

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2013



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

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Most everyone agrees with Benjamin Franklin that “in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes!” Yes, that unwelcome time of the year has come once again, as we prepare to “*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s*”

(Mark 12:17). The tax man cometh!

The other side of the coin is our responsibility to render “*to God the things that are God’s*.” Every believer has the honor to give to the Lord’s work as he or she is able. One of the three gifts the wise men presented to the Lord shortly after His birth was *gold*. Unknown to them at the time, their generosity made it possible for Mary and Joseph to escape to Egypt to elude the murderous campaign of Herod, who sought to take the Lord’s life.

Giving to the Lord’s work may well deliver a lost soul from an eternity of judgment or be used to help others learn about the Mystery (see page 25). Our ministry here at the *Berean Bible Society*, like that of many others, is not underwritten by wealthy sponsors. We are dependent solely on the voluntary support of our readers to keep the light of the gospel shining in this world of darkness. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your faithfulness and prayers on our behalf, especially to those who are unable to give to the ministry, yet stand with us in the faith.

Throughout the year we often receive inquiries about wills, which, of course, we are more than happy to answer, while at the same time never becoming directly involved. We always share with those who contact us how essential it is to draw up a will. If you fail to do so, the State will be happy to do it for you after your passing. The problem is that their decisions may not be in accordance with your wishes.

One of the ways that your legacy for the Lord can continue long after your homegoing is by naming the *Berean Bible Society* as the beneficiary on retirement funds, annuities, and life insurance policies. The will, of course, will govern the amounts that are to be disbursed among the principal parties. This also holds true for stocks, bonds, commodities, CDs, savings accounts, etc. A *charitable remainder trust* is another way of guaranteeing your wishes will be carried out to the praise of His glory. May the Lord be with you as you plan for the future in the New Year.

Amazed at His Grace,

Paul M. Sadler, President

2013

Wishing You a Full Year in 2013

If you fill a large wooden crate with bowling balls, it is full—or is it? After a moment's reflection, you realize that if you add a dozen buckets of marbles, you'll find that your "full" crate was not nearly as full as you thought it was! But even then, your newly filled crate has room to receive many *more* buckets of BBs. After adding these, you are confident that your crate is now full—that is, until a friend comes along with several buckets of sand. After emptying these, you and your friend are both convinced that literally every milliliter of space in your crate is finally "full." Just then you hear the weatherman call for a hard rain, and you realize that soon it will be "coming down in buckets."

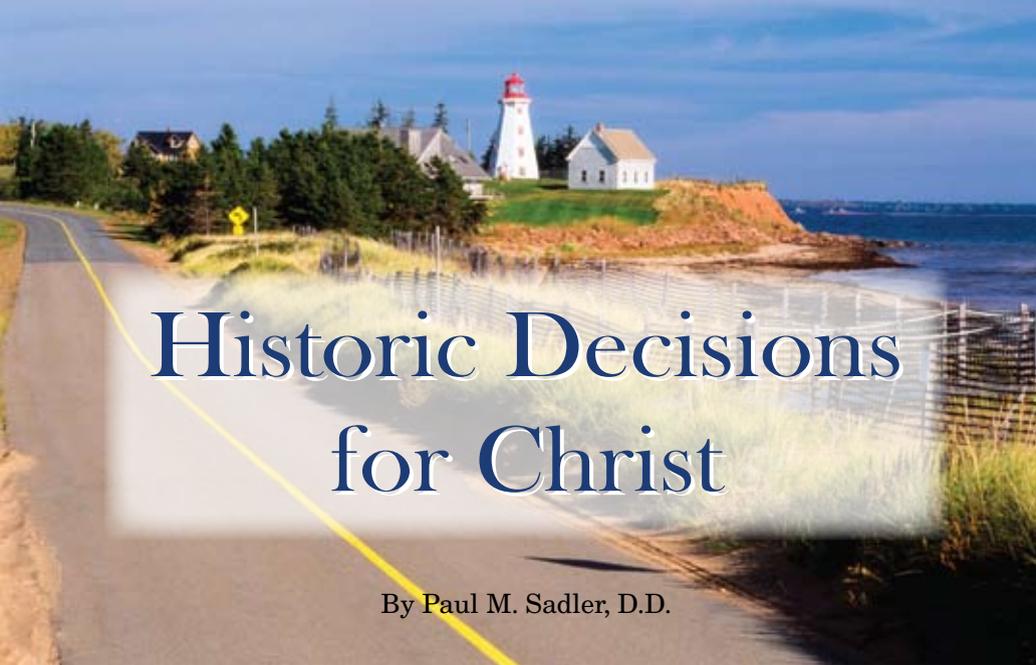
In the coming year, it is our prayer here at *Berean Bible Society* that you be "*filled* with all knowledge" of God's rightly divided Word (Rom. 15:14). This knowledge will lead you to "the *full assurance* of understanding" (Col. 2:2) that always eluded you before you learned how to rightly divide the Word. This in turn will enable "the God of hope" to "*fill you* with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13), since with the seeming discrepancies in God's Word dispelled, you can now fully *believe* the Word.

This joy and peace will fill you with a desire to be "*filled with the knowledge of His will*" (Col. 1:9), so that you can learn the will of God for your life and know how to live in response to all that He has done for you in Christ. Soon you'll be "*full of goodness*" (Rom. 15:14) and "*filled with the fruits of righteousness*" (Phil. 1:11), and this is what Paul had in mind when He talked about being "*filled with the Spirit*" (Eph. 5:18).

Fullness like this will then lead you to seek the fellowship of other Spirit-filled believers so that you can be "filled" with their "company" as well (Rom. 15:24), which will lead you to be further "filled" with the kind of "joy" that Paul found in men like Timothy (II Tim. 1:4).

Looking back at 2012, you may feel that you had a pretty full year, spiritually speaking. But as we have seen, there is full, and then there is *full!* Whether you call it a new year's resolution or not, why not resolve to begin this year by looking for even more ways to enrich your life *spiritually* and be "filled with *all* the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19)?

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



Historic Decisions for Christ

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

Prince Edward Island is the smallest Canadian province. As the setting for Lucy Maud Montgomery's book, "Anne of Green Gables," P.E.I. receives thousands of tourists every year. The entire island is made of a deep red sand and has the most striking beaches. The island is very scenic but suffers from one flaw. The roads! Since the island is made of sand there is no firm foundation for the roads. It is a constant battle to maintain them in good condition.

"This is a fine example of the man who hears the words of Christ but does not put them into practice. Without a firm foundation, a house, a road or a life is sure to fall apart."¹

Life is an endless stream of decisions. When I walk into the closet in the morning my first decision of the day is what I'm going to wear. There have been times when I've said to my wife, "I don't have a thing to wear today," which

usually means I forgot to pick up my shirts at the cleaners the day before! When my wife says, "I don't have a thing to wear," it means she needs to go shopping for a new outfit.

In addition to the hundreds of temporal decisions we make every day, there are those that have eternal consequences. The most important *decision* we will ever make in this life is whether or not to trust Christ as our Savior. He is the sure foundation upon which our lives need to rest! For those who do believe the gospel, the second most important *decision* is whether or not we are going to live our lives in accord with the Word of God.

IN THE ARMS OF AN ANGEL

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band" (Acts 10:1).

