

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 2001



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Editor: Paul M. Sadler

Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

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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>

E-mail: <berean@execpc.com>

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An Auspicious Occasion



Dearly Beloved,

After the eagle bears its young, the mother seems to know instinctively when the little ones are strong enough to fly. She'll swoop down with that massive six-foot wing span and sweep her wing across the top of the nest, knocking her young from their secure home high atop the rocky peaks. The time has come for them to take flight. But let one of these little guys falter and the mother will quickly circle around and bear it up on her wings to safety.

In like manner, five years ago when the Berean Bible Society's Board of Directors formed the Berean Bible Institute, it was the Board's sincere desire to push the Institute out of the nest, as it were, so it could establish its own identity. With the exception of using the facilities here at BBS, this has been accomplished. The school now has a Board of Directors, a full-time administrator, a part-time secretary, an impressive library, and seven faculty members (one full-time, one part-time, and five volunteer instructors) who have developed a well-rounded curriculum for the academic program. The last major hurdle will be to secure a building, which is already in the preliminary planning stages.

While we are grateful for other Christian schools of higher learning, Berean Bible Institute was founded for the sole purpose of training young men and women who desire to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. So it is with great joy that we announce the 2nd Graduation and Awards Ceremony of the Institute on Friday, May 25th at 7:00 p.m.

We, therefore, cordially extend an invitation for everyone to join us for the Commencement Address and Awards Presentation. We're sure the honor of your presence will be a great encouragement to the entire student body.

In His service,
Paul M. Sadler
President

BBI Graduation and Awards Ceremony

Location: *Stony Hills Church, N112 W17655 Mequon Road, Germantown, Wisconsin*

Date: Friday, May 25, 2001

Contact Persons:

Linda Bedore or Jessica Sadler (262) 255-4094

From Michigan:

"I'm not sure what prompted you to send me the book entitled *Things That Differ*; but I have to say the book is a real blessing. So much so that I'm very much looking forward to the two books I'm currently ordering. I've spent years reading the Bible without really grasping its meaning. The book *Things That Differ* has enabled me (through the Holy Spirit) to come to more of an understanding of the Word, as well as admit to myself that I've been somewhat in error, mainly through ignorance of the Word. I have a long way to go but feel I'm heading in the right direction. I believe that the Lord had a hand in your decision to send me *Things That Differ*. I first and foremost thank Him. And I also would like to take this time to thank you. The Word can be exciting when it begins to make sense. It's starting to." (A little bird named *Grace* requested that we send you a copy. Ed.)

From Indiana:

"Keep up the good work. The *Berean Bible Society* is a wonderful work of God. Keep sending the *Searchlight*. I look forward to it every month."

From New York:

"Many thanks for your answer to my inquiry. You people have a wonderful way of putting words and phrases together. I now understand the Holy Spirit and His work much better. How wonderful when you see Paul's gospel and the truth rightly divided. How I thank God for what He has shown me through you people. I pray He will continue to make you a blessing as you have blessed me."

From Iowa:

"Brother Sadler, we think your writings on the *Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* in the *Searchlight* are very interesting and encouraging. Praise God."

From Arizona:

"I enjoy reading your monthly issue of the *Berean Searchlight* very much. Thank you."

From Wisconsin:

"I'm so thankful that I learned about the Word of God, rightly divided. Just finished reading *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* by Paul M. Sadler. It is a very good book and I've been helped and encouraged. Thank you for your ministry. Also thanks to Pastor Stam for his books and ministry."

From the Philippines:

"I would like to convey my deep appreciation for continually sending your magazine (*The Berean Searchlight*) for almost five years now. It has been very helpful in my Christian life and ministry as well. In this age of apostasy and compromise, it is really nice to know that your Bible-teaching ministry continues to uphold the sound doctrines of the Christian faith. The information that I've read in your magazine really inspires and challenges me to know (Acts 17:11) and stand for the truth. I also commend you for not shrinking from the responsibility of alerting us to the new and increased threats to Christianity. Keep up the good work (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; II Thes. 3:13)."

From Nebraska:

"I am a retired *Evangelical Free Church* pastor. I have used your material and charts at different times in my S.S. class, even though some do not appreciate my dispensational teaching. The book that opened my eyes was *Things That Differ*. Please note my change of address. I want to continue receiving the *Berean Searchlight*." (We have often received the same response, but as the apostle says: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." Ed.)

From Minnesota:

"The *Berean Searchlight* is a real blessing to me. I have really enjoyed the articles on the *Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter*. You are so careful to answer questions one may have and are so thorough in all your studies. May God bless you in your very important ministry."

From Pennsylvania:

"Thanks for your books, so precious. I am 100 years old, will be 101 on April 18th. It is hard for me to write. Keep up the good work. God bless, thanks again." (In the words of former President Reagan, Sister Ross is celebrating the 62nd anniversary of her 39th birthday. Normally, however, the first number is considerably smaller than the second. Congratulations!! Ed.)

