

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2011



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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,

December has always been all about the giving and receiving of gifts. Looking back, however, I can only remember a few of the gifts that I received this time of year. I recall the toy army tank I was given as a boy, the studded snow tires I received after turning 18, and not much else.

I have a slightly better memory of gifts that I *gave*. I can remember a stationary bike that I gave my father after some chest pains prompted his doctor to caution him to get more exercise. Then there was the Catholic Bible I gave my mother, knowing her religious background would make her more likely to read God's Word in the version put out by the church in which she was raised.

My fondest memories are of the *people* who gave me gifts, not just in December, and not just the kind that come wrapped in ribbons and bows. I often thank God for my parents. We often hear horrific stories from people who were abused as children, so I frequently thank God for their gift to me of a "normal" childhood. I am also thankful for the friend who cared enough about my soul to invite me to church, where I trusted Christ as my Savior. When I am thankful for these ones, my prayers then turn to my first pastor, who led me to Christ, taught me the grace message, and instilled in my heart a hunger to serve the Lord in the ministry. This of course leads me to thank God for BBS founder Pastor C. R. Stam, who took a young man like me under his wing and mentored me, giving me the privilege of working closely with a truly great man of God. These givers and their gifts will never be forgotten!

This December, you too have the opportunity to give spiritually to others in ways that will never be forgotten. Since the Bible teaches there will be memory in heaven, the spiritual gifts you give today will be remembered throughout eternity! Why not be like my friend and invite someone to church for the holiday, where they too might hear the gospel and be saved? You could also follow the lead of my first pastor, and suggest to some young man with self-doubts that the Lord could use a man like him in the ministry. Or become a spiritual mentor to some young person and allow him to benefit from your years of experience in the Christian life, as Pastor Stam did for me.

When it comes to ways of giving spiritual gifts, the possibilities are endless, but *time is running out*. After the Lord comes, it will be eternally too late to be an unforgettable giver. Why not start *today*?

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth





THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

Historically, it is a well-established fact that Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King. Matthew and Luke record our Lord's arrival with remarkable simplicity that even a child can understand. But it is the Apostle to the Gentiles who explains the *significance* of the incarnation of Christ.

According to Paul

When Christ left heaven's glory, He as God, *emptied* Himself of the outward manifestation of His attributes. It was essential that the Lord *veil* the glory of His deity so sinful humanity could exist in His presence.

—Philippians 2:6,7

Christ's entrance into the world was through natural means like any other birth. He was born of the woman that He might accomplish the great work of redemption.

—Galatians 4:4,5

Our Lord humbled Himself by stepping into a sinless human form so that He might experience all the trials and temptations we encounter. Therefore, He took upon Himself the form of a servant that He might minister to others.

—Philippians 2:7,8

Into this pure, sinless vessel was poured our sins and iniquities. As a result, He was made sin for us so that His righteousness might be imputed to us.

—II Corinthians 5:21

The Manger and the Cross stand at the opposite ends of our Lord's earthly life, but they are uniquely connected by a special revelation given to Paul that "Christ Jesus **came** into the world to **save sinners**." It has been said, "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He's not born in you, your soul is still forlorn."

Although tradition often overshadows the truth at this time of the year, may God, in His infinite grace, use us as instruments to show a lost and dying world the *Way*, which is Christ Jesus. From all of our staff here at the *Berean Bible Society*, may you and yours have a joyful holiday season in the Lord.



A Man After God's Own Heart

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

FOUNDATIONS

“The world’s tallest building. The Burj Khalifa opened in Dubai January 4, 2010. At a staggering 2,717 feet tall—more than half a mile high—it easily overshadows the previous tallest building (Taipei in Taiwan is but 1,671 feet tall) and it stands double the height of the renowned Empire State Building. Built at a cost of \$1.5 billion, the Burj Khalifa accommodates 12,000 people, and captured several other world records. Those include:

“Tallest man-made structure...;

“Building with most floors...;

“Highest elevator and world’s fastest elevators (40 mph);

“First world’s tallest structure to include residential space;

“Highest outdoor observation deck (on the 124th floor)....

“While most attention focuses on its height, perhaps more important is what lies buried beneath the building. Without a solid foundation, the world’s tallest building would become the world’s longest pile of rubble. Extending 164 feet deep under the Burj Khalifa lies 58,900 cubic yards of concrete weighing over 120,000 tons. It took a year just to build the foundation.

“So it is with great lives. What people see—what we marvel about—are the great heights to which some people seem to soar. Yet, supporting any truly great life is a solid foundation. A heralded career is built on foundational principles like dependability and

hard work. A celebrated sixtieth wedding anniversary results from deep love and selflessness. Successful retirement depends on years of responsible money management.

“Jesus said, ‘Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock’ (Matt. 7:24-25).



“Foundation matters. We cannot start wrong and expect to finish right. Reach high in your life! But remember first to start with a solid foundation.”¹

Of course, the foundations that men build in their own strength will one day surely collapse, but the foundation which is Jesus Christ will never falter nor fail (I Cor. 3:11). While the words of our Lord in the above passage were specifically intended for Kingdom believers, the principle is just as true today as it was when He first spoke it. Any member of the Body of Christ who hears His words found in Paul’s epistles,

and puts them into practice, is like that wise man who built his house on a rock. He will be able, by the grace of God, to weather any storm this life has to offer.

Every believer rests upon the sure foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, but those who aspire to be great, or have an attitude of superiority, are destined to fail in the eyes of the Lord. God passes by the proud and exalts the humble (Prov. 29:23). He often takes ordinary believers who have no aspirations of greatness whatsoever and makes them great, that He might receive the honor and glory.

A good example is David. He was the youngest son of Jesse, who tended his father’s sheep in Bethlehem. On the social scale of those days, a shepherd was lower than dirt. This is validated in Joseph’s counsel to his brethren. He instructed them that, when they appeared before Pharaoh, they were not to tell the king they were shepherds, “for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians” (Gen. 46:31-34). God took David from this lowly state and made him king. Because he humbled himself before God, he was promised that One of his descendants would one day sit on his throne. Of course, we now know that One to be Christ (Acts 2:30).

A PROFOUND STATEMENT

“And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will” (Acts 13:22).

