

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2010



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

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Questions, comments, orders?

You can reach us at:

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
PO Box 756
Germantown, WI 53022

Main Office: (262) 255-4750 — Fax Number: (262) 255-4195

Internet: www.bereanbiblesociety.org

E-mail: berean@bereanbiblesociety.org

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., CST

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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you may know, in addition to my ministry here at *Berean Bible Society*, I am also the pastor of *Faith Bible Church* of Steger, Illinois. With that in mind, I'd like to share with you something that happened recently that has greatly encouraged the people of our church.

A couple of Sundays ago, a family visited us for the very first time. They appeared to appreciate our ministry and gave every indication that they would be back. Now every pastor knows that such encouraging initial visits do not always lead to return trips! But when these folks did in fact return this past Sunday, I was not surprised. You see, as they explained during their first visit, they are already grace believers, and have been receiving the *Searchlight* for about ten years. Since we preach and teach the message that they too hold dear, I wasn't surprised to hear the mom say of our church, "It is everything that I hoped it would be."

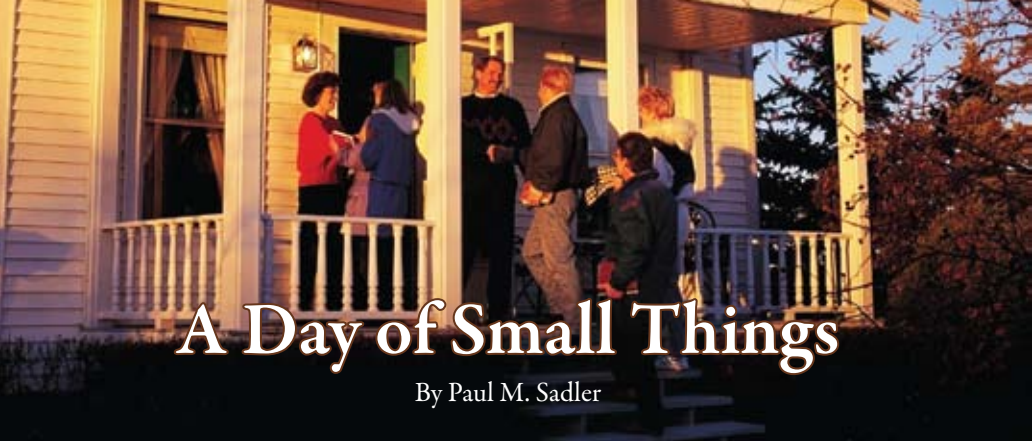
She then went on to explain that they had known about our church for five or six years, but for some reason had just never gotten around to paying us a visit. Part of the reason was the forty-five minute drive, no doubt, which always looms large in the minds of busy people like these dear folks. But as with all of us, it mostly boiled down to our natural reluctance to step outside our weekly routine, especially when it involves going somewhere we've never been and meeting people we've never met. Now, of course, they wish they'd taken that first step years ago, and regret missing out on the edification and fellowship they could have been enjoying all along.

All this got me to wondering if there might be other grace believers who live near a grace church, but have yet to darken the door. If that's you, we hope that hearing about the good experience of these folks will encourage you to make *next Sunday* the day you are welcomed by your new spiritual family of friends. Meanwhile, grace pastors may want to consider hosting a Bible conference as a way of attracting these dear saints. Our new friends say that, had we asked Pastor Sadler and some other grace pastors to come for some special meetings, they would have been more inclined to visit us earlier.

To sum it up, if we all work together, we can make each local grace church the vibrant testimony that God longs for it to be for Him.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth





A Day of Small Things

By Paul M. Sadler

When Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the second temple after the Babylonian Captivity, many of his countrymen viewed the effort with contempt, believing it would never amount to anything. The prophet Zechariah responded to these critics in the following manner: “For who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zech. 4:8-10). Zechariah reminded the people that even though the work seemed, in their eyes, to be insignificant, they were not to despise it because the hand of the Lord was with Zerubbabel.

When Gideon amassed a large army to do battle with the Midianites, who were said to be like grasshoppers upon the land, the Lord whittled the number of Gideon’s forces down to a mere three hundred. Throughout the Scriptures there is a recurring theme that God is far more interested in *quality* than He is in quantity. The smaller the number, the greater the glory and honor and adoration He receives, which is clearly demonstrated in the story of Gideon’s three hundred.

As we move down the corridor of time, although it may appear that the Grace Movement is small and insignificant in the eyes of our denominational critics, they should take great care not to despise the day of small things. It is true that we are small by comparison to the mega-churches of our day that often consider us second class citizens of heaven. However, just the *opposite* is true if we apply the above principle from time past. For those who never took the Grace Message seriously, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Lord may well acknowledge all those who willingly stood for Paul’s apostleship and message to the **praise of His glory**.

So we must never become disheartened that we are small in number, for God has honored us with an understanding of the Word, rightly divided. But this does not mean that we should think too highly of ourselves, seeing that we have a God-given responsibility to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. And it is essential that we carry out this charge by speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

While we rejoice that Christ is preached in denominational circles, for the most part, they have turned aside from the truth of the Grace Message. With this in mind, may I call upon you to unite together with us in prayer that there might be one last great awakening of our denominational brethren to Paul’s gospel before we are called into glory? Remember, God is able “to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

Why Do *Bad Things* Happen to Good People?



By Pastor John Fredericksen

Why do bad things happen to good people? Good people still have wayward children, routine sickness, and catastrophic illnesses. Good people have conflicts at work, lose their jobs, and have financial setbacks. Good people suffer injury in car wrecks, lose young children in death, and go through divorce. Good people are sometimes even the victims of violent crimes. One Christian lady in a Midwestern town was very active in ministry in her local church with her husband, and yet she was raped and murdered in front of her children. *Why do bad things happen to good people?* Why does God do such things to good people, even to Christians, or at the very least, why does He allow such things to happen to us?

Even when it comes to difficult questions such as these, God has

an answer for us in His Word. On a subject as serious as this, it is important for us to be very careful NOT to mistake our logic or reasoning for God's answer. Likewise, ***we must NOT interpret the Scriptures by our experiences, but instead interpret our experiences by the Scriptures.*** We also must not simply accept what others have taught us about trials if it is not consistent with what the Lord teaches us in His Word rightly divided. Failure to be careful about these things has led many people to draw five serious misconceptions about why trouble occurs in the life of a believer.

