

# The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 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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# From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Nearly two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote the Colossians, saying: “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you...” (4:7). In the same vein, he wrote to the Ephesians:

**“But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus... shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs” (6:21,22).**

In both of these passages, the apostle was responding to a need, the need for God’s people to know about the state of the man who had come to mean so much to them spiritually over the years. It was *natural* for the saints to want to know how Paul was doing, and it is heartening to see the great apostle respond to this need with a special envoy, whom he sent to make known to them *all things* concerning himself.

Not much has changed in the Body of Christ over the past two thousand years, at least not in this respect. God’s people are *still* eager to know the state of the men of God whom they love in the Lord. Thus when Pastor Sadler was diagnosed with lymphoma earlier this year, we immediately began receiving calls, emails and letters, all wanting to know his state. These communications have not abated with the passing of time, and it seemed that everywhere I traveled this year, everyone wanted to know: “How is Brother Paul?”

With that in mind, we are thankful to be able to report that after six rounds of chemotherapy, final tests indicated that the boss (as I call him!) was cancer free. As he slowly regained his stamina, he began coming into the office here and there, after some months of working at home as strength permitted.

But as cancer survivors everywhere can testify, chemotherapy leaves a body greatly weakened, and vulnerable to any number of maladies. And so it was that right after Pastor Sadler’s first full week back in the office, he experienced a setback that took him into the hospital, where he was diagnosed with pneumonia, bronchitis, and a weakened heart condition.

His doctors are prescribing plenty of rest, so please don’t be disappointed if you don’t hear back from him in response to any well wishes you might send his way. But he delights to hear from you, and since “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22), we would encourage you to keep those cards and letters coming, as you remember him in prayer before the throne of God’s grace.



Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ricky Kurth

# This Is for Jesus

By Cornelius R. Stam



Visiting a young pastor and his family some time ago, I observed a touching example of true Christian stewardship.

It was nearly time to go to church when the pastor's wife reached for a small box containing a few coins and handed it to her little boy. The coins represented the boy's earnings received for jobs done, good behavior, etc.

Seriously the boy contemplated the contents of the box and took from it two dimes—a substantial portion of the whole. Then looking up at me he said earnestly: "This is for Jesus."

Several Scriptural lessons about Christian giving came to mind as we observed this simple incident.

This little lad had already been taught the responsibility of participating systematically in supporting the work of the Lord (I Cor. 16:2). He gave "as he purposed in his heart"; no one suggested how much he ought to give (II Cor. 9:7). After thinking it over carefully, he gave sacrificially (II Cor. 8:7,9). He "proved the sincerity of his love" (II Cor. 8:8) for it was with sincere, child-like affection that he said, "This is for Jesus."

Most of all, perhaps, his gift was a living demonstration of Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:8: "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." There was no fanfare, no boasting, no evidence of any feeling that he was doing a lot for the Lord; just an attitude of simple, humble satisfaction that he could join others in supporting the work of Christ.

How much we, who have been hardened through the years, can learn from children!



# Are You Secure?

By Paul M. Sadler

The postwar years from 1945 through 1960 were not only years of rebuilding in America, they also served as an era that provided a sense of security. Those who pursued the “American Dream” found that their employers supplied steady employment along with a comfortable retirement plan. Security seemed to be woven into the very fabric of our society.

But as a new day dawned in the 60’s, storm clouds began to gather, threatening the very existence of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Everything seemed to come unglued overnight. With the Cuban Missile Crisis, the tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was at an all-time high. Most of us sat on the edge of our seats as a nuclear assault appeared to be imminent. The assassination of leaders stunned us, leaving everyone astonished as to how cruel our fellowman can really be. As if that wasn’t bad enough, our teenagers suddenly went berserk, rebelling against

anything than had even the semblance of authority.

As the years wore on, unexpected mergers and acquisitions of numerous companies started taking place on a nationwide scale, causing many Americans to face uncertain futures. More recently a number of corporations have pulled up stakes, relocating overseas, taking with them thousands of jobs. As a result, many have found themselves out on the street, unemployed, laden with a feeling of betrayal. Gradually the great industrial nation of the world has found itself in a state of fading glory, destined now to become a service nation.

The “American Dream” has to many become the “American Nightmare” as jobs, marriages and our sense of security have been uprooted. Insecurity is a plague upon the land which will not soon pass. It has caused many people, including believers, to pause and consider: “Is there anyone that we can trust?” “Is anything certain in this world of uncertainty?”

## HOPE FOR THOSE IN DESPAIR

**“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2).**

The fact that the believer is in the world, yet not of the world, does not diminish the reality that the world around us affects us. Sometimes being weary from life itself can even cause one’s confidence in the Lord to be shaken. This is especially true of new believers who are still finding their way in the Scriptures. To heighten their sense of uncertainty, just about the time they are getting a handle on things spiritually, someone informs them that they are not eternally secure and could lose their salvation! Were it not for the grace of God, such times could result in a lethal injection of fear.

The Apostle Paul, when he writes to Titus, calms these fears, turning our doubts into hope—the hope of eternal life. He declares that there is someone we can implicitly trust in a world of instability, and that someone is the Lord God Almighty.

God has promised the free gift of eternal life to all those who believe on His Son. If God has spoken it, then you can be absolutely certain that He will bring it to pass just as He has promised. He “cannot lie”! The Word of the Lord through the prophet Balaam lends additional confirmation to the Apostle’s teaching:

**“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the Son of Man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).**

When God says that He parted the Red Sea and one and one half million Israelites crossed on dry ground, I unequivocally take Him at His Word, based on two truths: one, “*nothing is impossible with God*” and secondly, He “*cannot lie*”! All believers can look forward with confident expectation for God to honor His Word and grant sincere believers the gift of eternal life. Be it known, however, that He will also stand true to His Word by confining all of those who reject the gospel to the Lake of Fire.

## SALVATION

When we consider the subject of salvation, it is crucial to remember that “*salvation is of the Lord.*” It was God who conceived the plan of salvation and implemented it at the Cross, where Christ died for our sins. God’s justice, having been satisfied, paved the way for His acceptance of the finished work of Christ on our behalf. Now in love He turns to us, revealing that we must respond by faith to what He has accomplished to receive forgiveness.