As the Apostle Paul ministered the Word to those at Antioch, in Pisidia, he reviewed the history of the chosen nation for the sole purpose of pointing out that Israel, as a nation, was unfaithful. He then points his bony finger into the face of his countrymen to say, in essence, do not also reject the grace of God. During the course of Paul's discourse, he made reference to David. This was by design, to momentarily remind his countrymen that, unlike them, David was a man after God's own heart, in that David submitted himself to the will of God. Accordingly, Paul challenged them to do the same by believing that Christ died for their sins, was buried, and rose again (Acts 13:28-30,39). He begs them not to reject the grace of God.

What an amazing statement! God says of David that he was "a man after mine own heart." David! You mean David, the one who had more shortcomings and failures than you could shake a stick at? Yes, he's the one! We are exceedingly thankful that God isn't looking for perfection because, if He were, none of us would ever be used of Him, including David. He uses us in spite of our faults, our inadequacies, and our weaknesses. To the contrary, His strength is made perfect in our weakness (II Cor. 12:9). We merely need to be a willing vessel through whom the Spirit of God can work.

But what exactly does it mean to be a man or woman after God's own heart? The end of Paul's statement regarding David gives us the answer. God Himself said that it is someone "which shall

fulfill all my will" (Acts 13:22b). In other words, it's someone who is in full agreement with the Lord, that what is characteristic of God is characteristic of him. The life of David is a prime example.

A TOUCHING STORY

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (II Sam. 9:1).

The house of Saul! You will recall after God had removed His blessing from King Saul, Saul tried to kill David numerous times. On one occasion he threw a javelin across the room at David, narrowly missing him as he slipped away into the night. Shortly thereafter, word came to Saul that David and his men were in the wilderness of En-gedi. Saul took three thousand men with him to the wilderness to hunt David down and put him to death. Upon their arrival, Saul retired to a cave to rest before beginning his pursuit.

Unknown to Saul, however, David and his men were hiding in the sides of the same cave. Once Saul was asleep, David's men tried to persuade David to kill his archenemy while he had the opportunity. Instead, David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe and fled. Afterwards, David said to his men, and later to Saul,

"The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD" (I Sam. 24:6).

Here David exhibited *mercy*, which is one of the attributes of God. If someone were going to lift his hand against Saul to kill him, it would not be David's hand. As far as David was concerned, Saul was still his master and the anointed of the LORD; therefore, he left the matter with the Lord. If Saul perished by the edge of the sword, it would be at the hand of someone else, not David's. This demonstrates the caliber of David who was always in close touch with the LORD's will before he acted. Is this true of your walk with the Lord?

During the years that Saul attempted to take David's life, Saul's son, Jonathan, intervened at times on David's behalf to warn him of his father's plans. Needless to say, David and Jonathan were the best of friends. The Scriptures say of Jonathan that he was "knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (I Sam. 18:1). And David felt the same way about his friend. Now, there was nothing whatsoever inappropriate here regarding their relationship, as some have insinuated. Rather it is to be understood that David merely had a friend who was closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). Like God, David was faithful and loyal in his relationships with others. Oh, that the same might be said of all of our relationships!

Jonathan knew that David was God's anointed and that one day he would ascend to the throne. Unsure what fate awaited him, Jonathan made David promise that, whether Jonathan was living or dead, David would never cut

off his kindness from Jonathan's house (I Sam. 20:14-16). That day David entered into a covenant with Jonathan.

In biblical times, when a new king came to power, it was customary to execute the members of the former monarchy. This often included the servants as well. This was done hoping to insure that there would never be an insurrection against the new monarchy. As we return to our text, David asked a question that we're sure got everyone's attention in the king's court:

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (II Sam. 9:1).

Years after the death of Saul and Jonathan at the hand of the Philistines, David inquired if there was anyone of the household of Saul to whom he could show kindness for Jonathan's sake. The first thing that stands out about David's inquiry is that he honored his word. He kept his promise to Jonathan not to cut off his seed or destroy his name from the land. David's action mirrors that of God, Who always honors His Word and keeps His promises.

In the days of Noah, for example, the Scriptures declare, "And God remembered Noah," after the flood (Gen. 8:1). In time past, God promised to send a Redeemer, but after four-hundred years of silence following the Book of Malachi, all hope seemed to fade like the morning mist. But then we are introduced to Zacharias and Elisabeth, who were the

parents of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Redeemer. The name Zacharias means, “God has remembered.” God honored His Word and sent His only begotten Son to redeem mankind.

I remember years ago that a man’s word and a handshake were his bond. Today it is necessary to have a signed contract, with witnesses, and even then many fail to keep the terms of the contract. David didn’t need a signed contract; without a second thought, he emulated God and was true to his word. In your interaction with others, do you always keep your promises? David did!



As we return to David’s question, it was discovered that Ziba, a servant of Saul, would be able to answer the king’s inquiry.

“And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?” (II Sam. 9:2,3a).

Notice it was “the kindness of God” that David was using as a pattern for his action. As Ziba stood before the king, he was all too well aware that both he and

Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth, could lose their lives with a flash of the sword. They were both tied to Saul, who was the chief enemy of David before he ascended to the throne. So Ziba’s concern would have been well founded. Undoubtedly he breathed a sigh of relief when David said, he wanted to show his *kindness* to a descendant of Saul.

“And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet” (v. 3b).

They say that wisdom is knowledge that is applied properly. Ziba’s response is an example of this very thing. Bear in mind that the king’s court was a place of majesty, and beauty, and honor and glory. It’s where the upper crust resides! It has been correctly observed that, rather than explain to the king why this wasn’t a good idea, Ziba simply said, Jonathan has a son who is lame, and left it at that. Essentially, he was cautiously forewarning the king that he may want to reconsider his decision because Mephibosheth just wouldn’t fit in here and he doubtless would be an embarrassment. In other words, there’s still time to save face.

Although David heard every word Ziba said, the fact that Mephibosheth was lame didn’t deter him whatsoever from showing his kindness to Jonathan’s son. That’s the nature of kindness, which, according to James Strong, has the idea of *favor*. Kindness doesn’t ask what type of man is he! Nor does it ask what happened to him, or how long has he been lame, or is there any hope he will walk

again. You see, *grace* **accepts** us in whatever state it finds us. It asks the same question David asked: “Where is he?”

“And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar” (v. 4).

