

# The Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 1999



# AUTUMN BOOK SPECIALS

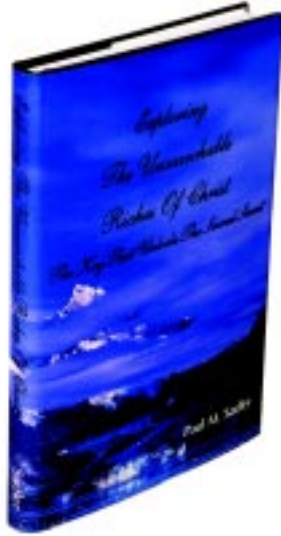
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By Paul M. Sadler

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

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## From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

Shortly after our dear Brother Maurie Reynolds stepped down from the BBS Board of Directors due to age related problems, we began to search for someone to fill his vacancy. Since the majority of our board members normally serve well beyond their retirement years, we are slow to fill these positions until a qualified candidate is available. The *Berean Bible Society* Board of Directors has earned a reputation over the years as being conservative, fundamental, objective, and willing to stand *uncompromising* for Paul's gospel, come what may. Further-

more, we have sought to avoid the perils of new evangelicalism, yet maintain a *balance* in regard to the inroads of extremism.

After months of deliberation and prayer, we extended Pastor Rollin Wilson an invitation, which he graciously accepted, to join the BBS Board of Directors. Pastor and Mrs. (Jetty) Wilson have five children and nine lovely grandchildren. Brother Wilson is a graduate of the old *Milwaukee Bible Institute* where he sat under the ministries of Pastor J. C. O'Hair, C. R. Stam, and Charles Baker. In addition to being a member in good standing of the *Berean Bible Fellowship*, Rollin is presently the senior grace pastor of the *Grace Bible Church* located in Altoona, Wisconsin. We deem it important that Brother Wilson has been tried and tested through the years, yet he has never wavered in his stand for the truth of Paul's gospel.

With the appointment of Pastor Wilson, we now have a full complement of directors. Our current board is comprised of the following members: Pastor Paul M. Sadler, *President*; Pastor John Fredericksen, *Chairman*; Pastor Jeff Seekins, *Secretary*; Mr. David Brown, *Treasurer*; Mr. Donald Weffald; Mr. Stephen Shober; and Pastor Rollin Wilson. You may also be interested to know that the election of Officers on the board takes place yearly in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws.

Please pray without ceasing that God will give us a special measure of grace to remain a guiding light to the confused masses that have yet to see the distinctive apostleship and message of Paul. May our feeble efforts be used to the praise of His glory in Christ Jesus.

Paul M. Sadler, President  
Berean Bible Society  
Board of Directors

**From New York:**

"I pray God's presence to guide and bless each one who is there getting out the message of His Word, rightly divided. May each one be strengthened and grow in grace."

**From Wyoming:**

"Thank you for sending me the *Berean Searchlight*. It is helping me a lot in understanding the Grace message. We are blessed to have a church where the Grace message is taught. I also attend two Bible study classes where we use Pastor Stam's books to help us in our study."

**From Iowa:**

"Thanks for continuing to send me the *Searchlight* which I continue to read from cover to cover before loaning it to others who are interested in it. I am enclosing my regular check to help in continuing your message of Christ to a listening world." (Although the world does its best to tune us out, we must be just as persistent to broadcast the meritorious work of Christ. Ed.)

**From the United Kingdom:**

"Please accept my gratitude for the latest *Berean Searchlight*—April 1999, it is very, very much appreciated. As usual, a great selection of items which both challenge and bless. The article on *Tradition, How Shall We Regard It?*—Cornelius R. Stam, is the best I've read on the subject. Thank you so much indeed!!!! I agree totally, and more, the Church isn't only sick, it is dead. I well remember a church in my home town was going to put on films to 'get the people in.' An elderly man said to the minister and its members, at a business meeting, 'By the means you get people in, so by those same means you will keep them.' Very apt, I thought."

**From Illinois:**

"Thanks for sending me the *Searchlight*. It's been very exciting. What joy to read such truths."

**From Pennsylvania:**

"Thank you for the packet you sent in response to my request for the *Berean Searchlight*! I read each booklet and information about the *Berean Bible Society* and passed them on to other family members. They are so helpful in my spiritual life and I praise Him for each and all of you involved in the *Berean* ministry!"

**From New York:**

"I would like 10 of the bookmarks you offered in your last letter. Really appreciate it. It is great. I have enjoyed the *Searchlight* for a long time. Really like the *Lighthouse* pictures on the front. Thank you for your faithfulness. God bless each one and supply each need."

**From Ohio:**

"I want to let you know how much I enjoyed the article *Y2K—Hype, Hysteria, Hope* by David Havard. Thank you for the many years of *Berean Searchlight*, a blessing to my heart. A check toward the *Searchlight* is enclosed."

**From Michigan:**

"You have a very good little booklet. Thank you for sticking with me all these years. Please forgive me for not contributing these many years. May God almighty bless your fine work. Thank you." (He abides faithful; therefore, we seek to abide faithful. Ed.)

**From Florida:**

"We have been receiving the *Searchlight* for many years now and can hardly wait each month for it to arrive in the mail. When it does arrive we immediately read it from cover to cover. What joy it brings to our hearts to hear and read the Word of God, *rightly divided*. We were first introduced to the Grace message and the Word, *rightly divided* over 20 years ago through Pastor Stam's book, *Things That Differ*. That message has never dulled or become routine for us. It has only shined ever brighter over the years. Thanks be unto God for His marvelous grace towards us."



