

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

March 2008



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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:



Dearly Beloved,

We receive many heartwarming letters here at the *Berean Bible Society* thanking us for our sound teaching of the Word, rightly divided. We are humbled by these types of responses and thank the Lord for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. One such letter was recently received from a Grace believer down south.

“Since I trusted the Lord a few years ago I have had occasion to read the *Berean Searchlight*. I just read this morning a fascinating article Pastor Sadler wrote in the February 2001 issue, ‘*The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter*,’ and I thank God for your clarification, instruction, and edification on this matter. Because of that, I felt compelled to subscribe and to donate today. God bless, and may God allow you to continue this great ministry.”

Of course, we also receive our share of criticism from those who hold doctrines contrary to those taught by the Apostle Paul. But we are unwavering in our stand for the truth of Paul’s gospel, simply because his revelation gives us the commands of Christ for the members of the Body of Christ. Understanding the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery is *liberating!* It freed me from the denominationalism that had me shackled to a legalistic system of their do’s and don’ts. Grace not only saves us and equips us, it also teaches us how to live.

With this said, we firmly believe that we are to proclaim the whole counsel of God in light of the Pauline epistles. In so doing, we are following Paul’s example. Therefore, after we complete our studies in Philippians your Editor plans to begin a short series on the *Mysteries of the Kingdom*. While we spend the lion’s share of our time in Paul’s epistles, from time to time it is profitable to study the prophetic Scriptures to better understand the Lord’s revelation to those who have an earthly hope and calling. This will help us to distinguish between their hope and ours. We will also note the Lord’s special emphasis on the impending judgment of the unsaved under the kingdom program. This study will give you a greater appreciation of the grace of God and hopefully encourage you to evangelize the lost to Christ, because they face the same eternal destiny today, if they believe not.

Many confuse the *Mysteries of the Kingdom* with the *Mystery* that was committed to the Apostle Paul, especially those who fail to rightly divide the Word of truth. This is a common error that we hope to address with God’s help.

Yours in His redeeming love,
Paul M. Sadler, President



Two Minutes with the Bible

PUZZLE OR PICTURE

Where “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15) is concerned, our spiritual leaders are like a group of people, each one of whom holds a part or several parts of a jig-saw puzzle, but who fail to put them together and so never get to see the picture.

One sees clearly that the so-called “Great Commission” was a *Kingdom* commission and not ours. Another sees that the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 MUST be the DIVINE baptism which makes believers one in Christ. Another sees that Paul’s apostleship was wholly distinct from that of the Twelve. Another sees that Romans 6:3,4 does not contain one drop of water. Another sees that the Christian’s position is spiritual and heavenly in

character. Another sees that the Body of Christ, the Church of today, was never prophesied—even, that it did not begin at Pentecost with Peter and *the eleven*, but later, with Paul.

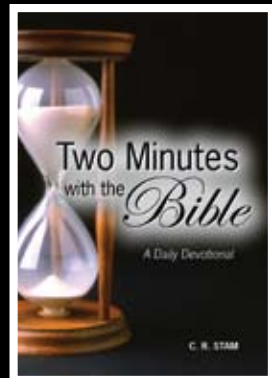
But while each sees some component part of “*the Mystery*,” Satan has used tradition to blind him to the rest. The result is that confusion continues to prevail and they still have a puzzle instead of a picture.

If only they would put the pieces together! What a clear picture they would see of “*the dispensation of the grace of God*,” and how eagerly they would join us in “*THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY*” (Rom. 16:25)!
—C. R. Stam

Two Minutes with the Bible originated as a newspaper series, and still appears in numerous 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 daily, featuring many articles that do not appear in the book. Just visit our website at www.bereanbiblesociety.org.



PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 4:8-14

By Paul M. Sadler

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” —Phil. 4:8,9

THE GOD OF PEACE

As Paul prepares to close the letter to the Philippians he lays special emphasis on the believers' responsibility before God, which he counterbalances with another great truth that we will go into a little later. In our last lesson we learned that the saints at Philippi were not to occupy themselves with worrying about things that were beyond their control. This would only serve to draw their attention away from the Lord. They could *rest* in the fact that God is in control of all things.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (vs. 7), “and the God of peace shall be with you” (vs. 9).

Paul assured these dear saints that the God of peace would not only be with them, He would also guard their hearts and give them peace of mind. But to fully realize this promise they needed to align their *thought life* with the Word of God, and continue to *practice* the lessons they had learned from Paul's manner of life. In other words, “keep thinking on these things—keep practicing these things.”

When the apostle says at the end of verse 8 to “think on these things,” he used the Greek word *logizomai*, which means to “take into account, reflect upon, and then allow these things to shape your conduct.” So we are to “think on” or take into account “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,” etc. that

we might walk worthy of our calling.

After coming to know the Lord we begin to think differently, simply because we now view everything in light of the Word of God. It isn't long, however, before it becomes crystal clear that there is an inner conflict, due to the fact that we have an old nature and a new nature. Believers don't always think wholesome thoughts; therefore, there is a constant battle that goes on in the mind to think thoughts that will glorify God (Eph. 4:22-24).

We need to remember and remember well that it was Paul who said: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Using the Scriptures then, we will illustrate what Paul had in mind when he states, "think on these things."

Think on whatsoever things are true in contrast to that which is false. It isn't necessary to immerse yourself in the unsound teachings of false religions, for this reason: if you are well grounded in the truth it will always expose the error. A straight line always exposes a crooked line. A well known paleontologist may claim that man evolved from a chemical slime pit in the dateless past, but the Scriptures teach man was created by God in the beginning (Gen. 1:26,27 cf. 2:7). We are to fill our minds with that which is true.

Think on whatsoever things are honest which has the idea of being admired for having character. When King Darius placed Daniel over his kingdom the presidents and princes in the king's court were filled with jealousy. Hoping

to find fault with Daniel in his execution of the affairs of state they secretly spied on him. When the report came back from those who observed Daniel, it was said, "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Dan. 6:1-4). The next time you have thoughts of being dishonest, remember Daniel, who was a man of *impeccable character*. After all, someone may be watching to check your testimony!

Think on whatsoever things are just or right. While King Saul was hunting David in the wilderness to kill him, David came upon Saul and his men who were sound asleep. Abishai who was with David that evening said: "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear," but David instructed Abishai to "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?" David did what was *right* in God's sight! In spite of Saul's failures, he was still the Lord's anointed; consequently, if Saul died it would have to be by God's hand and not David's (I Sam. 26:1-12). The last time a clerk gave you too much change, did you do what was *right* and return the overage? Remember David!

