

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2015



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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 Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last week it was my privilege to officiate at a funeral for a dear man of God who had attended our church for a number of years with his wife. Keith Reich loved “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,” so I shouldn’t have been surprised at the unusual request he made for his funeral.

The unusual request wasn’t that I tell people at his funeral about Paul’s distinctive apostleship and message, for other grace believers had asked me to do this in the past. The unusual request wasn’t that he and his wife Mary asked that donations be sent to *Bible Doctrines To Live By* in lieu of flowers, for I had seen that done as well. The unusual request came when he asked that a copy of *Things That Differ* be given to every household represented at the funeral.

To impress upon Keith’s loved ones how this book had revolutionized his life, I read a letter that he had written to BBS some months before, one that we published in our *Letter Excerpts* last May. It read, “I became acquainted with Pastor Stam’s *Fundamentals of Dispensationalism [Things That Differ]* in March of 1955...In Masan, Korea, after a tour of duty, I was sitting on my bunk reading my New Testament when one of the men asked me if I was a Christian. I didn’t know. He gave me the plan of salvation, which I accepted. Then I asked him, ‘What about baptism?’ He responded, ‘What about it?’ and gave me a copy of *Fundamentals of Dispensationalism*, which I still have fifty-nine years later.”

As I closed my message that day, I assured Keith’s loved ones that there was no finer way they could honor his memory than to accept a copy of the book that he had so generously bequeathed to them. I added that there were no more comforting words that they could give to Mary than to promise her that they would read it.

As you pray for the forty-six households who received the truth that day, perhaps you’d like to consider making a similar request for your own funeral arrangements. Thanks to the generosity of our faithful contributors, we were able to offer Mary a substantial discount to help her with the expense. Nothing will comfort her more than knowing that Keith’s request inspired others to follow in his footsteps, and nothing would please the Lord more than to see you impress upon *your* loved ones what “rightly dividing the Word of truth” has meant in your life.



Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth

A Giant in the Faith Called Home



As we take a moment to reflect on this past year, we have lost a number of stalwarts in the faith. Death is an enemy! It robs us of those that we loved and labored side by side with to make known the riches of God's ever-abounding grace. One of those giants in the faith was our good friend Joe Watkins. Brother Joe was one of our grace missionaries who was well known for his uncompromising stand for the revelation of the Mystery that was committed to the Apostle Paul.

Pastor Watkins was originally from Alabama where he came to Christ early in life. He once shared with me that he was very content serving the Lord at the time and enjoyed doing some coon hunting. Then one day, he said, "The Lord called me into full-time service." The call was so clear that he and his wife, Pauline, packed up their car and headed north to attend the *Milwaukee Bible Institute*. Upon completing his schooling, Joe's heart longed to go to the mission field to evangelize the lost to Christ in the regions beyond.

Under the banner of *Things to Come Mission*, Joe and Pauline joined Vernon and Darlene Anderson in the Philippines where they faithfully ministered the Word. Fifty years later I had the privilege of joining Joe and Vernon on a missionary journey to Ozamis City, where we gathered to celebrate the *50th Anniversary* of *Things to Come Mission* in the Philippines. More than fifteen hundred Filipinos, from every corner of the Philippines, had assembled there to show their appreciation to Vernon and Joe for bringing them the gospel. I saw firsthand their labor of love and sacrifice as I sat on the platform before my message that memorable evening. As I looked out over that sea of faces, I said a silent prayer of thanks to God for the great things He has done through *Things to Come Mission*. All that the Lord needs is a willing heart!

Pastor Stam once said, "What! Giants in Heaven? Of course!" Brother Joe, like those who have preceded him to glory, rose to the occasion to fight the good fight of the faith. Any believer who dedicates his or her life to Christ rises far above those who have never taken the things of the Lord seriously. And I know exactly what Brother Joe would say to those who have yet to get involved in His service, "Man there's still time, get to it!" With confident expectation, we'll see Joe on the other side!

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler



The Olive Tree Graft

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

If you've ever wondered why "extending an olive branch" is an expression that signifies an offer of peace, many think that this figure of speech is a reference to the olive leaf that the dove brought back to Noah (Gen. 8:10,11). Noah rightly interpreted the extension of this olive branch as evidence that the waters of the great flood were receding, and that God's "war" on mankind was coming to an end. Here we see yet another reminder that many of the familiar figures of speech that pepper our language find their roots in the Word of God.

But while the olive *branch* is a symbol of *peace* in our culture, the olive *tree* is a familiar symbol of *Israel* in the Scriptures. Speaking to the people of Israel, the prophet said,

"The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree..." (Jer. 11:16).

However, in speaking to the members of the Body of Christ in Rome, the Apostle Paul said,

"I speak to you Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13), then went on to tell them that "thou, *being a wild olive tree*, wert grafted in among them" (Rom. 11:17), speaking of a symbolic graft that spliced these new Gentile believers into this symbolic tree that previously symbolized only Israel.

It is absolutely *crucial* that we understand what the apostle is talking about in this passage, for only a proper interpretation of the olive tree analogy will eliminate three very damaging misunderstandings that are taught from these verses. First, the doctrine known as "replacement theology" points to this text to prove that God *replaced* the people of Israel with the Gentiles, and that we are now "spiritual Israel." As we shall see, this view cannot be supported by a correct understanding of the olive tree graft. Second, those who teach that a believer can lose his salvation also look to this passage to support their erroneous view.

However, as we shall also see, this cannot be what Paul had in mind when he warned of God's "severity" and spoke in threatening tones of being "cut off" (v. 22). Finally, understanding Paul's analogy will eliminate the temptation to deny that it is the Gentiles that have been grafted into the olive tree, a mistake that leads to the erroneous Acts 28 position that teaches that we have nothing to do with the people of Israel.

The Firstfruit

Now that we've cleared the brush away from the base of the olive tree, let's begin to delve into a study of this analogy by considering the details, which begin with Paul's words in Romans 11:16:

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

It is not difficult to interpret what the "firstfruit" of Israel's olive tree represents in this analogy if we compare Scripture with Scripture, the only safe way to interpret the Bible. Speaking through the prophet Hosea, God said to the Jews of his day:

"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw *your fathers* as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time..." (Hos. 9:10).

