

The **Berean Searchlight**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2002



Feature Articles

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter (II Pet. 2:15-22)
 Pastor Paul M. Sadler 7

Paul, The Apostle of Grace
 Pastor Cornelius R. Stam 13

The Devil and the Mystery
 Pastor J. C. O’Hair 17

Departments

From Our Mailbag 4

Important Recall Notice 6

Question Box 12

On the Wings of the Morning 20

The BBI Byline 25

News and Announcements 26

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From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

I came to the conclusion years ago in the ministry that you can't do everything yourself, although most pastors give it the old college try. The last time I attempted to burn the candle at both ends I ended up in intensive care, with a blood pressure reading that made the doctors pale. Since then I've learned to pace myself, which has included setting priorities and sticking with them. It is also helpful to remember a key word in the Lord's work—*delegate!* As difficult as it may be to relinquish some control of the reins, it is essential that Christian leaders delegate authority to others. The benefits are too many to list.

Here at the *Berean Bible Society* we have put together a staff that is both capable and exceedingly efficient. Whenever I go out of town I never have to wonder if the employees are lounging around on "flowery beds of ease." They go about their daily responsibilities with a melody in their heart. You see, they're doing what they do as unto the Lord. It's a great motivator.

We are happy to report that the newest member of our staff is Mr. Doug Cox. Doug and his wife Sonja have two grown children, Greg and Cindy, and three darling grandchildren. Brother Cox is well known to many of our readers as a man who has faithfully served the Lord in numerous capacities. He is perhaps best known for the key role he played as the Director of *Northern Grace Youth Camp*, which his father helped establish in 1955. Although Brother Cox stepped down as Camp Director many years ago, he still serves on the Board of Directors at NGYC.

Doug is gifted in so many areas that he is most assuredly over qualified for the position. In fact, when I conveyed this concern to him, he responded, "I simply want to serve the Lord in whatever capacity He has for me." I think he may have wondered to himself at first if there would be enough to do to fill up his time every day. Well, we've set that notion to rest—he's been buried under a stack of work since he started! I gathered though from a recent conversation that he's beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Perhaps I should tell him—it's a train loaded with additional responsibilities preparing to pull into his workstation. Welcome aboard Doug, it's great to have you with us!

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not....For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

Because of Calvary,

Paul M. Sadler
President

From the Philippines:

"We want to thank you for coming to the Republic of the Philippines and helping so much with the work here. Your teaching was a great help. May the Lord richly bless you and the work of BBS."

From Nigeria:

"Thanks to God for what He is doing through your ministry. I was blessed by one of your sermon tapes through a friend. Words are inadequate to express the significant impact that your sermon has made to my life....Since I listened to your tape my life has never been the same. I also gained much knowledge."

From Florida:

"I was introduced to BBS by my parents and have been receiving your *Searchlight* magazine for quite awhile and enjoy it. May God continue to richly bless the wonderful work you do."

From Connecticut:

"Thank you for sending a recommendation to Brother...concerning our church. He called me last week to ask about our ministry. He thought he was the only person in Connecticut who rightly divided the Word...He came to visit us this past Sunday and was amazed to find 20-25 Bereans gathered together rightly dividing the Word of truth and was thrilled and excited that we even existed." (By way of encouragement, historically God has always done His greatest work through the remnant, the little flock, and the church in the house. Ed.)

From the United Kingdom:

"BBS is like an oasis in the midst of a crooked world. I praise our God for you all. I treasure your *Searchlight* and want to enroll in your Bible studies. God bless BBS and all who work there. A GREAT BIG THANK YOU from the UK."

From Oklahoma:

"I just finished reading the April *Searchlight*. I thank you for sending it each month. I love the many enlightening articles."

From South Dakota:

"Thank you for the *Berean Searchlight*. It is truly a blessing to read and to study God's Word! Rightly dividing the Bible eliminates so many common errors held by so many dear Christian folk. I'm working on and praying for my pastor...Will you please mail me another issue of the April *Searchlight* so that I could give it to a friend, who is also in my church family? Also, will you tell me the procedure to follow in trying to get *Two Minutes With the Bible* published in my town's weekly newspaper?"

From British Columbia, Canada:

"I have recently come to an understanding of the Mid-Acts position (I was previously an Acts 2 dispensational believer) and would very much appreciate receiving the *Berean Searchlight* in order to learn more. Thanks so much for your ministry. Are you aware of any brothers and sisters of 'like precious faith' with whom I could find fellowship? God bless you."

From Kenya:

"Thank you very much for the copies of the *Berean Searchlight* which you mailed to me....Your booklet, 'We Know a Secret,' has given me more insight of Paul's ministry and has changed what I believe concerning inheriting the kingdom of God. Please send me more copies and past issues of the *Searchlight*. Send my heartfelt thanks to Mary Cruthers who introduced me to you." (Thanks Pastor! Since I know you'll be reading these lines Mary, I also want to convey my gratitude for your faithfulness in sharing the message with others. Ed.)

From California:

"Your on-line *Searchlight* magazine seems to reflect accurate teaching. How do I receive other literature? Are there any Bereans in Yucca Valley, CA? If so, please have them contact me. And I wish to make a small donation so you can maintain your site."

From Michigan:

“Please send literature and a price list pertaining to this new message of grace that you’re talking about.”

From Oklahoma:

“God bless those who rightly divide the Word of truth in order that the full wisdom and knowledge contained in the Scriptures might be revealed.”

