

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

June 2007



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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:



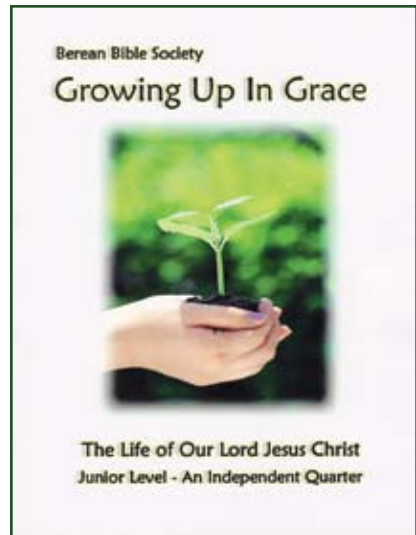
Dearly Beloved,

If you were adrift on the high seas it would be a relief to hear over the radio that the Coast Guard received your SOS, especially when they inform you—HELP is on the way! Well, several years ago we heard from many of our readers who informed us that there was a great need for Grace Sunday School lessons for our young people. We received the SOS and—HELP is here!

Our Director, Steve Shober, would like you to know that *Growing Up In Grace* (the BBS Sunday School Program) now has two full years of lessons available for sale and is in the process of developing year three. These lessons are for Juniors (ages 9-11); however, they can also be readily used for older students. In addition, an independent Quarter (13 lessons) dealing with *The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ* is now available.

If you are frustrated trying to develop your own Grace-based Sunday School lessons, or have experienced problems using materials produced by others, then this curriculum may be just what you need. These lessons teach the whole counsel of God in view of Paul's epistles and are doctrinally sound. They emphasize the need for salvation and provide practical applications that will continue throughout the student's life.

If you would like to examine a free lesson to see if it is right for you, or if you want to place an order, please contact Debbie Keshan at (262) 255-4750 or e-mail: info@growingupinGrace.com. You can also visit our website at: www.growingupinGrace.com. Lord willing, we hope to hear from you soon!



Yours in His service,
Paul M. Sadler, President



Maker of the Universe

By F. W. Pitt

The Maker of the universe
as Man, for man, was made a curse.
The claims of Law which He had made,
unto the uttermost He paid.
His holy fingers made the bough,
which grew the thorns that crowned His brow.
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
in secret places He designed.
He made the forest whence there sprung
the tree on which His body hung.
He died upon a cross of wood,
yet made the hill on which it stood.
The sky that darkened o'er His head,
by Him above the earth was spread.
The sun that hid from Him its face
by His decree was poised in space.
The spear which spilled His precious blood
was tempered in the fires of God.
The grave in which His form was laid
was hewn in rocks His hands had made.
The throne on which He now appears
was His for everlasting years.
But a new glory crowns His brow
and every knee to Him shall bow.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 2:8-11

By Paul M. Sadler

“And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

—Phil. 2:8

For our sakes, Christ “humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.” The ascent to the Cross began at Gethsemane where the Lord prayed: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” As Christ agonized in prayer over what was contained in this cup of sorrows, He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood (Luke 22:42-44). While the Savior was not drawing back from the work of redemption He came to accomplish, there was one ingredient in the cup He dreaded to face, more than all the others. He knew that in a few short hours He would be *forsaken* of the Father, which caused His soul to be exceedingly sorrowful. As we know, it was at Gethsemane that Christ was betrayed into the hands of evil men, who bound Him like a common criminal and led

Him away to be interrogated for hours on end.

As the Lord traveled down the path of His obedience unto death, His enemies set up false witnesses against Him (Matt. 26:59-63), He was mocked (Luke 22:63), and then blindfolded and struck on the face (Luke 22:64). Pilate had Him scourged unmercifully (John 19:1). The Roman soldiers placed a purple robe on Him, and put a crown of thorns on His brow and mockingly said, “Hail, King of the Jews” (John 19:2,3). The Savior was then beaten beyond recognition (Isa. 52:14 cf. John 19:3) and made to bear His own Cross to Calvary. But this was only the beginning of sorrows that the Son of Man endured, for not only was He obedient unto death, Paul adds, “even the death of the Cross.”

Crucifixion was one of the most cruel, inhumane forms of death ever devised by mankind. It is believed to have originated with the Persians, but the Romans perfected it to inflict as much pain as

possible. Crucifixion was reserved for the vilest of criminals. “For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Doctor C. Truman Davis provides the following physical description of death by crucifixion:

“The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place.

“The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now crucified. As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet.

“As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get

even one small breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

“As believers
in Christ we have
been conquered
by His love...”

“Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

“It is now almost over—the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level—the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. Finally he can allow his body to die.”¹

Normally death by crucifixion took a number of days, but the Scriptures reveal the Savior died in a matter of hours due to the awful weight of the sins of the world that He bore. As horrific as the physical sufferings of Christ were, the anguish of His soul was even more intense as He hung there that day reflecting on why He had been *forsaken* of the Father. One

of the seven last sayings of Christ on the Cross was: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The answer to the question is found in the Book of Psalms where the innermost thoughts of Christ that day are recorded for us: “But Thou art *holy*, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Psa. 22:1-3).

Sin is, without exception, a violation of God’s holiness. The Father is *holy*, which theologically speaks of His moral excellence. Our finite minds cannot begin to take in the majesty and holiness of God. He is infinitely *pure*. This is graphically illustrated by the veil in the tabernacle that separated a Holy God from His unholy people. When the prophet Isaiah, a *righteous* man, saw the holiness of God, he said: “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5). As the blackness of darkness eerily fell over Jerusalem the day Christ died, the Father turned aside when His dear Son was made sin for us; consequently, He died *alone* for you and me!

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...” (Phil. 2:9,10).

When we contemplate the *enormity* of what Christ endured to provide a means of salvation for a lost and dying world, it helps us to more fully comprehend Paul’s statement: “Wherefore” or “For this cause, God [the Father] also hath highly exalted Him.” According to Paul’s gospel, Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in a position of *exaltation*, “far above all

principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under His feet” (Eph. 1:21,22).