The fig tree is yet another symbol of Israel (Luke 13:6-9), and so the "fathers" mentioned here were unquestionably Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men to whom the prophet refers to as "the firstripe." The first *ripe* fruit would naturally be the first *fruit* of a crop, and so we can easily determine that the firstfruit of our text verse is a reference to Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs of Israel.

Now that we've identified the firstfruit of the olive tree, we can turn our attention to the "lump."

"...it is this position of nearness to God that the olive tree represents."



The dictionary defines a *lump* as "an aggregation of things massed together."¹ We usually use this word as a verb when we speak of *lumping* things together. We believe that this identifies the lump, in this context, as the aggregate members of the twelve tribes that descended from the three patriarchs; that is, the lump represents all the natural descendants of these fathers, saved and unsaved. Paul is contending that if the patriarchs were holy, then the lump of their natural descendants, this lumped-together multitude of saved and unsaved people, were holy as well.

But what kind of holiness did Paul have in mind? What kind of holiness could saved and unsaved Jews experience together? We must answer this question here

at the very outset of this discussion if we hope to draw the right conclusions from the olive tree analogy. Paul is *not* speaking here of the kind of holiness that the patriarchs received when they got saved, for they could not pass this kind of holiness on to the lump of their natural offspring. He is rather speaking of the kind of holiness that *the entire nation of Israel* had, believers and unbelievers, a holiness that separated them from all the other peoples of the earth.

God told the entire nation that they were “*an holy people...a special people...above all people*” (Deut. 7:6). *This* kind of holiness, the holiness that rendered all of the natural seed of the patriarchs “so nigh” to God (Deut. 4:7), is the only holiness that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could pass on to the lump of *all* their natural descendants. Remember, spiritually speaking, God has many children, but He has no grandchildren. That is, you can’t pass the holiness of *salvation* on to your children by any natural means, and neither could the patriarchs.



But all of the branches in Jacob’s family tree, saved and unsaved, were holy unto God, in a general sense, above the rest of the people of the earth who were “afar off” from Him (Eph. 2:17).

We might compare this to how Paul says that children who have at least one believing parent are “holy” (I Cor. 7:14) in that they are more nigh to God and His Word through that redeemed parent than children of unbelieving parents. Unsaved children in such marriages are more likely to be saved than other children because of the influence of the believing parent, and so Paul says that they are “holy” in that respect. In the same way, unsaved natural descendants of the lump of the patriarchs were more likely to be saved, due to the influence of their saved brethren, than the other peoples of the earth who were *not* set apart as nigh unto Him.

The Root and the Branches

The “root” of the olive tree of Israel has to be Abraham himself. If you are wondering why, we might compare this to how the Lord Jesus is said to be “the Root of David” (Rev. 5:5). If you are not sure what that means, remember that the Lord was called “the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). We know that the Lord was the offspring of David because He was a *natural descendant* of David (Matt. 1:1; 22:41-45). But if natural descendency is the issue here, then we know that the Lord was also *the root* of David (Rev. 5:5) because David was *His* natural descendant. Remember, David was a son of Adam, “which was the son of God” (Luke 3:38). But if the Lord is called the root of David because He was David’s earliest progenitor, then the root of the olive tree of Israel must be Abraham. When you trace the family tree of the

people of Israel back as far as you can go, you find that the great root of the Jewish race is their great father, Abraham, the rock from which they as a people were hewn (Isa. 51:1,2).



Of course, if Abraham be the natural root of the olive tree of Israel, the “branches” must symbolize the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jews, just as the branches in the diagram of any family tree symbolize the descendants of the root of an ancient progenitor. We know this because it was said of Jesse, “a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isa. 11:1), speaking of how the “Branch” of Christ would grow up out of the “roots” of Jesse, the father of David (Jer. 23:5). If the “branches” of the olive tree in our text grow out of the “root” of Abraham, then the branches must speak of Abraham’s natural descendants, the way the “lump” spoke of the natural descendants of the firstfruit of the patriarchs. Later, we’ll see that Paul uses both of these analogies because we Gentiles are grafted into the root of Abraham, but not into “the stock of Israel” (Phil. 3:5).

The Holiness

Now when Paul says, “if the root be holy, so are the branches,” we have to remember the kind of holiness that Paul is talking about in this passage. He wasn’t saying that since Abraham was *saved* that all the natural branches of Israel’s family tree must be saved as well, something about which the Jews were confused, and had to be set straight (Matt. 3:8,9). He is rather saying that since God set Abraham apart as nigh unto Himself, apart from the other peoples of the earth (Gen. 12:1; Josh. 24:3), so all of the branches of his descendants were likewise set apart unto God. They were “holy” in the sense that they were set apart as nigh unto Him, and thus much more likely to be saved than the Gentiles who were *not* set apart unto God.

Here we have to pause and examine what it was that *made* Israel so nigh to God. In a discussion of the Jews who “*were* nigh,” and the Gentiles who were “*made* nigh” when they were grafted in among them (Eph. 2:13,17), Paul reminds us Gentiles that *before* we were made nigh, we were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” (2:12). Being a part of the commonwealth of Israel was what made the Jews nigh to God, and the *commonwealth* of Israel was the *wealth* that the people of Israel shared in *common*, saved and unsaved.

If you’re wondering what that wealth might be, when Samuel spoke of “all the wealth which God shall give Israel,” he spoke of how God’s “habitation” was with Israel (I Sam. 2:32). You see, God

dwelt in Israel's temple, between the two cherubim that stood atop the mercy seat (I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2, etc.) amid *all* the people of Israel, saved and unsaved alike. This presence of God in their midst (Joel 2:27; Zeph. 3:17) is what made the Jews "nigh" to God, both geographically and spiritually, and it is this position of nearness to God that the olive tree represents.

The Broken Off Branches

Now that we understand what the Bible means when it says that the olive tree of all Jews in Israel were nigh to God, we are in a better position to understand what Paul means when he goes on to say that some of the branches of this olive tree were "broken off":

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11:17).

The breaking off of some of the branches from Israel's olive tree (the branches that we've already defined as all the natural descendants of Abraham) is not a reference to how any of the *believers* in Israel lost their salvation. We know this because Paul is drawing from an analogy that God Himself used in Jeremiah 11:16, where the prophet said to his nation:

"The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult He hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken."

When the next verse begins with the word "for," that tells us

that Jeremiah is about to explain what God *meant* by the breaking off of these branches in Israel:

"For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee..." (v. 17).

