

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

June 2006



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The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15), to energize their Christian lives, and to encourage the local church.

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

We like to take the opportunity whenever possible to distinguish between the *Berean Bible Society* and the *Berean Bible Fellowship*, seeing that we are frequently confused with one another. The *Berean Bible Society* (BBS) is headquartered just outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is primarily a literature based ministry, helping believers understand and enjoy the Bible through the printed page. The *Berean Bible Fellowship* (BBF) is a national conference ministry of Grace Speakers headquartered in Evansville, Indiana. Both organizations are governed by two entirely different Boards. We are, however, *united* in the same purpose, which is to “make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery.”

For those who have never attended an annual *Berean Bible Fellowship Conference*, on behalf of BBF, we would like to invite you to attend this year. We promise you will have a wonderful time of fellowship with those of like-precious faith.

Once again, the conference will be held at the beautiful *Cedar Lake Conference Center* located in Cedar Lake, Indiana, just one hour southeast of Chicago. If you haven't attended the Cedar Lake Conference for a number of years you will be amazed at all of the improvements that have been made to the grounds. In addition to a new cafeteria/activity center, the *Torrey Hall* has been completely renovated, with air conditioning!

Over 30 Grace pastors and Bible teachers from around the country will be in attendance to minister the Word, rightly divided. And if you are searching for sound Grace Literature, this is the place to come. Various Grace Ministries will be represented at the conference offering Grace books and booklets, Grace Sunday School Curriculum, Missionary presentations, Grace Lessons on DVD, Electronic Libraries, Grace Music CDs, etc. It's one stop shopping!

While the facilities at Cedar Lake fill up quickly this time of the year, there are plenty of motels within reasonable driving distance. If you are unable to attend the entire week, plan to at least join us for the weekend. For additional information or to receive a brochure, please see page 4. Hope to see you there!

Yours in His service,
Paul M. Sadler, President



38th Annual Berean Bible Fellowship Conference

Location: *Cedar Lake Conference Center*
Cedar Lake, Indiana

Dates: June 17-22, 2006

Theme: *Christ Our Sufficiency* (II Cor. 1-7)

Daily Exposition Hour: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

Guest Speakers from around the country will be present to proclaim the riches of God's grace!

Music Directors: Mr. & Mrs. Jim Wade

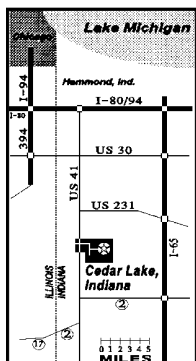
At the Piano: Mrs. Virginia Shriver

Accommodations: BBF recommends that reservations be made early, although accommodations are often available for latecomers. For reservations, write or phone: *Cedar Lake Conference Center*, Reservations Manager, PO Box 665, Cedar Lake, IN 46303, or phone: (219) 374-5941.

Facilities for travel trailers, motor homes, and tent camping include electric/water hook-ups, dump station, showers, etc.

For more information or to receive a brochure, please contact:

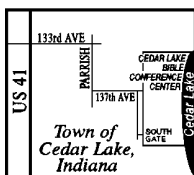
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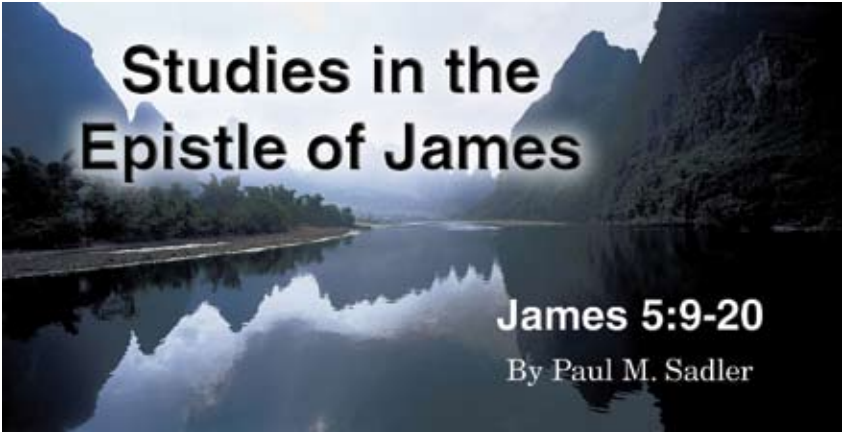
Cedar Lake Conference Center is located in the town of Cedar Lake, in northwest Indiana, twenty miles south of Chicago.

By Auto: US 41 to Cedar Lake, Indiana:

- At the traffic signal in Cedar Lake, turn east on 133rd Ave. 3/4 mile to the traffic signal at Parrish.
- Right on Parrish for 1/2 mile to 137th Ave.
- Left on 137th Ave. for 1/2 mile to the Conference grounds. Enter at the South Gate for parking and registration.



If traveling by air into Chicago's O'Hare or Midway airports, call the Conference Center to arrange pickup.



Studies in the Epistle of James

James 5:9-20

By Paul M. Sadler

“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.”

—James 5:9

THE PERIL OF CRITICISM

As James closes his epistle he delivers a number of practical exhortations for his readers to follow. These instructions were given in view of the Lord’s return to establish His kingdom, at which time He will judge the living and the dead. James was obviously concerned that the trouble these saints were enduring might cause them to become impatient with one another. This, of course, would only serve to further Satan’s goal to cause dissension among the brethren. Sadly, there are some believers who unwittingly aid and abet the enemy in his purpose by their less-than-godly behavior. In fact, it seems as though this may have already become a problem within the kingdom church, which prompted James to write:

“*Grudge not one against another.*” Essentially the warning was: don’t murmur, complain, criticize,

or find fault with one another. To do so would grieve the heart of God. Furthermore, James adds, “lest ye be condemned,” which in this context does not refer to eternal damnation, but to be *judged* with the implication of suffering loss.