**From Connecticut:**

“Praise be to God for His marvelous provisions through Grace! I consider it a privilege to be able to give to His work, and I vow to give faithfully as He supplies the means (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 8:12). Please add 5 copies of the *Searchlight* to my monthly mailing. I work in an area hospital and would like to leave them in the lobby and visitor’s waiting rooms. I am also ordering some of your Spanish pamphlets as there are many Hispanics who come to our facility, and I want to reach them with *la palabra de dios!*”

**From Oregon:**

“We thank you for continuing to send the *Searchlight* to us when we could not help financially to help publish it. We are so grateful for the help it has been through the years. May God continue to bless the Word as it goes forth.”

**From Florida:**

“Again I would like to thank you for May’s issue of the *Searchlight* (and every issue). I continue to get blessed each and every issue. I would like to request that my parents be put on your mailing list to receive the monthly *Searchlight*.”

**From Kentucky:**

“I read and very much profited from the article *Supernatural Sign Gifts, part V* by Paul M. Sadler in the May 1999 issue of the *Berean Searchlight*. I was wondering if the whole series was available as a package and if so how I might obtain them.” (Thanks, beloved, for your encouraging words. Lord willing, we plan to place this series in booklet form in the very near future. Ed.)

**From Ohio:**

“Thank you for all the wonderful editions of the *Searchlight*. This offering is in memory of one who has treasured the message you send forth.”

**From Michigan:**

“Please use this where needed most. God bless you all. We enjoy the *Searchlight* very much. Thank God we have those that stay true to Paul’s message. What a wonderful Savior we have.” (Thankfully there are still some Onesiphorus’ around. Be sure to read Pastor Stam’s article, *Not Ashamed* on page 13. Ed.)

**From Florida:**

“Studying the Word, rightly divided in the *Berean Searchlight* is a blessing to me and most enjoyable reading. Enclosed is an offering for your work. May God continue to bless you and your staff.”

**From Iowa:**

“Our prayer is that God will bless you and supply your needs, and that many will come to know Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We thank God for His Son Christ Jesus and that we know we are redeemed by the cleansing power of Christ’s sinless blood shed for our sins at the Cross.”

**From New York:**

“The *Berean Searchlight* is such a blessing. I find the notes and letters printed in the mailbag so interesting and informative of how the *Searchlight* is blessing and just to get the messages is a great fellowship blessing. The articles are very informative and we can learn much from them.”

**From West Virginia:**

“I have been setting aside checks twice a month since the first of the year wanting to write a letter and tell you how much I enjoy the *Berean Searchlight*...It is so amazing how much my eyes and heart have been opened by studying and rightly dividing the Scriptures. The Grace message is so powerful. Keep up the great work to keep that beautiful message alive.”

“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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*FYI: Pastor Sadler is hard at work trying to finish up his Ephesians commentary and he asked me to fill in for him on this issue—something that I was pleased to do. Don't worry, he'll be back!*

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## The General Epistles: Where Do They Fit In?

By David M. Havard

### INTRODUCTION

Those of us who understand Paul's unique apostleship and message usually have a pretty clear understanding of his epistles and how they apply to us today. We also tend to have a good grasp of the prophetic nature of the gospels and how they fit into the kingdom program. Through the gospels and up to and through Paul's epistles, we seem to recognize the proper dispensational distinctives. But after Paul's epistles things seem to get a little fuzzy for some of us. "What about the General Epistles? Where do they fit in? How do they apply to the Body of Christ today?" Such questions are typical of those we receive here at BBS about the books that follow Paul's Epistles.

While many Grace pastors preach and write about Paul's epistles (which they certainly should do), some of them unfortunately neglect the rest of the Bible. This leaves many Grace folks having to get their instruction on the General Epistles from teachers who do not understand Paul's unique apostleship and message. While we *certainly* want to emphasize the teaching and preaching of the dispensation of the grace of God committed to the Apostle Paul, we do not want to neglect the other Scriptures because we know that **ALL** Scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Our goal should be to know and understand the entire Bible *in light of* Paul's gospel.

Why are the General Epistles seemingly ignored when it comes to sermons and dispensational commentaries? Go to just about any dispensational Bible conference and you will likely find numerous commentaries on Paul's Epistles but nothing dealing with the General Epistles. Perhaps part of the reason is that the General Epistles raise some issues and questions not found in the Gospels or Paul's Epistles.

Those of us who understand Paul's unique apostleship and message usually have a pretty clear grasp of where the gospels fit in dispensationally. We understand that the gospels present Jesus' prophesied earthly ministry to the nation of Israel. (Even some non-Pauline dispensationalists understand that Christ's earthly ministry was "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and did not include the Body of Christ—and how could it, since even according to an Acts 2 dispensationalist the Body of Christ did not start until Pentecost?) Up until Paul, we know that God had been dealing specifically with Israel.

Everything in the gospel accounts has to do with the prophesied earthly kingdom and salvation coming to Israel. In the book of Acts we see the offer of the kingdom to Israel—an offer which they reject. Following Israel’s rejection of the kingdom proclaimed by Peter, we see the transition from Law to Grace at the calling of Paul after the stoning of Stephen. By the end of the book of Acts we know that the Law (and Israel’s position as the chosen nation) has been set aside and that the gospel of the grace of God is now the salvational message for this dispensation.