Lo-debar was a land without pastures, according to Strong. It was about as remote as you can get. If you consult a biblical map of that period you will find that it was on the back side of the desert, far from the bright lights of the city of Jerusalem. This indicates that Mephibosheth was doing his best to keep a low profile—as the old saying goes, “out of sight, out of mind!” So imagine his surprise when the Captain of the guard of David’s army knocked on his door to take him to the king who had inquired about him. Incredibly, it’s human nature always to think the worst. Trembling, Mephibosheth probably thought to himself, this is it; it’s curtains for me! This is clear from something David said to him when he appeared before the king.

“Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not” (vv. 6,7a).

When David perceived that Mephibosheth was visibly shaken to be in his presence for fear of what was next, he consoled his newfound friend with: “Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s

sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father.” The first emotion that swept across Mephibosheth had to be a sense of relief. But what he didn’t anticipate was the king’s *kindness* to restore all of the land of his grandfather, which made him a wealthy man.

But David’s kindness didn’t end there; he also invites Mephibosheth to eat at his table and announces to all in his household that “he shall eat at my table, as one of the king’s sons” (vv. 7b,11). That’s grace! This young man understood his unworthiness to sit and dine with the king when he said, “A dead dog, as I am!” (v. 8). But it wouldn’t have been grace if Mephibosheth was worthy or had earned David’s kindness.

“Thankfully,
God isn’t
looking for
perfection...”



God had shown His kindness to David, anointing him King of Israel, when he was nothing more than an insignificant, unworthy shepherd boy. This wasn’t lost on David when he followed God’s example and bestowed his kindness on Jonathan’s son, whom he could have just as easily killed. David truly was a man after God’s own heart. He loved what God loved and hated what God hated. May the same be said of us; but I fear that some have allowed the world to cloud their judgment when it

comes to living a godly life in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S WILL TODAY

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1:9).

It should also be our heart's desire to be a man or woman after God's own heart. But how does what Paul said about David, “which shall fulfill all my will,” apply to us? We must remember that David lived under the law and the prophets, so his understanding of the will of God was very different in many respects. While we can glean many helpful things from the life of David, as we have seen, we must turn to Paul's letters to discover God's will for the Age of Grace.

If you want to *fulfill all the will of God* today you must understand and *receive* the following:

First, you must be cognizant of the fact that Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). His apostleship is very unique! He was not one of the twelve, nor was he the thirteenth apostle of the Kingdom. God specifically called him to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16).

Second, God introduced a new message to Paul known as the Mystery, which was hidden from ages and generations past (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:25,26). Since it was a secret hidden in the mind of God, it was necessary for the apostle to

receive a *special revelation* from the Lord of glory. This is what Paul means when he states in Galatians that his gospel is “not after man;” that is, it did **not** originate with any man **nor** did anyone teach it to him, including Peter (Gal. 1:11,12). Of course, this is why Paul calls his message the *unsearchable* or *untrackable* riches of Christ. It cannot be found in the Old Testament, the four Gospels, or the early chapters of Acts. The first footprint of these riches is found in the conversion of Paul.

Third, there is a new creation today through which God is channeling His blessing, known as the Church, the Body of Christ. For the very first time, Christ is presented as the *Head* of the Body of Christ in Paul's epistles. We are not Israel, nor are we spiritual Israel; we are members of the true Church, which is His Body (I Cor. 12:27 cf. Col. 1:18).


Fourth, the commands of Christ for the Church today are solely found in Paul's epistles (I Cor. 14:37). With this in mind, the members of the Body are to uphold the sevenfold unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace found in Ephesians 4:3-6.

Fifth, the heart of the Mystery that was committed to Paul is *Calvary*. With this revelation was imparted a new set of terms for salvation in this dispensation. Today we are responsible to tell the lost that Christ died for their sins, was buried and rose again (Acts 13:28-30; I Cor. 15:3,4; I Thes. 4:14). Here too, it is essential to follow the pattern of Paul as we evangelize the lost to Christ.

While much more could be said, it is sufficient to say that these five pillars rest squarely upon our foundation, Who is Jesus Christ in His heavenly ministry. Once this sure foundation is laid in your life, it will allow the Spirit of God to direct you where you can most effectively serve the Lord. Without any reservation, you will be able say, "Lord I want what you want in my life."

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).

The goal in our Christian life is to walk well-pleasing to the Lord, the result of which will make us fruitful in every good work. For

example, we are to "do the work of the evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5). With a knowledge of His will, we understand that our instructions for evangelizing the lost to Christ aren't found in the Great Commission. We are rather operating under a greater commission, the commission of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:14-21). Armed with an understanding of His will, we will be like a fruit tree that bears fruit year after year for God's honor and glory. 

Endnote

1. Kent Crockett, www.kentcrockett.com, "Foundations." (The passage quoted in Matthew from another translation was changed to the AKJV to be consistent with the other quotations from the AKJV throughout the article).



If you are among the many employees who must put in for their vacation time in January, we thought we'd extend to you an early invitation to the...

44th Annual Berean Bible Fellowship Conference

Location: Cedar Lake Conference Center, Cedar Lake, Indiana

Dates: June 16-21, 2012

Theme: *The Preeminence of Christ* (Col. 1:18)

Bible Hour Teacher: Pastor Jeff Seekins

For questions or additional information, please contact David Brown (BBF President) at 920-693-3039 or pineridge@tds.net, or visit the BBF website at: www.bereanbiblefellowship.weebly.com.



The following Sunday school lesson is from the Middle School Book 3, *Christ in My World*. To order, call 262-255-4750 or visit www.growingupinGrace.com.



Key Verse: Romans 3:26

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

LESSON 36

GRACE & YOU

By Steve Shober, BS, MS, ND

Part 1

We all want to be treated fairly.

ENGAGE

What does God's grace have to do with fair treatment?

ENLIGHTEN

Introduction

One thing we probably agree upon is that we all want to be treated fairly. For example, if you studied hard for a test but your teacher, for some strange reason, decided to give all the students on the left side of the room an A and all those on the right side an F, would that be fair? Those on the right would say, "This really stinks, we did not get what we deserve, it's just not fair." In fact, we have all thought or said, "Why did this happen to me, it's not fair?" However, we will see being treated fairly can take on a whole new meaning when we look at life from God's perspective. Which raises the question, does God even care about me being treated fairly; if so, what will He do about it? In the next two lessons we will explore what grace means and how it relates to being treated fairly.