The confusion that often surrounds the biblical account of Cornelius is primarily due to a failure to understand that there was a change underway in the plans of God at that time. It is essential that we bear in mind that the conversion of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, had taken place approximately four years prior to Peter's visit to the household of Cornelius.

Cornelius, a Roman soldier, was stationed at Caesarea, a seaport city that had been so named in honor of Caesar Augustus. As we have read, Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian band. Because Caesarea was a strategic city in the Roman Empire, Caesar sent that day's version of the Secret Service to the city, under the command of Cornelius. This was done to protect Rome's interest and the governors he had appointed to oversee her affairs (Acts 23:23,24; 25:1-12).

"A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2).

"And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews" (Acts 10:22).

Many have concluded, on the basis of these two passages, that Cornelius was saved, and therefore knew the Lord. But was he? We know he was a devout man who feared God and dutifully provided for the needs of the indigent. Cornelius was also a "just man" in the performance of his duties as a commander of his regiment. He even had a good rapport with the

Jews, which, being a Gentile, was commendable in itself.

While Cornelius was a very *religious* man, we know he was unsaved. This explains why God sent Peter to him to share the good news about His beloved Son. When the Apostle Peter made his defense to his countrymen as to why he went to a Gentile who was considered unclean, he shared with them the instructions of the angel of God. The angel had told Cornelius, in a vision, to send men to Peter, "**Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved**" (Acts 11:14).



"Who among us doesn't have a loved one, friend, or neighbor who resembles Cornelius?"

The words of French writer, Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr (1808-1890), are as true today as they were then: "the more things change, the more they stay the same." In other words, "changes do not affect reality on a deeper level."² Who among us doesn't have a loved one, friend, or neighbor who resembles Cornelius? They fear God, go to mass, pray the rosary, take communion, and even help the poor, which indeed is commendable. But why is it then that, when you share the gospel with them, they are highly offended when you ask if they know Christ as their personal Savior?

You see, they have placed their trust in a religious system that they believe will secure eternal life for them.

Where Cornelius differs from others who are entrenched in their religious practices is that he was open to spiritual things in his life. Some claim that he was the centurion at the Cross on the day Christ died who said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54). If this was the case, the experience surely left an indelible impression upon him. In any case, he yearned to know more about God.

"He [Cornelius] saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:3,4).

The natural man has no desire whatsoever to seek after God (Rom. 3:11); however, when he comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, "he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). Cornelius had been diligently seeking God that he might know Him on a personal level. In remembrance of his prayers, God dispatched an angel who instructed him to send men to Joppa to seek out Peter, who would tell him, "what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:6), that is, to be saved. As a commander in the Roman army, Cornelius followed these *orders from heaven* to the letter.

Without a moment's hesitation, Cornelius sent three men

to Joppa to tell Peter all that the angel had said to him in a *vision*. Visions from God normally took place during the daytime hours, which is confirmed by the fact that the angel appeared to Cornelius at the ninth hour of the day, or three o'clock in the afternoon. Dreams, on the other hand, usually occurred at night in biblical times. It is very significant that the commander sent *three men*, two of his trusted servants and one of his devout soldiers, all of whom were Gentiles.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER? PORK!

Unaware that the detail sent from Cornelius was approaching Joppa, Peter went up to the housetop to pray around lunchtime while he was waiting for the meal to be prepared. One of the things he undoubtedly prayed about was the twelve's inability to carry out the Great Commission. Something was amiss, but he couldn't put his finger on it. "Lord show me what you would have me to do!" As he prayed, he fell into a trance, at which time he received a vision from the Lord.

Peter then "saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth....

"And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This

was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven” (Acts 10:11-16).

God is able, in His infinite wisdom, to weave things together with amazing results. Peter was hungry, he was praying to God for direction, then suddenly he received a vision of a sumptuous feast that had everything on the menu a soul could wish for, including *pork*. He was then instructed to kill and eat. Peter’s immediate response to this command was, no, under no circumstances! He had *never* eaten anything common or unclean, in accordance with the dietary laws of the Old Testament.



Believe it or not, he had never eaten a pork sandwich for lunch, *but now* it was permissible for him to do so. Peter insisted he would never do such a thing. But the Lord made it very clear that he was never to call anything common or unclean again for it had been cleansed by God. After the sheet was let down before Peter *three times*, it was received up into heaven.

As Peter was pondering what this all meant, *three common, unclean* Gentiles were knocking on the door of the house, inquiring where they could find Simon, called Peter. After they explained the purpose of their visit, Peter put them up for the evening and the next day returned with them

to Caesarea. In anticipation of Peter’s visit, Cornelius gathered his entire household together to hear what this man, who was sent from God, had to tell them.

Peter was stunned to see so many *common, unclean* Gentiles who had gathered. This is a clear sign that something had changed in God’s dealings with mankind. The truth be known, the middle wall of partition separating Jews and Gentiles, called the Law, was beginning to crumble. Having put two and two together, one of Peter’s first statements to Cornelius is telling:

“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28).

Approximately three years after Paul’s conversion, the apostle left Damascus and went down to Jerusalem where he visited with Peter for fifteen days (Acts 9:26,27; Gal. 1:18-20). God obviously had a reason for Paul to visit Peter at that time. We believe it was to give the Apostle Paul an opportunity to share with Peter how the Lord would soon leave Israel behind in favor of a special ministry among the Gentiles that had already been launched years earlier (Acts 9:15). We know that Peter would have none of it from his initial response to Cornelius. In all probability, he concluded that Paul had been out in the scorching, hot sun too long when he was in the Arabian Desert. Surely, Peter reasoned, Paul is mistaken!

When Paul saw Peter’s reaction to his special revelation he

chose to leave the matter with the Lord.



Perhaps you have been dealing with a rebellious teenager lately that has been a handful. You've tried stern warnings, encouragement, recruiting the help of others, but to little avail. What now? It is very important at such times to keep the lines of *communication* open with teens. They need to know that you love them and will always be there for them, while at the same time *not* condoning their actions. It's a delicate balance! Like the Apostle Paul, sometimes you just need to leave the matter with the Lord and keep them before the throne of grace. Believe me when I say that Lord has *unique ways* of getting their undivided attention, which usually isn't a pleasant experience. It's only a matter of time, as Peter can verify.

AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF EVENTS

When the three Gentiles appeared at Peter's door, after they told him the purpose of their visit, he had a *decision* to make. We too are often faced with the same decision, whether to obey the will of the Lord or suffer the guilt of

not doing so. As it has been said, "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities [consequences] of not doing it."³ To Peter's credit, he accepted the Lord's correction not to call the Gentiles unclean any longer and he willingly opened the Scriptures to this Gentile household with a message on salvation. It is essential to understand that Peter was **not** sent by God to Cornelius under the guidelines of the Great Commission. Under this commission, the Lord specifically instructed the twelve that they were to begin at *Jerusalem*. Once Jerusalem received Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, they were to move on to Judea, followed by Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the world, which would mean the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

This is a clear indication that Peter was sent to Cornelius under a *special commission*. We know this was the case because, throughout the Acts record, the twelve rarely left Jerusalem, and even if they did for a short time, they always returned in an attempt to fulfill the first stage of the Great Commission (Acts 2:14; 5:28; 11:2; 15:2; 16:4; Gal. 2:1-9). But this was never to be, due to the temporary setting aside of the chosen nation. After Peter gave a brief review of the miracles the Lord had performed and how God was with Him, he went on to say:

"And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up

the third day, and showed Him openly” (Acts 10:39,40).