These passages clearly state that Christ has been given absolute *power* and *authority* over His entire creation because He humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the Cross. If the Father has “put all things under His feet,” how do we explain the ongoing rebellion of men and angels who continue in their evil ways? Simple, this is the administration of Grace—sin is not being imputed today (II Cor. 5:19). While Christ has the authority to judge sin, He has chosen *not* to exercise His power in accordance with the riches of His grace. But the day is soon coming when He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

On a practical note, Christ did not exalt Himself, but rather humbled Himself taking on the form of a servant to carry out the will of His Father. We are to understand it was God the Father who exalted Him. Those who truly have the mind of Christ will never aspire to exalt themselves, as some at Philippi were prone to do. The Lord’s work has suffered greatly at times by leaders who esteem themselves more highly than they should. Sadly they often “lord it over” other members of the Body of Christ, which only serves to grieve the Spirit of God. Leaders are to lead by example, not by intimidation. Our attitude should be one of *humility* before God! As the Scriptures say, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.”

Not only has the Father given His Son a position of exaltation higher than the heavens, He has also favored Him with a supreme name. Interestingly, in the original language, it is not “a name” but “the Name” which clearly denotes a *particular* name. While commentators cannot agree among themselves as to the identity of this name, we believe it is the name “Jesus,” as the very next phrase substantiates, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”

The name “Jesus” was originally associated with our Lord’s humiliation when, as we know, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). He was despised and rejected and led away as a lamb to the slaughter, to be crucified at the hands of those who conspired against Him. But no longer is the name of “Jesus Christ” associated with His humiliation for Paul plainly says, “though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth [i.e. from this point forward] know we Him no more” (II Cor. 5:16). We no longer know the lowly Jesus who wearied from His journey as He ministered to the needs of His people, Israel. We know Him as the Lord of glory, the Savior of the world, whose name is above every name!

It is important to remember that while the angel announced that Christ was the Savior at His birth and He Himself claimed to be the Savior, He did not in reality become the Savior until He died and rose again. A man may claim he can walk across Niagara Falls² on a tight rope, but until he actually does, it is only a claim. Because God’s only begotten Son humbled Himself and voluntarily

endured death, even the death of the Cross, the Father has *glorified* and exalted the name of “Jesus” above “every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:21). Forevermore, the name “Jesus” will always be identified with what He accomplished at Calvary.



The pre-incarnate Christ left Heaven’s glory as the Son of God. He returned after completing His finished work as the Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, with a glorified resurrected body. Consequently, God the Father honored His Son by highly exalting Him and glorifying His name. Today, in Him dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

EVERY KNEE WILL BOW

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10,11).

We have before us one of the most solemn accounts of *things to come* recorded in the Word of God. These passages clearly teach *universal subjugation*, that Christ has conquered all; therefore, at the name of “Jesus” every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge

that Jesus Christ is Lord. Men *bow* themselves before gods and kings in recognition of their authority. Soon every soul will bow before the Son of God and acknowledge that “Jesus Christ” is who He claimed to be. Jesus Christ is God—the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world! In addition, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Every soul will acknowledge His *title* as “Lord.” He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things in heaven and earth. He is sovereign! He is the Lord of lords.

In regard to the three realms the apostle makes reference to here, you will note that the term *things* is in italics, which simply means the word does not appear in the Greek text, but has been supplied by the translators to help give us the sense of the passage. The three phrases that appear here in the original are three adjectives, which can refer to either “things” or “people.” With this in mind, we believe that the term “people” or “beings” best fits the context—ultimately, it’s a judgment call. The *King James Translators* are to be commended for their sound judgment in this area. In their “Letter to the Reader” that appears in the original 1611 *King James Version* of the Scriptures, the Translators collectively state the following:

“Some peradventure would have no variety of the senses in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgment not to be so sound in this point....they that are wise had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings,

than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other.”

So then, with the above modification applied, the passage reads accordingly: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven, and *beings* in earth, and *beings* under the earth.” The universal subjugation spoken of here applies to both men and angels and will apparently take place at three separate events in the future.

The *first event* will be the *Judgment Seat of Christ* when the members of the Body of Christ will be caught up together to meet the Lord in glory. We are the *beings* in heaven that will stand before Him. As believers in Christ we have been conquered by His *love*; therefore we will willingly bow before Him as we pay homage to our Savior who gave Himself a ransom for our sins. Most believers freely acknowledge Jesus is Lord, but those members of the Body who have not made Christ Lord of their life will confess He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Furthermore, Paul warns us not to judge one another “for we shall all stand before the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10-12).

In all likelihood, the elect angels of heaven’s glory will also bow in humble adoration at the close of the Judgment Seat. At that day, the host of heaven will fully understand the manifold wisdom of God “according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10,11). When they witness the fullness of our exaltation with



Christ in the heavenlies, which was hidden in God in ages past, they too will confess that “Jesus” is indeed Lord to the glory of God.

The *second event* will be at the *Judgment of Israel and the Nations* when Christ returns in power and glory to the *earth* at the close of the Great Tribulation. After the King of kings separates the wheat from the chaff, the unbelievers will be cast into outer darkness. This will be followed by the resurrection of all the prophetic saints, commonly known as the first resurrection. As Christ sits on the throne of His glory, believing Israel and those saved through her will stand before Him. Here again *love* conquered those who placed their faith in Him. They, too, will gladly bow before Him acknowledging He is the Messiah who delivered them from the hands of their enemies and redeemed them from their sins. These saints will also confess “Jesus” is Lord, but they will understand that the “Jesus” of the New Testament was the Jehovah (LORD) of the Old Testament.³

Paul often borrows passages from the Old Testament in his writings in order to make an application for the Body of Christ, as we saw in Romans a moment ago. What was true for Israel will in this case also be true for us at the Judgment Seat of Christ—we too will bow before the Holy One of heaven. The passage Paul quoted

was taken from the Book of Isaiah which directly pertained to the judgment of Israel and the nations currently under consideration. In time past, the Lord said through Isaiah concerning the subjects of this particular judgment: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come” (Isa. 45:23,24).

