

# *The* **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 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* the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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## *From the President's Desk*

Dear Friend in Christ,

The old English proverb, "Forewarned is forearmed," has a great deal of merit. Our apostle says in this regard, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1). The warning seems clear enough; as we approach the end of this age, evil *influences* are going to cast a long shadow over the Church. Many sincere, unsuspecting souls will be drawn aside from the truth. The past fifty years have witnessed unprecedented changes in Christianity, most of which have not been for the better.

The truth of the gospel used to echo throughout tent meetings and auditoriums filled with people who hung onto every word that was proclaimed from the Scriptures. That beautiful sound has nearly been drowned out by the noise of uncertain trumpets. Doctrines of seducing spirits have sought to *redefine* the ministry. This evil cohort uses a variety of schemes to mask this unseemly plot. "Intellectualism" says we have to interpret the Scriptures for you because they really don't mean what they say. "Emotionalism" says doctrine is boring; it's more important to get in touch with your feelings. "New evangelicalism" says let's forget all these doctrinal differences and just get along. "Legalism" says you must conform to our doctrine and precise code of behavior and dress or you're not spiritually minded. "Extremism" says our viewpoint is the only plausible one even though there may be little or no Scriptural support, for we are the final authority!

At the *Berean Bible Society*, we have sought to avoid these "-isms." We believe that the Word of God emphasizes the importance of having a **BALANCE**. Although there have been many outside influences through the years, prompting us to change course, we have sought to remain faithful to that which God has called us. By the grace of God, we stand without apology for the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of Mystery.

We may not be popular in some circles, but to this Paul says, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). And so we take this occasion to thank each and every one of you for standing with us in the defense and affirmation of Paul's gospel. Your sacrificial labor, prayers, and faithful support have been like a sweet-smelling savor, well pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Amazed at His grace,  
Paul M. Sadler, President



# Applied Grace

(A letter from a  
dear friend)



"Dear Pastor Sadler,

"Thank you so much for the kindness you have shown to me in sending your book on the Rapture: *Triumph of His Grace*. I have read it four times already and am currently dissecting it on the fifth reading. You have opened my eyes of understanding and have given me some more weapons to use against those who seem to want to go through the Tribulation period whether the Lord wants us to or not. Your book was reassuring and comforting to me, Paul, and I'm thankful to our Lord for giving you insight and understanding on the blessed hope of our going Home.

"Paul, I have two mentally handicapped children that my wife and I adopted when they were 1 year old and 3 year[s] old, a sibling group that we were told were normal, healthy children, only to find out a few years later that we had been lied to by our Department of Health and Human Resources....So, Paul, my wife and I are left on our own to take care of two mentally handicapped children the rest of our lives. So why wouldn't I want to trust in the pre-trib Rapture? I don't think my Lord would allow my two children to suffer His wrath. I've never heard anyone else say this, but I've always said for years that, if the Church is to go through the Tribulation period, then our God is pouring out His wrath on His own Son a second time, as we are His Body, indwelt by His Spirit. And I just don't see that as possible. His Son already suffered enough for us on the Cross and I can't see Him adding more suffering that His suffering the first time didn't finish for all time.

"Thank you so much, Paul, for your book has been so helpful in my study....I am ready to depart right now, for this world is not a good place for my children to endure. My son uses your *Berean Searchlight* booklets to write studies for friends and family, so thank you for them also. I watch him as the Holy Spirit uses my handicapped son to preach Jesus and the Cross to others. I don't think my Lord will allow my precious son and daughter to receive the Father's wrath after he tries so hard, in his limited capacity, to serve Him. He saved him according to His amazing grace and I believe He will deliver him according to His amazing grace and all the rest of us as well. Thank you, Paul, for thinking of me. Keep my children in your prayers, as I will also keep you in mine. Here, there, or in the air, God bless you!"

# Trouble in Paradise



By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

“A man, who came to [his] pastor, [who] had attended church for 25 years...said, ‘Pastor, I’ve got something to tell you. I’ve never told this to a soul, and it’s extremely difficult to tell you this now, but my wife and I have had a fight every day for the past 30 years of our marriage.’

“Pastor, taken aback, didn’t know what to say to the man. Playing for time to gather [his] thoughts, [he] said, ‘Every day?’

“‘Yes, every day.’

“‘Did you today before you came to church?’

“‘Yes!’

“‘Well, how did it end up?’

“‘She came crawling to me on her hands and knees.’

“‘What did she say?’

“‘Come out from under that bed, you coward, and fight like a man!’”<sup>1</sup>

While this story is humorous, there are some marriages where husbands and wives are in a

constant state of conflict. Things began well, but when the honeymoon was over, sparks began to fly in every direction. Over the years, so many unkind and hurtful things were said that the best thing one can hope for is a truce. Once a cease-fire is declared, reinforcements can be brought in to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, as we are going to see.

A point-by-point discussion of marriage would be incomplete without addressing the subject of *divorce and remarriage*. Sometimes saints find themselves in a set of circumstances that are beyond their control. For those who may be reading these lines that are divorced, we want you to know that God loves you, and it is His will for you to continue to live a productive Christian life to the praise of His glory.

The last thing someone who has gone through a painful divorce needs is to be criticized or

neglected by the local assembly, although, sadly, this is often the case. They are already broken-hearted over the matter. What they need is our *compassion* and a helping hand to pull their lives back together. With God's help, we want to explore what the Scriptures teach regarding divorce and remarriage during the dispensation of grace. And may we all humbly submit ourselves, as believers in Christ, to the counsel of His will.

### THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

**“And unto the married I command, yet not I, *but the Lord*, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (I Cor. 7:10,11).**

It is imperative to remember that we are no longer under the law, but under *grace*. As we know, God raised up a new apostle and commissioned him to go to the Gentiles. Thus, we must look to the Apostle Paul for our instructions today. In his epistles, which should be of particular interest to those of us who rightly divide the Word of truth, we have the commands of Christ concerning the *guidelines* for the marriage relationship. Having dealt with the issue of celibacy, Paul now presents various dilemmas in which the members of the Body of Christ could find themselves embroiled, along with the proper course of action.

With the change in dispensations, the Lord imparted a *new* revelation to the apostle in regard

to believers in Christ. When a saved man and woman have been united in wedlock, they are bound together until death them do part, according to verses 10 and 11. Since couples who know the Lord are equally yoked together, it is the *directive* will of God that they *never* divorce. This is why it is essential that young couples who are contemplating marriage make sure that they are prepared to enter into a *lifelong* commitment. May we ever be mindful of the solemn words of the traditional wedding ceremony, that marriage is “not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.”<sup>2</sup>



But what if a serious problem arises in the marriage? For example, if a wife finds herself in an abusive relationship, she has every right to *separate* from her husband until he gets effective help. She should never place herself or her children in harm's way. A wife isn't a punching bag; she's created in the image of God. Mark these words and mark them well: a husband who strikes his wife is striking the image of God. In the event that her husband refuses the counsel of a godly pastor and continues in his sinful

behavior, the wife can remain *separated* until a time of repentance. However, she is directed not to divorce him.

When you are struggling with a problem that seems to be unresolvable, the first person you should contact is a godly pastor. He will show you how there is no temptation you will ever face in this life that is not common to man. That is to say, someone before you has faced the same thing or something very similar to it. With these words of encouragement from I Corinthians 10:13, you will find hope.

Those who are dealing with a serious issue usually dwell on their circumstances when they should be seeking a *solution* to the problem. This is where an objective Christian counselor is indispensable. He is equipped with the Word of God to help you navigate through the storm in which you have found yourself. The Word of God has the solution to every problem in this life, whether it is in a specific passage of Scripture or in a general biblical principle.

If the abused wife's husband comes to the point where he sees the error of his ways and repents, she should be more than willing to *reconcile*. Grace will always *forgive* the erring party. As the apostle says, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man [or woman] have a quarrel [**complaint**] against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13).

Suppose for a moment that a believing wife commits adultery. She is trapped in the snare of Satan and habitually living in sin. In order that she might understand

the gravity of her sinful lifestyle, her husband should immediately *separate* from her until a time of *repentance*. Once again, divorce is not God's will for the believer in Christ. Although the experience may be painful and the wounds deep, *grace* will follow the instructions of the Spirit: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

In both of the above cases, Christian couples who experience unforeseen problems have two godly options: either *separate* or be *reconciled* to one another (I Cor. 7:11).

But what about Christian couples who have divorced and one or both of them have *remarried*? Perhaps they were unaware of these instructions. This matter falls under the *permissive* will of God. Since past actions belong to the ages, our counsel is always the same. Paul writes, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before**, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13,14).

In other words, you cannot change the past, but you can apply the above marital regulations to your *present* marriage. God's forgiveness extends to broken relationships. The believer may not be perfect in this life, but he is *forgiven*.

Those who find themselves in these circumstances have often shared with us that, while they

would never consider holding a position of leadership in the local church, the Lord has used them greatly in other areas of service. Indeed, there are ten thousand things that need to be accomplished for Christ and *every* member of His Body should be helping in the cause, including those who are picking up the pieces of a shattered relationship. Our prayer is that God will make the way straight for our local assemblies to make these weary souls a part of the ministry.

### THE UNEQUALLY YOKED MARRIAGE

**“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (I Cor. 7:12-14).**

Paul’s phrase, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord,” isn’t any less authoritative than that which preceded it. The inspired apostle is merely showing that, in the previous passages, he had received a *special* revelation from the Lord. Now, in consideration of a different set of circumstances Paul addresses another marital issue under the direction of the Holy Spirit (v. 40).

Let’s consider the hypothetical case of a wife who, after being saved, subsequently finds herself in an unequally yoked marriage.

She is torn as to whether she should abandon the marriage or remain, for she loves her husband and her children. The problem is further complicated when a well-meaning Christian friend shares with her, “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (II Cor. 6:14). During the years I was engaged in an active counseling ministry, I found this problem to be all too common.

### The Solution to the Problem

Some couples are unequally yoked because either the husband or the wife was saved *after* they got married. Others are unequally yoked because a believer knowingly entered into marriage with an unbeliever, contrary to the will of God. Either way, Paul’s counsel here is the same: the believer should **not** depart from the unbeliever. Some might conclude that, since the husband and wife are unequally yoked, the believing partner should leave the marriage. However, just the opposite is true. If the unbeliever is willing to continue the relationship, the believer is not to divorce the unsaved partner.

The apostle goes on to write, “For the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* [i.e., set apart to the marriage, **not** salvation] by the wife...else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” You see, God *honors* the marriage for the sake of the believer; moreover, He accepts any children born of the relationship as legitimate. Thus, every attempt should be made, by God’s grace, to remain together and make the marriage work.



This arrangement serves a twofold purpose. In addition to the children having the opportunity to be raised by their natural parents, the unbelieving husband may well be *won* to the Lord. Paul poses the question, “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” (I Cor. 7:16). Of course, a believing wife has no power to save her husband directly but, through her faithful walk and testimony, he might come to trust in the Lord’s finished work. The likelihood of her husband being converted to Christ is much greater since he is repeatedly exposed to the gospel and his wife’s godliness.

“Never badger an unbeliever with the gospel; this will only... alienate him from the Lord...”