Like any good preacher, Peter effectively shared with Cornelius and his household how the rulers of Israel rejected the Savior and crucified Him. Since the dead were buried on the same day as their death in biblical times, Peter highlights the resurrection of Christ, how God raised Him on the third day, making a public display of His Son’s resurrection. Clearly, Cornelius and those who gathered with him were open to the truth; therefore, they were *captivated* by Peter’s every word, which is substantiated by what happened next.

Peter began to close his message by saying, “whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” The words were no sooner out of his mouth when, to his amazement, they believed the good news and received the Holy Spirit as a result (Acts 10:44,45). They made that all-important *decision* for Christ! The next thing Peter was preparing to say to his hearers was, “Repent of your sins and be water baptized,” but before he could utter the words, the Holy Spirit *interrupted* him. This is the first in a number of interruptions in the Book of Acts, each of which show how God was doing something unique among the Gentiles.

Those who came with Peter, of the Jews, were just as astonished as Peter was when they witnessed that the Gentiles were saved by the grace of God and heard them speak in tongues. They were obviously saved by grace through faith apart from circumcision and water baptism, which were also

requirements under the Law for those of other nations (Gen. 17:12; Ex. 12:48; Mark 16:16).

After Peter and those who came with him regained their composure, Peter was undoubtedly unsure what to do with these uncircumcised, unbaptized Gentiles that he once called common and unclean. So as an *afterthought*, he baptized them with water. As you can see, God’s special commission left Peter with a whole new perspective on the Gentiles.

We know, of course, that Paul was saved at the time and was the apostle of the Gentiles, but why then did God send Peter to the household of Cornelius? This is a good example of how our ways are not the ways of the Lord. The Lord had a very special purpose, a two-fold purpose in sending Peter, and not Paul, to these particular Gentiles.

God used this experience to reveal to Peter that what Paul told him at Jerusalem, during Paul’s visit for fifteen days, was *true*. It is commendable though that Peter was reluctant to believe what Paul said, without proof, which he received when God sent him to the household of Cornelius. Today we are no longer in the changing times of the transition period; consequently, those who reject Paul’s message essentially reject the Word of God.

This a good lesson for us. While God always speaks through His written Word, there are times when He uses others in the faith to corroborate His Word, whether it’s by offering a word of encouragement or by merely passing along a warning that we know to be true.

I recall the time when a young man approached me at a conference and asked, "Pastor Sadler, how can I know for sure if the Lord is calling me into the ministry?"

I shared with him that, if he sensed the Lord's leading in his life to enter the ministry, he needed to pursue it until the Lord showed him otherwise. I then added that it would be necessary for him to train for the ministry, whether it was by going to Bible school or by serving under the guidance of a senior grace pastor who was willing to take him under his wing. After a brief discussion, I asked the young man how the Lord's people responded when he taught the Word. He said that it seemed as though everyone was encouraging him to enter the ministry, to which I replied, "This is often how the Lord works when He's calling us to full-time service."

The second part of God's two-fold purpose of Peter going to the household of Cornelius was to use his experience to *confirm* Paul's ministry among the Gentiles at the Jerusalem Council. You will recall that, when there arose a question over whether or not the Gentiles needed to be circumcised to be saved, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to address the problem (Acts 15:1-4).

Upon their arrival, certain of the Pharisees demanded that the Gentiles be commanded to be circumcised and keep the Law. When Paul observed that some of the religious leaders brought in false brethren to disrupt the proceedings, he met with the apostles and elders behind closed doors.

"And I [Paul] went up by revelation, and communicated unto

them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation [Peter, James, and John], lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Gal. 2:2).

After they emerged from the meeting, the legalists were still disputing with those who didn't believe the Gentiles needed to be circumcised to be saved. It is interesting that it was Peter who stood up and *confirmed* Paul's ministry. In essence, Peter said that Paul is correct, the Gentiles do not need to be circumcised to be saved because in fact, Peter saw it with his own eyes (Acts 15:7-9; Gal. 2:3-9). He concluded by saying, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples [**Gentile disciples**], which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10).

Like the Pharisees, many believers today are scripturally correct, but where they go astray is in their failure to understand that God has changed dispensations.

A FINAL THOUGHT

The Word of God often has an underlying thought that is always beneficial for our learning and admonition. Whenever we are facing a crisis, whether in the Lord's work or with loved ones and/or friends, it is always best to meet with the principal parties *privately* to resolve the matter. During those years when I did pastoral counseling, I observed that, anytime a serious problem was spread among those who weren't involved, it was like throwing feathers to the wind. That is to say, this only served to create additional complicating problems.

Have you made a *decision* for Christ? If you haven't, remember Cornelius, how he was *delivered* from the eternal consequences of not doing so. 

Endnotes

1. Shawn Abigail (ed.), "Illustrations For Christian Living," www.brethrenonline.org.
2. Author Unknown
3. *Today in the Word*, Nov., 1989, p. 11.

Question Box

"What does Solomon mean when he states in Proverbs 6:16, 'These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him'? It appears to be some type of riddle that was only understood by Solomon. Am I correct in this assumption?"

Actually, it is a Hebraism, a Semitic figure of speech! There are many such expressions found in the Old Testament that are used very effectively by the Spirit to draw our attention to an important truth. For example, Isaiah said, "precept upon precept...line upon line; here a little, and there a little," which puts forth the idea that the Word of God was given as a progressive revelation over a period of hundreds and hundreds of years.

Solomon's usage of the Semitic expression, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him," suggests to the reader that the list of sins was *incomplete*. In other words, here's the first six sins God hates, followed by a seventh, but there are many others recorded in the Scriptures that He also abhors.

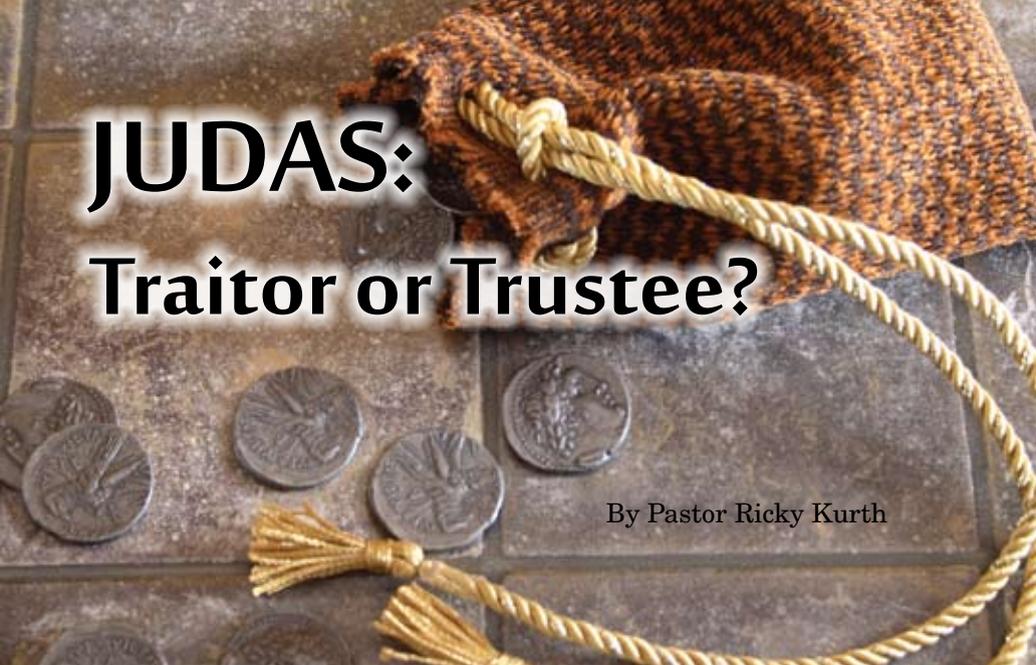
We should also point out that this list in Proverbs 6:17-19 is given in the order these sins were originally committed:

1. "A proud look." Pride was the first sin committed by Lucifer (Ezek. 28:14-17).
2. "A lying tongue!" Satan is charged with the second sin as well (Gen. 3:4,5; John 8:44).
3. "Hands that shed innocent blood!" Cain was the one who committed the first murder when he rose up against his brother, Abel (Gen. 4:8-10 cf. John 8:44).

"An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:18,19).

The latter part of the list rounds out the first set of seven sins that are an abomination to the Lord. Search the Scriptures to see if you can discover where the first examples of these last four are found.

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler



JUDAS: Traitor or Trustee?

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“Was Judas saved?” is a question that we are frequently asked here at *Berean Bible Society*. On the surface, this might seem like a ridiculous question. How could the man who betrayed the Son of God be saved? But as is the case with many Bible questions, there is more to this one than meets the eye.

Those who argue this question reason that if Judas had not betrayed his Master, then the Lord Jesus Christ would not have died on the cross for our sins! They then contend that by betraying the Lord, Judas was actually *serv-ing God*, since his actions helped provide the world with a Savior! This would make Judas more of a *trustee* than a traitor, a man who was entrusted by God with the sacred duty of helping provide salvation for all the world.

The problem with this logic is that if we apply it to Judas, we must apply it to the people

of Israel as well. Listen as Peter charges the nation with the death of their king:

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth...being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:22,23 cf. 3:12-15).

Thus if we grant salvation to Judas for helping provide us a Savior, we have to grant it to the people of Israel as well, for it could be argued that they too served God by fulfilling His will and affecting the death of Christ for our sins. That might sound like convoluted logic to you, but this writer once met a Jewish man who was convinced that all Jews are saved, since their rejection of Christ sent Him to the cross where He died for the sins of the world.

But wait! It gets worse! Peter later *broadened* his murder indictment to include *the Gentiles*,

when in praying to God the Father he said,

“For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

“For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27,28).

Here we see that the Gentiles are as guilty of the murder of God’s Son as the Jews, as far as God is concerned. That means that if we grant salvation to Judas and the Jews for executing the Lord, we have to grant it to the Gentiles as well, for they too were guilty as charged in the eyes of God.¹ And why stop there? Since Satan entered into Judas just before the betrayal (Luke 22:3; John 13:27), he too would be eligible for salvation since he too helped provide the world with a Savior.

Perhaps you are thinking that all this seems reasonable, for if the death of Christ was something that God’s hand and His counsel “determined before to be done,” why wouldn’t He want to reward the ones who carried out His will? Wouldn’t He be unjust *not* to reward such service?

The Answer

We believe that the answer to this question lies back in Acts 2:23, where Peter acknowledged that Christ was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” but then he *added* that it was “by wicked hands” that they killed Him. This addition suggests that while the death of Christ was indeed a part of God’s determinate

counsel, the wickedness of their hands was not. That is, while it was part of God’s eternal plan to have His Son die for our sins, it was *not* part of His plan that men reject and crucify Him. We believe God had something else in mind, a plan He outlined for Israel in Psalm 118.

Most Bible students will recognize the words of Psalm 118:22:

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

Here the psalmist predicted that Israel’s rulers, the “builders” who were responsible to build the kingdom church, would instead reject the Cornerstone that God sent them. The Lord Jesus confirmed that this is exactly what happened when He quoted these words in Matthew 21:42.

Next the psalmist says,

“This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes” (v. 23).

Here we must be careful to understand what the psalmist was *not* saying. He was not saying that the rejection of Christ by Israel’s rulers was marvelous, of course. He was rather noting how marvelous it was that *in spite of* their rejection of Christ, He would still become the cornerstone of the kingdom church. But how could this happen? Let’s read on!

“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (v. 24).

This familiar verse is often used by way of application to describe every day of grace that God gives us, and we don’t believe there is anything wrong with making such an application. The primary interpretation of this

verse, however, revolves around a *specific* day in human history. The next two verses give us a clue as to the particular day the psalmist had in mind:

“Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord...” (vv. 25,26).



The specific day of which the psalmist speaks here is identified in Matthew 21:9, where Matthew tells us this prediction was fulfilled. The Hebrew words for *save now* are *yasha* and *na*, words that by themselves mean nothing to us but, when put together, they become *yashana*, or as it appears in Matthew 21:9, “Hosanna”! This cry went up on the day of the Lord’s lowly entry into Jerusalem, when the people knew the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 when they saw it, and responded by crying, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Luke 19:38).

What were the people supposed to do once they recognized their King, according to this prophetic instruction? The psalmist doesn’t leave us guessing:

“God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar” (v. 27).

After recognizing their King, the people of Israel were then to do the unthinkable. They were instructed here to “bind” the Lord to the horns of the altar and “sacrifice” Him in faith, rather than crucifying Him in unbelief. The people were obviously aware of this psalm, for they quoted it. Those who further understood their duty as outlined in the psalm² might even have pondered how their instructions mirrored those given to Abraham, who in a symbolic precedent was similarly asked to sacrifice one who was dear to his heart.

The Precedent

If you remember the story, God promised Abraham a son, for whom he ended up waiting an awfully long time. Once the promised one arrived, God tested his father’s faith by asking him to sacrifice him. But how could he even think of sacrificing the son through whom all of God’s promises were to be fulfilled? After all, God had promised Abraham that his multiplied seed would resemble the sand of the sea, and rival the stars in number, and be the channel through which God would bless the rest of the world. If Abraham took the young man’s life, these promises could not be fulfilled!

Or could they? Knowing the power of God, “Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead...” (Heb. 11:17-19).

We believe that this beloved story would surely have come to the minds of the people who understood their Psalm 118 duty on the day of the Lord’s presentation to Israel. Here was the Promised One, for whom—like Abraham—they had waited so long! But how could they follow through on the instructions to sacrifice Him, knowing that all of God’s promises of a kingdom were vested in this One whom they themselves recognized to be Israel’s King? The answer surely lies in the knowledge that they knew they worshipped a God that could even raise the dead (I Kings 17:22; II Kings 4:35; 13:21).

If you think about it, don’t we today recognize the story of the offering of Isaac as a type of God, who “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32), knowing He could raise Him from the dead and thus fulfill all of His promises? Why should it be thought a thing incredible that this was His plan for Israel as well, to spare not the Son in whom the promises were vested, knowing that God could and would raise Him from the dead to keep His solemnly-given word.