Some conclude that their goodness should enable them to escape most of the trials of life. In effect, this would require God to heap them with blessings

and sovereignly prevent trouble from coming their way. But such a notion is fundamentally flawed. In the dawn of mankind, Job learned that “man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (5:7). He repeats it for emphasis saying “man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble’ (14:1), ‘his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn” (14:22). In other words, all men will have trials all their lives. *We should expect troubles* to come our way rather than expect they won’t. The only exception to this rule was when God promised the nation of Israel that He would bless them with prosperity and health in the promised land if they obeyed all His laws (Deut. 28). But this was a specific promise to a specific people for a specific time. It simply doesn’t apply to us. *In the age of grace, bad things happen to good people because this is simply man’s general lot in life.*



*“...God does
NOT dispense
trials because
of some sin
in our lives.”*

Many believe when bad things happen, that God is punishing them. One of Job’s friends told him “if thou wert pure and upright; surely He would awake for thee, and make...thy righteousness prosperous...[but] so are the paths of all that forget

God” (8:6,13). Many a believer has faced some severe trial and asked, “What have I done to deserve this?” But *the truth of the matter is God does NOT dispense trials because of some sin* in our lives. Such a concept was confined to Israel when He told them they would incur His wrath if they disobeyed His commandments (Deut. 28).

What a mistake we make when we begin claiming things that God promised to Israel without documenting the same principle in Paul’s epistles to the Body of Christ. In Romans 5:20-21 we learn that *God is dealing with saints today on the basis of grace.* That means the Lord doesn’t give us what we deserve even when we’re sinful. He deals with us on the basis of mercy, longsuffering, forgiveness, love, and divine patience. No wonder Paul explains that today “grace did [or does] much more abound” over our sins and that today God allows “grace [to] reign” as His means of dealing with us. Believe it, dear friend, and rejoice in it. If God dealt with us otherwise, there would be precious few left alive.

When Billy Graham was driving through a small southern town, he was stopped by a policeman and charged with speeding. Graham admitted his guilt, but was told by the officer that he would have to appear in court. The judge asked, “Guilty, or not guilty?” When Graham pleaded guilty, the judge replied, “That’ll be ten dollars—a dollar for every mile you went over the limit.” Suddenly the judge recognized the famous minister. “You have

violated the law,” he said. “The fine must be paid—but I am going to pay it for you.” He took a ten dollar bill from his own wallet, attached it to the ticket and then bought him a steak dinner. “That,” said Billy Graham, “is how God treats guilty sinners!” *When bad things happen to good people, it is NOT because God is punishing us. The Lord deals with us today on the basis of grace. That means He mercifully paid our penalty for sin, and continues to deal with us in mercy.*



We tend to forget that Satan often afflicts mankind. Over and over in Scripture the Lord informs us that *Satan has the power to afflict with illness*. God acknowledged that Job was in Satan’s “hand” (2:6) and that he was the one who “smote Job with sore boils” (2:7). The Lord Jesus explained that “Satan hath bound... eighteen years” a woman with “a spirit of infirmity” (Luke 13:11,16) so severe that she couldn’t raise herself up. The Apostle Paul confirmed that he had “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet” him (II Cor. 12:7). Because Satan is an unseen foe, we often don’t realize that we are in a spiritual and physical battle

with Satan every day. *Our evil foe uses illness to distract and disable us from our needed service for Christ.* He would also be pleased if it *discouraged us spiritually or even destroyed us*. If any one is to blame for illness or disease, it isn’t the Lord. *Sometimes bad things happen to good people because Satan is fighting against us.*

It seems to be in our nature to want to blame someone else for our problems. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and quite often we blame God. The truth is, **much of the time, our troubles are completely our own fault.** We’re reminded in Galatians 6:7, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*” Believers are often guilty of stubbornly choosing to make decisions that we know are contrary to the Lord’s will, unwise, or even foolish. When we do, God is simply not going to override the laws of nature or prevent the inevitable from happening.

If we choose to date and marry someone who doesn’t know or love the Lord, it won’t be surprising if our mate makes worldly decisions that jeopardize our happiness. When we overeat, refuse to exercise, and persist in that pattern for years, God is not going to stop the inevitable from catching up with us. Should we allow our testimony to be soiled by angry words or other sinful actions, certain consequences will come our way. Some will come sooner than later, and some more severe. But **God is not punishing us for wrong doing today.** *That’s not how grace works. God*

is simply allowing the natural law of sowing and reaping to run its course. We can choose a wise and godly path, or we can choose an unwise and willful path. But like it or not, WE are responsible for the consequences. So, we must not blame God for our trials when they come calling. *Sometimes bad things happen to good people simply because we bring troubles on ourselves.*



Little Haley, a three year old, sat playing in the living room one December while her daddy lay on the couch. After a few minutes, Haley's daddy drifted off to sleep. In those few short minutes, temptation overtook the little girl. She began unwrapping presents under the tree and disposing of the wrapping paper in her younger sister Autumn's crib, who was only one and a half years old. When Haley's daddy awoke and he realized the presents were unwrapped and the shredded paper was in the crib, daddy began to question Haley: "How did this get here?" Quick as could be, Haley said, "Autumn do." Just like Haley, we often prefer to blame someone else for our trouble, even when we know better. But *the truth*

is, sometimes bad things happen to good people simply because we bring it on ourselves.

Many will find this hard to accept, but *God does NOT sovereignly control all the circumstances in our lives.* He certainly has the power to do so, but He doesn't. After long and careful deliberation about the issues of life, wise Solomon concluded **"time and chance happeneth to them all"** (Eccl. 9:11b). That means that a lot of what we incur in life is what is commonly called luck. Some of it is good luck, some of it is bad luck. A plant closing down and one losing a job doesn't mean that God was showing that person it was His will for them to move somewhere else. When two soldiers are advancing toward the enemy and shrapnel cuts one down right next to the other, it doesn't necessarily mean that God protected one and not the other. If a believer comes down with inoperable cancer or dies in a tragic car wreck, it isn't necessarily because "it was his time to go." Such things are romantically emotional conclusions, but weakly supported by Scripture.