Think on whatsoever things are pure or free from moral defilement. Chaste! Shortly after Joseph was given charge over Potiphar's household and business affairs, his wife tried to seduce Joseph to have an illicit affair with her. The patriarch responded

to her advances in the following manner: "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Notice, he recognized this was more than a sin against his master; it was a sin against God! Remember Joseph the next time you are tempted to commit an immoral act. Keep yourself *pure—flee* from fornication, for this is the will of God (I Thes. 4:3). Joseph did, and God greatly used him.

Think on whatsoever things are lovely, which means to be amiable, well pleasing. If you pause for a moment you can probably think of a believer who is simply a joy to be around. You've never heard an unkind word come from their lips and they always seem to have a word of encouragement to share with you. This was the case with Barnabas, the son of consolation (Acts 4:36,37). When John Mark stumbled in the faith, it was Barnabas who wanted to give him a second chance. In fact, it was his encouragement that helped Mark regain his footing (II Tim. 4:11). Think of Barnabas when you are about to criticize someone or say an unkind word; it may keep you from regretting what you said later. Work at being *pleasant!*

Think on whatsoever things are of good report, which is to be understood as being well-spoken of or reputable. You will recall when there arose a dispute over the distribution of food after Pentecost that Peter addressed the brethren accordingly:

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

As we know, they chose seven men, one of whom was Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Stephen was apparently the *first* one who came to mind when the need arose to call on someone to fill this important position. He had proven himself to be faithful and dependable. It literally takes years to build a good *reputation*, but only a moment in time to destroy it. If your pastor was looking for someone to fill a position of responsibility would you be on his list of *those who are of good report?*

If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Paul concludes this passage by saying, "if there be any virtue" or moral excellence, and as we have seen above there is, take note of them. "If there be any praise" that should be lifted up to God, and there is, then think on these things and you will have a sound mind. We are to bring into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ. Herein lies the key to spiritual victory!

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).

What things had these believers at Philippi learned from the apostle? They had "learned" the Mystery from him and all that it entails. They understood they were members of the Body of

Christ, who were blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens. Paul had effectively communicated to them how Christ is carrying out His *heavenly ministry* today, and that they were the recipients of a heavenly hope and calling.

They also “received” these teachings of grace as their own. They could defend Paul’s gospel with the best of them. You see, it is one thing to know the message of Grace; it is a completely different matter to fully accept it and stand for it uncompromisingly. These saints were fully committed to Paul’s apostleship and message, which God expects *every* believer to embrace in the age of Grace.

In addition, the Philippians had “heard” the gospel of the grace of God, not secondhand mind you, but directly from Paul himself when he visited Philippi. He preached Jesus Christ to them *according to the revelation of the Mystery* (Rom. 16:25). They had heard him proclaim the secret of the gospel, of how God was in Christ at Calvary reconciling the world to Himself. Now they were sharing the good news that Christ died for the sins of the world. Furthermore, they had heard Paul emphasize the importance of church planting, and the need to train faithful men to serve as pastors “who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

These saints had “seen” firsthand how Paul handled adversity. He didn’t lash out in a tirade at his persecutors when he was beaten unmercifully before the very eyes of these saints. Nor did he curse the Philippian jailor when

he threw Paul into the inner prison and put his feet in stocks. He rather prayed and sang songs of praise to God, which so moved the jailor that he trusted Christ immediately after the earthquake took place (Acts 16:19-31). It is far more beneficial for a son to *see* his father living for the Lord, than to hand him a list of do’s and don’ts.

You see, Paul not only taught these things, he lived them! With this in mind, the apostle challenges these brethren to “do” these things, in the sense of performing them *repeatedly*, to which he adds: “And the God of peace shall be with you.” This charge is as relevant today as it was when Paul first gave it.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

The apostle counterbalances the above with the providence of God, which is his reminder that we are not alone in the struggle. Paul weaves God’s providence and the believers’ responsibility together throughout the entirety of this chapter.

With all of the technological advances today, human knowledge has become a god in the eyes of the world. Medical science glories in the fact that they are beginning to unlock the mysteries of DNA, but, in so doing, they have conveniently neglected to acknowledge that it was God who originally created the genetic code known as life. This code is so complex that it demands the recognition of an intelligent designer whom we know to be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and Sustainer of all things (Col. 1:15-17).

While the true Church is quick to point out the world's failure to acknowledge God's involvement as the Creator of all things, it hasn't fared much better in its acceptance of His divine providence in the lives of those who have been bought with a price. In fact, there are movements within the Church that claim that God has chosen not to know all things and never intervenes in our lives. We believe however, the providence of God is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Simply because we are living in the dispensation of Grace does not diminish whatsoever from the fact that God is still working in the affairs of men.



Mayflower II docked in Plymouth Harbor

Although the providence of God is bound up in His foreknowledge, that is, He knows *all things* beforehand; it is also interwoven with His determinate counsel to arrange certain circumstances in advance to fulfill His eternal purpose (See Acts 2:23). Those believers who lived prior to modern times were far more in tune with these mysterious workings of God. For example, Charles Colson gives the following touching historical account of Squanto:

Most of us know the story of the first Thanksgiving—at least, we know the Pilgrim version.¹ But how many of us know the Indian viewpoint? No, I'm not talking about some revisionist p.c. version of history. I'm talking about the amazing story of the way God used an Indian named Squanto as a special instrument of His providence.

Historical accounts of Squanto's early years vary, but historians believe that around 1608—more than a decade before the Pilgrims landed in the New World—a group of English traders, led by a Captain Hunt, sailed to what is today Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the trusting Wampanoag Indians came out to trade, Hunt took them prisoner, transported them to Spain, and sold them into slavery. But God had an amazing plan for one of the captured Indians—a boy named Squanto.

Squanto was bought by a well-meaning Spanish monk, who treated him well and taught him the Christian faith. Squanto eventually made his way to England and worked in the stable of a man named John Slaney. Slaney sympathized with Squanto's desire to return home, and he promised to put the Indian on the first vessel bound for America.

It wasn't until 1619—ten years after Squanto was first kidnapped—that a ship was found. Finally, after a decade of exile and heartbreak, Squanto was on his way home. But when he arrived in Massachusetts, more heartbreak awaited him. An epidemic had wiped out Squanto's entire village. We can only imagine what must

have gone through Squanto's mind. Why had God allowed him to return home, against all odds, only to find his loved ones dead?

A year later the answer came. A shipload of English families arrived and settled on the very land once occupied by Squanto's people. Squanto went to meet them, greeting the startled Pilgrims in English. According to the diary of Pilgrim Governor William Bradford, Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God for [our] good...He showed [us] how to plant [our] corn, where to take fish and to procure other commodities... and was also [our] pilot to bring [us] to unknown places for [our] profit, and never left [us] till he died."