The Question

But wasn’t it predicted that Israel would reject her Messiah? Yes, of course, but *knowing* that something will happen is quite different than *ordaining* it.³ If the reader will study the prophecies

of the rejection of Christ with this understanding in mind, we believe he will see that, while the death of Christ for our sins was something God had in mind from before the foundation of the world, the rejection and crucifixion of His Son “by wicked hands” was *not* part of what God ordained. If it were, the Lord’s enemies would have an excuse on Judgment Day. Men could effectively argue that they *had* to reject God’s Son in unbelief, for it was ordained of them. As it stands, neither Judas, nor the Jews, nor the Gentiles who were involved in His death will have any excuse in that day. Our just God will act in complete righteousness when He condemns any who went to their grave without repenting of their sin, as Peter later called upon them to do (Acts 2:38; 3:19).



“...the rejection and crucifixion of His Son ‘by wicked hands’ was *not* part of what God ordained.”

If you still think God would be unrighteous to condemn those who think they helped Him provide the world with a Savior, we would invite you to consider the following fascinating precedent,

found in the pages of Israel's illustrative past.

The Example

When the people of Israel were living in sinful rebellion against God, He sent the "Assyrian" to chastise them (Isa. 10:5). God called this man "the rod of *Mine* anger," and said of his people, "the staff in their hand is *Mine indignation*" (v. 5). As you know, the Assyrian, whose name was Sennacherib, was only too happy to attack Israel.

But why would he be so happy to serve the God of Israel? The answer is found in the next verse:

"Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (v. 7).

The king of Assyria had no desire whatsoever to serve the God of Israel; he was just the kind of guy that liked to "destroy and cut off nations not a few." In conquering Israel, he was just following the instincts of his own wicked, sinful heart, a heart that—just like the heart of many a ruler—wasn't content to rule over his own nation, but sought to conquer *more* nations over which he could then rule.

And how did God respond to the service that this wicked pagan king rendered Him? Did He handsomely reward the king for chastening His disobedient children? Let's read on:

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,

and the glory of his high looks" (v. 12).

Huh? What? Let me get this straight. God planned to *send* the Assyrian against Israel, then *punished* him for obeying? How can this be? The next verse tells us!

"For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people...and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man" (v. 13).

Here we see how God could justly condemn the man who had accomplished His will, for here we see that Sennacherib obeyed God—not out of any allegiance to Him, but rather in accord with the dictates of his own prideful, sinful heart. Unaware that he was only able to conquer Israel because Israel's God *allowed* him to do so,⁴ he attributed the glory of his victory to himself, and not to God. Thus we see that God was well within His rights to punish a king who dared to curse the seed of Abraham instead of blessing it, as He had said He would do from the beginning (Gen. 12:3).

"Surely" it was true in that day that, as the psalmist prayed to God, "the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psa. 76:10). Just because the genius of God knew how to capitalize on the wickedness of this man, that didn't put Him under any obligation to reward the man's wickedness! Likewise, just because God knew how to capitalize on the wickedness of the men who nailed His Son to a cross does not mean that He is obligated to reward their wickedness, nor will He be unjust in condemning them

when they stand before His Great White Throne.

The Conclusion

One of the fundamental issues with which the Apostle Paul deals in the foundational book of Romans is the question, “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?” (3:5). We trust that this study has equipped the reader to similarly defend the integrity of God when asked why Judas was sent to “his own place” rather than to the Lord’s place when he died (Acts 1:25).⁵ We also trust that this glimpse into the infinite wisdom of God will leave you feeling more confident than ever before of His power “to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20), and to

fall at His feet, just *bursting* with the adoration Paul expressed so well in Romans 11:33:

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” 

Endnotes

1. Those who hate Jews because “they killed Christ” should take note here.
2. Had no one in Israel understood their Psalm 118 duty, the Lord would have explained it to them.
3. Had their free will led them to accept their Messiah instead of crucifying Him, then the prescience of God would have led Him to predict that this would happen instead.
4. This is how God *sent* him.
5. This is the short answer as to whether or not Judas was saved, which answer this article serves to defend.

Do We Make Too Much of Paul?

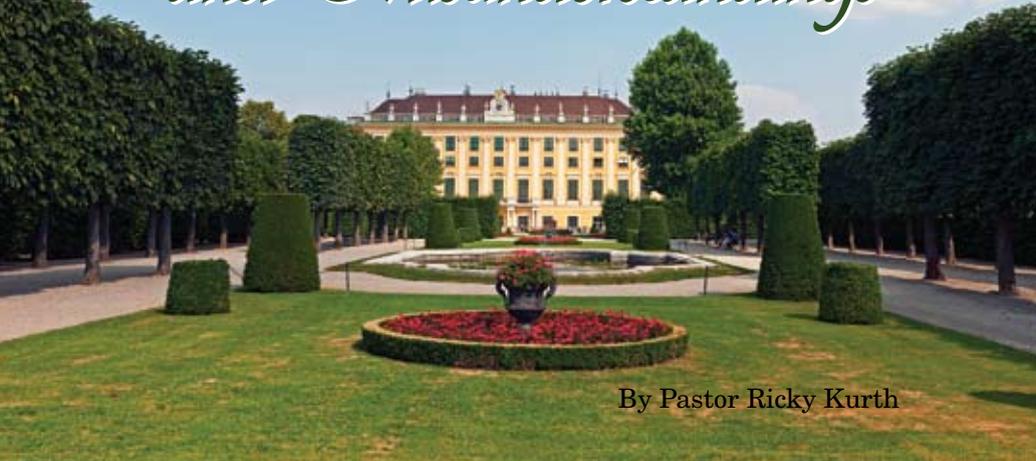
Here at BBS we recently received yet *another* email informing us that we make too much of Paul, and elevate him above the Lord Jesus. But in exhorting believers to follow Paul as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1), we are *not* making too much of Paul, and we can prove it! Do you remember when the Lord said,

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do...” (Matt. 23:2,3)?

Was the Lord making too much of the scribes and Pharisees when He told His followers to observe their words? Hardly! Was He elevating them above Himself? Of course not! He was simply pointing out that these spiritual leaders should be followed because they taught the Law of Moses, and the Law was God’s program for that day. Today God’s program is the program of *grace*, and it is not making too much of Paul to point out that he is the apostle to whom the dispensation of grace was committed (Eph. 3:1-5). —Pastor Kurth



Mansion Myths and Misunderstandings



By Pastor Ricky Kurth

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3).

Over the past 2,000 years, God’s people have found a lot of comfort in the Lord’s words here. For those who know Paul’s gospel, however, these words present some formidable theological challenges! After all, don’t we believe and teach that Israel’s hope is to live in the kingdom of heaven *on earth*? How then can the Lord be speaking to His Jewish disciples about going to heaven to prepare a place for them there? Furthermore, don’t we hold that the Rapture was a mystery (I Cor. 15:51), a mystery that was not revealed until it was revealed *to Paul*? How then could the Lord say to these Hebrew believers, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself”? And what’s all this about mansions in the Father’s house?

These and other questions about this passage arrive here at *Berean Bible Society* with some regularity, sent to us by grace believers who wonder about these things themselves, or have been confronted with these verses by non-grace believers who hold that there is no difference between Paul’s gospel and the Lord’s earthly ministry. And so if these verses give you pause, or you’d like to know how to answer those who might ask you about them, we trust that you will find the following thoughts helpful.