From the Internet:

“I do believe that the only thing a person need be taught is the principle of dispensational interpretation, and after that, they should be better equipped to read and apply God’s Word to their lives....Once the ‘denominational blinders’ are removed and a student of Scripture allows himself to view the Bible dispensationally, then the true learning begins....I’m glad you’re out there sharing God’s Word with the correct dispensational bias—keep up the good fight!”

From the Philippines:

“First of all I thanked God for you. Your visit to the Philippines has impacted so many lives. Truly you are a blessing to each of us.” (May God richly reward your love of the truth! Ed.)

From South Dakota:

“Thank you for the vast expanse of literature you have made available. These books make great graduation and wedding gifts.”

From Wisconsin:

“Enclosed please find a gift to help get the real message out to the world in this age of Grace. The confusion in religious circles is unbelievable. We are rejoicing in the Word rightly divided and looking for the Blessed Hope.”

From the Internet:

“I’ve been getting your *Searchlight* magazine for three years and love it. May God bless your ministry always.”

From Melbourne, Australia:

“Please accept my appreciation for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. Last Sunday, 7 April 2002, our small church, with 16 members celebrated our 2nd year Anniversary. To my knowledge, we are the only Acts 9 dispensational church in Melbourne. We are an independent church since I started the ministry on April 2, 2000.” (Congratulations! Anniversaries have a way of keeping us in touch with our spiritual roots, making us thankful for present blessings, and helping us plan for the future, as to how we might better serve Him. Ed.)

From California:

“Since I am homebound and can’t attend church, I depend greatly on the *Searchlight* to bolster my faith....Please accept my small donation. I wish I could send more. God bless you and your generous work.”

From the Netherlands:

“This ‘Two Minutes With the Bible’ article is so good! Thank you very much!”

From Nelspruit, South Africa:

“I have used your excellent article, *The Right Foundation*, twice. I first sent it to an unsaved friend and subsequently to a former colleague that has lost his job. It is one of my favorite tools when dealing with people.”

From Washington:

“Praise God! How refreshing to find others that believe as I do! Be His and set your faces like flint toward the hope we have in Jesus Christ.”

From Pennsylvania:

“Enclosed is a contribution toward your ministry. I can’t even imagine where my spiritual life would be if I had never learned to rightly divide God’s Word. How awesome it truly is to pick up God’s Word, knowing what is and what isn’t for us today.”

“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

Important Recall Notice

The Maker of all human beings is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to the serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype unit code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units.

This defect has been technically termed "Subsequential Internal Non-Morality" or more commonly known as SIN, as it is primarily characterized by loss of moral judgment. Some other *symptoms* are:

- (a) Loss of direction
- (b) Foul vocal emissions
- (c) Amnesia of origin
- (d) Lack of peace and joy
- (e) Selfish or violent behavior
- (f) Depression or confusion in mental component
- (g) Fearful

The manufacturer, who is neither liable or at fault for this defect, is providing factory authorized repair and service **FREE** of charge to correct the SIN defect. [The number to call in your area is **F-A-I-T-H**. Simply believe that Christ died for your sins, was buried and rose again, and your unit will be regenerated. No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Christ will repair and replace it with]:

- (a) Forgiveness
- (b) Love
- (c) Joy
- (d) Peace
- (e) Longsuffering
- (f) Gentleness
- (g) Goodness
- (h) Faith
- (i) Meekness
- (j) Temperance

Please see operating manual **HOLY BIBLE** for further details on the use of these fixes. [See sections I Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:7; and Gal. 5:16-26].

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human unit without correction voids the manufacturer's warranty, exposing the owner to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded. [For free emergency service before it's too late: call upon the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself a ransom for our sins].

DANGER: The human units not receiving this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace.

This action was authorized by the Creator.

—Selected

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

II Peter 2:15-22

By Paul M. Sadler

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.”
—II Pet. 2:15-17

In 1938 ominous storm clouds began to gather over Europe. The Second World War was inevitable. Hitler had amassed an impressive army. In so doing he intimidated Austria to join him in his cause. After he invaded Poland in the fall of 1939, he conquered Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Hitler then focused his attention on England. The winds of war were now blowing in her direction. Although England was gripped with fear, she was the last bastion of freedom and hope for Europe.



In the midst of the world’s darkest hour came a voice of hope. Sir Winston Churchill stood before a wartime Parliament (May of 1940) and rallied his nation to stand up against the totalitarian beast on the other side of the channel. Churchill declared he could offer only, “Blood, toil, tears, and sweat. You ask: What is our aim? I answer in one word—Victory! It is victory! Victory at all cost! Victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be.”

In June of that same year came his greatest address of all. In fact, it has appropriately been called, “His finest hour.” “We shall not fail. We shall go on to the end...We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the landing grounds; we shall fight in the fields and in the streets. We shall never surrender.”

In similar fashion, Peter rallied his countrymen to stand up against another type of evil beast—*deceivers*, who would rob them of the truth. Peter was not one to sit idly by and watch the faith of his countrymen be overthrown by these so-called visionaries. As the apostle says, “which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” Since every Hebrew was taught the Old Testament from childhood, Peter knew his readers were very familiar with the exploits of Balaam. Therefore, he uses the story of Balaam to illustrate how false teachers operate.