Many Christians believe, "Everything happens for a reason." By that they mean that God is manipulating the circumstances of life, especially ones they deem important, in such detail that it guides them down a path of God's preordained will for their lives. Sincere saints say, "I believe in the sovereignty of God." I looked this and related words up so I could trace everything that God says about it in His Word. Do you know that this word or anything

similar to it does not appear in our KJV Bible even once? With that in mind, isn't the sovereignty of God a slender thread to balance a weighty doctrine on? It's time to re-examine carefully what many allow to dictate major decisions in their lives, all because they conclude God is taking control of everything that happens in life.

But we don't want to be unclear on the issue of God's sovereignty. We do believe what the Bible says when it promised a Saviour, His resurrection from the dead, His return for the Body of Christ, His subsequent return to the earth to reign for one thousand years, and final judgments for all men. These promises, and many more, we believe God will carry out as part of His sovereign will. But we believe such things because they are plainly revealed in Scripture. But much of what happens in life is not God micromanaging every detail. It is as Solomon concluded, "time and chance." Therefore, *sometimes bad things happen to good people simply because of bad luck*. It may not be popular, or what we have been taught, or what we want to believe, but *it is what the Bible teaches*.

It is important to remember that when bad things happen to good people, that we are not alone. The Lord is always there. He wants us to run to Him in times of trouble. If we have never trusted in Christ as our only hope for the forgiveness of sins, turning to Christ by faith will be a genuine comfort all in itself. For those of us who know Christ as Saviour, the Lord invites us to come early and often to Him

in prayer. He would have us look into the Scriptures for guidance and comfort, therein allowing the Lord to minister His grace to us. No matter how severe or long the trial, the Lord can give us "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). But it will only come as we flee to Him for strength in our time of weakness, and allow Him to show us that His grace can be "sufficient" for us too (II Cor. 12:9).

Just about evening, while two deer hunters in Oregon were stalking game, a noise exploded in the brush nearby. Before one of the men even had a chance to lift his rifle, a small blur of brown and white came shooting up the trail straight for him. As the hunter looked down, there was a brown cottontail rabbit, utterly spent, crowded up against his legs between his boots. The little thing was trembling all over, but it just sat there and didn't budge.




Now this was really strange. Wild rabbits are frightened of people. While the hunter momentarily puzzled over this, twenty yards away, a weasel burst out of the brush. When it saw its intended prey sitting at the feet of

the hunter, the predator froze in its tracks with its mouth panting from the chase. Only then did the hunter realize that he had stepped into a life and death drama in the forest. The cottontail, exhausted by the chase, was only seconds away from death. This hunter was its last frantic hope. So, forgetting its natural instincts to fear humans, this little animal had crowded up against him for protection from the sharp teeth of its relentless enemy.

The hunters did not disappoint this little rabbit either. The other hunter, also observing all this, raised his rifle and deliberately shot into the ground near the weasel. Now scared half to death itself, the weasel leaped several feet into the air and took off like a rocket back into the forest. For a

while the rabbit didn't stir. It just sat there huddled at the man's feet. Then in a few minutes, it hopped away from its protector and back into the forest.

Friend, where do you run in time of trouble? Where do you run when the predators of worry, heartache, fear, or the past are pursuing you? Where do you flee for comfort when tragedy, illness, or temptation is threatening to overtake you? Where do you turn when your energy is spent and you can't seem to run the race of life any further? Don't give up. Don't turn to the wrong people or places of refuge. Turn to the Lord! He's waiting to comfort and strengthen you. *When we run to Him, He can turn even our trial into a triumph.* Right now, take the trials you had this week to Him in prayer. 



Priorities in Pastoral Ministries

A seminar designed to encourage and challenge those who are in pastoral ministry or serve as an elder in a local church

Location: Berean Bible Institute
116 Kettle Moraine Dr. S., Slinger, Wisconsin

Dates: November 11-12, 2010

Keynote Speaker: Dr. W. Edward Bedore

Session Speakers:

Pastor Dan Wolgast, Dr. Robert E. Nix,
Pastor Matt Ritchey, Pastor Don Sommer

For further information, please contact:
Berean Bible Institute at 262-644-5504
or visit www.bereanbibleinstitute.org

Closing Challenge and Meal at Cabela's

Even If...

By
Cornelius R. Stam

When the Babylonian multitudes prostrated themselves in worship before the golden god which Nebuchadnezzar had erected, three young Hebrews refused to bow and remained standing, erect and alone.


When called before Nebuchadnezzar to answer for their impudence and threatened with death in a fiery furnace, they answered:

“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:17,18).

This is the stand every believer should take for God and His truth. He is able to deliver us from persecution if we stand true, but even if He doesn't see fit to do this, we should still stand alone if necessary, for the light He has given us on His Word.

Many have suffered temporary loss of standing for their convictions. Hebrews 11 lists among the heroes of faith some who were “tortured, not accepting deliverance,” and others who suffered “trial of cruel mockings and scourgings...bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:35-37).

But we read that these all “obtained a good report” before God and looked forward to “a better resurrection” (vv. 35,39).

As the apostasy rises all about us and those who stand for God's truth are often ridiculed and despised, may God give us the grace to stand true regardless of the cost, remembering that any sufferings for Christ are only temporal while the rewards will be eternal. 



Iowa Regional Bible Conference

November 5-6, 2010

Location: *Best Western, Ankeny, Iowa*

Guest Speakers:

Bible Teacher Les Feldick, *Les Feldick Ministries*
Pastor Paul M. Sadler, *Berean Bible Society*

For further information, please contact:
Ric Jennings at 515-964-2407 or riccardj@msn.com



West Virginia Fall Bible Conference

Location: *Holiday Inn, 301 Foxcroft Ave.,
Martinsburg, West Virginia*

Date: Saturday, November 13, 2010

Speakers: Pastor Dennis Kiszonas, *Grace For Today*
Pastor Kevin Sadler, *Berean Bible Society*

For more information, please contact:
Jim Miller at 304-671-1458 or jmiller4181@gmail.com



The following Sunday School lesson is from the newly released Middle School Book 2 *Christ in My Life*. To order, call 262-255-4750 or visit www.growingupingrace.com.



Key Verse: **Ephesians 3:16**

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"

LESSON 15

DEVELOPING

GODLY VIRTUES

Part 2

By Steve Shober

Lesson Theme: Correct virtues assure a God-pleasing life.

ENGAGE

Have you ever wanted to act or think the right way but ended up doing just the opposite? We all do. However, the Holy Spirit can and will help each of us develop spiritually so that we will, more and more, reflect the behavior that honors our Lord.