Perhaps a word of caution should be added here for those who may be living with an unsaved loved one. Never badger an unbeliever with the gospel; this will only serve to alienate him from the Lord (and perhaps from you as well). We recently read about one lady who stuffed her husband’s newspapers with tracts. Every time he opened the newspaper, he was showered with the gospel. When this didn’t

work, she tuned his car radio to the Christian radio station every morning. Although these are ingenious methods, an unbelieving partner will sooner be won to Christ through the godly *example* of his wife. Peter gives us these words of insight:

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation [behavior] of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation [behavior] coupled with fear” (I Pet. 3:1,2).**

## REMARRIAGE

There are many pastors who feel that remarriage is not permissible under any circumstances. While we hold their convictions in high regard, we believe that the apostle gives liberty to remarry under certain circumstances. Let’s suppose that a believing wife has been faithful to her husband, but he’s fed up after two or three years with “all this religion.” He hadn’t bargained to be married to a “religious fanatic” who will no longer participate in drunken binges or cheat on their taxes; he wants *out!* As a result, there is a willful desertion on *his* part. Under these circumstances, the apostle gives the following counsel:

**“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace” (I Cor. 7:15).**

It seems clear to us from this passage that if the *unbeliever* files for a divorce, “let him depart.” Seeing that the circumstances are beyond the believer’s control,

“a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases...” Some have concluded that the bondage here is a reference to the bondage of sin. However, the immediate context isn’t addressing the sin question, but *marriage*. It is our firm conviction that the believer is not bound to the unequally yoked marriage if the unbeliever forsakes the relationship. The opposite of bondage is *liberty*; therefore, the believer is at liberty to remarry, but only in the Lord (I Cor. 7:39). But how do we reconcile what the apostle says here in I Corinthians with Romans?

**“Know ye not, brethren...how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress...” (Rom. 7:1-3).**

First of all, we must remember that Romans and I Corinthians were both written during Paul’s early ministry. Since Paul received a *special revelation* from the Lord concerning the marriage relationship under grace (I Cor. 7:10-16), this means that the passage under consideration in Romans 7 would have to be interpreted in light of Corinthians.

Of course, Paul uses the marriage relationship to show that we are free from the law just as a wife would be free from the law of her husband if he passed away. Here it must be remembered that

the Scriptures were primarily written to *believers*, so it seems clear that the apostle has those in mind who were equally yoked together in the bonds of holy matrimony. However, he gives us a further revelation on the matter in I Corinthians 7, where he goes into far more detail, such as how to deal with an unequally yoked situation.



**“When problems arise...divorce isn’t the answer. The solution to your difficulties is...”**

God always begins with the *ideal*. For example, under the law, He only made a provision in the sacrificial system for “sins of ignorance,” for surely His chosen people would never sin against Him knowingly (Lev. 4:27-29). But, in reality, they committed every sin under the sun, time and time again. Thus God graciously instituted the Day of Atonement to cover the sins of the nation. With regard to marriage, the standard has always been one woman for one man (Matt. 19:4-6). Nevertheless, under the law, God permitted divorce because of the hardness of Israel’s heart (vv. 7,8).

Today, when there’s trouble in paradise, *grace* is to forgive the erring party so that a reconciliation might take place. In the case

of an unequally yoked marriage, a new stipulation has been added. If the unbeliever abandons the marriage, the believing party is permitted to remarry, but only in the Lord (I Cor. 7:39). Essentially, God has called us to *peace* (v. 15).

Although marriage is often taken lightly these days, those of us who know the Lord should hold it in high esteem. These matters must be taken more seriously for the Lord's sake and for the sake of our society. More and more couples are living together to test the waters, as they say, before tying the knot. They do so without any shame; after all, they reason that it's accepted today and everyone's doing it. That may be true, but that doesn't make it right. In fact, it's a sin in the sight of God. We're sure someone reading these lines is thinking, "Pastor Sadler must be living in a cave on some remote mountain to be this out of touch with reality."



For God's reply to the question, "Is living together outside of marriage right in the sight of God?" see I Thessalonians 4:3.

It is essential to teach our young people at an early age that they should only date and marry believers. "But that's so narrow!" Be that as it may, I've sat across the counseling table with too many shipwrecked lives. The stories are heartbreaking. It

won't seem so narrow when your daughter comes home and says she's fallen madly in love with an unsaved young man who has a history of drug abuse or worse.

Christian parents and local assemblies must begin to work together to curb the increased divorce rate due to unequally yoked marriages—that is, such marriages as are entered into *knowingly*. Those who have made this mistake will usually be the first to tell you it is an extremely difficult life.

We've all heard parents defend the actions of their son's or daughter's involvement with an unsaved dating partner on the grounds that it is purely platonic. But why date them only to become *emotionally* involved in a relationship that can never be brought to fruition? When the time comes to break the relationship off, the unbeliever simply won't understand, no matter how much explanation is given. Those who entangle themselves in this way usually end up in unequally yoked marriages.

The Scriptures present a clear line of teaching on this matter: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers [[partnerships](#), [marriage](#), etc.]: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14).

God merely wants what is *best* for us. Our marriages can indeed stand the test of time if we will only obey the counsel of His will. While a believing couple may think the solution to their problems is a divorce, the truth of the matter is that they will

only carry their problems into the next marriage. When problems arise in paradise, divorce isn't the answer. The solution to your difficulties is closer than you think; it is found by submitting yourself to the Word of God!