The "evil" that God pronounced against Israel was the coming of the Babylonian captivity. In that captivity, believers like Daniel and his three Hebrew friends did not lose their salvation, but the "branches" of the nation as a whole were separated from being as near to the God that dwelt in Israel as they were before they were carried away from Jerusalem into Babylon.

Since Paul is drawing from this analogy for his own analogy, we have to conclude that he has the same idea in mind. The natural branches of the nation as a whole have been separated from their position of being nigh to God. Remember, the olive tree spoke only of a position of being nigh to Him. It is *from this position of nearness to God* that the unbelieving Jews were broken off in Acts 7 when they stoned Stephen. As a result, unsaved Jews are no closer to God than unsaved Gentiles in the present dispensation.

Now, when Paul says that "some of the branches be broken off," don't let that word "some" throw you. This word *usually* means "not the majority," but sometimes it means "not all," as it does when the Bible speaks of Israel in the wilderness and says that "*some...did* provoke: howbeit *not all* that came out of Egypt" (Heb. 3:16). If you know the story, you know that *most* of the nation *did* provoke God, with

Joshua and Caleb being the only exceptions. In another example of this use of the word *some*, Paul says that “some of them” were idolaters (I Cor. 10:7), even though we know that *most* of the Jews in the wilderness were idolaters. In yet another example, Paul said of the Jews in his own day that “*some* did not believe” (Rom. 3:3), when in reality we know that *most* of them didn’t believe. So when he says here in our text that “some of the branches be broken off,” he is referring to the unbelievers in the nation, *the majority* that rejected Christ and stoned Stephen, the ones outside of the remnant in Israel that believed on Christ, who remained nigh to God, of course.

We know that the “some” refers to unsaved Jews because in the context the “some” that were broken off must be the same “some” that Paul just finished saying he hoped would get saved through his ministry (v. 14), the ones that he says were cast away in the next verse (v. 15). The nation of Israel as a whole may have rejected Christ and stoned Stephen, but individual Jews could get saved through the ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles, just as individual Jews can be saved in our own day. The word “for” that introduces the analogy (v. 16) shows that the analogy is an illustration of the breaking off of the unbelieving branches of Israel, the casting away of which he’d just finished speaking about.

Now that we know who the branches were, and what they were broken off from, let’s find out who was grafted in among them.

The Wild Olive Tree

In context, the “wild olive tree” represents the Gentiles, saved and unsaved alike. Remember, Paul introduced this analogy by saying, “I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles” (v. 13),² and—still speaking to the Gentiles here—Paul says, “*and thou*, being a wild olive tree...” In this analogy, of course, the plural “you” of “I speak to *you* Gentiles” (v. 13), that refers to *individuals* among the Gentiles, becomes a singular “thou” in “*thou*, being a wild olive tree” (v. 17) because those individuals are now being viewed *as a people*, and so are represented by a single olive tree.³



If you are wondering in what sense Gentiles could be considered an olive tree, we might as well ask in what sense Israel could be considered an olive tree. That is, the only reason Israel is represented by an olive tree *is because God says that it is so*. In the same sense, if God here says that the Gentiles are a *wild* olive tree, we can’t tell God what He can and can’t represent in His analogies. The Jews were the *cultured* olive tree that God carefully planted and cultivated in the promised land (Isa. 5:1-7). The Gentiles, on the other hand, were a *wild* olive tree in that they were “aliens from

the commonwealth of Israel” (Eph. 2:12), having grown up *outside* of the commonwealth in lands outside of the promised land. Because of this, the Gentiles did not have God in their midst, as saved and unsaved Jews did in Israel.

Now that we’ve laid the groundwork, we are in a much better position to understand what Paul means when he tells the wild olive tree of the Gentiles that they had been “grafted in” to Israel’s olive tree. Paul was not saying that the Gentiles were *saved* by this graft, for the olive tree didn’t refer to saved Israel. He was rather saying that saved and unsaved Gentiles alike had been set apart unto God as holy unto Him, with God in our midst, just as saved and unsaved Jews once were.

In what sense is God in the midst of saved and unsaved Gentiles? In the same sense in which God was in the midst of saved and unsaved Jews. They were His base of operations on the earth. Remember that when the Lord told a Gentile woman that “salvation is *of the Jews*” (John 4:22), He wasn’t saying that every individual Jew was saved. He was rather telling her that the salvation of God *resided* with Israel, and Gentiles who wanted to be saved had to come to God through the people who had His salvation, the Jews, and be saved the Jewish way, through circumcision and the Law. But today, in the dispensation of grace, “the salvation of God is sent *unto the Gentiles*” (Acts 28:28), and it now dwells with us. This doesn’t mean that every individual Gentile is saved, it just means that if a person wants to

get saved today, whether Jew or Gentile, he has to come to God through the people who now have His salvation, the Gentiles, and be saved the Gentile way, by grace through faith alone.

The Graft

When Paul says that the Gentiles were grafted in “among them,” this cannot be a reference to how we were grafted in among the *unbelievers* in Israel, for the unbelieving branches of Israel’s olive tree were broken off from their position of nearness to God. We were rather grafted in among the *believing* branches, the only branches that were left near to God in Israel’s olive tree after the unbelieving branches were broken off. Remember, the olive tree represented the aggregate members of the descendants of the root of Abraham, saved and unsaved, who were “nigh” to God. Once the unbelieving branches were broken off, the only branches left nigh to God and His blessings were believing branches, and it is among them that Paul says we Gentiles were grafted in.

That makes what Paul goes on to say easier to understand when he says of these believing branches that the Gentiles as a people now “partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.” Let’s examine our relationship to these two things, the root and the fatness, one at a time.

First, when Paul says that the Gentiles partake of the *root* of the olive tree, we have already identified the root of the olive tree as Abraham. The Gentiles as a whole, saved and unsaved, now

partake of the root of Abraham in the olive tree in the same way that saved and unsaved Jews once partook of the root of Abraham in the olive tree, in the nearness to God that this root afforded them.

But just because the Gentiles are now part of the olive tree, that doesn't mean that all Gentiles are saved, any more than all Jews were saved because of their position in the olive tree in time past. All Jews were a part of the olive tree and were all nigh to Abraham, but *believing* Jews were nigh to him *spiritually*. In the same way, all Gentiles today are a part of the olive tree, but *believing* Gentiles are nigh to him *spiritually*.

