

The

Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

March 2005



Feature Articles

The Importance of the Local Church (Part IV)
 Pastor Paul M. Sadler 5

The First Step to True Spirituality
 Pastor Cornelius R. Stam 11

In Christ—The New Man
 Pastor Joe S. Leftwich 15

Departments

Two Minutes With the Bible 4

Question Box 21

Spring Bible Conferences 22

From Our Mailbag 26

Spotlight on Grace Churches 28

News and Announcements 30

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:



Dearly Beloved,

You will recall when Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharaoh that God revealed to him how there would be seven years of “great plenty” throughout the land of Egypt, followed by seven years of famine. The patriarch predicted that the famine would be so severe that all the blessings of the former years would be forgotten. Joseph wisely instructed Pharaoh that during the seven plenteous years one-fifth of Egypt’s crops each year should be placed in storage to endure the harsh reality of the years of famine.

Although we have no way of knowing for certain, we could well be on the eve of a spiritual famine as a result of persecution. The ominous storm clouds gathering on the horizon may soon pose a major threat to Christianity. Paul warns us: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times [hard times, grievous times] shall come...yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

For some years now, the humanists, with their “gods of time and chance” called evolution, have sought to eradicate every semblance of the Christian faith from society. The so-called “enlightened” do not believe there is a God and they will not be satisfied until everyone who names the name of Christ is silenced. But this isn’t the only threat to Christendom. According to Islam anyone who refuses to acknowledge Allah is an infidel and unworthy to live. The Islamic extremists who kidnap, torture, and murder the innocent are sending a message to the west (Christian nations); they will not rest until the world embraces the ideology of Islam!

We may well be living near the end of the plenteous years, spiritually speaking, before the persecution at the hands of men intensifies. The goal of the ungodly is to silence the voice of Christianity. We are not speaking of the wrath of God, but the wrath of man. Paul says to redeem the time “because the days are evil,” and they are growing more evil everyday. Beloved ones, the time has come to take spiritual things more seriously. It is very important to be under the ministry of the Word and store the Word of God in your heart that you might be better *prepared* to weather the approaching storms.

In His service,

Paul M. Sadler, President

TWO MINUTES

WITH THE BIBLE

BY CORNELIUS R. STAM, FOUNDER
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THE FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION

The fruits of our Lord's resurrection from the dead are many and important:

First, there were *immediate* results. It silenced those who had ridiculed His claims, and struck terror into their hearts. It explained how the prophecies would be fulfilled which predicted the death of Christ and the kingdom glory to *follow*. It heartened His followers, making cowards bold, turning their fear into faith, their sorrow into joy and their despair into glorious victory.

Then there were also long-range results, for our Lord's resurrection is a *warning to unbelievers*:

"Because [God] hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31; see also John 5:22,27; Acts 10:42).

As to believers, first, Christ's resurrection from the dead *assures us that our debt of sin has been fully paid*:

"[He] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 4:25; 5:1).

Second, His resurrection gives us a *living Savior* to help us in our daily walk.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Third, His resurrection is *the pledge of our own*:

*"That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the **first** to rise from the dead..."* (Acts 26:23).

*"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become **the firstfruits** of them that slept"* (I Cor. 15:20).

"Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3).

Two Minutes With the Bible originated as a newspaper series, and still appears in about 700 newspapers across the country. If you would like to place *Two Minutes* in your local paper, contact Pastor Russ Miller here at BBS. *Two Minutes* then evolved into a daily devotional book (See page 31 for price and shipping costs). Finally, you can now sign up to have *Two Minutes* automatically e-mailed to you on a daily basis, featuring some articles that do not appear in the book. Just visit our website at www.bereanbiblesociety.org and click on *Two Minutes With the Bible*.

The Importance of the Local Church (Part IV)

By Paul M. Sadler



Several years ago my wife and I had the opportunity to minister the gospel of the grace of God in San Francisco. While we were there we crossed the *Golden Gate Bridge*, which is one of the engineering wonders of the world. What many may not realize is the south pier of the bridge rests on the *San Andreas Fault* zone. It is said the *Golden Gate* had to be designed and built to withstand an 8.0 magnitude earthquake on the Richter scale. Consequently, the engineers knew they needed two things—a sure foundation and flexibility!

The two towers that grace the center of the bridge were sunk deep beneath the floor of the bay and rest squarely on bedrock. The upper part of the span is secured with thousands of steel wires which provide flexibility. According to the specifications, the bridge can sway 20 feet at the center without collapsing. While all of

this may be true, I wouldn't want to be traveling across it during an earthquake!

Like the *Golden Gate Bridge* that is *dependent* upon its foundation, those who provide spiritual leadership for the local assembly must be securely anchored in the Lord. They must tower above the circumstances by setting an example for all to follow. But effective leadership also entails being flexible. Paul instructed Titus to choose elders who were “not self-willed,” that is, someone who always has to have his way, overbearing, inflexible (Titus 1:7). While a leader must never compromise the faith, he should stand ready at times to bow to the collective wisdom of those with whom he is serving in the administrative affairs of the Lord's work. I've had the privilege of working with godly men over the years who didn't always see eye to eye, but by the grace of God we were able

to work through the circumstances and come to a general *consensus* for the sake of the ministry. We all desired His will to be accomplished, not ours!

