as to what remains to be said." Today, we would probably say "furthermore." Furthermore, "my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." The apostle isn't simply using this phrase as an empty cliché, as is often the case in Christian circles

today. Instead, he is *commanding* the saints at Philippi, and us, to rejoice in the Lord. We're often reminded when we find ourselves in one of life's tsunamis that we are able to rejoice in the Lord in spite of the circumstances. While this is true, Paul actually has something far more profound in mind when he uses this phrase.

Notice Paul states: "rejoice *in the Lord.*" That is, rejoice in the great things He has done for you! You see, we are to *rejoice* that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. We are the sinners for whom Christ died. *Rejoice*, for in Him we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, through His precious blood. *Rejoice* that He saved us by His grace, and sealed us with His Spirit. *Rejoice* because the day is soon coming when He will receive all the glory, honor, praise and adoration that are rightfully due Him. In that day, He will be glorified in us (Eph. 5:25-27). This is why the apostle places so much emphasis on this theme throughout the epistle. Christ is the source of our joy!

“...Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship with Christ.”

Having served in a local assembly as a pastor I have no problem whatsoever relating to Paul's next statement. "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." We

learn by *repetition*; therefore Paul didn't find it irksome to remind the Philippians again and again to rejoice in the Lord. In fact, it was for their spiritual well-being that he did so.

I had an interesting experience years ago when I was conducting a home Bible Study. We were studying the Book of Ephesians at the time, and I had spent quite a bit of time in chapter 3, explaining at length verses 10 and 11. One of the saints who faithfully attended the study every week also attended the local Grace Church where I ministered the Word. Months after we had completed our study in Ephesians, I was preaching on Christ's heavenly ministry in the morning worship service and made a passing comment on Ephesians 3:10,11. After the service, the saint who faithfully attended our weekly Bible Study stopped to say, "Pastor, I really enjoyed what you said about Ephesians 3 this morning. That's the first time I ever heard it presented that way." Actually, she had heard it before, but this was the first time it registered.

This particular experience taught me the importance of repetition. Every believer in Christ is at different levels in their understanding of the Scriptures. What may not be understood today will often come to light the longer we sit under the ministry of the Word. With this in mind, we also need to have patient perseverance when we share Christ with the unsaved. It is said we hear the gospel seven times before responding to its message. Remember, "faith cometh by

hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

### **BEWARE, BEWARE, BEWARE**

**“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Phil. 3:2).**

When Paul traveled from city to city preaching Christ, Satan’s emissaries followed close behind attempting to discredit his apostleship and undermine the grace of God through their legalistic practices. Consequently, Paul warns these brethren to beware of dogs. In time past, the people of God called the Gentiles dogs; it was a derogatory term, which showed the *disfavor* of God.

Paul turns the table on some of his countrymen calling *them* dogs, namely the Judaizers (See Isa. 56:10,11). Apparently the Judaizers, who had overthrown the faith of some at Galatia, had recently made their way as far west as Philippi. Before these workers of evil could wreak havoc on this assembly, Paul warns these brethren three times to *beware*, hoping to get them to see the danger of legalism. He calls these evil workers, who would rob the Philippians of their liberty in Christ, “the concision,” or “those who mutilate the flesh,” a clear reference to the rite of circumcision.

Essentially, there were two errors these troublemakers were seeking to impose on the Gentiles. First, that faith in Christ wasn’t sufficient. According to them, the Gentiles must return to the law and be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1). Second, that

by keeping the law they would become more spiritually minded. Satan’s tactics haven’t changed much. Today he has strategically replaced the rite of circumcision with the rite of water baptism. Baptism is the legalism of our day. If you don’t think so, simply watch the reaction of other believers when you tell them you don’t believe baptism is to be practiced today. You will find yourself immediately ostracized as not being very spiritual—or worse!

**“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3).**

Paul is very clear in his epistles that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Therefore, when the apostle declares “we are the circumcision” he is speaking about *spiritual* circumcision. As we know, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant was physical circumcision, which was the *cutting away* of the foreskin on the 8th day after birth. It made the little one a child of the covenant. This rite found its fulfillment in Christ’s finished work at Calvary. The apostle of our spiritual blessings in Christ says these words:

**“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2:11).**

Notice every member of the Church, the Body of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, has been spiritually circumcised “with

the circumcision made without hands.” In other words, it was the operation of God, **not** the instrumentality of parents. At Calvary the sins of the flesh were *cut off* when Christ was cut off from the land of the living. Christ died for our sins! The point Paul is making to the church at Philippi, and to us as well, is this: which is better, physical circumcision that *looked* to the Cross or the *reality* that our sins have been removed? Obviously the latter! But let’s not stop here, Paul adds in Colossians:

**“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12).**

This is another wonderful spiritual truth we enjoy in Christ. As only God could see, we were crucified with Christ—His death was our death! We were also buried with Him in baptism, which means our old man is both dead and buried. Our sins that were cut off at the Cross are *buried* in the tomb forevermore. And when Christ came forth from the grave our new man was raised to newness of life. This is our spiritual baptism with Christ wherein we have been completely identified with His death, burial, and resurrection. This is commonly known as the “one baptism” (I Cor. 12:13 cf. Eph. 4:5). Even most of our Baptist brethren agree that this is the baptism that saves!