That is, the entire physical seed of Abraham were nigh to him, but "neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all *children*" (Rom. 9:7). "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted

for the seed" (Rom. 9:8). Simply put, all Jews in the olive tree of Israel were nigh to him, but *believing* Jews were saved. In the same way, all Gentiles are now nigh to the root of Abraham, but *believing* Gentiles are saved, for "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7).

To Be Continued!



Endnotes

1. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged
2. Paul is the apostle of saved and unsaved Gentiles alike. He tells unsaved Gentiles how to be saved (by grace through faith alone) and he tells saved Gentiles how to live.
3. In Greek, and in many other languages, there are different words for "you" when speaking to an individual than when speaking to a group. Modern English cannot reflect this difference in the Greek text, but in the King James Version the words "you," "your" and "ye" reflect the plural in the Greek text, while the words "thee," "thou" and "thy" express the singular.

*You Are
Cordially Invited...*



...to help us here at *Berean Bible Society* observe our 75th anniversary by gathering together for a special commemorative Bible conference to be held April 24,25.

This event will include an open house opportunity to tour the facilities here at BBS, meet the staff, and learn more about the everyday operation of the ministry that Pastor Stam established three quarters of a century ago.

For further information, be watching your mailbox for the letter that we'll be sending out to all our *Searchlight* readers later this month.

Walk in Love and Light

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.



“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (Eph. 5:2).

Christ Himself is our example of how to walk in love. Love gives of itself. When we came to Christ someone *cared*. Someone told us of the Savior’s love and redeeming grace. Someone prayed for us. Someone loved us.

If we are walking in love, we will *love* our neighbor. Paul says: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10). This touching true story illustrates the importance of loving our neighbor:

“Two farmers lived side by side on land that was divided by a shallow river. On a day in August the cows belonging to one of them got out of the pasture, crossed the stream, and ruined about half an acre of the ripened corn that grew

along the bank. The man who owned the field was so angry that he corralled his neighbor’s cattle and locked them in his own barn. After making the first farmer pay for everything they had destroyed, he continued to hold the animals’ hostage until a high ransom was paid for them.

“In the fall of that year, some hogs belonging to the second farmer escaped through a broken fence, crossed the stream, and invaded the potato patch of the man who owned the cows. The pigs rooted around his property, grunting happily, and caused great damage. Although the man was disturbed by the loss of his crop, he carefully rounded up the strays and began herding them back to their own pen. When their owner saw him coming, he expected trouble and got out his gun. But he soon discovered that his neighbor had no intention of harming him or his hogs.

“Coming out of the place where he had been hiding, he said in surprise, ‘How can you be so kind to me after the way I treated you?’ The man replied, ‘Because I’m a Christian!’ That evening the unsaved farmer and his wife paid a visit to the home of their good neighbor. Before they left, they had both trusted Christ—all because a consecrated believer refused to render ‘evil for evil.’”¹

Those who walk in love are to flee *“fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness,”* and *“let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints”* (Eph. 5:3). Note carefully the apostle’s statement that these sins of the flesh are *“not to be once named among you.”* The philosophy of the world is, “One time won’t hurt anything; after all, you owe it to yourself. Who’s going to find out?” Mark these words and mark them well: this is the devil’s lie!



Don’t be deceived into thinking that one time won’t make any difference. *One* act of fornication could result in the deadly disease of HIV. *One* illicit affair could destroy your marriage and emotionally traumatize your children for the rest of their lives. *One* snort of cocaine could leave you a

vegetable. *One* dishonest act could destroy your reputation that took you a lifetime to build. It takes years to earn the respect of those around us, but it only takes *one* foolish act to tear it all down.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5).

This passage and its counterpart in Galatians pose a perplexing problem for many. Some have concluded from this statement that those who commit such sins will lose their salvation. But remember, there is an underlying principle to consider. Under the law, the sacrificial system was designed only to cover sins of *ignorance*. No provision was made for presumptuous sins, for God was unwilling to even entertain the thought that His people would ever sin against Him willingly (Num. 15:27-31).

Paul follows the same line of thought seeing that those who walk in love and understand the sufferings of Christ would never be guilty of such sins. For “those who live in sin are dead while they liveth” (I Tim. 5:6), and therefore shall never inherit the kingdom of Christ.² However, we are the redeemed who have been forgiven in Christ—the recipients of the heavenly inheritance (II Tim. 4:18). But what if a believer should fall from grace and commit one of these sins? We will answer this query with two questions: Does not the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse from all sin? and “Who shall separate us from

the love of Christ?" You see, our salvation is not dependent on our actions but, on Christ's once-for-all sacrifice at Calvary.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:6,7).



The name *Titanic* has come to be identified with tragedy. The story of this infamous ocean liner is a sad commentary on the *darkness* of the human heart. On April 10, 1912, the *Titanic* embarked on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York. At the time, the *Titanic* was touted as the largest, most luxurious ocean liner ever built by man. Nothing was spared in the construction of this floating city. The length of the ship was over four city blocks, with spiral staircases and opulent chandeliers.

Perhaps the most outstanding thing that set her apart from other ships of her day was the claim that the *Titanic* was the safest vessel afloat. The White Star Line that owned and built the massive ocean liner *boasted*, "She is unsinkable!" After all,

what could possibly go wrong with a ship that had a double hull with sixteen watertight compartments? In fact, one crew member went so far as to say, "Not even God could sink this ship!" Such reasoning may explain why there were so few lifeboats on board.

As the *Titanic* steamed across the Atlantic, her passengers had no way of knowing that the ship was headed for disaster. The sounds of merriment soon turned into cries of terror when the ocean liner struck an iceberg, tearing a 300-foot gash in its hull. As the *Titanic* was going down, many of the 1,513 passengers for whom there were no lifeboats sang, "Nearer My God to Thee." Two and one-half hours later the ship was resting 13,000 feet below the ocean's surface. Eva Hart, one of the survivors, was asked years later if the *Titanic* should be raised from its resting place. She responded, "The ship that not even God could sink should remain there forever as a monument to man's *arrogance*!"

The story of the *Titanic* is a regrettable commentary on the unfruitful *works of darkness*. The sins of pride, arrogance, greed, and defiance of God were the seed plot for one of the worst tragedies in maritime history. Yet history continues to bear testimony that men love darkness because their deeds are evil.