In summary, Lionel Whitston makes a very astute comment in *Homemade*: "Broken marriages begin to mend and communication is reestablished when one of the partners is willing to make a breakthrough and say, 'Lord, begin with me. I am the one who needs to change, to love more deeply and more wisely.' Even if you think your spouse is 100% wrong, when you stand in the presence of Christ you will begin to see

that you, too, have shortcomings. You will discern where you have failed to accept responsibility for the marital relationship, and you will be able to say, 'God, change me.' The Christian is committed to follow Christ who went all the way in love, all the time. So, for a start, stop demanding that your partner change his ways. Let God start changing you."<sup>3</sup>



### Endnotes

1. Author unknown, [www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/marriage/htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/marriage/htm) (April 2013).
2. *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 300.
3. Lionel Whitston, *Homemade*, April 1990, [www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/marriage/htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/marriage/htm) (April 2013).

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# Wishful Thinking

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

*The last in a series of excerpts from our upcoming commentary on the Epistles of John*

**“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (III John 1:2).**

Every year, well in advance of the Christmas season, Sears puts out what they call a “Wish Book,” a catalogue of items that are most commonly associated with holiday gift giving. This writer has many boyhood memories of poring over the pages of this annual delight and *wishing* for the toys that were featured on its colorful pages.

But if you are wondering if it is appropriate *for a Christian* to wish for things, wonder no more, for the Apostle John opens his third epistle with a wish for Gaius, the beloved disciple to whom he was writing (v. 1). It helps to remember, however, that the word *wish* simply means *to desire*, and there is certainly nothing wrong with desiring things. Just be careful what you wish for! Since the Greek word for “wish”

is sometimes translated *pray*, we believe it is okay to wish for anything you’d be comfortable praying for. Using this Greek word twice, our apostle Paul wished that the saints at Corinth would “do no evil” (II Cor. 13:7), adding, “and this also we wish, even your perfection” (v. 9).

## John’s Wish List

Now that we know that it is all right to wish for things, let’s consider the things that John wished for Gaius. His first wish for his brother was that he might *prosper*, a word which means *to be successful*, especially in financial matters. We feel that this is what John had in mind, since he mentions Gaius’s physical and spiritual health separately in this verse. This suggests that Gaius was *not* prospering financially, which implies that something had changed in the kingdom program.

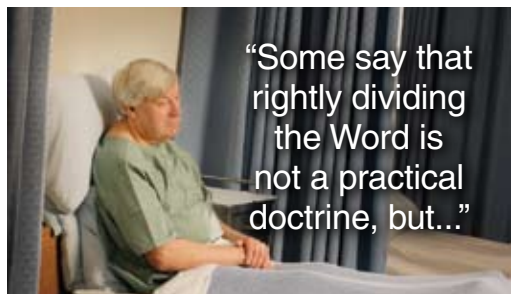
Remember, John's epistles were addressed to the kingdom believers who lacked for nothing (Acts 4:34) after they obeyed the Lord's commands to sell all their possessions and pool their resources (Luke 18:22; Acts 2:44,45). However, after Israel rejected Peter's Acts 3:19 offer of the kingdom by stoning Stephen, the kingdom program began to break down, and soon Paul was taking up a collection "for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Rom. 15:26), who were obviously no longer prospering. For John to have to wish for Gaius's prosperity was a sign that by the time John wrote his third epistle, this breakdown in the kingdom program had already begun.

Another indication that the kingdom program was unraveling is found in John's second wish for Gaius, that he might "be in health." Remember, kingdom believers in Jerusalem were healed by Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15), and "there came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks... *and they were healed every one*" (v. 16). For John to have to wish for Gaius's health "above all things" implies that he was not in good health, and that the gift of healing had begun to fade.

### **A Problem for Prosperity Preachers**

This verse presents a problem for the brethren known as "prosperity preachers," i.e., those who teach that God will bless you with health and wealth if you are a spiritual believer. This view does not square with John's wish here that Gaius might prosper and be in

health, *even as his soul prospered*. It is obvious from these words that Gaius was a spiritual man, but it is just as obvious that he didn't enjoy prosperity or good health, or else an apostle of God wouldn't be praying for these things for him "above all things."



It is certainly true that God blessed obedient believers with prosperity under the Law (Josh. 1:7), but a recognition of the dispensational change that was taking place here would put an end to all prosperity theology. As Pastor Stam used to say, in the dispensation of grace, some of God's choicest saints are poor, and lie on beds of affliction. As a grace pastor, I am thankful that I don't have to visit them in the hospital, or in their humble homes, and suggest that the reason they are not healthy or wealthy is because they are not spiritual enough to merit these blessings from God. Some say that rightly dividing the Word is not a practical doctrine, but what could be more practical than freeing God's people from the despair they feel when the blessings of the kingdom are absent from their lives, no matter how spiritual they might be.

After telling Gaius of his uppermost wish for him, the apostle goes on to explain how it is that

he knew of the prosperity of his brother's soul:

**“For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth” (III John 1:3).**

Isn't that wonderful? The truth in Gaius had prospered his soul so much that people were talking about it! Do the brethren talk about the truth that is in you?

How did these brethren know of the truth that was in Gaius? Did they ask him questions, or give him Bible quizzes? No, they knew of the truth that was in him because he *walked* in the truth. The kingdom program may have been collapsing around them, but the indwelling of the Spirit that kept them from sinning (I John 3:9) was still controlling their lives. It was still true that “he that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (III John 1:11). Thus these brethren knew of the truth that was in Gaius because of his walk.

### Is It in You?

Now how about you? Can people know of the truth that is in you because of *your* walk? Of course, the truth today is no longer the truth of the kingdom program, as it was in John's epistles; it is the truth of Paul's message of grace. Can people know that the truth of God's grace is in you by your walk? We're not asking if your head is filled with the doctrines of grace, we are asking if you are *walking* in grace, i.e., if you are as gracious to others as God has been to you. We know of one believer who felt that the grace message was God's truth when she first heard it, but

concluded that it *couldn't* be the truth because of the rude and arrogant attitude of those who presented it to her. Consequently, she placed the truth of God's grace on the shelf of her mind *for two years* before finally accepting the grace message. May such ungracious behavior never be true of us!