Contrary to popular opinion, “criticism” isn’t one of the gifts of the Spirit. Those who have a critical spirit usually have serious shortcomings of their own they are attempting to conceal. By criticizing others they effectively deflect attention away from themselves. The one who complains the most is normally doing the least to further the cause of Christ. Sometimes murmurers are those who find fault with others so they can place themselves in a position where they can assume the authority that rightfully belongs to another. The history of Israel bears this out with many such examples.

You will recall the time recorded in Numbers Chapter 16 when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram withstood Moses and Aaron. They brazenly confronted Moses with these words, “Ye take too much upon you.” Essentially they were

saying: Who do you think you are? We have two-hundred and fifty princes in the congregation who are far more capable and eloquent than you'll ever be, Moses! And you know, they were probably right, but God had not called these princes to be the Deliverer of Israel, He called Moses! Those who found fault with Moses' manner of speech and criticized his leadership found themselves opposing the will of God. Consequently, God was displeased with these murmurers and judged them accordingly (Num. 16:31-35). Little wonder James warned his hearers "murmur not" one against another, for it was displeasing to God and had serious consequences.

EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10).

We all have encountered adversity in one form or another. It may be the loss of a job, a financial reversal, the loss of a loved one, or poor health. Sometimes we suffer for standing for the truth. Whatever we are called upon to endure, the trials of those who have gone before us serve as examples of suffering and patience, which were written for our learning and admonition.

The prophets of old suffered unspeakable injustices at the hands of evil men, yet they *patiently* endured one affliction after another. Jeremiah warned Judah to surrender to Babylon or they would perish at the edge of the sword, famine, and pestilence. But the princes in Jerusalem spoke

against Jeremiah, informing King Zedekiah that the hands of the men of war who were left to defend the city were weakened by the prophet's warning. They, therefore, demanded that Jeremiah be put to death, to which the king consented. So they took the prophet and lowered him with cords into the dungeon at Malchiah where he sunk in the mire. This was a sure death sentence which Jeremiah patiently endured.

Surely God is merciful to those who are willing to speak in His name. Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, knew that without food and water Jeremiah would not live long, so he interceded on the prophet's behalf. He requested that the king allow him to hoist Jeremiah out of the miry clay. Fearing the Lord, the king granted his appeal, but Jeremiah remained in the court of prison until the day the King of Babylon destroyed the city, as the prophet had predicted. The Lord graciously delivered His spokesman from death (Jer. 38:1-28).

James desired that his hearers follow in the footsteps of the prophets, like Jeremiah, who were patient in the face of adversity. He prayed they would be strengthened by their example to endure unto the end. The apostle reminds them that the Lord's coming was near; in fact, He was standing at the door as the Judge of all the earth prepared to deliver them from their enemies. We now know, of course, that with the casting away of Israel this promise will be fulfilled in the future day of the Lord.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the

Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11).

James was so concerned that these saints were going to lose heart, that the apostle appeals to the patriarch Job as another example of *patience*, hoping to bolster their faith. It is believed that the Book of Job is the earliest book of the Bible, written long before Moses wrote the Pentateuch (first five books). The Book of Job has been called “A Journal of Affliction” wherein is recorded the story of the patriarch’s life and times.

Job was a very wealthy man who glorified God with all that he possessed, but he lost all that he owned at the hand of Satan. On the heels of this tragedy he lost his greatest possession of all—his children! The patriarch was a family priest who faithfully ministered to the spiritual needs of his children, but now they, too, were taken from him. Covered with boils from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, even his health was touched, which left him in excruciating pain. Job lived a righteous life, yet one calamity after another stalked him like a mountain lion that stalks its prey.



To add insult to injury, Job’s wife added to his emotional distress when she offered her advice to “curse God and die.” But even in this he maintained his spiritual equilibrium, telling her that she

spoke “as one of the foolish women speaketh.” Job’s three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar offered their moral support, but in so doing they concluded that the reason these afflictions came upon Job was due to some *hidden* sin in his life. Sometimes family and friends only add to our suffering even though they may mean well. The Scriptures tell us that “in all of this did not Job sin with his lips” (Job 2:10).

James very effectively shares with his hearers that not only should they find consolation in the patience of Job but also the *reward* he received for being patient. If they patiently endured like Job they, too, would be rewarded at the Second Coming of Christ. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.” What does the apostle mean by the statement: “*and have seen the end of the Lord*”? We believe this is a reference to God abundantly blessing Job to a far greater degree at the end of his life than He had in the beginning. This is clearly supported by the Scriptures:

“So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters” (Job 42:12,13). Surely the Lord is merciful and generous with tender mercies!

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

“Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them

pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:13,14).

Like the Apostle Paul, James instructed his readers to be *content* in whatever state they may find themselves. If they were suffering an affliction, they were to be content and pray. If they had a song in their heart, they were to sing psalms. True *contentment* is resting in the Lord, that He is in control of all things.

“True *contentment* is resting in the Lord, that He is in control of all things.”

James inquires, “Is there any sick among you?” If so, “let him call for the elders of the church.” The elders here were the older men of these *local* kingdom churches, as the term implies, who served as the spiritual leaders of the assembly. When called upon these elders were to visit at the bedside of the sick and pray over them, anointing them with oil. The anointing with oil in biblical times was often done for medicinal purposes, as seen in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:37). This was a very common practice in the east.

James, however, seems to connect the need to anoint the sick with oil with the Great Commission under which he worked. It was said of those who labored under this commission, “And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13). Notice how the anointing was closely associated

with the *miraculous* healing of the sick. It is also significant that the anointing with oil was to be done in the name of the Lord. It appears that God used the physical element of anointing to convey the divine grace of healing, whereby restoring the sick believer.