While God is not imputing man's sins to him in this present age, the full measure of His wrath will be manifested against the children of disobedience in the coming day of the Lord, which closes with the Great White

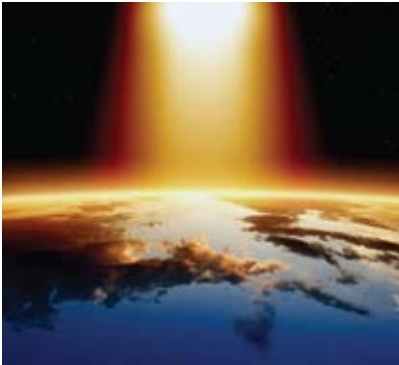
Throne Judgment (Rom. 2:3-5; Eph. 5:5,6; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8). This will be the final chapter in God's triumph over sin.

DARKNESS AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

Moses, who was guided by the Spirit, has recorded for us the historical account of creation in the Book of Genesis:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep....And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:1-3).



God *is* light! Therefore, it is well within His power to create a light source to sustain earth until the creation of the sun and stars on the fourth day. And this is exactly what He did on the first day. While most will acknowledge that God made the light, they would not be too quick to say that He created *darkness*. But Isaiah states regarding this work of God, “I form the light, and create darkness”

(Isa. 45:7). The absence of physical light implies darkness, but this does not necessarily suggest that darkness is always inherently evil. Moreover, it is easily substantiated that darkness was already in existence before the entrance of sin.

Evil entered God's creation sometime between Genesis 1:31 and 3:1 when Satan tempted our first parents. At the end of the sixth day...God “saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). God could have never pronounced His creation good, much less *very good*, had evil been present at this point in time; consequently, *iniquity* was introduced shortly after this pronouncement.

Now that we have pinpointed the time frame of the entrance of evil, is it possible to determine its origin? Theologians have wrestled with this question for centuries, so it is doubtful that we are going to address the matter to everyone's satisfaction. But we would like to offer some helpful suggestions.

We believe that *evil* originated with none other than Satan himself. Of course, it is essential to remember that God did not create Lucifer a sinful being. The very nature of God excludes any possibility that He conceived evil in any form. However, there is no question He did *permit* it, that His righteousness might be magnified to the praise of *His glory* (Rom. 3:5-7). Initially, Lucifer came forth from the hand of God as a perfect being. “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty...Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth;

and I have set thee so...Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, *till iniquity was found in thee*" (Ezek. 28:12,14,15).

By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know there were five cherubim that originally graced the court of heaven. Apparently, Lucifer was the chief cherub who led the host of heaven in worship of our heavenly Father. He was the crown jewel of the angelic host, until *iniquity* was found in him. As the haze of creation began to burn away, Lucifer reasoned, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13,14).

So then, the beginning of the "great conflict of the ages" was not a choice between good and evil but a choice between *God's will* and *Lucifer's will*. Thus, when Satan chose to defy the will of God by reason of his wisdom and beauty, *pride* filled him with violence and he sinned against his Creator. Hence, the evil we witness around us today is a direct result of *his transgression*. When our first parents yielded to the tempter's deception, they brought death and darkness upon the whole human race. This spiritual darkness keeps men from the love of God and leads to eternal damnation unless they believe the gospel.

Darkness, then, is closely associated with unrighteousness, willing ignorance of God, and wickedness. In Ephesians the apostle states, "*For ye were sometimes darkness*" (Eph. 5:8). Notice in regard to our former manner of life that Paul did not say, "we were



"Those who *walk in the light* often show the unsaved the way to *the Light*..."

in darkness," although that is true too; rather, we "were darkness." Darkness emanated from every fiber of our being. We hated God and were by nature the children of wrath. Just as a python crushes the life out of its prey by nature, a man sins because he is a sinner by nature, demonstrating the importance of the sovereignty of God in salvation. Apart from the Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the natural man has no hope of being saved.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

"*But now are ye light in the Lord*" (Eph. 5:8). Notice, again, that the apostle does not merely say "we are in the light," but rather we *are* light. *Light* speaks of righteousness, knowledge, and truth. As a wise old preacher once said, "God is light! In Him is no darkness and in us is no darkness, for we are light. The darkness is gone. Beloved, God is telling you

what you *are*, not what you can be. If God has made you light, you don't have to try to be light."


Every form of life has its *enemies*. Birds prey on insects, but will flee to the heavens when a cat is present. Walk into a classroom of second graders sneezing



and coughing and you will soon learn that those little things called germs will leave you feeling poorly. The chief enemy of darkness is light. Your very presence in the midst of the unfruitful works of darkness will make the unbeliever *uncomfortable*. Often-times they will turn downright vicious when exposed to the truth of God's Word. A case in point is found in the Book of Acts, where it is said that upon entering the city of Ephesus, Paul and his companions spoke against the goddess Diana. The apostle boldly proclaimed that there are no gods made with hands. This caused "no small stir" among those who profited from selling silver shrines of Diana. The magnificence of Diana was well known throughout the world. In fact, many came from great distances to worship the image that bore her name. The craftsmen, led by a man named Demetrius, feared that Paul

would turn the city against Diana and cause her downfall.

The forces of darkness were not about to take this lying down. They waged an all-out attack attempting to extinguish the light of the gospel. The opposition became so intense that the whole city was filled with confusion. "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another." This unruly mob, most of whom did not even know why they were in the streets, shouted with one voice for the better part of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Only by the grace of God did Paul and his fellow companions escape Ephesus with their lives (Acts 19:23-41).

Those who *walk in the light* often show the unsaved the way to *the Light* through their manner of life. When a friend inquired of Charles Spurgeon if he could write the story of his life, he responded, "Feel free to write it in the heavens, I have nothing to hide." Perhaps we too should ask ourselves if we could pass the *test* of Daniel. For several months his enemies *secretly spied* on him, but the Scriptures state concerning Daniel: "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Dan. 6:4). Daniel walked in the light; can the same be said of us? 


Endnotes

1. Dennis J. DeHaan (Comp.), *Windows on the Word*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pp. 97,98.
2. For a more comprehensive study regarding the Kingdom of God, please see the Author's book, *The Triumph of His Grace*, Chapter 11, pp. 192-196.