Now which is better, the physical rite of water baptism that *symbolized* the washing away of sins or the *reality* of our spiritual baptism with Christ? Once again,



the latter! I don’t know about you, but I will take the reality of actually eating an ice cream sundae over the picture of one in a magazine any day.<sup>1</sup> Most will agree that water baptism is an *ordinance*. If this is true, then it is no longer to be practiced simply because God clearly states that His beloved Son blotted “out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross” (Col. 2:14). Either Christ’s finished work is sufficient or it isn’t! Beloved, may our faith rest in Him and not in rites and ordinances imposed by men.

As members of Christ’s Body we “worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3b). In time past, those Israelites who lived near Jerusalem worshipped at the temple (Acts 3:1). For example, after a newborn was circumcised he was taken to the temple by his parents who presented him to the Lord and offered the proper sacrifices according to the law (Luke 2:22-24).

We *no longer* worship God through rites and ceremonies as they did in the Old Testament. Today we worship God in the



Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus in regard to what He has accomplished on our behalf. While we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together in public worship, Paul would have us understand that we have a *personal relationship* with Christ. You see, we are to commune with Him on a daily basis. It has been correctly said that we have a spiritual relationship with Christ, rather than a ceremonial one; consequently, God is more interested in the condition of our heart.

With this in mind, we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice in service to Him. We are not to be conformed to this world's system, but transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that we might glorify Him in all that we do and say (Rom. 12:1,2). Interestingly, Paul adds "speaking to yourselves" in Ephesians: "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:19,20). Because we have a relationship with Christ we can worship God at any time, in any place, without others even being present.

### **RELIGIOUS FERVOR**

**"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" (Phil. 3:4).**

Here the apostle offers a challenge to all those who are trusting in religion to make themselves

right with God. Paul momentarily returns to his former manner of life before he was saved to drive a stake through the heart of religion. Paul's challenge is this: Lay your religious credentials alongside mine and we will see whose is more impressive.

He begins, If you think you have "confidence in the flesh, I more." Paul reminds us in Galatians that he had "profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14). The Jews religion wasn't just any religion; it was *Judaism*, the only divinely ordained religion that God ever sanctioned. It is very important to remember that Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship with Christ. Christianity is a *way of life!* Paul pulls the noose a little tighter:

**"Circumcised the eighth day"** (vs. 5a). Not the seventh day or the ninth day, but the eighth day according to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. Paul was a child of the covenant. Although circumcision in and of itself did not save, it gave those who were an opportunity to be saved. A contemporary example would be the Christian home. Who has the greater opportunity to be saved, a child raised in a Christian home, or a child raised in the home of unsaved parents? Although there is no guarantee that the child in the home of the saved parents will be saved, he does have the better opportunity.

**"Of the stock of Israel"** (vs. 5a). Paul could boast that he

wasn't from just any nation; he was from *the* chosen nation of Israel. Israel held a position of preeminence in time past over all the other nations of the world. She was the head and they were the tail. Jehovah channeled His blessing through Israel to whom was given the oracles of God, the promises, the covenants, the adoption, etc.

**“Of the tribe of Benjamin”**

(vs. 5a). He was careful to point out that he wasn't from one of the ten northern tribes of Israel, who departed from God and worshipped the idols of the Gentiles. Rather, he was from one of the more spiritual southern tribes. Even though they too eventually wandered into apostasy, God continued to channel His blessing through Benjamin and Judah during the captivities.

**“An Hebrew of the Hebrews”**

(vs. 5b). Apparently Paul's family was well connected socially, politically, religiously, and monetarily. They were the cream of the crop, as they say. Furthermore, we would do well to bear in mind that Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, an esteemed doctor of the law (Acts 22:3). He probably could have taken us back many generations on his family tree and boasted of those in his family who held prominent positions of authority. My father was a Hebrew, my grandfather was a Hebrew, and my great, great grandfather was a Hebrew of the Hebrews!

**“As touching the law, a Pharisee”** (vs. 5b). Before his conversion Paul held a position of leadership in Israel as a Pharisee.

He wasn't one of those liberal Sadducees who denied the existence of angels and the bodily resurrection from the dead. No indeed, he was a *conservative*. He was an ardent defender of both of these truths.

“Baptism is the legalism of our day.”

**“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church”** (vs. 6a). That is, the kingdom church. You see, during these years Paul believed that Christ was an impostor. He did not believe that Christ rose again from the grave as it was being reported. Consequently, he persecuted the kingdom church, thinking that he was doing God a favor. Our Lord, during His earthly ministry, predicted this very thing.

**“Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”** (vs. 6b). Paul isn't saying here that he never sinned—quite the contrary! He is rather pointing out that when he did sin he brought the proper sacrifice to atone for his sins. As far as he was concerned he was blameless.

Paul's religious credentials were impressive to say the least. In fact, he leaves the competition past and present in the dust when it comes to the works of the flesh. But Paul learned something the day he met Christ on the road to Damascus that most religious pilgrims have sadly failed to see—without *faith* it impossible to please God. He was

going through all of the religious motions, but his heart wasn't right with the Lord. Listen to what he says in his own words:

**“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:7-9).**

All of those things that were once gain to him, profiting in the Jews religion, excelling above many of his equals, keeping the law—it was nothing but a pile of rubbish when he came to know Christ. It was an eye-opening experience the day he came to see it wasn't his righteousness in trying to keep the law, but the *righteousness of Christ*, which was imparted to him when he responded to the Savior in faith.

*To Be Continued!*



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## Endnote

1. ©iStockphoto.com/Jan Tyler.