We must be very, very careful to remember that James was ministering under the kingdom program in which miraculous manifestations were quite common. What James records here does not apply to us during the administration of grace.

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:15).

The “prayer of faith” also looks back to the earthly ministry of Christ. The Lord promised those who proclaimed the kingdom gospel: “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22). These were not empty words, but a legitimate promise as witnessed when the little flock prayed for boldness. They asked that the Lord would stretch forth His hand to *heal*, and that signs and wonders might be done. The place in which they had assembled literally shook in answer to their prayer (Acts 4:28-31).

Oftentimes *salvation* and *physical healing* went hand in hand under the kingdom gospel, as James suggests when he says, “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.” When Peter took the hand of the lame man at the gate of the temple he was immediately healed. He went into the temple with Peter and John walking and leaping and

praising God. But as we read further in the Acts narrative we learn that it was through faith in Christ's name that the man was healed. In other words, he had trusted Christ and was restored as a result of his faith (Acts 3:16). Thus Peter says: "the faith which is by Him [Christ] hath given him [the lame man] this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (See Acts 3:1-16). You see, the lame man was a *representation* of national Israel who also needed to be restored spiritually and physically before she could enter the kingdom. Therefore, every time God responded to the "prayer of faith" it was emblematic of this wonderful truth.

"And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15b).

These bodies of humiliation are prone to sickness and disease due to the frailty of the flesh. Most sickness is not a result of personal sin; however, there are times this may be the case. If a young man is living a promiscuous lifestyle and he contracts a venereal disease he is suffering the consequences of his sinful ways.



Pools of Bethesda model

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In Jerusalem, by the sheep market, there was a pool called Bethesda. A great number of sick folks and the infirmed frequently gathered there hoping to be healed. From time to time an angel would

stir the waters of the pool and the first one to step into the water after it was stirred was miraculously healed. Of course, many were unable to reach the water in time, such as the "impotent man" who suffered from his affliction for 38 years. The Lord had compassion on the man and restored him to sound physical health, then instructed him to take up his bed and walk. Later when the Lord found the man worshipping in the temple He instructed the impotent man: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (See John 5:1-15). Obviously this man's sin had been the cause of his infirmity.

The man who was sick with the palsy is another example of how sickness and sin are sometimes connected. There was such a press of people to hear the Lord that the friends of this man lowered him through a hole in the roof so they could have an audience with the Lord. When He saw their faith he said to the man: "*thy sins are forgiven thee*" (Luke 5:20). And the Lord healed him of his malady. According to James the "prayer of faith" must also include a request for forgiveness in certain cases.

CONFESSION

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Confession played a very important role in the kingdom program. Here James makes it clear that the reason some were not being healed was because they were harboring sin in their lives. We do not believe

James required these sins be confessed before the local assembly, as some teach. He is rather singling out the brother who had offended another brother, but refused to set the matter right. The brother who had been offended on the other hand was probably harboring bitterness in his heart due to his mistreatment. James counsels these brethren to confess their faults to *one another* and pray for each other, lest their prayers be hindered (1 Pet. 3:7). James reminds them that the “effectual fervent of a righteous man availeth much.” He then uses the prophet Elijah to demonstrate his point.

“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:16,17).

Moses and Elijah were highly revered in the annals of Israel’s history. Moses represented the Law and Elijah the prophets, which meant the apostle had the undivided attention of his readers. For those who may have felt that they were unworthy to go before God in prayer, James wanted them to consider Elijah who was a man of like passions as they were. He, too, had shortcomings and failures!

There were times of greatness in Elijah’s ministry. On one such occasion he called fire down from heaven, consuming the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the water, exposing the prophets of Baal to be false (1 Kings 18:37-40). Yet there were other times when the prophet suffered from bouts

of depression and self-pity, which nearly incapacitated him. When Jezebel vowed to kill the prophet, Elijah went out and sat under a juniper tree and requested the Lord take his life because he was no better than his fathers. He reasoned that he alone had not fallen before the idol Baal to worship him. But God reassured him that there were seven thousand men in Israel who had not bowed the knee before this false god.

When the prophet prayed that the heavens might be shut so that it would not rain for 3½ years, God heard and answered his prayer. And when he prayed to the Lord to open the heavens that the earth might again bring forth her fruit, again God hearkened unto the voice of Elijah. In spite of the prophet’s shortcomings and failures God responded to his prayers in a wonderful way. And James wanted his countrymen to know that if they prayed in faith believing He would also answer their prayers and heal their sick.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19,20).

As the apostle gives his parting instructions he leaves them with a solemn charge. They were to be mindful that they had a *responsibility* to share the gospel with those who were yet outside of Christ. And in so doing, if one was converted to Christ they plucked his soul out of the fires of hell and delivered him from eternal separation from God.

The End!



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

True Spirituality and God's Will for Our Lives

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL

By Cornelius R. Stam

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

Every truly spiritual believer will heartily desire to know and do the will of God, and as we write the above passage again we pray earnestly for our readers, as Paul did for his, that they may indeed be *filled* with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

We must be prepared, however, to expect that “the heart,” which by nature is “deceitful above all things,” and “the father of lies,” who appears as “an angel of light,” will both be ready to offer “attractive” substitutes for the true knowledge of God's will. Here we can find safety only in depending upon what God Himself says on the subject.

It is just because believers so often fail to recognize the *realm* of Satan's activities and the deceitfulness of their own hearts that they are constantly “tossed to and fro,” not certain whether

or not they are truly in the will of God.