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER

“A bishop [overseer] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous.”
—I Tim. 3:2,3

The long list of qualifications the apostle addresses here is a solemn reminder to the local church that great care should be taken in the selection of spiritual leaders. Having touched on the first two qualifications in our last lesson, the apostle adds that those being considered for the office of overseer must also be:

Vigilant: Although this term in the original is usually associated with abstinence from the drinking of wine, seeing that the apostle addresses strong drink later in the list, he is undoubtedly speaking figuratively of being spiritually sober. An overseer must not have his senses *dulled* by the things of the world, but have full use of all his faculties. This will enable him to be watchful, alert, observant and more cautious. In other words, he will be attentive to what’s going on in the local assembly and community in order to prevent sin and error from taking hold.

Sober: This particular word has to do with being temperate,

earnest. While there is a place for humor in the pulpit, it is inappropriate to turn a worship service into a comedy show. The Lord’s people are less likely to take a pastor’s ministry seriously if he’s always trying to impress everyone with his comedic skills.

Good behavior: The Greek word Paul uses here is *kosmios*, which has the idea of being well arranged or orderly. In the Pastoral Ministry class that I help to teach at the *Berean Bible Institute*, I always share with the students that their messages should not be like a shotgun blast that hits every subject under the sun. Rather, they need to organize their thoughts and presentation so everyone can follow the theme they are weaving throughout the message. Furthermore, the demands of the ministry call for someone who does *all things* in an orderly fashion.

Hospitality: In biblical times, it was fairly common for someone to open their home to a guest. But being hospitable had far more in view than simply inviting a Christian friend over for dinner. Travelers were often invited to stay for days and even weeks, especially during times of persecution when many believers were left homeless or destitute. Although some may have feared for their lives for hosting the persecuted, the leaders of the assembly were to set the example by opening their homes to Christian strangers.

Apt to teach: This is one qualification we strongly believe *every* overseer who is considered for the office should possess. The thought

is, not one who might teach, but one who is skilled and willing to teach if called upon to open the Scriptures. During a time of crisis in the local assembly those who have willingly ministered the Word are more qualified to resolve the problem, and less likely to be the problem (II Tim. 2:24,25).

Not given to wine: While wine was freely used in biblical times at meals and feasts (John 2:7-11), it was not to be abused. Drunkenness is a sin! Since strong drink is so closely associated with worldliness, we feel it is best for believers today to abstain altogether for the sake of the Lord's work. This is particularly true of those who hold positions of leadership in the assembly.

No striker: This is an individual who is quick-tempered. There are times in the ministry when the spiritual warfare becomes so intense you can cut the atmosphere with a knife. The last thing that is needed at such times is someone in a position of leadership who's short-fused and flies off the handle. A leader must be calm under fire! Great care should be taken here by those involved in the selection process of an elder.

Not greedy of filthy lucre: The Scriptures are clear that the workman is worthy of his hire. Seeing that a pastor and his family live in the same community as his congregation, the price of housing, utilities, groceries, gasoline, and other expenses are basically the same. Therefore his salary should be equivalent to the average income of those whom he is serving. While the local church

is responsible to meet the needs of the pastor, he is not to be a lover of money. If he is preoccupied with personal gain it will distract him from fully dedicating himself to the ministry of the Word. It is important that he has his priorities in place.

Patient: A leader is to be forbearing. Those called to a new assembly to minister the Word oftentimes have high expectations of the members of their congregation. Normally what they find after the first few months is that many of their people are struggling in the faith. Then there are those who should be teachers that need to be taught again the first principles of the Word of God. Pastors and teachers need to think in terms of years, not months, when ministering to the Lord's people. This is what leadership is all about—it's patiently teaching, challenging, and encouraging the saints.

“A leader must
be calm
under fire!”

Not a brawler: An overseer is not to be contentious. He isn't to be looking for a good fight because he'll probably find one, in short order. The opposite of brawler is peacemaker! It is enjoyable to work with godly leaders that are gifted in defusing an emotionally charged discussion. They are skilled in the fine art that a little honey goes much farther than a

full measure of vinegar. In other words, they understand the difference between “tact” and “contact” in maintaining good relations among the brethren.

Not covetous: There are those who selfishly enter the ministry for all the wrong reasons. And they do so at their own peril! Since the apostle already dealt with the issue of the love of money he is apparently addressing other lustful desires, such as coveting what others possess, hoping to be rewarded by them in some way. There are also some ministers of the gospel who merely desire fame and popularity. Consequently, they use the Lord’s people to catapult themselves into the lime light. A pastor who humbles himself before the Lord is more precious than fine gold.