When Squanto lay dying of a fever, Bradford wrote that their Indian friend "desired the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen's God in heaven." Squanto bequeathed his possessions to his English friends "as remembrances of his love."

Who but God could so miraculously weave together the lives of a lonely Indian and a struggling band of Englishmen? Squanto's life story is remarkable, and we ought to make sure our children and grandchildren learn about it. Tell them about Squanto, the "special instrument sent of God"—who changed the course of American history.²

Paul, too, experienced the providence of God in His life. On his second apostolic journey, he attempted to go east into Asia with the gospel of the grace of God but the Holy Spirit barred the way. He then sought to go northward

into Bithynia but again the "Spirit suffered him not" (Acts 16:6-11). God, in His infinite foreknowledge, knew that the gospel of grace would receive a more favorable reception in the west. Therefore, Paul was sent to Europe where not long afterward he established the church at Philippi. When we look back over our own lives, each of us can probably point to times where the hand of God was upon us in a wonderful way. We can see them clearly now, but we were most likely unaware of His providential supervision at the time.

"True spiritual contentment
is in Christ."

Now years later near the end of the apostle's ministry he reminds the saints at Philippi that he took comfort in the providence of God. "**But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again;** wherein ye were also careful [thinking of me], but ye lacked opportunity" (Phil. 4:10). Notice that Paul doesn't thank the Philippians for their support, he instead thanks the Lord. You see, the Lord had laid it on the heart of these dear saints to provide for the needs of the apostle on more than one occasion. He recognized it was God who was the source that supplied his needs. That's providence! William Carey, the great missionary to India, once said: "Depend upon it, God's work, done in God's way, will not lack God's support."

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction” (Phil. 4:11-14).

Paul wanted the Philippians to understand that while he was grateful for their generosity, he did not want them to think he was expecting another gift, for he had learned to be *content* in whatever state he found himself. Notice the apostle says, “I have learned” implying there was a time in his life that he wasn’t content. He had come from a family that was well off prior to his conversion, which meant he was like many unbelievers who equate contentment with the accumulation of wealth.

Paul had “learned” the *secret* as to how to be content in this life. He

found experientially, after he was saved, that contentment was not based on the sum total of his possessions or religious aspirations, but on Christ. This is how he could confidently say that whether he was full or hungry he was content, in spite of his circumstances. Or whether he was free or in prison, which was the case when he wrote this letter, he simply left it with the Lord.

True spiritual contentment is in Christ. Until we come to accept this in our Christian experience we will be hopelessly searching for that which will never be found. Our sufficiency is Christ and Christ alone! We can endure anything in Him. This is why Paul could boldly say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” The question is, can we say the same?

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. ©iStockphoto.com/Tim Gupta.
2. Charles Colson, *BreakPoint Commentary*, November 25, 1998, (c) 1998 *Prison Fellowship Ministries*.

Black Hills Spring Bible Conference

Dates: April 4-6, 2008

Location: *Grace Bible Church*
23751 Pine Haven Drive
Rapid City, South Dakota

Speaker: Paul M. Sadler, *Berean Bible Society*

For more information, please contact:

Pastor John Fredericksen
Phone: (605) 343-3349
E-mail: jtgbc@msn.com

All are warmly welcome!





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For additional information or to receive a brochure, please contact: Pastor Joe Watkins, *Things To Come Mission*, PO Box 127, Beech Grove, IN 46107—Phone: (317) 783-0300 or e-mail: tcm@tcmusa.org.

May God richly bless this special occasion to the praise of His glory!

Pennsylvania Bible Conference



Dates: April 25-27, 2008

Location: *Quality Inn*, 625 Quentin Road
Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Speaker: Ricky Kurth, *Berean Bible Society*

Conference will include: Preaching the Word, Question and Answer times, Prayer sessions, children's classes, and refreshments/fellowship.

For directions and additional information, please contact:
William Schaeffer at (717) 949-3020

THE RESURRECTION ACCORDING TO PAUL

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(A Resurrection Day message delivered
at Faith Bible Church in Steger, Illinois)

Did you ever notice how death and dying seem to bring people together? When a loved one is passing, even feuding family members keep a bedside vigil. Later at the funeral, people who haven't seen one another in years gather together as one.

But the death of the Lord had the *opposite* effect! As His death drew near, His apostles forsook Him (Mark 14:50), and after His death, even the great Apostle Peter returned to his fishing business (John 21:3). It was the *Resurrection* that brought His people together, and it brings us together here today!

The resurrection of Christ played a major role in the Apostle Paul's first recorded sermon in Acts 13. Let's begin in Verse 26, where we read:

“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God,

to you is the word of this salvation sent.”

Notice that Paul's first recorded sermon was given primarily to *Jews*. This is highly significant, for professing Christendom has been historically *anti-Semitic*. For instance, history tells us that the church of Rome persecuted the Jews during the Dark Ages.

But it is said that Martin Luther also hated the Jews! Early in his life he favored them, thinking they would turn to Christ after his break with the Roman church that had persecuted them. But when they persisted in rejecting the Christ of Protestantism, he is said to have turned viciously against them, perhaps buying into the old “Christ-killers” mentality. Many anti-Semitic quotes attributed to him can be found on anti-Christian web sites, where atheists use them to discredit Christianity as hateful and intolerant.



Renowned auto maker Henry Ford was also reportedly anti-Semitic. Ford wrote a book expressing his feelings—a book that we are told was later read by Adolph Hitler.

Perhaps you are thinking it doesn't matter if *you* are anti-Semitic, for you are not an influential person like Luther or Ford. However, while you may not be anyone in the world, you are the world to someone. Someone looks up to you, and values your opinion, and *all* anti-Semitism is a poor testimony for Christ. Paul's example here clearly demonstrates our responsibility to share "*the word of this salvation*" to Jews as well as to Gentiles.

Notice in Verse 26 that Paul also addresses all who fear God. If you are not saved, *you need to fear God*. Please don't think that a loving God won't sentence you to eternity in the Lake of Fire. It is true that "*God is love*" (I John 4:8); that's why He sent His Son to die for your sins. But if you reject Christ, you should know that the Bible *also* says that "*our God is a consuming fire*" (Heb. 12:29). You need to trust Christ as your Savior, and Christ *alone*.

There is an old saying that is of particular interest on "Easter"

Sunday: "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."¹ This is usually good advice, but not when it comes to salvation. You cannot put some of your faith in the blood that Christ shed for your sins, and some in your own good works. The Lord did all of the work necessary for your sins. All that He asks is that you *believe* that all of the work for your sins has been done.