The *third event* will transpire at the *Great White Throne Judgment* at the close of the millennium. In that day, all the unsaved of all ages, who are confined to the infernal regions *under the earth*, will be raised from the dead, which is known as the second resurrection. The infernal regions referred to here are *hades* where the unsaved presently reside, *tartarus* where the angels that sinned in the days of Noah are chained, and the *abussos* (bottomless pit) where Satan will be incarcerated during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 14:9-11; Luke 16:19-31; II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:1-3). All three of these realms are located in the *center* of the earth.⁴

The scene described here should strike fear into the hearts of those who are headed for a Christless eternity. When they see the Lord Jesus, *regret* will consume their soul. Every unbeliever will appear before the Judge of the earth, including those who were persecuting the saints at Philippi in Paul’s day. In Isaiah 45:24 quoted above, the passage goes on to say concerning those who will bow before Him, “*and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed.*” Those who

blatantly rejected Christ, believing Him to be nothing more than a misguided teacher, will tremble when they bow before Him and reverently acknowledge He is God. John Lennon once said after a performance before a large crowd of screaming teenagers: “we [the Beatles] are more popular than Jesus Christ.” Someday when he stands before Him, he will regret ever making that statement.

Those who cursed in His name will confess at this solemn occasion that His name is above every name. They will acknowledge before the court of Heaven that “Jesus” is Lord of all to the glory of God the Father! As we saw in an earlier lesson, Rome required its subjects to acknowledge that Caesar was *Lord*. Those who persecuted the saints at Philippi for refusing to submit to Caesar’s claim will, along with the Caesars, humbly declare “Jesus” is Lord.

The universal subjugation of beings *under the earth* will also include Satan and the fallen host of angels who defected with him in the original rebellion against God in the beginning. Satan’s desire to exalt his throne above the throne of God will be dashed when he and his emissaries prostrate themselves before the Lord of Heaven. They, along with the unsaved, will suffer eternal damnation, which they have sadly chosen.

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. Adapted from C. Truman Davis, M.D. in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8.
2. ©iStockphoto.com/Kevin Tavares
3. ©iStockphoto.com/Andrew Penner
4. For a more comprehensive study of the infernal regions and the state of the dead, please see the author’s book *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter*, Pages 117-126.



Spotlight on Grace Churches

This month’s church is:

Church of the Resurrection

Location: 1605 Holland Avenue, Galena Park, TX 77547

Pastor: David Carden

Sunday Service: 10:00 a.m., Bible Study & Worship Service

Additional Ministries: Bible Institute, Food Pantry, Nursing Home Ministries, Thanksgiving Dinner Ministry, and a Spanish ministry led by Pastor Eduardo Lopez.

Contact information:

Phone: 713-453-0019 / E-mail: freegrace3@houston.rr.com

www.churchoftheresurrection.4t.com

Thanks to Our Volunteers

By Paul M. Sadler



A special word of thanks is in order to all of our volunteers who assist us in the work of the ministry here at the *Berean Bible Society*. To be quite honest we don't know what we would do without them. We have a very efficient and dedicated staff, but it is our volunteers who save the day when it comes to our national mailings. The project would literally overwhelm our staff with all their other responsibilities.

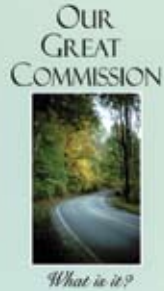
On our national letter months, Pastor and Mrs. Miller set up everything like an assembly line so each volunteer has letters, inserts, and envelopes directly in front of them. I think even Henry Ford would be impressed with how smooth the operation runs! When you consider the sheer volume of mail, it brings to mind the old adage: "Many hands make light work."

We have between twelve and fifteen volunteers who give us a helping hand throughout the year—our youngest being Catherine Leigh who is a Senior in High School. Mrs. Elsie Rohrbach has the honor of being our oldest volunteer at the age of 94. It reminds us that we are never too young to serve the Lord, nor are we ever too old to be used of Him. Whether we are young or old may the Lord "teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Once again, we want to convey our grateful appreciation to all of our volunteers for their labor of love. Surely a great recompense of reward awaits them at that day for their faithful service.

A Serious Side Effect

By C. R. Stam



THE ATTEMPTED RECOVERY OF THE SIGN GIFTS TODAY

A natural result of the confusion that prevails with regard to the so-called “great commission” is the attempted recovery of the sign gifts.

We have already shown that notwithstanding the claims made by many sincere believers, the commission to the eleven and the program of Pentecost *cannot* be carried out today. God has rendered this impossible, for the supernatural manifestations of that day have been “*done away*” and have “*ceased*.” Hence the attempt to recover them is not of God but of Satan, who would use even the Scriptures to rob God’s people of their most precious possessions.

Satan and the Saints

As Satan used the Word of God itself to tempt our Lord, and used it again to cause the Galatians to “fall from grace” into the bondage of Moses’ law, so he uses it in our

day, pointing to the Scriptures themselves to draw sincere believers away from a full appreciation of “all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies” to the lesser blessings of a former dispensation. Our adversary is pleased when untaught Christians say: “If it’s in the Bible it’s enough for me,” but there are two Scriptures he will never point men to: Romans 11:13 and II Timothy 2:15, for were they heeded the theological confusion in the Church would be dispelled. All is clear when we “rightly divide the Word of truth.”

It should be further observed that the attempted recovery of the sign gifts today is a distinct sign of *immaturity*. The sign gifts abounded in the Corinthian church (I Cor. 1:7 and Chaps. 12-14) and the Corinthians boasted of them, yet Paul let them know in no uncertain terms that they were mere “babes in Christ” (I Cor. 3:1) unable to digest solid food (I Cor. 3:2) and their “envying and strife and division” (I Cor. 3:3) proved that he was right.

