

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2015



Feature Article

A Miraculous Transformation, by Ricky Kurth5

Articles

A Solemn Challenge, by Paul M. Sadler13

Shadows from Ship and Shore, by Ricky Kurth15

The Riches of His Grace, by Paul M. Sadler21

Departments

Satisfaction Should Not Be Guaranteed4

Question Box12

Did You Read Your Bible Through in 2015?14

News and Announcements30

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.

The Berean Searchlight is the official organ of the Berean Bible Society, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

Editor: Ricky L. Kurth — Graphic Design: Kevin J. Sadler

Reader's Rights & Responsibilities: BBS respects a reader's right to hold views that differ from those of our writers. If a reader has a serious concern with a specific article, it is his or her responsibility to act in a manner that endeavors to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This can best be accomplished by contacting the editor, who will then forward your concerns to the author of the article in question. We promise to address all concerns in a timely manner.



You can reach us at:

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
PO Box 756
Germantown, WI 53022

Main Office: (262) 255-4750 — Monday-Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, CT

Internet: www.bereanbiblesociety.org

E-mail: berean@bereanbiblesociety.org

The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), December 2015. Vol. 76, Number 9.

The Berean Searchlight is published monthly (except July) at no subscription price, by Berean Bible Society, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756. Periodical postage paid at Germantown, WI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Berean Searchlight, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., PO Box 756, Germantown, WI 53022-0756 and additional mailing offices.



From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

During this season of giving, I can't help but share the story of a heartwarming gift that was given to me earlier this year.

The story begins a few years ago when my son Jesse began caddying at a posh local golf club. At the time, I assumed this would lead him to an interest in learning to play golf. Since I'm always on the lookout for new ways to bond with my son, I asked a friend to give me a few lessons. As it turned out, Jesse didn't pursue an adolescent career in caddying, and never showed any interest in learning to play. In the meantime, however, I had been bitten by the golf bug, and began to play at the less-than-posh club right across the street from BBS, where my friend could continue to give me free lessons.

Flash forward to the spring of this year when, like many of you, I determined that my family needed to cut back on our expenses, and I naturally decided that golf was the first thing that had to go. As the days started getting warmer, however, one of the ladies in my church asked if I had golfed yet. When I explained my decision, I should have smelled a rat when she went on to ask the name of the club where I played, under the guise that her son would be traveling to Wisconsin and was looking for an inexpensive place to golf. Then, one Sunday when I was away from my church at a speaking engagement for BBS, this dear lady passed the hat, and the beloved members of my assembly raised enough money to buy a summer's worth of free passes, along with some extra cash for golf balls. This is a rather large expense for those of us just learning to play. My golf balls find water faster than a divining rod!

Well, you can imagine how I felt when my congregation presented me with the passes, along with a card signed by everyone in the church. I felt like Jimmy Stewart at the end of *It's a Wonderful Life* as all of his friends chipped in to help him. It is a moment I'll never forget.

I say all this to encourage you, in all your holiday giving, to remember the spiritual leaders in your life, *especially* those who labor without financial remuneration. Some of my fondest holiday memories revolve around the gifts my wife Barb was always sure to give to the Sunday School teacher and Junior Church teacher who taught our children. Why not make some memories for the teachers in your life this year as well?



Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



Satisfaction Should NOT Be Guaranteed

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

One thing for sure about the Apostle Paul, he was never satisfied with the spiritual condition of the saints. Nowhere is this more evident than in his words to the church at Thessalonica:

“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you...indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: *but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more*” (I Thes. 4:9,10).

Did you catch that? After acknowledging that the brotherly love of the Thessalonians was so great that it had spilled over into the surrounding regions of Macedonia, rather than congratulate them, the apostle *begged* them to “increase *more and more*.” When it came to wanting God’s people to grow in the Lord, there was no end to the Apostle Paul! In this he reminds me of my father, who was never satisfied with the level of success that he had attained at any point in his life.

Years ago, my brother (who was Dad’s partner in his tool and die business) was telling me about the tremendous growth that their machine shop had experienced after I left to work for Pastor Stam at *Berean Bible Society*. It was no coincidence, by the way, that the shop really took off after I left, for I was never a very good toolmaker! But after hearing of the exponential growth that my father’s business had experienced, I remarked to my brother, “Dad must be very happy about all this.” Shaking his head, my brother replied with words that I will never forget, saying, “There is no end to Dad. He wants to buy *more* machines, hire *more* people.”