Review Last Week's Lesson

Upon believing, the Holy Spirit takes residence within us and begins to work in our lives, transforming us by renewing our minds. Our minds have to be renewed so that they function as God desires. He wants to renew our minds, so that our old natures with their values and beliefs are replaced by godly virtues. The Holy Spirit is mostly concerned with renewing the deeper things of our lives, as He works from deep within us.

The areas where He definitely wants to work are our consciences, characters, values, and will/desires. His work in our lives is not forced upon us, we have to cooperate with Him in this transformation process.

ENLIGHTEN

Introduction

Believers are commanded to change the behaviors related to their old life and nature to that of the new nature which indwells every Christian. This is done by the renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit. Without renewed minds, we

Christians would act much like the unsaved; clearly that is not what the Lord wants. Going back in time, we know the early Christians did not really know what God expected from them or how to act properly. The early church believers in Corinth acted very immaturely and lacked good spiritual insight. Even our Apostle Paul did not know all

these things at the start of his ministry. The truths of godly behavior and virtues were slowly revealed to him by the Lord, for our benefit.

One of the first books Paul wrote was 1 Thessalonians, and there the Lord gave us commandments on how to act properly (not commandments on how to be saved, but how to live godly lives that honor Him). These commandments contain the Christian qualities and virtues that the Lord will help produce in our renewed/transformed minds. However, these are not automatically produced in us, we must allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives through faith and obedience. The commandments are found in 1 Thes. 4:2-5:28. This is a large section of Scripture, and it is hard to discover all the Lord is teaching (that is why constant Bible study is required).

The Bible does not say how many commandments there are in these verses, that is not the point. The point is that by studying His Word we learn what He wants and this allows the Lord to work in the lives of His sons and daughters, by transforming them. When He is working in our lives to produce His fruit (virtues), then we will know how to act and think in the circumstances of our lives (we will not need a list of rules for reference).

Similar listings of godly behavior are found in Romans 12:9-21 and Ephesians 4:17-32 (even to the end of Ephesians). Please understand, the Lord is not saying that Christian behavior is established by memorizing a list of virtues; that is a law-way of thinking, not the grace-way. He does want us to study and learn the Word, to constantly apply His Word to our lives, and to seek His renewal

in our minds. Then, Christlikeness will flow from our hearts because it becomes an actual part of who we are as believers in Christ.

Discovering the Virtues

We will now look at some of the commandments starting in 1 Thes. 4:2. We will see how they are related to our conscience (our moral code of right and wrong), our character (who we are deep within), our values (our concept of what is true, right, honest), and our will/desires (our wishes, goals, and plans). These are the deeper things in our minds.

1. Sexual purity (vs. 4:3-8). Each of us is told to possess “his vessel in sanctification and honor,” which means it honors our Lord if we set ourselves apart and do not have sexual relations before marriage; and once married, only with our spouse. To have improper relations indicates we may be someone who despises God and “defrauds his brother,” that is, someone who would cheat their own family.

2. Love (vs. 4:9-10). This love extends to all people, especially fellow believers. Love is explained very carefully in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 (called charity). This form of love does not lust (sexual desire) and is not the romantic kind (hugs and kisses). This is the deep love that is founded upon respect, putting others first, and one that does not keep a record of wrongs done by others.

3. Quietly minding and doing our own business (vs. 4:11-12 and Rom. 12:11). The Bible very strongly tells us to be “quiet,” that is, to mind our own business (not to be a busybody, telling rumors, or gossiping). Not only are we to mind our own business, but to be

honest in our business (any job or thing we are doing). So, in school or in any job we may have, we are asked to be honest and diligent (hard working and of good report). As we work, we are to be reliable workers on whom others can trust. We are to be self-sufficient in life (of course this means also relying upon the Lord), but not demanding things from others (parents, government, relatives) (Rom. 12:11; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thes. 4:11-12).

4. Comforting (vs. 4:13-5:11). We know that the Lord is coming to receive us at the Rapture, we will not go through the terrible time of the Tribulation. This is good news and is of great comfort to those who wonder or worry about the future. We are called to comfort those who need encouragement or hope. There are many new Christians or unbelievers that need a word of comfort about the future.



5. Champions of the underdog (1 Thes. 5:14; Rom. 12:10). Who are the underdogs we should support and value (be their champion)? We are told in 5:14 to comfort the feeble-minded (the dejected, those down emotionally, and those with no hope). We are called to support the weak (those who have a disability or are not as robust as others). We are also told to be patient toward all

people (patient even when they are not, or even when they are hard to get along with). Comforting, supporting, and being patient to these people teaches us that in all things we are to be sensitive to those who have less or have problems in life. For some of us this may be a handicapped person, a poor person, an older relative, or someone who is not generally liked by others. They may be down due to family problems, economic status, inability to find a friend, or because they get mistreated.

Discussion

The commandments continue (1 Thes. 5:15-28), but by this time you get the idea especially when you read Romans 12:17-21 and Ephesians 4:31-32.

From what we have learned, how should we treat our enemies?

(Thoughts: We are not to think evil or get revenge, we are to forgive and actually do good unto those who dislike us. "Heaping coals of fire on them," Romans 12:20, is a reference to helping, not harming them. This is not natural, it comes from the Lord).

Applying the Scripture

Last week we learned of a third century man who wrote to his friend and noted the bandits on the highways, pirates at sea, and the slaughter of innocent people in the amphitheaters. In the midst of all this violence and injustice he noted, "Yet in the midst of it, I have found a quiet and holy people... They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They have overcome the world. These people... are Christians..."¹

This incredible observation refers to Christians that applied the Scriptures we just studied. They were a quiet and holy people...Quiet, not obnoxious or boastful. Not demanding, just quiet (they talked, but did not complain, find fault, or disrespect others). These Christians had transformed minds displaying the fruit of the Spirit. When our faith and transformed minds are obvious to unbelievers, God can use that to witness to them.



Living a Christ-honoring life is dependent upon understanding what God teaches, which is different from memorizing some list of virtues. So, as we read these chapters (1 Thes. 4-5; Eph. 4; Rom. 12), we need to study and think about them (meditate upon the Word). Then we must determine how we will apply them to our lives; this takes our action. The Christians noted in the third century knew the intent of these verses in their hearts and lived them in their everyday lives. They did not have to be told or did not have to look up a verse to know what to do in a particular circumstance. The correct conduct sprang from within, because God's Word and fruit were within. Likewise, when we are confronted with a situation (whether specifically mentioned in the Bible or not), we will know what the Lord

would have us to do. The Bible provides the direction we need, but making it work for our lives' issues is our choice—this is what living for the Lord is about.

