

# The **Berean Searchlight**

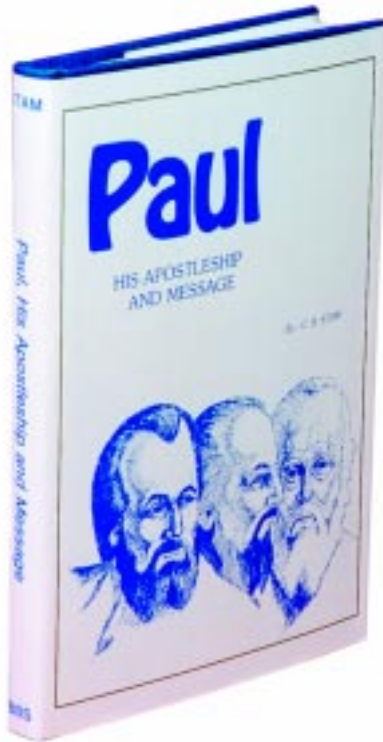
Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

April 1999



# ***PAUL, HIS APOSTLESHIP AND MESSAGE***

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The *Berean Bible Society* is an organization for the promotion of Bible study by means of newspaper series, recorded Bible lessons, and the distribution of Bible study literature. It is a non-profit organization, a work of faith supported by the gifts of Christian friends.

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*Editor:* Paul M. Sadler

*Composition and Layout:* Kevin J. Sadler

*Printing:* Lithocolor, Westchester, IL

Questions, comments, book orders? You can reach us at:

Berean Bible Society  
N112 W17761 Mequon Road  
PO Box 756  
Germantown, WI 53022

Internet: <[www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)>

E-mail: <[berean@execpc.com](mailto:berean@execpc.com)>

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## From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

We have always held those in Law Enforcement in high esteem. While there are a few bad apples in every bunch (including the ministry), for the most part, these courageous men and women deserve our utmost *respect*. They're out there on the front lines every day risking their lives to protect us. The danger is *real!* On Wednesday, January 27th, David and Mary Ann Wasson's son, Brent, was shot in the line of duty by a crazed gunman. It's a parent's worst nightmare.

Brent is a dedicated Kentucky State Trooper who knows the Lord and rejoices in the riches of His grace. He was responding to a call from dispatch when he found himself face to face with a man who was out of touch with reality. Apparently, he had been threatening family members with bodily harm. Brent managed to calm the man down, but just when the situation seemed to be under control the man unexpectedly went into a fit of rage and attacked him.

As Brent scuffled with the man to subdue him, the man's brother-in-law tried to assist but only complicated matters. In the mayhem that followed the man managed to grab Brent's handgun and began firing at pointblank range. Thankfully, he was wearing his bulletproof vest. Brent was shot in the left shoulder, grazed along the left side of his face, and across the back of his neck. The most serious injury he sustained was to his right forearm where the bullet entered, *shattering* his elbow.

Years of experience and training helped Brent to get back to his police cruiser where he secured his shotgun. With his right arm disabled, he was somehow able to fire left-handed to keep the gunman at bay until backup arrived on the scene. Bleeding profusely, Brent was life-flighted to *Jewish Hospital* in Louisville where, as the *providence of God* would have it, the surgical team who had performed the first hand transplant in America was present. According to the surgeon the operation on Brent's elbow was similar to putting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle back together.

Brent is expected to make a full recovery, but will have to undergo months of physical therapy. The entire Wasson family is grateful to God for His sustaining grace through the ordeal. They have maintained a wonderful Christian testimony through it all. If you would like to drop Brent a card or note of encouragement, his address is: Brent Wasson, 10200 Belmont Court, Evansville, IN 47711. Believers may live in a sin-cursed world, but thank God for His *providential* care over us. Please remember the Wassons in your prayers.

Paul M. Sadler  
President

**From Indiana:**

"Keep preaching the Word, rightly divided. We pray for your encouragement and steadfastness of faith."

**From Missouri:**

"I thank our dear God for the shed blood of our precious Savior, and for faithful preachers and writers of grace. I have some grandchildren who need to read the booklet on *Institution of Marriage*. Please send me 3 sets (9). I would like to hear from grace believers in the Independence, Missouri area. God bless and meet the needs of the Institute."

**From Colorado:**

"My wife and I would thank you for your faithful stewardship to both minister God's Word *rightly divided* and also train the next generation of pastor/teachers. Please allow us to pass along some of the Lord's money to that end."

**From Indiana:**

"I am so enriched by the words in the *Berean Searchlight* that I want to thank each person who contributes to the writing and publishing of it. The Lighthouse theme is certainly appropriate and I do enjoy the photos of the different lighthouses. Thank you for your time and commitment to the excellence of this magazine." (If you have taken a picture of a lighthouse and would like to share it with us, we'd love to hear from you. Be sure to send us a *copy* of the original, with a brief description of the location. You never know, it may just appear on the front cover of the *Searchlight!* Ed.)