Up until this point, most Grace believers are in agreement. Up to and through Paul’s epistles there is confidence and clarity as to the right division of Scripture. Why then do we see hesitancy and confusion as to how to rightly divide the Scriptures *after* Paul’s epistles?

### **12 IN OR OUT?**

There may be a number of issues that cause Grace expositors to be more tentative when it comes to teaching on the General Epistles. One issue that has clouded the understanding of some regarding the General Epistles is whether or not the 12 Apostles and the kingdom saints became members of the Body of Christ. In the past, a person’s position as to the “12 in or out” has caused needless division and loss of fellowship between believers. And because (it is commonly said) our position on this issue will affect our interpretation of these books, this potentially divisive issue may be why more Grace teachers have not

dared to venture into exposition of the General Epistles.

Some are reluctant to teach on the General Epistles because they believe that they will have to stake out a claim as to whether or not the 12 are in the Body of Christ. And since they do not want to cause any dissension or division over the 12 in or out issue, they simply avoid the General Epistles altogether. This is unfortunate because such an issue should not really affect our understanding of the General Epistles.

Even if the 12 Apostles and the rest of the kingdom saints became members of the Body of Christ, it should not change our interpretation and application of the General Epistles. Merging kingdom saints into the Body does not change the fact that *Paul* is our apostle, not Peter, James, Jude, or John. It does not alter the fact that our doctrine has to come from Paul’s epistles. Paul never tells us to learn from any epistles other than his own (although Peter *does* tell the Jews to learn from Paul (II Pet. 3:15-16)).

In addition, if kingdom saints became members of the Body of Christ, it would not change the prophetic and kingdom nature of the General Epistles. Regardless of where we place the 12 and kingdom saints after the formation of the Body of Christ, it does not change to whom these books are written.

Perhaps an illustration will help. Let us compare the Body of Christ to the United States and the kingdom Church to a Territory. In this analogy, Paul is the president of the United States and



Peter is the governor of the Territory. Years later, we find a directive written by Peter. We ask the question, "How does Peter's directive apply to us as citizens of the United States?" "Did Peter's Territory become a state?" "Was it a part of the United States?"

Maybe you know where this analogy is going. You see, whether the Territory became a state or not does not really affect the impact of Peter's directive on us. Whether a state or a Territory, Peter's citizens can only be kingdom Jews; we cannot belong to Peter's group—we are not eligible for citizenship. If Peter's group remained a Territory, it is obvious that what he wrote does not apply to us because we are in a different country. This would be equivalent to saying that the 12 did not become members of the Body of Christ.

Now let us say that Peter's Territory did indeed become a member of the United States (the equivalent of the 12 becoming members of the Body of Christ). Now what effect would Peter's directive have on us? It would be the same; nothing has changed. Even if the kingdom Jews were a state, something written by their governor would have no jurisdiction on the residents of another state.

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"Because Paul is our Apostle and because we get our doctrine from his epistles alone, we know that the General Epistles are written for us, but not to us....their primary application is to Israel."

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An individual state is a subset of the United States. The federal government can dictate to the states, but a state cannot dictate to other states or to the federal government. If the 12 became members of the Body of Christ (subsets), Paul could write to them (just as the president can give directives to the states), but Peter could still write only to his subset, the Jews (or returning to our analogy, as governor of a state, Peter could still write to residents of his state but it would not have jurisdiction or authority over the other states).

Because Paul is our Apostle and because we get our doctrine from his epistles alone, we know that the General Epistles are written for us, but not to us. In practical terms, this means that their primary application is to Israel. The General Epistles will find their primary application to the kingdom saints during the tribulation. We may draw applications and principles from the General Epistles but we must never forget that they are written to kingdom saints with a decidedly prophetic emphasis.<sup>1</sup>

With that lengthy introduction, let us try applying what we have said to I Peter and see if we can answer a few basic questions.

### **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

There are some basic questions that we must ask before we can properly understand any portion of Scripture. The first question of authorship is not debated. Peter, one of the twelve apostles, wrote I Peter. The next thing to determine is to whom the epistles were

written. The fact that Peter wrote these epistles should let us know that they are not written to us since we know that Paul is *our* apostle. But even if we don't know that fact, the first verse of I Peter tells us that Peter wrote to "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," i.e., Peter wrote these epistles to the dispersed Jews.

Therefore, verse 1 gives us two reasons why I Peter is written *for* us but not *to* us: (1) It is written by Peter, not Paul and (2) It is written to the dispersed Jews, not to the Body of Christ. Even if we do not agree that Paul is our unique Apostle, we still cannot escape the fact that Peter's epistle is written to the Jews and not to us.

Answering these first two questions correctly is very important. People often ask us a question because they are concerned about a verse or passage in either the Gospels or the General Epistles. At first glance the passage in question seems to say that we can lose our salvation, or that we have to work for salvation, or that we could be guilty of the unpardonable sin (just to name a few). But when we ask these two questions about the particular passage, we see right away that they are not written by our apostle and neither are they written to us. We must never lose sight of these basic principles of biblical interpretation (or to use the fancy word, hermeneutics).