From Oregon:

"Thank you so much for sending me the *Searchlight* month after month for learning and keeping up with the news. I like also hearing from readers (Letter Excerpts), even when a particular writer is negative. It reminds me that it takes the Holy Spirit, not just my own effort, to actually reach the hearts of the unsaved—and even those who are saved (but have been taught, or brainwashed, in the thinking of denominationalism). It makes me feel a little less *stranded* as a grace believer knowing that you (Bereans) are out there along with all the many faithful pastors and saints spread throughout these United States. May you continue your work until the Rapture."

From Arizona:

"I want to thank you very much for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. It helps me a lot in studying the Bible. I read it every day until I have finished the magazine and enjoy going back over the articles. I am sending you a check to help you publish it. I would hate to be without it."

From Nebraska:

"Thank you at *BBS* for sending me the *Searchlight* year after year. I have many of Pastor Stam's books and have learned so much from them. I am now reading Pastor Sadler's notes on Peter. My problem—I need more time to read them. God bless you all."

From Australia:

"I am writing on behalf of a small group of believers who have come to appreciate the writings of Pastor Stam and others as they have expounded the Scriptures from a Pauline perspective. All in our group have been involved in churches where this teaching has been deficient and/or mixed with Old Testament Law and Kingdom theology. We have made contact with Cecil and Jenny Burgess in Queensland and they have been most helpful in supplying printed material to us."

From Ohio:

"Not too long ago, I asked for prayer for Maria and Rusty. One week ago they were blessed with a healthy baby boy making the Mrs. and I great-grandparents—a very blessed event. Thank you for your prayers and thanks for the articles in the *Searchlight*. God bless the *Berean Bible Society*." (We think you're great grandparents as well! Ed.)

From Florida:

"We are so thankful for you and the *Berean Bible Society*. We praise God every day for the wonderful Mystery message. Please continue doing the work that God has appointed you to do. Enclosed in this letter is a check for the work. Please use this gift anywhere you see a need."

From Wyoming:

"We look forward to each issue of the *Berean Searchlight*... What a wonderful complement it is to the message rightly divided being proclaimed in *Grace Chapel*, Laramie, Wyoming."

From Pennsylvania:

"Enclosed is a gift of \$.... to be used where it is needed most. What a wonderful blessing it has been understanding God's Word, rightly divided. We pray that the Lord would use *BBS* to help others understand also."

"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

Have You Thought About Your Soul?

Have you ever stopped to wonder
What this life is all about?
Why you're here and where you're going
When your lease on time runs out?
Maybe you've been far too busy,
Trying hard to reach your goal;
Would you let me ask you kindly,
Have you thought about your soul?

You may reach the highest portals,
And your dreams may all come true;
Wealth and fame may be your portion,
And success may shine on you.
All your friends may sing your praises,
Not a care on you may roll;
What about the great tomorrow—
Have you thought about your soul?

Don't forget your days are numbered,
Though you may be ridin' high;
But like all of us poor mortals,
Someday you'll just up and die.
Your success and fame and glory
Won't be worth the bell they toll;
Let me ask you just one question,
Have you thought about your soul?

If you've never thought it over,
Spend a little time today;
There is nothing more important
That will ever come your way
Than the joy of sins forgiven,
And to know you've been made whole
In the name of Christ the Savior.
Have you thought about your soul?

—Selected

As you ponder the above question, remember God's warning: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Simply believe Christ personally died for *your* sins, was buried, and rose again, and God will wonderfully deliver you from the wrath to come!

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

I Peter 5:1-4

By Paul M. Sadler



CHRISTIANS

Before we move on to Chapter 5, we want to clear up a misnomer regarding the beloved title “Christian” found in I Peter 4:16: “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” It is generally believed that Christian missionaries had reached Peter’s hearers with the Christian message, which earned them the designation “Christians.” But this is far from the case when we consider the historical record.

The very first passage of the epistle clearly establishes that Peter was writing to those of the dispersion who were scattered abroad shortly after the stoning of Stephen (Gr. *diaspora*=scattered, Acts 8:1-4 cf. I Pet. 1:1). This, of course, took place before Paul’s conversion; therefore, Peter’s hearers could not have been saved under what has come to be known as the Christian message. Paul was the first to proclaim the preaching of the Cross as good news, which embraces the doctrines of reconciliation and justification by faith.

“And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves

with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Since the Greek word *Christianos* has a Latin ending, it strongly implies that the Romans were the first to call the followers of Christ “Christians.” They apparently coined the name to distinguish themselves from those who worshipped Christ.

The cult of the Caesar was the state religion of the Roman Empire in which the emperor was worshipped as a god. It served two purposes. The subjects of Rome gave obedience to the laws of the empire, not only as a political, but also as a religious duty. It constituted the unifying factor which bound the many different peoples of the empire into one, and made the military task of holding its far-flung domain an easier one. The Greek word for Caesar is *Kaisar*. Those who worshipped the *Kaisar* were called *Kaisarianos*.¹

Because it was believed that Christ would one day overthrow the kingdoms of this world and establish His own kingdom of righteousness, those that worshipped Him were called *Christianos*. By coining the term, the Romans were attempting to distance themselves from the followers of Christ. In addition to believing they were pre-occupied with Christ, the Romans felt these Christians had written their own death sentence by defying Caesar. Ten bloody persecutions followed as a result.