**“We are bound  
to the Father  
by the blood of  
Christ for all time  
and eternity.”**



There is not a believer reading these lines who would hold that we can save ourselves from our sins. Every true believer will acknowledge this conclusion to be

unconditionally true, because it is based on the living Word of God. This being the case, we must also acknowledge that the Lord must, according to His Word, *keep* us saved or *eternally secure*. If we agree that no one has the power to save himself, then it naturally follows that no one has the power to keep himself either. Our complete salvation, past, present and future, depends wholly on *Him*.

### **HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE**

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).**

Is it possible to help those who believe they can lose their salvation? Certainly, but first we must be equipped with the proper Scripture passages in order to minister effectively to those who hold this view. Here are two suggestions: Select a passage, such as Romans 6:23, and *graciously* ask your friend to read it carefully. Then inquire, “When you initially believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, did you receive the gift of eternal life as promised in this verse?” Brace yourself, because he is going to respond, “Definitely!” Gently reply—again I say gently—“In what sense was it eternal if you can ever lose it?” You see, if you can lose it, then it was never eternal to begin with. The Holy Spirit used the word “eternal” because that is exactly the thought He wanted to convey. If you believe God is eternal, then the life we inherit at the moment of regeneration must also be eternal, because Christ is our life (Col. 3:4).

The next inquiry that naturally follows is, “If you can lose your salvation (eternal life), *which* sin is it that will place you *again* in danger of the Hell fire judgment to come?” Understanding the Word rightly divided means that we must confine ourselves to Paul’s revelation, seeing he is the apostle to the Gentiles and received the commands of Christ for the Church today (Rom. 11:13; I Cor. 14:37).

After years of studying Paul’s Gentile epistles, I know of *no* passage of Scripture that sets forth a sin or sins whereby one could lose his salvation. Where God is silent the believer is also bound to be silent. But some will say, “It’s the more serious sins named in the Bible, ones like murder or adultery that can finally condemn us.” But according to Proverbs 6:16-19 the sins of pride and lying are a greater abomination in the sight of God. Furthermore, Paul says, “There is therefore now **no** condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). In other words, those who are in Christ are beyond the reach of judgment.

Another dilemma you will find yourself in if you hold to the doctrine of “eternal insecurity” is trying to determine when you’ve sinned that undefinable sin too many times. If for example it was lying, is it one lie or the tenth lie you may tell? A bewildered saint said to me one time, “I am not really sure, but I’ll know it in my heart when it happens.” I needed only to remind him of the words of Jeremiah. “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” (Jer. 17:9).

## OUR RELATIONSHIP

**“And because ye are *sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).**

**“In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).**

A father and a son had worked together for several years when one day the son became disgruntled and angrily approached his father. “Dad, I’ve had it. I don’t like how you operate this business and I feel you have treated me unfairly. I plan to move away, change my name, tear up my birth certificate, and I never want to see you again!”

While the fellowship between the father and the son had been disrupted because of the young man’s sinful behavior, the son could never change the fact that he was still the son of his father. He could not alter the blood relationship he had with his father. Such a relationship is irreversible for all of the days of one’s life.

If you count this to be the indisputable fact that it is, then you must also acknowledge the Scriptures when they instruct us that we have the same type of relationship, spiritually, with our heavenly Father. The Word of God declares that we are the sons of God, which clearly indicates we have a *relationship* with Him. We are bound to the Father by the blood of Christ for all time and eternity. Since this relationship can *never* be broken, it can only mean that every believer in Christ is eternally secure!

But will some object that this teaching provides a license to sin. Quite the contrary! Which is

better: a father who rules with a rod of iron demanding the letter of the law, or a father who, out of love and respect, is willingly obeyed? The latter of course, which is a divine exhibition of *grace*. Because God has achieved so much on our behalf, it is out of love and respect for Him that we would not want to do anything that would bring disgrace to His holy name.

## ETERNAL SECURITY

**“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,**

**“Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:13,14).**

From this passage we learn that the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the eternal security of every believer. The moment we have received Christ as our personal Savior, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ, *sealing* us there until we are redeemed bodily at the Rapture. We are not sealed with a mere circular impression as on a legal document, but rather the Scriptures disclose that the Holy Spirit *Himself* is the seal that secures us in the Body of Christ. Years ago when a woman sealed jars of jelly with wax, the jellies were sealed *by* the woman, but *with* wax. The wax was the seal. In similar fashion, according to Ephesians 1:13, believers are sealed *by* the Father “with that Holy Spirit of promise,” the Holy Spirit Himself being the Seal, keeping them safe forever.



During biblical times, when a ruler would fix a seal to a certain thing, whether a den or a tomb, it was done to *secure* his decree, thus making it irrevocable. When the presidents persuaded King Darius to make a declaration against petitioning any God, the King was forced to place Daniel in the lion's den, sealing it with his own signet. The record informs us that the sealing with the King's signet was done, "that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel" (Dan. 6:16,17). If this is true in the affairs of men, how much more so in the affairs of God. *Every* believer has been sealed with the Holy Spirit, and this proclamation of God can *never* be reversed—we are safe and secure in the everlasting arms.



The Apostle Paul goes on in the Ephesian letter to show us that the earnest of the Spirit is the pledge or the down payment until the transaction is completed. To place earnest money down in Paul's day, as well as in our day, meant three things:

- 1) It was a non-refundable down payment which made the deal binding.
- 2) If the payor did not follow through on the deal, he forfeited the earnest money.
- 3) It was a foretaste of what was to come.

When purchasing property it's a common practice to place a certain amount of earnest money down. If the buyer fails to purchase the property, he forfeits the earnest. So it is with God. He has given us the earnest of the Spirit (the indwelling Spirit). Would God the Father forfeit God the Holy Spirit? By no means! Therefore, when the trump sounds at the Rapture, God will claim His purchased possessions, ushering us home to be forever with Him (I Thes. 4:17).

### THE BENEFITS OF BEING SECURE

The world can fall apart around us, but "*if God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:31). In a world of uncertainty and chaos, the believer can rest assured that he belongs to the Lord, who is able to keep him until the day of redemption.

One of the many benefits of understanding the doctrine of eternal security is that it removes the *fear* of ever losing our salvation and the confusion that accompanies it. Instead of finding ourselves in an emotional frenzy, wondering if we have gone too far in sinful behavior, we can rest in the truth that, by His grace, we are still safe and secure. This will motivate us to serve the Lord *because He loves us*. We then can devote all of our time and energy to carrying out the commands of Christ to the praise of His glory!

**"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"**

**"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we**

are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

**“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.**

**“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,**

**“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39).**

In Verse 36 of this passage, Paul borrows a passage from the Old Testament to point out that we are like sheep—vulnerable! As we know, sheep are susceptible to vicious attacks by predators, much like we are. Simply name the name of Christ in a public forum and you will be shocked to find how much the natural man hates that name and what it stands for. In some countries, your life would be in jeopardy.