"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him" (Acts 13:27).

Most of our Lord's ministry was conducted outside of Jerusalem among the common people, and "*the common people heard Him gladly*" (Mark 12:37). Did you ever wonder why the Lord then sought the approval of "*they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers*"?

Most people of influence are concerned with the common man. When Groucho Marx was breaking in a new vaudeville act, it was well-received among his elite group of friends, but he wondered if it would be popular with mainstream Americans, and so coined a phrase by asking, "Will it play in Peoria?" At that time, this Illinois city was well known to be a cross-section of the American populace, a host to people of different race, creed, color and income. Corporations would test market their products in Peoria, and to this day in an election year, reporters often visit to see how the claims of the candidates are being received by the common majority.

This is because in many countries candidates need only the vote of the common majority to get elected. However, in Israel of old, the Lord seemed intent on also gaining the approval of those who sat in Moses' seat (Matt. 23:2), whom He hoped would be the "builders" of the kingdom (Matt. 21:42). This is why the Lord returned to Jerusalem during the last week of His earthly life, asking "Will it play in Jerusalem?"

As we know, it didn't. A week after He entered the city, Israel's builders "disallowed" (I Pet. 2:7) and crucified the Lord because, as Paul says here, they "knew Him not," and He took the kingdom out of their hands (Matt. 21:43 cf. Luke 12:32).

"But when the last of his seed was crucified, God's promise to David was looking anything but 'sure.'"

But how could they *not* have known the Lord? Well, despite what we see in the paintings of the masters, the Lord wore no halo, and His heart did not glow through His chest, as is often portrayed. We can prove this Scripturally. When His enemies tried to kill Him, He was able to pass through their midst unnoticed on more than one occasion (Luke 4:28-30; John 8:59; 10:39). Had He had any distinguishing features, they would simply have cried, "Grab the guy with the halo!"

But if there was nothing distinctive about the Lord's appearance, how were Israel's leaders supposed to have known Him? Ah, as Paul reminded his hearers, they should have given heed to "the voices of the prophets." As the Lord said of the Scriptures these prophets penned, "they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

In Isaiah 35, the prophet Isaiah told Israel that someday "your God will come" and "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (v. 4-6). Thus when the Lord healed the blind, the deaf, the lame and the dumb, *whom should they have known was among them?*

And there is more. Job 9:8 says that God "alone...treadeth upon the waves of the sea." And so when the Lord walked on the sea (Matt. 14:25), they should have known that *their God had come!*

Perhaps Israel's leaders were unfamiliar with these passages? I don't see how! As Paul says here, the Scriptures were read "every Sabbath day"! This means that each week they listened to the reading of the Scriptures, but did not *hear* them.

How about you, Christian friend? Do you go to church each week and hear the pastor preach that "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (II Cor. 5:15)? Do you hear these words, but continue to live for yourself?

Next, Paul says that *“because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets...they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.”* Here we mustn’t be confused. Just because the Scriptures *predicted* Israel would condemn the Lord doesn’t mean they had to do so! They had a free will, and had they chosen to accept Christ, the Scriptures would have predicted that instead! Just because we serve a God so great that He can turn the *worst* thing that ever happened (the crucifixion of Christ) into the *best* thing that ever happened doesn’t mean He *caused* the Jews to condemn the Lord!

“And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain” (Acts 13:28).

Our Lord was actually tried by at least three different men, including Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, yet all *“found no cause of death in Him”* (Luke 23:22). *“Yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain,”* and Barabbas the murderer released (Mark 15:6-11). Don’t miss the symbolism here! The innocent Christ died so that the guilty Barabbas might go free. Just as the innocent Christ died, so that you as a guilty sinner might also go free. There is no evidence that Barabbas ever believed on the One who died in his place. How about you, my unsaved friend?

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre” (Acts 13:29).

Perhaps you’ve noticed that sometimes the Bible says the

Lord died on a cross, while in other places it says “tree,” as here. My own thinking is that the cross on which He died was not the smooth, polished variety that is used to remember Him today, but was rather so roughly hewn so as to be little more than a tree. Also, the term “cross” would be familiar to Gentile Romans, while “tree” would be familiar to Jews (Deut. 21:22), hence both words are used. I wonder if there isn’t also some symbolism involved here as well. You’ll never find fruit growing on a cross, but a tree is *life-giving*, as is the cross of Christ, for all who trust in Him.



Next we read that *“they laid Him in a sepulchre.”* Throughout history, men have been buried in some pretty fancy tombs. One of Egypt’s pharaohs was buried in the Great Pyramid of Giza. But the Lord lived such a plain life, you would think He would be buried in a rather plain tomb. Why do you suppose God allowed Him to be buried in the tomb of “a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph” (Matt. 27:57-60)?

I believe it was because in those days the poor were often forced to *share* a tomb with others. While the Lord was indeed poor, it was

essential He be buried in a “new tomb” (Matt. 27:60), one “*wherein never man before was laid*” (Luke 23:53). You see, it was well known that a man was once buried in the tomb of Elisha, “*and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet*” (II Kings 13:21). Because of this, God the Father was anxious that men know that the Lord didn’t rise from the dead by coming into contact with the bones of some holy man, but that He rose from the dead by His own power and holiness (John 10:17,18; Rom. 1:4).

But if our Lord arose by His own power, why does Paul say:

“But God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 13:30).

And why does Romans 8:11 affirm that it was *the Spirit* who raised Him? Ah, surely this is another attestation to the *oneness* of the Trinity. And just as surely it means that after His death, the Lord passed *three more examinations*, after which He was righteously released from the prison of death. Due to overcrowding in our nation’s prisons, our flawed judicial system frequently releases men from prison before they have paid their full debt to society. But there is no way that any member of the Trinity would have released Christ from the prison of death had He not fully paid our sin debt on Calvary.

Of course, when the Lord rose from the dead, *Joseph got his tomb back!* How symbolic this is of how anyone who ever gives anything to the Lord receives it back. The Lord borrowed a penny to teach

people to pay their taxes (Luke 20:24), but how many of you think the Lord then absconded with the penny? He also borrowed a boat from which to address a multitude of people on the shore (Mark 4:1), but does anyone think He didn’t return it? The same could be said for the donkey He borrowed for His ride into Jerusalem, and the room He borrowed to eat the Passover with His disciples. And we know that the boy who loaned Him a few loaves and fishes (John 6:9) received *his* gift back in exponential fashion!