A SUPERINTENDENT OF GOD

“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (I Tim. 3:4,5).

In these passages, Paul gives the local church a general guideline to follow in the appointment of a ruling elder or a pastor. The word “ruleth” here has the idea of one who *presides* over his home. A husband and father who upholds his God-given responsibility in his own house is usually a good candidate to serve the household of God. Leadership begins at home! If a man cannot manage his own family it is unlikely he will be an effective leader in

the assembly. For example, if his children are swinging from the church balcony and fail to obey the warning of their father, why would we think children of God would heed him? They won’t take him seriously any more than his children do.

According to the Scriptures, the role of a husband/father is to serve as a *household manager*. Therefore he understands the importance of delegating authority in the home. If his wife is organized and enjoys working with the budget he may want to call upon her to manage the financial affairs of the home. He also takes the initiative to assign each of the children specific chores around the house to help ease the burden on Mom and Dad.

The same is true in the church. Although most local assemblies are convinced their pastor is Hercules, the truth of the matter is he’s human, frail, and given to bouts of exhaustion after working a 60-hour week. It’s little wonder that the most effective pastors in the ministry are proficient at *delegating* authority to others. It’s called survival!!

Delegation! A pastor should call on others (preferably two other elders) to assist him with hospital visits. The more outgoing members of the assembly can help him with the visitation of shut-ins and newcomers. The church services should always be conducted by someone from the congregation who feels comfortable in front of others, which includes leading the congregational singing. Throughout the week the

church secretary or a volunteer should field phone calls for the pastor and assist him with all of his correspondence. By spreading the responsibilities of the ministry among the assembly it eases the burden of the pastor and involves others in the work of the ministry.

I am sure there are those reading these lines thinking to themselves, but we hired the pastor to do all this work! In fact, we pay him a good salary! But what do the Scriptures say? Please read prayerfully Ephesians 4:11-16! The concept of a “One-Man Band,” is not what the Lord had in mind for the ministry of the pastor.



The pastor of the local assembly is God's *superintendent*. While he should oversee all of the above ministries, and even be involved in them from time to time, his primary responsibility is to research, study, and open the Scriptures so all can grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. When I had my pulpit ministry I used to deliver four messages per week, so I can speak from personal experience that it

takes time, lots of time, to prepare messages that are edifying. In addition, a block of time is needed to go over each message to give an adequate presentation. Add to this the hours your pastor spends counseling those who are overcome with sorrow and you have a full schedule.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:8,9).

Our Grace Pastors and Bible teachers are to be commended for their willingness to stand in the defense and confirmation of Paul's gospel. Our message holds out hope to all those dear saints who are entangled in the confusion of denominationalism. However, we are seeing a troubling trend in the Grace Movement. A growing number of pastors and teachers have taken up strange doctrines while others seem to always be dwelling on secondary issues. Essentially they are majoring on minors! The danger here, of course, is that the Mystery is increasingly becoming *unimportant* and even neglected in order to promote these teachings, which are questionable at best. We fear Satan is attempting to get the brethren sidetracked on peripheral issues.

We believe our time and energy is far better spent on preaching Christ according to the revelation

“We believe our time and energy is far better spent on preaching Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery...”

of the Mystery and confirming the fundamentals of the faith that are time-honored. This we can and will fulfill by the grace of God. Paul never wavered in his proclamation of the Mystery. Can the same be said of us? There needs to be a *redirection* in the movement back to winning lost souls to Christ, making known the Mystery, and comforting the destitute with our blessed hope. In short, we need to return to the simplicity of Paul’s gospel.

When we consider the privilege of having an understanding of the Word, rightly divided, we should have an *attitude of thankfulness*

like that of Matthew Henry, who after being robbed counted his blessings. Shortly after being accosted by thieves and robbed of his wallet, he wrote these words in his diary:

“Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my wallet, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because, it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”¹

May we be thankful first, for those who taught us the Mystery; second, for the God-given responsibility to make it known to others; third, for those of like-precious faith that we serve with in the local assembly; and fourth, for the opportunity to pray for one another.

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *Encyclopedia of 7,000 Illustrations*, by Paul Lee Tan, Assurance Publishers, Rockville, Maryland, page 1456.

Pastors According to God’s Heart

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer. 3:15).

“In these crucial days, when so many are satisfied if only their hearts are warmed, when a sick and divided Church can digest nothing more than spiritual milk, when the appalling ignorance of the Word among the laity only reflects that of the clergy—in these days when subversive movements gain ground on every hand while the Church lies prostrate—pastors after God’s own heart are more sorely needed than ever, pastors who will *feed* His people with the *knowledge and understanding* of the Word.”

—Pastor C. R. Stam
Suggestions for Young Pastors, pgs. 12, 13

The following is the second in a series of excerpts from Pastor Stam's classic work on true spirituality. Since this book never appeared as a series in the *Searchlight*, many of even our long-time readers may not be familiar with these selections.