As our minds are renewed, we develop deep convictions of His desire in our lives.² We should realize that being stubborn or passive-aggressive is not His will. A passive-aggressive person will find a passive way to resist following instructions, make others suffer if they have to do things they do not like. A passive-aggressive person will take so long getting ready to go somewhere (they do not want to go) that the event is nearly over before they are ready. They may “mope,” deliberately fail, or make others suffer while doing something. We all must learn to do the right thing out of respect, duty, and because there are times when even unpleasant things just have to be done. Lawns have to be mowed and dishes washed; why not have a teenager do it? God made work part of our lives' duty upon this earth; the Bible says that if anyone refuses to work they should not eat, 2 Thes. 3:10.

Discussion

If asked to mow the lawn, you could “accidentally” hit every rock and flower possible to show your resentment. Or, if washing dishes you could “accidentally” drop one of mom’s special dishes. Discuss.

(Thoughts: These are clearly passive-aggressive behaviors. A God-honoring approach is to do your work quietly, without complaining, and realize God says there is a need to do quality work in order to live, Eph. 4:29; 1 Thes. 5:15).

Following God's plan for our lives may not make us popular. It is fun to be popular and to fit in with the majority of students. Many times the desire to be popular is in direct opposition to our faith. It was rare for a Biblical hero to be popular (people like David and Solomon were at times, but they learned that popularity that fades away is not important in the final analysis). We will learn our roles as Christians are not to be popular, but to reach out to those in need of Christ. Christ was despised and rejected, and those that will live for Him will be also (Isa. 53:3; Rom. 12:16; John 15:20; 2 Tim 3:12).

ENERGIZE

Summary

God has planned for our transformation from the beginning. He gives us many commandments on how to live godly lives. As the Holy Spirit renews our minds, He produces His fruit in place of the "gunk" that was there before we were saved. This renewal transforms our sinful minds and changes them to conform to that of Christ. Some of the things God commands us are: to maintain sexual purity, to exhibit a true love for others, to be quiet and mind our own business, to comfort others, and to be the champions of the underdogs. This may not make us popular, but God has a larger plan for us.

Application


God gives us His Word with complete directions and assistance to assure that we can have a healthy mind (with a godly way of thinking). Each of us has to study the Word to figure out how to use it in our lives. As we do study and follow His Word, we are slowly transformed.

This requires a commitment on our part every day, it is not a one time event (like salvation). As we make ourselves available for His transforming power, we present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Gospel

Christ died to save sinners, each of us. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." We do not deserve salvation, but God knows we are helpless to do anything about our sin. So, He gives us what we do not deserve (that is grace in action). What He gives us is salvation for all eternity if we have childlike faith in Jesus Christ.

Encouragement

Thank you for each step of obedience to His Word even when it is difficult. It would be nice to be popular, but that generally is not the case in the Christian life. The Lord sees your hurts and struggles; He also knows your desire to honor Him. Sometimes when you follow Him you get treated poorly or made fun of; this has to hurt, but the Lord sees your suffering and is touched by it. Your faithful walk with the Lord is an encouragement to other young folks and will help you grow to be an adult that the Lord can use in outstanding ways. That is far better than being popular. 

References:

1. Max Lucado, *Grace for the Moment*, J. Countryman, Aug 24 "Set Apart," 2000.
2. *A Sound Mind—Biblical Transformation*, Steve Shober, Berean Searchlight, Sept and Oct, 2005.

Buckeye State Meetings

Sunday, October 24, 2010



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Mike Karnes at 317-984-4799 or r.karnes@insight.com
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FEEL THE ZEAL

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up” (John 2:17).

Watching the Lord Jesus Christ drive the moneychangers out of the temple (2:12-16) must have been something for the disciples to behold! The Lord knew that His Father’s house was meant to be a “*house of prayer*” (Luke 19:46), and when He saw how religious hucksters had turned it into “*an house of merchandise*” (John 2:16), it aroused His righteous indignation! As a faithful Jew “made under the law” (Gal. 4:4), He had just finished cleansing *His own house* of leaven (Ex. 12:15,19) and had made the trip to Jerusalem, only to find *His Father’s house* filled with *the leaven of corruption*. The “zeal” He then displayed as He drove those profiteers from God’s house reminded the disciples of Psalm 69:9: “*the zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.*”

But like many New Testament quotations of the Old Testament, this reference presents a problem. As we study this psalm, we see that while it is clearly a Messianic psalm, it is *specifically* a psalm about Messiah’s *death*, and so we have to wonder why the disciples thought of these words when the Lord cleansed the temple. We believe the answer to this question will lead us to a very precious truth, and that the practical application of this truth will challenge your heart!

The Problem

Let’s begin by establishing that Psalm 69 is indeed a psalm about the cross. First, we are told that when a man is crucified, his lungs fill with water and death comes by drowning. Thus we are not surprised to hear the Lord speak prophetically in this psalm of waters that reached *His soul* (69:1,2). This is similar to the waters that reached “to the soul” of Jonah when (as we believe) he died in the heart of the whale (Jonah 2:3,5 cf. Matt. 12:40).

Next, we also understand that crucifixion caused unbearable *thirst* (John 19:28), which would explain why the Lord would prophetically declare, “*My throat is dried*” (Psa. 69:3). Then, while the Lord never

gave anyone cause to hate Him, they hated Him without a cause (v. 4 cf. John 15:25), a hatred that reached its zenith at Calvary. And although it was Adam who took away our right standing with God, the last Adam could say of His death on the cross: “*I restored that which I took not away*” (Psa. 69:4).

Some object that this psalm *cannot* be speaking of the Lord, for the psalmist speaks of “*my sins*” (v. 5). But while it is true the Lord “knew no sin” (II Cor. 5:21) during His *life*, this psalm speaks of His *death*, where He bore *our* sins, which were “not hid” from the Father as He poured out His wrath upon them. Thus sinners who looked to the Lord for salvation would not be disappointed (Psa. 69:6), because He was willing to let His face be “*covered*” (v. 7) with “*shame and spitting*” (Isa. 50:6 cf. Mt. 26:67; 27:30) on their behalf. Few of us would agree to *that* measure of shame, *but He did* (Heb. 12:2). And while space does not permit us to expound the rest of the psalm, Verse 21 also clearly speaks of Christ on the cross (Mt. 27:34).