### **NOW WHAT?**

Having established the authorship and audience of Peter's epistle, now what? What exactly do

we mean when we say that a book of the Bible is written **for** us versus **to** us? Books that are written **to** us are those books from which we build our *doctrine*. As members of the Body of Christ, that means that we must be careful to make sure that all of our doctrines are founded upon Paul's epistles (Romans through Philemon). Books that are written **for** us include all of the rest of the Bible. Because all Scripture is profitable we can find principles and applications from the entire Bible, but we must be careful to build our doctrine on Paul's epistles alone. This does not mean, however, that we throw out the rest of the Bible. It simply means that until we can *properly* understand the *primary* interpretation of a passage of Scripture (who wrote it, to whom, and why) we will be unable to make a proper application of the passage.

### **WHY?**

Now that we have established the authorship and audience of Peter's epistle, we need to understand *why* he wrote the books. What condition or problem was he trying to address?

Referring back to verse 1, we see that Peter is writing to the Jews who are "scattered abroad." Why are they scattered abroad? They were scattered abroad following the persecution of the kingdom church that followed the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1; 11:19; James 1:1).

### **WHAT IT MEANT TO THEM THEN**

When you compare I Peter to what he said in the book of Acts,

you see that some things have definitely changed. In Acts, we see that Peter was preaching the immediate return of Christ and the inauguration of the millennial kingdom—contingent upon Israel repenting and believing on Jesus Christ as her Messiah (Acts 3:19-26).

But as we know, Israel did *not* accept Jesus as her Christ (Acts 4:1-3). While a few thousand Jews believed, Israel as a nation continued in unbelief. Then, in Acts 7 we have the stoning of Stephen, followed by the dispersion of the Little Flock from Jerusalem. As we read in Acts 8:1, “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

We should be aware of a prime mover in this persecution. Acts 8:3 tells us that Saul (Paul) “made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”

Rather than experiencing the earthly blessings of the prophesied and long-awaited kingdom, the Jews were persecuted, imprisoned, killed, and dispersed. It is to address these trying circumstances that Peter writes his epistles to the kingdom Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

I Peter has double application for the Jews. When it was written,

Peter’s first epistle addressed the problem of the kingdom saints’ dispersion from Jerusalem and of their persecution under an Antichrist of sorts—Saul of Tarsus. Speaking of Saul in his preconversion state, we read in Acts 9:1 that he was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” Just like the Antichrist who is to come, Saul was intent on destroying the followers of Jesus.

These early saints were no doubt confused as to God’s plan for them. After all, hadn’t they believed on Jesus as their Messiah?

Had not God promised them the kingdom? Had they not been given a foretaste of the kingdom to come (Acts 2:1-21; Heb. 6:4)? But instead of experiencing the utopia of God’s kingdom come to earth, they were being pursued and persecuted for their faith. Has God forsaken Israel? What

about the promises to Abraham? What about the promised kingdom? It is to answer questions such as these the Peter wrote his epistles to the Jews.

### **WHAT IT WILL MEAN TO THEM LATER**

Likewise, these same questions will need to be answered by the tribulation saints. They too will be persecuted, pursued, imprisoned, and killed by the real Antichrist, of whom Saul of Tarsus was just a prefiguring. The Antichrist will have the same hatred and

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“...instead of experiencing the utopia of God’s kingdom come to earth, they were being pursued and persecuted for their faith.”

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single-minded intent of eradicating the followers of Jesus. It is during this time of the Great Tribulation that I Peter will have its primary application to the Jews. I Peter tells them how to persevere with hope and holiness under God's planned time of suffering for them. The theme of I Peter is suffering, sanctification, and salvation. Just as kingdom saints of years ago were comforted and challenged by its message of victory over suffering, tribulation saints will be likewise edified by what Peter wrote by the inspiration of God. That Peter fully understands God's gracious purpose in all of these things is indicated by his conclusion in I Peter 5:10:

**“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”**

### WHAT IT MEANS TO US

While we do not receive direct application of I Peter, we can learn many vital lessons about how we should respond to suffering in this dispensation of Grace. I Peter can teach us the principles of submitting ourselves to God's sovereignty in the midst of suffering.


Suffering as a tool of God is common in all dispensations. Human nature seems to be such that our best lessons are learned through the fire of suffering. To a great extent, responding properly to such things will determine our practical growth as believers.

Even in this dispensation of Grace, God allows suffering to play

a part in our spiritual development. The Apostle Paul wrote about the place of suffering and tribulation in our lives today—something of which he had first-hand experience (II Cor. 12:7-10). He also warned us in II Timothy 3:12 that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

### CONCLUSION

While I Peter can give us edification and teach us how to have the proper outlook regarding suffering in our lives, we must not forget that it's primary application is to Israel's tribulation saints.

The General Epistles and especially the book of Revelation make much more sense when we understand their unique application to the prophetic program. The kingdom phraseology and emphasis that used to make us wonder now makes perfect sense in light of its proper dispensational context. See if you notice the difference when you read them now too! 

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### Endnote

1. Some are confused by what they consider “Paulinisms” in the General Epistles. Whether the 12 technically became members of the Body of Christ or not, it seems obvious that they read and learned from Paul's epistles. Apparently it was from Paul that Peter fully learned why the kingdom was put on hold (Rom. 9-11; II Pet. 3:15-16). Therefore, it is no wonder that we find the influence of Paul in Peter's later epistles. Just as Peter's epistles are for us but not to us, likewise Paul's epistles were for the kingdom saints but not to them. Of course, this depends on your view of 12 in or out. If you believe the 12 were in, then you would say that Paul's epistles were to them. But either way—to them or for them, they learned from Paul's epistles about the new dispensation of Grace and why Israel's kingdom was not forthcoming.