# Grace Singles Conference

**Dates:** December 28-31, 2007

**Location:** *Camp Idrahaje*  
Connifer, Colorado

**Speakers:**

John Fredericksen, Justin Lynn  
Andy Kern, Kevin Dickey

**Theme:** *Life, Love, and Other Mysteries*

*The conference is for post-high school singles.* For additional information, please contact: Pastor Justin Lynn at (303) 663-1026, or at [Pastorjustin@Q.com](mailto:Pastorjustin@Q.com).

[www.GraceSinglesPlace.com](http://www.GraceSinglesPlace.com)





# Rapid City Fall Bible Conference

**Dates:** November 2-4, 2007

**Location:** *Grace Bible Church*  
23769 Pine Haven Drive  
Rockerville, South Dakota

**Speaker:** Keith Baxter

**Theme:** "Living God's Grace"

For more information, please contact:  
Pastor John Fredericksen (605) 341-9692

*May God richly bless these  
meetings to the praise of His glory!*

## Midwest Grace Fellowship FALL BIBLE CONFERENCE

**Dates:** November 9-11, 2007

**Location:** *Grace Memorial Church*  
108 E. Douglas Street  
Edinburg, Illinois

**Guest Speakers:**

Tim Stonecipher and Robert Nix

**Theme:** *Church Truth*

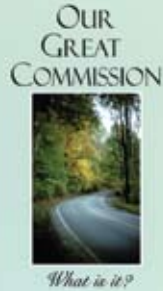
For additional information, please contact: Pastor Ken Lawson (217) 498-6958 or Alvin Boggs (217) 625-7259 or Alan Stender (217) 623-4232.

*All are welcome!  
And why not bring a friend?*



# Getting Things Straight

By C. R. Stam



## THE AMAZING ENERGY WITH WHICH PAUL PROCLAIMED GRACE

To the Romans the apostle writes of his commission from the ascended Lord:

**“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among *all nations*, for His name” (Rom. 1:5).**

In his Epistle to the Ephesians he writes:

**“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;**

**“And to make all men see what is the fellowship [or, dispensation] of the mystery...” (Eph. 3:8,9).**

But while it is generally acknowledged that he was *commissioned* to proclaim grace to all nations, there are few who have quite realized the amazing energy with which the apostle proclaimed this message in the face of the most relentless persecution, or the wide extent of his ministry and influence.

In Pisidian Antioch “*almost the whole city*” came together to hear the Word of God, but the unbelieving Jews, filled with envy, contradicted and blasphemed, and it was necessary for Paul and Barnabas to turn from them to the Gentiles.

**“And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.**

**“But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts” (Acts 13:49,50).**

In Iconium, where he next preached the gospel, “*the multitude of the city was divided,*”

**“And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,**

**“They were ware of it, and fled to Lystra and Derbe....**

**“And there they preached the gospel” (Acts 14:5-7).**



Pisidian Antioch

At Lystra the people first tried to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas as gods, but this attitude changed abruptly when

**“...there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew [dragged] him out of the city supposing he had been dead” (Acts 14:19).**

And then, after preaching the gospel in Derbe, and teaching many, they went right back to the cities where they had risked their lives and had suffered such persecution.

**“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith...” (Acts 14:22).**

Returning to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had been sent forth, they found certain men from Judaea seeking to bring the Gentile believers under the law of Moses, and *“Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them” (Acts 15:2).*



Philippi

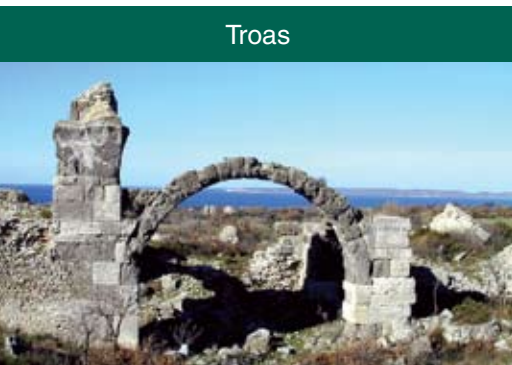
As a result of this Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to settle the matter with the leaders of the Messianic Church there. On this occasion, as we have seen, Paul took Titus, a Greek, with him as a test case and was later able to write to the Galatians: *“Titus...was not compelled to be circumcised either.”* And concerning those who would have had it so, he said:

**“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:5).**

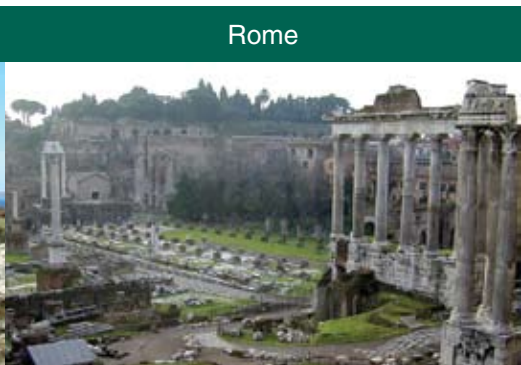
Think of the energy required for all this!

Next we find the apostle going forth with Silas and again it is peril, persecution and toil wherever he goes.

At Philippi<sup>4</sup> he is beaten with many stripes and imprisoned. At Thessalonica *“the Jews which believed not...set all the city on an uproar” (Acts 17:5)* and things became so dangerous that *“the brethren immediately sent away*



Troas



Rome



Athens



Ephesus

*Paul and Silas by night unto Berea*” (Ver. 10). But the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica followed him to Berea and “*stirred up the people*” there, so that this time “*the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea,*” but actually “*brought him unto Athens*” (Acts 17:13-15).