Peter is the only believer to use the term “Christian.” The other two

times the word appears it came from the lips of the unbelieving. The prefix “Christ” is the common denominator when we consider the usage of the term *Christian* in relation to the two programs of God. Christ is the subject of both programs. So it is correct to say that Peter’s hearers were Christians because they believed *Christ* was the Messiah of Israel who would establish His kingdom here upon the earth. They were followers of Christ according to this purpose and calling.

Although the Apostle Paul never uses the term, the members of the Body of Christ have come to be called Christians because *Christ* is our Head. We are to follow Paul as he followed Christ according to His heavenly purpose and calling (I Cor. 11:1). Thus, true Christianity as we know it today, is a product of the doctrines of grace that the Lord of glory revealed through Paul.

THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

—I Pet. 5:1-4

There are numerous metaphors assigned to the nation Israel, but perhaps the most beloved is her role as the sheep of God. Israel is the flock and the Lord is their shepherd who watches over them. This particular metaphor abounds in the Prophetic Scriptures. Although the

23rd Psalm is repeatedly applied devotionally to the members of the Body of Christ, the words of David were originally intended for the Children of Israel. For example:

The LORD is my shepherd. Christ is the Shepherd of the flock of God in three senses. He is the *Good Shepherd* who laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:14-18). As the *Great Shepherd* who has risen from the dead, Christ gives His own eternal security; consequently, no man can pluck them out of His hand (John 10:27-30 cf. Heb. 13:20). Finally, as the *Chief Shepherd*, He is coming again to reward His own with a crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Pet. 5:4).

I shall not want. Here the sheep are portrayed as being perfectly *content*. Unlike the hireling who is merely out for personal gain, the Good Shepherd loves His sheep and naturally cares for their needs. They know His voice and willingly follow Him.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. It is said that four requirements must be met before sheep will lie down in a pasture: First, they must be free from hunger. If sheep are hungry they tend to wander off in search of food. Second, they must be free of pests, such as parasites and flies. Third, they must be free from internal strife within the flock. Fourth, they must be free from fear. Thus, the very presence of the Great Shepherd has a *calming* effect upon the sheep. They feel secure as long as He is nearby.

He leadeth me beside the still waters. Most animals will avoid drinking from a contaminated pool of water. Sheep, however, seem oblivious to the danger. As a result, herds that are unattended often contract diseases and parasites.

The Good Shepherd alone knows what is best for the flock. He leads them to still waters that are pure and will *satisfy* the longing of their souls. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

He restoreth my soul: The shepherd is aware if even one from his flock is missing. Sheep seem to have a propensity for wandering away, which usually places them in harm’s way, especially if they become “cast.” A *cast* sheep is one that rolls over on its back and is unable to right itself. It is completely helpless! Only the shepherd can save it from sure death. After 1500 years of failure under the law, Israel had wandered far from God. Isaiah put his finger on the pulse of the matter when he said, “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa. 53:6). She was “cast.” According to the word of the prophet, the Good Shepherd will one day *restore* Israel to her rightful position.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Like man, sheep are creatures of habit. If not managed properly, they will graze until the pasture is barren. Thus, sheep will blindly follow one another down the wrong path in search of greener pastures. Isaiah adds to the above passage that his countrymen had “turned everyone to his own way.” In other words, the nation had departed from the way of the Lord to worship idols. On the basis of His resurrection, the Great Shepherd will lead the flock into the pathway of righteousness for His name’s sake. As He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will

fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. On the journey to the high country the flock had to be led through the valley which was fraught with danger. Flash floods and predators were just two of the hazards along the way. But the flock found solace in the shepherd’s rod and staff. The shepherd skillfully used the rod to beat off attacks by coyotes and wolves. The curved end of the staff, on the other hand, was placed around the neck of the sheep to pull it back to safety. As Israel walks through the valley of the shadow of death in the coming Tribulation period, the Chief Shepherd will lead her safely to Mount Zion where He will return in great power and glory to set up His kingdom.

THE UNDER-SHEPHERDS

Peter’s reference of the Messiah being the Chief Shepherd of Israel was to remind the under-shepherds that they needed to be extremely careful how they tended the flock of God. They were to closely follow the *example* of the Chief Shepherd, due to the fact that they must soon give an account of their oversight of the flock at the Second Coming.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”

As Peter set down some practical instructions for the elders of the dispersion, he included himself in their number. This is a clear indication that Peter’s apostleship

“Being a pastor is far more than preaching at Sunday services. A true shepherd is one who has a pastor’s heart.”

was gradually fading in significance. Fewer and fewer revelations were being imparted regarding the kingdom, which eventually left the chief elder in Israel with a ministry of confirmation.

Peter is directing his exhortation to the shepherd who is the pastor of the local assembly, as the term implies. Simply because one is a Bible teacher or an elder does not necessarily mean he is a pastor. In fact, there are probably many that shouldn’t be in the ministry, although they may be qualified to hold other positions in the Lord’s service.