What’s the point? Anything and everything that you as a believer give to Him is something you will get back in eternity. All of the time, the money, the effort and the passion that we give to Him will likewise be repaid in exponential fashion. I believe the Lord will be a rich rewarder of the smallest of favors done in His name.

“And He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people” (Acts 13:31).

I Corinthians 15 mentions over five hundred witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, making it one of the best-attested events in history. There were not 500 witnesses to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and yet no one doubts that Booth shot him.

But perhaps you are thinking that hundreds of people have also claimed to have seen Elvis Presley since his death! While this might be true, it is probably because there are hundreds of Elvis impersonators walking the streets!

However, there were no Jesus impersonators. Even His apostles forsook Him and fled, and were trying to disassociate themselves from Him, not impersonate Him (Mark 14:71). Besides, if they really wanted to prove Elvis was dead, they could dig him up and display his body. But while our Lord's enemies would have loved to silence all that resurrection talk by producing His body, they could not, for He had risen.

“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

“God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:32,33).

Notice Paul calls Christ's resurrection “glad tidings,” that is, *good news* or *gospel!* This is different than how Peter preached Christ at Pentecost. Peter *charged* Israel with the death of Christ (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10), adding that God had raised Him up despite their efforts to dispose of Him. This was not good news! If you kill someone, then hear that your victim has risen from the dead, this would be very bad news for you indeed! The man would no doubt come looking for you, and he would not be pleased! This was precisely how Peter preached Christ at Pentecost.

How different was Paul's message! Paul's preaching of the cross was not, “You did it, and you'd better repent of it!” Paul's message was rather “*God* did it! He did it *for you!* He's not angry with you,

He wants you to be reconciled to Him!”

Notice Paul says the Lord was “begotten” of the Father. This Bible word often refers to births, but also to *resurrection*, for when a man is raised from the dead, he is given *new life* just as surely as when he was born.

“...after His death,
the Lord passed *three*
more examinations...”

This explains Paul's allusion to the Lord as “*the firstborn of every creature*” (Col. 1:15). The cults misuse this verse to teach that the Lord was the first thing created in God's creation, negating His deity, and His identity as the Creator. However, in context this verse is rather teaching that He was the first of God's *new* creation, for He was the first of many who will also rise from the dead and receive resurrection life (Acts 26:23).

“And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David” (Acts 13:34).

These “sure mercies” involve the promises God gave David concerning a son. David was promised that his son would be given a kingdom, and that this kingdom would last “for ever” (II Sam. 7:12-16). These promises were fulfilled in Solomon (I Chron. 28:6,7), and in all of David's subsequent seed. But when the last of his seed was

crucified, God's promise to David was looking anything but "sure." Nevertheless when God raised Him from the dead, it was manifest to all that God's promises are indeed sure (Psa. 89:1-37), as David believed them to be (II Sam. 23:3-5).

"Wherefore He saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 13:35).

All human bodies corrupt in the grave, and yet Psalm 16 speaks of One that would *not* see corruption. This psalm was written by David, but David could not have been writing about himself,

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption" (Acts 13:36).

Paul could have *proved* that David's body saw corruption by exhuming it, for as Peter informs us, "*his sepulchre is with us unto this day*" (Acts 2:29). And so David misspoke if he was speaking of himself. Of course, we know he was rather speaking prophetically of Christ, as Paul asserts:

"But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37).

An old Union theme song from the Civil War declared of a controversial abolitionist, "John Brown's body lies a-molderin' in the grave," and this can likewise be said of the body of everyone who has ever died—*except Christ!* Biblically speaking, the corruption of a dead body begins on the fourth day after death (John 11:39), and our Lord arose on the third!

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

"And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38,39).

Notice that it is "*all that believe*" who are saved and not all who *behave*. Your behavior has nothing to do with your salvation. We often speak of "*the plan of salvation*," but the word "*plan*" does not appear in Scripture. Paul rather speaks of "*the word of this salvation*" (v. 26), and if the gospel could be boiled down to *one* word, that word would be *believe!*


In closing, I should point out that the complete line from that Civil War song is: "John Brown's body lies a'molderin' in the grave, *his soul is marching on.*" Part of what was meant by this was that while the abolitionist might be dead, the *spirit* of abolitionism lived on. Similarly, many who deny the bodily resurrection of Christ will agree that "He lives," but only through the spirit of His teachings, while His body continues to molder in the ground.

If this be true, then we are of all men most miserable (I Cor. 15:19), and your loved ones who have died in Christ have perished, with only their memory living on (v. 18). Thankfully, this erroneous view of the resurrection of Christ is refuted here in this passage, as well as in countless others.

When Joseph of Arimathea finally died, imagine the confidence he must have felt, knowing they would lay him in the very tomb

from which his Lord arose! Such confidence is not limited to Joseph, but is joyfully extended to every believer, for when Christ arose He became “*the firstfruits of them that slept*” (I Cor. 15:20-22).

We began by saying that the Lord’s resurrection brought His people together, just as it has brought us together here this day.

But there is coming a day when His resurrection will bring us together again for the last time. Old feuds will be put aside forever, and God’s people will gather together as one. What a day of rejoicing that will be! 

Endnote

1. ©iStockphoto.com/Eileen Hart.

Question Box

“What did the Lord mean when He said we have to eat His flesh to be saved?”

“Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).

Catholicism takes this literally, and believes the communion bread and cup *become* the body and blood of Christ. But we know the Lord did not mean this literally, for the drinking of blood is forbidden (Lev. 17:12), and the eating of human flesh is always associated with the judgment of God (Lev. 26:28,29).

The Lord was employing a figure of speech. He had just finished saying:

“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (v. 40).