That was certainly my father. When the state lottery began in Illinois, he mentioned to an old friend who worked at his shop that he had bought a ticket. This friend, who had known my dad for years, just laughed at him, and asked, “What would you do if you won the lottery? You wouldn’t retire like most people, *you’d just buy more machines!*”

Beloved, that’s the way to achieve greatness in any field of endeavor. Never be satisfied! Paul wasn’t satisfied with the surpassing love of the saints at Thessalonica. Don’t you want to be like Paul? Are you satisfied with the level of your spiritual growth? Are you *begging* God to help you attain pinnacles of spirituality that would make an angel gasp? No matter what area of your spiritual life needs to flourish, are you willing to pray about it *right now*?



A Miraculous TRANSFORMATION

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Recently former Olympic decathlon champion Bruce Jenner announced that he'd undergone *a transformation* and is now a woman. In fact, he claims that he's *always* been a woman inwardly, a claim that may cause him a problem. You see, hearing this claim, someone started a petition saying that his Olympic medal should be revoked. After all, it is against Olympic rules for a woman to compete in men's events!

Well, as you can see, when men undergo SINFUL transformations of that nature, it ends up being a complicated mess in many different ways. But there is a transformation that God wants *you* to undergo that will bring you nothing but blessing as a believer:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Now first, you know what it means to *conform*, don't you? The word means to make something the same *form* as something else. When I was young, my generation wanted to be considered *non-conformists*. That is, we didn't want to conform to our parents' generation; we thought they were old and stodgy! But I remember one of my high school teachers mocking us for this, saying, “You call yourselves non-conformists, but you're all wearing blue jeans!” Looking back now it is easy to see that while we didn't want to be conformed to our parents' generation, we were certainly conformed to our own!

Spiritual Nonconformists

Paul says that as believers we shouldn't be conformed *to this world*, and he's not talking about whether or not you wear blue jeans. He means we shouldn't be conformed to this world's *evil*

(Ex. 23:2). God has always been determined that His people *refuse* to be conformed to the evil of the world around them.

“After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do...” (Lev. 18:3).

If you are wondering what *kind* of evil God didn’t want His children to conform to, this passage goes on to describe the carnal sins of the flesh for which the lands of Egypt and Canaan were well known (vv. 4-24). Knowing that God hasn’t changed His mind about things like the fornication and homosexuality described in that passage, most pastors are careful to warn their people of these evils. But there is another form of worldliness to which God does not want us to conform:

“When thou art come into the land...thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that...useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or...a consulter with familiar spirits...” (Deut. 18:9-11).

Astrology and other things of this nature might *seem* harmless, but if God told His people to avoid them, then in His eyes the world of such *spiritual* wickedness must be just as evil as the carnal sins of the flesh that He warned them to avoid. In our own day and age, you could even make the case that things like that are more *dangerous* than fleshly sins in that they are more *subtle*. Even many Christians think that consulting their daily horoscope is harmless,

and certainly not sinful. But God doesn’t want us to conform to that world either.

Speaking of worldly things that are dangerous in subtle ways, Paul warned the Corinthians about *another* kind of worldliness, “the *wisdom* of this world” (I Cor. 3:19). Now, you want to talk about subtle danger! The philosophies of men all sound good, but Paul warns us to beware of man’s wisdom, “lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit” (Col. 2:8). The philosophies of men are *deceitful* because they are “vain”; they all appeal to your *vanity*. They all say that man is smart and that his way is best. That’s just “vain deceit” waiting to happen!

Some pastors know enough to warn their people about this kind of worldliness in addition to the carnal sins of the flesh and things like astrology, but there is yet *another* world to which God does not want us to conform.

The World of Religion

“...if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not...)” (Col. 2:20,21).

Here the apostle is warning us about the rudimentary ordinances of the *Law of Moses*. It was the Law that warned God’s people not to “touch” dead bodies or “taste” unclean foods. Here we have a *dispensational* kind of worldliness, for the Law was *spiritual* when God gave it to His people in Israel, but it is now *worldly* for members of the Body of Christ who are not under the Law (Rom. 6:15).

You won't find too many pastors warning their people about the worldliness of *religion*, but when it comes to subtle danger, Satan has no more effective weapon! The only way to keep from being sucked into conformity with *this* world is to follow Paul:

“Brethren, be followers together of me...for many...are the enemies of the cross...who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:17-19).