Being a pastor is far more than preaching at Sunday services. A true shepherd is one who has a pastor’s heart. The flock he is given to oversee is his extended family. He has a burden for *every* member of the family that they might grow spiritually in the Lord. When one of them is sick, he visits without being asked. If one of them is overtaken in a fault, he is brokenhearted until the offender is restored to the fold. It is usually the pastor who is the first to call, or at least he should be, to console those who have lost a loved one. He is a consoler, a counselor, and a confidant.

Peter instructs the shepherds of the dispersion to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.” Here the apostle

is passing along the counsel the Good Shepherd gave to him prior to His ascension. You will recall that Peter *denied* the Lord three times, as the Master had predicted. Near the end of the forty-day post-resurrection ministry of Christ, He appeared to His disciples. As they dined, the Master inquired of Peter:

“Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). While we will not concern ourselves here with the significance of the Greek play on words, we would like you to see that the Lord is giving Peter the opportunity to *retract* his former boast, that he loved the Master more than the other disciples. As we know in the end he denied Him.

After Peter was humbled, the Lord takes the first step to restore His apostle with the statement, “Feed my lambs.” The Good Shepherd was about to leave them, but before He did He commissioned Peter and the others to “feed His lambs.” They were the most vulnerable of the flock and needed special attention. Sometimes it is necessary to hand-feed the little lambs until they are strong enough to stand for the truth.

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:16). There were three steps to Peter’s denial and three steps to his restoration. Once again the Good Shepherd was commissioning His under-shepherds to care for the flock in His absence. Hence, Peter is instructed to “Feed His sheep.” The Greek word “feed”

here is a much broader term which has the idea to supervise, rule, and discipline the flock. The sheep are portrayed as mature, but somewhat unruly at times.

“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto Him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:17). Peter was not grieved in the sense of being offended, but rather he was sorrowful. He had to recall his threefold denial. In essence, the Lord is saying to Peter, and to all shepherds for that matter, if you truly *love* me then properly *care* for my sheep. Notice in all three passages that it’s the Lord’s sheep which are placed into the care of under-shepherds. They are His purchased possession. “Feed my sheep!” As it has been correctly said, “the work is so laborious, the appreciation is often small, the response so discouraging, the criticism so harsh, the attacks of Satan so fierce, that only the love of Christ—His for us and ours for Him—can constrain us to such work.”

Peter undoubtedly had these three things in mind when he instructed the elders of the dispersion to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.” You see, he too would soon have to leave the care of the sheep to others—the shadow of his martyrdom was looming larger and larger.

THE MOTIVES OF THE UNDER-SHEPHERDS

“Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over

God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”

Peter challenges those who wear the mantle of the shepherd not to serve by constraint but willingly. Some who are called to the ministry may feel a sense of unworthiness to hold the position or feel overwhelmed at times with the great responsibility in leading God’s people. Essentially Peter says, don’t be half-hearted; serve the Lord with a full measure of devotion.

Football fans think nothing of driving two hours to a football game, spending another hour waiting in line to enter the stadium, followed by three hours of uncontrollable yelling and screaming in twenty degrees below zero wind chill temperatures to root for the home team. If believers had half this much enthusiasm for the Lord’s work, we would be accomplishing far more for the cause of Christ—something of *eternal* worth!

“Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.” Here Peter warns of using the ministry for personal gain. While the workman is worthy of his hire, the shepherd is not to fleece the flock of God. The pastorate should never be viewed as an occupation but rather a calling of God. Those who shamefully enter the ministry simply for material benefit will one day have to answer to the Chief Shepherd. The Lord will not hold the hiring blameless who takes advantage of His people. The true servant of the Lord will serve with a “ready mind.” That is, he will *eagerly* do the Lord’s work without consideration of financial profit.

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” The shepherd is not to be a dictator, placing unreasonable demands on the elders and

congregation. The attitude of some shepherds is, "It's *my* way or the highway!" As it has been said, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The shepherd is not to drive the flock of God, but lead it. He is to lead by *example*,

not fear, that all may come into a fuller knowledge of His will.

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *Bypaths*, pages 20-32.

Question Box

"Our parenthetical period between God's dealing with Israel is obvious as is the difference between Paul's gospel of grace as compared to the gospel of the kingdom. However, suppose as a result of Peter's Pentecostal offer of Christ's return to rule that the 'times of refreshing' be theirs and all Israel embraced their Messiah—where would the prophesied 'Time of Jacob's Trouble' fit in that 70th week?"

"To me, it seems the Tribulation period would not be consistent for an immediate return of Christ to rule. Satan and Anti-Christ could be dealt with immediately, and Christ's millennial rule started with the kingdom gospel outreach to the Gentiles. Of course, during the Tribulation the 144,000 will be reaching out to all, but to me, those 'times of refreshing' seemed an immediate result if Israel had responded to Peter's offer of the kingdom restored, with the Messiah enthroned. Though this isn't a real problem for me, I lean toward a Tribulation bypass and Christ's kingdom set up for repentant Israel."

The key word in your question, beloved, is "suppose." The problem with suppositions is they are like shifting sand beneath our spiritual feet. What if Adam had not sinned? But he did, and we've been suffering the consequences ever since. What if Israel's leaders had repented at Pentecost? But they didn't!