Being Treated Fairly

Suppose you were in a store with a friend and your friend took something and put it in his/her pocket and intended to steal it. You asked your friend if that is what he/she was going to do. You even told your friend that stealing was wrong. Your friend said that he/she planned to take it anyway because everyone does it, and it is so inexpensive that it can't really be stealing. You did not know what to do. When checking out of the store the clerk asked if that was all you two had, and you said nothing. After leaving, the clerk called the police, and they picked-up you two for questioning. If you had said something to the clerk you could have prevented the crime of stealing, but you also would have "ratted-out" your friend. You did not have time to think about this before it was all over. Now you are in trouble. Your parents will get involved, you will be treated as a suspect even though you did not

want to do anything wrong, and, well it just is not fair.

As we examine this story more closely, you knew stealing was wrong, you even tried to talk your friend out of it; that was good. Yes, you tried to stop it once, but the second opportunity to stop it (when the clerk asked if that was all) you did not speak the truth, and that makes you an accessory to the crime. An accessory is someone who does not do the actual crime but was involved in it, even if that means you were against it but did not do all you could to stop it. We will see being treated fairly involves justice, mercy, and grace.



Justice: Being treated correctly and fairly is called justice—you get just what you deserve. The law assures that justice is done. Thus, the law is designed to protect the innocent (store owner) and to assure everyone is treated fairly and properly. If you do good the law leaves you alone, but if you do wrong you get punished. An accessory (even to a minor crime) is guilty of breaking the law, the slightest offense is punishable, but to a lesser degree. In our example, you were wrong and deserve punishment. **Justice**

assures a person gets what they deserve—that is being treated fairly!

Mercy: You are an accessory to the crime, you deserve some punishment. However, the judge will look at your past record with the police, school record, age, attitude, the fact you did say something to your friend, and the nature of the crime. The judge will most likely decide to let you off with a warning to never do this again and say, “Now you know better.” This judge could have put you in a teen correctional facility, but has shown you mercy. **Mercy is not giving you what you really do deserve**, like a pardon after doing something wrong. **Mercy is not fair** (you deserved punishment but did not get it). The judge’s mercy “let you off the hook” with no penalty.

Grace: Grace takes this whole matter to another level that few can understand. If the judge were to let you go free (mercy) and for some unexplained reason gave you \$100, then that is grace. You were treated very kindly and favorably even though you did not deserve it. **Grace is undeserved or unmerited favor** (you do not merit the good done to you). By the way, notice that **grace is not fair** (the judge did not give everyone \$100). The concept of grace is receiving good when you really deserve nothing or something bad. For some reason someone goes beyond forgiving your wrongs and gives you something good and you deserve none of it.

If we were given our choice, clearly mercy and grace would be it—the law and justice are too harsh

and unforgiving. Now wait, **mercy and grace are not fair!** Maybe there are times when being treated fairly is not what we want, or is there more to consider?

Discussion:

Some say that God will balance our good deeds against our bad, and if we do mostly good we will go to Heaven.

(Thoughts: Before being saved our good deeds are really totally worthless (Phil. 3:7-8). The law [civil and God's] judges what you do wrong, not good deeds. So, when you steal something you are judged for that one wrong, not the fact you did not steal 100 other times. The righteous Judge [God] sees us all as sinners and that deserves a penalty. This all points to our need for a Savior who paid our penalty.

God and Grace

In the Past: God had an eternal purpose and plan before He created the world. That purpose included proving many things to humans, so we could see our sin and our need for God's intervention in our lives. Throughout the Bible, God showed mankind that no one will maintain a right relationship with Him. This was proven to us by the various dispensations. Recall, a dispensation is the way God works with mankind to "give out" (dispense) His grace. The things we think would keep us in a right relationship did not: innocence, conscience, divinely guided government, God-given promises, even His Law.

However, God knew this would be the case. So, throughout all history He had a way to save humans in spite of their failures (sin). After all, what sense would it be to create humans, know they would sin, and then condemn them all to Hell?

Today in the Age of Grace:

God has always provided for each person's salvation. Salvation requires forgiveness of sin. Being treated kindly, on top of being forgiven, would be an extra benefit. Please recognize salvation is given to unworthy sinners. A person does not get punished for their wrong, and they get something good instead. In all ages, God's offer of salvation is based upon His grace, i.e., people are treated favorably even though they do not merit it.

There is no reason God has to save anyone, but thankfully He does. He does specify what is required, and if we obey that, He "gives out" His grace as a free gift. It is never given out (dispensed) based upon merit because no one would ever deserve it. What God asks of us in order for Him to dispense His grace has changed throughout the Bible.

Salvation has always been based upon God's grace. God dispenses His grace based upon obedience to Him. Obedience requires faith in God and doing whatever He says. In the Old Testament and the Gospels, they were required to have faith and to do "works" as evidence of their faith (build an ark, bring a sacrifice...). Noah would not have been saved if he had not built the ark. So, faith with works were the items God required to dispense His grace. Today we too

must obey God; however, in our Age we receive His grace by faith only, no works! This is what God requires; we have no choice. It is His grace we need, so He tells us how we can get it.

Discussion:

Dispensing grace, what does that mean?

(Thoughts: As sinners none of us deserve salvation. Salvation is based upon God giving us something we do not merit [grace]. He determines on what basis He will dispense [give out] this free gift.)

Is Life Fair?

Throughout history sinners have been saved, but have not paid for their sins; how is that **justice**? On top of that, they get special favors and blessings from God, how is that **fair**? From an earthly perspective, it is **not fair or just** when a believer receives a pardon, when they do not pay for their sins, or when they are blessed with good things.

God is just, so He cannot forget sin. Each sin has to be accounted and the penalty paid. Recall, Romans 6:23 says (brackets added), **“For the wages [payment] of sin is death.”** What we earn from our sin is spiritual death. Unless we have our sins forgiven, somehow, we are doomed.