The First Step to True Spirituality

THE NEED OF A NEW NATURE

By Cornelius R. Stam

What man needs first of all, to become truly spiritual, then, is *a new nature, begotten of the Spirit of God*. Our Lord put it very plainly when He said to Nicodemus:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

In this passage again the term *flesh* cannot refer merely to the physical body, for at birth a spirit and a soul, as well as a body, are brought forth. Thus *the flesh* here refers to the fallen Adamic *nature*.

Similarly, the *spirit* which is born of the Spirit, here, cannot be man's own spirit, for we have already seen that the whole natural man, body, soul and spirit, is “born of the flesh,” and the very point of this passage in John 3 is that *therefore* men need to be born, or begotten, again—this time “of the Spirit,” i.e., the Spirit of God (Vers. 6-8).

So much is involved, however, in the impartation of spiritual life to the believer—especially as related to the present dispensation—that God uses *three* metaphors to describe it: *birth, resurrection* and

creation. No one of these could adequately set it forth; all three are necessary.

Let us begin, then, with the elementary figure of the new birth.

THE NEW BIRTH

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again [anew] he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3).

It is not surprising that the unsaved do not see their need of the new birth apart from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Even among those who have themselves been born anew, however, there are those who hold that the figure of the new birth applies only to Israel, not to those who live under the present dispensation. They base this conclusion on the premise that our Lord spoke to a Jew about the Jews regarding the new birth, and that Paul does not mention the subject in his epistles. This premise is wrong, however, and so are the conclusions drawn from it.

First, it should be noted that our Lord spoke to Nicodemus in *broad terms* about seeing and entering into the “*kingdom of God*.”

He did not use the narrower phrase *"kingdom of heaven,"* which has to do with the establishment of the kingdom of God *on earth* (See Dan. 2:44; Matt. 5:3-5; 6:10). This is because He was referring to something which involved more than entrance into the millennial kingdom.

That believers today enter into the kingdom of God as surely as do believers in any other age is made abundantly clear in the Pauline epistles (See Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:20; 6:9,10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 4:11; I Thes. 2:12; II Thes. 1:5).

It should further be noted that our Lord also spoke in broad terms when He said that it was necessary for *"a man"* to be born anew to enter into the kingdom of God.

We have no right to assume that our Lord *meant* that it was necessary only for a *Jew* to be born anew to enter into the *kingdom of heaven*, when He said it was necessary for a *man* to be born anew to enter into the *kingdom of God*.

Does a reader object that our Lord must have had only Jews in mind since He was at that time ministering only to Jews and was here addressing a Jew? Then we must insist that our Lord's discussion with this prominent Jew is here recorded especially to show that *all men in every age* need to be born anew to enter into the kingdom of God.

An unfortunate chapter division has obscured this important fact, for the story of Nicodemus in John 3 is but a demonstration

of an important assertion made at the close of Chapter 2. We link the two together here to show the connection.

"Now when [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.

"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; because He knew all men,

"And needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

"The same came to Jesus by night..." (John 2:23-3:2).

To demonstrate the universal need of regeneration, God chooses this outstanding character: a ruler of the Jews, highly intellectual, rigidly moral, profoundly religious and utterly sincere in his inquiry concerning Christ.

It must have been an impressive sight: a venerable Pharisee coming to a young man (as it appeared) of thirty, respectfully addressing Him: "Rabbi," and acknowledging Him at the outset as *"a teacher come from God."*

Yet this was one of those to whom the Lord would not commit Himself; one of those who had "believed" on Him because of His miracles. As Nicodemus himself put it: *"We know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him"* (John 3:2).

But this does not, nor did it ever, save a man. Thus, sweeping the ground from under Nicodemus'

feet, the Lord replies that what he needs—what any man needs—is a *new life*. Regardless of all his intellect, morality and religion, he must be born again—*of God*.

But what about the argument that the phrase “born anew” is not found in the Pauline epistles?

The answer is, first, that arguments from silence are often treacherous and, standing alone, prove nothing. Even if the Pauline epistles did not refer to the new birth, the new birth would still be a basic necessity for entrance into the kingdom of God according to the words of our Lord. But, secondly, while the *exact phrase* “born anew” does not occur in the Pauline epistles, the *doctrine* of the new birth is taught there as clearly as in any other part of the Bible.

First, it is taught by clear implication. Referring to believers, the apostle uses the words *nepios*: a babe, or small child, and *huios*: a fullgrown son. Moreover, he looks for spiritual *growth* in believers.

Positionally, to be sure, *all* believers are recognized as fullgrown sons of God from the moment they are saved, with all the rights and privileges of sonship (See Gal. 4:1-7). But in these studies we are not dealing basically with position; we are dealing with *experience*—the impartation of spiritual *life* to the sinner, and the enjoyment of it by the saint.