But, thankfully, the apostle goes on to add, “we are more than conquerors.” The term *conquerors* in the original language conveys the idea that we are actually “super conquerors.” Today, the world is captivated by “super heroes,” “super sonic jets,” “super novas,” but we are to understand that we’re *super conquerors* in Christ. The fact that we are more than conquerors has nothing to do with our ability, but everything to do with Christ and what He has accomplished for us at Calvary. Because of Christ’s finished work, we are justified freely by His grace, forgiven, and sealed with the Holy Spirit. As we have seen, we are beyond the reach of judgment.

In my pulpit ministry, I often use the following illustration to illustrate why we are more than conquerors in Him. In my left hand I hold an open Bible, which represents the Lord Jesus Christ, but in my right hand I have a piece of paper representing the sinner who has trusted Christ. I then place the folded piece of paper into the Bible and close it. Then I point to the front of the Bible and ask, “What do you see?” Christ! We are in Him! We are perfect in Him! So when God the Father looks at His beloved Son, He sees His holiness and His righteousness put to our account.



With this in mind, the apostle now poses the question: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” After all, we are up against super-human enemies, but Paul was fully persuaded that nothing could separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. He then methodically covers all the potential things that some might claim could separate us. We will only briefly touch on them:

**Death**—While it is true that the time of our death may be uncertain, even if it lays its icy grip on our shoulder and claims us, we will be with Christ, which is far better.

**Life**—Not one circumstance in this life can ever separate us. Life can be daunting at times, but the Lord and His written Word are a present help in a time of need. No circumstance in life can undo the supernatural work that was done on our behalf by the Spirit of God when we were saved. Oftentimes you will hear young people, who are struggling to live the Christian life, say, “I’m bored!” Well, just tag along with me for a week and I’ll put you to work. My wife says, I’m a master at giving people something to do! I guess it’s my lot in life. In short, get involved in some area of the Lord’s work; it’s the remedy for boredom!

**Angels**—This would include both the elect and fallen angels. Of course, Satan and his fallen host would like nothing better than to destroy you. While he can rob you of the joy of your salvation if you allow him, he cannot rob you of salvation itself because it is vested in Christ. Not even Satan can separate you from the love of God. Why? He’s already a defeated foe (Col. 2:15).

**Principalities and Powers**—Although principalities and powers are sometimes references to angelic beings, seeing that Paul already dealt with them in the previous category we can safely conclude he is speaking about earthly rulers. Historically, those in authority have not looked favorably on the Christian faith and those who expound it. Interestingly, their persecutions and incarcerations only served to strengthen the resolve of the Church. They threw John Bunyan in prison, hoping to silence him, but he responded by writing *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

**Things Present**—Such as sin! We are forgiven of all of our sins, past, present, and future. In Paul’s epistles, forgiveness is always in the past tense. It’s a finished transaction as far as God is concerned.

**Things to Come**—Not even the Judgment Seat of Christ can separate us, for we are judicially forgiven in Christ.


**Height**—We can be lost in space at the outer reaches of the universe, but thankfully, we can never escape the love of God.

**Depth**—Like the thirty-three miners in Chile who were trapped a half mile underground, we can descend into the lowest part of the bowels of the earth and, even there, the love of God surrounds us.

**Other Creatures**—No created thing in this life or the next can ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul was able to make this foolproof argument that we are *safe* and *secure* on the basis that the gift of eternal life is not based upon our actions, or the lack thereof, but Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice for us. Our good friend Mildred Dillon, who’s now with the Lord, penned the following little song that we’ve all sung at one time or another. It was written shortly after two tragedies in her life.

### Safe Am I

Safe am I, safe am I  
In the hollow of His hand  
Sheltered o’er, sheltered o’er  
With His love forevermore.  
No ill can harm me, No foe alarm me,  
For He keeps both day and night;  
Safe am I, safe am I  
In the hollow of His hand. 

## Question Box

*“Did the Lord die on a cross or a stake?”*

The Greek word for “cross” in Scripture is *stauros*, a word which is said to denote an upright pale or stake. Similarly, the word for “tree” (I Peter 2:24) is *xulon*, a word which is also said to give no indication of a cross. But if these things be so, why then did our translators render *stauros* as “cross”? Were they influenced merely by tradition, as is often alleged?

We believe rather that they were convinced the Lord died on a cross when they compared Scripture with Scripture. In John 20:25, we read that Thomas refused to believe the Lord had risen, saying, “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the *nails*...I will not believe.” Here we see the word “nails” is *plural*, proving our Lord’s hands were secured using more than one. This indicates His hands were nailed to a cross, a procedure that would require *two* nails, one for each hand. If the Son of God died on a stake, His hands would have been folded over one another above His head, and affixed with a single nail through both, as were His feet. The Romans would not have wasted the time, the nails or the effort it would require to use *two* nails on His hands if they could have fastened them with *one*.

Further evidence that He died on a cross is seen when we compare the Scripture in Matthew 27:35-37, where we read that they crucified Him, “and set up *over His head* His accusation.” If the Lord died on a stake with His hands nailed over His head, God’s Word would say that His accusation was attached *over His hands*, not over His head.

Finally, remember that the Passover blood was applied to “the two side posts” as well as to “the upper door post” of the homes in Israel (Ex. 12:7), a picture of how the blood of “Christ our passover” (I Cor. 5:7) flowed from wounds on His left and on His right, but a picture which would not be an accurate type if the Lord’s blood was shed on just *one* post.

Of course, when it comes to our Lord’s death, the real issue is not *how* He died, but *why*. “Christ died *for our sins*...was buried, and...rose again” for our justification (I Cor. 15:3,4; Rom. 4:25). “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31).  
—Pastor Kurth

# The Mystery of God's Will and The Dispensation of the Fullness of Times

By Pastor Ken Lawson  
*Grace Memorial Church, Edinburg, Illinois*

**“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph. 1:9,10).**

As terrorism spreads into our once tranquil lives and conflict heats up in the Middle East, troubled people are beginning to ask, “How far will it go? Are we headed for destruction, another national tragedy?” Those who know the Bible have the answer to these questions and many more. They are little disturbed by the seeming progression of evil, knowing that God has a plan and is working that plan.

Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, writes by divine revelation when he assures us that God has already made known to us “the

mystery of His will” and how it relates to the completion of His plan—“the dispensation of the fullness of times.” What does Paul mean by these terms, and why are people still in the dark regarding them? Let us begin with an explanation of these key phrases, and let related Scriptures shed additional light on the issue.

## **The Fulfillment of God's Plan**

First, we will look at the dispensation of the fullness of times. What is it? We know that a “dispensation” in the Bible covers a period of time in which God dispenses or administers His program to those who willingly become the recipients of His working. Thus many of the newer translations have rendered it “administration” (Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25; 1 Cor. 9:17). “The fullness of times” refers to the season when God's purpose concerning man has reached its conclusion. Three

main views have emerged from Bible teachers as to its identity:

- 1) It refers to the present dispensation of Grace.
- 2) It is the Millennial Kingdom.
- 3) It is the New Heaven and New Earth.

Its main characteristic is God gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in Him (Eph. 1:10). The idea of God gathering all people together into Christ would certainly remind us of the Church, the Body of Christ, which is being formed in the present dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:1,2). In fact, a major hallmark of the Body of Christ is its positional oneness in Christ (Eph. 2:15,16; 3:6; 4:4-6; Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13). However, the passage is not speaking only about the gathering together of all people, but of “all things” in Christ. These things will be identified in a moment, but for now we must understand that the oneness of the Church, the Body of Christ is the precursor to an even greater oneness (unity) that God will affect at the end of the ages. Paul tells us of “the fullness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25) but the context is clear that it does not include everything contemplated in “the dispensation of the fullness of times.”

The Millennial Kingdom described in Revelation 20 and numerous other Bible passages comes closer to the realization of the fullness of times. But rebellion, judgment and death will still be manifested at the conclusion of the 1000 year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7-15). The best candidate for

the dispensation of the fullness of times is the New Heaven and New Earth along with the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-22:7).<sup>1</sup>

### Governmental Authorities

Next, let’s look at the phrase “all things.” It is God’s purpose to gather together in one “all things” in Christ. This is inclusive of both heaven and earth. Whenever Paul uses this phrase, it is almost always qualified by the context. In this case, we must leave the near context and refer to a similar passage to see the identical phrase with more information.

**“For by Him were *all things* created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things* were created by Him and for Him: and He is before *all things*, and by Him *all things* consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in *all things* He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:16-18).**

Here we see the phrase “all things,” of which Christ Himself is the Creator. They encompass heaven and earth, visible and invisible. We might think of the beauty of the earth, sea and sky, or the expanse of space with planets, stars and galaxies. But Paul has a very specific “all things” in mind. They are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. These are governmental positions of rank and authority in heaven and on earth. God created these for the orderly administration of His kingdom. But something went horribly wrong. God’s creation

rebelled against Him! Untold multitudes of angels followed Satan's scheme to dethrone their Creator-God. The heavenly realm then became the habitation of wicked spirits whose sole purpose is the doing of the devil's will and the relentless opposition to the purpose of God (Eph. 6:12).<sup>2</sup>



God still has His holy and elect angels who remained faithful to Him but now the heavens themselves are not clean in His sight (Job 15:15). Neither was Satan satisfied with spreading devastation in the heavenly places. When God created the first man and woman, he was there to tempt them into rebellion. All he had to do was dangle the bait in front of them and trick them into one act of self-will. The eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil seemed like a harmless thing, but it was disobedience to the revealed will of God. As a result, Adam and all his descendants were plunged into sin. What would God do now? What could He do? Satan's evil scheme surely must have been hatched as a result of his realization that this scenario would paint God into an impossible corner. Since God is

pure and righteous, His own holy nature would prevent Him from fellowship with fallen creatures. Since heaven and earth were now in a state of rebellion, Satan (himself a fallen creature) could now rule by default. Satan's promise of an improved status in his kingdom must have been a pull that many of the angels could not refuse. But blessed be God! He that knows the end from the beginning foreknew everything and began to unveil a master plan of redemption that would not only judge sin but restore both heaven and earth to God's eternal kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Manifold Wisdom of God**

This plan is not only for restoration but also for further glorification. It will make both Christ and His people eternal beneficiaries. This explains the problem of evil and why a loving God would allow sin to enter the world. I do not believe it would have been allowed unless His plan provided infinite gain for both man's blessing and God's glory.

### **The Earthly Sphere**

The first key step in the revelation of God's plan began with the call of Abraham. The failure of man to rule righteously for God had been fully demonstrated by the rebellion resulting in the Flood of Noah and the Tower of Babel. At this point, God chose Abraham and his seed to be the channel of blessing to the nations. Through Abraham's one Seed (Christ) and his multiplied seed (Israel), God's prophetic program will result in the reconciliation of all things in earth back to God (Gal. 3:16; Gen.

12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:5-7,18; 17:1-8; 22:17,18). Again, while all people on earth will never be reconciled, all things in relation to governmental authority will someday bow to the power of God.

Today, relatively few Christians are placed in such positions of authority and even they soon find the deck stacked against them when they strive to implement Christian principles. In that day, Christ will place only those who have been faithful to acknowledge His Lordship in their lives to reign with Him in glory (Matt. 19:28; 25:14-23; Luke 19:12-19). What a wonderful day that will be when Christ returns to rule in righteousness on David's throne over Israel and the nations. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Dan. 2:35,44; 7:13,14; Isa. 11:9; Zech. 14:9).



## The Celestial Sphere

But what about the heavenly places? The reconciliation of all things in earth, while the fulfillment of Israel's prophecies, would nonetheless be a hollow victory were the heavenlies to remain alienated and in the hands of the enemy. Christ reigning in holiness on earth while the devil rules through fear and intimidation

in heaven? Unthinkable! God's plan only contemplates unconditional and total victory. But Israel's prophecies only cover the earthly sphere. Nowhere do we read until Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, of an aspect of God's plan which encompasses the heavenly realm. This is where "the mystery of God's will" comes to the fore. While it is the last part of the plan revealed, it will be the first realized in history. Here is where we must explain how God's will is used in Ephesians 1:9. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will...."

Often our thoughts of God's will are confined to His will for our lives, our families, our local church or our nation. Certainly these aspects of His will are vitally important and we get much needed light from God's Word. But, in the context, let's try to expand our thinking of God's will to include a much wider scope of His design from "before the world began" to "the ages to come." In other words, God's will may also be called God's *plan* and is identical to "the eternal purpose" (literally God's plan for the ages—Eph. 3:11). So the *mystery* of His will is the *secret* of His plan for the ages. Whatever this secret is, it is *not* the plan in its entirety, but the key which unlocks God's wisdom and makes the whole thing work.