The House

Earlier, the Lord used the phrase “my Father’s house” to refer to the temple in Jerusalem (John 2:16), but speaking of Christ, Isaiah predicted,

“And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue...” (Isa. 22:24).

Isaiah here defines the Lord’s Father’s house as “the offspring and the issue”—that is, as *people*. The “Father’s house” would of course be *the house of Israel*, but “the glory of His Father’s house” would be limited to *the believers* among the house of Israel. Thus the Lord is affirming that there are many mansions in the house of redeemed Israel. But what are these mansions?

The Mansions

One of the definitions of a mansion is “the house of the lord of a manor,” and a manor is “the land belonging to a lord or nobleman.” In Scripture, the Greek word for *nobleman* (John 4:46) is related to the words for kings and royalty, and reigning over others. Thus, in saying that there were many mansions in His Father’s house, He was saying that there were plenty of opportunities in redeemed Israel to reign with Him in the kingdom of heaven on earth. This agrees with the parable that the Lord taught in which He promised that faithful Hebrew saints would someday rule “over five cities” in the kingdom, while those who were even more faithful would rule “over ten cities” (Luke 19:17,19).

The Truth

But why would He need to add, “If it were not so, I would have told you”? Doesn’t that sound like the Lord is taking an oath of truth before His apostles? If you are wondering why He might do that, remember that the apostles had given up a lot to be saved. When the rich young ruler asked the Lord how to inherit eternal life under the kingdom program (Mark 10:17), He explained that he would have to sell all his possessions (v. 21). Of course, this was something the apostles had already done, which prompted impetuous Peter to ask if eternal life was going to be their *only* reward for having forsaken all of their earthly possessions:

“Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; *what shall we have therefore?*” (Matt. 19:27).

The Lord replied with this assurance:



“Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold...” (Matt. 19:29).

Notice here that the Lord promised that if they were to give up their family members for His sake, they would “receive an hundredfold,” referring, of course, to the new spiritual family of believers they would have in the kingdom (cf. Matt. 12:48-50). But notice He also promised that, if they gave up their *houses*, they would recoup this loss a hundredfold also. Well, if you make even the humblest shack a hundred times better, we have a word for such a house. We would call it a *mansion*.

Since the definition of a mansion is “the house of the lord of a manor,” and a manor is “the land belonging to a lord or nobleman,” this fits the promise the Lord gave them of a hundredfold “lands” if they would give up theirs (Matt. 19:29), and reminds us that God promised Israel that they would be “kings and priests” in the kingdom of heaven on earth (Rev. 1:6). As such, they will reign over the “cities” of the Gentiles (Luke 19:17,19) across their new lands from these lordly mansions.



The Preparation

Before this could happen, of course, the Lord had to go “to prepare a place” for them. The place that He planned to prepare for them was not in heaven, however, for elsewhere He spoke to these same Jewish believers about “*the kingdom*” that is “*prepared for you*” (Matt. 25:34). And so we know that the Lord was speaking here of going to heaven to “prepare a place” for them *in the kingdom of heaven on earth*. If you are wondering how going to heaven would prepare a place for them in the kingdom, remember that He knew he was going to go to heaven *by way of the cross*. It was His death for their sins that prepared them a place in the kingdom of heaven. Since He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), He could speak to them about “the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

The Place

One of the definitions of the word *place* is an “office” or “official position.” The Pharisees feared that, as they said, “all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our *place* and nation” (John 11:48). That is, they feared the loss of their position as rulers over the nation of Israel.

Another passage where the word *place* has to do with political rank is found in Nebuchadnezzar's dream about an image of gold, silver, brass, and iron (Dan. 2:31-33). Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar that the gold head of the image represented the king himself (vv. 37,38), but that after him would come other kings (vv. 39,40). "The stone that smote the image" (2:35) represented the Rock of Ages at His Second Coming, who in this prophetic dream then "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." A *mountain* in Scripture is a symbol of a *kingdom*, and when the Lord establishes *His* "holy mountain" (Isa. 65:25), there will be no place in it for these or any other unsaved kings. And so we read that they "became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, *that no place was found for them,*" i.e. no place of *authority* in the Lord's kingdom.¹ In the coming kingdom, the twelve apostles will take the *place* of all earth's kings on the thrones of the world (Matt. 19:28), with faithful Hebrew saints ruling with them (Matt. 25:21; Rev. 2:26,27).

The Coming Again

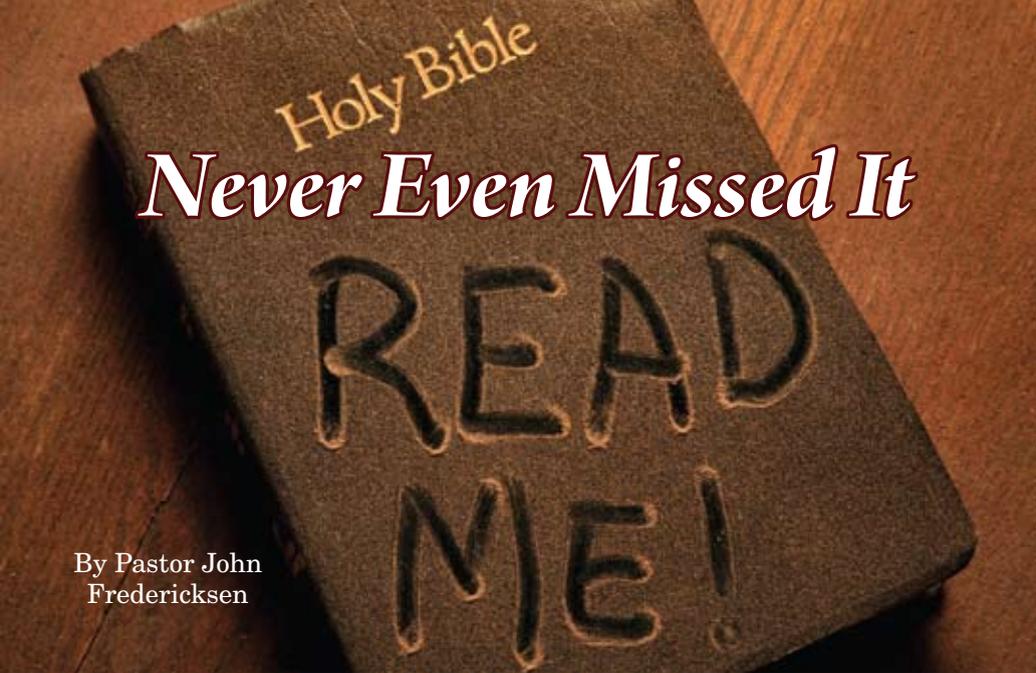
Most grace believers know that in the four gospels, when we hear the Lord say that He will come again, it refers not to the Rapture, but to the Second Coming. Thus when He said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3), we know that He had the regathering of *Israel* in mind (Matt. 24:27,31), not the catching away of the Body of Christ (I Thes. 4:13-17). This means when He added, "that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3), He wasn't speaking about how you and I will "ever be with the Lord" after the Rapture (I Thes. 4:17). After the Second Coming, the Lord "shall execute judgment and justice *in the earth*" (Jer. 23:5), and Hebrew kingdom saints will be right there with Him, reigning as kings and priests "on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). John 3:13 shows how it will be no problem for the Lord to be with us in heaven and with Israel here on earth at the same time.