While heart bypasses are quite common these days, a spiritual bypass is not possible here due to other prophetic predictions. A proper hermeneutical approach always takes into consideration every Scripture that is related to the subject, even though one passage may appear to be inconsistent with the overall theme. In other words, we must consider the whole picture.

In accordance with God's infinite foreknowledge, He foreknew Israel would not receive her Messiah. Consequently, at the stoning of Stephen, had there not been the intervening age of Grace, Daniel's seventieth week—the seven-year Tribulation—would have been immediately introduced. There are well over 300 prophecies yet to be fulfilled in the coming day of the Lord; therefore, a bypass of the future Tribulation is not an option. In fact, we believe the veracity of God's very Word is at stake (See Dan. 9:24-27; Isa. 2:6-22; Zeph. 1:14-18 cf. Rev. 1-19, etc.).

—Pastor Sadler

All Profitable

By Cornelius R. Stam

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

—II Tim. 3:16

There appears to be a natural hesitation on the part of some Bible teachers and commentators to deal objectively with the Scriptural record of the failings of great men of God. Indeed, many Bible expositors lean over backward to excuse, or explain away, at least in part, the sins of great saints.

Yet the Bible records these sins with factual exactness, adding no light tones to the black hues of moral and spiritual guilt. This is for our good, for these sad incidents too were recorded “for our admonition” (I Cor. 10:11). John Kitto, in his *Daily Bible Illustrations*, brings this out in his comments on II Samuel 11 and 12:

“It was while the army was engaged in these distant operations that David fell into those deep sins, which have left a dark blot upon his name, that all his tears have not been able to expunge from the view of man, nor all his griefs to make man forget. It is indeed profitable that they should be held in remembrance, in their causes and results, that the sad fall of so distinguished a saint—a man so near to God—may teach us not to be high-minded, but fear.

“The facts are so well known to every reader that it will suffice to indicate them very briefly.

“David, when walking upon the roof of his palace, after having risen from his afternoon rest, obtained a view of a beautiful woman, of

whom he became most passionately enamoured. Her name was Bathsheba, and she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who, notwithstanding his Canaanitish origin, was one of the king’s most distinguished officers, and a member of the illustrious band of ‘worthies.’

“After gratifying his criminal passion, and finding that it would not be possible much longer to conceal a fact which would expose Bathsheba to the death-punishment of an adulteress, David did not shrink from sending orders to Joab so to expose her valiant husband in battle as to ensure his destruction by the sword of the Ammonites. Joab obeyed this order to the letter, and Uriah perished. Bathsheba was then free, and David barely suffered the days of her mourning to pass (probably a month) before he added her to the number of his wives.

“Here is adultery; here is murder. O, David, David, how art thou fallen! To our minds, there is nothing in all that man has written so terribly emphatic as the quiet sentence which the historian inserts at the end of his account of these sad transactions.

“BUT THE THING THAT DAVID HAD DONE DISPLEASED THE LORD.”

“His high displeasure was made known to David by the prophet Nathan, in a parable of touching beauty, applied to the case with a degree of force, which at once brought conviction home to the heart of a man not hardened in guilt by a course of less heinous and unrepented sin, but who had plunged headlong into one great and complicated crime.

The awful words—‘THOU ART THE MAN,’ at once brought David to his knees. He confessed his guilt. He deplored it with many tears. He was pardoned; and God hid not his face from him for ever. But seeing that this deed, in a man so honoured, had ‘given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,’ it became necessary that God should vindicate His own righteousness, by testifying, in the punishment of His servant, His abhorrence of that servant’s sin.

“The sentence pronounced upon him—‘Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house,’ furnishes the key to David’s future history and career, which was as unprosperous and troubled, as the earlier part of his reign had been happy and successful. There was in all things a great change—even in the man himself. Broken in spirit by the consciousness of how deeply he had sinned against God and against man; humbled in the eyes of his subjects, and his influence with them weakened by the knowledge of his crimes; and even his authority in his own household, and his claim to the reverence of his sons, relaxed by his *loss* of character—David appears henceforth a much altered man. He is as one who goes down to the grave mourning. His active history is past—henceforth he is passive merely. All that was high, and firm, and noble in his character, goes out of view—and all that is weak, and low, and wayward, comes out in strong relief.


“Of the infirmities of his temper and character, there may have been previous indications, but they were but dimly discernible through the splendour of his worthier qualities; now that splendour has waxed

pale—the most fine gold has grown dim, and the spots have become broad and distinct. The balance of his character is broken. Still he is pious—but even his piety takes an altered aspect. It is no longer buoyant, exulting, triumphant, glad; it is repressed, humble, patient, contrite, suffering.

“His trust in the Lord is not less than it had been, and that trust sustains him, and still gives dignity to his character and sentiments. But even that trust is different. He is still a son—but he is no longer a Joseph, rejoicing in his father’s love, and delighting in the coat of many colours which that love has cast upon him; but rather a Reuben, pardoned, pitied, and forgiven, yet not unpunished, by the father whose honor he has defiled. Alas for him! The bird which once rose to heights unattained before by mortal wing, filling the air with its joyful songs, now lies with maimed wing upon the ground, pouring forth its doleful cries to God.