At Athens he got “the cold shoulder” and “*departed from among them*” to Corinth, where he was able to remain for a year and six months, but not without tasting much opposition and persecution (I Cor. 2:3; Acts 18:9,10,12,13).

At Ephesus he went to the synagogue “*and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.*” Then, when “*divers were hardened, and believed not*” he “*separated the disciples*” from the unbelieving multitude and went with them to “the school of one Tyrannus,” where he “*disputed daily.*”

**“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia<sup>5</sup> heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:8-10).**

Indeed, before Paul left Ephesus so much had been accomplished that a spontaneous public bonfire was held, at which the occult leaders who had been won to Christ burned their pagan books,

amounting in value to 50,000 pieces of silver. “*So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed*” (Acts 19:20). But this was followed by the great uproar at which Demetrius and the craftsmen who made silver shrines for Diana stirred up the unbelieving masses to such a pitch that for two hours they cried, “*Great is Diana of the Ephesians*” (Ver. 34).

**“And when Paul would have entered into unto the people, the disciples suffered him not” (Ver. 30).**

Concerning this ministry in Asia Minor the apostle writes to the Corinthians:

**“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia; that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life” (II Cor. 1:8).**

At Troas, on the first day of the week, Paul preached in an upper room “*until midnight*” (Acts 20:7), then “*talked a long while, even till the break of day*” (Ver. 11) and then departed again to continue his journey to Jerusalem. Think of it!

*“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called for the elders of the church”* and, exhorting them to stand fast, reminded them how he had served the Lord among them, “*...with many tears,*

and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and...taught you publicly and from house to house" (Vers. 17-20), adding:

**"Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Ver. 31).**

Finally, having been sent from Jerusalem to Rome in chains he was able to write to the Philippian believers:

**"...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;**

**"So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places" (Phil. 1:12,13).**

And again:

**"...The brethren which are with me greet you.**

**"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:21,22).**

So mightily was the apostle used, even while in bonds, that his imprisonment for Christ was a subject of discussion throughout and beyond wicked Nero's palace, and a company of believers had sprung up within the palace itself.

All the while the apostle continued, in the face of much opposition, to do his utmost to get the truth to those without, even to those whom he had never seen, writing letters to them which still thrill the hearts of millions today.

His words to the Colossian believers reflect the earnest effort that the apostle, even now, was putting into the ministry committed to him:

**"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.**

**"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (Col. 2:1,2).**

Thus, under Paul's ministry there did take place a world-wide proclamation of "the gospel of the grace of God," so that he could write to Titus about the *epiphany*, the shining forth, of God's grace to all mankind (Titus 2:11).

### **The Apostle Divinely Empowered**

But even recognizing Paul's organized efforts to send the gospel to "the regions beyond," how could one man have accomplished so much? What was the source of the amazing energy that took him from one uprising into another; that urged him on and on with his proclamation of the gospel of grace, though even lacking much-needed rest? How could he keep enduring stripes and imprisonments, stonings and shipwrecks, long journeys with perils of every sort? How could he go on bearing weariness, pain, watchings, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness? And all these he had already suffered by the time he wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians—in addition to "the care of all the churches" (II Cor. 11:23-28). Indeed, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians he writes:

**"Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and**



**are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place” (I Cor. 4:11).**

How could one man endure all this?

The answer to this question is given to us in the inspired writings of the apostle himself. It is simply that he was *divinely empowered*, as the following passages indicate:

**“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (I Cor. 15:10).**

**“For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:8).**

**“Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col. 1:29).**

**“At my first answer [before Nero] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.**

**“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (II Tim. 4:16,17).**

Thus it was that the apostle could write about *“the epiphany of grace,”* the shining forth of grace, *“to all mankind.”*

### **The Light Dimmed**

But alas how the light has since been dimmed! How lightly men have esteemed the infinite grace of God! Indeed, it was during the

apostle’s own ministry that he had to write to the Galatians:

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

For this Christendom has called the Galatian believers fickle, and commentators have quoted the statements of certain Roman rulers to prove that the Gauls were by nature changeable. We believe, however, that politicians and statesmen in any age, including our own, could be cited to prove that the public is fickle! Certainly the Apostle Paul would have to say with respect to the Church as a whole, historically: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”*

Galatians 1:6 is not only the word of Paul to the Galatians; it is also the Word of God to the Church as a whole, for how soon the Church departed from the great revelation of the glorified Christ through Paul! This declension *began*, as we say, during Paul’s own lifetime. One church after another was affected by it. We have seen how through his ministry “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus,” but it was not many years before the apostle had to write to Timothy:

**“This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me...” (II Tim. 1:15).**

From the writings of the early-century fathers which still exist, it is evident that rather than recognizing the distinctive character of Paul’s message, they had it all confused with the kingdom message proclaimed by John the

Baptist, Christ and the twelve, even to requiring water baptism for the remission of sins. And this declension went on apace until the Dark Ages, when Rome held sway and a mixture of Christianity, Judaism and heathen idolatry prevailed.