What would you think of a brilliant brain surgeon who never performed any surgeries? What would you think if you heard that the most knowledgeable civil engineer in the world had never designed a single building or bridge? You'd think, “All that knowledge, *just going to waste.*”



We would submit that the same is true for all those who *believe* in grace but don't *walk* in grace. Such is the very definition of hypocrisy, and the Lord Jesus Christ saved His most scathing rebukes for the scribes and Pharisees, whom He wasn't shy about labeling “hypocrites.”

### A Cause for Rejoicing

As you can imagine, this good report from the brethren led to great rejoicing in the heart of the Apostle John:

**“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (III John 1:4).**

John's children were the people he had introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ. But as we mentioned in our comments on I John 2:1, not all of these people who believed on the Lord had believed to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39). Thus it was that nothing gave the apostle more joy than to hear that his children walked in truth for, in the kingdom program, this gave clear evidence that they were controlled by the Spirit, and so had believed to the saving of the soul.

You fathers understand something about this. Nothing makes a Christian father happier than to hear that his children are walking in truth. Similarly, nothing rejoices the heart of a pastor more than to hear that the people in his church are stepping in the light. The best way to honor your father and bring joy to his heart, or to the heart of your father in the faith, is to walk in the truth that God gave you.

### **The Need for Faithfulness**

As you might imagine, walking in truth involves faithfulness, a virtue not lacking in Gaius, as John goes on to testify:

**“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers” (III John 1:5).**

Whatever Gaius was doing, he was doing it *faithfully*, and he was doing it “to the brethren.” John described what he had in mind here when, in his first epistle, he told the kingdom believers that “we ought to lay down our lives *for the brethren*” (I John 3:16), an example of faithfulness that he defines by contrast in the next

verse, where he spoke of believers who were *not* faithful:

**“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth *his brother* have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (v. 17).**

Remember, John was writing to Jews who would have entered the Tribulation had the dispensation of grace not interrupted God’s prophetic program. When the Beast issues his mark in that terrible day (Rev. 13:16,17), God’s people will be unable to buy provisions and will stand in need of “this world’s good.” In that day, believing Jews will have to *faithfully* help any brethren who are “naked, and destitute of daily food” if they want to be saved (James 2:14-26 cf. Matt. 25:31-46). Gaius was faithfully doing this to the brethren in his community, “and to strangers.”

Like all Bible words, the word *stranger* must always be defined in the light of the context in which it is used. Here it refers to the men that John sent forth “for His name’s sake...taking nothing of the Gentiles” (v. 7).<sup>1</sup> These men were following in the footsteps of the apostles whom the Lord sent forth without provisions (Matt. 10:9,10), instructing them to steer clear of the Gentiles (v. 5), focusing on the Jews (v. 6), and seeking provisions in the homes of faithful Jews like Gaius (vv. 11-14). John goes on to say of these traveling preachers:

**“Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well” (III John 1:6).**



The strangers who were well received by Gaius bore witness of his charity “before the church.” This is significant, since the leader of that same church refused to show charity to these strangers (v. 9). Gaius obviously knew and



followed the commandment, “thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2). That’s good advice for us as well! But what a challenge to his faith this must have been! We often talk about doing right when *the world* does wrong; what if everyone *in your church* were to do wrong? To stand for what is right with our brethren is one thing; to stand alone is quite another. That kind of faith takes a deep, personal commitment to the Lord that can only come from a solid foundation in His Word. Do you have such a faith?

### **The Encouraging Word**

What Gaius did was so courageous that John sent him this epistle to encourage him. This shows that John believed in the power of an encouraging word. Remember, epistles in those days had to be sent by messengers, messengers who couldn’t just hop into their air-conditioned luxury automobiles, set the cruise control,


and deliver the message in a matter of a few hours. Travel in those days was long and arduous, but if John thought it important enough to go to such lengths to bolster the spirit of a brother, shouldn’t you? This is especially so in today’s world, where you don’t even have to hop into your car to encourage someone; you can call or Skype, or send a letter, an email, or a text message. As a pastor, I don’t always know what to tell people who are troubled, but I’ve noticed that when I think they are doing the right thing and I tell them so, they find it extremely encouraging! This is what John did for Gaius, and what you should consider doing for others as well.

When these strangers confronted the church with this testimony about the faithfulness of Gaius, it was a tacit rebuke of their *unfaithfulness*. This surely did not endear these strangers to the church, and made it all the more important for Gaius to follow John’s instruction here to “bring forward on their journey” these men who obviously could not look to the church for such help.

Phrases like “bring forward on their journey” are common in the Bible (Acts 15:3; 21:5; Rom. 15:24; II Cor. 1:15,16), but these are not expressions that we use today. Paul’s use of such a phrase in Titus 3:13 shows that they mean to send someone on their way with enough provisions “that nothing be wanting unto them.” Gaius had seen to the needs of these brethren when they were with him, but he must now ensure that nothing would be wanting unto them once they embarked on their journey. If he did, he would “do well,” as John

says here—and remember, these saints had to “commit the keeping of their souls to Him *in well doing*” (I Pet. 4:19). Believers who had “ministered to the saints” had to “shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end” to be saved (Heb. 6:10-12). Those who had believed to the saving of the soul always did this, of course, and this gave assurance to their hearts (I John 3:17-19).

If you think that sounds like salvation by faith plus works, you’re right! That’s the kingdom

program (Matt. 7:21; I John 2:19), but it’s *not* God’s program for today! Some people say that rightly dividing the Word isn’t important, but what could be more important than knowing that salvation today is by grace, through faith, plus *nothing* (Eph. 2:8,9)! 