**From Wisconsin:**

"I want to thank you for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. Your books are a blessing to me. Thank you again."

**From Illinois:**

"It is a pleasure and a privilege to be a partner with you in your wonderful work of spreading the gospel and edifying believers. Please accept the enclosed gift and allocate as follows."

**From Washington:**

"I want to thank you again for the many years of your ministry to the Body of Christ. I have been so thankful for all you have taught me. Namely, to rightly divide the Word of God. My mother and father-in-law first introduced me to your little booklet, which I have received faithfully for 28 years. Please keep telling the truth that is in Jesus Christ to the people of God. And I'll pray that God will richly bless you until He comes for us in the Rapture."

**From Illinois:**

"My husband and I are requesting to be added to the mailing list to receive the *Berean Searchlight*. Also if there are any churches in the area of Batavia, Illinois. Please send us any info on any upcoming conferences." (Welcome aboard! The 1999 Conference schedule is also posted on our web site: <[www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)>. Ed.)

**From New Zealand:**

"Greetings in the love and grace of God. Thank you for continued subscription for one dozen issues of your excellent publication, *Berean Searchlight* each month."

**From New York:**

"We are writing to inform you of our change of address. The *Berean Searchlight* is always uplifting and encouraging and we don't want to miss receiving it! We're also happy to learn that the articles on marriage have been combined into a single booklet. We would like to order some in the near future. Thank you for all of your efforts to further the message of truth. Your ministry is in our prayers. Keep shining forth the Word of Life."

**From Arizona:**

"I am sending a check to help as needed. I receive the magazine the *Berean Searchlight* each month. I wish to help what I can. The magazine has been a real help to me. I thank you for sending it to me."

**From Maine:**

“I enjoy reading the *Berean Searchlight*. We grace believers up here in Maine do not have a pastor or organized church, just a bunch of us who meet weekly and watch preaching videos or listen to tapes to keep ourselves moving forward in the faith. Thank you for your magazine.”

**From Arkansas:**

“The two lead articles in the December issue of the *Berean Searchlight* are just excellent. Thank God for Paul and Cornelius.” (We must humbly confess, beloved, that we are merely instruments in His hand. Ed.)

**From Massachusetts:**

“I’ve received the *Berean Searchlight* for about 2 years now and look forward to each issue. Since there seems to not be any Grace teaching church anywhere around me, I find I can keep growing spiritually by reading and studying the Bible. The *Searchlight* is such a help to me for topical studies. I would like to know if possibly there are any fellow believers around the central Massachusetts area?”

**From Iowa:**

“I would like to receive the book, *Two Minutes With the Bible*. Thank you for the *Searchlight*. It has truly been a blessing.”

**From Tennessee:**

“I wanted to drop you a letter and thank you for all the help you’ve been to me studying God’s Word, rightly divided for this dispensation of Grace. I would like to thank you for sending the *Searchlight* as it is a real help and blessing for me. Please send me a list of all the audio and video tapes you have for sale, including the prices. Thank you for all your help, time and trouble, and may God bless you and your ministry.”

**From Maryland:**

“Here is a gift to help your ministries. Please use however needed. We thank God for the things He is accomplishing through you all. May the new year bring many opportunities to spread far and near the gospel of the grace of God.”

**From Missouri:**

“I am sending a small check. The Lord has blessed me in so many ways. Hope you have a successful new year. I know you have worked hard in getting the Word out.”

**From Illinois:**

“I do not feel I can give any support to *Berean Bible Society* right now. I am 83 years old and living on a small Social Security check. I enjoy your magazine very much and read it from cover to cover. I thank you for sending it to me.” (We certainly understand—thanks so very much for your thoughtful words of encouragement! Ed.)

**From Iowa:**

“I’m enclosing my check for \$.... a little late, but thinking of you and remembering you in my prayers. The *Searchlights* are beautiful with such thoughtful articles. I look forward to their arrival each month.”

**From Kenya:**

“I have much joy and am very happy to be able to convey to you all this message with a great love to you friends. My main point of writing this letter: I do appreciate getting the *Berean Searchlight* and also the work you all do in getting out the truth, God’s Word, rightly divided. Be remembering to send to me because they are helping me so much. Thank you all. Be praying for me because I am single. I have not married and I was born in 1976. I am preaching at Twamakaa Church in Kenya. God bless you all.”