# Not Ashamed

By Cornelius R. Stam

**T**he faithful proclamation of the “gospel of the grace of God” entails suffering. That it entailed suffering in Paul’s day is evident from the very passage in which this term occurs in Scripture. Having already suffered untold affliction and persecution for proclaiming this glad news, and about to suffer more, the apostle of Grace declared:

**“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).**

But why should the good news of God’s *grace* stir up antagonism?

## THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE OF GRACE

The answer is that at the heart of “the gospel of the grace of God” lies *“the preaching of the Cross”* (I Cor. 1:17-25), and the Cross, as presented in the Pauline epistles, has always been an offense to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

By the Cross the world is crucified to the believer and he to the world.<sup>1</sup>

**“But God forbid that I should glory [boast], save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).**

Indeed, the crucifixion of Christ explains why in every age God has called upon His people to live as “strangers and pilgrims” in the earth (Heb. 11:13; I Pet. 2:11).

The Cross spells death to the flesh, the Adamic nature, too.

**“What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?...our old man in crucified with Him....reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:1-12).**

Finally, we learn from the revelation committed to Paul that the Cross spells Satan’s utter defeat. Satan, in God’s providence, was, and still is, “the prince of the power [government] of the air” (Eph. 2:2). Even Michael, the archangel, did not dare to “bring against him a railing accusation” (Jude 9).

However, because our Lord is “rejected of men,” and Satan instead is “the god of this age” (II Cor. 4:4); because they worship him instead of Christ, God in His sovereign wisdom has allowed Satan to retain his position until the coming “war in heaven,” when he will be cast out (Rev. 12:7-9). Meantime, we are assured that his doom has been sealed, *by the Cross*, where Christ “died for our sins,” “redeemed us from the curse of the law,” overcame death and stripped Satan of every claim against us.

**“...having spoiled [vanquished] principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15).**



“...the Apostle Paul calls his ‘preaching of the Cross’ ‘the gospel [good news] of the *glory* of Christ’ (II Cor. 4:4).”

For submitting to “the death of the Cross” to gain these victories for us,

**“...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).**

Or, as the Ephesian epistle so beautifully expresses it:

**“...He [God] raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places,**

**“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world [age], but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20,21).**

This is why the Apostle Paul calls his “preaching of the Cross” “the gospel [good news] of the *glory* of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4).

### **SATANIC ENMITY**

With all this in view it is not strange that Satan and his hosts should do all in their power to oppose the proclamation of the Cross and all the riches of grace involved (See Eph. 6:10-12). Even Paul had to pray for boldness to proclaim this blessed message (Vers. 18-20); but God answered his prayers in abundant measure, for again and again we read of his God-given boldness; again and again we hear him say: “*I am not*

*ashamed,*” and hear him encourage others not to be ashamed.

The title of this message, *Not Ashamed*, however, has mainly to do, not with the Apostle Paul, but with a humble, courageous believer named, Onesiphorus.

### **FORSAKEN**

In II Timothy, Chapter 1, especially the closing verses, we learn in an intimate way of some of the sufferings and heartaches the imprisoned apostle was called upon to endure for his stand. But there were also encouragements—refreshing examples of Christian fidelity.

In Verse 15 he says: “*All they which are in Asia<sup>2</sup> have turned away from me.*” This is sad in the light of Acts 19:10, where we learn that after two years of teaching by Paul in “the school of Tyrannus...*all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus...*”

Is it possible that all the believers in Asia had now turned away from the truth? No, for it appears that Timothy was at this time still the pastor at Ephesus, ministering to the believers there. They had rather, as the passage states, turned away from *him*, from Paul, the prisoner. They had forsaken him in his hour of need, ashamed of his bonds, afraid that if they stood with him or even visited him, they themselves might become implicated. They were afraid to become involved.

It appears that it was at Ephesus that Paul was arrested for the second time, and that it was in this vicinity that the stampede, the flight of his many friends

took place. There is an implication in Verse 15 that Phygellus and Hermogenes may have been the leaders in this defection.

Now that he was in prison at Rome, circumstances had not changed. Of his few remaining companions in Rome, Demas had forsaken him, and Crescens and Titus had gone elsewhere (4:10). Only Luke, that beloved and faithful physician, was now with him (Ver. 11). The apostle's heart no doubt ached as he looked back at his "first answer" before Nero, when "no man" stood with him. All this must have been especially disappointing as he recalled how the Ephesian elders had wept and embraced and kissed him, and had sorrowfully accompanied him to the ship on his last journey to Jerusalem before being sent to Rome (Acts 20:36,37).

Without doubt the most bitter ingredient in Paul's suffering was one which he shared in common with his Lord, that his closest friends deserted him when he needed them most. Yet he was not *bitter*, but rather said: "*I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*" (II Tim. 4:16).

### **NOT ASHAMED**

In addition to Luke there was one other notable exception to all the fear and cowardice that had gripped Paul's "Asian" brethren. This was Onesiphorus.