For one thing, self-occupation enters entirely too much into the average Christian's desire to know God's will. The vast majority of believers, reading the passage quoted above, think only in terms of God's will for *their* lives in *their* particular circumstances.

A young Christian asks: “What is God's will for my life? Should I go into the ministry or become a missionary? If the latter, should I go to China, Africa or India? Or, would God have me stay in business and help to finance His work? But while the young man is so concerned about God's will for the details of *his* life, he is woefully ignorant of *God's will*, i.e., *what is it He wants done*. The emphasis is upon himself rather than upon God and *His* great plan for the present dispensation.

What would be thought of the soldier in the army who was constantly concerned about the details of his life, wondering whether or not his commanding officer would approve, while indifferent to the great objectives which his commanding officer

had outlined for the progress of the battle?

Those who would truly know and do the will of God should learn first that such passages as the above do *not* refer to God's will in a given situation but to God's purpose and program as revealed through the Apostle Paul by the glorified Lord, and that He rightly holds us responsible to learn what this is.

At Paul's conversion the Lord sent Ananias to tell him:

"...The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth.

"For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:14,15).

That the revelation of God's will to and through Paul involved more than God's will concerning *his life* is evident from Paul's own writings about it. We cite here several passages as confirmation of this fact:

"[Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world [Gr., age] according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4).

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5).

"Having made known unto us the mystery [secret] of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself" (Eph. 1:9).

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all

things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

In connection with God's having made known "the mystery of His will," the apostle emphatically states: "*By revelation He made known unto me the mystery*" and calls this mystery "*the dispensation of the grace of God*" (Eph. 3:1-3).

"The majority of God's people seem to think that God's will should accommodate itself to their fluctuating experience."

Such passages as Colossians 1:9, then, refer not to God's will in a given situation, but to His long-hidden *purpose and program* as revealed in the epistles of Paul. Briefly, it may be outlined as follows:

When Israel had rejected the risen, glorified Christ, joining the Gentiles in rebellion against God; when sin had risen to its height and all was ready, prophetically, for the outpouring of God's wrath upon this wicked world, God intervened, saving Paul and sending him forth with "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). "*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*" (Rom. 5:20). "*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all*" (Rom. 11:32). "*And that He might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity*

thereby” (Eph. 2:16). This body, not to be confused with the kingdom to be established on earth, enjoys a heavenly position, heavenly blessings and a heavenly prospect (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:5).

This, basically, is the great message Paul labored so earnestly and suffered so willingly to make known, asking prayers for an open mouth and open doors to proclaim it, and open hearts to receive it (Eph. 1:15-23; 6:18,19; Col. 4:3).

Should the reader ask: What is God’s will for my life? We would reply immediately: God’s will for your life is that you obey II Timothy 2:15 to obtain a clear understanding and deep convictions as to *His will for the present dispensation*, and then to *obey* it. Then the details will naturally fall into their proper places and assume their proper proportions.

A fine, faithful young Christian once asked the author about a change which was taking place in her prayer life. “I used to pray,” she said, “about so many little things: my position, my salary, my health and even the smallest details of my life. Now I find I don’t spend much time with these things. Oh, I *do* pray all the time, though, about this wonderful message of grace, and that the Lord will help me present it clearly and faithfully!” We answered: “Now you are getting to be a full general in God’s army!”

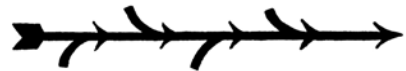
As the general naturally has a larger outlook and is concerned about more important matters than the soldier of lower rank, so the believer who makes progress as “a good soldier of Jesus Christ” naturally becomes less and less

occupied with the lesser circumstances of life and more and more occupied with the great overall objective.

The majority of God’s people seem to think that God’s will should accommodate itself to their fluctuating experience. When, in the depths of despair, they do not know where to turn, they cry to the Lord to show them His will. When on the mountain top, called upon, perhaps, to choose between two attractive alternatives, they ask the Lord again to show them His will, thus:



But all the while they neglect to inquire as to *His* objective, or to learn how *they* may fit into *His* plan and purpose, so clearly defined for us in the Pauline epistles. This plan—the will of God for the present dispensation—runs straight as an arrow, and *we* must conform ourselves to *it*, thus:



It is true that *God is interested in whatever concerns us* and that He would have us look to Him in any detail in which we may need help or guidance, but let us put the *emphasis* where it belongs. If a man is ignorant of the will and purpose of God, what good to inquire whether he should go to Africa or China for service? He may do as much harm as good wherever he goes. On the other hand, one who does have an intelligent understanding of the will

of God and has been gripped by it will have little danger of remaining unused in the Lord's service.

If we would be in the center of the will of God, then, we *must* come to a knowledge and appreciation of the great secret revealed through Paul for us today. This alone can give us a true sense of our place in His program, broadening and balancing our spiritual experience.

PARTICULAR CASES

In seeking to determine God's will in the particular circumstances of life, the truly spiritual believer will pay little heed to the very things which others deem decisive. He will not depend upon "getting the mind of God through prayer," hoping for "inner promptings" (not "a voice" but "an impression" as one writer on "spirituality" put it). Nor will he go to "the promise box"¹ or flip his Bible open at random to learn God's will.

He will look for guidance *in answer* to prayer, to be sure, but this by using his God-given faculties in the light of the written Word, rightly divided.

God has given us hands to work with, hearts to love with and minds to think with, and He expects us to use them all to His glory. Hence, in any given situation we should use the common sense He has given us, in the light of His Word. True, there may be places so dark that we will not even know what to pray for, for it is still true that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," but it is in this very connection that the apostle explains

that the Holy Spirit "*maketh intercession for the saints ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD,*" and the most perplexing problems need not lead us one step out of God's will, since *He* will work all out for us (See Rom. 8:26-28).