“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

# The Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period (Part IV)

By Paul M. Sadler

## THE GIFT OF TONGUES

**“To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”**

—I Cor. 12:10

The *gift of tongues* was the supernatural imparting of languages, which gave the recipient the ability to fluently speak languages he had never learned. There has been an ongoing debate since the turn of the century as to whether or not God is bestowing this gift today. With the rally cry, “Back to Pentecost!” being sounded throughout Christendom, the Charismatic assemblies are convinced He is. The evangelicals are just as adamant that this is simply not the case, even though their defense of the *Great Commission* flatly contradicts their position.

The gift of tongues is perhaps the most abused, misused, and misunderstood of all the sign gifts, both past and present—namely because it’s no longer in operation today! Our Charismatic friends, for the most part, believe that “tongues” are a heavenly language only understood by God. They base this conclusion upon two passages of Scripture:

**“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (I Cor. 13:1).**

**“For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries” (I Cor. 14:2).**

But do these references support their position? They claim that the “tongues of angels” is clearly a reference to a heavenly language. This raises the questions: What language do angels speak? What is the language of heaven? According to the Scriptures, it is not some heavenly gibberish that’s unintelligible. The primary language of heaven appears to be *Hebrew*. When our Lord spoke from *glory* to the chief of sinners, Paul recounted:

**“And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the *Hebrew tongue*, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 26:14,15).**

Although the angels are without number, it is noteworthy that each one has been given either a Hebrew or Greek name—sometimes they have both. For example: “And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11). As the ministers of God they are undoubtedly fluent in *all* languages. Of course, the angels always spoke in the tongue of the one they were ministering to. When Gabriel was dispatched from heaven and appeared to Daniel he would have addressed him in Hebrew, the

mother tongue (dialect) of the chosen nation (Dan. 9:21-27 cf. Acts 21:40; 22:1-3).

So then, Paul's reference to the "tongues of angels" in I Corinthians 13:1 has nothing whatsoever to do with a heavenly language—such an idea is foreign to the Word of God. Perhaps a closer examination of this passage will be helpful. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Interestingly, the verbs "speak" and "have" in this verse are in the *subjunctive mood*. In other words, the apostle is using a supposition or stating a hypothetical case. He's simply saying: *If I speak all known languages with the persuasiveness of men and the eloquence of angels, and have not love, I am merely a noisy instrument that men will avoid.*

In regard to I Corinthians 14:2, Paul writes: "For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." The phrase "unknown tongue" here is often appealed to by our Charismatic friends to support their view that this gift was a heavenly language. However, the Greek word *glossa* translated "tongue" is consistently a reference to *known languages* in the New Testament. For example:

**"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue [Gr. *glossa*] shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).**

We doubt anyone would draw the conclusion that some unknown heavenly language is being spoken

here. Furthermore, the italicized word *unknown* that is supplied by the translators oftentimes clouds the sense in I Corinthians 14:2. The addition of the term is indeed helpful if it is understood in its proper context. The "tongue" wasn't *unknown* because it was a heavenly communication that only God and the recipient could understand. Rather, it was *unknown* because the *hearer* had no knowledge of the language being spoken. This is the apostle's whole argument as he builds a case against the Corinthians who were *misusing* the gift. What profit was there if they impressed their audience by speaking in an unknown language, if no one understood what they were saying?

Once again, "For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries" (I Cor. 14:2). There is a passage found in the Old Testament that may help clarify the apostle's point: "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose *tongue* thou shalt not *understand*" (Deut. 28:49). The nation that would take Israel *captive* was Babylon. They spoke to the Israelites in an unknown tongue, which only added insult to injury and brought *confusion* into the camp.

Thus, those who used the gift of tongues in the assembly without an interpreter weren't speaking unto men, but God. Why? Because no one but God understood them—howbeit in the spirit they spoke mysteries. This went far beyond



the preaching of the Word; it also applied to praying and singing in the church. "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, **my** spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:14,15). In the spirit, they may have lifted up one of the most spiritual prayers that ever entered glory, but if it was spoken in an unknown language, what profit was it to those present? It was unfruitful!

Since God is not the author of confusion, Paul shows the Corinthians the importance of everything being done in an orderly fashion. Hence, "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep *silence* in the church; and let him speak to *himself*, and to *God*" (I Cor 14:28). More will be said about the role of the interpreter in a moment.

If we continue with the apostle's argument (vs. 7,8) it becomes even clearer that he has *earthly* languages in mind, not some type of obscure heavenly tongue. He illustrates this point by showing that even things without life, such as musical instruments, have their own distinct sounds. Otherwise there is *confusion*. For example, "...if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

He then couples this with an interesting statement in verse 10: "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world [Gr. *Kosmos* i.e. earth, world system], and none of them is without signification." In short, there are

many kinds of voices or sounds of languages here upon the *earth*, and each one is significant in its own right. Paul adds: "Therefore if I know not the **meaning** of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me" (vs. 11).