In the light of this let no modern Pentecostalist imagine that his supposed “gifts” of healing or prophecy or tongues are signs of spirituality or maturity. The Corinthians had all these, yet were pronounced *carnal* rather than spiritual, *childish* rather than mature. The Pentecostal gifts in themselves were *never* an indication of spirituality. They were simply temporary *signs* associated with the *Messiahship* of our Lord. Certainly a visit to a Pentecostal meeting today should convince the thoughtful student of the Word that spiritual maturity is not one of their characteristics. A man rises to speak in an “unknown tongue.” Another follows with an “interpretation.” Or a “prophet” rises with some special “revelation” from the Lord. And what do they say? Do they offer some refreshing light on the Word, or discuss “the deep things of God”? No, they make such statements as: “The Lord is pleased with the meeting,” or “The Lord is coming soon and we must be ready,” or “There is a backslider in our midst and the Lord wants him to know that if he doesn’t soon seek God’s face he will be cut off.” And what brings the greatest response from the audience? The speaker who goes to the greatest extremes of physical or vocal exertion, the suggestion that the Holy Spirit is about to come down in power, or the mere mention of healing. But “the riches of the glory” of God’s “mystery among the Gentiles,” which God “would make known” to His saints (Col. 1:27) and by which believers are established

(Rom. 16:25) is utterly unknown to them. In the words of another: “What they look upon as superior spirituality is actually instability and emotionalism that lasts only so long as the spell is upon them and then often drives them into a state of depression which is closely related to melancholia.”

Referring to one who had embraced Pentecostalism and had been ruined by it, Sir Robert Anderson rightly said: “This complete surrender of mind and will—his entire personality—to what he believed to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit, left him a prey to the terrible delusions in which he was at last engulfed” (*Spirit Manifestations*, P. 19).

But the Corinthians had an exaggerated estimate of the value of the sign gifts at a time when they were at least in order. What shall we say of those who make much of them after God has suspended them and made them to cease? The surging waves of emotionalism, the constant emphasis on the miraculous, the self-deceit and the deception of others, the failure to recognize Paul as the God-appointed apostle of the present dispensation—all this is not of God, but of Satan.

Convincing Miracles

With convincing “signs and wonders” being wrought all about us in increasing numbers, some are being carried away from the truths so clearly set forth for our day in the epistles of Paul.

Some have concluded from these “supernatural manifestations” that toward the close of

this present dispensation we may expect a revival of the divine gifts of tongues, healing, etc.

As to healing, may we first point out that no instructed believer in Pauline truth questions that God can, and often does, heal the sick and infirm as, for example, in the case of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-27). We believe too that God is constantly working miracles. But we deny that *healers* and miracle *workers* or that *signs* and miraculous *demonstrations*, have any part in God's program for today.

“Satan...would use even the Scriptures to rob God's people of their most precious possessions.”

First, the apostle did not say in I Corinthians 13:8 that the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge would be done away until the closing days of the dispensation. He simply declared that these miraculous manifestations were to be *done away* (i.e., in this new dispensation), and that “faith, hope and love” would “abide” (Ver. 13). Nor is there any indication in the Pauline epistles that the Pentecostal signs are to be restored at the close of this dispensation.

Lying Wonders

The apostle does declare, however, that *after* the close of the dispensation of grace, the “man of sin” will appear “with all power and signs and *lying* wonders” (II Thes.

2:9). In this the apostle confirms what our Lord says in Matthew 24:24 about the same period of time:

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

During the “tribulation period,” then, *after* the members of the Body of Christ have been “caught up” to be with the Lord, the ministers of Satan, from Antichrist down, will come with “all power and signs and lying wonders,” to deceive, if possible, “the very elect.”

But now let us see how this affects *us today*.

In the very same passage about Antichrist and his “power, and signs, and lying wonders,” the apostle warns that

“...the mystery of iniquity doth already work...” (II Thes. 2:7).

What does all this tell us about the multiplied “miracles” we are seeing all about us as the days grow darker: tongues, healing, prophecies, plus ESP, witchcraft, spiritism, exorcism, etc? Obviously it tells us that these are not of God, but of Satan.

We do not mean to imply that our Pentecostalist brethren would deceive us, but rather that Satan would deceive *them*.

A wondrous manifestation is to some the end of all argument. So-and-so must be of God or he could not work these miracles! But the above passages from the Bible tell us differently. Satan has power. He can work wonders, but he does

so to deceive men and draw them away from the truth of God's glorious purpose and grace.

Indeed, Paul, in I Timothy 4:1, issues a stern warning to this effect:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,¹ giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons].”

This is one reason why the apostle urges all believers:

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high [heavenly] places” (Eph. 6:11,12).

Be not deceived. Satan is not a grotesque creature with horns, hooves, a tail and a pitchfork. He

inspired that caricature to draw attention *away* from himself, for when the apostle warns of “*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*” (II Cor. 11:13), he adds:

“And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...” (Vers. 14,15).

There you have it! If Satan did appear as men portray him, the multitudes would flee from him. But “*an angel of light*” with “*ministers of righteousness*”! This attracts the unwary.

To Be Continued! 

Endnote

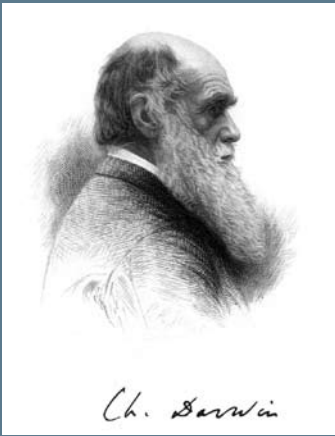
1. Obviously, “the faith” *he* had proclaimed, hence “the latter times” of this “*dispensation of the grace of God*” (Eph. 3:1-3).