The Solution

But if this is indeed a psalm about the cross, why did cleansing the temple bring it to the mind of the disciples? Well, to begin with, while the Lord's first miracle had just convinced the disciples that He was the Messiah (John 2:1-10,11), they did not yet know that Messiah would have to die (Luke 18:31-34). And so while 20/20 hindsight makes it clear *to us* that Psalm 69 speaks about His death, the disciples applied it to the cleansing of the temple, and it is easy to see why. The zeal the Lord displayed that day seemed to fit Psalm 69:9 “to a T,” as they say, and John seems to agree that there was a connection when he mentions what they were thinking in his inspired record.

But while this verse then fits the cleansing of the temple, how does it fit the cross? True, when the Lord “stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” to die for us (Luke 9:51 cf. Isa. 50:7), He exhibited a *zeal* that naturally calls Psalm 69:9 to mind. How precious to see that the Lord was literally *eaten up* or *consumed* with an impassioned commitment to do His Father's will on Calvary. But how could this zeal to go to the cross be called a zeal *for His Father's house*? What could the Lord's zeal *for the temple* have to do with His zeal in going to the Cross?

We believe the answer lies in remembering that the *earthly* temple was only a reflection of God's *heavenly* temple. Hebrews 9:23,24 makes it clear that the earthly temple was a *figure* of the “true” temple, a “shadow” (8:5) of “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and

not man” (v. 2). No wonder Moses was told: “See...that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (8:5). God wanted His earthly house to look exactly like His heavenly house!

And so while a passion for His Father’s *earthly* house led the Lord to cleanse the temple of religious hucksters, it was His zeal for His Father’s *heavenly* house that led Him to Calvary. You see, after the purveyors of wickedness had been expelled from God’s *earthly* house, the Lord’s work was only half done. There were still “principalities” and “powers” to deal with “in high places” (Eph. 6:12), “spiritual wickedness” that consisted of fallen angels who have been “the rulers of the darkness of this world” since Satan fell and these beings chose to follow him in his rebellion. We believe the reason the Lord cleansed the temple twice, once at the beginning of His ministry and once at the end, was to symbolize the need for cleansing in God’s earthly *and* heavenly temples.

God plans to cleanse His heavenly temple by expelling these beings (Rev. 12:7-9), just as the earthly temple was cleansed by expelling those earthly corrupters of His righteousness. But before He could execute this plan, God knew that He first had to deal with their legitimate *right* to those thrones (Ezek. 28:14; Luke 4:6). This He accomplished *at Calvary*, where the Lord Jesus Christ “*spoiled principalities and powers*” and “made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them” (Col. 2:15; Mt. 28:18) in the cross (Col. 2:14). This was the heavenly housecleaning that the Lord accomplished *with a zeal* when He died for the sins of their replacements, the members of His Body. The Lord *couldn’t wait* to do His Father’s will that day, *and we should feel the same way!*

The Challenge

The Lord was *eager* to cleanse His Father’s house of all leaven of sin that Passover (John 2:13 cf. Ex. 12:15,19), and we should be *just as eager* to cleanse His earthly house *today* of the leaven of sin. Today, our Apostle Paul speaks of “the house of God, *which is the church of the living God*” (I Tim. 3:15). We know Paul speaks here of *the local church*, since he has just finished giving Timothy instructions concerning the order of the local assembly. Today God “dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24), but corporately in the men and women that make up the local church (I Cor. 3:16).

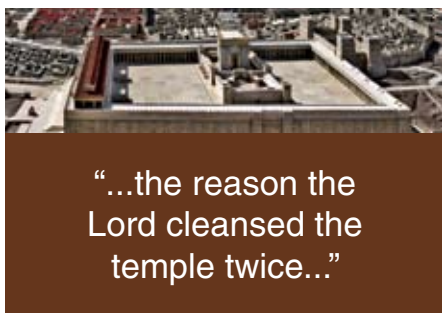
No wonder Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians that since “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (v. 7), they were to “purge out therefore the old leaven” from their assembly (I Cor. 5:7). They were to “keep the feast, not with old leaven,” i.e., not by conducting a ceremonial



household hunt for *physical* leaven, as orthodox Jews do at Passover to this day. Paul rather wanted them to leave this symbolism behind, and focus on what it symbolized, the purging of sin from the house of God, the expulsion of the fornicator in their midst (5:2,13). This was *not* to be done “with the leaven of malice and wickedness” (5:8); that is, this brother was not to be put out *maliciously*, “but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (v. 8), in sincere love for him and the testimony of God’s house.


Of course, if we would spiritually police *ourselves*, the local assembly would not have to enforce this kind of church discipline. Thus Paul goes on to warn the Corinthians about fornication (6:9-18), reminding each of them that the physical body of the believer is *also* “the temple of the Holy Ghost” (6:19), and that the only proper response to Christ our passover being sacrificed for us is to purge the leaven of sin from our individual lives as well.

Finally, we must add to this personal challenge by reminding the reader that in a larger sense, the Body of Christ as a whole is *also* the Father’s house, “the habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). And He has commissioned *grace believers* to cleanse *this* temple



by wrestling (Eph. 6:12) with the principalities and powers who prompt non-grace pastors to teach doctrines that bring the righteousness of God into question. These pastors lead many to conclude God is unrighteous when He does not give them everything they ask for in prayer as He said He would (Mt. 21:22), or when “the prayer of faith” doesn’t “save the sick” as He promised it would (James 5:14,15). Grace believers—yea, *only* grace believers—can consistently defend God against these and similar charges of unrighteousness that come when verses like this are applied to us. Are you up to the challenge? *Do you feel the zeal?*

What’s Eating You?

It could be said of the Lord that the zeal of His Father’s house had *eaten Him up*. Can it be said of *you*? The presence of the leaven of sin in the house of your life impugns the holiness and righteousness of God, just as surely as the presence of the buyers and sellers did in the temple, and *you alone* can do something about it. The presence of the leaven of doctrine that impugns God’s righteousness in the house of His church is something that *you alone* as a grace believer can counter by getting our blessed message out to others. May the zeal of our Father’s house *consume* us, as it did the Lord, to the praise of the glory of His grace. 