“The change we have indicated furnishes the key to David’s subsequent career, and unless it be borne in mind, the incidents of that career will not be thoroughly understood.”

In the above passage Mr. Kitto shows his usual keen insight into the Word of God. In examining the Scriptural record of David’s life, it is disappointing indeed to see his “sword arm” weakened so that he can no longer mete out pure justice or discomfit the enemies of righteousness as before.

We live in a day when this sad account serves as a much-needed warning that a moral fall, even when moral falls are so prevalent, enfeebles, debilitates and embarrasses its victim for the remainder of his life. 

The following article was written by our good friend James M. Humphrey. After retiring from the *Phoenix Police Department* Brother Jim became a Private Investigator. So he knows whereof he speaks when addressing the subject of Vice and Virtue. —Ed.

Our Motives—From Vice or Virtue?

By Major James M. Humphrey III
Formerly of the *Phoenix Police Department*

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

—Jer. 17:9

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

—Rom. 3:23

HUMAN PHILOSOPHY

The unregenerate man cannot believe these Bible passages. He believes he is basically good. He points to men and women who, apart from God, do good works and create beautiful works of art, literature, architecture, engineering, and science. On the other hand, he witnesses hypocrisy in the lives of many who call themselves “Christians.” And it is a fact that people who call themselves Christians have been guilty of adultery, theft, and worse while they preached just the opposite. Down through history people have been burned at the stake, untold thousands tortured and slaughtered, and all in the name of a God that is said to be loving and gracious. We must admit that the hypocrisy of many who claim to be Christians is sickening. Therefore, it is no wonder that intelligent and thoughtful people who have not seen the truth of God’s wonderful love and grace have rejected Christianity and made man a god.

Mankind was originally created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26) and so

even unsaved, unregenerate man has the capacity for great intelligence and understanding. There have been many philosophers and men of science that were geniuses but that did not know our Lord as Savior. The Bible calls these unsaved, unregenerate men the “natural man,” and the natural man, no matter how intelligent, is spiritually dead. The Bible instructs that “...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14).

THE MIND OF CHRIST

We as believers in the God of the Bible who have been saved by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ are made the Body of Christ. Christ is our Head (Eph. 1:22,23). Therefore, we can know the things of God because we have the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:15,16). But, we must ask, how do we use the mind of Christ? The answer is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, manifests Himself to us by means of His written Word, that is, our Bible (John 1:1). The Apostle Paul continually prays that God will give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him and His understanding,¹ that is, the mind of Christ.

Knowledge of His Word does not give us some supernatural means by which we can look into the hearts of our fellow man and determine his motive for doing things. But it does give us an understanding of ourselves as well as of human nature in general. So, in light of the Bible, let us consider the motives behind our words and actions.

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

To consider how God knows the heart of man, let's look to the Bible regarding the life of David, King of Israel. He was a man after God's own heart, but he nevertheless broke God's law, and for that matter, any norm of morality and decency. To begin with, God chose David to be King of Israel in spite of his outward appearance. Samuel the prophet had been sent to anoint one of Jesse's sons as Israel's King. Samuel looked at Jesse's son Eliab and believed he should be the anointed King.

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

After God rejected Eliab, all of Jesse's other sons, except David, were brought before Samuel and each was rejected. Without God's direction, Jesse and Samuel would have chosen any of them before they chose David. However, God finally instructed Samuel that he should anoint David as King. We are just as Samuel in that we are unable to look into a man's heart. The criteria by which we judge another is not the criterion used by God.

"The criteria by which we judge another is not the criterion used by God."

If we did not have what God's Word teaches us about David and we only knew about what he did from history, we might have a very low opinion of him. Many non-believers express a very low opinion of David. He committed adultery and then compounded this with murder. Unsavvy philosophers look at David's actions and see hypocrisy. Here was a man chosen by God to uphold the law of God which he himself violated.

We can reasonably assume David's motive for his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. But, without God's Word there would be no way to know his motive in repentance, that is, whether David had truly repented and that his heart was right with God. We might think that possibly he was just sorry he was caught but that he was not truly sorry for what he had done. It is only from God's Word that we know he was truly repentant, and that he had a broken and contrite heart before God (Psa. 51:16,17).²

THE PHARISEES

The only Man³ to truly know the motives and hearts of men while on this earth was our Lord Jesus Christ. During His earthly ministry, He addressed the motives of men and, of course, the record of this is instructive to us. For instance, the Pharisees of Jesus' day were the religious leaders of the Nation

of Israel. They were recognized as such and were looked up to by Israelites in religious matters as well as examples of how to live.

However, the Pharisees were no different than any other human that has lived throughout history. Many appeared to do good in their actions while their motives were evil. Jesus revealed that the motives of the Pharisees were based upon vice, not virtue. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. He told them they made things clean on the outside but they were full of extortion and excess within. He told them they should cleanse the inside first so the outside would be clean also. He likened them to whitened sepulchres, which appear beautiful on the outside, but were full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. He said they appeared righteous unto men, but within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23:25-28). This was no laughing matter, it was not some ethics class Jesus was giving. He was serious as a heart attack. This we learn when He tells them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33).