Balaam was a hireling prophet who sought to *market* his gift. This is the **way of Balaam**. When Balak, the king of the Moabites, saw how the Amorites were utterly destroyed by the children of Israel, he feared that he was going to suffer the same fate. So he sent the elders of Moab to Balaam with gifts of divination to curse Israel. Balak reasoned that if the prophet

cursed the chosen nation, he would prevail and drive her out of the land. The very fact these bearers of silver and gold were sent to Balaam strongly suggests that the reputation of the prophet preceded him. As they say, money talks, and Balaam was listening. But God would not allow the prophet to return with the elders of Moab, nor did He permit him to curse Israel.

However, temptation always knocks at the door of opportunity more than once. Thus, it does not surprise us when the princes of Moab returned to offer Balaam riches untold and even greater honor throughout the realm. Rather than accept the will of God regarding the matter, he approached the face of the Lord again. Balaam reasoned that since Israel had sinned against God she deserved to be cursed; which, of course, meant he would reap a handsome sum for his effort. He had no concern whatsoever for his countrymen, that many of them would perish, as long as it profited him. This time God gives Balaam the liberty to go, as a *test*. This shows the true intent of his heart inasmuch as he fully understood it was not God's will for him to go, yet he went. Lust filled his heart!

Interestingly, Balaam's journey was interrupted when the ass upon which he was riding saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with a sword drawn. Although the money-blinded prophet could not see the angel of the LORD at first, the ass did and turned aside into the field. The second time she crushed his foot against the wall. The third time she saw the angel of the LORD she collapsed beneath the prophet. Each time Balaam beat the ass unmercifully. However, after the third beating, the

dumb ass spoke to him. Now that would leave you speechless! The Lord often uses unique ways to get our attention. But we must also remember that in this case, nothing is impossible with God (Jer. 32:17 cf. Luke 1:37). Thus, Peter would have us understand it was according to God's purpose that Balaam was "rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness [insanity] of the prophet" (See Numbers 22).



Then the Lord opened his eyes and Balaam saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way. It is important to note that this was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, the very One who would redeem Israel from the curse of the law. This was the **error of Balaam** (Jude 11). He reasoned that a holy God must curse Israel on the basis of His righteousness. But what the hiring prophet failed to understand was the higher purpose of God to redeem Israel at the Cross, where Christ would be made a curse for the sins of His people (Gal. 3:13). Consequently, the Lord rebuked the wayward prophet: "Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is *perverse* before me" (Num. 22:32).

After Balaam realized God would not allow him to curse Israel, he *deceitfully* devised a plan to corrupt Israel. He taught Balak to sway the chosen nation into eating things that had been offered to idols and to commit fornication, both of which were strictly forbidden by God. This is known as the **doctrine of Balaam** (Rev. 2:14). Israel was only to worship the true

and living God. She was to be a separate nation unto God; therefore, she was not permitted to marry those of other nations. So when the Israelites joined themselves to the daughters of Moab, God sent a plague among His people wherein 24,000 perished (Num. 25:1-9).

Beloved, the false teachers of Peter's day were "following the way of Balaam," that is, they were *imitating* the prophet. Balaamism is a system of teaching that's based purely upon human reasoning. It is worldliness in its worst forms; lust, greed, and personal advancement at the expense of others. The face of evil may change, but its devastating effects are always the same.

WELLS WITHOUT WATER

"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (II Pet. 2:17-19).

The natural man is inherently religious. Like Cain, he wants to do something to appease God. Satan uses this religious fervor as a means to lead men to perdition. After all, his ministers present themselves as ministers of righteousness wherein they lie in wait to deceive. With persuasive words of man's wisdom, these false teachers were promising liberty from the moral restraints of the *Sermon on the Mount*, according to Peter. But the liberty they promised was in reality a license to sin, which appealed to the flesh.

Perhaps a current example will help us understand how insidious these attacks can be upon the Word of God. The following is an excerpt from *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* by Richard Ostling, regarding the position of Dr. Spong, a prominent leader in one of the mainline Christian denominations:

"Jesus Christ as portrayed in some New Testament passages is 'narrow-minded' and 'vindictive.' The Gospel writers 'twisted' the facts concerning Jesus' resurrection, which was never meant to be taken literally. The virgin birth of Christ is an unthinkable notion, and there is not much value in the doctrine of the Trinity, or in the belief that Jesus Christ was sent to save fallen humanity from sin."

Ostling states that Mr. Spong "declares his goal is to reveal the spiritual truths underlying the biblical text." He adds that Spong's unorthodoxy has now reached epic proportions in his book, *Living in Sin?* wherein he "asserted that non-marital sex can be holy under some circumstances."

**"The face of evil
may change, but its
devastating effects are
always the same."**

Peter wasn't afraid to tell it as it was for the sake of those who were under the spell of these unscrupulous teachers. He warns, "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." In the dry, barren desert, wells hold out the promise of life-giving water,

but if the oasis is dried up, those who approach are left destitute. The message of these false teachers was unable to quench the spiritual thirst of their hearers because they themselves were empty wells.

It was Augustine who said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” Only Christ can satisfy the longing of the soul: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37,38).

There should be no question that these apostates were unsaved when Peter says, “to whom the mist [blackness] of darkness is reserved for ever.” Those who purposely lead men to perdition have a special place reserved for them in the lake of fire. Hell is darkness, but Peter reveals that there are degrees of darkness, which would be in keeping with degrees of punishment promised those who blatantly reject the Savior (Matt. 11:20-24 cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

THE GREAT DEBATE

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (II Pet. 2:20,21).