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### Endnote

1. It would appear that these strangers were the same traveling preachers John mentions sending out in verse 9, the ones that Gaius received, but that the church and Diotrephes refused to receive.

## Question Box

*“I understand that we are eternally secure in Christ, but how would you explain II Corinthians 6:1-3 in light of this?”*

**“We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [helped] thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed” (II Cor. 6:1-3).**

If we remove Paul’s parenthetical thought for a moment, it becomes clear that the apostle had the *ministry* in mind, not salvation, when he used the phrase “that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” As ambassadors, representing Christ in His absence, the Corinthians should have been living lives beyond reproach. However, their conduct was *far* from exemplary, thus placing their ministry, which they had received by the grace of God, in jeopardy of being *ineffectual*.

With the re-insertion of the parenthetical verse 2, it becomes apparent that the apostle was seeking to show the Corinthians the gravity of the circumstances. While they were busy squabbling among themselves, lost souls were perishing.

Isn’t it wonderful to know that we are “workers together with Him”? What an honor and privilege it is to be used of the Lord!

—Pastor Sadler

# The Scenes that No One Saw



By Pastor Ricky Kurth

The scourging and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been depicted so often in film that most believers are able to picture the graphic scenes without too much need of imagination. Even without the aid of such motion pictures, the Bible accounts of the Lord's passion leave little to the imagination. Then too, Paul was able to remind the Galatians that they were a people "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1). Paul had preached the cross so powerfully that its images were as clear to them as if the Lord had been slain in their very midst.

But while the New Testament provides us with an account of all that could be seen with the eyes that fateful day, it does not furnish us with any description of what was transpiring behind the scenes in the unseen world of fallen angels. For this, we must turn to the pages of the Old Testament, to a passage that we believe lifts the veil that cloaked the unseen world, and prevented men from seeing the actions of the principalities and powers that Paul later described as "the rulers of the darkness of this world" and "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). What might *they* have been up to the day the earth stood still, when our Savior died for our sins?

## Scene 1

**"Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand" (Judges 16:23).**



In this account of the passion and death of Samson, a type of Christ, the ungodly lords of the Philistines serve as fit types of the unseen rulers of the darkness of this world.

These fallen principalities and powers had prompted their earthly counterparts to offer Delilah a bribe of silver to betray Samson (16:4,5), whom she probably betrayed with a kiss, reminding us of how Satan had prompted their New Testament counterparts to bribe Judas with silver to betray the Lord (Luke 22:3-6).

These unseen rulers, through their visible counterparts here on earth, had been trying to kill the Lord since His birth (Matt. 2:16; Luke 4:29; John 8:59), and now at last it appeared that their malicious bloodlust was about to be satisfied. They gathered at Calvary “to offer a great sacrifice” (Judges 16:23) unto *their* god, “the god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), believing that he had delivered the Lord into their hands when he entered into Judas.

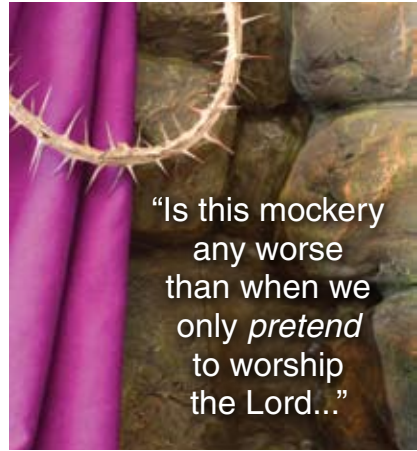
**“And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us” (Judges 16:24).**

The Lord “slew” many of the people of these fallen principalities the day He released them into the swine (Mark 5:13). But now that it seemed that their god had “delivered” the Lord into their hands, they “praised their god” as the Lord was arrested and “delivered into the hands of sinful men” (Luke 24:7,20).

## Scene 2

**“And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars” (Judges 16:25).**

The merriment described here, which surely reflected the merry hearts among the unseen host, reminds us of the prophetic words of the Lord, spoken in a well-known Messianic psalm: “I was the song of the drunkards” (Psa. 69:12). This Messianic psalm was specifically a psalm about the cross (see v. 3 cf. John 19:28; v. 4 cf. John 15:25; v. 21 cf. Matt. 27:34), and the merriment of these unseen rulers was mirrored in the mocking that their New Testament counterparts engaged in at His expense (Matt. 27:41,42). Through their earthly equivalents, these wicked rulers called for the Lord “out of the prison house” (Judges





16:25 cf. Isa. 53:8) to make them sport, taunting Him (Matt. 26:67,68) and mocking him (Matt. 27:28-31).

How the rulers of the darkness of this world must have delighted in the mocking that was given the Lord that dark day. But before you condemn this mockery too loudly, think about what it is they did to Him. They put a crown on His head, a reed for a scepter in His hand, and wrapped Him in a robe of the color of royalty, but only *pretended* to bow down and worship Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” (John 19:3). Is this mockery any worse than when we only *pretend* to worship the Lord, when we adorn Him as king with our words, but betray Him with our actions? To be sure, “God is *not* mocked” when we sin, “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). But the very fact that Paul has to say this implies that it *is* a mockery to own Him as our King but deny Him in our works.

**“And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them” (Judges 16:26).**

Once you remember that people can be considered pillars (Gal. 2:9; Rev. 3:12), it is not hard to see in this verse a picture of our Lord, hanging on the cross between two men who could easily be considered pillars of the community of evil men. Once divided in the midst by the One who died for them, the evil house that these men represented could not stand (Matt. 12:25).