It must have meant much to Paul at such a time to have this brave Christian look him up in his Roman dungeon.

Onesiphorus might well have said: "I couldn't find him," for II Timothy 1:17 indicates that he had

not found it easy to locate Paul. But to Onesiphorus' everlasting credit we read Paul's grateful words:

**"But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me" (II Tim. 1:17).**

And more:

**"...he *oft* refreshed me, and was *not ashamed of my chain*" (Ver. 16).**

What a picture! A good, brave man, risking his life again and again to encourage, doubtless with food to refresh, clothing to warm, and comforting words to hearten the valiant warrior for Christ.

Many others loved and honored Paul, but not enough to risk life or liberty to stand with him. They should have thanked God for him every day, but now they were careful to stay away. It was the old, sad story of cowardly infidelity: "Don't get me involved." We still hear it on every hand in word and action—or rather in failure to act: "Don't get me involved." How many Christians there are, yes and Christian leaders, who in the final analysis think first, not of obedience to the written Word of God, or to the Christ who died for them, but of *themselves* and their temporal welfare. They fail to realize that this is exactly how to *miss* the blessing of God, the power of the Spirit in their ministry, and rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We all need this exhortation. As we have seen, Paul himself needed prayer for boldness and, now that he was in prison in Rome, it was necessary for him to write even to faithful, conscientious Timothy:

**“...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**

**“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, *nor of me His prisoner*; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (II Tim. 1:7,8).**

But there is more still that interests us about Onesiphorus. Did he bring his wife and children with him to visit Paul in prison? Did he allow *them* to jeopardize their welfare for Paul’s sake? Verse 16 may well imply this, for the apostle prays for God’s special mercy “unto the *house* of Onesiphorus,” though Onesiphorus himself doubtless took the lead in the matter. Just think what blessing and encouragement this would bring to the heart of the weary soldier! But whether or not he brought his family, Onesiphorus, who had already “ministered” to Paul at Ephesus in “many things” (II Tim. 1:18) had now *sought* for Paul, had found him, and had refreshed him again and again, in spite of the danger involved in being thus associated with him.

Surely this brief but touching passage about Onesiphorus has been given to us for our encouragement and inspiration.

Paul is now gone, but the battle over his God-given message still rages. Some are too ungrateful to ever subject themselves to suffering or sacrifice for the One who suffered and died to purchase for

them all the riches of grace. They are just glad they are saved and on their way to heaven, and seem to feel the more “spiritual” for experiencing this joy. Others, like Demas, have focused their attention and interest upon “this present age,” rather than the message for which Paul suffered and died. Still others, like devoted Timothy, need encouragement to stand for the truth of God and for faithful men of God in times of crisis. But there are always some noble souls who, like Onesiphorus and his family, show true Christian courage in times of severe testing.

We now find ourselves in a time of testing. Rather than accept “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,” many Christian leaders have embraced the New Evangelicalism in a vain attempt to bring unity to a bewildered and divided

Church. Sheep-like, multitudes follow them into an artificial “unity” which is based, not on the Word of God, but on the will of man; not on a recognition of our true oneness in Christ, but on union by compromise. Meanwhile the opposition against *God’s* remedy for the Church’s malady continues unabated as it did in Paul’s day.

Let each one of us, then, “examine himself” in the light of the Word at this critical period in the history of the Church, and at the very least let each one who has come, by God’s grace, into an understanding of the glorious revelation

“Paul is now gone, but the battle over his God-given message still rages.”

committed to Paul, join with him in praying:

**“...that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel....that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:19,20).**



## Endnotes

1. We refer, of course, to *organized* humanity (Gr., *kosmos*), with all its outward show and inward corruption, the “world” whose “course” is directed by Satan (Eph. 2:2). *This* world had no use for Paul, and the feeling was mutual; *he* had no use for *it*.
2. A province in Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was one of the chief cities and Paul’s headquarters for three years and six months.

## QUESTION BOX

*“Please, can you help me with a question about the Church after the Rapture. Will we come back to earth or not? I personally think that we, the Body of Christ, will be in the heavens. People seem to be really confused on the matter.”*

We do not believe that the members of the Body of Christ will be numbered with those who return with Christ in His Second Coming to establish the kingdom. Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied “...Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all...” (Jude 14,15). Since the Body of Christ was yet a mystery when Enoch uttered these words we can safely conclude that only the *prophetic saints* are in view.

Those who suggest that we will be present during the judgments at the beginning of the kingdom reign usually appeal to I Corinthians 6:2: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” This passage, however, has nothing whatsoever to do with the kingdom age. According to prophecy, the separation of the wheat (just) from the tares (unjust) is confirmation of this conclusion. Remember, there shall be two in the field; “the one shall be taken” (unbeliever *removed* from the earth) and “the other one left” (saved) to enter into the blessings of the kingdom. Therefore, it is clear that the judgment of the world awaits a *future* day following the Millennium (Matt. 13:24-30 cf. 36-43; Matt. 13:47-50 cf. 24:38-42).

Clearly the Body of Christ will reign with Christ in the heavens during the kingdom age, which is consistent with the distinctive character of the two programs of God (Eph. 2:6,7 cf. II Tim. 2:12). But when will the saints judge the world and fallen angels? We believe as time gives way to eternity at the *Great White Throne Judgment* (Rev. 20:11-15).