The “earthly” or *worldly* things Paul had in mind here were not the carnal sins of the flesh like fornication and thievery. One could argue that those things are *friends* of the cross and not “enemies.” Do you know who knows they need a Savior, and are more likely to be drawn to the cross than others? Fornicators and thieves! Do you know who *doesn't* know they need a Savior? *Religious people*. That's why, in the context, the earthly things Paul had in mind were the worldly things endorsed by the “conscion” of unsaved Jews (3:2) who had “confidence in the flesh” (v. 3), *the flesh of their religion* (cf. Gal. 3:3). After describing how he himself had jettisoned the trappings of religion (vv. 4-8), Paul encouraged the Philippians to simply live the resurrection life (3:10-16), and warned about any who would draw them back to the worldly things of the Law (3:17-19). Those who promote the Law that has gone by the dispensational way-side are the *real* enemies of the cross, for they make people think they can be saved by keeping the Law, and they make Christians think they can be guided into a life of holiness by attempting to obey

its precepts. Don't be conformed to this world, or to...

The World of Former Lusts

There is still *another* world to which God would not have us conform. The only other time the Greek word for “conformed” (Rom. 12:1) is used is in I Peter 1:14, where Peter tells his readers to be “obedient children, not *fashioning* yourselves according to *the former lusts*.” Here Peter is not warning his readers about conforming to the world of lustful sins like fornication. It was *the Gentiles* who were famous for fornication (I Cor. 5:1), and Peter was writing to Jews (I Pet. 2:12). So what kind of lusts were the Jews known for? Well, historically, they “lusted exceedingly *in the wilderness*” (Psa. 106:14), “lusting” (Num. 11:4) for things like “the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick” (v. 5).



We know that this type of lusting displeased God for “the LORD smote the people with a very great plague” and “there they buried the people that *lusted*” (vv. 33,34).

Now God's people *today* never conform to the world of this kind of lusting, right? I mean, members of the Body of Christ never lust after

things that God's people used to have; or do they? Maybe you don't know any believers who lust after things like the prosperity that God gave Abraham and Job, the physical healings that the Lord gave the Jews when He was here, or the gift of tongues that the Spirit gave the Jews at Pentecost, but those believers are out there!

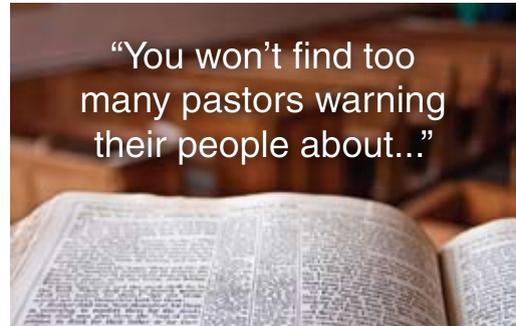
But if you seek to conform to the world of lusting after former things like that, you are in for a world of hurt. The inability of healers to heal "every one" as the Lord did (Luke 4:40), and as they did at Pentecost (Acts 5:16), has shattered the faith of many, and many who claimed they had the gifts of the Spirit have died of snakebite. Those who believe that God is still prospering men as He did Abraham and Job are also not without their share of hurt.

Years ago I was listening to a prosperity preacher on a Christian radio station. When he was finished, a commercial came on for a local law firm that specialized in bankruptcy. Coincidence? I don't think so! I think the lawyer was smart enough to know that many of God's people go broke believing prosperity preachers who tell them that if they live godly lives and give God more than they can afford to give that He will make them rich! With all this in mind, Peter's advice to the Jews to avoid conforming to the world of former lusts is good advice for us as well!

Don't Be at Peace With This World Either

There is yet one final world to which you don't want to conform.

James warns the "adulterers and adulteresses" among his readers that "friendship of the world is enmity with God" and "a friend of the world is the enemy of God"



(4:4). Since James was also writing to Jews (1:1), the "world" that these adulterers and adulteresses had befriended was not the world of *physical* adultery, such as was found among the Gentiles. James was addressing Jews who were guilty of *spiritual* adultery, those who were like their fathers who "with their *idols*...committed adultery" (Ezek. 23:37). You see, the Jews were *married* to God (Jer. 3:14), and when they went "a whoring" after idols (Ex. 34:15,16), they became *spiritual* "adulterers and adulteresses."

Now *you've* never messed with idolatry, right? Before you answer, remember that your apostle talks about "*covetousness*, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). If you are still caught up in the world of covetousness, there is something you need to know about your flesh. It is never satisfied. No matter how many things you accumulate, no matter how many times you commit adultery, your flesh will always covet *more*. Did you ever wonder why the Lord called His

generation “an evil and *adulterous* generation” (Matt. 12:39) when they asked Him for “a sign” that He was their Messiah (v. 38)? It was because the Lord had already given them *plenty* of signs; they just wanted *more*. The best way to keep from being conformed to the world of covetousness is to never start (Eph. 5:3).