The debate has raged for years in Christendom as to whether or not it is possible to lose our salvation. Those who have come to understand the Mystery rest in the

truth that we are eternally secure in Christ and, thankfully, have the assurance of it (Rom. 6:23 cf. Eph. 1:13,14). While there are those who believe the kingdom saints could lose their salvation, we are not of that number. We do, however, agree that they did not enjoy the assurance of their salvation, as we saw in an earlier lesson.

First and foremost, the kingdom saints, to whom Peter was writing, are said to be *saved*. You will recall the woman who washed our Savior’s feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. The Lord said to her “Thy sins are forgiven,” then added, “Thy faith hath *saved* thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:36-50). We don’t want to weary you, but what did her faith save her from? Obviously, she was saved from her sins and the judgment to come. If she could lose her salvation, as some claim, then what would have this woman been delivered from—it surely could not be her sins, simply because she’s once again in jeopardy of the hell-fire judgment.

The Lord said to Nicodemus under this same program, “That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:15,16). Those who believe in Him here are said to *have* eternal life. We know from the record that Nicodemus responded to the Master’s words and received eternal life. But in what sense did he have eternal life if he could have lost it? It was not eternal if there was ever the possibility of losing it.

Surely this passage should settle the matter that the sheep in Israel, who believed Christ was their

“...it’s essential to carefully distinguish between an intellectual knowledge of Christ and true saving faith.”

Messiah, were eternally secure. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28). If these saints, any one of them, lost their salvation, then would it not have to be said that they were plucked from the Savior’s hand? God forbid!

But what then does Peter mean by those who have a knowledge of Christ and if they again become entangled in the pollutions of the world, it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness? Clearly the apostle is addressing the false teachers and those led astray by their cunning ways. They escaped the pollutions of the world, not by conversion, but through an *outward* knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Religiously speaking, there were numerous benefits to being closely aligned with the kingdom message. But as one author correctly states, “Now, to be thus re-entangled in evil, after having once escaped it through the *professed* knowledge of the Lord and Savior, was infinitely worse than if they had not known the way of truth at all.”

Judas is a prime example. He was one of the twelve who played the part of a believer so effectively that the other disciples had absolutely no idea he was a worker of iniquity. He ministered alongside them, ate with them, and sat at the

Master’s feet as He taught the kingdom gospel. Judas was an opportunist. He saw how his close association with the things of the Lord could benefit him personally. He reveled in the power, the prestige, the respect, the glory, the money. The disciples trusted him so implicitly they made him treasurer of the group (John 12:6).

But the Lord unmasked this unsavory character for who he was—a devil. He plainly said to His disciples, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve” (John 6:70,71). To which the Lord added, “Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born” (Matt. 26:24). This is also the sense of Peter’s words concerning those who wear the cloak of deception for personal gain. “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

Peter uses two animals to illustrate his point—a dog and a pig—both of which were despised by the Hebrews.

“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (II Pet. 2:22).

We must keep before us here that regeneration is not reformation, but a *transformation*. Furthermore, it’s essential to carefully distinguish between an intellectual knowledge of Christ and true saving faith.

A man who *professes* Christ may outwardly appear to have experienced a change in his life, yet his

heart is far from God. He is like the pig that has been washed, but given the opportunity, returns to the mud. You see, it's the pig's nature to do so. So it is with the unbeliever; inwardly he will always return to

his sinful ways. The sheep, on the other hand, has no desire to enter the pit, and if it falls in by accident, it wants to be removed and restored—like the believer!

To Be Continued!



Question Box

“Living the Christian life can be challenging at times. How do we determine what is acceptable to God when there is no direct command of Christ?”

The Word of God is always relevant. It transcends the ages; therefore, if a particular matter isn't dealt with specifically, we are to defer to a broader principle. For example, you may want to ask yourself the question, will my action or participation glorify God? If you have any reservations whatsoever, then you are probably skating on thin ice. Paul says, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).

Another principle is to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (I Thes. 5:21,22). Proving has the sense of putting things to the test. If you are remodeling an old house and the steps going upstairs look unsafe, you naturally make sure the steps will hold your weight before you attempt to ascend the stairs. We wouldn't think of placing ourselves in harms way, which should also be true in our spiritual lives.

Test: Should we take possession of something if we are unsure whether or not it rightfully belongs to us? Often, examining the conduct of a servant of God such as Paul will help us *prove* whether our actions will be acceptable to the Lord. When the apostle won Onesimus to Christ at Rome, he could have reasoned that since this runaway slave's slate was wiped clean from past offenses he would claim him as his own. After all, think how profitable Onesimus could have been to Paul in the work of the ministry. But Onesimus rightfully belonged to Philemon, so the aged apostle returned him, along with a letter, to allow Philemon to make that decision. In other words, Paul didn't simply assume his friend would understand; he did what was *right*.

“Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.... Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: *But without thy mind would I do nothing*; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly” (Phile. 9-14).

—Pastor Sadler

Paul, The Apostle of Grace

By Cornelius R. Stam

To the unbiased believer of the Word of God, there is overwhelming proof that the secret of God's eternal purpose and of His good news to man was first communicated by revelation to the Apostle Paul, that he in turn might make it known to others. Not only does Paul himself *declare this by divine inspiration* but his declarations are amply confirmed by a comparison of his message and ministry with the messages and ministries of all his predecessors.

But while *particular distinctions* have often been noted in this connection, we feel that too little attention has been given to the *broader* aspects of his message and ministry as compared with those of his predecessors. Those great, grand truths which he was commissioned to unfold were the *constant* subject of his discourse and his letters, and his life and conduct harmonized perfectly with those truths and with the dispensation he ushered in.