From Romans 3:24-26, we see this issue from a heavenly perspective, and things change dramatically. Romans 3:25 reads, **“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,**

to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” First, the phrase with the word “propitiation” means, “Christ’s blood enables God to act with mercy and to forgive those who believe Christ’s blood was shed for them.” Second, it is His righteousness (His total lack of sin) that enables forgiveness. Finally, the “forbearance” phrase refers to the fact that for thousands of years God covered millions of people’s sins. Notice those past sins could not be forgiven because it was not possible for the blood of sacrifices to do that (Heb 10:4). So, for thousands of years God “passed over and ignored” former sins without punishment (forbearance). Then, with the death of Christ, all those sins (from Adam to the last person saved) were forgiven for believers, because they were punished and paid for by the death of Christ. Sin’s penalty was paid in full. **We can now be pardoned and it is totally fair.**

Consider this analogy: Suppose each of our sins was a speck of dirt on the floor. You could sweep the floor and then push the dirt under a rug, no one would see it. That is similar to what God was doing with sin in the past; He was allowing animal sacrifices to cover them (like a rug), but they were not forgiven (dealt with in a just manner). However, if you kept sweeping dirt under the rug, for a huge number of people, over thousands of years, what would happen? Well, you would have a mountain of dirt with a little rug on top. The dirt would not really be covered any more.

Christ had to die so that the sin issue could be resolved once and for all. However, only those who have faith in Him will receive that forgiveness. The dirt under the rug of all believers instantly disappears. His blood forgives all the sins of those who lived in the past and those who will live in the future. When sin is forgiven in any age, it is by the blood of Jesus Christ. Your sins can be forgiven by that blood right now; past, present, and future sins.



Once Christ died the payment for sin had been made. Romans 3:26 teaches, God is **just** (He is totally right when He forgives people of their sins). Not only is He just, but based upon Christ's death, He is **the justifier** (the judge who pronounces us righteous). So, God's eternal purpose was to give His Son as the only true sacrifice for sin, the sins of the world. Life is only fair because of God's grace.

ENERGIZE

Summary and Application

From God's perspective, we now see He does treat us with justice since we can be forgiven because Christ paid our penalty. He treats


us with mercy and pardons our sins because Christ paid for it all with His blood. He lavishes blessings on anyone who believes because the Son is worthy of blessings (and we are one with Him by faith). **All the forgiveness, mercy, and blessing are part of His overwhelming grace** (it is all something good that we do not deserve). That is what grace is about.

For the believer in Christ their sins are paid, they are pardoned (righteous act of the Judge), and believers are blessed. This is all done through God's grace. It is all very fair because sin's debt was paid by Jesus Christ. The unbeliever chooses to reject God's provisions, so God respects their choice. They are also treated justly and fairly. Since they reject God's salvation, their sins are not forgiven. They are judged fairly for their sins and found guilty. Each receives the appropriate degree of punishment in Hell.

Gospel

“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” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Encouragement

Understanding what grace is about takes a lifetime. This is probably God's plan, so that we continually grow spiritually. It is encouraging to know He will treat us graciously if we have faith in Christ, and will guide our minds and direct our lives. Thank you for living a life that shows the Grace of God has made a change in you. 

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Not long ago, we received this letter from our good friend John Baker out in Colorado. In it, he reminds us of a way you can give something *to the Lord* this holiday season, a gift that will continue to give *to Him* throughout the year.

Dear Berean Bible Society,

It seems we are all living busy lives today, trying to make ends meet, and fulfill the many obligations we all have in life; thus we tend to forget matters of giving in support of the ministry. That is a shame, when one considers the honor God has bestowed upon us of sharing in the gift of giving. It may be that many are like myself: they simply forget until something jars the memory. It is not that they do not wish to give, but they have put it on the back burner while they attend to other matters.

Well, today it occurred to me that, because I do my banking online, I could easily set up automatic payments to those ministries I wish to support, such as the BBS and others, and every month the amount I choose to give would be automatically sent out on a certain day. If others are like myself, and for one reason or another forget to give in a timely manner, they may wish to do as I have. I will now have the joy of giving and supporting those ministries that have been a blessing to me over the years, and I do not have to worry about whether or not I remembered to send something this month.

I do not know why I have not done this before, but I am happy I did it today. I would encourage others to join me if they are able.

In Christ,

John

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. Thanks, John!

Pastor Stam always said that while one-time gifts are nice and very much appreciated, the Lord's work depends upon the faithful, regular monthly giving of conscientious grace believers who have made an unwavering decision to stand with us in the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2), and what a wonderful day in which we live, wherein we have tools like automatic online deductions to help us in our desire to be faithful in our giving!

—Pastor Kurth

www.bereanbiblesociety.org/donations/



Understanding the Bible

By Pastor John Fredericksen

God wants each of us to be able to understand the Bible. He never intended this wonderful Book to be beyond the comprehension of the average believer. We know this from two passages of Scripture. II Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that “all *Scripture is given* by inspiration of God, and is profitable for...instruction in righteousness: *that the man of God may be perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” What kind of believer is going to find God’s Word understandable enough to benefit from it in this way? I Corinthians 1:26-27 says, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that *not many wise men* after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen...the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” This passage reveals that the Savior did NOT intend His Word for only the super-intellectual or those with extensive seminary training. On the contrary, *the Bible is intended to benefit you and me, the ordinary man [or woman] of God* who has a genuine desire to learn from the Holy Book He gave us.

If you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and the Bible seems confusing, don’t get discouraged. *It takes time to build a working knowledge of the Scriptures.* Isaiah informs us that as “He [the Lord] teaches knowledge” it must be done slowly: “For precept must be upon precept...line upon line...here a little, and there a little” (28:9,10). As we are patient and diligent about learning God’s Word, the Lord will reward us with a growing understanding.

Be encouraged by knowing there is a way for you to glean wonderful truths from the Scriptures all by yourself. The Apostle Paul told Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (II Tim. 2:15). From these words we learn that the Bible has important divisions

in it. Most Christians recognize a division or distinction between the Old and New Testament, but there are actually three major divisions in Scripture. Once we learn where to find these three divisions, what God's purpose was for each, and to keep these consistently in mind, we can then understand the Bible.



GENESIS-ACTS RECORDS THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Romans 15:4 describes the largest portion of our Bible as the “things [that] were written aforetime.” This first and largest section of the Bible was written “aforetime,” before God gave Paul the new revelation contained in the Book of Romans. The books Paul is referring to are Genesis through the Book of Acts. According to the inspired words of Romans 15:4, they belong in a separate category all by themselves and “were *written for our learning*.” These books were *written to Israel, about Israel, and for Israel’s obedience*.