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

This holds good even with regard to calls to special service for Christ, whether to the pastorate, the mission field or any other branch of the work.

The truly spiritual child of God will not look for, nor depend upon, some overwhelming emotion as an indication that God has called him to the ministry. Much less will he expect a "Macedonian vision," for he will have learned that Paul's call to Macedonia is the last such call recorded in Scripture, and that it belonged with the signs of a past dispensation.

First, *all* believers are called to make known "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" and the written Word of God together with the appalling need all about us constitute an urgent call to this ministry.

All are not meant to minister in the same capacity, however. Some may accomplish much more for Christ in business than they could as pastors or missionaries. Here the particular qualifications of the individual and the particular ministry to which he is best suited are involved.

There is no room for superstition in matters so important. It is rather for each individual to ask God for light from the Word and



for wisdom to consider the need, the circumstances and his own talents objectively, praying for an open door to that field of service where he may accomplish most for his Lord.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF THE LORD

The infinite importance of understanding God's will may be better appreciated if we consider that we are now living in the tense moments between man's declaration of war on God and God's counter-declaration of war on man, so that there is no time to lose in winning men to Christ.

After Pentecost, Israel, instead of repenting, joined the Gentiles in their rebellion. They "*set themselves...against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us*" (Psa. 2:2,3). In a word, they declared war on God and His Christ (See also Acts 4:26,27; 8:1,3). In


reply God will "*speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure*" (Psa. 2:5) will "*make [His] enemies [His] footstool*" (Psa. 110:1) and, in a word, make a counter-declaration of war on *them* (Cf. Rev. 19:11).

As we have seen, however, the prophetic program was interrupted just when the judgment was about to fall and "the dispensation of the grace of God" was ushered in, under which reconciliation is offered to all men by grace through faith in Christ and His merits.

But how long will this dispensation of His longsuffering last? When will it close? No man knows, for not one more day's delay has been promised, nor has one specific sign been given to indicate the time of its consummation. Hence the apostle begs the unsaved not to receive the grace of God in vain, counselling them: "*Behold, NOW is the accepted time; Behold, NOW is the day of salvation*" (II Cor. 6:2). And to the saved he says:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming [Lit., buying up] the time, because the days are evil.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17).

In the light of all this, how we should pray for ourselves and our fellow-believers "*that [we] may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*"! (Col. 4:12). 

Endnote

1. If for no other reason, simply because he would thus limit God to the particular passages which the box happened to contain!

Question Box

“Where will kingdom saints go at the end of the millennial kingdom when the earth is burned up to make way for the New Earth?”

We know that the millennial kingdom will end with the climactic battle of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-9). John then sees *“a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away”* (21:1), but no mention is made of where kingdom saints go while *“the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* (II Pet. 3:10). It would seem that they cannot be harbored in heaven, for *“the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved”* also (II Pet. 3:12).

The answer to this question lies not in the Book of Revelation, but rather in the prophecy of Isaiah. In Isaiah 51:6, Isaiah speaks of the dissolution of the old creation:

“...the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment...”

Isaiah then goes on to explain exactly how kingdom saints will be preserved while the elements of the old creation melt and the new creation is birthed:

“And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth...” (Isa. 51:16).

This verse is sometimes applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is true that God’s words were in His mouth (Deut. 18:18; Isa. 50:4; John 17:8). However, the Lord Jesus would hardly need to be covered in the shadow of God’s hand while the old creation is destroyed. The context in Isaiah 51 is rather *“the redeemed of the Lord”* (Isa. 51:11), of whom it is *also* said that God put His words in *their* mouths (Isa. 59:21). And so it is the redeemed of Israel who are said to be sheltered safely in the hand of God in that cataclysmic day.

This question may be more than just a matter of academic interest to members of the Body of Christ, for while we will be reigning with Christ in the heavenlies during the millennial kingdom, the heavens will also need to be purged with fire in preparation for the new creation. And so it is possible that we can extrapolate from this verse that we too will enjoy a temporary haven in the shadow of His blessed hand.

—Pastor Kurth

Man Alive! (Cont.)

JONAH: LESSONS FROM A WAYWARD PROPHET



By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(From a class taught in *Minor Prophets* at *Berean Bible Institute*)

When God sent Jonah to preach to Nineveh, the prophet replied, “*Over my dead body!*” Jonah then showed that he would rather die than give the barbarians in Nineveh a chance to repent (Jonah 2:12). And as we have seen, Jonah actually *did* die in the whale, and God raised him from the dead, making him a true type of Christ.

Now no one knows that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9) like someone who has died and been imprisoned in *sheol*, the place of all the departed dead in Old Testament times. No human effort could avail to free a man from that divinely secured place of confinement. What a picture of how if we are to be saved from the penalty of sin, this too must be “of the Lord,” for no human effort can avail to free us from the bondage of sin. *Salvation is of the Lord!*

The obedience of the fish to the word of the Lord (2:10) stands in stark contrast to the *disobedience* of Jonah! Frogs, flies, lice, locusts and caterpillars all obey God without question (Psa. 105:30-34); only man dares say no to God.

But God is a God of second chances (Jonah 3:1,2), as witnessed by men such as Moses, Peter, and John Mark, to name just a few. These examples should give hope to any of our readers who may have strayed from the Lord and are wondering if He could ever take you back. However, these examples should also serve as a warning to us all that it is always best to obey God when first we learn of His will.

Thanks to the second chance extended to Jonah, he is now as obedient to God (3:9) as the wind and the sea in Chapter 1. Isn't it amazing the attitude adjustment that a few days in a fish can produce!