—Pastor Sadler

## **A Father's Tears**

By David Wasson

Brent:

From the flavor of these tears  
My mind goes back across the years  
Through all the heartache, doubt and fears  
God's grace sustains me, draws me near.

All my needs have been supplied  
The love of Christ I have inside—  
Overflows my soul...my spirit cheers  
From the flavor of these tears.

My son's been spared by God's great hand  
Unlike *His* own...midst angel band  
He gave His Son, so pure, so dear  
Oh sinner, can't you see? Won't you hear...  
The sweet flavor of that tear?

Confuse not...tender love with lack of strength  
Across life's breadth and o'er its length  
Beloved...he my conscience sears  
With this gulf of flavored tears.

Someday the clouds will part, I'll leave  
This old world, no more to grieve  
With my Savior evermore  
No more tears...He's closed that door.

I love you,  
Dad

### **GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE**

The above poem was written by our dear Brother David Wasson while his son, Brent, was undergoing surgery from a gunshot wound that he suffered in the line of duty. We are happy to report that Brent is doing well and still rejoicing in the Lord. Later this year he is going to need additional surgery on his right arm to correct some nerve damage. Hopefully, this will give him more mobility in two of his fingers.

The Wasson family wanted me to convey their sincere gratitude for your cards, letters, phone calls, and outpouring of love. They were truly touched by your thoughtfulness.

—Ed.



# Freedom From Bitterness

By Pastor John Fredericksen

**E**ach of us struggles against the emotion of bitterness when someone treats us with insensitivity or selfishness. But bitterness is like a cancer to our soul. Hebrews 12:15 tells us it can greatly “trouble you, and thereby many [can] be defiled.” Therefore, we must follow God’s biblical path to freedom from the emotion of bitterness. It is the path of H-E-A-L-I-N-G!

Healing begins by **HANDING** the offender over to God! Romans 12:17-19 reminds us “Vengeance” is God’s job, and in His wisdom He “will repay” the wrongdoer. Our obligation is first, “to recompense to no man evil for evil.” Getting even only sinks us deeper into bitterness.

When **EMOTIONS** are given to God, healing continues. That means we act and react on the basis of biblical instruction, instead of on how we feel. It also means we forgive the offender, so that we can heal. Positive emotions will eventually follow right actions.


**ACCEPTING** the consequence of the offense is critical for healing. Few wrongs can truly be undone, so we have to live with it anyway. Believers can trust that our sovereign God can use even hurtful situations to our good. Therefore we can accept the wrong.

**LOOKING** for God’s lesson in the midst of trial also speeds the healing process. It enables us to take our focus off of what makes us bitter, and place it on to how God wants to make us better!

**INVESTING** good in the offender is the next step toward healing. Romans 12:20-21 tells us “if thine enemy hunger, feed him...be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.” Not only is it hard to stay bitter toward someone you’re truly trying to help, it’s also difficult for a wrongdoer to continue to hurt us when we’re doing them good.

**NOTING** our responsibility in Scripture to forgive, is a powerful force in destroying bitterness. If we “have a quarrel against any” our obligation is to forgive “even as Christ forgave you” (Col. 3:13). This is not the natural thing to do, but we have supernatural strength to draw upon, especially when following the above steps to freedom.

**GOING** on with life is the last step to healing bitterness. Instead of reliving the past offense over and over again, we can make the spiritual decision to leave the past behind us and go on. After doing everything else God has told us to, He will enable us to focus on serving the Lord in the present and the future.

If this subject and study has struck a chord of need in your life, you may want to reread the account of Joseph in the book of Genesis. He followed all seven of these principles after being terribly wronged, and it enabled him to heal. But perhaps the thing you need to do first is prayerfully begin right now to implement what you have just learned. “The peace of God” is waiting to “rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15), if you only will. 

## THE BBI BYLINE

### Our Lord's Descension

By Kevin J. Sadler

**“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout...” (I Thes. 4:16).**

The wording here by Paul almost gives a sense of amazement, that *the Lord* would descend from heaven to *meet us* in the air. For he says, “the Lord *Himself* shall descend.” Stop and really think about this for a moment.

He is the exalted, glorified Lord who is “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” (Eph. 1:21). He is “the great God and our Savior” (Titus 2:13). And *to think* that He would *descend* from heaven to *personally* meet *us* in the air! How humbling this should be to undeserving sinners like us.

The fact that He died for me is beyond my comprehension. The fact that I am seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that I am in Christ is beyond what I can fully understand. The fact that I am blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places is unexplainable. And *to think* that His love for me and for us, His Church, will cause *Him to come down* to meet us and usher us all into His presence to forever be with Him. How can we explain such amazing grace? Our words are worthless in trying to explain an infinitely gracious and loving Lord.

All Christ has done for us should cause us to realize that the very least we can do for Him is to bring glory to Him through our service and the way we live our lives.

**Jesus Christ** is the reason for everything that *Berean Bible Institute* does and stands for.

He is both the beginning and the end as well as the means by which we exist and function. We do not merely name Christ as a formal facade for otherwise secular or religious pursuits and activities. He is not a figurehead, but the **Living Head** of the Church, which is His Body. The members of the Body of Christ are called to serve Him by making known the Gospel of the Grace of God. At BBI we do this by teaching and preaching “Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery” to our students, in both words and actions, preparing them to go out and do the same (see Rom. 16:25-26; II Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 3:1-12; II Tim. 2:1-15).