This section of our Bible records what God WAS doing in “TIME PAST” (Eph. 2:11), when He was dealing with the Jewish descendants of Abraham. Genesis through Malachi record the *history of Israel*, their promise of a great Millennial Kingdom, and their many failures. The Gospels of Matthew through John document the earthly ministry of Israel’s promised Messiah or King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and Israel’s refusal to follow Him. The Book of Acts records the temporary setting aside of Israel from her favored position with God because of her repeated rebellion, and the beginning of a new program of grace for Gentiles today. The thing that is consistent in content and crucial to see, if we are to understand the Bible properly, is that these books are *all dealing with the history of Israel*. When we read this section of the Bible, we must be careful NOT to lift instructions intended for Israel out of context and indiscriminately apply them to ourselves. Genesis through Acts was written to Israel; it was not written to believers today. It is “for our learning.”

In this portion of Scripture, we have many things we can learn. As II Timothy 3:16 says, we learn about “instruction in righteousness” on many moral issues. I Corinthians 10:1-11 refers to those in this section of our Bible as providing “ensamples” or examples of faith, faithfulness, godliness, victories, and even unrighteousness. We can “learn” many basic principles from these examples. However, we must never forget *it was not written to us, nor for our practice*.



ROMANS-PHILEMON WAS WRITTEN FOR US TODAY

In this section of our Bible, God features a new apostle, Paul, who is the exclusive dispenser of truth intended for believers in today's Age of Grace. In I Corinthians 4:16 and I Corinthians 11:1 Paul exhorts, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." In I Corinthians 14:37 he boldly writes, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

It is proper to *look to Paul's writings as our instructions for today* because **he is the one biblical writer that discusses "the dispensation of the grace of God"** (Eph. 3:2). Paul's inspired words declare that "by revelation" God initially "made known" these truths exclusively to him (v. 3). The rest of Scripture also backs up this claim. The subject of every other biblical writer is Israel's past, present, or future, and none of them desired any ministry with Gentiles. Compare Matthew 10:5-7; 15:12-24; Acts 10:28, 11:1-8; and Galatians 2:9-13; only Paul calls himself "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13), explaining that, in today's Age of Grace, God sees "no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. 10:12).

Romans through Philemon are the letters of the Apostle Paul and are effectively our "mail" from the Lord. This section is where we find the specific promises, instructions, and doctrines intended for us.




HEBREWS-REVELATION RECORDS FUTURE EVENTS

In this section of our Bible, the nation of Israel is once again in view. These books were written to Jewish saints during the early Acts era. As the title suggests, *Hebrews* was written to the Jews. James wrote his letter to "the twelve tribes" of Israel (James 1:1), who were "scattered" through persecution. Peter and John both wrote their epistles

to these same Jewish believers or churches who were enduring intense trial because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These believers had been promised that the Savior would establish a “Kingdom” on earth and that they would rule and reign with Him (Isa. 9:6-7; Dan. 7:27; Matt. 4:17, 19:27-30).

God has a unique *past and future purpose for each of these books*. Hebrews was written to explain the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice, encouraging the Jews not to “fall away” (6:6) from Him because of persecution. James was written to explain how these Jewish saints were to endure the persecution of the Acts era (1:12; 5:11). Peter wrote to explain the delay in Christ’s Second Coming to establish His Millennial Kingdom (II Pet. 3:3-16). John’s three short epistles and the Book of Revelation all describe religious “deceivers” (II John 1:7) and what will eventually happen to all the enemies of God. These were critical instructions for the Jewish believers experiencing severe trial during the Book of Acts and these same books will serve a similar function in the future, after our Age of Grace has ended and God resumes His dealings with Israel.

This last section of Scripture contains many wonderful truths that will greatly build up believers today IF we remember that they were written about Israel and NOT to us. We *can* understand the Bible if we remember the context of the three divisions in Scripture and to whom each book of instructions were written. 

MARY DID YOU KNOW?

Mary did you know that your baby boy will one day walk on water? Mary did you know that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?

Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you’ve delivered, will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man? Mary did you know your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?

Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod? And when you kiss your little baby, you have kissed the face of God.

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation? Mary did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your baby boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb? This sleeping child you’re holding is the great I AM.

—Mark Lowry





Are You a Token Grace Believer?

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

“Which is *a manifest token* of the righteous judgment of God” (II Thes. 1:4,5).

In 32 years of pastoral ministry, this writer has had the privilege to officiate at many a wedding ceremony. When it comes time for the groom to say “I do,” we initiate this response by asking him, “Do you give your ring, and accept your bride’s ring, as a *token* that you will keep the pledge and perform the vows that you have made this day?” Since the word *token* has been defined as “something that serves as an indication or an expression of something else,” we then conclude the ring ceremony by saying, “These gold rings will serve as continual reminders of the lasting and imperishable faith that you have pledged to one another this day.”

In the Bible, we read that God gave the rainbow as a “token” of His promise to never again destroy the world with a universal flood (Gen. 9:11-13). Similarly, circumcision is said to be a “token” of the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:11), and the blood of the Passover lamb was said to be a “token” of God’s promise to Israel to spare their firstborn (Ex. 12:13).

Here in our text, the apostle Paul says that the patient manner in which the Thessalonians were enduring persecution was “a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.” That is, their patient endurance of tribulation was a sign that, when God finally does judge the world, “He will judge the world *in righteousness*” (Acts 17:31), for He will be paying the world back for persecuting His people. As Paul goes on to say in the verse that follows our text,

“Seeing it is a *righteous thing* with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you” (II Thes. 1:6).

You see, when a Christian is persecuted for his faith, an injustice has taken place; an *unrighteous* thing has occurred. In God’s perfect system of justice, which can leave the debt of no sin unsettled, this injustice must be *paid for*, and God solemnly vows to right this wrong “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (II Thes. 1:7-9).


Here God vows that He will someday avenge the Thessalonians for the tribulations given to them by their persecutors, beginning with the destruction that He will bring upon the world at His Second Coming. Of course, God knows that He will be charged with unrighteousness, as He always is when He is forced to sit in judgment upon men. This is why the *Book of Revelation* is sprinkled with affirmations that God’s Tribulation judgments are *not* unrighteous, that they are rather “just and true” (Rev. 15:3), and “righteous” (16:5-7; 19:2). Similarly, here in our text, Paul is defending the righteousness of the Lord’s Second Coming judgments.