Jonah had only begun to deliver God's message (3:4) when every preacher's dream came true, and the people of Nineveh repented "*from the greatest of them even to the least of them*" (Jonah 3:5). God used this brief sermon of eight words (even fewer in the Hebrew text!) to bring *an entire city* to repentance, proving once again the old adage that "a sermon need not be *eternal* to be *immortal!*" When we consider the darkness of the human heart, we wonder whether such momentous results cannot be considered the biggest miracle in the Book of Jonah.

How was the prophet able to see such extraordinary results? The key just might be in Jonah's description of how the citizens of Nineveh repented "*from the greatest of them even to the least of them.*" This phraseology is used eight other times in Scripture, but in each case the categories are reversed. That is, the normal way of expressing this phrase is to say, "from the least even unto the greatest." But here we feel that the transposition is significant.

Jonah 3:6 begins with the word "for," which means that the prophet is about to tell us how it came to be that the entire city repented. Verse 6 then goes on to explain how even *the king* of Nineveh repented, and so it is possible that Jonah was able to bring an entire city to its knees because of the influence of the city's sovereign. Once the king of Nineveh believed and repented (3:6), the people followed suit. This hypothesis has a couple of possible applications to our ministry today.

Not long ago, *Things To Come Mission* director Ben Anderson began to implement what he called "the Troas strategy" in countries where TCM ministers. This strategy is based on Paul's experience in Acts 16, where after the Spirit forbade him to preach the word in Asia and Bithynia (v. 6,7), the apostle came to Troas (v. 8), where a vision convinced him that the Lord had called him to preach in Macedonia (v. 9,10). He soon found himself in Philippi, which was "the *chief* city of that part of Macedonia, and a *colony*" (v. 12). This designation of Philippi as a Roman "colony" made it a city of considerable influence.

It would seem from all this that rather than letting Paul continue to stop and minister in every city to which he came in piecemeal fashion, God was rather guiding him to "chief" cities such as Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. While there will always be opponents and proponents of what was called "trickle-down economics," as the gospel trickled down from these influential cities "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10). The considerable results achieved by reaching key, influential cities reminds us of the results that Jonah achieved by reaching Nineveh's influential king. Pastor Dennis Kiszonas has similarly produced a considerable ministry that has emanated out of New York City after this visionary pastor targeted the chief city of the United States.

A similar strategy is being employed by Grace Evangelist Art Fowler, who has a unique ministry. Art witnesses to anyone and everyone,

from the least of men even unto the greatest. However, he *targets* high-profile people in entertainment, government, and many other circles of life, people thought by most of us to be simply unreachable with the gospel. We wonder if this too isn't an example of following the methodology of the Apostle Paul, who after his Troas experience perhaps purposely sought out not only chief *cities* but chief *citizens* (Acts 17:7). By the time he reached Ephesus, it could be said of "certain of the *chief* of Asia" that they "were his friends" (Acts 19:31). Perhaps Paul was able to reach all which dwelt in Asia because he had focused on certain key, influential people, from whom the gospel was received by others more readily. We might call this the Nineveh strategy, for it sure seemed to work in the case of the king of this great city.

Another application of this principle might be reflected in the efforts of many of our Grace brethren to get dispensational literature into the hands of pastors and other spiritual leaders. The people of the *1st Philippian Church* of Detroit all came to rejoice in the message of grace when years ago Pastor Wilson Watkins came into a knowledge of the truth.

Next, when we read that Nineveh's king repented in hopes that God would change his mind about destroying his city (Jonah 3:9), it should be noted that he was not acting in compliance with any stated terms or conditions uttered by Jonah. That is, Jonah had not proclaimed, "Your city shall be destroyed—*unless you repent.*" It would seem that the prophet was simply stating a prophetic prediction when he proclaimed, "*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*" But whether the king knew it or not, Israel's God was a God that Jeremiah later characterized as a forgiving God, even when it came to nations other than Israel:

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jer. 18:7,8).

And so as we compare Scripture with Scripture, we understand that whenever we read of an announcement on God's part to bring judgment on a people, such pronouncements always carry an implied proviso that He will relent should the people He intends to judge change their ways. We see an example of this in Micah 3:12. While this verse seems to be an unqualified prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah later quoted this verse (Jer. 26:18) and observed that when the city repented, God changed His mind (v. 19).

All of this is significant in light of the position held by open theism that God didn't offer Nineveh any terms by which they might be spared because He fully intended to destroy the city, and then was surprised at their repentance. The open view, as some of our readers may know,

teaches that God does not know the future, outside of what He himself has determined to do. Open theists would hold that God did not know in advance that Nineveh would repent.

However, unless it was understood that Jonah's proclamation was conditional, then under the strict terms of Deuteronomy 18:22, his prophecy was a *false* prophecy, making him *a false prophet*. But as with the seemingly unconditional prophecy of Amoz in II Kings 20:1, of which God quickly repented (v. 6), the conditional nature of Jonah's words was clearly implied.

The case of Amoz deserves special attention in this regard. When he delivered God's announcement to Hezekiah that he would "die, and not live," there didn't seem to be anything conditional about his words. His prophecy seemed to be a clear prediction of the king's imminent demise. However, we can demonstrate from Scripture that it was simply *not possible* that Hezekiah could die at that time. God had promised David:

"...If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said He) a man on the throne of Israel" (I Kings 2:4).

Hezekiah was one of David's descendants, and as he himself tells us, he had fulfilled the conditions expressed to David in I Kings 2:4 and had walked before God "in truth and with a perfect heart" (II Kings 20:3). Yet at this time he had no sons who could sit on the throne of David if he should die. II Kings 20:18 makes it clear that the sons that would issue from him had not yet been begotten of him. If he should die childless, as Amoz had stated, *the Word of God to David would be broken*.