## The Mystery of God's Will

We know that God has already made this mystery known to us in the epistles of Paul, but a misreading of the grammar of Ephesians 1:10 has often led to a misidentification of its content.



The dispensation of the fullness of times in verse 10 is often understood to be either a definition or a further explanation of the mystery of God's will in verse 9. This is *not* the case as we have shown. It all depends on how the first words "That in" are taken in verse 10.

"...God has a plan and is working that plan."



They are the Greek preposition *eis*, which carries the idea of a motion toward something (i.e. toward the dispensation of the fullness of times). For clarity, we can read it this way, "Having made known to us the secret of God's plan, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: that in (i.e. with a view toward, or, with regard to) the administration of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all governmental authorities in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him."

When understood in this way, the mystery is a part of God's plan (or will) which was formerly kept secret in ages past but now is revealed to His saints through Paul's ministry (Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:25-27; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:8). This mystery is the spiritual program which God has implemented today for the Gentiles and results in the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, through faith in Christ's

shed blood. It is the final missing piece which completes God's plan for the ages and spells total victory for God in the heavenly places.

The book of Revelation (Chapter 12) describes a future war in heaven which will take place near the middle of the coming tribulation. The Church, which is His Body, will already have been caught up to heaven (1 Thes. 4:15-18). Michael and his angels will fight against Satan and his angels, and Satan's unholy horde will be cast down to the earth. This will leave a large vacancy in the heavenly government described in Ephesians 6:12. God could have appointed His holy angels to fill the void but that dignity is reserved for faithful members of the Body of Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4).

### Putting It All Together


Paul is the apostle chosen of God to reveal the truth concerning the present dispensation of the grace of God and the formation of the Body of Christ. Not until Paul do we read of the heavenly citizenship, heavenly position in Christ, heavenly home, heavenly blessings, heavenly warfare, or heavenly kingdom (Eph. 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 4:10; 6:12). Thus we see that the Church is the instrument through which God will reconcile the things in heaven while Israel is the instrument by which He will reconcile the things on earth. Satan will be cast out and judged with his angels in the lake of fire. Then will God's kingdom be *one in scope*,<sup>4</sup> reaching the whole universe, and *eternal in duration* by encompassing all future ages.

While Israel and the Church will maintain their distinctive identities, there will undoubtedly be a close spiritual kinship and fellowship between them as members of the family of God. How important it is to be reconciled to God now and enjoy in ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). Eternity will be far too short to utter all His praise. All of this will be due to Christ's sacrificial work on Calvary's cross for us all.

### Conclusion

God has provided a plan which assures total victory over sin and evil for both Himself and His people. It extends to every area of creation and encompasses the fulfillment of the prophecies of Israel's program and the secret (mystery) program for the body of Christ. In this plan, we have revealed to us the reconciliation of all things in the government of God's kingdom. The multifaceted excellencies of His character will be put on display for all creation to appreciate, including His wisdom, knowledge, power, goodness, love, mercy, grace and holiness.

We who believe have begun to see His glory and can have confidence that the One who does all things well will work out the end perfectly in spite of how things now appear. This is the essence of Christian belief, "for we walk by faith, not by sight." When we are diagnosed with incurable cancer, when we lose our employment, when our spouse leaves, or a loved one is taken in death, we can encourage our hearts with the

assurance that, for the believer, the end will be a participation in that eternal glory whose surpassing splendor no mortal imagination can conceive. 

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### Endnotes

1. It is fascinating to me that Paul's history and prophecy cover a wider frame than that of Israel's prophets. It reaches back "before the world began" (Eph. 1:4; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:9) to the ages to come, and the dispensation of the fullness of time (Eph. 2:7; 1:10). Compare this with Israel's prophetic program, "since the world began" (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21). Whether Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 reaches beyond the New Heaven and New Earth is interesting, but because of a lack of Biblical detail, it cannot be dogmatically asserted.
2. It seems from certain Bible passages that the angelic rebellion included the upper echelons of angelic powers who followed Satan. Only Gabriel and Michael are named as the chief angels who held to the things of the Scriptures of truth (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; 10:13,20,21; Luke 1:19,26).
3. There can be little doubt that the devil is now "the prince of this world" and "the god of this age" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19). However, God still maintains His sovereignty over all things (Dan. 4:17,25,32; 5:21; Job 1:6; 2:1; Col. 2:10).
4. This is one area where I depart from some of my fellow grace pastors. However, my departure is more of perception than substance. The Bible never speaks of the *kingdoms* of God (one in heaven and one in earth) but only of the *kingdom* of God (singular). Likewise, the Bible never speaks of the two purposes of God but rather of the *two-fold purpose*. God's kingdom is one but is manifested in two different spheres—heaven and earth. God's purpose is to place Jesus Christ on a throne whose authority will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. This universal kingdom will be formed by the judgment of all rebellious beings and the exaltation of God's people to glory. While this is the *goal* of God's purpose, we do well to remember that the *center* of the purpose is the cross (Col. 1:20).



# Freedom from Loneliness

By Pastor John Fredericksen

Since we often hear that loneliness is a problem for many around the holidays, we share the following article with our readers.

**L**oneliness is a problem that everyone faces sooner or later. It comes when we move to an unfamiliar location, when we're the only Christian in our work place, when the children leave the nest, when we can't find a mate, when a divorce separates us from spouse and children, or when our life partner is taken in death. No one is immune.

The world recognizes the pain of loneliness. Do you remember Roy Orbison's song, "only the lonely, know the way I feel tonight," or when the Beatles sang of Eleanor Rigby, "all the lonely people, where do they all come from?" If the world can admit such a problem, believers should.

In fact, many of God's people have struggled with loneliness. Remember that Elijah complained he was the only one left in Israel standing true to the Lord. Recall how the Apostle Paul "had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother" (at Troas, II Cor. 2:13), but was later comforted when he arrived (7:6). Perhaps the best example is that of David in the Old Testament, when he fled from Saul's murderous attempts on his life. In Psalm 142 he complains, "my spirit was overwhelmed within me...no man cared for my soul" (3-4). According to I Samuel 22:1, it was during this time that David lived literally in a cave, and figuratively in the cave of despair and loneliness.

So when you feel like you're in this same emotional cave, you're not alone, other saints have been there too. The best news is, David found his way out of this cave, and we can too, by learning about what helped David. Comparing four passages of Scriptures from this time frame will give us the needed answers.