So then, these were languages that were *commonly known* to the human family. Paul was merely attempting to correct the abuses of the gift of tongues. You see, the Corinthians enjoyed the *attention* this gift brought; it made them look spiritual. But the apostle unmasked their vain ways when he said, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..." (vs. 4). Simply put, their words were *meaningless* to the hearer.

## THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES

Those who have taken the time to learn more than one language will tell you it was a painstaking task that took years to accomplish. So it is really quite amazing that the gift of tongues miraculously enabled the early members of the Body to Christ to speak in languages they had no prior knowledge of. This particular supernatural manifestation during the Acts period had a twofold purpose.

*First*, tongues served as a *sign*. "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe *not*..." (I Cor. 14:21,22). Here again the apostle travels back

through time to the days of the Babylonian Captivity. When the Chaldeans spoke harshly to Israel in an *unknown tongue*, it was a sign to the chosen nation of her *unbelief*. Tongues, then, were meant to be a sign to the *unbeliever!*

Since the Jews required a sign, the Gentiles were blessed with the gift of tongues as a *sign* to Israel that she was out of the will of God (I Cor. 1:22 cf. Rom. 11:11,32). Thus, it was a valuable *evangelistic* tool to reach the *individual* Jews with the gospel of Grace after Israel was set aside nationally. Historically, Israel was *scattered* throughout the known world following the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities. Only a minority of Hebrews had migrated back to Palestine prior to the days of John the Baptist. The vast majority still lived *outside* the land and would have naturally adopted the languages of the nations.

As the gospel of Grace spread throughout the Gentile world the *diversity of tongues* gave the members of the Body of Christ the opportunity to announce to the dispersion that Israel had fallen. It also greatly *accelerated* the evangelistic campaign among the Jews and Gentiles, giving the Church, which is His Body, worldwide recognition practically overnight. In fact, those who preached the gospel at this time were said to have “turned the world upside down”; actually they had turned it right side up (Acts 17:6). Unlike

today, this shows the profound *influence* the early Church had upon the affairs of men.

*Second*, the gift of tongues was used as a *teaching* tool. “Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” (I Cor. 14:6).

In biblical times most local assemblies were established in cities that had seaports or were located on trade routes, as was the case at Corinth. Those who knew the Lord would have naturally

“...the *diversity of tongues* gave the members of the Body of Christ the opportunity to announce to the dispersion that Israel had fallen.”

sought out the saints at Corinth when they were passing through. With growing numbers present at the assembly, some of the Corinthians saw an opportunity to make a favorable impression upon the brethren by showing off their ability to speak in other tongues. While

this was an awe-inspiring demonstration of their intellectualism, or so they thought, the apostle quickly exposed the *folly* of such a practice.

**“If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues [that is, all those who have the gift], and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?” (I Cor. 14:23).**

Imagine sitting there watching this theatrical performance as an *unbeliever*. You are unable to understand a word that is being spoken, and to further complicate the

matter two or three are trying to speak at the same time. You would probably walk out thinking to yourself that these people have some form of *dementia*. They may have all their marbles, but they're surely not all in line. Thus, Paul sets down four commands of Christ to correct the misuse of tongues in the assembly.

1. "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course..." (vs. 27). The latter part of this passage is a clear indication that the gift of tongues could be kept under control. Like prophecy, it was subject to the spirit of the one who possessed the gift. All things were to be done decently and in order. While it was permissible for two or three to use the gift, only *one* was allowed to speak at a time. Of course, this should have been obvious, but common sense went out the window when the Corinthians began to think too highly of themselves. Sadly, they had an insatiable appetite for the praise of men. But "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a *fall*" (Prov. 16:18).

2. "...And let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God" (vs. 27,28). The *interpreter* was also one of the supernatural sign gifts of the Acts period. Translators will tell you that it is impossible to translate from one language to another word for word. In fact, they sometimes pour over a text for days searching for a word that's close to the term they are translating. Normally it takes

years for someone to master two languages. In addition, the interpreter must have a working knowledge of the various *definitions* of each word to convey the proper sense in another language. The *interpretation of tongues* provided this understanding instantaneously to those blessed with this gift.

If those who spoke in tongues received further enlightenment from the Spirit on a particular doctrine, they were not permitted to use the gift of tongues unless an interpreter was *present*. They were commanded to be *silent*. The interpreter was God's connection between language barriers. If these gifts were practiced according to His will, they produced unity in the assembly and provided the means for all to be *edified*. However, if there is one thing that characterizes the modern day tongues movement, it's confusion!

3. "...For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (vs. 5). As mentioned earlier, the gift of tongues was never intended to stir the assembly into an emotional state. Rather it was an important teaching tool to impart a fuller understanding of the Mystery to those who spoke another tongue. This insured that they, too, could be *built up* in the faith along with the other members of the assembly as the Scriptures were being taught. With no room left for boasting, everyone could give God the glory for the "great things He hath done."

4. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not

permitted unto them to speak” (vs. 34). While most understand the principle that the woman is not to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, Paul also makes it crystal clear in the context of I Corinthians 14 that she was not to prophesy or speak in tongues in the church. Even though these were supernatural gifts of the Spirit, the women were only permitted to exercise these gifts *outside* the local assembly (Acts 21:8,9). It has been said that if you were to remove the women from the present-day tongues’ movement it would collapse. Apparently, that’s how prominent of a role they play. But what saith the Scriptures?

Some have been troubled by Paul’s statement: “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (I Cor. 14:39). Beloved, it is important to remember that at the time of this writing these gifts were still being used by God to establish the Body of Christ. They were manifestations of the wonderful workings of God. Therefore, Paul instructed the Corinthians, “*forbid not to speak with tongues,*” that is, use them for God’s honor and glory. As we know, the sign gifts were soon to become a passing memory. But until that time, the apostle tirelessly contended for their proper use.

*To be continued!*



### QUESTION BOX

*“Could you address the subject of fasting during the Church age?”*

As the Gentile Church at Antioch prepared to send Paul and Barnabas on their first apostolic journey, Luke records: “*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away*” (Acts 13:3). It is usually assumed that “fasting” belonged to the law. However, the writings of Moses are *silent* in regard to the matter. Thus we are to understand that “fasting” falls within the parameters of a horizontal truth, and we believe there is *liberty* under grace to fast today. In fact, God is well please when we do, as long as it never becomes a legalistic practice (Col. 2:20-23).

Have you ever become so engrossed in a project that you deliberately abstained from eating? If so, you fasted! Spiritually speaking, the *fast* is merely time alone with the Lord, whether it is set aside to pray about a need or meditate upon the Word of God. When the saints at Antioch were faced with an important decision they fasted and prayed. While our time with the Lord and His Word is always beneficial, the fast *itself* doesn’t convey a special blessing or make us more spiritually minded (see also Acts 14:23; 27:33; I Cor. 7:5).

—Pastor Sadler

# The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View

Condensed from an article by C. Truman Davis, M.D., M.S.



Golgotha

“I became interested in (the physical aspects of the passion, or suffering, of Jesus Christ) when...I suddenly realized that I had taken the Crucifixion for granted all these years. It finally occurred to me that, as a physician, I didn't even know the actual immediate cause of death.

“...Pilate condemns Jesus to scourging and crucifixion. Preparations for the scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in His hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first, the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then,

as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally, spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

“The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again, there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body)....The soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. This had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, causes excruciating pain.

“In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans return His garments.

The heavy patibulum (the cross-arm weighing over one hundred pounds) is tied across His shoulders, and the procession...begins its journey along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance. The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects...Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross....The six hundred and fifty-yard journey to Golgotha is finally completed. The prisoner is again stripped of His clothes—except for a loincloth, which is allowed by the Jews.

“The crucifixion begins...Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. (Crucifixes today show the nails through the palms. Roman historical accounts have shown that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when they support the weight of a human body. The misconception may have come about through a misunderstanding of Jesus’ words to Thomas, ‘Observe my hands.’ Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrists as part of the hand.)

“The legionnaire drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood.... The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified.

As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again, there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

“...As the arms fatigue, waves of cramps knot them in deep, relentless pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed, and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled....Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.


“Hours of this pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rendering cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins; a crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart....It is now almost over; the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level. The compressed heart is struggling to pump. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. A sponge

soaked in cheap, sour wine is lifted to His lips. He apparently doesn't take any of the liquid. The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brings out His words... 'It is finished.'

"His mission of redemption has been completed. Finally, He can allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again

presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His last cry, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.'"

**"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).**

**"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21).** 

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## Tradition

### *How Shall We Regard It?*

By Cornelius R. Stam

**M**any sincere believers have a vague idea that tradition is always wrong. They suppose that tradition in itself is contrary to the Word of God. Others lean heavily on tradition. Indeed, the great majority of Christians probably lean more heavily on tradition than on the Bible itself.

We received a letter some time ago from an advocate of a religious practice which is all but universal in Christendom. He wrote: "It has been the regular practice of the Church for centuries of time. Is it possible that the Church has been wrong all this time?" Our answer is—certainly it is possible that the Church has been wrong all this time. Man can always be wrong—and *generally is!*

Can the Church be wrong? Look at the sad history of Israel, God's covenant people! And shall we say that we are less prone to err? Can we claim that the Church under grace has done better than

Israel under the Law? Not one whit. The history of the Church in this age of Grace does not make any better reading than the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. Whatever may be the virtues or vices of tradition, let us put it down as a fixed principle never to *depend* on man—not even the Church. We can *depend* only upon the written Word of God.