BIBLE CONTRASTS

By Pastor David Adams


First Grace Gospel Church, Ashtabula, Ohio



MANY BAPTISMS were practiced through most of the Bible. The Old Testament religious system required “divers washings [various baptisms, in the original Greek language]” (Heb. 9:1,10). The Jewish religion of Christ’s time held to the “washing [baptism, in the Greek text]” of many things (Mark 7:4,8). When John the Baptist came to “baptize...with water,” he also spoke of Holy Ghost and fire baptisms (Matt. 3:11). Both Jesus and Peter at Pentecost taught water baptism as necessary to “be saved”—“for the remission of sins” (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Later Peter water baptized Cornelius obviously after his salvation (Acts 10:43-48). Death and risking martyrdom are also called baptisms (Luke 12:50; I Cor. 15:29). Christendom today practices many different baptisms.



“ONE BAPTISM” alone is now God’s rule (Eph. 4:5). That one baptism is a spiritual one “for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (I Cor. 12:13). The Apostle Paul also calls this baptism “the operation of God” (Col. 2:12). This one baptism happens the moment a person trusts Christ after hearing the gospel of salvation (Eph. 1:12,13).



GOD’S SPIRIT COULD LEAVE believers in other ages. “The Spirit of God came upon” men for specific tasks. So was it with careless Samson and King Saul (Judges 14:6,19; I Sam. 11:6). God’s Spirit also came upon godly men such as Moses and King David for their appointed work (Num. 11:17,29; I Sam. 16:13). The Spirit came

upon Jesus Christ when He began His earthly ministry (Mark 1:10). But “the Spirit of the Lord departed from” such as Samson and Saul (Judges 16:20; I Sam. 16:14). Even David begged God, “take not Thy Holy Spirit from me” (Psa. 51:11).

GOD’S SPIRIT STAYS in believers today from salvation onward. When someone trusts Christ as Savior he is “sealed with that Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13). Everyone who is truly saved possesses the Holy Spirit, for God’s Word declares “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8:9). By “the Holy Spirit of God... ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).


PETER’S AUTHORITY: While on earth, Christ gave to Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Peter’s power included “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:16-19). In early Acts, Peter exercised this authority. Peter led in replacing Judas, explaining Pentecost, stating salvation, condemning deceivers, and receiving Gentiles (Acts 1:15ff; 2:14ff; 3:7,8; 5:3ff; 15:7-11).




PAUL’S AUTHORITY: From heaven, the Lord later “appeared unto” Paul (Acts 26:15-19). Paul received his message “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11,12; Eph. 3:1-3). Paul often stressed his special authority. He magnified his office as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13). Paul wrote that he “should not be ashamed” to “boast somewhat more of our authority” (II Cor. 10:8). Believers are repeatedly commanded to follow Paul as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9; et al). Then we read that Paul “withstood” and “blamed” Peter (Gal. 2:11ff). Peter (Cephas) saw that Paul had authority “unto the heathen” and “wisdom...hard to be understood” (Gal. 2:9; II Pet. 3:15-17).

JEWISH CHURCH: Israel under Moses was called “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:37,38). To “all ye the seed of Israel” the Lord says, “In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (Psa. 22:22,23). Hebrews quotes that Psalm “saying...in the midst of the church [congregation=church]” (Heb. 2:12). Christ and His apostles were “not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5,6; 15:24). His Jewish disciples are called a “church” in contrast to “an heathen” or Gentile (Matt. 18:17). At Pentecost, Peter spoke


only to “the house of Israel” and “the Lord added to the church” which already existed (Acts 2:36,47). Peter said that “all the prophets... foretold these days” (Acts 3:24).




BODY CHURCH: The Apostle Paul alone wrote of “the church, which is His [Christ’s] body” (Eph. 1:22,23). In God’s present church “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,” “there is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ” (Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28). This Body Church was “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations” (Col. 1:24-27; Eph. 3:4-6).




“JESUS”: The Gospels use this single name hundreds of times to record events during Christ’s time on earth. Before His birth it was written, “thou shalt call His name JESUS,” the name linked to His humiliation to “save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Only unbelievers, enemies, and demons addressed Him as simply “Jesus” (e.g., John 6:42; 18:5; Luke 4:33,34). His disciples never spoke to Him without some title of reverence (John 13:13).



“LORD JESUS CHRIST” is the Apostle Paul’s usual title for Him. Paul used it often, especially in beginning all his letters. He prayed, “That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified...” (II Thes. 1:12). Instead of “Jesus took bread” at the Lord’s Supper (Mark 14:22), “the *Lord* Jesus...took bread” (I Cor. 11:23). The crucifixion now involves not “Jesus” (John 19:23), but “the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 2:8). Both salvation and the Holy Spirit require calling Him “Lord” (Rom. 10:9; I Cor. 12:3). This change is clearly stated: “though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more” (II Cor. 5:16).



CONDITIONAL BLESSINGS if you obey, were formerly promised to God’s people. God has Moses “tell the children of Israel...if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people” (Ex. 19:3,5). Later Israel was told “if thou shalt...do all His commandments...all these blessings shall come on thee...if thou shalt hearken unto...the Lord thy God” (Deut. 28:1,2,13). “But...if thou wilt not hearken...to do all His commandments...that all these curses shall come upon thee” (Deut. 28:15). In the Sermon on the Mount, blessing also depends upon what people do (Matt. 5:1-9; 6:14,15).



UNCONDITIONAL BLESSINGS belong to all true Christians today. The Apostle Paul declares that “God...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). Even unspiritual believers are told “all things are yours” (I Cor. 3:1,21,22). Now believers “are the children of God: And...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:16,17). “And ye are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10).



Question Box

“Why is it that you never refer to yourself as ‘Reverend’ (Rev.) or ‘The Reverend’? I must add that I totally agree with not using the title.”

In the Old Testament “reverend” is an adjective referring to the One who was to be revered. The Psalmist says, for example, “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name” (Psa. 111:9). The term is clearly used here to describe the *honor of His name*. The name Jehovah was so high, so holy, so *revered* that the Hebrews changed the pronunciation of it fearing the curse of the law:

“And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD [Jehovah], he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger” (Lev. 24:16).

The Scriptures are very clear that we are to hold those in high esteem who have rule over us in spiritual things (1 Thes. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:17). While they are indeed worthy of our recognition, the fact is, the very best fall short of the calling. Furthermore, we never want to give the impression that “The Reverend” is in any sense the final authority. Instead, it should be every spiritual leader’s desire that believers study the Word of God, which *is* the final authority.