If Pastor Stam has piqued your interest, and you just can't wait to read more of his insight into this important subject, see Page 25 for a special offer that will help make *Our Great Commission* an integral part of your Christian library.

It Is or It Isn't

“Either the ‘mystery’ revealed to Paul is the answer to the prevailing theological confusion or it is not. If it is not, let's forget it. If it is, let us ask God for the wisdom to explain it clearly, the courage to stand for it faithfully, and the power of the Spirit to proclaim it effectively and to demonstrate its relevancy to our times.”

—C. R. Stam



Where Was Darwin at Virginia Tech?

By Pastor James T. Penney, Jr., Th.M.

Pastor of *Falls Bible Church*,
Associate Professor of Theology,
St. Louis Theological Seminary

Once again, the nightmare of every parent and grandparent has come to pass. 28 students and 5 staff members were recently killed at Virginia Tech University, including the gunman. 15 were wounded, some critically. One of the staff members was Liviu Librescu, 76, who survived the holocaust perpetrated by Hitler upon the Jews. He was here on a teaching visa, only to be killed in America by a young man who was an immigrant himself, here on a student visa.

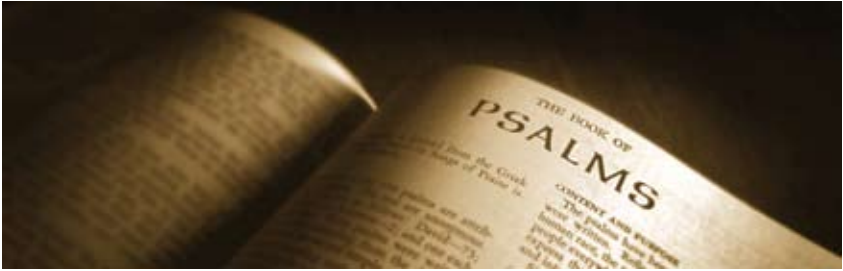
Until that Monday, the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history was in Killeen, Texas, in 1991, when George Hennard plowed his pickup truck into Luby's Cafeteria and shot 23 people to death, after which he shot himself.

The deadliest previous campus shooting in U.S. history took place in 1966 at the University of Texas, where Charles Whitman climbed to the 28th-floor observation deck of a clock tower and opened fire. He killed 16 people before he was gunned down by police. After that, we had Columbine in Littleton, CO where two young men methodically went from class to class, executing their high school classmates, especially those who professed to be Christians. If I were a betting man, I would bet that not one of those victims or their family members had in mind that this would be their last day on earth. I doubt that any one of them awoke and said that this would be a good day to go to class and be shot.

At times like this, one of the first questions that come to mind is this: *Where was God in all of this?* If there is a God and He is in Control, why do these kinds of things happen? The argument goes something like this: either God is good but impotent and not in control, or He is omnipotent but He is not all good. He cannot be both all good and all powerful; otherwise these things would not happen.

In response to those who pose the question "where was God," I would counter that the question is not where was God, but where

was Darwin? By Darwin I mean Darwinian philosophy and secular humanism. I know where God was, but where was Darwin, because it appears to me that this shooting is not a failure on the part of God, but a failure on the part of secular humanism.



The Psalmist tells us something about where God was during this tragedy (Ps. 139:7-12).¹

**Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.**

Where was God during this inexplicably evil act? He was there all along, and He was a comfort to the extent that those individuals allowed Him to be. But we are still left with the nagging question of why? Why do these things happen in our society?

Déjà Vu: In 1968, conditions in the country were eerily similar to that which we face in our country today. We were in the middle of an unpopular war. The country was divided politically, culturally, and morally. Young Americans were coming home in body bags. President Johnson's approval ratings were in two categories: Low and lower. Bobby Kennedy was running for president, and in a speech given in response to a request by the president for an increase in troop levels, Kennedy questioned the wisdom of sending more troops to Vietnam. At the end of the speech is the following quote:

"You are the people, as President Kennedy said, who have 'the least ties to the present and the greatest ties to the future.' I urge you to learn the harsh facts that lurk behind the mask of official illusion with which we have concealed our true circumstances, even from ourselves.

Our country is in danger: not just from foreign enemies; but above all, from our misguided policies—and what they can do to the nation that Thomas Jefferson once told us was the *last, best hope of man*. There is a contest on, not for the rule of America, but for the heart of America.... I ask you to go forth and work for new policies—work to change our direction—and thus restore our place at the point of moral leadership, in our country, in our hearts, and all around the world.”

Bold words. *The last, best hope of man*. One can only wonder where he would have taken the country had he not been assassinated. I don't need to wonder however, about the kind of country envisioned by those who heard his words that day, for it is that generation that is among the ruling elite; from the halls of Congress to the halls of the local school.

I don't know what Bobby Kennedy had in mind when he quoted Jefferson; but I know what his followers have done with the country. The first thing they did was:

Remove God from the classroom: It's ironic that when tragedy strikes, people start questioning where God is, or why He allowed a particular tragedy to happen. They treat God like Superman, expecting him to stay hidden until they need him, at which time He will pop out of a phone booth and come to the rescue. God is not a God of force, but a God of love. Love doesn't force, and God doesn't force Himself on any individual or society. By removing God from the classroom and putting Darwin in His place, America has removed the moral foundation of our society. By removing God and His word, we have a whole generation that has grown up on moral relativism; i.e. there are no moral absolutes. When you have no moral absolutes, then you have no right or wrong, nothing that is intrinsically evil or good.

In 1987, Allan Bloom wrote a book called *THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND*.² In the introduction, he wrote, “If there is one thing that a college professor may count on among all of his students to believe, or think they believe, is that all truth is relative” (Interesting that Bloom uses an absolute to support relativism) Just one look at the faces of those young people at Virginia Tech will tell you how wrong Bloom was. At least for that one that day, they were not moral relativists. There is an innate, moral sense that tells us that certain acts are evil, no matter how much you try to deny the existence of evil. That act of violence perpetrated upon their fellow students and teachers forced them to confront the stark face of evil. No one can say that this kind of evil is culturally relative; i.e. it's evil here but not there.