### TRADITIONS TRUE AND FALSE

The word *tradition* merely means that which is *handed down* from one to another. It is not *necessarily* false.

In I Corinthians 11:2 Paul writes: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (Gr. *paradosis*, traditions), as I delivered them to you."

In this case what Paul had *handed down* to the Corinthians was most assuredly true, for he had received it by divine revelation.

Concerning the Lord's supper he says: "FOR I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD *that which also I delivered unto you*" (I Cor. 11:23), and a few chapters farther he says again: "*For I delivered unto you first of all THAT WHICH I ALSO RECEIVED*" (I Cor. 15:3).

Twice in his second letter to the Thessalonians he emphasizes the importance of these traditions.

**"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thes. 2:15).**

**"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thes. 3:6).**

But let us not forget that Paul was chosen of God to proclaim a particular message some years before the Scriptures were completed. Notice carefully that he does not instruct his readers to follow tradition in general, nor even the traditions of any particular group. He speaks only of that which he had himself received by revelation to proclaim to them.

*Those* traditions were, of course, absolutely dependable, but the Scriptures have since been completed. No man today can say "Thus saith the Lord," unless he quotes the written Word of God. Therefore human traditions, as such, are wholly unreliable. They may be true or they may be false.

## THE DANGERS OF TRADITION

Because *some* traditions are true men soon confuse tradition with revelation and begin to *depend* on it. Since God uses men to proclaim His Word we are prone to confuse the words of men with the Word of God. *Tradition is the more dangerous because it is not necessarily false.*

Error when mixed with truth is the more difficult to discern. Furthermore, our adversary often uses personalities to lead sincere believers into error. Dr. So-and-so's hearers know him as a godly man. They cannot believe that he would preach anything but the truth and accept all he says in simple faith! But this is a perilous mistake.

The very best of men are only men at the very best. Even the most godly men fail. They fail even in handing down the Word of God to their

hearers, and so the truth is corrupted. Let us illustrate:

Suppose my computer printer is down and I decide to type out twelve copies of the eighth chapter of Romans on my old typewriter. How should I go about it? Suppose I make the first copy, then copy the second from the first, the third from the second, the fourth from the third and so on to the twelfth.

Do you see the danger? If I should make an error in the second copy there is the danger of repeating that error in every

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"The very best of men are only men at the very best."

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successive copy—and the more such an error may *seem* to be correct, the greater the danger. If I make two more errors in the fourth copy, one in the fifth and another in the seventh, the errors will multiply and the last copy may well contain them all! The correct way would be to make all twelve copies from the original. So it is with the Word of God.

Men, even godly men, err and their errors are transmitted from generation to generation. Almost every time another error arises it is passed on to following generations; as a result, almost every imaginable heresy is taught in the name of Christ. That is the extreme danger of depending on tradition.

Therefore, even if *our fathers* copied from *their fathers*, let us not copy from *our fathers*. Or, to put it another way—even if our spiritual leaders copied from *their* spiritual leaders, let *us* not copy from *our* spiritual leaders. Let us go to the original—to the Word of God itself and be safe. Before Paul was saved he made much of the traditions of the fathers. He says in Galatians 1:14:

**“And [I] profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”**

But with all this tradition behind him he still did not recognize his own Messiah; indeed, he became His greatest enemy on earth. And Paul was not the only one thus blinded by false traditions. Some years after his conversion he wrote to the Romans:

**“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.**

**“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.**

**“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:1-3).**

They were so steeped in tradition that they could not see anything else. This casts light on Peter’s statement to the believing Jews of his day:

**“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were *not* redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers,**

**“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Pet. 1:18,19).**

If Paul had continued in the traditions of his fathers he would have been lost. If these Jewish believers had continued in the traditions of their fathers they would all have been lost, as the nation was. What peril there is in following tradition! What multitudes have been lost because they depended upon tradition instead of the Word of God!

## **OUR LORD AND TRADITION**

The Lord Jesus was hated and persecuted for openly opposing the traditions of the Pharisees. However, His answers to them were most significant. When the Pharisees came from Jerusalem and found the disciples eating with “unwashed” hands, “they found fault” (Mark 7:2).

**“For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, *holding the tradition of the elders.***

**“And when they come from the market, except they wash [Gr. *baptizo*, baptize] they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [Gr. *baptismos*, baptism] of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.**

**“Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, *Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?*” (Mark 7:3-5).**

Matthew’s record tells us that He began to answer by saying: *“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”* (Matt. 15:3). But Mark continues with His answer:

**“Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.**

**“Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

**“For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups and many other such like things ye do.**

**“And He said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:6-9).**

*How dangerous, then, to follow tradition!*

## **“AUTHORITIES”**

There is always a tendency to place spiritual leaders upon pedestals. How often Christians settle doctrinal questions by appealing to “authorities!” That is how tradition grows. It is always puzzling to us to note how most believers see

this clearly in the case of the spiritual leaders of Jesus’ day, yet fall into the same trap themselves.