### Scene 3

**“Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport” (Judges 16:27).**



The Lord may have been wounded, as He predicted, “in the house of My friends” (Zech. 13:6), but the men and women in the house of Israel were certainly acting more like the house of their ancient Philistine enemies on the fateful day of His death. And unseen to men, the fallen principalities and powers were perched on the roof in their high places, looking down on the Lord from above as their earthly counterparts made sport of your Savior.

**“And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” (Judges 16:28).**

When He was forsaken of the Father (Matt. 27:46), it would be quite natural for the Lord to cry out to Him, “Remember me!” The Father, of course, would only need to strengthen His Son “this once” for once

would provide Him with all the strength He would need to accomplish our redemption (Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:10; I Pet. 3:18), and the spoiling of the rulers of the darkness of this world. While it might seem strange to think of the Lord's death as an act of vengeance, as pictured here in this type, the vengeance that He will take at His Second Coming is only the earthly version of the heavenly vengeance He took when He spoiled these principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross (Col. 2:14,15).

### Scene 4


**“And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.**

**“And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life” (Judges 16:29,30).**



As Samson shared the fate of his enemies, so the Lord shared the fate of *His* earthly enemies (Rom. 5:6,10). When this man of incredible strength “bowed himself,” it reminds us of how our mighty Savior “bowed His head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30). The enemies among the unseen host that He slew in His death were more than they that He slew in His life, for in His death He spoiled them *all*, although they themselves knew nothing of this spoiling until it was revealed to and through the Apostle Paul.

**“Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father...” (Judges 16:31).**

The Lord's brethren, representing all the house of His Father, then buried Him (John 19:38-42). The name “Manoah” means *rest*, and because the Lord died for us, “we which have believed do enter into rest” (Heb. 4:3), and we will one day take the place of these spoiled principalities and powers (Eph. 1:18-23) and “reign with Him” (II Tim. 2:12). *All because of what happened in the scenes that no one saw.* 

### If You Marry a Child of the Devil...

you are going to have trouble with your father-in-law! If you ignore God's command not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (II Cor. 6:14), you'll soon be “doing according to their abominations” (Ezra 9:1,2). If you think you are too wise to let this happen, are you wiser than Solomon? “Did not Solomon...sin by these things? yet...was there no king like him...nevertheless *even him* did outlandish women cause to sin” (Neh. 13:23-26).



—Pastor Ricky Kurth

Shortly after meeting the woman who became my wife, I knew she was the one for me. It was hard to explain, but she had captured my heart. I thought about her as soon as I woke in the morning, continually during the day, and she was one of the last things I thought about before going to sleep. I consistently pursued a relationship with her allowing all other relationships to become secondary. I not only confirmed that I loved her, I also expressed to her that she satisfied and completed me like no other woman could.

Many of the same principles that make close human relationships work are the same in our personal relationship with the Lord, after salvation. Even though the program has changed from the Law of Moses to the principles of grace, walking with the Lord every day is essentially the same now as it was for David. In Psalm 63, he expresses many of the things that made his daily walk with the Lord such a sweet and joyous experience.

David did not merely have a passive interest in the Lord. He longed for a vibrant relationship with the God of his salvation. He told the Lord, “my flesh longeth for Thee [as] in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (v. 1). Since David wrote these words “when he was in the wilderness of Judah”, where water was extremely scarce, his description of being thirsty for the Lord pictured his surroundings. Just as only water can satisfy the need of one in the desert, David realized that only God could satisfy the thirst of his soul.

These were not mere empty words on the part of David. He promised the Lord: “early will I seek Thee” (v. 1). David, like Abraham before him (Gen. 19:27), was in the habit of beginning the early part of his

# A Close Personal Relationship

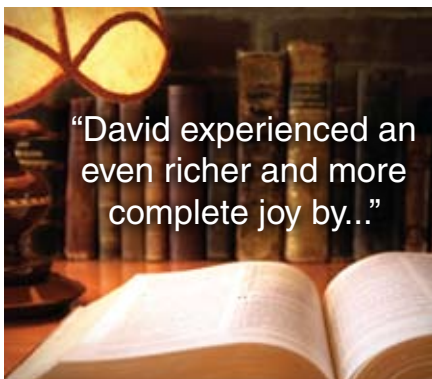


By Pastor John Fredericksen

day in communion with the Lord (Psa. 5:3). Just as two people in love long to see each other, David longed “to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary” (63:2). As David went through the day, he continued to think about the Lord and talk about Him. He wrote, “...my lips shall praise Thee. Thus will I bless [or praise aloud] Thee while I live” (vv. 3b-4a). When a man and woman love each other, they talk to others about the one they love, extolling each other’s virtues. It was the same with David, who happily expressed the virtues of the Almighty.

David’s walk with the Lord was so fulfilling that he couldn’t help but express it. He told the Lord, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips... in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice” (vv. 5,7b). When two people are in love and maintain a healthy, growing relationship, they too make a conscious decision to be satisfied and joyful in time together. David experienced an even richer and more complete joy by being in the satisfying presence of his God.

David not only began his day in fellowship with the Lord and spoke of Him throughout the day, he also ended his day with the Lord. He wrote, “I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches” (v. 6). For soldiers and shepherds, the night was divided into three watches: from sunset to 10 p.m., from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., and from 2 a.m. until dawn. In verse six, David is sharing that, throughout the night, sleep sometimes evaded him because even then he was thinking about the Lord and His greatness.



David also explained: “My soul followeth hard after thee” (v. 8). Just as a young man oftentimes pursues hard after a young woman to win her love, David fervently pursued his relationship with the Lord. Of course, David did not have to win His love. The Lord already loved David. Nonetheless, David was not casual or complacent in the way he nurtured his relationship with the Lord. His walk with the Lord meant too much to him for his efforts to be anything less than diligent and wholehearted. In principle, we should exert the same kind of effort in our relationship with the Lord as we read that David did.