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Let us begin with his proclamation of *grace*.

We are sometimes asked: "Did not others before Paul speak of grace?"

Yes, others before Paul did speak of grace, but before we assume too much from this, let us consider a few basic facts:

It is not merely Paul, but the inspired Word which declares that "*the dispensation of the grace of*

God" was committed to him (Eph. 3:2) and that it was his "*ministry... received of the Lord Jesus*" to make known "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). **THIS CLAIM WAS MADE FOR NONE OF HIS PREDECESSORS**, nor did any of them even mention the *dispensation* or the *gospel* of the grace of God so far as the record is concerned.

To the believer this evidence should be conclusive that Paul was God's chosen vessel, raised up especially to proclaim the message and program of grace. But to those who hesitate to accept these inspired statements at their face value, we have further important evidence to offer in the fact that **NO OTHER BIBLE WRITER—NOT EVEN ALL THE OTHERS PUT TOGETHER—HAVE SO MUCH TO SAY ABOUT GRACE.**

The Hebrew equivalent of Paul's word for grace is found only 68 times in *the whole Old Testament* (which is nearly *twelve times* the size of Paul's epistles including Hebrews) and then not always relating to *God's* grace, and *never* to *the dispensation of Grace*.

In the four Gospels (nearly *twice* the size of Paul's epistles) the word grace (Gr. *charis*) with its derivatives appears in the original only 13 times (much less often in the English A.V.) and then rarely in even a doctrinal, much less a dispensational, connection.

By comparison, the epistles of Paul, only about one twelfth the size of the Old Testament and one-half the size of the four Gospels,

employs the word *grace* and its derivatives no less than 144 times, *more often than all the rest of the Bible together and nearly twice as often as the whole Old Testament and the four Gospels together!* And then, in Paul's epistles the word *grace* is nearly always used doctrinally, in connection with *the dispensation of Grace*.

Every epistle signed by his name opens with a proclamation of *grace and peace "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."* In the epistles we find that we are "*justified freely by [God's] grace*" (Rom. 3:24), that "*where sin abounded grace did much more abound*" (Rom. 5:20) that *grace might reign* (5:21). There we read that we are "*not under the law, but under grace*" (6:14), that "*God is able to make all grace abound*" toward us that we may "*abound to every good work*" (II Cor. 9:8), that it is God's purpose for "the ages to come" to "*show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:7). And we could go on and on adding up the evidence that "*the dispensation of the grace of God*" was indeed committed especially to Paul to make known to us.

An examination of the book of Acts reveals a similar comparison. There the word *grace* in the original is found four times *before* the raising up of Paul and 12 times *after*. Before the raising up of Paul it is not used once of the dispensation of Grace or of salvation by grace, but in later Acts, after his conversion, not only is the *word* used more often, but immediately it appears in connection with the *dispensation of Grace*.

When Barnabas "*had seen the grace of God*" in saving Gentiles at Syrian Antioch, he "was glad" (Acts 11:23). When Jews and religious proselytes at Pisidian Antioch received Paul's proclamation of salvation through Christ, without the law, he and Barnabas "*persuaded them to continue in the grace of God*" (13:38,39,43). At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas gave bold testimony to "*the word of His grace*" (14:3). Later Peter confirmed Paul's message, publicly declaring his conviction: "*We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we [Jews] shall be saved even as they [Gentiles]*" (15:11). At Ephesus, Apollos proved helpful to "*them...which had believed through grace*" (18:27). On his way to Jerusalem Paul declared his determination to fulfill his Christ-given commission "*to testify the gospel of the grace of God*" (20:24) and then commended the Ephesian elders to "*the word of [God's] grace*" (20:32).

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

Let us next consider Paul's presentation of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was again *by divine revelation* that the apostle claimed that his was "*the preaching of the Cross,*" i.e., as good news, and that the *theme* of his message was "*Christ crucified*" (I Cor. 1:18,23). Again, **THIS CLAIM IS MADE FOR NONE OF HIS PREDECESSORS.** Furthermore, this claim also is amply confirmed by a comparison of his writings with those of all his predecessors.

In the Old Testament Scriptures the predictions of our Lord's

death, from Genesis 3:15 on, are purposely veiled in obscurity and we are explicitly told that while the prophets themselves “*searched diligently,*” they *did not find out* either “what manner of time” or even “*what*” the Spirit “did signify, when [He] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Pet. 1:10-12).

It is the same with the Old Testament *types* of our Lord’s death. We can *now* look back at them and exclaim: “*God had it in mind all the while!*” but we are not told of *one single case* where those of *that day* were informed that the death of Christ was being prefigured.

Then when our Lord appeared on earth He did not even *begin* to tell His apostles that He must suffer and die until near the close of His ministry (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22), and then we read:

“Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matt. 16:22).

So ignorant were our Lord’s own apostles of *even the prophesied fact* of His death (let alone *its meaning*) that later, in the very shadow of the Cross, when He told them again how He must suffer and die, they were still nonplused:

“And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken” (Luke 18:34).

In fact, even at Pentecost, when the death of Christ had become a historical fact, its full accomplishments were not yet revealed or proclaimed.

In the early chapters of Acts we do not yet find the death of the Cross proclaimed for salvation. It is rather spoken of as a matter of shame to be repented of. Peter does not offer his hearers Christ’s shed blood for the remission of sins, he *charges* his hearers with that blood and demands repentance and baptism for the remission of sins.