Most believers roundly condemn the spiritual leaders of Jesus’ day for having set themselves up as authorities and condemn the people of that day for having followed these leaders so blindly. Yet these same believers play “follow the leader” as seriously as those of Jesus’ day! They have such implicit confidence in their spiritual leaders that they can hardly believe that any of them are guilty, actually *guilty*, of unfaithfulness to God and His Word. When men arise to call Fundamentalist leaders to repentance, their followers gasp with astonishment.

But is the Church in any better condition than Israel was in the days of Christ? Are the masses any less confused than the Jewish multitudes? Is the Church any less divided than Israel was? They forget that our greatest Christian leaders are but men and that our fathers were but men as we are, and as prone to err as we. Indeed, those who occupy the highest places, ecclesiastically, are often most used by Satan to keep men from seeing the truth and rejoicing in it. And Fundamentalist leaders are by no means exempt.

The Pharisees were the Fundamentalists of Jesus’ day, yet our Lord called them *“blind leaders of the blind”* (Matt. 15:14). And though our Fundamentalist leaders preach salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, do not suppose that many have not been lost by following their traditions. They have given their hearers the

impression that water baptism has some essential value in this age of Grace, especially since it has been made the rite of initiation into the company of God's people.

Let young Christians fall into worldliness or sins of the flesh and they are frowned upon for their waywardness, but these are not the greatest sinners in the Church. The greatest sinners are the Fundamentalist leaders who are idolized by the throngs who drink in their every word and whom they keep in darkness as to the most glorious truth in the whole Bible—the mystery of God's purpose and grace.

They know there is something wrong with the Church and they know what that something is, but they love the praise of men.

They well know that they ought to repent, but they are as determined to be "orthodox" and defend their traditions as the Pharisees of old, even if it means they must reject the written Word of God. Though they have seen something of the glory of the finished work of Christ and the believer's completeness in Him, they are determined to defend a baptism ceremony which is far more unscriptural in this age of Grace than the Pharisees' traditional baptisms were in the age of Law. They would be glad to preach the clear, unadulterated "gospel of the grace of God," but that would be too costly—the people would not take it! And all the while they are too blind to see

that the reason the people would not accept it is because *the people have been following them!*

We acknowledge, of course, that the same degree of guilt does not rest upon all who practice water baptism. Some sincerely believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Church. But woe to men who go back on the light they have received! Our Lord said: "*If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*" (Matt. 6:23).

Many of our Fundamentalist leaders need to repent. Our correspondence files bear abundant testimony to this fact! They are so self-satisfied that they ignore the sad condition of the Church, over which God has made them overseers. Just because *they* are popular and throngs flock to hear them, they suppose that the Church is strong, while in reality it is sick and weak and exerts so

little influence on the masses that the world laughs. And while it is supposed that the Church today is spiritually advanced (whatever intellectual advances may have been made) it is filled with children who need constantly to be entertained to keep them coming to the services.

But the Church would soon see and rejoice in the Mystery which Paul burned out his life to proclaim if it were not for the spiritual leaders. This is why we appeal to every reader: *Do not depend upon men. The traditions of men have*

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“...woe to men who go back on the light they have received!”

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wrought as much folly and shame in the Church as they ever did in Israel. How many souls have been lost because of traditions! And if Satan cannot keep them from being saved he will rob them of their blessings as believers. This is why Paul wrote to the Colossians:

**“Beware lest any man spoil [rob] you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.**

**“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**

**“And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power:**

**“In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.**

**“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:8-12).**

Circumcision and baptism spoke of death to the flesh and cleansing from sin. How Satan has robbed those who do not see that this is all accomplished for us by the finished work of Christ—that believers are complete IN HIM, already crucified with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life.

### **OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD TRADITION**


In closing, what should our attitude be toward the words of men, even the best of men?

Acts 17:11 tells us about the Bereans to whom Paul preached. They were broad enough to listen to Paul respectfully, and carefully consider what he had to say even though it must have shocked them,

but they were narrow enough to refuse to take even *his* word for granted.

**“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word [Paul’s word] with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures [God’s Word] daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

They *received* Paul’s word but they did not immediately *believe* it. They gave him an interested hearing, but then put his words to the test of Scripture. We wonder how many of our readers are really Bereans. How many are spiritually big enough to listen to the words of men, but who are also big enough to test the words of men by the Word of God. It is by this method alone that we can be kept in the truth and delivered from error.