On Virginia Tech's website, I noticed that they offer no courses in theology or religion. All of the sciences are represented. There is a philosophy department, a psychology department, but nothing about God or the Bible. None of those students deserved what happened to them. But I thought it was revealing that the first two murders took

place in a coed dormitory. If we have great universities in America where there is nothing morally wrong with unmarried young men and women sharing the same dorm, then we have a moral crisis; and I believe that we have just seen the tip of the iceberg.

The Psalmist said it best in Ps. 53:1: *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.”* And Paul reflects in Gal. 6:7: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* While some might suggest that Virginia Tech is proof that God is judging America for her wickedness, under Grace we believe we are simply reaping what we have sown. America has been sowing the seed of Darwinian philosophy for at least the past 150 years, and we are now reaping the whirlwind.

Thus, the first step that led to Virginia Tech was removing God from the classroom. The second step I have already alluded to, but consider, not only did they remove God, they **Replaced God with Darwin**: What I mean by that is in American schools, media, government and in almost all of public life in America, God, and especially Bible-based Christianity, has been systematically attacked and ultimately removed. The result is the loss of a moral compass and the distinction between right and wrong.

According to marketresearch.com, the average American child watches 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school. Darwin taught that only the fittest survive and that nature is morally neutral. When you remove God and replace Him with the moral relativism of secular humanism, add the constant exposure to violence, and you create monsters like Jeffery Dahmer, and mass murderers like Cho Seng Hui. When you remove the restraining influence of Christianity, the ethics of Jesus in the Gospels and Paul in his epistles, you have a whole generation who have been brainwashed to believe that nothing is right or wrong within itself.

If you kill a child before birth, that’s not morally wrong, but choice; if you crush its skull and suck out its brains, that is protecting the reproductive rights of the mother (thank the Lord partial birth abortion was overturned recently by the Supreme Court). If you assist old Uncle Homer in committing suicide, that’s called mercy.

When you extend the philosophy of secular humanism to its logical conclusion, you have a society in which life has no value, and chaos reigns. In order to keep society from imploding, society demands more and more laws. It wasn’t long after the shooting that the anti-gun lobby was on the television. “If only we had stricter gun laws, this wouldn’t have happened.”

This guy broke so many laws already on the books, what makes the humanists think that adding yet more laws will stem the tide of violence? The only hope for our society in the dispensation of Grace is

for the Body of Christ to rise up and stand in the gap to stem the tide of evil in our society. Our form of government was not created for the atheist; it will never work outside of a Biblical worldview and framework. Paul makes it clear in Galatians that no law, whether written on stone tablets or paper, can force a person to act morally. Only a life led by the Spirit, can hope to, “crucify the flesh and walk by the Spirit.” You see, legislating morality isn’t the answer—Christ is the answer!

Just because we are in a church building does not make us immune. Recall the shootings at the church meeting in a motel in Brookfield; or the shooting at a church in Milwaukee last year.

I saw the ranting of Cho Seng Hui on the internet. It was obvious that he had come to the point where he no longer valued life, neither his nor those that he perceived as the source of his pain. He was a social outcast who taped his plan for murder in advance. It wasn’t long after NBC aired this rambling diatribe when the talking heads were excusing his behavior based upon mental illness or a chemical imbalance. The one word that was noticeably absent was the word “evil.” In the absence of a transcendent God, in the absence of an external standard, you cannot call those murders evil. In Darwinian naturalism, there is no evil. Call it an inconvenient truth; call it a tragedy for the students and their families; but you can’t call it evil. Evil implies the existence of transcendent good, and when you replace God with Darwin, you have lost all standards of ultimate good and are left adrift on a morass of moral relativism.

I ask again, where was Darwin at Virginia Tech? America has removed God from the classroom, replaced God with Darwin, and in the face of a mass murderer, Darwin was M.I.A.

May I suggest that only Christianity explains our moral outrage?³ It’s explained by the fact that we are created in God’s image and that we have in us a sense of moral right and wrong. Paul writes in Romans 2:14-15 concerning the Gentiles who did not have the written Law: *“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.”*

Christianity also explains our desire for justice. We know some things are morally wrong and are deserving of punishment. We want to make a strong enough impression on the guilty that he (or observers of the case) doesn’t do it again. The NKJV has 135 verses that use the word “justice”; God is very interested in justice.

Acts 17:31: *“He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”* The Greek word for righteousness in this context is “justice” or “righteous judging.”

Besides moral outrage and a desire for justice, *Christianity offers hope*. Even in the worst of situations, the person who has received the grace of God in salvation has the hope of a future in which death has no place. In the New Testament, hope is presented as the assurance of the future. We have the hope of eternal life—of that life which has no room for death—by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.


The Apostle Peter wrote, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Jesus proved that He has broken the hold of death through His own death on the cross, breaking free from the tomb and appearing live to hundreds of people. Because He rose and conquered death, we who trust in Him will also.

And there, as the English say, “*is the rub.*” Only those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior have that assurance. We leave it in the hands of a merciful God as to whether an individual was saved or not. But I can’t help wondering if anyone ever talked to the gunman about Jesus Christ. Imagine how different things might be today had he become a Christian years ago.

Thus we see the inevitable spiral of doom that led to this tragedy. God was kicked out of the classroom and was replaced with Darwin. And where was Darwin that day? He *was noticeably absent* as the students were jumping out the window; as their classmates were being murdered; and as the cries of the wounded resounded through the building.