### **Our Responsibility to Relight the Torch**

Years later the Church *began* to emerge from the darkness and superstition of Romanism as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and others were raised up to recover Pauline truth. And, thank God, still greater advances were made under such men as Darby and Scofield, and later, J. C. O’Hair. But much, very much, still remains to be done. Those of us who are now laboring to carry out the commission of the glorified Lord *to us*, who desire to recover and make known the blessed message of grace and glory, will have to pray and toil and sacrifice as never before to make any impression upon the indifferent masses—including carnal Christians. Those Christian leaders who know the truth but maintain a discreet silence because they fear men or “love the praise of men,” yes, and those who fail to proclaim the *whole* truth for “diplomacy’s sake”—all these will have to cast aside their selfish interests if the grace of God is to shine forth with any degree of brightness again.


We know, of course, that the millennium will be brought in *by the return of Christ*, not by the efforts of men. But we have not been discussing the millennium. We have been discussing God’s revealed program for “this present

evil age,” the time of Christ’s rejection and absence, and it is God’s *command* that we make the message of His grace known to all men. The fact that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse” does not relieve us of this responsibility. However the darkness may deepen, we are to “*shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of life*” (Phil. 2:15,16).

As we have seen, God’s grace was once made to shine forth to all mankind in spite of the most bitter and Satanic opposition. Then the torch began to flicker until the world was plunged into the Dark Ages and scarcely a spark remained. Then, after centuries, it was lit again and began to burn somewhat more brightly. But still it must be made to blaze afar.

In these critical times shall we not make it *our one passion to know* God’s Word, rightly divided, and to *make it known* to others, until the grace of God shines forth again as a blazing torch? Shall we not, *must* we not, put aside *every* other consideration and say with Paul:

***“But as we [are] allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (I Thes. 2:4).***

Soon enough our Lord will appear in glory and our work will be done. *Now* He would have us “buy up the time” and use our God-given energies to make known His *grace* to all who will hear. 

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### **Endnotes**

4. Pictures from [www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com). Copyright ©2001 by Todd Bolen.
5. A province of Asia Minor.



# Discerning the Will of God

By Ricky Kurth

First of a series of four messages given this past summer at the 39th Annual Bible Conference of the Berean Bible Fellowship in Cedar Lake, Indiana

**D**iscerning the will of God is no doubt a subject of universal interest among Christians. What believer hasn't sought the will of God in making the big decisions in life: "Where should I live?" "Whom should I marry?" "Which job should I take?"

Then, wishing to please God in all things, we also seek to know His will in *everyday* areas of life: "Should I buy a Chrysler or a Ford?" "What doctor should I see?" "Which plumber should I hire?"

Then, besides seeking to *discern* the will of God, we also seek to *understand* the will of God in areas as sensitive as: "Why was I stricken with cancer?" "Why did the tornado hit my house, and not my neighbor's?" "Why did my child have to die?"

These latter questions can shake a child of God to the very foundation, and we dare not take them lightly. In this series of articles, we shall submit answers to these questions for your consideration, and hopefully provide comfort in understanding the will of God, and direction in seeking it.

Perhaps it is best to begin by ruling out some methods of discerning God's will that are common to God's people, but which we deem to be fallacious and even dangerous. One such method, perhaps found among immature believers, is illustrated in Ezekiel 21:

**"The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying,**

**"Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city.**

**“Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defended” (vv. 18-20).**

Ezekiel is being told to construct a visual aid, a model to illustrate God’s message to Israel. Every Sunday school teacher knows the value of visual aids in teaching children, and God treated the people of Israel as children. That’s why the phrase “the children of Israel” appears well over 600 times in Scripture, and explains why God often asked His prophets to *act out* their prophecies (Isa. 20:2-4; Acts 21:10,11).

Here in Ezekiel 21, the people of Jerusalem were wondering why King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon chose to attack Israel over more attractive cities, such as the Ammonite city of Rabbath. To answer this question, God instructed the prophet to construct a geographic model depicting the road leading out of Babylon. This model would show how the road came to a fork, at which point Nebuchadnezzar had to decide which way to go, and which city to attack.

This was an important decision for the king. The success of those who wish to conquer the world often hinges on the selection of whom they attack, and when. Many military tacticians agree that Hitler’s decision to invade Russia prematurely cost him the war. Thus here, Nebuchadnezzar knew it was time to consult with his gods.

**“For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver” (v. 21).**

The word “*divination*” here refers to the mysterious means the king employed to discern the will of his gods, much as a “divining rod” mysteriously indicates the presence of underground water. We can’t be sure, but we believe he took two of “his arrows,” marked one of them “Jerusalem,” and the other “Rabbath,” and placed them in his quiver. He then trusted that the one he blindly withdrew from the quiver over his shoulder would reveal the decision of his gods. He then consulted with his “*images*,” idols that kings brought along on military campaigns for this very purpose.

For final confirmation, “*he looked in the liver.*” We believe this means he sacrificed an animal, cut it open, and somehow the color or shape of the organ revealed the will of his gods. The thinking appears to have been that the gods would be so pleased with the sacrifice that they would happily show their devotee the path in which he should go.

Of course, in this particular case, the king’s pagan customs revealed to him the will of *Israel’s* God (v. 22). God honored these heathen divinations to ensure that Israel received the chastening she deserved on account of her rebellion against God.

Perhaps the reader is thinking, Surely no intelligent person *today* would seek guidance by such superstitious practices! But while perhaps no one in our “enlightened age” looks to arrows or livers, many

will flip a coin or read the color or shape of tea leaves. Also, we are told that certain voodoo religionists will cast chicken bones on the ground to discern the will of their god.