Will you join us in the most noble of endeavors that a man or woman can become engaged in, that of making Jesus Christ known to a lost and dying world? If you won't, who will?

For information or an application contact: Dr. W. Edward Bedore, PO Box 40, Germantown, WI 53022, or phone: (414) 255-4094, fax: (414) 255-4195, e-mail: <berean@execpc.com>.

# AUDIO CASSETTE OFFER

By Paul M. Sadler

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## HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT

“It does not matter where He places me or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me. For the easiest positions He must give grace; and in the most difficult His grace is sufficient. So, if God places me in great perplexity, must He not give me much guidance? in positions of great difficulty, much grace? in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? As to work, mine was never so plentiful, so responsible, or so difficult; but the weight and strain are all gone. His resources are mine, for He is mine.”

—J. Hudson Taylor

*“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Cor. 12:9).*

## ***ALTOONA BIBLE CHURCH***

### ***Fall Bible Conference***

**Dates:** September 18-22, 1999

**Location:** *Altoona Bible Church*  
3017 Union Avenue  
Altoona, Pennsylvania

**Theme:** *The Whole Armor of God*

**Speaker:** Pastor Paul M. Sadler

For times of services and additional  
information, please contact:

Pastor Ken Peebles (814) 942-2131

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TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY!***

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For additional information, please contact:

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## ***SPECIAL MEETINGS***

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5800 West 49th Street  
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## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP:** Brother John Willson wanted us to pass along a special word of thanks to all those who donated *Scofield Reference Bibles* to BCF. He writes: "Please tell your readers how much we appreciate their care for the forgotten brethren in prison. We have already sent out many of the Bibles to deserving students who have completed the advanced courses in *Dispensational Relationships* and *Things That Differ*." Here's a sample of the excerpts that Brother Willson sent to us:

From Walla Walla, WA: "Thank you very much for the Bible! I love it! It opens up a whole new level of understanding for me! Please be sure to thank the *one* who gave them to you. This is one of the best gifts I have ever received, and by far the best Bible I have ever owned."

**THE GRACE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP** of Citrus County, Florida would like to extend a warm invitation for those who live in the area to join them in worship. The assembly meets at 2780 N. Florida Ave. #17 in Hernando, Florida located in the Hernando Plaza on U.S. Highway 41. For additional information please contact: Brother Edwin R. Jones, P.O. Box 1323, Hernando, FL 34442 or phone (352) 344-5330. God's very best to these dear saints as they make known the riches of His grace.

**ADVANCE NOTICE:** This year's Fall Bible Conference sponsored by the *Grace Bible Church* of Altoona, Wisconsin is scheduled to be held at the Ramada Inn, 1202 W. Clairemont Ave., Eau Claire, Wisconsin on October 22-24, 1999. The guest speaker for these special meetings is Pastor Joel Finck. For more information, please contact: Mr. Fred Lewis at 1-800-522-8399. More next month!

**JUST A REMINDER:** If you have a question, request, or you're simply placing an order, it will only be necessary to use the following address: *Berean Bible Society*, P.O. Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022.

Of course, if you are using the *Business Reply* envelope, simply drop it in the mail, all the pertinent information is already provided. **Please note**, however, if you are sending us a *package* it will be necessary to use the street address located on page 3, especially if you are sending it UPS. Heartfelt thanks!

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

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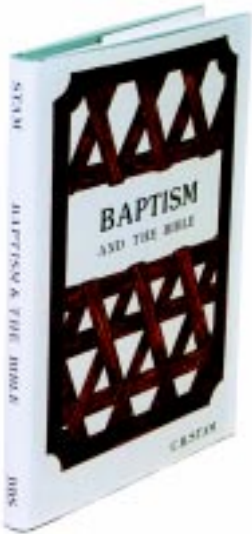
## ***Baptism and the Bible***

By C. R. Stam

There is no other subject that has caused more confusion in the Church than “water baptism.” Since God is not the author of confusion, the problem unquestionably lies with a faulty system of interpretation. Pastor Stam isolates the problem in this work and presents a simple solution to the matter that the Church has overlooked for generations.

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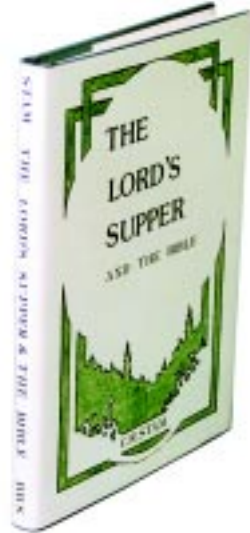
## ***The Lord's Supper and the Bible***

By C. R. Stam

In seeking the *truth* as to the Lord's Supper we must go to the Word of God alone. Here man's opinions and preferences are valueless and worse, for these are exactly what caused the confusion on the subject in the first place, and have perpetuated it in many quarters to this day. As you will see, Pastor Stam presents a clear case for the proper observance of the Lord's Supper during the administration of Grace.

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***SPECIAL PRICE: \$6.00***



## **THESE OFFERS END SEPTEMBER 30, 1999**

Orders up to \$20.00, please add \$2.00 for postage and handling.

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**“Life FORMS us,  
Sin DEFORMS us,  
School INFORMS us,  
But only Christ TRANSFORMS us.”**

**THE BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT  
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**PERIODICALS  
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