Why then did God flatly state to Hezekiah that he would die? Had He forgotten His promise to David until reminded of it by Hezekiah? Surely not! God was rather *testing* Hezekiah to see if *he* remembered God's promise, a test Hezekiah passed with flying colors, actually *quoting* the promise as he called upon God to be true to His Word. God then acknowledged Hezekiah's claim on His Word by identifying Himself as "*the God of David thy father*" (II Kings 20:5), as He granted the king another fifteen years of life.

And so we know that God's seemingly unconditional prediction of Hezekiah's death was actually an attempt on God's part to elicit a declaration of faith from Israel's king. Similarly, God's seemingly unconditional pronouncement of doom on Nineveh was actually designed to elicit repentance from a people whom God was eager to spare.

The very fact that God *warned* Nineveh of their imminent destruction shows that He was pressing them to repent. Surely the example of Sodom serves to teach that when God fully intends to destroy a city, He does so without warning. In His foreknowledge, God knows who will repent and who will not (Ezek. 3:6; Matt. 11:21).

Next, in Jonah 3:10, we have an example of how salvation in time past was by faith *plus works*. Earlier in this chapter we read that “the people of Nineveh believed God” (v. 5), but it was not until “God saw *their works*” that He “repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them.” While today faith *alone* “is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5), this was not the case in time past. For example, when Phinehas executed judgment, we read that “*that was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Psa. 106:30,31). As we rightly divide the Word of truth, we see that God’s plan of salvation in time past was very different than His plan of salvation today in the dispensation of grace.

Did the people of Nineveh *truly* repent? We know that they did, for we have the Lord’s word on it (Luke 11:32). However, their repentance would not last, and about one hundred and fifty years later God sent the prophet Nahum to announce their destruction, a destruction which came to pass about a century later (Jer. 18:9,10).

“God is a God of second chances...”

Since we know that “there is *joy* in the presence of the angels of God over *one sinner that repenteth*” (Luke 15:10), how sad it is to see Jonah *angry* over the repentance of *many thousands* of sinners (Jonah 4:1). He who rejoiced in the mercy of God when it was extended to *him* in Chapter 2 is now unhappy when mercy is extended to the Assyrians. Jonah says here, as it were, “Lord, *I told you this would happen! I knew You would spare them if they repented!*” (4:2).

Jonah doubts that their repentance is genuine, and believing it was only a matter of time before they rebelled against God, he determined to pitch a tent outside of town so as to wait and watch it happen (Jonah 4:5). Since Jonah refused to answer God’s question about whether he is right to be angry (4:4), God gave him a little object lesson to prompt him to respond. The Lord supplied the prophet with a sun-blocking gourd, and then took it away from him. Sadly, Jonah’s reaction was not the same as Job’s (Job 1:21), but rather mirrored the attitude of the foolish women of Job 2:9,10.

Like all sin, sinful anger must be checked or it will worsen. Jonah was angry enough to die when God spared Nineveh, and now he is angry enough to die because God took away his shade! (Jonah 4:5-9). Likewise if we allow ourselves to be sinfully angry over big things, it won’t be long before we are sinfully angry over little things.

Asking the same question in Jonah 4:9 that he asked in Verse 5, God provoked a response from Jonah, in which the prophet declared


he had a perfect right to be angry about the gourd that at first had shielded him from the desert sun, but then was taken away. Now that Jonah has taken the bait, God springs the trap on His wayward prophet, pointing out how He had “laboured” much in Nineveh, while Jonah had not expended the least bit of energy to produce the gourd. And yet while Jonah had pity on the gourd, he did not want God to have pity on Nineveh! Once the incongruity of this was pointed out to the seer, Jonah is left with nothing to say in his own defense.

Something should be said, however, about the many people in Nineveh that could not discern between their right hand and their left (4:11). These would include young children and the mentally retarded. God was saying to Jonah, in effect, “You want Me to destroy Nineveh because of the atrocities committed by the adults. But remember, Jonah, there are one hundred and twenty thousand *innocent* people in Nineveh who would perish along with the guilty,” something God found repugnant (cf. Gen. 19:23-33).

If the reader object that these people, having inherited sin from Adam, were not “innocent,” we would tend to agree, in light of verses like Psalm 51:5 and Psalm 58:3. However, our text points up the truth that there is an “age of accountability,” and children who die before reaching it, and adults whose limited mental capacity never allows them to reach it, are “covered under the Blood,” as Pastor Stam used to say. We see a symbol of this very thing when Ezekiel 45:20 states that the sacrifice of the priest is offered “for him that is simple.”

We see more evidence of an age of accountability when the people of Israel left Egypt. We read that there was an entire generation among them “which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil” (Deut. 1:39). God made it clear that these children would not be held responsible for the rebellion of the adults, but would be allowed to enter the Promised Land. And so it is just sound Biblical hermeneutics to extrapolate from this that God does not hold children and the mentally impaired responsible for their sins.

This precious doctrine is what enabled David to assert with confidence concerning the child that he had lost, “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (II Sam. 12:23). This beloved truth also enabled this writer to preside recently at the funeral of a darling one-year-old little girl and comfort her parents *from the Word of God* that their hearts would ache only until they are caught up together with their daughter in the clouds.

The lessons to be learned from a wayward prophet are many and varied. May we take them to heart as things that were written “for *our* learning” (Rom. 15:4), as we determine as never before to obey the Lord without question, to the infinite blessing of our soul, and to the souls of those about us. 