Next, Paul says that the righteous judgment of God on these persecutors of God’s people will then continue in the Lake of Fire, “the “everlasting destruction” of which he goes on to speak of here in II Thessalonians 1:9. Here we see clear evidence that all those in any age who reject God’s provision for their sins will die in their sins (cf. John 8:24), and must themselves be made to pay for their sins.

Of course, the Thessalonians themselves could have retaliated against their persecutors, and forced them to pay for the crimes they committed against them. Surely there were times when they *felt like* evening the score. However, had they done so, it would then be *unrighteous* for God to someday recompense tribulation to their persecutors, and God will not be guilty of double jeopardy. As it was, Paul was able to tell the Thessalonians that the “patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure...is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.” If the world should someday ask why God is troubling them, He can reply, “Well, you used to trouble My people, so now, by the same token, I am troubling you!”

There is a lesson that we can learn from this. If *we* take vengeance on those who trouble us, that means *God can’t*. What an incentive to leave vengeance to the One whose judgments are always fair and equitable! When *we* take vengeance, we often retaliate too little, leaving our sense of justice feeling unsatisfied. Or we retaliate too much, creating an additional imbalance of justice that leaves our adversary

feeling a need to strike at us again. “But we are sure that the judgment of God is *according to truth* against them which commit such things” (Rom. 2:2). God will judge all men fairly, for His judgment will be *according to truth*. No wonder Judgment Day is called “the day of wrath and revelation of the *righteous* judgment of God” (2:5).

Are you a token grace believer? Is *your* patient endurance of those who trouble you a token that, when God judges *your* persecutors, He will do so in righteousness? None of us would ever knowingly and purposely take something away from God that He says belongs to Him, and yet this is what we do when we take vengeance away from the One who has said, “Vengeance is *Mine*, I will repay” (Rom. 12:19). If you are thinking of making someone pay for what they did to you, why not determine *right now* to leave it all with Him? 

Question Box

“Someone pointed out to me that the word ‘virgin’ in Isaiah 7:14 is the Hebrew word ‘almah’ meaning, ‘a young woman’—in other words, a ‘young woman’ who may or may not be a virgin. I am a firm believer in the virgin birth of Christ, but how do I address this dilemma?”

It is true the Hebrew word *almah* simply means a “damsel” or a “maiden,” who may or may not be a virgin. However, *almah* can refer to a young woman who is a virgin, such as in the case of *Rebekah* (Gen. 24:43-45). Interestingly, the Holy Spirit does not leave the matter open for debate in regard to Mary. Under the guidance of the Spirit, Matthew directly quotes Isaiah and, in doing so, he uses the Greek word *parthenos*. This term is *solely* used of a woman who has never known a man.

“Behold, a virgin [Gr. *parthenos*] shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

The purpose of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Christ was to show that He was not stained with Adam’s sin. As Paul says, “He knew no sin” (II Cor. 5:21). Christ was an empty vessel when it came to sin. This allowed the Father to pour our iniquities into His dear Son at Calvary, where He was made “sin for us.” It is essentially a matter of faith! If Christ wasn’t born of the virgin, then we are yet in our sins.

—Pastor Sadler



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Kansas:

"The truth rightly divided is always a blessing and never gets old or outdated or irrelevant. Thank you for continuing to keep it up front."

From Alaska:

"Thank you for your teachings using the pure Word—not adding to or taking away—and not mixing us all up in Law and Grace!"

From our Inbox:

"Thank you for your reply. It spoke to my spirit because I immediately felt it in my heart and began to cry! I have had a few people and pastors tell me this but they did not explain and give references as you have." (God's answers are always in the references.—Ed).

From Wisconsin:

"Thank you for the concise answer to my question. The Scriptures you gave and your explanation of them provide further insight into why it is not necessary to try to look for new revelations from an 'apostle' today when we have the complete Word of God to rely on."

From Montana:

"I just wanted to thank you, Pastor Sadler, for putting together the DVD's about *What It Means to Be a Grace Believer*. Awesomely good! You are teaching me so much and it brings me great comfort and peace to hear the teaching so clear. I get to hear it and see it, which is important to me."

From our Inbox:

"I have only recently come into the knowledge of your society from a new friend in Christ who lent me a book by C. R. Stam, *Things That Differ*. I read about half of it and then ordered it for myself, and I just finished it a couple of days ago. That book really helped to clear up a couple of nagging issues I didn't understand for much of my Christian life, and I am so happy that I read the book that I just ordered a number of other books from your society. One of the biggest areas of not understanding was Peter's preaching at Pentecost and water baptism. I didn't believe one needed to be baptized to be saved, but I couldn't figure out how to interpret Peter's preaching with Paul's grace in Romans. I put this issue on the shelf for twelve years and just asked the Lord to make it clear for me sometime. Through *Things That Differ*, I now fully understand for the first time how to rightly divide these and other things I did not fully understand. Praise God!"

From Illinois:

"I have been a *Searchlight* subscriber since 1948...and always kept the faith, and have never found anything that can oppose it."

From Oklahoma:

"The *Berean Searchlight* as well as the BBS web site are such enjoyment. The teaching from God's Word with the emphasis on 'the Mystery' has been the instrument that has allowed us to mature as believers."

From California:

"I am thankful for your ministry and faithfulness to proclaim the unadulterated truth of God's grace—grace greater than all our sin, and grace that gives us God's presence in Christ so we can walk in the newness of life we have in Him."

From Illinois:

"I thank God and I thank you as well for your ministry in making clear the teaching and preaching of Christ through Paul with the revelation of the Mystery!"

From Indiana:

"I grow stronger every time I read the *Searchlight*."

From Florida:

"I really enjoyed your *Personal Testimony*, Pastor Sadler. It took me back to 1951, when my brother invited me to the farm where I grew up, to discuss the Bible."

From North Carolina:

"I found your article about baptism for the dead very thorough and thought-provoking. Thanks for doing the homework. Everything you wrote, upon examination, did seem valid."

From Texas:

"Thanks for straightening me out on 'baptism for the dead.' This was a wonderful article!"