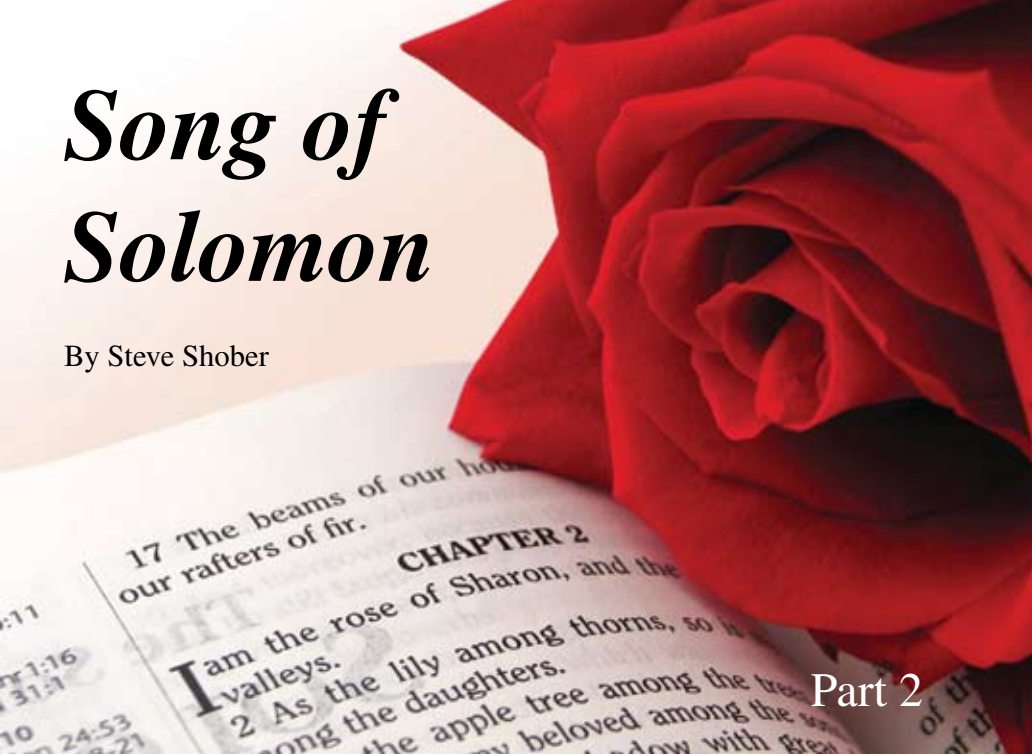
Notice how the phrase “and I will raise Him up at the last day” ties Verse 40 to Verse 54. If Verse 40 says that believing on the Lord gives everlasting life, and Verse 54 says that eating the Lord’s flesh and drinking His blood give eternal life, then eating and drinking the Lord is a figure of speech that symbolizes believing on Him.

And it is a good symbol. We sometimes say “He *swallowed* the whole story” when we mean someone believed the story *completely*. This illustrates how we must believe on Christ *completely*.

The Lord’s Supper is only a memorial of the Lord’s sacrifice for us (I Cor. 11:24b, 25b). If African-Americans held a memorial to honor the day Lincoln freed the slaves, none of them would believe that *the memorial* saved them from slavery. Likewise it is the sacrifice of Christ that saves us, not the figure of speech which memorializes it. —Pastor Kurth

Song of Solomon

By Steve Shober



Part 2

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Interpretation of the Song of Solomon

Last month's article indicated the Song of Solomon (SOS) contains a true love story about a young girl and Solomon. Their love goes through many stages and is very intriguing. The love story portrays the relationship between God and Israel over the span of history. It is written in a poetic style that seems to cleverly mask the prophetic message. We will now begin to consider the underlying meaning of that story and how it relates to the future.

Analogies: A problem with types and analogies is that they can be misused and overworked, so much so that the analogy no longer makes sense. If we say Solomon represents God, and the woman Israel, then what do we make of his multiple, heathen wives and his moral failures? Obviously God has no such failures, so we must not over-analyze this story. This problem is inherent with any example, type, or analogy where a human or thing in some way represents God. If we carefully maintain the correct representations of the Song of Solomon (SOS) we will avoid many of the possible pitfalls. Again, it is the relationship between Solomon and the Shulamite (corresponding to the relationship between God and Israel) that will be the basis of our interpretation.

Transitional Book: It was mentioned (Position in the Canon) that SOS is a transitional book preparing the reader for what the prophets will have to say. The first prophet is Isaiah and in just the first chapter (and first two verses of chapter two) he says this about the relationship

between Israel and God: they rebelled against Him, they do not know Him, they are sinful, they have forsaken the Lord, the faithful city had become a harlot, Israel will be ashamed, He would purge away the dross, Zion will be redeemed, the last days, and the establishment of the Kingdom. These are the same basic thoughts contained in the proper interpretation of SOS; indicating SOS is a carefully, divinely crafted love story alerting the reader to profound spiritual truths and compelling Israel to return to the Lord.

Basic Elements of the Story: The SOS story contains seven basic elements (excluding the introductory parts of the story): (1) First love, (2) Promised Coming, (3) Warnings, (4) First Coming, (5) Separation, (6) Final Restoration, and (7) Perfect Love.

These seven elements (or divisions) are the key highlights describing Israel's relationship with God. Elements 1-5 look through the prism of time to reiterate Israel's sordid past. Elements 6-7 look over the horizon of time to what the future holds in store. Today, Israel is in unbelief and temporarily set aside (Romans 11) while God is pouring out His grace upon Jew and Gentile alike in the age of Grace.

Israel is in element number five today (technically, the continued unfolding of the prophetic program is held in abeyance today and this will continue until the Rapture, at which time the prophetic program will begin again). This means that Israel will have to go through the final restorative process after the Rapture. The restoration of unbelieving Israel derives from a severe chastening (requiring that the believers of this age be removed from the world first). That chastening converts and restores Israel to that which God desires. The seven elements listed above will be used for reference as we continue the interpretation.

1. First Love: The concept of first love is important. In Ezekiel 16:8 and Jeremiah 2:2, Israel's beginning was noted as, "...thy time was the time of love." First love is special, pure, and without conditions. It is very precious to our Lord because of its sincerity and purity, like a baby towards its mother. God often recalls Israel's first love after she came out of Egypt leaning on Him to become a nation.

2. Promised Coming: The promise of His first coming (as the Messiah) was made to Israel throughout the Scripture. Israel's euphoric view of that coming was much like the Shulamite's musing. The Millennial kingdom was desired by Israel and they expected the Messiah to come as a conquering general to give reprieve from those who oppressed them. They envisioned Him providing what they wanted, deliverance and blessings. At this time, God's and Israel's early relationship was satisfying and in its early bloom.

3. Warnings: Israel was given warning after warning what would happen if she departed from following the covenant with Him. These

warnings are replete throughout the Old Testament, and are the primary subject of the prophets Isaiah through Malachi. She was warned over and over that her continued sin would result in her capture, many dying, unbelievable suffering, captivity, being treated cruelly, dispersion among the nations, and being despised of all nations.

4. First Coming: Christ's first coming was just as the Song of Solomon story describes, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness...?" They wanted a deliverer, but could not believe who really came. They got someone who was gentle, meek, and lowly. He came the wrong way; He came out of the wilderness (of humanity) as a man, not as a Divine conqueror. He was a carpenter not a general; he rode a donkey not a triumphant horse. He failed to deliver them and was far too gentle, he would not even quench a smoking flax or break a bruised reed (Matt. 12:20). They did not know it was their Messiah when He came the first time because they were blinded by self-interests. The least of their interests were the critical issues of true faith and the need to be born again.