David began his recovery by *pursuing his relationship with the Lord*. While in the cave, he tells us, “I cried unto the Lord with my voice...I poured out my complaint before Him” (Psa. 142:1-2). Many saints conclude God is with us when things are going well, but think when trouble comes, the Lord has left us, or at least maintains a great distance. David knew this wasn’t so. No matter how alone he felt emotionally, he knew his God was always there. That’s why he could write, “Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living” (v. 5).

When storms come: trees need deep roots, buildings a sure foundation, and boats an anchor. David’s anchor was his unshakable relationship with his Lord. He could have sung with conviction the two hymns, “No Never Alone...He’s promised never to leave us, never to leave us alone,” and “we have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll.” So when David was in the cave of loneliness, he did not drift further away from his Lord. He used it as an opportunity to develop a greater intimacy with Him. In so doing, he was also laying his requests before the Lord, asking for God’s intervention.

While believing this principle is our very foundation for coping with loneliness, it was not enough. Pat answers like, “All you need is God,” or, “Just trust the Lord,” fall short of being the divine design in defeating loneliness. Though some might initially think it sounds unspiritual, David needed more than a closer walk with the Lord to be restored from this dark emotion.

David needed to *pursue human relationships*. According to I Samuel 22:1-2, God did not merely leave his troubled child alone in a cave to cultivate a deeper prayer life. He didn’t design any of us to live in isolation. The Lord made each of us with a need to be with people. Genesis 2:18 confirms this when God said of Adam, “it is not good that the man should be alone.” Likewise when Paul uses the illustration of a physical body to demonstrate how dependent believers are upon one another, we’re told, “the eye cannot say unto the hand...nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you” (I Cor. 12:21). We need



other people to share life with, to uphold us in prayer, to comfort us when we’re down, to encourage us, and sometimes merely to listen—allowing us to tell them, “I’m at my lowest ebb.”

So God sent two groups David’s way. His family, “and all his father’s house” (I Sam. 22:1b), went down to see him first. Then “everyone that was in distress...in debt, and...discontented, gathered themselves unto him” (22:2). David could have made the mistake of refusing their

company. In the emotional state he was in, he would have probably preferred solitude. Many today decline the offers of those who reach out to them, choosing to retreat into their gloomy homes while holding onto memories of yesterday instead of making memories today. But, David accepted the opportunities for companionship sent his way by his gracious Redeemer.

Perhaps it was while in the cave of loneliness that David learned the lesson of Proverbs 18:24, “a man that hath friends must shew himself friendly.” When family and friends came to David’s lonely cave, he accepted their company and reached out to them in friendship. Our application may be different, but the principle is the same. When we fight the battle of loneliness, we have the responsibility before God to accept the opportunities for friendship divinely sent our way, and to reach out aggressively to others.



David took a further step away from loneliness by **pursuing God’s purpose for his life**. God had revealed that David was to be the King of Israel. Regardless of how bad circumstances or personal weakness were, a cave was no place for him to be. He needed to be pursuing God’s will for his life.

For David this meant training the unruly men God had sent his way, and molding them into an army of soldiers. So, David “became a captain over them,” and they became disciplined and fearless warriors. Some proved to be “mighty men of valor” and from this group rose men who would later become his cabinet members in the palace, capable of great responsibility or wise counsel. All of this, along with David’s rise to the throne, became possible because David pursued a purpose brighter than dwelling in the cave of loneliness. This decision was a turning point for David, and for many other lives who were impacted by a man doing the things God had for him to do.

Understand that this was no easy task for David. The men he molded into soldiers were a raucous bunch. He described them as “lions...that are set on fire...whose teeth are spears...and their tongue a sharp sword” (Psa. 57:4). But David softened their hardness by pointing them to the promises of God (Psa. 34:6-10), giving instruction in godliness (34:13-14), and inviting them to “magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together” (34:3). If such a pattern could dispel loneliness and impact others for the Lord in David’s day, it will for us too. When loneliness comes knocking, it’s a time to be busy in the work of the Lord, seeking to influence others for Christ in our local church.

***Pursuing the path of praise*** also helped defeat David's loneliness. This may have been more an act of discipline than emotional spontaneity. Nonetheless, his response was "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psa. 34:1). This was no small part of what stabilized the heart of this godly saint. In Psalm 57:7 he said, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." We know that the timing of this was during David's days of dwelling in the cave of loneliness, because both chapters refer to the fierce "lions," or men, assembled around him.


While in his most difficult time and setting, David's despair was vanquished by focusing on praise and singing to his God. Since music is the window to the human soul, we can readily see how it affected David so positively. When you're in the cave of loneliness, turn it into an echo chamber of praise to the Almighty. Its reverberations will lead you into the sunlight of a healthier frame of mind.

One further step from loneliness was David's willingness to ***pursue intimate relationships again***. Just because David left his cave did not mean his problems had all been solved. Saul was still seeking to do him harm, so enduring injustice was still a way of life for this child of God. The natural thing for him to do would have been to erect an emotional wall so that no one could get very close to him. He could have reasoned, "I was close to Saul and his family, and that makes my hurt all the deeper. I'll never let anyone get that close to me again."

This should sound familiar because believers react this way today. After unsuccessful attempts to find a mate, after a painful divorce, after the loss of a loved one, or after being hurt by a fellow believer, many refuse to let anyone get close to them emotionally again. But it's a terrible mistake that leads into the cave of loneliness.

David allowed his heart to open up once again to his old friend Jonathan, and what a blessing it was. Jonathan "went to David... and strengthened his hand in God" (I Sam. 23:16). Similar rewards are waiting today for those who will once again open their hearts to the pursuit of close relationships. Will you open yourself up again to close relationships? Will you begin today?

In reality we can't always eliminate loneliness. God may allow the refining process of lonely circumstances to darken our doorstep for an extended period of time. If we find this to be so, we must guard against making foolish decisions that will lead to deeper sorrow and regret. Like David, we need to pursue godly and sensible paths that God can use to enable us to cope with or even dispel our loneliness.

We can also be comforted that the pain of loneliness won't last forever. Jewish kingdom saints were given a promise in Revelation 21:4 that is no less applicable for us. One day, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." May God's grace be sufficient for you until that day comes. 