“...in Paul’s epistles the word *grace* is nearly always used doctrinally, in connection with *the dispensation of Grace.*”

But with the raising up of Paul all is changed. The crucifixion takes on a new and wonderful meaning. The Cross, the blood, the death of Christ become the very *theme* of his message. He constantly speaks of them, not in hidden meanings, but in open declaration, *as good news*, as that around which God’s eternal purpose revolves and from which all our blessings flow.¹

NO OTHER BIBLE WRITER HAS SO MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

By the Spirit, Paul tells us that

While we were yet *sinners* Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

When we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10).

We are saved through *faith* in His blood (Rom. 3:25).

We have *redemption* through His blood (Eph. 1:7).

We are *justified* by His blood (Rom. 5:9).

We are *reconciled* in the body of His flesh, through death (Col. 1:21,22).

“...with the raising up
of Paul all is changed.
The crucifixion takes
on a new and
wonderful meaning.”

We have *peace* through the blood of
His Cross (Col. 1:20).

We are *made nigh* by the blood of
Christ (Eph. 2:13).

We are *baptized* into His death (Rom.
6:3).

We are made *one Body* by the Cross
(Eph. 2:16).

The Covenant of the Law was nailed
to the Cross (Col. 2:14).

Through death He destroyed him
that had the power of death (Heb. 2:14).

*He died that they which live should
no longer live unto themselves but unto
Him Who died for them and rose again*
(II Cor. 5:15).

*He died that whether we wake or
sleep, we should live together with Him*
(I Thes. 5:10).

Christ crucified is the *power* of God
and the *wisdom* of God (I Cor. 1:23,24).

We are to *boast* in the Cross alone
(Gal. 6:14).

We are to show forth the Lord's death
till He come (I Cor. 11:26).

Little wonder Paul's message is
called "*the preaching of the Cross*"
(I Cor. 1:18).

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. See the writer's booklet: "*The Preaching of the Cross.*"

*"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but
unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).*

Don't Follow the Crowd

When Paul was at Ephesus the crowd roared for two hours:
"*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*" and the town clerk, referring to
the religion which surrounded this pagan goddess, said confidently:
"*These things cannot be spoken against*" (Acts 19:34-36).

But at Rome the apostle was informed, with reference to those
who had accepted the truth of God: "As concerning this sect, we
know that *everywhere it is spoken against*" (Acts 28:22).

Which side would you rather be on: that of the superstitious
multitude, or that of the minority who place their faith in the sure
Word of God?

Today, who knows Diana? but that Blessed Book stands un-
changed and unchangeable!

Do not fear to be in the minority, for with regard to some of the
most important and vital truths the majority, even among God's
people, has often been *wrong*.

—C. R. Stam

Pastor J. C. O'Hair was one of the founding Fathers of the Grace Movement, as we know it. Although the revelation of the Mystery has always been an integral part of the canon of Holy Scriptures since Paul, Pastor O'Hair was one of many who helped recover this lost precious gem. Brother O'Hair was called home to be with the Lord in 1958, but thankfully his ministry continues through the written page. —Ed.

The Devil and the Mystery

By J. C. O'Hair

Most Christians know more about the devil than they know about *"The Mystery."* Even so, they do not know any more about the devil than they should know. They should know *more* about him, so that they can truthfully say, with Paul, "We are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:11). Certainly every Christian should know more about *"The Mystery."* God wants every Christian to know *"The Mystery,"* and to make it known to others (Eph. 3:9). You say, "Then it would no longer be *"The Mystery."* Certainly not. Why after over 2,000 years should this divine truth still be a mystery so far as ninety-nine per cent of God's people are concerned? Can you answer this question? It is true that the devil doesn't want any one to understand or even study this divine truth. But is not God's will to be desired by Christians more than Satan's? Doesn't God's power exceed the devil's power? Satan is mighty. God is almighty. Genuine spiritual Christians know that God's power exceeds Satan's power.



Pastor J. C.
O'Hair

But let's take an inventory. As we take in the world-wide political situation, the distress of nations, with even the so-called Christian nations on the verge of bankruptcy and destruction, we may wonder that Satan has such power after 2,000 years of Christianity. But we believe that Satan knew what he was talking about in Luke 4:6 when he told the Lord Jesus that the kingdoms of the world were under his control. The Lord was right when He called Satan "the prince of this world."

When we consider the millions and millions of people of the world religiously, and see what the devil has done to them, surely we give a hearty "Amen" to the statement of I John 5:19, "the whole world lieth in [the evil one]." In his tricks to keep sinners away from the saving gospel of Christ, Satan is called "the god of this [age]" (II Cor. 4:3,4). To accomplish his purpose with people who want some kind of a so-called Christian religion, the devil transforms himself into an angel of light and instructs his servants to pretend that they are missionaries of Christ (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Then let us consider what the devil has done with Church members who are actually members of Christ's Body, God's one and only Church today. Note God's instructions in Ephesians 4:3-6:

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Meditate—“the unity of the Spirit.” Where is it found? One faith, one hope of your calling, one baptism. One Body. How many sects and denominations? Several hundred. How many bodies? One Body. Note Ephesians 1:20-23:

“Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in [the heavenlies]. 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, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Christ is in the heavenlies. Christ is the one Head of His one and only Church, which is His Body, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

No matter how loyal, zealous sectarians may defend and contend for their denominational churches, the student of the Word of God knows that “denominationalism” is absolutely unscriptural. There is one, and only one, true Bible Church and that Bible Church is denominated, The Body of Christ, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” In Ephesians 3:6 that one Church is called the “Joint-Body” (see the Greek).