"The final restoration of Israel is a major theme of biblical prophecy yet to be fulfilled."

5. Separation: Hosea paints the picture of Israel as an adulterous wife. Because of her spiritual adultery (worshiping other gods), the northern 10 tribes (also called Israel) were taken into captivity and the people were dispersed before His first coming. These tribes were divorced by God (Jer. 3:8-9; Hos. 2:2; Isa. 50:1). The two southern tribes (Judah) had a history of blessing and failure in their relationship with the Lord. Judah often found pleasure in her own pursuits and other gods. God warned them (Ezekiel 16:22,43 and Jeremiah 2:2) saying, "Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth...." Accordingly, He told them He would recompense their ways upon them. Indeed, as the Shulamite, all Israel has had a history of being mistreated by most nations because she did not remember her Lord. Shortly after the first coming, Israel (as a nation) was temporarily given up by the Lord because of unbelief. All 12 tribes left their first love and continued to commit spiritual fornication; God had to divorce/separate from them all. To this day, the wife of the covenant is "put away" and remains in unbelief.

SOS 5:6 and Hosea 5:6 tie together, "...they shall go...to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them." By the time Israel starts awakening to her need for the Messiah, He will be gone and there will be a drought of understanding in Israel (start of the Tribulation).

6. Final Restoration: The final restoration of Israel is a major theme of biblical prophecy yet to be fulfilled. The body of believers in this age will be removed from this world and then the prophetic

program will begin again, taking off right where it stopped when interrupted by the age of Grace. Recall that God has divorced all 12 tribes and is now joined unto the believers of this age. When our age ends He will resume action with His former wife, i.e., He will remember the eternal covenant He made with her in her youth. But, we have to be taken out of this world first or He would have multiple wives.

In Deuteronomy 24:4, a man was forbidden to remarry a former wife. The reason for this is that the former wife would be defiled and remarriage would be adulterous. God is true to His own word; how then can He remarry His former wife? His solution to this seemingly unsolvable problem is He will restore the adulterous former wife to that of a pure virgin, that is, completely remove any, and all, defilement. In this future time, she will become pure and without blemish, an undefiled virgin once again. This has never happened in all recorded history. This is something that mankind would not even think in the realm of possibility. Once she is pure and undefiled she is totally fit to take the Lord's hand in marriage. When Christ came the first time He was born of a virgin, who ever heard of such a thing? When He comes again, he will restore an adulterous wife to a pure virgin, who ever heard of that?

With restoration in view, please note SOS 6:1. The women ask where her beloved has gone, "...that we may seek him with thee." This is akin to the Gentiles coming to Israel as they seek the Lord during the Tribulation and Kingdom (His withdrawal, see 5 above, has ended). Israel's complete transformation will result in the Gentiles seeking Him.

7. Perfect Love: Removing her defilement is a true miracle! It is the basic goal of the Tribulation (which begins right after the Rapture of the Church). The Tribulation is a furnace of affliction to purify Israel by removing the dross of sin and refining them by fire, like precious metals are refined (Zech. 13:9). During the Tribulation, Israel is driven into the wilderness and only one-third will make it through (Rev. 12:14). They that do make it through will have been transformed into pure virgins, coming out "leaning on Him." These virgins are appropriate spouses for our Lord. Israel's change will be so dramatic, so unbelievable, the world will ask, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved" (SOS 8:5). Israel will then be the true, pure wife of the Lord. His ardent desire is toward her, and vice versa, forevermore.

To Be Continued!



Steve Shober is a member of the BBS Board of Directors. If you have questions about this article you can contact him at: 7179 Clover Hill Dr., Waunakee, WI 53597; or shober@chorus.net.

Beyond the Veil

By Paul M. Sadler



Our dear friend and fellow laborer in the gospel, Russ Tunks, was unexpectedly ushered to glory on New Year's Eve at the age of 73. Russ and his wife, Marion, were charter members of the *Falls Bible Church* where I had the privilege of serving as pastor for nearly ten years.

After Russ' retirement they moved to Alabama, but this didn't hinder his involvement in the Lord's service whatsoever. Russ was always on the cutting edge when it came to electronics, so he was naturally one of the first ones we contacted when we wanted to transfer Pastor Stam's messages to a CD format. Now beyond the veil, he's still actively serving the Lord to the praise of His glory. We want to extend our love and sympathy to Marion and their daughters Laurie, Sherie, Julie, and son Rusty. May the Father of all mercies comfort you in your time of need.



BBI Missions Conference 2008

The annual Missions Conference held near the end of January at the *Berean Bible Institute* was once again a joy to attend. Grace missionaries from both *Things To Come Mission* and *Grace Ministries International* shared with us how the gospel of the grace of God is changing lives around the world.

Everyone I spoke to who attended the meetings was challenged to become more involved in what the Lord is doing in the *regions beyond* our borders. Our missionaries both young and old alike have sacrificed much to take the ministry of reconciliation to a lost and dying world. I am sure they would appreciate hearing from you—a letter, or gift, or even a note to let them know you are praying for them would be a great encouragement. Hope to see you at the conference next year!

—Pastor Sadler



BBS Letter Excerpts

From the Internet:

“I have found your web site with great excitement. I have never seen the truth of the Scriptures so plainly presented in one site.”

From Indiana:

“I became a Grace believer at age 75, eight years ago, and since then just can’t get enough!”

From Florida:

“I would like to receive your magazine the *Berean Searchlight*. My friend who recently died had his life changed by your magazine.”

From Wisconsin:

“I ordered James Kirkwood’s book, *Unlimited Grace*. It has encouraged my heart so much and helped me grow in the Lord. I would like to write to Pastor Kirkwood and thank him.” (Consider him thanked!—RK).

From Montana:

“Wow! What you pointed out is simply EXCITING to me, because things are starting to gel, and I am seeing more and more how to rightly divide the Word! We are no longer in investigation mode with the Grace message. We are convinced, and we are learning.”

From Ohio:

“A Christian friend loaned us *Sermon on the Mount* and *Moses and Paul*, and we were greatly blessed. We are ordering these books to give to friends and family.”

From the Internet:

“Thank you for sending the *Searchlight*. I am in my third week as protestant chaplain here at the penitentiary, and I appreciate all the tools and support I can get.”

From Florida:

“I can hardly express what the *Searchlight* has done for me. Having heard the truth, it has set me free. I do not attend the church where I have been a member for many years. The messages and the songs they sing are all pertaining to the kingdom. I am not looking for the kingdom this time, I am looking for the Rapture, the blessed hope.”