OUR MOTIVE, FROM VICE OR VIRTUE?

Now let us consider our actions and motives. The dictionary gives a definition of the word motive as "something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act." When most people think of motive they probably think in terms of doing something wrong. In other words, they think of the motive for crime. The motive in such cases is based on vice, which is moral depravity, corruption, it is based on wickedness. Such motive can produce evil acts. This was

David's motive when he committed adultery and murder.

On the other hand, when we witness people doing good works we naturally think of good motives. In these cases, we assume the motive is based on virtue. Virtue is conformity to a standard of right or morality. And, no doubt, many good things are done out of virtuous motives. However, what about the people that appear to do good but their motive is based on vice, such as the Pharisees? And we also ask, why do people do such terrible things and yet at the same time claim to be Christians?

Let's think for a moment of some examples of what motivates some people. We can ask, what motivates:

- The person aspiring to political office? Is it an altruistic wish for good government or a selfish desire for power and recognition based on ego?



- The business or professional person who serves on a charitable board of directors? Is it to serve the community or is it to enhance the board member's own standing in the community?

- The man to stop and help a lovely young lady fix a flat tire? Would he stop and help a woman who is not so lovely?

- Us to be polite and attentive to someone in a higher place of authority or a person who has a great deal more money than we do? Are

we that polite to everyone or is our motive merely to curry favor with the possibility of gaining something in return?

- People to contribute money to charities? By doing so, are some people just trying to look good and gain the respect of someone else who can do something for them?

- Some people who go into the ministry? Although many ministers work hard under very difficult circumstances, there are some such jobs that may be the easiest and most comfortable place to earn a living.

“...our motives as well as our actions will someday be made known and laid bare before our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It can be reasoned that people’s motives may be totally obscured by the fact that even the crooked, self-serving politician’s constituency can sometimes benefit from his work in office. Good work is done and people are assisted in their want and suffering even if the motive of the selfish board member may be questionable. A tire is changed for someone who could not do it for herself. Regardless of ulterior and selfish motive, charities benefit from doing and giving. Therefore, in a worldly sense, good can be done regardless of selfish, self-serving motive. However, these people’s good deeds are not enough to save them in God’s sight (Isa. 64:6).

KNOWING OUR MOTIVES

It can be, and in many cases usually is, very difficult, if not impossible, for us to know the real motive behind the actions of people with

whom we deal day by day. Their motives may be revealed in some instances, but in many cases we may never know another’s motive this side of heaven. However, we are *responsible* for our own motives just as we are for our actions. In fact, our motives as well as our actions will someday be made known and laid bare before our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be two different and distinct judgments of mankind. In both judgments, all can be assured that they will receive a fair hearing.

In the case of lost sinners of all ages, not only their actions, but also their motives will speak for them. Many will be those who have appeared good on the outside. They may have claimed to be Christians and may have gone to church and even talked and acted like a Christian. However, Jesus Christ taught that many will say to Him in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? However, at the judgment, the Lord Jesus Christ will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:22,23). Their inward motives will be revealed and they are going to the lake of fire as a result of their rejection of Him who died to save them.

We who are saved, because of our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, have His assurance that we are going to heaven and will be there with our Lord and Savior for eternity. Nevertheless, the Word of God informs us that even we saved are going to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will all give account of ourselves to God. All of us will receive reward or loss for what we have done in our bodies (Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10).

The exact nature of this judgment and how it will work out in eternity is not spelled out. For if it were, mankind would make the criteria given into so many rules and regulations that these would be turned into works which would then become the focus of attention. However, we can be sure that our motives will be revealed, as well as our actions.

We know from God's Word that we are to judge ourselves. In regard to the communion we have with our Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul reveals, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Cor. 11:28,29). Also, he teaches, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5). The Greek word translated "reprobates" means unapproved; by implication worthless: castaway, rejected.

We may be able to fool ourselves and others, but we will not be able to fool our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God.

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12,13).

The living Word knows all motives and He will someday bring them to light. Therefore, let us not be arrogant in our good works and outward appearance of good. Let us examine ourselves that we may reflect Him and be truly loving and gracious in our lives.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).



Endnotes

1. Ephesians 1:17-19; 3:3-5; 4:13; 5:17.
2. Also, we must hasten to point out that David's crimes brought terrible consequences upon him while he lived. However, the fact is that he was truly repentant and God could forgive him by virtue of the Blood of Christ that was yet to be shed; God gave him eternal life.
3. Jesus was both God and man.

If you have any questions or comments, Brother Humphrey can be contacted at: <jhumph783@aol.com>.