But surely no *Christian* would seek direction in life in manners such as this! While true, this writer can attest that when he was first saved, he continued to read his daily horoscope until learning from his pastor that this was an unwise practice. During that same early period in our Christian experience, a friend gave us a gift of a set of tarot cards. Though raised in a grace church, this young teen had also not yet learned the danger of these kinds of things.

And so we trust the reader will not consider our introduction to this subject unnecessary. Even grace believers are all at different levels of Christian maturity, and some may not yet be aware of the need to avoid psychics, Ouija boards, and astrologers (Isa. 47:13). While it is true God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to know His will using heathen customs, as we rightly divide the Word we know that these are *not* legitimate ways to discern God's will *today* in the dispensation of grace.

“...it would be inappropriate for *us* to seek God's will in this manner.”

While most Christians have probably matured enough to avoid these kinds of things, some perhaps are still seeking the will of God using the method described in Genesis 24. Here, Abraham sent his servant to the land of his birth to seek a bride for his son Isaac (vv. 1-13). Arriving in his master's homeland, the servant prayed,

**“And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac...” (v. 14).**

If we didn't know better, we'd be tempted to think that this might be a good way to choose a wife *today*. And why wouldn't we! It is, after all, a Biblical method, one that God honored in the very next verse:

**“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out...with her pitcher upon her shoulder” (v. 15).**

But the words *“before he had done speaking”* remind us of Isaiah 65:24, where God promises to answer prayer with the same swiftness. While God *sometimes* answers prayer this way *today*, this promise of *consistently* answering prayer in this fashion won't come to pass until the kingdom of heaven is established on earth, the kingdom that Isaiah describes in the very next verse. When we notice that this is also how God answered the prayer of Daniel (Dan. 9:20-23), we begin to understand that this means of seeking the will of God is associated with the people of Israel, and not with the Body of Christ.



And yet we wonder how many Christian girls may have prayed something like, “The boy that I ask to carry my books in school, and he says, ‘Let me carry your purse also’, let that be the boy for me!” These days, girls, he’s probably just after your purse! Thus while this method of determining God’s will is Biblical, we know that it is *not* a technique that we should apply in the dispensation of grace. It involved the people of Israel, and really there is no indication that God ever intended it to be a pattern even for Hebrew believers who were seeking His will.

As we move on in Scripture, we find Gideon in Judges 6 praying a prayer that was similar to that which Abraham’s servant prayed:

**“And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said,**

**“Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said.**

**“And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water” (vv. 36-38).**

This process has come to be called “putting out a fleece” by believers seeking the will of God today. A man might pray, “Lord, if you want me to take this job, let the interviewer be wearing a blue suit.” However, while such a prayer might be *called* “putting out a fleece,” it is actually more similar to the prayer of Abraham’s servant. After all, proposing a scenario of someone wearing a blue suit is just as possible as a maiden offering to water a camel. But what Gideon was asking for was a sign that literally defied the laws of nature, and few believers today ask for this sort of sign.

Now, there was nothing wrong with *Gideon* asking God for such a miraculous sign, “for the Jews *require* a sign” (I Cor. 1:22). Nor were the Jews wrong to require a sign, for God had taught them to *look* for such miraculous signs from their very beginning as a nation. In Exodus 4, God gave Moses the power to work *two* miraculous signs, in case Israel did not hearken to the voice of the first (vv. 1-8). This dependence on “two or three witnesses” was perhaps what prompted Gideon to boldly ask God for *yet another* miraculous sign:

**“And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray Thee, but this once**

with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

**“And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground” (Judges 6:39,40).**

Since God granted Gideon’s requests for miraculous signs, we know that it was perfectly appropriate for him to request them. But in the absence of nature-defying miracles in God’s program for today, it would be inappropriate for *us* to seek God’s will in this manner.

Besides, it should be pointed out that in reality, Gideon was not actually seeking the will of God. He already *knew* God’s will for him, as evidenced in his words,

**“...If Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said...then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said” (vv. 36,37).**

In setting out a fleece, Gideon was not seeking *direction* from the Lord, he was seeking *confirmation* of the direction he had already received by the Word of God. This would be similar to how a believer today might pray, “If You want me to be an ambassador for Christ, as Thou hast said, show me a miraculous sign!” While God *delighted* in giving Gideon such corroboration, He flatly refuses such requests today.

Still another common but erroneous way to determine the will of God is drawn from I Kings 19, where Elijah’s depression has driven him into a cave:

**“And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?”**

**“And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts... and they seek my life, to take it away.**

**“...And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:**

**“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice” (vv. 9-12).**

When seeking the will of God, often we are told to “just listen for that still small voice!” By this it is meant that God will speak to us in some intangible way. However, in these troubled times, if you hear a still small voice on the street, it will likely say, “Hand over your wallet!”

Despite the popularity of this practice, this event in Elijah’s life has nothing to do with finding the will of God! The prophet did not go to the cave to seek God’s will, he was hiding from those who sought his life. And the Lord’s words here were not spoken to give him direction, but rather to address his depression.

Elijah had just called fire down from heaven in a spectacular display of the power of God against the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18), and the

prophet thought that such a powerful demonstration would surely convince Israel's king and queen to turn to the Lord. When they instead sought to kill him (19:1-3), Elijah fled from their presence.

It was then the Lord gave him a visual aid, designed to teach him that God works best—not in astounding exhibitions of miraculous power—but in “a still small voice”—*Elijah's* still small voice, and the voice of the smallest among men willing to speak the mighty Word of God.