In addition to students and faculty, four things died at Virginia Tech, at least for that one day: **1. Secularism died.** Even the secular university held a memorial service, and they invited every kind of religious representative they could think of. *Noticeably absent was Darwin.* **2. The second thing that died was blind optimism.** The idea that humans are getting better and better. There is still resident within us the capacity to do tremendous evil. *Noticeably absent was Darwin.* **3. The third thing that died was euphemism.** Trying to call what happened something other than what it is. A good example of secular euphemism would be to call the murderer at Virginia Tech a disturbed young man. That he was, but what he did was absolute evil by any decent standard. *Noticeably absent was Darwin.* **4. The last victim of Virginia Tech was relativism.** All of the moral relativist professors on that campus who taught that morality is relative to culture or situation were silenced that day. Look at the crying faces of those students on that campus. If they were, they are no longer moral relativists. They would not argue that what happened there was not wrong, or that it might be alright if it happened in another culture, **and oh yes, Darwin was noticeably absent.**

I would love to say that our country has finally learned the lesson of leaving a Biblical world view, but I am not that optimistic. I did

not find one secular pundit who called for a return to a sane society based upon the Bible. Where was Darwin at Virginia Tech? He and his followers were on the sidelines, watching as the fruit of their philosophy played itself out. May God comfort the families of those poor young people, and may He help America return to its Christian roots, and in this way help prevent further Virginia Techs. 

Endnotes

1. All Scripture references are from the NEW KING JAMES VERSION, *Nelson*, (Nashville, 1979).
2. Bloom, Allen, *THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND*, *Simon and Schuster*, (New York, 1987).
3. From Lane Palmer, *A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO AN UNSPEAKABLE TRAGEDY*, www.dare2share.org, (2007).
4. *Ibid.*

Question Box

“Did the Lord really give 12 apostles the power to forgive sins?”

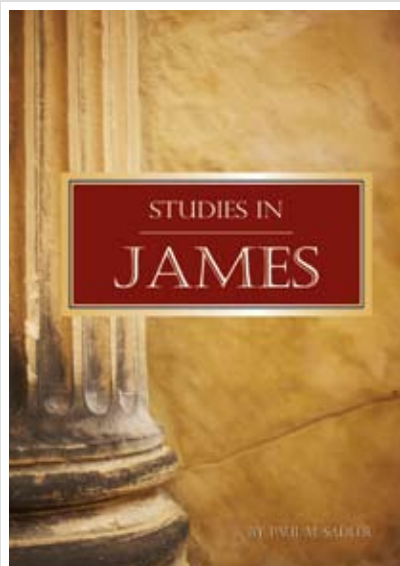
“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23).

The 12 apostles did indeed have the power to remit or retain sins, but only by an authority *delegated* to them by the Lord, for “who can forgive sins, but God *alone*?” (Luke 5:21). We might compare this to Job 9:2,8, where we read that “God...*alone*... treadeth upon the waves of the sea.” The Lord later proved He was God when He walked on the water, but He also delegated this power to Peter. Similarly, while only God could cleanse a leper (II Ki. 5:7), the Lord empowered the apostles to cleanse them also (Matt. 10:8), and to perform other miracles that He alone can do. In the same way, while only God has the power to remit sin, He can delegate this power to others.

But how could the Lord *trust* failing men with such fearsome power? Here it must be remembered that John 20:23 is found in John’s account of the Great Commission. In Mark’s record of the commission, we read that the apostles were also commissioned to speak in tongues, an ability they did not *obtain* until “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4). And so we can extrapolate from this that the apostles were likewise not given the power to remit sins *until* they were likewise filled with the Spirit, and supernaturally controlled by Him (Ezek. 36:27).

—Pastor Kurth

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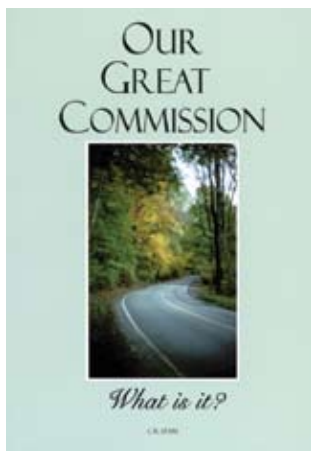
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From Michigan:

“Rightly dividing the Word is all new to me. It has turned out to help me progress in my study of God’s Word. I would love to be added to the list to receive the *Searchlight*.”

From Myanmar:

“On April 5th, we established the *Missionary Bible Church of Myanmar*. We would also like to set up *Berean Bible Institute of Myanmar* to produce our church workers. I am now praying to translate your books into Burmese. Please help pray also for me.” (Please join us in prayer for this new group, located in the country once known as Burma.—RK).

From Florida:

“I had never before encountered teachings on rightly dividing the Word. I feel like a whole new door has been opened to me in the Word of God. It is very literally as though the ‘scales’ have been removed from my eyes.”

From Portugal:

“Here in Portugal we have a few Bereans, and I think we owe a lot to Pastor Stam for what we came to learn through some brethren who learned from him.”

From the Netherlands:

“Thanks for sending each month the *Berean Searchlight*. The Bible studies and other things therein encourage us! Thank you!”

From Australia:

“I am gaining more understanding of the Word of God, rightly divided. I felt some ten years ago, when first exposed to the Grace message, that I just HAD to know this message, and I purposed in my heart to learn it. In those days I had so many questions, and sat under Pastor John Shriver’s teaching, often wrestling with the subject and realizing I had to ‘unlearn’ a few things learned in Pentecostal churches.”

From Florida:

“We are new to attending *Grace Bible Fellowship* in Nokomis, and were fortunate to attend most of the conference. My husband and I learned much, and the messages made an impression on our son.” (You will continue to be blessed by the Bible-teaching ministry of Pastor Whitey Myers.—RK).

From Texas:

“I have studied a semester here in Dallas, TX under Dr. Ryrie and after reading his Dispensationalism almost three times now I am more convinced of the ‘hyper’ hermeneutical scheme. Can you send me any literature for free that you may have at your disposal and point me to a good Hyper-Dispensational Church?”

From Florida:

“I am the Chaplain at this jail facility, and would like to request additional free subscriptions to be distributed to the inmates here. Thank you for your consideration.”