The righteous standing before God, which Christ purchased for all men, is of no avail to the sinner until it is accepted by faith. In the same way, the position of

sonship which is ours in Christ, and the blessings that go with it, are *appropriated* and *enjoyed* only by faith. Hence the apostle rebuked the Corinthians for their carnality, calling them babes who had to be fed with milk because they could not yet digest solid food (I Cor. 3:1,2). The Hebrew believers, too, were reproved because they were still spiritual babes, when, for the length of time they had been saved, they should have been teachers of the Word (Heb. 5:12-14).

Similarly, we are told in Ephesians 4:12-15 that God gave to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, “for the perfecting of the saints...

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...

“But speaking [holding] the truth in love, may grow up....”

Further, Paul writes in I Corinthians 16:13:

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith; quit you [conduct yourselves] like MEN [i.e., seasoned men] be strong.”

Surely the apostle does not refer, in these passages, to the infancy, growth and maturity of the *natural* man. He refers to the *new life* which was, to begin with, begotten of the Spirit.

The words *men*, *sons*, *babes*, used of the spiritual life, clearly imply spiritual *birth*. The seasoned man had at some time in his experience come to a place of spiritual maturity. Before that he was a babe. And this, in turn, implies that he was *born*, for there

was a specific time when the babe came into being.

In addition to all this there are two passages in Paul's epistles which teach the new birth in a most positive manner. The first is Romans 8:16,17, where the apostle employs the word *teknor*: *born-one*.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the *children [born-ones]* of God:

“And if *children [born-ones]* then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ...”

Could anything bear clearer testimony to the fact that believers under the dispensation of Grace are born anew? Surely we did not become born-ones of God by *natural* birth.

The other passage is Titus 3:5, where we read:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of *regeneration* [Gr., *palingenesia*] and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Out of the twenty-four versions of the New Testament which we have at hand, this word *palingenesia* is rendered *regeneration* by twenty, *new birth* by three and *renaissance* by one. Not one of them departs from the basic idea of new birth.


Finally, we would emphasize the fact that *in the nature of the case* men born of Adam must be born or begotten again to be saved. A new and different life must be imparted and begun. It is true that the life which the believer receives is *Christ's* life—*eternal* life—which has no beginning; that

in Christ the believer is immediately considered an adult. But this is a deeper truth which must be considered later. Spiritual life *does* have a beginning in the *experience* of every believer, and the need for this is given as much emphasis in the epistles of Paul as it is in the recorded words of Christ on earth.

“But what about the argument that the phrase ‘born anew’ is not found in the Pauline epistles?”

As our Lord impressed upon Nicodemus the fact that man at his best cannot enter into the kingdom of God, since “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” so Paul, by the Spirit, also insists:

“Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*” (I Cor. 15:50).¹

Thus, while it is true that our Lord taught the new birth during His earthly ministry to Israel, it does not follow from this that this subject concerns only the nation Israel. What our Lord said concerned *mankind*, as such, without respect to race or time. 

Endnote

1. It is true that the apostle here contends particularly for the necessity of a new body for physical entrance into God's presence, but does not this strengthen the argument that man in his natural state is unfit for the presence of God?

Pastor Joe Leftwich recently retired from the pulpit ministry after years of service in the *Evangelical Free Churches of America*. During this period, he writes, "There was never time, it seemed, to just study and sense more of His presence." We are happy to report that the fruits of his study have brought him to an understanding of the Mystery. We're sure you are going to rejoice, as we did, at how far he has come in such a short period of time.

In Christ—The New Man

By Pastor Joe S. Leftwich

In Christ we were made "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). "Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5). "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 2:6). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

The Scriptures declare that the things above have already been done (past tense) to and for the believer in Christ! What part did we play in the above actions? Zero!

Not only are the above statements true, but there are many other descriptive elements in having been made new creatures in Christ. We died to sin (Rom. 6:2). We were "baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3). We were "buried with Him" (Rom. 6:4). We were raised with Him in our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4). Our "Old Man" was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). Our "body of sin" has been done away with (Rom. 6:6), so we should not let sin reign in our mortal bodies (Rom. 6:12).

We were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11). We were made "complete" in Him (Col. 2:10). Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). We were made ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). We reign in grace, in Christ and "in life" (Rom. 5:17). We reign! We can choose to offer our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1). We reign! We can choose "not to be conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). We reign! We can choose to renew our minds that we might "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). We can take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

Does this list of things God has already done in and for every believer in Christ for eternity surprise you? Everything in Scripture from Genesis through mid-Acts has been leading up to this crowning of God's love for mankind and is now being revealed by His Apostle Paul, today, in this age of Grace.

God's chosen people, the Jews, had lived through many generations and several administrations (dispensations) in which God had

been revealing Himself to His people in many ways: through His Law, for instance, given through Moses. But even while the Law was being delivered by God to Moses in the mountain, His chosen people were involved in gross sin down below. God had delivered them out of Egypt and had led them through the wilderness, by the supernatural pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day. He also gave them supernaturally, manna from heaven and water out of the Rock.