Is it not so that many believers today urgently need to learn this lesson as well! Many are convinced that if they could just perform a flashy miracle, men would surely believe what they say about the Lord! This despite God's testimony that *the gospel* is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16). Many are also convinced that God only works through the big, flashy ministries they see on TV. While we wouldn't venture to say that God is not in those ministries at all, we insist that God *is* in the small voices of believers everywhere who are faithfully proclaiming the Word of God.

We also insist that listening for an audible voice from God, or even an intangible impression or feeling, is no way to discern the will of God. That small voice that you hear in your head may be the voice of a conscience that is “*seared*” (I Tim. 4:2) so badly it is “*past feeling*” (Eph. 4:19), and hence cannot be relied upon to indicate God's will.

Moving on, if we are to cover this subject thoroughly, we must glance at Proverbs 16:33:

**“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”**

Under Israel's program, it was perfectly legitimate to discern the will of God by the casting of lots (I Sam. 14:38-42; Acts 1:26). But as we rightly divide the Word of truth, we understand that this is not a legitimate method to determine God's will today. The casting of lots was a common Bible practice, but our apostle Paul never employed it, and so we shouldn't either.

Finally, of all the faulty ways that believers use to discern the will of God, perhaps the most dangerous is a technique drawn from Paul's epistles:

**“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15).**

On the basis of this verse, a believer will say, “Well, I prayed about the matter, and God gave me such a feeling of peace that I *know* my decision must be His will.” But Paul is not saying that we should allow a feeling of “peace” to “rule” our lives and assure us that God is with us in the decisions that we make. We know from the example of Jonah that God has *never* endorsed this kind of thinking. Jonah was living in open rebellion against God, and yet when the Lord sent a storm so fierce that even seasoned mariners were calling on their



gods in terror, “Jonah...lay, *fast asleep*” (Jonah 1:1-5). He had perfect peace about his decision to defy the revealed will of God!

In the context of *forgiveness* (Col. 3:13) and *love* (v. 14), Colossians 3:15 is actually saying that we should let the peace that God has with other believers rule *our* hearts as well. There is nothing a believer can do to God that can shatter the peace he enjoys with Him, and so there should be nothing that believers can do to *us* that can shatter the peace we enjoy with them.

We trust that the reader has found this introduction to our subject profitable. Recently after speaking to a grace believer about these things, he told us that he was previously unaware of the fallacy of putting out a fleece. And so for those who were already aware of the error of these methods, we thank you for your patience as we sought to ensure that we all begin a study of God’s will on the same page.

*To Be Continued!*



## *Question Box*

*“Can you explain the discrepancy in the numbers in II Samuel 24:9 and I Chronicles 21:5?”*

**“And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men” (II Samuel 24:9).**

**“And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword” (I Chronicles 21:5).**

The discrepancy: In Israel, II Samuel 24:9 says there were 1.1 million men, and I Chronicles 21:5 says there were only .8 million. In Judah, II Samuel 24:9 says there were half a million men, while I Chronicles 21:5 says there were only 470,000.

But notice I Chronicles 21:5 says “*all* they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand,” while II Samuel 24:9 specifies that only eight hundred thousand of them were “*valiant*.” Similarly, II Samuel 24:9 tells us that the *total* number of the men of Judah “were five hundred thousand,” while I Chronicles 21:5 specifies that of these half million, only “four hundred threescore and ten thousand...*drew sword*.”

Number discrepancies like these are often solved by watching for qualifying words that differ. —Pastor Kurth



## BBS Letter Excerpts

### **From North Carolina:**

“I thought I was going to Heaven all these years because I went to church and believed in God, until tonight, while reading through the BBS web site, I started reading the *Have You Heard the Good News of God’s Grace?* message. When I finished hearing your gospel message, I realized I was not saved and accepted Christ as my Savior. I cannot tell you how good it feels to be sealed with the Holy Spirit and a member of the Body of Christ. I’m going to Heaven and spend eternity with God. Thank you, *Berean Bible Society*, for sharing the gospel with me.” (Welcome to the family!—RK).

### **From Colorado:**

“A friend gave me *Things That Differ* and that was the first time the Bible really started to make sense to me.”

### **From Washington:**

“I am already richly blessed reading the monthly magazine. It is insightful and thought-provoking, even if I don’t agree with everything.”

### **From Oregon:**

“I’m interested in trying your Sunday school material for this quarter at our church. We are very displeased with our current popular curriculum and I have seen your sample material and I am impressed...After reading *Things That Differ* I desire more of a Grace influence in my current limited library.”

### **From Minnesota:**

“Thank you for having such a wonderful selection of Grace authors from which to choose. I have just learned to separate the gospels and am thrilled to find so many works to assist me in learning.”

### **From Florida:**

“For years I read the Bible with a sincere heart and undoubtedly gleaned many truths, only to be left in confusion, not understanding that God has dealt with man in different ways at different times. I was taught to apply the doctrine of the Gospels and Hebrews through Revelation to the time we’re living in now, but I was slowly noticing drastic differences when comparing those books to the Pauline epistles....Now I read the Bible with so much enthusiasm and enjoyment. I thank God!”

### **From Arkansas:**

“I enjoyed your *Searchlight* and found I agree with most everything, except maybe baptism. I am interested in hearing more.”

### **From Florida:**

“There were questions that I had on tithing, but received a lot of insight out of the March *Searchlight*. It was awesome.”