“Why after over 2,000 years should this divine truth still be a mystery...?”

Members of Christ’s Body are seated with Christ in the heavenlies and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6 and 1:3). One reason why God wants all men to see “The Mystery” is expressed in Ephesians 3:10,11:

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in [the heavenlies] might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The Mystery then, is divine truth concerning “the heavenlies” and “according to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” By searching the Scriptures we find that this divine message was not in fulfillment of prophecy, but was a spiritual program predestinated by God before the foundation of the world.

We have seen how Satan works politically as “the prince of this world”; how, as “the god of this age” he blinds the unbeliever to keep him from believing the gospel of salvation. In Ephesians 6:11-20 we learn of Satan’s spiritual wickedness *in the heavenlies*, his opposition to the message and the messenger of “The Mystery,” divine truth concerning *the heavenlies*. Note Ephesians 6:11,12:

We have seen how Satan works politically as “the prince of this world”; how, as “the god of this age” he blinds the unbeliever to keep him from believing the gospel of salvation. In Ephesians 6:11-20 we learn of Satan’s spiritual wickedness *in the heavenlies*, his opposition to the message and the messenger of “The Mystery,” divine truth concerning *the heavenlies*. Note Ephesians 6:11,12:

“Put on the whole armour 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 in high places [in the heavenlies].”

And note Ephesians 6:19,20:

“And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Why was Paul a prisoner of Rome? Hear his own words: for *“the mystery of the gospel.”* Read this again in Colossians 4:3,4 and hear his testimony in Ephesians 3:1-3:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the Mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words).”

Note God’s Word in Ephesians 3:9:

“And to make all men see what is the [dispensation] of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

Here we see “the dispensation of the grace of God” and the dispensation of the Mystery are linked together. This glorious truth was made known by revelation to the Apostle Paul, who became the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. Do we appreciate what he suffered for us? Let’s get into the Book and try to understand the message for which he suffered.


While Paul knew that religious men were opposed to “The Mystery” and were determined that he should not preach that divine truth, he knew that he was not wrestling against flesh and blood; that his real opponent was the devil as the ruler of world darkness in the heavenlies.

Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:3 and 4 that Satan blinded minds. But note his request for a very specific prayer in Ephesians 1:17,18:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

Paul did not want minds blinded to “The Mystery.” He knew that it required a special spirit of wisdom and revelation to comprehend that particular glorious truth.

Yes, the devil succeeded in getting Paul in jail for “The Mystery,” bound as an evil doer unto chains. But from his prison cell he wrote: “The Word of God is not bound.”

God wants you to know and to make known this glorious truth...which should have ceased to be a mystery more than twenty centuries ago. 



On the Wings of the Morning

By Paul M. Sadler

John Newton wrote, “Thru many dangers, toils and snares I have already come; ‘tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.” On Monday, May 6th our beloved “Bud” Wilson was called into the presence of the Savior he loved and faithfully served for over 50 years. Shortly after Rollin and Jetty had returned home from their early morning walk, Brother Rollin suffered a heart attack. They were to celebrate their 50th Anniversary on May 31st.

It is never easy to say goodbye to a loved one or a close friend. As for me, Rollin was a friend who was closer than a brother. Death robs us of those who are near and dear to us. Humanly speaking, death may appear to be triumphant, but those in Christ have the confident expectation that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. For Rollin to live was Christ and to die was gain! It is with full assurance that we say, he’s with the Lord and has the hope of the resurrection, and we have the hope of seeing him again at that day. Little wonder Paul calls our hope a “Blessed Hope.” Indeed, death is swallowed up in victory! Do you have this confident expectation? If not, simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Pastor Wilson faithfully pastored Grace Churches throughout Wisconsin over the past 50 years, which included the establishment of the *Grace Bible Church* in Altoona, Wisconsin, where he ministered until his homegoing. Rollin and Jetty also served as missionaries in Brazil for several years. Bud authored two books, *Thematic Preaching* and *So Run That You May Win*, and he teamed up with the *National Business Institute* to produce the *Distance Bible Studies* correspondence courses. In addition he served on the BBS Board of Directors. As you can see, he was willing to spend and be spent so others might come into a fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

If there was one thing that characterized Pastor Wilson’s ministry it is this, he never wavered in his stand for the truth of Paul’s apostleship and message. Like Paul, he could say in the end, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” Oh that this may be our testimony when the wings of the morning sweep us into glory.

On behalf of our staff and the BBS Board of Directors we want to convey our love and sympathy to Jetty and the family. May the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort console you with the blessed assurance that you will soon be reunited at that day with your beloved Rollin.