***Are you following hard after the Lord?*** We encourage you to pattern your walk with Christ after the example of David’s wholeheartedness. Make a strong effort to make each day one of fellowship with the Lord from beginning to end.







25

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**Guest Speaker:** Pastor Richard Ware

**Theme:** *Knowing God, Knowing Christ*

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Pastor Ken Lawson at (217) 498-6958  
or Dan Heyle at (660) 425-6853



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## Sunday Services

**Location:** *Grace Memorial Church*  
1370 Holly Street, Denver, Colorado

**Date:** Sunday, May 19, 2013

**Guest Speaker:**

Pastor John Fredericksen, *Berean Bible Society*

For additional information, please contact:

John & Kathleen Baker at 303-420-3524  
or [jandkbaker@comcast.net](mailto:jandkbaker@comcast.net)



## BBS Letter Excerpts

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"Learning how to rightly divide God's Word has made me know Jesus my Savior as I never did before."

### From Arizona:

"To understand Paul's gospel and how to rightly divide the Word is like having a new Bible. Things that didn't make sense before do now!"

### From Ohio:

"Your books provide more study material than we've ever experienced before. We love it!"

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### From our Inbox:

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### From Arizona:

"I would like to know if you have the remaining issues of the *Searchlight* that have the continuation of the article, 'Paul's Ten Commandments,' by Paul M. Sadler. The article stirred something in me that I want to continue."

### **From West Virginia:**

"I was seeing these things that differ somewhat, but Mr. Stam's understanding enhanced my own, and for that I'm thankful. After thirty years of Bible study, I was starting to think I was confused myself, and wondered if I would ever have a clear knowledge of Scripture. But with the Spirit's guidance and help from those such as yourselves, I no longer feel confused, but empowered to preach and teach the Word rightly divided."

### **From Louisiana:**

"Really enjoyed 'A Christian Never Surrenders' in the December *Searchlight*! That publication needs to be read by everyone!"

### **From Wyoming:**

"I'm enclosing my contribution to help in some way the furtherance of the *Berean Searchlight*. Our Bible class, Pastor Sadler, studied your article on 'The Long Journey.' I don't think many people realize the Magi were not at the manger the night Jesus was born, or the preparation it took to travel across the desert. All of your studies are so great."

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"Pastor Kurth's article, 'Judas, Traitor or Trustee,' deeply affected me. Many years ago, our choir sang, 'Was There Not Another Way, Lord?' Wow! Now I know there was! It makes so much sense....I feel I must include a donation so others can experience the enlightenment and edification I get from the *Searchlight*."

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"Thanks for the excellent teaching and the ideas that promote much thought and Scripture-searching."

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"This *Two Minutes* by Pastor Stam is an eye-opening bit of info! It shows why Bible study is not only needed, but also such a fascinating, beautiful, rewarding endeavor!"

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### **From Minnesota:**

"I look forward to receiving my copy of your monthly magazine more than I can adequately express....As we cannot find a grace church close to our home, your magazine means we still have some contact with the grace gospel every month."

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"You really have given me great resources. It is very hard for me to take everything I know in the Bible and find exactly where it says it....No one is quite like the Berean ministry.... It is all so simple to understand when you have not been polluted with other teachings."

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"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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# News and Announcements

**New Board Member:** We here at *Berean Bible Society* are pleased to welcome Pastor Jim Tollar to a position on our Board of Directors. Jim has served the Lord on the mission field in Kenya and is currently pastoring the *Forest Park Bible Church* in Mobile, Alabama. His B.A. Degree in Business Management and Economics served him well during the time he spent here at BBS as our Business Manager, and will now make him a valued member of our board who is already familiar with our ministry. We are grateful to his wife Missy and their three children for sharing the head of their home with us, and we invite you to pray for Brother Tollar as he steps into the shoes of Brother Don Weffald, whose faithful service has been sorely missed since retiring from our board after many years of dedicated service.

**A Mid-Summer Night's Dream come true** just might be the best way to describe the annual summer Bible conference at the *Bitely Community Church* in Bitely, Michigan. Nothing that you could schedule for August 2-4 could possibly compete with the blessings that Ed Bedore, Kevin Sadler, Don Webb and others will be bringing forth from God's rightly divided Word that weekend, so don't delay in telling Pastor Ken Lyon that you are coming (231) 745-9595.

**New Bible Study:** Our good friend Janet Wilson is interested in getting a grace Bible study started in the Wilmington, North Carolina area. If you've been craving the fellowship of like-minded believers, this is your opportunity to get together with others longing to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Why not give her a call at (910) 395-1066 and help her establish yet another outpost for the truth of Paul's gospel.

**Grace Singles:** As announced in the March *Searchlight*, the BBF conference in Cedar Lake, Indiana (June 15-20) will feature a separate singles meeting for those fortyish and up. BBF president Dave Brown has now confirmed that this meeting will take place on Monday night. Don't miss it! See Page 12 for information about a discount for first-timers.



The *Yaquina Head Lighthouse* is located in Newport, Oregon. The tower stands 93 feet tall and is the tallest lighthouse in Oregon. It took over 370,000 bricks to construct it. During WWII, servicemen were stationed at Yaquina Head to keep a lookout for enemy ships.

# PRICE LIST

## BIBLE STUDY BOOKS BY C. R. STAM—FOUNDER

### (Hardcover—Gold Stamped)

Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Vol. 1 (originally Vol. I & II) .....	\$21.50
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Colossians (Commentary) .....	14.50
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No Other Doctrine .....	9.00
Our Great Commission (w/Bible Index) .....	9.00
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Things That Differ, English or Spanish (w/Bible Index) .....	10.00
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**A Mother's Day Reminder**

“...forsake not the law of thy  
mother” (Proverbs 1:8).