Since the designation of “reverend” is such a lofty description that only God is worthy of, we believe ministers of the gospel should avoid its use. We should, however, give our due respect to those who proclaim the riches of His grace among us. This is the Lord’s way of encouraging them in the faith.

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler

A Thought for the New Year

Facebook and texts are a good way to keep in touch with loved ones and friends, but it should never replace a personal visit or a phone call to convey how much you care.

—Pastor Sadler





Can't We All Try to Get Along?

By Pastor John Fredericksen

Former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, tells of this brief moment that she shared with Holocaust survivor and author, Elie Wiesel: “Not long after September 11, I was on a panel with Elie Wiesel. He asked us to name the unhappiest character in the Bible. Some said Job, because of the trials he endured. Some said Moses, because he was denied entry into the Promised Land. Some said Mary, because she witnessed the crucifixion of her son. Wiesel said he believed the right answer was God, because of the pain He must surely feel in seeing us fight, kill, and abuse each other in the Lord’s name.”¹

Within the early church in the days of the Apostle Paul, it appears from Scripture that internal unloving problems must have abounded. He wrote to the Corinthians saying, “I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it” (I Cor. 11:18). Actually, he knew there were contentions among them (I Cor. 1:11), as the believers championed one leader over another. He warned them: “I fear, lest, when I come, I shall...find...debates, envying, wraths, strifes, back-biting, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (II Cor. 12:20). He feared this condition because it was a persistent problem, therefore, Paul told them: “ye are yet carnal” (I Cor. 3:3).

The truth is, other churches were faring no better. Paul warned the churches of Galatia: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15). Likewise, he exhorted the Ephesian church: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying” (Eph. 4:29). Similarly, he instructed one of the more mature churches, the church at Philippi: “...be likeminded, having the same love, being of one

accord...let nothing be done through strife or vainglory” (Phil. 2:2-3). Within all these churches there was an ongoing problem of disunity and unloving actions. Even within the grace churches at Rome, Paul had to admonish: “them which cause divisions and offenses...serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly [or carnal appetites]” (Rom. 16:17-18). It was no different in Jewish churches with a kingdom hope. James 3:10 says, “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

Over the past couple of decades there have been a number of senseless slaughters where a gunman intentionally goes into a public place and shoots scores of innocent victims. It has happened at Columbine, Virginia Tech, in movie theaters, shopping malls, places of work, and not long ago, at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut. But, in principle, far too often in our day, it is no different within the Christian community in local churches.

Fellow Christians knowingly go into the safe harbor of a church and callously destroy one another with malicious activity. Gossip, false accusations, character assassination, unloving words and attitudes abound. Someone once said, “The army of Christ is the only army in the world where fellow soldiers purposely shoot one another.” Instead, shouldn’t we who have experienced God’s grace be seeking to demonstrate God’s grace to others?


To combat this timeless problem in local churches, our Lord has graciously provided a host of clear instructions. We are to remember that our Bible knowledge, in itself, is of little value if we fail to live with other believers in loving harmony. Paul told the Corinthians: “Though I...understand all mysteries, and all knowledge...and have not charity [meaning love], I am nothing” (I Cor. 13:2). Therefore, God’s standard for each of us is to “recompense to no man evil for evil...[but] live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:17-18). Every one of us has the constant responsibility to be “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). But how can we do this? I’m glad you asked.

God has provided a number of minimal standards for each of us that we must personally embrace as our own and then hold ourselves to this level of conduct. We are always to treat one another in a gentle way because “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men” (II Tim. 2:24). We are to “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other



better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). Even when we are in the right when an issue arises with another saint, if our attitude does not mirror this verse, we are automatically in the wrong. We must also always govern our tongues. Paul tells us: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but [only] that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). “I was just upset” and other excuses are no justification for wrong words from a wrong attitude. We may as well hold ourselves to the right standard, without absolving ourselves, because at the Judgment Seat of Christ such notions will not stand for an instant.

Even when we believe we have been wronged, our consistent goal must be to not be “overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:17-21). When this seems most difficult, we must ask the Lord to enable us to live these verses. It is simply God’s will “that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another” (I Cor. 12:25). It is much harder to be hostile and carnal when investing ourselves emotionally in one another. This is why God intends for us to “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15, also I Cor. 12:25).

If we will follow God’s design, our churches can mirror Psalm 133:1: “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” We are either part of the problem or part of the solution. Which are you going to choose to be? 

Endnote

1. Bill White, Paramount, California; source: Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in a talk given to Yale Divinity School in March 2004.

Nokomis Bible Conference

Dates: February 28 - March 1, 2015

Location: *Grace Bible Fellowship*
2600 N. Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, Florida

Guest Speaker:

Pastor Paul M. Sadler, *Berean Bible Society*

For questions or more information, please contact:

Pastor Ed Bedore at (414) 313-0928
or eandlbedore@gmail.com



BBS Letter Excerpts

From our Inbox:

“What is very destructive, and is part of ‘damnable heresies’ (2 Pet. 2:1), is the making of Jesus’ teaching ‘Law’ and Paul’s ‘Grace,’ but there is no difference at all...Jesus’ words are true to all, not just Jews. Anyone who believes such a false doctrine and lives it will not be forgiven and will end up in hell!” (Please pray for this brother who adamantly refuses the truth.—Ed).

From Iowa:

“Thank you for the opportunity to read your information from the *Berean Searchlight* subscription that you are willing to send to me. After browsing through your website, I felt a rush of excitement from what I was reading, and I have been on a lot of searches...I have always believed I was more like the Bereans of Scripture. Yet, did not know anything about them.”

From Arizona:

“I have attempted to bring the message of rightly dividing in Sunday school, but without much success. I recently purchased *Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ* by President Paul Sadler, and although I haven’t finished reading all of it yet, the introduction pretty much says everything that is on my heart to share with my pastor.”

From Oklahoma:

“I’ve been very impressed with the *Berean Bible Society* website and have signed up for the newsletter.”

From Wisconsin:

“It was about forty years ago, two years after my conversion at age thirty, that I first began seeing the Word rightly divided. No man showed it to me. For a few years after, I was feeling alone. Then one day I came across a small booklet titled *The Berean Searchlight*. I read some of Mr. Stam’s words, then said to myself, ‘Well, I am not the only one that sees the revelation of the mystery,’ and I’ve been growing ever since.”