Summer Bible Conferences

Holland Bible Conference

Location: *Berean Bible Church*
14461 James Street
Holland, Michigan

Dates: August 25-28, 2002

Theme: *Our Blessed Hope*

Guest Speaker:

Paul M. Sadler
President of the *Berean Bible Society*

Contact Person:

Pastor Rob Renberg (616) 399-4410

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Guest Speakers:

Paul M. Sadler, President of the *Berean Bible Society*
Bill Frank, Bible Teacher

Contact Persons:

Mrs. Patsy Davenport (615) 851-7490 or
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Frank (920) 924-0484

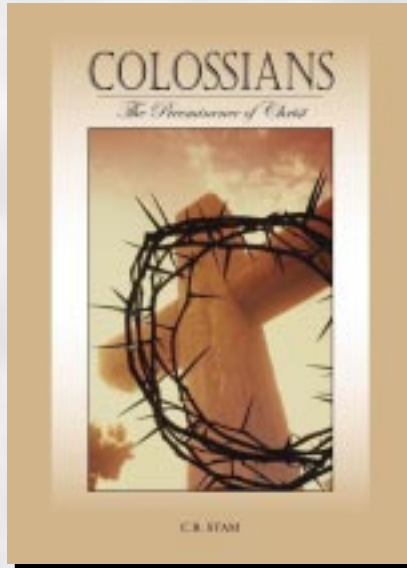
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Fall Bible Conferences

Midwest Grace Fellowship Fall Bible Conference

Location: *Neveln Community Center*
306 SW School Street
Ankeny, Iowa

Dates: September 20-22, 2002

Theme: *Gems of Grace Truth*

Guest Speakers:

Joel Finck, Director of *Parsons Ministries*
Kevin Heyle, Bible Teacher
Kevin Sadler, Bible Teacher

Contact Persons:

Mr. Ric Jennings (515) 964-2407 or
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THE BBI BYLINE

Are We to Exalt Paul?

Romans 11:13

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office” (Rom. 11:13).

Of course we are not to exalt the Apostle Paul, or any of the other apostles found in the Bible. The message of the Bible is that Jesus Christ is to be exalted as the Lord of glory, the King of kings, Lord of lords, and the glorified Head of the Church which is His Body.

On the other hand, we should pay special attention to that which the Lord has placed special emphasis on. Paul's declaration that *“I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office (ministry)”* (Rom. 11:13) is inspired by God and preserved for us in the Bible as part of God's special revelation to mankind. As such it holds as much authority as any other portion of the

Holy Scriptures. When we compare this with Paul's statement that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave him the gospel message he preached by an act of special revelation (Gal. 1:11-12), our interest in what Christ has to say to us through Paul should be intensified. James, Peter, and John limited their ministry to the Jews when they came to understand *the grace given to Paul* (Gal. 2:6-9). When they understood Paul's special apostleship and message, they honored Paul's office or ministry to the Gentiles (nations).

In Ephesians 3:1-7, it is clearly stated that the Dispensation of the Grace of God was given to Paul through *“the revelation of the mystery”* (secret) that was not known by man before (see Rom. 16:25). If God has seen fit to magnify Paul's ministry of grace, dare we ignore it?

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE was founded for the purpose of helping individual believers prepare themselves for service to God. We seek to do this by providing a full program of Bible and ministry training that gives our students a working knowledge of the whole Bible, grounds them in sound doctrine, teaches them proper Bible study methods, and shows them how to put their knowledge to work in actual ministry. If you have a heartfelt call to be in the ministry, we hope you will consider attending **BBI**.

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For information or an application contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 40, Germantown, WI 53022, or phone: (262) 255-4094, fax: (262) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTHERN GRACE YOUTH CAMP will be holding its *Young Adult Retreat* on August 17-21, 2002. The guest speaker this year is Pastor Ricky Kurth. NGYC is located on beautiful Berry Lake just north of Shawano, Wisconsin. If you are interested in additional information, please e-mail David Green <camp@ngyc.org> or phone (920) 855-2759.

GRACE LITERATURE: The latest release by Pastor Joel W. Finck is now available. The title of this new work is, *Common Questions about the Grace Message*. In this book, Brother Finck provides Scriptural answers to twenty of the most common questions he has encountered in over twenty-three years of preaching the gospel of the grace of God and the Word, rightly divided. If you have ever shared the Grace Message with a new believer, or even a seasoned saint who is new to the Pauline revelation, you have probably encountered some of the same questions. For example, when discussing the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4, many will ask, "Why was Jesus baptized?" or, "Why did Paul baptize?" This book will be helpful for the Grace Believer who needs to "brush up" on answering these questions.

How to Order: Copies of *Common Questions about the Grace Message* may be ordered directly from Pastor Finck by writing him at: *Parson's Publishing Company*, 30448 427th Ave., Tabor, SD 57063. The cost is \$6.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling for single copies. If ordering multiple copies, please enclose 10% for shipping and handling (\$2.00 minimum).

CONGRATULATIONS: The Board of Directors of the *Berean Grace Bible Church* wishes to share their thankfulness to the Lord on the calling and coming of Pastor Kevin Mepsted to BGBC as of May 1st. "We welcome Pastor Mepsted, Jen and their family to this ministry. We are anxious to see what the Lord can do through the Word of God for our people and those who need Christ in the Waukesha area. Also, we are grateful that Pastor Mepsted takes a strong stand for the Grace Message. We currently meet at the *West Suburban Christian Academy* located at 1721 Northview Road, Waukesha, Wisconsin. Services are Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. and Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m." For directions or additional information, please contact Pastor Kevin Mepsted at (262) 305-5832.

HEARTFELT THANKS: Pastor Stam wanted me to convey his sincere appreciation for all the beautiful greetings cards and notes that he received on his 94th birthday. Your thoughtfulness meant a great deal to him!

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Kathy Montonera. Kathy is the granddaughter of Mrs. Ruth Stam, who went home to be with the Lord in September of 1998. The *Chicago Harbor Southeast Guidewall Light* is located on a guidewall between two smaller piers just south of Chicago's large, well-known Navy Pier. This light still aids sailors approaching the piers.

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