From the Internet:

“I am currently teaching my children from your *Growing Up In Grace* Sunday School Program.”

From Ohio:

“We learned dispensational teachings from Dave Winebrenner, and are so blessed that we can now make sense of it all and share it with others. I will be offering a Bible study at the RV resort where we spend the winter and the teachings will be based on what I have learned from *Things That Differ* by Pastor Stam and *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ* by Pastor Sadler.”

From Michigan:

“The *Searchlight* has finally made sense out of a lot of questions that I have had with the Bible.”

From Pennsylvania:

“I’m so elated by your article *Discerning the Will of God*. All these years I was saying to individuals that God chastens us physically, but your message took the vibe off my understanding, or lack of!”

From California:

“I was recently moved to this unit, where I’m told the only ministry is the Jehovah’s Witnesses. As I read their literature, I realized what they were teaching was not in alignment with God’s Word. I have spent my life living lies! I only want truth! I asked around about how to acquire *reliable* Bible study literature, and when I awoke this morning, someone had slipped a piece of paper on my floor with your name and address, saying ‘Scripturally sound, reliable study material.’”

From the Internet:

“*Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ* has opened so many closed doors in my life. Because of Christians not understanding the truth, I was very confused to say the least.”

From Wales:

“I will study what you have said and be a Berean, even though it has gotten me into trouble with my pastor and deacons. They have told me to stop asking hard questions. My pastor has even refused to have a Bible study to help me and others. He even said I could go to another church to get teaching. It was only four months ago I felt the Spirit burden me to study Scripture and examine how much of what I believe is actually biblical.” (You may not be the Prince of Wales, but as a Berean you are a spiritual nobleman [Acts 17:10,11]—RK).

From the Internet:

“I use the *Two Minutes* devotionals for my adult Sunday School class. They frequently provide for some interesting discussion.”

From Pennsylvania:

“I got one of your *Searchlight* magazines last summer at *Grace Family Bible Church* in Duncansville. My husband is in a nursing home and I read it, then took it over to him. We enjoy it very much, and would like you to have this small donation.”

From the Internet:

“It was Berean influence that drew me to actually study the Scriptures—not just read them. As a result, I am very comfortable with my personal relationship that I have with Jesus Christ.”

From Wisconsin:

“I remember listening to J. C. O’Hair and Charles Baker as a child, and have attended Grace churches ever since. I love the Grace message, and it is such a blessing to read my Bible without questions in my old age.” (The groundwork for such comfort is best laid while we are young.—RK).

From the Internet:

“I had stopped going to our Pentecostal church because it became a night club. They healed the same people over and over every week. Anyway, I am so blessed to be able to now understand Scripture by rightly dividing it.”

From Oklahoma:

“We read your letter about postal rates going up, and we enjoy the *Searchlight* so much, here is a little help.”

“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

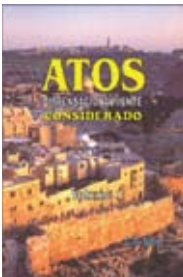


Grace Literature in Portuguese

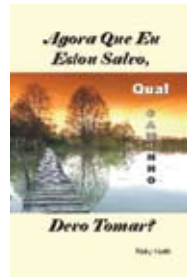
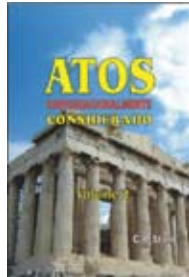
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Leo and Con Keiper

Word of Grace Mission, Inc.

The English-speaking Grace believer has an advantage that many of our foreign friends do not, we can easily obtain literature. Literature is an important tool in any ministry outreach and the Keipers are trying to fill the tremendous gaps lacking in Portuguese. They started working in the translation-printing ministry over 25 years ago. Their work has grown considerably to the point where it now extends to the four corners of Brazil and is also an international outreach with contacts in Portugal, Africa, and Japan.



Acts, Volumes 1 & 2
by C. R. Stam



Now That I Believe
by Ricky Kurth



Overcoming
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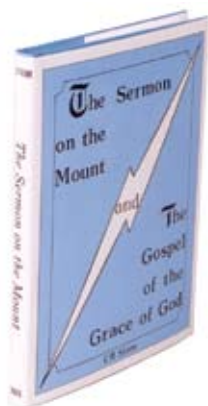
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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

5th Annual Encouragement Conference: *Grace For Today* would like to extend a warm welcome to Grace believers to gather together with them to study this year's conference theme: *Faith Working Through Love* (Gal. 5:6). What better way to spend Memorial Day weekend (May 24-26) than listening to speakers Paul M. Sadler, David Hobbs, Dennis Kiszonas, Leon Gilchrist, Elizabeth Kiszonas, Joe Torres and John Mark Stevens. For more information about this Sparrow Bush (near Port Jervis), New York conference, contact Maureen Morgan at *Grace For Today*, P.O. Box 798, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108, or at 1-800-803-0003, conference@gracefortoday.org.

New Intern: BBI graduate Andy Kern, his expectant wife Sarah, and their son Silas have joined Pastor Dick Ware in the ministry at *Grace Fellowship Bible Church* in Sheridan, Arkansas. Andy was such a sharp student at BBI that if he got an answer wrong on a test, we checked back to see if we taught it right! His addition can only augment the good work already being done by Pastor Ware and the saints at GFBC.

New Pastor: *Berean Bible Church* of Evansville, Indiana, is pleased to announce that former BBI student Pastor Kevin Mepsted has accepted their call to the full-time ministry at BBC. Please pray for the new pastor, his wife Jennifer, and their children Josiah and Jonah, and especially for Hannah, whose serious asthma constrained the family to leave the challenging air of the Los Angeles area.

Another New Pastor: A recent unanimous vote at *Falls Bible Church* of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, resulted in the recognition of interim pastor Dan Wolgast as the assembly's new pastor. In addition to his new duties at FBC, Pastor Wolgast will continue as an instructor at *Berean Bible Institute*, where he also serves as Dean of Students. Dan's wife Sheila helps out at BBI as well, and both will covet your prayers as they enter this new ministry together.

You can enlarge the print size of Bible study articles on our website (www.bereanbiblesociety.org) by holding down the "control" key and turning the wheel on your mouse. If your mouse has no wheel, go to your tool bar, click on "View" and "text size" and then "largest."

*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by Tom & Denise Trevorror while on a Mediterranean cruise celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, visiting locations where the Apostle Paul ministered. The *St. Nicholas Lighthouse* is located in Rhodes, Greece. The ancient *Fortress of St. Nicholas* stands in the foreground of the picture.

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