# A Harsh Wind or A Gentle Breeze?

By Dave Stewart, Bible Teacher  
*Faith Bible Church, Steger, Illinois*

**“Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.**

**“He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.**

**“A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth” (Isa. 42:1-3).**

Eric wasn't a newborn, but he was a very young believer in the Lord. Saved only a short while, Eric was being seduced by a heretical sect that would have led the unsuspecting babe to spiritual ruin. It was a “happy accident” then, when Eric stumbled upon a home Bible study where the truth was being taught by a fiery and zealous young preacher. Immediately the preacher began to educate Eric in all the ways that his new spiritual family was wrong. When Eric objected that this was not the way he had been taught, the preacher would respond, “That’s because they didn’t teach you the truth. If you think what I’ve told you so far is different than what that cult is teaching you, wait till I show you this!” It was more than the tender young believer could bear. Despite the best intentions of the preacher to “make him see the truth,” Eric was all but forced back into the waiting arms of the cult from which he might otherwise have escaped.

Sarah had been saved as a young adult and served the Lord faithfully for many years. Her oldest and dearest friend, however, noticed that lately Sarah’s devotion was not only slipping, but very quickly seemed to have all but disappeared. She was speaking in ways she had never spoken before, doing things her friend could never have

imagined Sarah doing. Of course her friend tried to encourage her, inviting Sarah to pray, to read, to do personal devotions together, but nothing, it seemed, could rekindle Sarah's flame. Finally in desperation her friend admonished, "Look, Sarah, you've been a Christian for a lot of years now. There is no excuse for this behavior! You'd better pull yourself together, and fast!" Well, Sarah did pull herself together. She pulled herself together, walked out the door, and neither her friend nor the Lord have heard from her since.

Isaiah says that, when the chosen Servant would come, He would be so gentle as not to break a bruised reed, nor quench a smoking flax.

A reed is nothing more than a fragile stick of grass. A bruised reed is more fragile still. Eric was a bruised reed. Tender and vulnerable, he required the most gentle handling. And if that didn't work, then even more gentleness (I Thes. 2:7; II Tim. 2:24).


Flax is the material from which lamp-wicks were made. A smoking flax is a wick that once bore a flame but is now snuffed and soon to grow cold. Sarah was a smoking flax, and again, harshness was not the Lord's prescription.

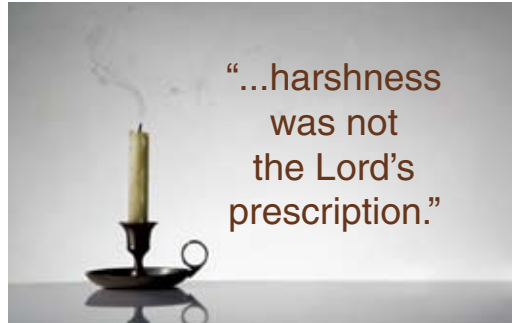
**"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12).**

In the Isaiah passage, God refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as "mine elect." Above, Paul instructs us to be "as the elect of God." In both places the outworking is the same: mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering.

There is most assuredly a type of person toward whom Paul recommends, even commands, strong handling. But if the reader would take away something from the sad experience of Eric's preacher, or of Sarah's friend (both of whom, by the way, are the same person, and writing this article), let it be that sharpness against a tender blade of grass can only cut it through, and that a dwindling flame is extinguished by a harsh wind, but rekindled only by the most gentle of breezes.

As Elijah discovered, every work of our Lord is not done in the whirlwind. When the prophet found himself disillusioned, even wrong-minded and weary of serving, it was the still small voice of gentleness and encouragement whereby that bruised reed was healed and the smoking flax reignited.

May each of us be led to the same discovery, and adorn ourselves always "as the elect of God." 



“...harshness  
was not  
the Lord’s  
prescription.”

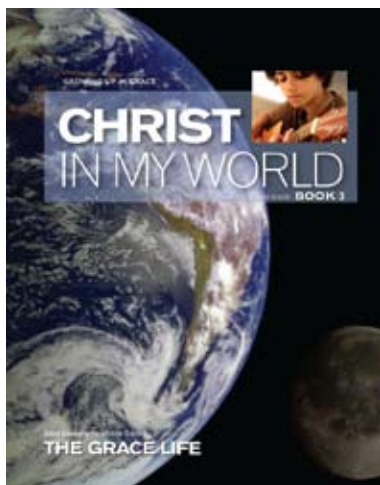


# Growing Up In Grace BEACON



***Growing Up in Grace* (GUIG) is the Sunday School program of the Berean Bible Society. It is designed to provide quality, grace-based Sunday School lessons for youth.**

**Teaching:** GUIG presents quality, grace-based lessons to youth throughout the world. The lessons are not the superficial type generally written for youth. The lessons cover a great breadth of subject matter and always adhere to the Scripture, rightly divided.



**Latest Release:** Middle School Book 3, “Christ in My World,” has just been released (13 lessons total).

Lesson topics for Book 3 are:

- The Bible and Archeology
- Comparative Religions
- The Bible and Science
- Growing in Grace
- Grace and You
- The Great Escape

**Future:** The BBS Board is delighted with the acceptance, outreach, and progress of GUIG. The Board recently made a commitment to support GUIG through the high school years, provided funding is available. This ministry is having a profound impact on the lives of our youth (and the grace movement). Thank you for your prayers and support. Gifts for GUIG should be sent to the BBS and clearly designated for GUIG.

**Please check out our new website!**

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



**Growing Up In Grace**

Sunday School Program

Phone: (262) 255-4750

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## BBS Letter Excerpts

### From Oklahoma:

“I am new to dispensational teaching...My wife and I were just delivered from a cult of bondage and legalism, and are basking in the grace of God.”

### From Florida:

“I have used Pastor Stam’s books before in my Bible study and teaching. I thank God for his insight. Recognizing the dispensations is the *key* to correctly understanding the Scriptures.”

### From Ohio:

“I am so thrilled about your organization, and helping me to rightly divide God’s Word...your authors are putting out some awesome Truth...no longer do I have to fear God’s Word to the point of confusion and gross misunderstanding.”

### From Nigeria:

“My Christian life has been greatly transformed through your teaching. I want some clarity on the issue of eternal security for the Hebrew believers....”

### From North Carolina:

“I attended the conference in the Raleigh area with my daughter. We were blessed and met many believers. I thank God for the BBS ministry.”

### From Kenya:

“Thank you so much for the *Searchlight*. It has been a blessing to me and to the students I teach, and to the church I pastor.”

### From Texas:

“You have changed my thinking and given me peace and understanding. My love to you all.”