Don't Miss This Transformation for the World

Notice that not being conformed to this world is only half of what Paul calls upon us to do in our text. We are also called to be “transformed,” a word that means *to transfer forms, or change forms*. The Greek word for “transformed” is *metamorphoo*, from which we get *metamorphosis*. When a caterpillar transforms itself into a butterfly, that’s a metamorphosis.



There are also some metamorphoses in the Bible. “Satan himself is *transformed* into an *angel of light*,” and “his ministers” are “*transformed as the ministers of righteousness*” (II Cor. 11:14,15). Satan and his host are all bad guys, but in this dispensation they *transform* themselves into looking like *good guys*. God is asking you

to do the same. You may be saved, but you still have an old man who is bad by nature and can make you act like a bad guy. God wants you rather to transform yourself into a good guy. He’s already transformed your *heart*, He wants you to change your *life* to match what He’s already done within you.

Metamorphoo is also used in Matthew 17:1,2, when “Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John...and was *transfigured* before them.” Do you know what happened there? The Lord *changed forms* and went from looking like a man to looking like God. More than thirty years earlier, of course, He had done the opposite. “Being in *the form of God*” before His incarnation, He transformed Himself when He “took upon Him *the form of a servant*” (Phil. 2:6,7). He lived in that form for over thirty years, and then was *transfigured* before the apostles. That is, He was transformed from the form of a servant *back* to the form of God. To all outward appearances He looked like a mere man on His way “up into a high mountain apart” that day (Matt. 17:1), but when He was transfigured, He revealed the Person He was within. In asking you to be transformed, that’s all God is asking you to do—reveal the person that is within *you*, “the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

So how are we supposed to do that? How are we to be “transformed”; how are we to change our form and reveal the person we are within? Well, the only other place *metamorphoo* is used is in II Corinthians 3:18.

The Foundation of Transformation

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

As you can see, *the Spirit* has to make this transformation change in us. But notice that He makes it as we behold the glory of the Lord in a glass. A *glass* in Scripture is a *mirror*, a symbol of the Word of God (I Cor. 13:12). If you look into a mirror and notice that your face is dirty, but don’t wash it, you are hearing the mirror tell you to wash but not obeying. James used that example to explain to his Jewish hearers how the mirror of the Word worked under the Law. If a Hebrew looked into the mirror of the Word and the Law told him that his life was dirty, but he didn’t clean it up, he was a hearer of the Word and not a doer (James 1:22-24).

But that is *not* how the mirror of God’s Word is supposed to work under grace! When *we* look into the mirror of God’s Word *found in Paul’s epistles*, we don’t see how dirty we are. Paul says we behold “the glory of the Lord” (II Cor. 3:18)—the glory of the Lord *in us*, the new man that God has made us in Christ. As we study the Pauline epistles, we see ourselves as God sees us, a new creature (II Cor. 5:17) who has been “made the righteousness of God in Him” (v. 21). When we see who God has made us in Christ, and decide to make our lives match the image of Christ that we see in ourselves as we look into the mirror of Paul’s

epistles, we are “changed into the same image from glory to glory” (II Cor. 3:18).

This explains what Paul means when he talks about “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:10). Our new man is created in the image of Christ, but this image that we bear of Him needs constant renewing if our lives are going to be transformed.



This renewing can only come as we look into the mirror of Paul’s epistles and behold the glory of the Lord in us.

The Height of Folly

If a man *doesn’t* transform his life by the renewing of his mind, he is going to “think of himself more highly than he ought to think,” as Paul goes on to say in our text passage (Rom. 12:3). That is, he is going to start thinking like an unbeliever, that *he* is in charge of His life and not the Lord, and so he doesn’t need any transformation. Remember, it is the unbeliever who thinks things like, “our lips are our own; who is lord over us?” (Psa. 12:4). But it is natural for a believer to think that way too, since he still has an old man. This is why Paul asks

you to present your body as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). He is asking you to sacrifice the idea that *you* are the head of you, and recognize that *Christ* is the Head of you (Col. 1:18), and that you are just a member of the Body. This is why Paul goes on in Romans 12 to speak of how “we, being many, are one body in Christ” (Rom. 12:4,5).