The list could go on, but these things are not new to most people with a cursory knowledge of Scripture. God had promised His people a Messiah, and they looked for Him with great anticipation. It is recorded in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, that God had sent their Messiah, Jesus Christ, into the world to be Savior of the world. It is stated simply but magnificently that, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

The four Gospels covered the administration of the old covenant under the Law. The New Covenant could not begin until the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ which of course came at the end of the four Gospels. Therefore, one could argue that the choice of those translating and publishing the Bible arguably could have put the four Gospels as the last four books of the Old Testament.

“We reign!...”

“We reign!...”

“We reign!...”

The emphasis of this article will be on the importance of knowing Paul’s message to both Jews and Gentiles during this age of Grace, with a special emphasis on the application of his message to the lives of believers. In this article we will be focusing on the Mystery which has been hidden from (past) ages and generations which God is now revealing through His Apostle Paul to His saints, and through His saints to the world, which is, “Christ in you” (Col. 1:26,27).

“Christ in you” is the seminal truth of our lives as Christians here on this earth; the root, stem, branches and fruit of this truth as it blossoms in our understanding of who we are, and this growing realization that there is a whole new you, created in Christ Jesus. This understanding of our new identity makes us capable of fulfilling all of His expectations of how He wants us to live in this world, in this present lifetime, as new creations in Christ dwelling in our old mortal body of flesh, well pleasing to Him.

We, as Christians, have a tendency to be negative about our ability to live our lives well pleasing to God. We tend to emphasize what we can not do. The enemy is just too powerful, it is said. Our “old nature,” it is argued, has habits that are systemic and demand constant gratification, that are beyond our ability to control even if we are Christians. This, they say, is our dilemma.

The reasoning in this article assumes that the reader has believed the gospel and has been baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ. This is essential because the “natural man” cannot understand the things of God.

How would you describe the average Christian's understanding of what it means to be “saved” and how he should live the Christian life in today's world? Who does he believe himself to be? How does he understand his relationship and responsibilities to God?

Most conservative Christians believe that they are saved, usually quoting John 3:16. Most believe that they should attend church, get involved in Bible classes, support missions and the local church in its endeavors to spread the gospel. And most have pastors who preach ninety-five percent of their Sunday messages with texts from the four Gospels. Their pastors probably cover the essential beliefs and activities as Christians until Jesus comes again to rapture His Church, His Body.

Now let us look at the contrast in messages as given by Paul in his epistles and those given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4 that Jesus was born under the Law. God's administration here on earth covered by the Gospels was a life under the Law. The Apostle John wrote in John 1:11: “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” What gospel was being preached by Jesus? Mark 1:14,15: “Jesus came, into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” And in Matthew 4:17: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Where, by whom, and to whom was this message of the kingdom of God to be preached? This is recorded in Matthew 10:1-8: “And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease....These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils....”

The message, the messengers, and the ones to whom the message was given were all a different administration than what one finds in Paul's epistles to “the Church which is His Body.” Surely this is enough material to make the case that the four Gospels were written to the Jews, and purposely excluded the Gentiles when Jesus said specifically, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.” Another clear indication of the difference between the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament was the whole way of life at that time.

Let's review the period of the Gospels: The Law, the Temple, and the offerings were in full operation during all of the life of Jesus on this earth. God made His offering of The Lamb of God, His Son, "without blemish and without spot" for the sins of Israel.

Through past ages and generations the prophets spoke of the coming Messiah, who would be the Great Deliverer of the Jews; Jesus was that Messiah. He was born under the Law. He came to His own while under the Law and His own received Him not. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Father's giving of His Son as an offering for sins through Israel and the Son's coming to give Himself are recorded in John 1:1-14. John wrote in Verse one, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and in Verse 14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory..."

Jesus, to fulfill the requirements of the Law concerning His being offered by God as "The Lamb of God" for sin, must be observed for the required period of time to be declared that He was without blemish. Jesus fulfilled this requirement by living among them for thirty-three years and was declared to be without blemish. He was the only acceptable offering for the sins of the world. He lived His life and ministered among His people right up until it was time for Him to be offered by His Father for the sins of all mankind, from Adam and Eve to every man, woman and child who will ever be born into this world, which was ultimately revealed "in due time" through Paul's gospel (1 Tim. 2:3-7).

So the four Gospels were all about God's coming to His own as their Messiah. He loved them and had a feast prepared for them but they would not come to the table. He came to His own and His own received Him not. The Son also gave Himself up as an offering for us Gentiles. The offer is still open.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have recorded for all eternity the coming of the Son of God into the world as a baby born to Mary and Joseph, His life as a child, His ministry to "His own," the Jews, reaching, teaching, healing, and performing miracles. I don't know of any references in the Gospels about Christ coming to the Gentiles. Therefore, I urge that we understand and accept the obvious purpose of the Gospels.