How to Get to Heaven from Your Current Location

By Paul M. Sadler

MapQuest® is an ingenious website that many have probably used at one time or another. Simply type in where you live and where you want to go and, *voila!* It gives you step-by-step directions to your final destination. Of course, it cannot give you directions on *How to Get to Heaven from Your Current Location*. Only the Word of God can give us these instructions.

The Peril of Good Works

The year leading up to the conversion of George Whitefield, the famous English Evangelist, is a good example of how God will have nothing to do with good works or acts of self-denial for the salvation of a lost soul. Both are repulsive in His sight. Shortly after entering his third year at Oxford, young Whitefield underwent a spiritual crisis. It was said of him:

“The life of God in his own soul was what he craved and must have—but how to obtain it! The thought of his sins caused him to sweat and groan. He shunned all company, wandering the fields and woods, deep in prayer—sometimes lying all night upon the freezing ground. He wore the shabbiest of clothing; his only fare [meals], dry bread and tea. In time even his prayers seemed to become sinful.”¹

It wasn’t until Mr. Whitefield came to the end of himself that he began to reflect on his reading of Christian literature, how it was “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” With the burden of his sin greater than he could bear, he turned to Christ, the great Sin-Bearer, and was gloriously saved by the grace of God. In his own words, he gave this touching account of his conversion:

“God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on His dear Son by living faith...Oh, with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of, and great with glory, and my

soul was filled when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God and a full assurance of faith broke upon my disconsolate soul!”¹

Perhaps you are like Mr. Whitefield prior to his conversion, trying to find acceptance with God apart from Christ. Your defense may be, “I’m not so bad. After all, I’ve never murdered anyone,” as if God will accept you because you never committed the act of murder. But which sin is worse, murder or lying? According to Proverbs 6:16,17, *lying* is the greater violation of the two in the sight of God—because lying leads to murder! We need to remember and remember well, **all** sin has eternal consequences for those who reject Christ as their Savior.

Beware of a False Hope


Perhaps your pursuit of God has taken you down the path of religious rituals. Surely here you will find favor with God! Interestingly, it is in this area that Satan has done his most effective work to blind men to the light of the glorious gospel. He uses *religion*! If men think their religious service will gain them acceptance with God, he has accomplished his purpose to keep them eternally damned.

Here is a short list of religious practices that men do, hoping to earn their way to heaven: church attendance, water baptism, first communion, confirmation, reciting the Lord’s Prayer, responsive readings, doing the sign of the Cross, confessing and receiving forgiveness of their sins from a priest, etc. Before his conversion to Christ, Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran Church, visited Rome, where he climbed the steps of *Scala Santa* on his knees. The *Scala Santa* is believed to be the stairway the Lord ascended to reach Pilate’s Judgment Hall on the day of His crucifixion. The Catholic Church supposedly had it brought from Jerusalem to Rome.



As a Roman Catholic, at the time, Luther believed such acts of self-sacrifice would increase his chances of entering heaven. But it wasn’t long thereafter, in a monastery at Wittenberg, he saw things in a whole new light. As Luther was reading Romans 1:17, where it states, “The just shall live by faith,” he paused a moment, and then it suddenly dawned on him that salvation was by *faith*. Up to that point he had tried to earn his salvation through religious observances, but never felt he had done enough. Now, for the first time, he saw that a lost soul is declared eternally righteous by God through *faith* on the basis of the finished work of Christ. He was delivered from the bondage of

his sins and indescribable joy flooded his heart. So dramatic was the change in his life that Luther went on to be the spark that ignited the great *Reformation*.

If you would like to get to heaven from your current location, simply *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ. We want you to know that God loves you and Christ died for your sins (Rom. 5:8). You see, the day Christ died at Calvary, He wasn't dying for *His* sins. *He knew no sin*. Instead, He was dying for the sins of the world—my sins and your sins. God has made a provision for *all*, but to receive the benefit of this provision you must believe that Christ died personally for you and rose again (I Cor. 15:3,4; I Thes. 4:14). Salvation is in a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ! He alone can save you from your sins! 

Endnote

1. *George Whitefield and the Great Evangelical Awakening* by Anthony Beaurepaire, *The Protestant Truth Society*, London, England, Pg. 13.

Question Box

“Pastor, what does Paul mean in I Corinthians 1:2 by the phrase, ‘with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours’? I am particularly interested in your thoughts on who the apostle was referring to when he states ‘both theirs and ours.’”

This question is a good reminder as to the importance of understanding when each of the Pauline epistles was written. Paul wrote *I Corinthians* from Ephesus where he resided for two years during his third apostolic journey; therefore it was written in the *transition period* (Acts 20:10 cf. I Cor. 15:32). At this particular time God's prophetic program, which was being phased out, and the Mystery that was to supersede it were running simultaneously side by side.

Since both programs were still in operation, Paul correctly acknowledges that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only “their” Lord, a clear reference to the kingdom saints, but He is “our” Lord as well as members of the Body of Christ. We, too, need to be careful to distinguish between these two groups, but we would also do well to follow the example of those in time past, to daily call upon the name of the Lord in the perilous times in which we live.

—Pastor Sadler



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Arizona:

"I found your web site during a search for dispensational grace and kingdom law and have enjoyed it."

From Facebook:

"If you are searching to understand God's Word, BBS is the place to start!"

From Alabama:

"I am new to the study of rightly dividing the Word of God, and just absolutely love the freedom it brings!" (Let freedom ring!—Ed).

From Georgia:

"I bought two books by Paul M. Sadler and very much enjoyed them. I looked up some information about him, and would like to get the free subscription offered."

From Indiana:

"Wow, that was really enlightening! It makes perfect sense now. As soon as I read what you wrote a light bulb went off in my head. It was annoying me not understanding that."

From our Inbox:

"My husband and I really do enjoy the monthly publication you mail us. The articles are very Scripturally sound and spiritually deep."

From Norway:

"Are there any books you'd recommend for someone who's new to Bible study and rightly dividing the Word of truth?"

From New Zealand:

"I read the article on *Revelation* by Pastor Sadler that 'there was no church of Thyatira'—I DIDN'T KNOW THAT, I exclaimed to my wife. I can now see more clearly Pastor Sadler's reasons. Wow, this is good stuff!"