The Defense

We know that grace believers long to defend Paul's gospel against those who would try to read it into the Lord's earthly ministry in passages like this one in John 14. We trust that these thoughts will help you to explain to these dear saints that the Lord's words here have nothing to do with anything in the dispensation of grace. Armed with this information, we hope you'll stand with us "in the defence and confirmation of the gospel" (Phil. 1:7)—*Paul's gospel!* 

Endnotes

1. This is similar to what will happen when the devil and his angels are expelled from their positions as the ruling principalities and powers in heaven (Rev. 12:7,8). When that happens, we read, "neither was their *place* found any more in heaven," just as there will be "no place" found for the devil, the beast, and the false prophet in the government of New Jerusalem (Rev. 20:10,11).



Holy Bible

Never Even Missed It

By Pastor John
Fredericksen

One Sunday, a Christian family of four decided to take two different cars to church. After the service was over, the young boy rode home with his mom while the eight-year-old girl rode with dad. The father and daughter decided to stop at a furniture store to look for a living room set. After a while the dad got in his car and drove home. After a few minutes in the house, the mother asked, “Where’s Emily?” Until that question, the father had not realized that he left the store without his daughter and drove all the way home without her. Despite the solitude in the car, he never missed her until after arriving home. All the way back to the store, the ten-year-old brother, who was very angry with his father, kept asking his dad, “How could you have forgotten my sister?”

It is a simple reality that many times the most important things in life are simply forgotten. During the years of Israel’s many kings, a pattern of turning away from the Lord to false gods persisted. But that changed with one king. Once King Josiah ascended the throne, “he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord” (II Kings 22:2). “And like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might” (II Kings 23:25). Josiah became a spiritual reformer, ridding the land of false worship, sinful practices, and leading the nation back to the proper, exclusive worship of Jehovah.

This spiritual revival began at the beginning of Josiah’s reign and was built on one primary incident. Josiah instructed trusted people to make needed repairs in Israel’s house of worship, the temple, which had been neglected for many years. In the process of making these repairs,

Hilkiah the high priest made an important discovery. He reported back to King Josiah, “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord” (II Kings 22:8). Amazingly, God’s chosen and blessed people, Israel, had been without God’s Word for decades. It had been absent in their times of worship, in their homes, in their conversations, in their work place, and in their lives, AND NOBODY EVEN MISSED IT.

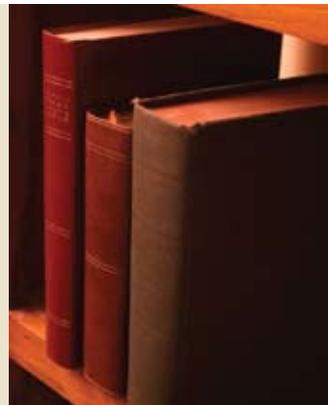
Over and over in the Old Testament, the Lord instructed Israel to build their lives around the Scriptures. They were to write portions of it on their door posts, read it daily, diligently teach it to their children, and make it a topic of conversation as they went about their day (Deut. 11:18-20). *How could it be that God’s own people could be without God’s Word and not even miss it?* No doubt the answer is through a growing neglect of the Scriptures, disinterest in spiritual things, and preoccupation with temporal things, resulting in a cold callousness toward the Lord. It’s a dangerous pattern and a dangerous place to be.

Could we today, who know Christ as Savior, come to a place where we have little or none of God’s Word in our lives and never even miss it? Absolutely, and it happens all the time. The same pattern that plagued Israel persists today. We are easily distracted and preoccupied with the temporal distractions of this world. Neglecting time in the Scriptures, or not applying it to our daily lives and conversations, can lead to a growing disinterest in the things of the Lord. It may be easier to see this in someone else’s life than in our own, but this danger is very real for all of us.

What should each of us do to avoid this from happening to us? The first thing is to be awakened to our need to make God and His Word preeminent in our lives. Just as Israel was to read it daily, constantly discuss it, and make it the central part of their worship, so it should be for us. This principle is just as needed today as it was for Israel. The Apostle Paul tells us to “hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love” (II Tim. 1:13). God’s Word in our lives is our life line to good spiritual health so “don’t leave home without it” and make it a topic of conversation with family and Christian friends. Finally, don’t neglect the place of worship where God’s Word is rightly divided and where the primary doctrines of grace are recognized to be found in the letters of the Apostle Paul. 

GOD’S BOOK

“Mother, I’ve found an old dusty thing
High on the shelf, just look!”
“Why, that’s a Bible, Tommy dear;
Be careful, that’s God’s Book.”
“God’s Book!” the child exclaimed.
“Then, Mother, before we lose it,
We’d better send it back to God,
For you know we never use it.”





Letter Excerpt Extra

From West Virginia:

"I've recently read *Things That Differ...* I'm 55 years old, been a Christian for 30 years, studied the Bible for 30 years, but oh how much I had missed and overlooked. So I want to thank you for your wisdom and spiritual understanding that has greatly helped me and given me peace.

"I was raised in the Church of Christ, but after I started studying on my own, I started to see things not add up, and I eventually had to leave....I was seeing all these things in my study, but not until reading C. R. Stam's book could I put everything together in the way you have put it together to give harmony to the Bible. You have given me a great peace, because I thought, 'Am I not understanding these things rightly?' I've always asked the Spirit to give me understanding, and I guess He did because, little by little, I was seeing these 'things that differ.' But I just couldn't put them all together as you so wonderfully, clearly have. I surely am blessed to have come across all of you. I feel like I truly have a new family, a like-minded family in Christ our Lord.

"But...what about all those in the Church of Christ who still hold to water baptism and church attendance? What about those in many churches who cling to baptism in the Spirit with speaking in tongues and miraculous gifts? I never believed in any of these things, as adding anything more to Christ's work on the cross, and this thinking always led to many disagreements with churches I have attended, as every church in my town adds these things to Christ's work....So I studied and studied on my own, and still could not come to agreement with adding them....

"I'm sorry I have bent your ear so long, but it's so wonderful to have like-minded brothers and sisters after so long a time having none. So forgive me for being so happy....

"My son, who is 18, used your materials over Christmas to send Bible studies to all of our family and friends. He touched the hearts of them all. He preached the simple truth of faith alone in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has helped him immensely. Your books are so simply, clearly explained. You have equipped him to preach the rightly divided Word and you have greatly encouraged me to stand in faith alone....

"May He always give us all more grace, more understanding, and more compassion when dealing with those who have been partially blinded by denominational teaching."



BBS Letter Excerpts

From our Inbox:

“Thanks again for this great *Two Minutes* study, we will use it in our newly started home church.”

From California:

“Thank you for the many years of the *Berean Searchlight*, and books. They made me a stronger believer in grace.”

From our Inbox:

“You have been a blessing to my study of the Word....I always pray for God to show me the truth of His Word, and I believe He has led me to the Berean way....After studying Acts rightly divided, everything started falling into place. How beautiful the Word rightly divided is! I can't wait to get to the rest!”

From Florida:

“I was raised Catholic and I'm still a practicing Catholic and believe strongly in my faith. I have to say that your *Two Minutes* email is a highlight to my thought of God on a daily basis.”