These are the characteristics of the spiritually great. If you have been depending upon some man or men to lead you into the truth you may be very far from the truth, but if, like the Bereans, you will search the Scriptures daily, with an honest desire to know the truth you will stand, in God’s sight, among the nobles of the Church. 



# Sanctified for Christ

By Scott Metz

The person who has trusted in the finished work of Christ is now sanctified or set apart through the blood of Christ. The first letter of Paul to the Corinthians is very clear on the fact that at the moment a person is saved they are "...washed,...sanctified,...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). This says that there is a moment when a person is sanctified in Christ by the Holy Spirit and that *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"* (Titus 3:5), through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross of Calvary (see I Cor. 15:3,4; Eph. 5:2).

What purpose does it serve to know that once a person has trusted in Christ, they have been justified, regenerated, sanctified, and declared righteous? Much in every way. It is most important for the Christian to realize that they are set apart, made sacred, and have been placed into God's service. Believers must remember that their *"body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* (I Cor. 6:19,20). This is the reason that sanctification is so important. Christians are owned by God (cf. I Cor. 1:2).

What difference does the fact that the Christian has been set apart for God make? First, it is to bring them comfort. Comfort that they are safe and secure in the Lord. Second, they are to realize that they are to continually grow. They are sanctified in order that they may develop into the likeness of Christ, for this is the goal of the Christian life (Rom. 8:29).

Having been set apart for God, and in reality owned by God (I Cor. 6:20), believers should strive to continually be sanctified in Christ in order to be more and more holy in practice. This is a continual process. I Thessalonians 4:4 talks about the believer keeping themselves in sanctification and honor. Another Scripture reference says, *"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work"* (II Tim. 2:21). In other words, Christians are to continually seek to live holy lives in order that God may use them for His work (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-8).

It must be said that believers will never attain to perfection, i.e., absolute maturity in this life but are to strive for it. A believer is made free from the power and penalty of sin to be a servant to God, and to have fruit (growth) unto holiness with the purpose of keeping ourselves pure through the Word of God so that we may bring glory to the Lord.

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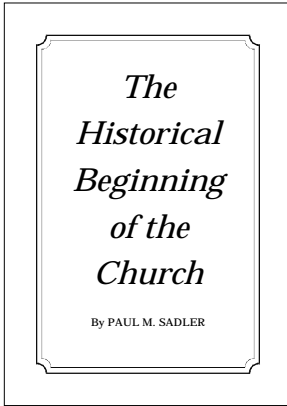
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# ***The Historical Beginning of the Church***

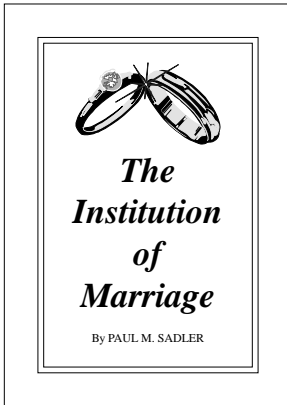
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## ***The Institution of Marriage***



This timely work which originally appeared in the *Berean Searchlight* is now available in booklet form. You will also find it of interest that we have *added* a section to further clarify how Romans 7 and I Corinthians 7 correspond with one another. Young and old alike should be interested to know more about God's original *blueprint* for the marriage relationship.

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**SPECIAL REQUEST:** If you have borrowed tapes more than a month ago from the *Tape Lending Library*, please return them as soon as possible to the above address. This will insure that others don't have to wait so long to receive their tapes.

### ADVANCE NOTICE

1. *Midwest Grace Fellowship, 11th Annual Spring Conference* will be held this year at the *Miracle Hills Ranch* on June 4th thru 6th. For additional information, please contact: Mr. Dan Heyle (660) 425-6853.

2. *Berean Bible Fellowship Conference:* If you are planning your summer itinerary the *Berean Bible Fellowship Conference* is scheduled to be held at the *Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center*, Cedar Lake, Indiana on June 19-24, 1999. Pastor Joel Finck will be the "Bible Hour" speaker this year. For more information, please contact: Pastor Ivan Burgener (618) 344-6741.

3. The dates for *Rocky Mountain Grace Camp* this year are July 12th thru 17th. If you would like more information, please contact: Pastor James Harley at (303) 452-9148.

Lord willing, we will be placing additional information regarding these Conferences in the May and June issues.

**CAMP:** For those that live in Wisconsin who would like a schedule for the summer and fall camping season at *Northern Grace Youth Camp*, please contact: David Green (920) 855-2759. Pastor Floyd Baker Jr. will be kicking off the Junior Camp on July 4th.

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\*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mrs. Betty France. She is a freelance photographer who we had the privilege of meeting at a craft fair in Milwaukee. The lighthouse is located in *Racine, Wisconsin*. We will be sharing more of Betty's work with you in future issues of the *Berean Searchlight*.

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