From Indonesia:

"I'm a Sunday School teacher at Grace Bible Church Bekasi, Indonesia. I don't have books for our Sunday School, specially from Grace lessons, so I get books from the other church. Sometimes it's not compatible with our doctrines. When I visited 'Growing Up In Grace' I'd like to have 'Middle School Book 2 *Christ in My Life*' but it's too difficult for me to buy because of limited funds. Maybe someone in the US can help us buy and send those books for us. Thank you." (Someone has already volunteered to help this lady.—Ed).

From Pennsylvania:

"Something you wrote in your last *Measure of the Ministry* article touched my heart. It was the statement to the effect that since I'm in Christ, God is no more righteous than I am. I had to take a few minutes just to reflect on that, and then praise the Lord for that wonderful truth."

From our Inbox:

"This is the first *Searchlight* I have received. Starting with the book of *Revelation* seems good to me, because that has been the most difficult book I have ever read in the Bible."

From Puerto Rico:

"The *Searchlight* has been a great blessing for me...I congregate at the Iglesia Biblica De Juana Diaz in Puerto Rico. We believe in the dispensations and in the Mystery."

From Australia:

"We have your June *Searchlight* editorial. Suddenly life confronts one with a BIG change. A change which affects not only oneself, but all who are near and dear. Your editorial brought to mind your words, Pastor Sadler, in *Trials and Temptations*, that 'sickness, disease, and death stalks every one of us, like a lion stalks its prey. If the Lord tarries, it is not a question of *if*, but *when* one of these three will overtake us or one of our loved ones, bringing with it sorrow and grief.'"

From Nigeria:

"My turning point in my walk with God came when by chance I got to know about BBS. However, since then, I have become more dissatisfied with my place of worship (Pentecostal) than ever before...I have been following the grace message for some time now, and your teaching on *The Measure of the Ministry* convinced me that a grace ministry is supposed to start in my environment."

From Pennsylvania:

"Thank you for your fantastic messages at the Lebanon conference. I have been able to use those Scriptures to help a few understand more Scripturally that it is all Christ's work in salvation and none of ours...I am amazed daily with your messages (we are now in Philippians), how you are continually pulling out thoughts, meanings, and underlying intentions that I never even perceived existed."

From British Columbia:

"Thank you for your wonderful MP3 audio Bible studies. I have listened to all of Galatians, am working through I John and am looking forward to Philippians...We have introduced some friends to God's Word rightly divided and they have embraced this teaching. Now we meet together once a week and listen to your messages. It is just wonderful! Please continue to put your messages online!" (Sounds like a church-in-the-home to me!—Ed).

From India:

"The *Searchlight* has been really very sound and encouraging, and often added materials and teaching to my thought and devotions. I have a small Brethren Assembly...Would you allow us to use some of your teaching materials on our website?"

From our Inbox:

"I was 17 when my dad found *Grace Chapel* in Laramie, shortly after retiring there. What a blessing and what peace came over my dad when his life-long search for clear, right thinking about the Bible was finally fulfilled...It's never too late to discover the beauty and peace that comes from embracing the Mystery fully. My dad experienced it when he was 65. I did when I was 17."

From Maryland:

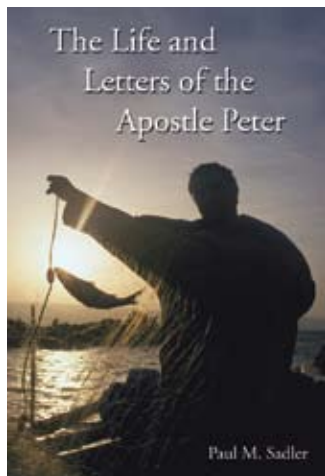
"When my mother told me Christ didn't come for me as a Gentile, that He came for the lost sheep of Israel, and that Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, I thought she had lost her mind. I thought she had developed dementia...When you study the Bible 'rightly divided,' the whole Bible comes alive. I could never turn back."



"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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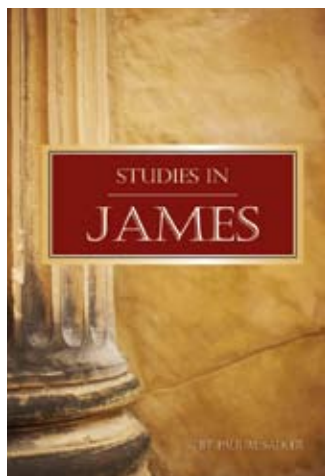
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News and Announcements

🇨🇦 Canadian Contributions: We want all our Canadian readers to know that you can contribute to *Berean Bible Society* through *BBS Canada*. Just send your donation to 54940 Light Lane, R.R. #1, Vienna, Ontario N0J 1Z0, and *BBS Canada* President John Peters will send you a receipt for tax purposes. Please place any literature orders through our main office here in Germantown, Wisconsin. *BBS Canada* is the way to go for all our Canadian friends!

Brother David Herrmann was called home to be with the Lord this past summer after a long battle with various health problems. Most will remember Dave as a well-known Bible teacher from Alton, Illinois who was instrumental in introducing many to the unsearchable riches of Christ. We want to convey our condolences to his dear wife, Betty, and his family who share in our blessed hope and glorious calling.

New Position: *Berean Bible Institute* graduate Timothy Board spent the past two years serving alongside Pastor Jeff Seekins of *Community Bible Church* in Tipp City, Ohio, as an intern and part-time associate pastor. Pastor Board will now minister full-time alongside Pastor Calvin Lowder of the *Valley Bible Church* (www.valleybibleconnections.org) of Stephens City, Virginia. The Board's covet your prayers as they engage this new phase in their lives and ministry.

"Speaking the Truth in Love" is a program that airs on Thurston Community TV, Channel 22, in Thurston, Washington. Tune in Sundays at 1 p.m. and Tuesdays at 7 p.m. to hear Gary Smith teach the Scriptures through, verse by verse. In the past nine years, Brother Smith has taught all of Paul's epistles through, and has begun again in Galatians. He can be reached at (360) 923-2391 (or gasmith10@juno.com) with any questions.

Our cover this month features a photo taken by Ken and Barb Wardius, a couple who travel extensively in search of unique photo opportunities. You can view some of their impressive gallery of photographs and e-mail them with any questions at their website: www.crestwoodcreek.com.



The cover lighthouse photo is of *Big Bay Point Light* in Big Bay, Michigan. The lighthouse dates from 1896, part of a plan to build a lighthouse every 30 miles of Great Lakes shoreline and reduce shipping collisions. It is an operational lighthouse and also a Bed and Breakfast.

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