From Facebook:

“I wish the world knew of and was receptive to the *Berean Searchlight*. It is rich in truth and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is very helpful and enlightening to show what it means to learn how to rightly divide the Word and put the Word into daily practical use in one's own life, because information without application is knowledge, not wisdom!”

From Iowa:

“I read the *Searchlights* a couple of times and then I loan them to a staunch Lutheran, and when he is through with them, I loan them to a staunch Baptist. They both look forward to them each month!”

From our Inbox:

“I was reading *Revelation, Volume 1* again...I have so enjoyed this book and it has helped me so much....I can't say enough how much I appreciate your time and the in-depth information you provide!”

From Facebook:

“What a privilege to grasp grace, yet what empowerment when grace grasps your mind and also your heart.”

From our Inbox:

“If I were to tell someone we do not go by what Jesus was telling the Jews under the law, but we should go by what Christ has revealed to the Apostle Paul, people would look at me like I have two heads....I guess I think I can convert our church, probably not everyone, but maybe one!” (Proving two heads are better than one.—Ed.)

From Virginia:

“I got caught up in the world for a while, but this morning about 5:30 I happened to pick up your little booklet, the *Berean Searchlight*, and started reading it. What joy I had when I realized that we may slip, but Christ is always there for us!”

From Ontario:

“I’ve heard very little of dispensationalism in any form, as I was saved years ago in the Salvation Army...I recently read a tough book by E. W. Bullinger on *How To Enjoy the Bible*....Do you think he is correct in saying the Sermon on the Mount is for the Millennium...which really means part of the Bible does not apply now, some is not for us, some is only for the Jews? A lot makes sense, but also makes it hard for the common reader to know which is which. Please help.”

From California:

“The October *Searchlight* was ‘right there’ with Paul Sadler’s ‘Christ in You.’ Sure different with believing we are placed into Christ, rather than the many denominational years of trying to follow an earthly Jesus—the difference between law and grace! We are so thankful someone not only told us but showed us the different Scriptures and we began to see that BIG piece of the puzzle that had always been missing—how to rightly divide. The Scriptures came alive and became exciting then. The other article that was special was Ken Lawson’s ‘Is There More Than One Gospel’.... An article like this is so helpful to show others the difference, and the Scriptures to back it up.”

From Texas:

“With ‘What It Means to Be a Grace Believer’...I...became more rooted and established in the ‘one faith’ revealed to our beloved apostle of grace...I was especially amazed by the September *Searchlight* on ‘Holy Ghost Power’... my order is attached...the Spanish pamphlets and booklets went like hotcakes!”

From Montana:

“My grandson doesn’t agree or understand Paul’s apostleship, and consequently isn’t agreeing that the sign gifts have ceased, so the article on ‘Holy Ghost Power’ and the booklets on special were a big help!”

From Wisconsin:

“I really appreciated Pastor Kurth’s article about self-defense. Thank you for addressing such a relevant issue about which the Word of God has much to say.”

From Pennsylvania:

“Thanks for sending your thoughts on Matthew 13. We have never heard such a thorough explanation of that parable. Everything fit beautifully, the symbolism kept right on going.... it is such a great example of letting the Bible define the Bible.”

From Facebook:

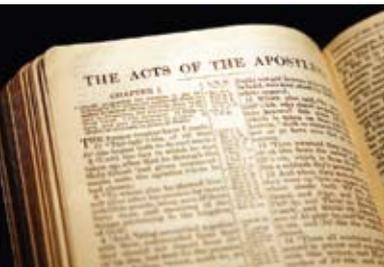
“Hello Berean! Thanks for sending me the copy of your magazine. All I can help with your ministry is prayer.” (Thank you for your help.—Ed.)

From our Inbox:

“I just wanted to say thank you for your Bible study article entitled *Helping Those Who Hurt*. It was very helpful to me, because a dear friend of mine just had her dad pass away. I wasn’t sure how to respond, so the article was a big help.”

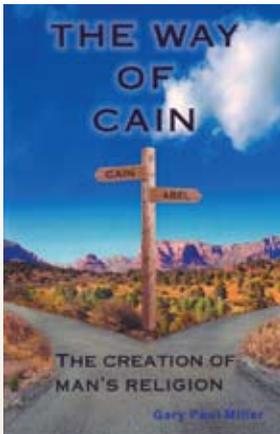
From Facebook:

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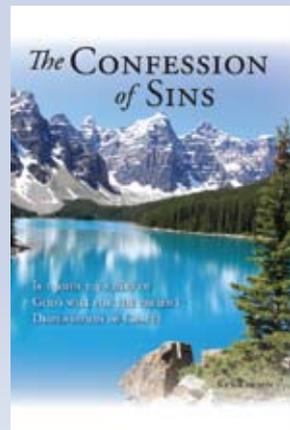
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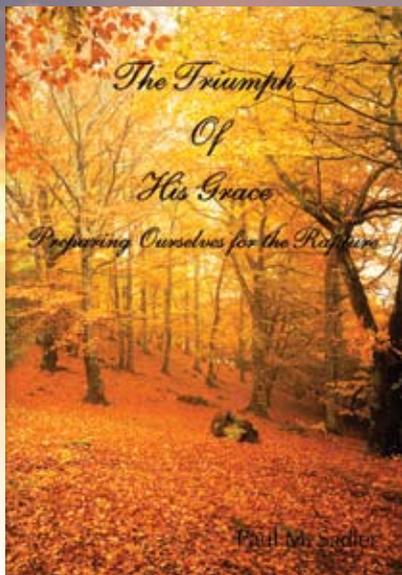
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News and Announcements

Used Literature Drive: Here at BBS, we receive frequent requests for free literature from prisoners and others who cannot afford to purchase our publications. Whenever we can, we try to meet these needs with literature that came to us imperfect from the printers, or with used books that have been returned to us. And so if you have copies of our works that you have thoroughly digested and would now like to pass on to others, why not share them with these hungry hearts? You'll be eternally glad you did!

Literature Request: In time past, BBS ended each year by publishing bound volumes of the *Searchlight*. We still have some of these volumes, dating back to the magazine's inaugural year in 1940. However, since Pastor Stam gave literature away so generously, we have only two complete sets of these volumes from 1940 to 1951, and very few from 1953, 1954, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1964 and 1967. If you have copies of these works that you plan to discard, why not share them with us instead? If you are still enjoying them, but have no one who would be interested in inheriting them, perhaps you could leave instructions that they be returned to us after you go home to be with the Lord, and in this way help us preserve Pastor Stam's writings.

Our Commentary on John's Epistles suffered a serious setback when the polished version was lost in the computer crash we experienced last summer when all three backup systems failed. We still have the roughed-out version, from which we are now working to try to get this book into print sometime this year. Please join us in prayer that the finished product will express God's truth even more clearly than the version that was lost!

Conference Pictures: We are looking for pictures from grace conferences of the past to post on our BBS website. If you would like to share your conference memories with us, just send your digital copies to berean@bereanbiblesociety.org, along with a description of who we are looking at, the year, and any other information you can give us. Grace believers are a very special and unique family, and it is about time we started a family photo album!



The *Bressay Lighthouse* is located in the Shetland Islands, Scotland. The 52-foot light was one of four lighthouses built in Shetland between 1854 and 1858. The light was powered by candles and then paraffin until July 1967, when the light was electrified.

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