From Florida:

"Your reply has given me the affirmation I needed to stand firm and not be swayed and not give in to the pressures of human viewpoint. I'm strengthened by your comments and feel encouraged to pursue my desires to renew my mind."

From Missouri:

"I have been reading the *Searchlight* article on water baptism. Real good; you explain it so easy. Keep up the good work!"

From Facebook:

"I love your *Two Minutes* in my daily email. It is the first thing I do when I turn on my computer in the mornings—start my day with the Word! Thank you for such a simple thing. It is easy to share with others too. Not overwhelming or radical or militaristic at all! I very much appreciate this as a witnessing tool."

From Indiana:

"I wanted to let you and BBS know how much your Bible Time and recorded messages via the internet are appreciated. My mother is pretty much home-bound and stays in bed almost all the time. My brother and I got her an iPad a few months ago. She has listened to many of the messages on the BBS site."

From Facebook:

"I pray God continues to use this organization to shine the light on nominal Christendom. Wake up Christians!!! It's high time to get in God's Word."

From Colorado:

"Each night I thank God for His Holy Spirit teaching me the Word, rightly divided. Been that way for forty-five years."

From Facebook:

"I thank the Lord God that I found the truth and I stand on it no matter what happens...Thank God I'm a grace believer, and I thank you guys also for teaching us the right doctrine."



"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

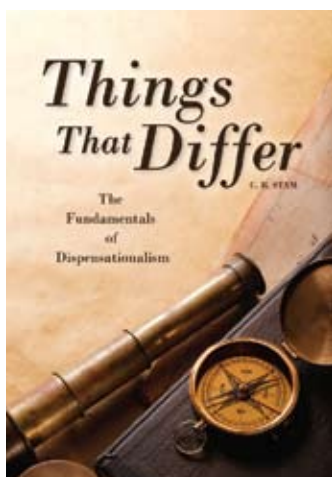


Something for Everyone

Some people like to read, while others prefer the more visual instruction received from watching a DVD. But one thing is certain: *everyone* needs to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth! With that in mind, we offer these two ways to learn it...

Things That Differ

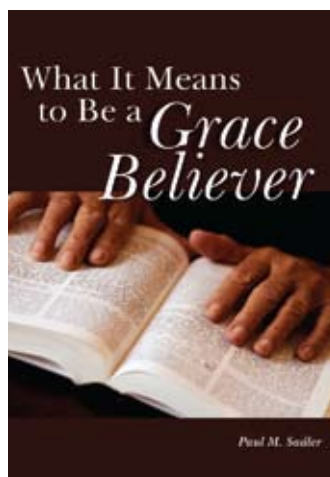
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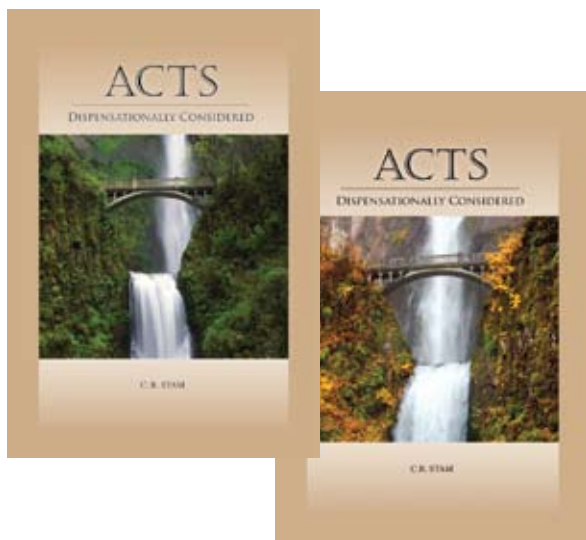
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ACTS, Dispensationally Considered

By Cornelius R. Stam



The Rest of the Greatest Story Ever Told

Since the holidays of organized religion seem to major on our Lord's birth, death, and resurrection, you'd think that after His ascension into heaven, He never did anything else! The Book of Acts chronicles the things the Lord *continued* to do through the apostles whom He had chosen, and the raising up of *another* apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles!

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News and Announcements

Web Site Addition: Thanks to BBS Webmaster Pastor Richard Church, our web site is now sporting a study of *The Epistle of James* in MP3 audio format. These studies were taught by BBS Board Member Pastor Ken Lawson at *Grace Memorial Church* in Edinburg, Illinois, his home church. Whether you are new to Bible study, or a seasoned student of the Word, Brother Ken's keen insight into the Scriptures is sure to prove invaluable in your study of this challenging epistle.

It is not too late to hear BBS founder Pastor Cornelius R. Stam teach the Word of God, rightly divided, even though he himself is now with the Lord. If you never had the opportunity to hear Pastor Stam proclaim the riches of God's grace, just go to our web site and click on *Bible Time*, and you'll find a selection of our founder's recorded messages. You can also purchase his CDs from our online bookstore, or borrow them from our *Lending Library*. Don't pass on the opportunity to hear some of the clear teaching that helped launch the grace movement!

 **Your Money Is No Good Here:** Now there's something you never thought you'd hear a ministry say! However, we recently received a cash contribution from Canada, and our bank no longer exchanges Canadian currency. That's why we established *BBS Canada*, a ministry where they not only welcome Canadian money, they can issue a receipt for tax purposes—something we cannot do here for contributions from north of the border. And so while literature orders should still be sent to us, Canadian donors should send all contributions to our good friend John and Debbie Peters, at 54940 Light Lane, R.R. #1, Vienna, Ontario N0J 1Z0.

In our October issue we mistakenly announced that Coal City, Pennsylvania readers now have a grace church in their vicinity. Since then, we learned that *True Grace Bible Ministry* is actually located in Coal Township, over two hundred miles east of Coal City! If you live near Coal Township, we urge you to contact Pastor Mike Marcheskie and beg him to forgive us. While you have him on the line, ask when and where this new grace church meets: truegracebibleministry@yahoo.com, (570) 648-9776.



The cover photo of *Irondequoit Bay Light* was taken by Hal Bekemeyer. The light is located in Irondequoit, New York, on the west pier, jutting out into Lake Ontario at the mouth of Irondequoit Bay. It's a popular fishing spot, as fishermen frequent the rocks surrounding the light.

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“For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

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