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Dates: August 19-20, 2006

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Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

Theme: *Earthly and Heavenly Ministries of Christ*

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David Tidd at (620) 365-6004

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Hosted by:

Grace For Today and Berean Bible Society

Dates: September 29-30, 2006

Location: *Norwalk Courtyard by Marriott*
474 Main Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut

Guest Speakers:

Dennis Kiszonas, President of *Grace For Today*
Paul M. Sadler, President of *Berean Bible Society*
Leon Gilchrist, Bible Teacher, *Grace For Today*

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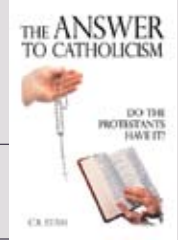
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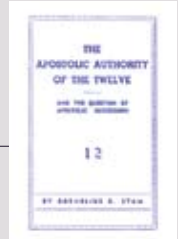
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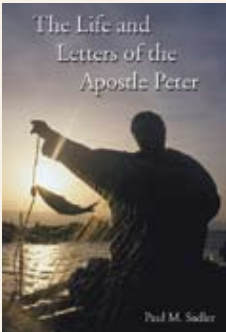


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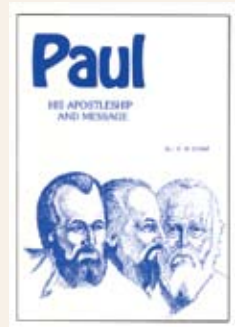
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Lee Homoki, Evangelist, *Bible Doctrines to Live By*
Joel McGarvey, Evangelist, *Bible Doctrines to Live By*
Paul M. Sadler, President of *Berean Bible Society*

Rooms are available at the beautiful *Legends Ranch*.

For those who are interested, please contact:

Pastor & Mrs. Ken Lyon at (231) 745-9595

May God richly bless these meetings
to the praise of His glory in Christ Jesus!

What Do We Teach at BBI?

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.
Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

The stated purpose of **Berean Bible Institute** “is to glorify God by training faithful Christian workmen to become approved unto God and not ashamed of the distinctive message of God’s matchless grace revealed to and through the Apostle Paul.” **BBI** offers a comprehensive three year program of instruction to accomplish its goal.

First, **BBI’s** program includes an intensive study of the entire Bible, in order to give our students a working knowledge of both the Old and New Testaments. This is imperative to a proper understanding of God’s “prophecy” and “mystery” programs and their relationship to what He is doing today.

Second, **BBI** emphasizes the need for personal application of the doctrines of grace to the life of the individual. It is vitally important for ministers of God’s Word to apply the teachings of grace to every aspect of day-to-day living, both personally and in guiding

others in how to deal with the problems encountered in life.

Third, we provide **BBI** students with instruction in various ministry skills, the skills needed to prepare them to effectively serve God by putting their Bible knowledge into practice. Included in our program are classes on theology, Bible interpretation, preaching, pastoral ministry, Bible counseling, song leading, Christian education, evangelism, missions, and youth ministry.

Fourth, **BBI** stresses the importance of the local church as central to God’s plan and purpose for fellowship, edification, and outreach by His people.

BBI holds to the foundational doctrines of Biblical Christianity, stands for and uncompromisingly teaches and preaches “Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,” and provides practical ministry training with a focus on establishing, edifying, and extending the local church. Could **BBI** be for you?

Fall Semester begins August 21, 2006!

For more information about **BBI**, please contact Dr. W. Edward Bedore at: **Berean Bible Institute**, 116 S. Kettle Moraine Drive, P.O. Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086-0587, phone: (262) 644-5504, fax: (262) 644-5507, e-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org, web address: www.bereanbibleinstitute.org.



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

You can't judge a book by its cover, but many people do! Many others judge a website by its design, and so we have updated the layout of our BBS site. Why not pay us a visit at www.bereanbiblesociety.org and check out our new look. Then be sure to join us in prayer that the new face that we've put on our ministry will encourage web surfers to linger long enough to get more than just a taste of grace.

Regrets and Apologies: If you see anything inappropriate or uncharacteristic of *Berean Bible Society* on our website's Guest Registry, please understand that those who post such things do so against our wishes, and without any authorization from us. It is the nature of a guest registry that anyone can leave any kind of message they wish, and we have no control in the matter. Webmaster Richard Church makes constant adjustments in an effort to block these messages, and while we sweep for such messages regularly, nothing short of constant monitoring could eliminate this problem completely. Thank you for understanding.

St. Louis, Missouri Meetings: The saints at *St. Louis Bible Fellowship* would like to extend to all a cordial invitation to attend their fall Bible conference, scheduled for September 15-17. Pastor Paul M. Sadler, president of *Berean Bible Society*, will be the guest speaker. For additional information, or to receive a brochure, please contact Pastor Richard Owsley at (314) 781-0472 or at rao@fidnet.com.

Community Bible Church of Lena, Wisconsin, is looking for a pastor, and covets your prayers for them as they seek a man to shepherd their flock. If you are a pastor who is seeking a Grace church with their own church building and a solid core of Grace believers, then CBC just might be the place for you. For more information, contact *Community Bible Church*, 7560 S. Hwy. 141, Lena, WI 54139.

Thanks to Missionary Leo Keiper, BBS messages *Now That I Believe* and *A Sound Mind* are now available in Portuguese. Both of these messages were well received in Brazil, and Leo is having trouble keeping these booklets on the shelf now that they are in print. He asked that we thank our *Searchlight* readers who sent contributions to help with the printing, which we are happy to do. You can write Leo at Caixa Postal 473, Rio Claro, SP 13500-970 Brazil or at wgmlkeiper@linkway.com.br.

*Our cover lighthouse photo was taken by John Grove of Simi Valley, CA. The *Diamond Head Lighthouse* is built on the steep coast cliff of the extinct Diamond Head Volcano on Oahu, Hawaii. Built in 1917, the 55 ft. light warns vessels away from the reefs of Waikiki Beach.

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