I believe it is a grievous mistake for Gentiles to claim the Gospels as their guide for being born into the Body of Christ. The writings of the Apostle Paul contain God's invitation to the Gentiles: I Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved....For I delivered unto you first of all that

which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

The four Gospels on the other hand record Jesus, born under the Law, coming to His own (the Jews), preaching to them day after day, demonstrating His Messiahship, and proclaiming His love for them and giving Himself as an offering for sins, first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. God’s gospel, given to Nicodemus, is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This was the message of John to his people, the Jews, that they might enter the kingdom of God.

“‘Christ in you’ is the seminal truth of our lives as Christians here on this earth...”

Why am I emphasizing that the Gospels were written primarily to the Jews? Because there are a great number of Christians, including many pastors, who live in the Gospels with John 3:16 as their salvation verse and missionary programs patterned after them. The missionary program Paul proclaims is that of every believer having been appointed as a living ambassador for Christ, permeating the world as messengers for Christ. God sent another message and another messenger to the Gentiles: the message of Grace through His messenger, the Apostle Paul.

So hopefully, we have proved that the four Gospels are not the source of God’s message for this age for which Paul has been chosen as God’s apostle to reveal His message to the Gentiles. Hopefully, we have also proved that the four Gospels, precious as they are, do not reveal this mystery that the Apostle Paul has been divinely chosen to reveal. So let us seek to understand this great revelation of God’s Mystery: Christ in you the hope of glory.

I see Romans 5:9,10 as being the transition statement of God from life under the law of sin and death to life under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. So, my fellow believers in Christ, reason with me as we look at these two verses that describe this transition: “Much more, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” and “much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Think with me for a minute, why does Paul use the phrase “much more”? Notice where he uses it. He uses it just before “having been

justified and saved by His blood from the wrath of God.” What could possibly be “much more” than being saved from the wrath of God? I thought this was what being saved was all about! But Paul tells us there is something “much more” than being saved from the wrath of God. What is it, Paul? Paul answers briefly and succinctly, “We shall be saved by His life.”

“We shall be saved by His life.” This is really what all the rest of our study is about. It is about our being in Christ, *new creatures* in Christ, and we will find that this is what it means to be “saved by His life.” Before you were saved from the wrath of God, you were dead in trespasses and sin. But when you believed the gospel you were made alive in Christ! You were dead in trespasses and sin but now you are being saved by His life.

We are going to learn together what this life in Christ and being saved by His life is all about. The Christian is unique, he is a “new man” in Christ! This is what is meant by being “saved by His life;” “Christ in you, the hope of glory”! We can understand being saved by His death, burial, and resurrection, but then we must discover an adequate meaning for our “being saved by His life.”

Frankly, my mind is settled on the question. I have been made alive in Christ and I have been made a new creature in Christ; my life in this mortal body, this body of flesh, is being saved by my being in Christ. “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*”!

We have looked at the message, now let us look at the messenger. The designated messenger to the Gentiles is the Apostle Paul. In Acts 9:15,16, the Lord sent Ananias to minister to Saul, telling him, “Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

Conclusion: it was Paul and Paul alone that was called to go to the Gentiles. I am a Gentile, so I reason that God would have me go to the writings of Paul for instructions about who I am, what God expects of me and what provisions He has given for my being able to carry out His instructions. Why do we Christians who believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ go to the Gospels, which were written to the Jews who were under the Law, for instructions about how we are to live our lives under Grace?

To Be Continued!



If you would like to drop Brother Leftwich a note of encouragement you can contact him at: 217 W. Miami Street, Broken Arrow, OK 74011.

Question Box

“Did Philip preach ‘Christ died for our sins’ to the Ethiopian eunuch?”

It is tempting to think that Philip preached this to the eunuch when we read that he “preached unto him Jesus” from Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:26-35). However, this message that was later given to the Apostle Paul (I Cor. 15:3,4) had not yet been revealed. Thus we know that Philip rather preached Christ according to the kingdom program.

The kingdom gospel was “*Jesus is the Christ*” (John 6:68,69; 20:31). The Lord vowed to build the kingdom church as people confessed this message, just as Peter had confessed it (Matt. 16:16-19). And so we read that when Peter preached this message at Pentecost (Acts 2:36), “*the Lord added to the church*” as people received His message (v. 47).

But how did Philip preach Christ to the eunuch *from Isaiah 53* without preaching “*Christ died for our sins*”? The answer lies in John 8:28:

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He...”

Notice that the Lord did *not* say, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know *that I died for your sins.*” The mere fact of His death on the Cross only identified Him as the Messiah that the Scriptures predicted (Psa. 22; 69; Isa. 53; Zech. 13:7), and as we have seen, “*Jesus is the Christ*” is the gospel that people believed under the kingdom program to be saved (John 8:24; 9:35-38; 8:26,27; 17:8).

When we read that Philip preached Christ from Isaiah 53, it is an easy mistake, looking back *now*, to read Paul’s *later* revelation of Christ’s death for our sins into his preaching. However, this would mean that this new gospel was first given to *Philip* and not to *Paul*, and there is no evidence of this in Scripture. It is more consistent to believe that Philip preached Christ in the same way that the twelve apostles before him had preached Christ.