### **From Arizona:**

“I enjoyed *Where Was Darwin at Virginia Tech?* A powerful article by Pastor James T. Penney, Jr. Very compelling.”

**From Texas:**

“Over the last 8 years the *Searchlight* has been one of the strongest witnessing tools for our family here in San Antonio.”

**From Oregon:**

“I was ordained an independent Baptist in 1976 and for 8 years followed that theology. Then for the next 10 years I was under the holiness persuasion. Under both indoctrinations I still saw areas of concern and confusion that caused me to leave religion altogether. For the next 6 years I was in the ‘wilderness’ complaining to God that I had wasted 20 years serving God when I could have been doing something else. At the end of the 6 years I came across the book *Things That Differ* and the concerns, confusions, and contradictions of man and denominationalism began to clear up. Praise God.” (Praise God, indeed!—RK).

**From Indiana:**

“I have been wanting a good commentary on *James* for some time. I heard of one a few years ago, but was unable to get it. I believe God had me wait for this one by Pastor Sadler.”

**From the Internet:**

“Thank you for that *Two Minutes* devotional on self-esteem. I had just e-mailed my brother about not believing in that teaching, and then yours came, so I forwarded it to him. I also appreciated the one on baptism.”

**From Arizona:**

“Thank you for the monthly issue of the *Searchlight*. I am so thankful to have heard about the Word rightly divided after not rightly dividing for some 17 years.”

**From Indiana:**

“Pastor Sadler, we just wanted to tell you one more time how very much we enjoyed and appreciated the seminar. Besides the message, meeting new Grace believers and fellowshiping with friends adds much joy to these events. After leaving the building, a group of us met for a while to relax and discuss the seminar and future meetings. We would love to have this be an annual event.”

**From the Internet:**

“I have read your web site article on when Tongues have ceased. This was very well written. Thank you for a good study guide. I feel more confident to share with those who still believe Tongues exist today.”

**From Arkansas:**

“For years I received the *Berean Searchlight*, most usually it would be trash. Then sometimes I would try to see what you were trying to say. I think I have figured out the most of it, and I think the Apostle Paul would be so sad at what you are doing with his words. I am asking that you *please* remove my name from your mailing list.” (Please pray for this dear lady.—RK).

**From the Internet:**

“I’m a retired old man, but I do enjoy the *Two Minutes With the Bible* every day. I’ve been very impressed that you have not hounded me for a contribution. I would like to give at least once a year.”

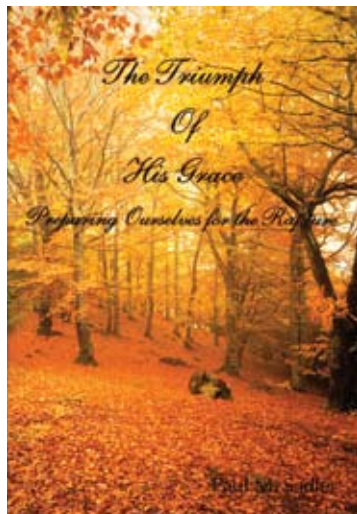
**From Ohio:**

“As long as I can I will send this amount each month, as I believe the Grace Message should continue to go forth.”

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

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# Commentary on Romans

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# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Unsolicited e-mails critical of BBS teachings** are being widely circulated. We wish the sender had contacted us with his concerns first, but we responded several times in detail once we became aware of them. We discontinued correspondence only after it became clear our efforts were fruitless. If you have questions about any doctrinal issues raised in these mailings, don't hesitate to contact us for clarification of what we teach.

**New Students!** *Berean Bible Institute* welcomed eight new students this fall, for which we praise God! An unwelcome arrival, however, came in the form of a BBI financial need. As with so many other ministries, BBI's offerings are down. Why not ask the Lord how you can help, and visit [www.bereanbibleinstitute.org](http://www.bereanbibleinstitute.org) or call 262-644-5504.

**New Record!** July was our web site's best month ever, with 1,556 visitors a day, who looked at a total of 90,088 web site pages, for an average of 2,906 pages viewed per day! In other words, a whole lot of people spent a whole lot of time reading about the riches of God's grace!

**New Grace Bible Study:** Pastor Brent Biller of *Grace Bible Fellowship* in Ridgely, West Virginia, has started up a Bible class in Morgantown, WV. For more information, contact Brent at [BrentBiller@Atlanticbb.net](mailto:BrentBiller@Atlanticbb.net), or at 304-726-4063. If you don't live in the area, but know someone attending Morgantown's *West Virginia University*, why not recommend this study group, which will meet in a student's home.

**New Internship:** *Community Bible Church* is excited to welcome BBI graduate, Tim Board, his wife Lori and son Tim Jr. to share in the ministry at Tipp City, Ohio. Tim is participating in every aspect of ministry to expand and strengthen his abilities through hands-on experience with Pastor Jeff Seekins. If you live in the area, why not visit CBC and see firsthand how God is blessing the ministry there. For additional information, contact [cbctipp@verizon.net](mailto:cbctipp@verizon.net), or call Pastor Seekins at 937-667-2710.

**Our cover this month** features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively throughout the state of Wisconsin in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs on various themes and you can e-mail them with any questions at their website: [www.crestwoodcreek.com](http://www.crestwoodcreek.com).

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\*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Ken and Barb Wardius. The *Ontonagon Lighthouse* is located in Ontonagon, Michigan. Built in 1852, this Lake Superior light was originally built at water's edge, but currents have piled up so much silt, it now sits 1/4 mile inland.

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