From Oregon:

“I am a pastor of more than 25 years of a charismatic/word of faith church who has had his eyes opened to dispensational truth...I’ve had to learn the Bible all over again with much inward angst over what I find now to be true. I’m seeing the errors of ‘word of faith’...you can imagine how this tests those to whom I’m currently teaching after 25 years of ‘other’ teaching. But, we’ve been ‘Berean’ in our approach, as uncomfortable as some of this has been—yet bringing faith, joy, peace and rest as our eyes are opened.” (You are a great example of how open to the truth all pastors should be.—Ed).

From California:

“I’ve been sharing the mystery... it has given me the opportunity to enlighten a few Christian brothers to spiritual truth. I know when they got the message of grace, because they always say, ‘Thank you, Brother, I see where the confusion is. It’s like the blinders are off me now.’”

From the Philippines:

"I studied at *International Grace Bible Institute* in Lupagan Clarin Misamis Occidental. I'm not finished, but I've learned many things about the unique gospel of the grace of God which was committed to the Apostle Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles. I bought books from the Institute that originated from BBS...and I've learned more about the grace message as our good news for today, and it helped me to share with people who don't know it. I'm so thankful for your website, because it gives me more knowledge about the dispensation of the mystery."

From South Africa:

"We...came upon this book that was written by C. R. Stam, in our language, many years ago...Since we like the book so very much, we were hoping to get some more of it to give to other family and friends. I had a look in the front, but could not find any South African address or phone number...Do you perhaps have any contact name or number of somebody whom I may contact in South Africa who deals with Berean publications as such? The book is the Afrikaans version of *Things That Differ*...I have seen a few books on your website, also written by C. R. Stam, which I would very much like to buy...." (See Page 3 of the December *Searchlight* for answers to these questions!—Ed).

From Florida:

"Are We Living in the Last Days?" was excellent. It showed the futility of preachers who preach a gospel that mixes gospels from other dispensations with the pure gospel of grace. And the danger such preachers present to the Body of Christ...."

From Texas:

"Your March *Searchlight* was brilliant! The first two articles, 'The Mysterious Stranger' and 'Last Days' are the perfect pairing of concepts. Jesus the Christ, on the road to Emmaus, showing how He connects all history (both past and future) and then your article reminding us that we are always in the 'last days' are related ideas which need to be constantly brought to our attention. Thank you!"

From Oregon:

"What a wonderful thing to *meet* Pastor Paul Sadler and Pastor John Fredericksen out here in Eugene at the Northwest Regional Bible Conference!" (What a coincidence! They thought it was wonderful meeting you too!—Ed).

From Georgia:

"I read *Moses and Paul, The Dispensers of Law and Grace*. It was an eye-opener in the similarities between the two. It has given me a better standing in the mystery that was hidden and revealed to Paul."

From Louisiana:

"I must say that I started receiving your booklets and newsletters in December 2013, and they have opened my eyes to how important it is to rightly divide the Word of truth."

From Michigan:

"I continue to champion BBS because I feel you have stayed the course while others have not....We need to once again see ourselves as the early founders of the grace movement did: Martin Luther began the reformation, but the grace movement completes it."

"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



New Item!

BBS MP3 Player



Image shown is not
the actual item

BBS is now offering an *MP3 Player* (2 GB) that has been pre-loaded with over 200 messages by Pastors C. R. Stam, Paul M. Sadler, Ricky Kurth, and Kevin Sadler.

Here is a list of the series included on the player:

- *Pastor C. R. Stam:* 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Metaphors of Paul, Pauline Apostleship, True Spirituality
- *Pastor Paul M. Sadler:* Acts—Dispensationally Considered, Future Comings of Christ, Is There a Literal Hell?, The Seven Pauline Mysteries, Understanding Dispensionalism, Where Is God When I'm Hurting?
- *Pastor Ricky Kurth:* Ezra, Philippians, Philemon
- *Pastor Kevin Sadler:* Grace Distinctives, The Life of Joseph

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“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:
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Ephesians 6:4



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News and Announcements

Texas Two Step: Your editor can't dance, but he'll be taking two steps in a brief taste of Texas tour this March 6-8. Our good friend Jason Summers will help us take the first step by welcoming us to his ministry in the Dallas area on the evening of March 6. He then graciously offered to drive us to the Houston area for some Saturday evening and Sunday morning meetings at *Grace Bible Church* of Willis. Jason can't wait to tell you all about the Dallas date: (972) 569-7184 or js2941@cableone.net, and Pastor Gerald Wheaton is just as eager to talk about the red carpet he'll be rolling out for you in Willis: (936) 524-6625 or gwheaton6625@gmail.com.

New Grace Church: *Haven of Grace Bible Church* is now meeting on Sunday morning at 13520 Foxcrest Blvd., Winter Garden, Florida 34787. Orlando area grace believers and grace snowbirds alike now have the opportunity to sit under the ministry of Pastor John Fredericksen, who serves as the chairman of our BBS board of directors, and is a featured speaker in many of our Bible conferences. If HavenOfGraceBibleChurch.com doesn't answer all of your questions about this new ministry, Brother John invites you to direct them to him at HavenOfGraceBibleChurch@gmail.com, or ring him up at (407) 952-0510.

New Church Location: *Grace Bible Church* of Madison is now meeting at 3120 Edmonton Drive, Suite 100, Box 10, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin 53590. For further information, you can dial 411...sort of: (608) 834-4111, or they'll also receive your emails at sunprairiegbc@frontier.net. We know from personal experience that if you drop in to see them, our good friend Pastor Wes Barteck and the saints of GBC will welcome you warmly in the Lord, and encourage and edify you in the faith!

New Church Assistant: Our good friend Dean Reinheimer recently brought a Rainbow (his wife Diane's nickname) to Michigan, where they have moved to assist Pastor Ken Lyon in the ministry at the *Bitely Community Church*. Dean is a graduate of *Berean Bible Institute*, and will be assisting Brother Ken in his jail and pulpit ministries, as well as their annual summer conference. Go Dean!



The *Grand Haven South Pierhead Lights* are located in Grand Haven, MI. The original fog signal building built in 1875 was moved to the end of the breakwater in 1905 after the pier had been extended several times. In 1919, a lighthouse keeper observed a huge meteor crashing nearby into Lake Michigan.

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—Pastor Ricky Kurth