Sinners in every dispensation have been saved by the *merits* of Christ’s death for their sins (Rom. 3:24,25) when they believed whatever *message* God gave them to believe (Gen. 15:5,6 cf. Gal. 3:8). However, only in the present dispensation of the grace of God are sinners saved by believing *the message* of “*Christ died for our sins.*” —Pastor Kurth

Black Hills Spring Bible Conference

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



***Revised Dates:** March 18-20, 2005

Guest Speaker:

Paul M. Sadler, President, *Berean Bible Society*

For more information, please contact:

Pastor John Fredericksen at: (605) 341-9692
or e-mail: jfredfbc@aol.com

Genoa City Bible Conference

Location: *Berean Grace Church*
N665 County B
Genoa City, Wisconsin

Dates: April 2,3, 2005

For additional information, please contact:

Mr. Tom Pascucci at: (262) 551-7595
or Pastor Steve Ross at: (262) 279-6435

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Location: *Holiday Inn*
I-94 & US 421
Michigan City, Indiana

Date: Saturday, April 30, 2005

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Evangelist Lee Homoki, *Bible Doctrines to Live By*

For directions and additional information, please contact:

Mr. Jerry Sterchi at: (219) 326-8705
or e-mail: firstlight@csinet.net

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W156 N6531 Pilgrim Road
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

Dates: April 7,8, 2005

Theme: *United in the Essentials of the Grace Message*

Guest Speakers:

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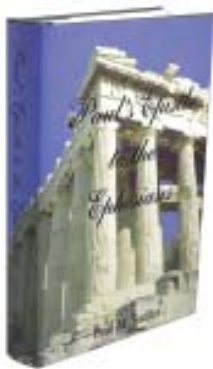
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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TSUNAMI RELIEF: If you would like to help the victims of this overseas disaster, but are concerned that your contribution may be misspent or not actually reach those who are in need, you should know that *Things to Come Mission* has a Grace church in the affected area in Indonesia. If you would like to help them help others, simply make your check out to *Things to Come Mission*, earmark it "Tsunami Relief," and mail it to: 2200 English Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46201-4017.

PASTOR PAUL TURNER officially assumed the pastorate of *Grace Bible Church* of Oshkosh, Wisconsin on January 2nd. Paul is a student at *Berean Bible Institute*, where he plans to continue until he finishes in December and graduate the following May. Please remember to uphold Paul and his wife Rebecca in prayer, and be sure to visit the church if you live nearby or plan to be in the area. You can read all about *Grace Bible Church* in this month's *Spotlight on Grace Churches* on Page 28.

CELEBRATE GRACE CAMP: This year you can celebrate grace with camp directors Jerry & Judy Worthley from July 24-29 near Montrose, Colorado. This year's special speaker is Pastor Joel Finck. For more information, please contact Jerry at 0627 CR 3, Canon City, CO 81212, at 719-276-2469, or at jeranjudy@yahoo.com. Why not come see why this annual event is such a favorite for so many Grace believers.

DATE CHANGE: The dates for the Black Hills Spring Bible Conference have been changed from March 25-27, as announced earlier, to March 18-20. Pastor Paul Sadler is still scheduled to be the guest speaker. For more information, contact Pastor John Fredericksen at 605-341-9692 or at jfredfbc@aol.com.

BBS TAPE LENDING LIBRARY: Sam and Ruth Castrova are doing an outstanding job with our *Audio Tape Lending Library* and they want you to know that they're there to serve you. All library tapes are available for loan at *no charge*. Good news! A number of new messages have been added to the collection, including our newest series: *Where Is God When I'm Hurting?* To request a catalog or tapes from the *Lending Library*, simply write: Sam and Ruth Castrova, 7900 Barbour Store Road, Willow Springs, NC 27592. They can also be reached via their *new* e-mail address at: lendinglibrary@nc.rr.com. Due to rising costs we are no longer receiving overseas requests as of January 2005.

*The picture of the lighthouse on the front cover was taken by Pastor John Fredericksen. The *Yaquina Head Lighthouse* is located in Newport, Oregon and at 93 feet is Oregon's tallest lighthouse.

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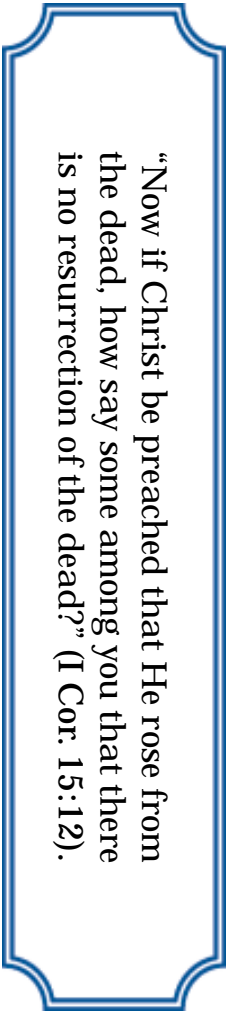
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“Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:12).

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