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Pastor Ken Lawson
Kevin Heyle, Bible Teacher

For times of services and additional information, please contact:
Mr. Dan Heyle (660) 425-6853 or
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Beacon of Grace Bible Church ***Spring Bible Conference***

Location: *Best Western, Beacon Harbourside
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Jordan, Ontario, Canada

Dates: June 1-3, 2001
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Speaker: Paul M. Sadler, President of
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Contact Person:
Jim and Yvette Bartkiw (905) 562-7170

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Location: *Falls Bible Church*
W156 N6531 Pilgrim Road
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Dates: June 2-3, 2001

Topic: *The Sacrifice of Christ*

Text: II Corinthians 5:21

For directions or additional information, please contact:
Pastor Phil Robinson (262) 279-5784, Church (262) 252-4080

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Teens: Joe and Janell White, Youth Ministries

Children: Julie Harley, Student at *Berean Bible Institute*

Evening Family Hour:

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President of the *Berean Bible Society*



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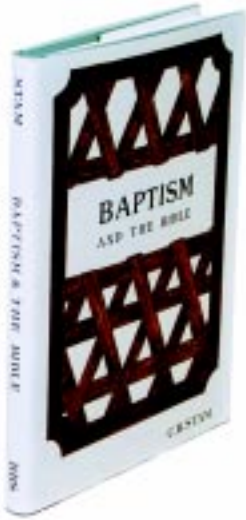
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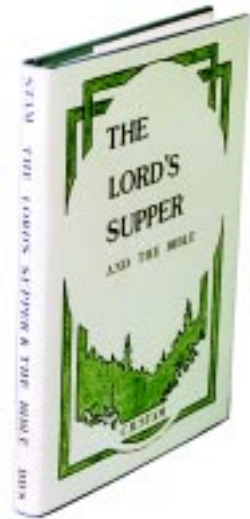
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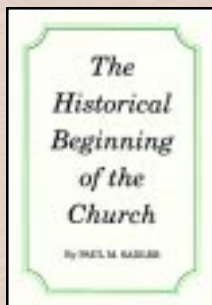
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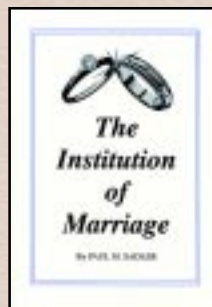
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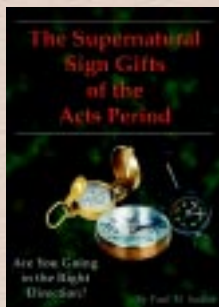
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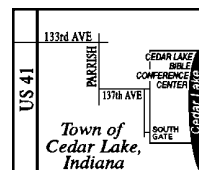
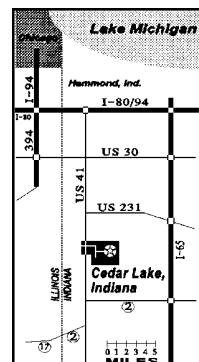
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THE BBI BYLINE

Berean Bible Institute will complete its fifth full year of classes on May 24th. This will mark an important milestone for this young ministry as two men will receive their diplomas in Advanced Biblical Studies. To complete the *BBI* program requires a lot of hard diligent work, so we want to congratulate Kevin Heyle and Bernardo Craesmeyer on their accomplishments. After graduation, Kevin will be looking to enter the ministry as a pastor and Bernardo will be returning to Brazil with his family as a missionary. Please pray for these men and the students who will be returning to *Berean*

Bible Institute to continue their studies.

We thank God for all of those who have taken part in the ministry of *BBI* through your prayer and financial support. *BBI* is a faith ministry that is primarily funded by the free-will love gifts of those of "like precious faith" who believe that what *BBI* is doing is important. So if you have not already done so, I would like to invite you to "prayerfully" consider becoming a co-laborer with us through regular monthly support of *Berean Bible Institute*.

—Dr. W. Edward Bedore

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Smoky Mountain Grace Conference ***8th Annual Spring Bible Conference***

Dates: May 25-27, 2001

Location: *Grace Bible Church*, 114 S. Allen St.,
Hendersonville, North Carolina

Speakers: Pastor Mike Keshan, Pastor Curt Crist,
Mr. Kevin Sadler, Mr. David Stallings

Contact Persons:

Pastor & Mrs. Curt Crist (828) 693-5812

BOOK PRICE LIST: Late last year we expanded our outreach to accommodate the national book houses. Consequently, it was necessary for us to add the retail price of our books to the BBS Price List. This column, however, does not apply to our readership. S-o-o-o when placing an order, the amount due is listed in the wholesale column.

TRAVEL ITINERARY: If you would like to have advance notification of the Berean Bible Society's conference schedule for 2001, simply visit the BBS web site at <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>. In the event you don't have access to the Internet, merely have a loved one or a friend print out a copy for you. Lord willing, we hope to see you at the meetings!

PRAYER REQUEST: Pastor Harland Shriver had to have emergency surgery recently for a blood clot that formed in his leg. It was touch-and-go for a while, but thankfully he's back home and expected to make a full recovery. We're sure both Harland and Ginny will appreciate your prayers on their behalf.

A SPECIAL WORD OF THANKS: It is nearly impossible to respond to every letter and e-mail thanking us for faithfully making known the riches of God's grace. While we are merely instruments in the Lord's hand, we do want you to know that your thoughtfulness is a great encouragement to all of us here at the Berean Bible Society.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Mr. Robert Johnson of Keyser, West Virginia, while on vacation visiting his sister in England. The lighthouse is located on Anglesey Isle, North Whales, England.

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