### From Wisconsin:

“September’s *Searchlight* had an article in it for teens. My daughter really enjoyed reading it! I was wondering if you could consider printing more articles that are geared directly to teenagers...I taught my daughter the seven basic dispensations, and then introduced her to the idea of the kingdom interrupted. She was astounded and so excited to make sense of so many things all at once! It was so exciting to see her get serious about studying the Word, rightly divided!” (We plan to publish more articles from our teen Sunday School lessons.—Ed).

### From our Inbox:

“A Christian brother shared two books with me. I read them and was in awe. They are *Our Great Commission* and *Things That Differ*. I want to order them for myself, so I will be able to read and reread them any time, and learn how to show others about the dispensations. I was so excited to learn from these two books.”

### From Maryland:

“I have been studying the mid-Acts position for a number of years. While I do not agree with it, I do appreciate the drive that your movement gives me to study to show myself approved unto God.”

**From Michigan:**

“I wish the enclosed check could be larger. I have enjoyed the *Berean Searchlight* for many years. It is not only part of my personal Bible study, but a valuable resource for the classes I teach in Bible School and Junior Church.”

**From our Inbox:**

“I was just wondering if Pastor Sadler has finished his commentary on Revelation? I am most interested! (Revelation is a massive undertaking. With that in mind, I am about halfway through the project. Thanks for your patience!—PS).

**From Oregon:**

“Pastor Fredericksen, I have to write and say a huge THANK YOU for your article in this month’s *Berean Searchlight*. It was remarkable, very clear and succinct....”

**From North Carolina:**

“Thank you for your recent teaching on Ephesians 4:1-6. I had never read a teaching on this before, and I had always had some questions on the passage.”

**From Massachusetts:**

“Thank you...for showing the saints the distinction between God’s message for the Jews and His message for the Gentiles, and for showing how Christ is the end of the law for all who believe in Him.”

**From our Inbox:**

“You have given me much to think about and consider, but just briefly reading through your response for the first time, it has already provided me with some intensely sought insight.”

**From our Inbox:**

“Very good *Two Minutes with the Bible* devotion. I passed it on to my online Bible study group, and some others.”

**From Colombia, South America:**

“I want to express my thanks to the *Berean Searchlight* for this free subscription. I found your website recently and I reckon it excellent in sound doctrine and useful for my Christian growth. *I am blessed with your teaching.*”

**From our Inbox:**

“Thank you so much for your response to my question concerning baptism...After finding your ministry, I have learned much about Scripture that is new to me.”

**From Kentucky:**

“I’ve recently been listening to Brother Kurth’s sermons on *Galatians*. What a relief to hear someone preach about the finished work of God’s Grace.”

**From our Inbox:**

“I thank you for your response to my question about Paul’s laying on hands in Acts 19:6. Your answer satisfies my ‘wonderment’ over it.”

**From Illinois:**

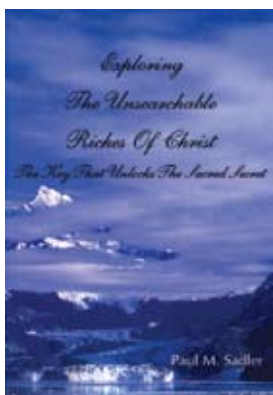
“My wife went to live with the Lord...it gets pretty lonely around here when one has been used to living with an angel...please don’t discontinue sending the *Searchlight*. It has been part of our daily devotions. Though Mary can no longer share them with me, daily devotions still continue.” (Thanks to the faithful saints who support us, we will continue to send it.—Ed).



“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

# December Double Feature

*Share the Grace message with your friends!*



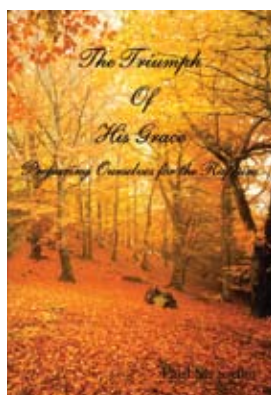
## Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ

By Paul M. Sadler

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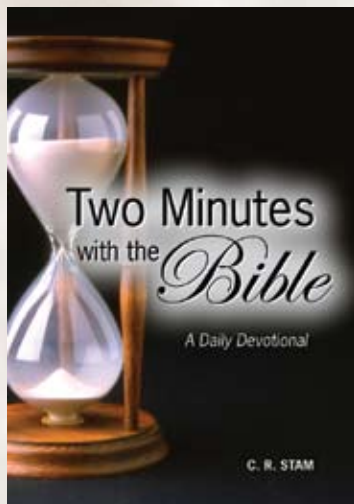
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# News and Announcements

**Two Minutes with the Bible** is now back in print, just in time for holiday giving. Pastor Stam always said that grace believers should *use* Christmas to get good grace literature into the hands of others, and the daily devotional format of *Two Minutes* that begins with January 1 makes it the perfect year-end gift. See the ad on Page 29 for more information.

**A Grace Milestone:** When *Grace Bible Church* of Madison, Wisconsin, recently celebrated their 60th anniversary, Pastor Wes Barteck invited former GBC pastor Floyd Baker to come and speak at special services that were held to commemorate this historic event. In a day when many a church has come loose from its moorings, *Grace Bible Church* has maintained their focus on the message and ministry given to the Apostle Paul. May God grant them many more years in His service.

**A Grace Conference:** *Grace Bible Church* of Madison has decided to begin their 61st year of ministry with a March 12-13 conference that is scheduled to feature Paul M. Sadler, Floyd Baker, Jr., Ed Bedore, Joel McGarvey, and Kevin Sadler. Pastor Wes Barteck will be happy to supply you with additional information when you contact him at 608-222-2205 or at [madisongbc@att.net](mailto:madisongbc@att.net).

**Another Grace Conference:** *Grace Bible Fellowship* of Nokomis, Florida will hold their annual spring Bible conference on February 18, 19, & 20, a conference that will feature this year's invited guest speaker, Pastor Jim Penney. This annual event is also an opportunity to meet and fellowship with noted grace writer Robert Brock, who assists Pastor Whitey Meyers in the ministry of the Word at GBF. For more information, contact Pastor Meyers at 941-496-8051, or at [elvnmyers@verizon.net](mailto:elvnmyers@verizon.net).

**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](http://www.crestwoodcreek.com).



The cover photo is of *Crisp Point Lighthouse* located on Lake Superior near Whitefish Point, MI. The stretch of coast between Whitefish Point and Grand Island became known as "The Shipwreck Coast" because of violent storms out of the north pushing vessels onto the shore.

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