From North Carolina:

“I thank God for your ministry and have been referring people to your publication for years. Our new young pastor is coming to understand the message and joy of God’s grace, and is receiving your publication.”

From Kenya:

“I am the Deputy Principal in Kapsabet Bible College, and have been a regular recipient of the *Searchlight*. Recently I read one of your articles, *In Christ, the New Man*. What a wonderful article! This is exactly the area I have been teaching in class! WOW! You really opened my eyes to thoroughly grasp the topic.”

From Texas:

“I am almost 88 years old, and legally blind. I have to copy, paste and enlarge *Two Minutes With the Bible* in order to be able to read it, but I always enjoy it. I especially enjoyed Pastor Sadler’s article on cremation. We celebrated our 57th anniversary as a church last Sunday. We praise God for our young pastor, Charles Mays, and his faithfulness in teaching the Word in the light of the Pauline revelation.” (It is always good to hear from our good friend, R. B. Shiflet.—RK).

From Pennsylvania:

“I have read *Things That Differ*, and was amazed at how my understanding of God’s Word was expanded! Of course, I had (and still occasionally have) questions.”

From Missouri:

“Many thanks for your insightful commentary on Philippians. It is surprising how some of your comments on different topics really ‘hit home’ sometimes. I have three good Baptist friends who feel the need to be water baptized after being saved. Your explanation about how ‘Paul exercised a spirit of tolerance...’ with those who have different beliefs and philosophies was most encouraging and uplifting. Although my friends and I have differences, ‘Grace leaves room for differences without compromising the faith.’”

From the Philippines:

“The *Searchlight* has helped me so much in my growth as a Christian.”

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“My wife and I have been privileged to serve as missionaries in Brazil since 1960. Your ‘tools’ have been invaluable in preaching and teaching the Scriptures.” (From our friends Kenneth and Mary Mueller.—RK).

From Pennsylvania:

“My children and I have found a good church in the area after reading *Things That Differ* nearly two years ago. I left the Baptist church and started going to one where the Word was rightly divided. I cannot go back now that I understand the difference between prophecy and mystery.”

From Wisconsin:

“Thank you for your prompt and thoughtful response to this rather obscure question. I will share your reply with the person that asked me about this. I often come to the BBS web site for encouragement and study. Thanks for being there!”

“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

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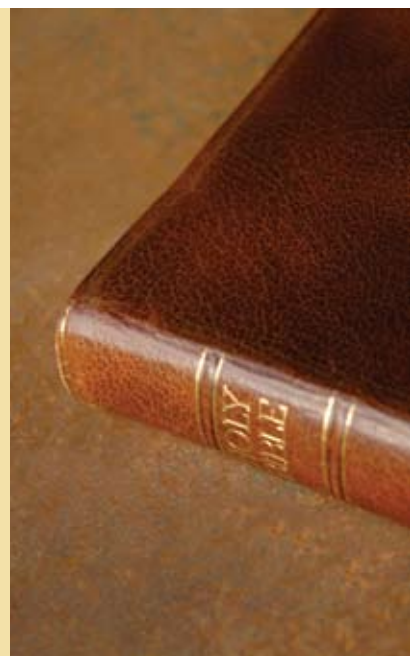
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Speaker: Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For additional information, please contact:

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All are warmly welcome!



BBI's Purpose, Method, and Goal

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

Purpose. Berean Bible Institute's purpose is to help individual believers prepare themselves to effectively serve God. BBI is not in competition with any other school or training program but is simply making an effort to help meet the very real and undeniable need for more properly trained pastors, missionaries, and workers in the local churches.

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"received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things be so."

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Pastor: *Grace Bible Church* of Castle Rock, Colorado, is pleased to announce that they have called Justin Lynn to be their pastor. A recent graduate of our *Berean Bible Institute*, Justin and his wife Candace began their Castle Rock ministry on May 20th, and are already hard at work. If you live near Castle Rock or are planning a Rocky Mountain vacation, why not pay them a visit? To learn when and where they meet, call or e-mail Pastor Lynn: 303-681-9889, pahstallynn@yahoo.com.

New Degree: Pastor David Carden was recently awarded a Master of Theology degree in a May 6th ceremony held on the campus of the *St. Louis Theological Seminary*. Brother Carden pastors *The Church of the Resurrection* in Galena Park, Texas. To learn more about his church, see our *Spotlight on Grace Churches* on Page 11 . For more information about *St. Louis Theological Seminary*, go to www.stlouistheological.org, or call 314-781-0472.

New Grace School: Pastor David Carden's *Church of the Resurrection* has established the *Mid-Acts Dispensational Bible Institute*, a tuition-free school founded to train men and women for what Pastor Stam used to call the "blessed service" of the Lord Jesus Christ. For more information, go to www.mid-acts.4mg.com, or call Pastor Carden at 713-453-0019.

Beacon of Grace Bible Church of St. Catherine's, Ontario, is looking for a pastor. If your heart *burns* to faithfully proclaim God's Word, rightly divided, you could hardly do better than *Beacon of Grace*. A glance at their web site at www.beaconofgrace.com will show what a solid Grace church they are. For more information, contact Jim Bartkiw at 905-562-7170.

Church Anniversary: This July, *Friendship Bible Church* of Friendship, Wisconsin, will observe their 140th anniversary. Special events on July 7th and 8th will include a hymn sing, a pot-luck dinner, and a bluegrass gospel concert with the Siegmann Family. Then the church will welcome the return of their first Grace Pastor when Pastor Don Graves visits to minister the Word on the 21st and 22nd. To learn more about this milestone event, contact Pastor Richard Church at Richard@richardchurch.com.

This month's cover features a striking image that was captured by our good friend Robert Penney of Eastport, New York. This historic photo was taken back in 1969, and so does not present the sharp resolution of modern photography. But what it lacks in clarity it makes up for in character. The *Montauk Point Lighthouse* was authorized by the Second Congress under President George Washington, and was completed in 1796, making it the oldest lighthouse in New York State.

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