This is knowledge that must *constantly* be renewed in us, for it is *constantly challenged* by the world around us. When you leave church, or the sanctity of your home, and go out into the world, you hear Frank Sinatra sing, “I Did It My Way,” or if you are younger you hear They Might Be Giants sing “You’re Not the Boss of Me.” You may say that you don’t listen to such music, but if you shop in stores or ride in elevators, such worldly influence is difficult to avoid. That sort of stimulus unconsciously affects the way that you think, and it is the reason you have to renew your mind. The highest part of your body is your head, and if you don’t remember that *Christ* is your Head, you’re going to think that *you* are the head of you, and that’s thinking more highly of you than you ought to think!

This is why Paul says that you should rather think “soberly” (Rom. 12:3). Beloved, if you as a believer think that you are the boss of you, *you’re high*. If you know anyone who struggles with drugs or alcohol, you know that when they are high, they don’t feel like taking orders from anyone. When you as a believer get to feeling that high, God wants to

take you down a notch or two—or three!

The Proof Is in the Perfecting

All of this will help you do what Paul says in the last part of Romans 12:2, “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Paul is not speaking here of three different wills; he is using three different words to describe the single will of God. We know this because elsewhere the apostle asserts that the “good and acceptable” will of God is for “all men to be saved” (I Tim. 2:3,4), and that it is also “good and acceptable” for family members to care for one another so the church is not burdened with their support (I Tim. 5:4). God’s will is *always* “good and acceptable,” but it is *perfected* in us when we are transformed into the image of Christ rather than being conformed to the world. That’s why Paul spoke in our text of “that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,” and why Epaphras prayed for the Colossians that they might “stand *perfect* and complete in *all* the will of God” (Col. 4:12).

When your life is transformed in this manner, you “prove” the will of God. The word *prove* means to *try* or *test* (Ex. 16:4), so when you transform your life by the renewing of your mind, you test the will of God. People are naturally afraid to release the control of their lives and let Christ be their Head, *but it is God’s will for your life*; and if you’ll give it a try, you will find that God’s will for your life is as good, and as acceptable, and as perfect as He says it is. 

Question Box

“I have a question regarding something I believe is called contextualizing of the gospel message...I would like to understand more about this....”

The contextualizing of the gospel is a concept that has been popularized by the emergent churches out west, which in itself is a cause for concern. It is essentially an attempt to accommodate social change, culture, tradition, and religious views of other so-called faiths when presenting the gospel. The Word of God is then conformed, as needed, to adapt to these areas more effectively to minister to others.

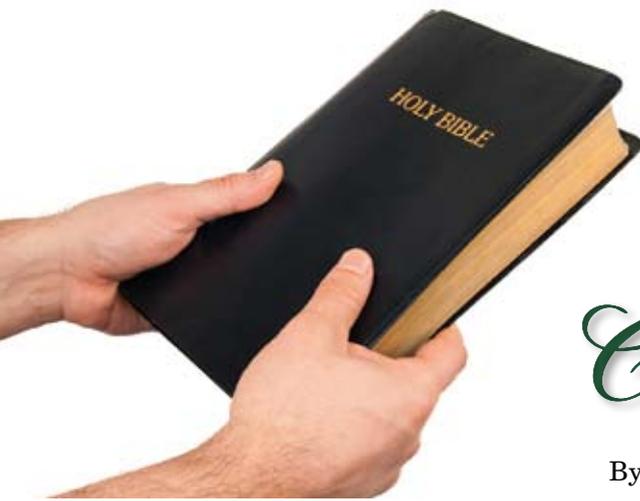
For example, the Muslim holds a monotheistic view of Allah. That is, there is only one true God. Contextualizing theology asks the question whether this is compatible with Christianity since it also holds to a monotheistic view of God. With what appears to be common ground they feel they have an open door to advance the gospel. While this is only one facet of contextualizing, it is a practice that is questionable at best, and in some cases heretical.

The Word of God stands *alone* as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. It does not need the assistance of concepts, which only serve to undermine the Scriptures. There is one true and living God whose name is Jesus Christ, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). All other gods or views of gods are false! —Pastor Sadler



’Tis the Season

Since one in four men pop the question during the holidays, may we remind you that if you ignore God’s command to not 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 feel 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). There’s no getting around it, if you marry a child of the devil, you are going to have trouble with your father-in-law.



A Solemn Challenge

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

With this we challenge you! Heed these words of the Apostle Paul, and you will find fulfillment in your Christian life.

LEARNED

What things had these believers at Philippi learned from the apostle? They had “learned” the Mystery from him and all that it entails. They understood they were members of the Body of Christ. Paul had communicated effectively to them how Christ is carrying out His *heavenly ministry* today, and that they were the recipients of a heavenly hope and calling. You must do the same!

RECEIVED

They also “received” these teachings of grace as their own. They could defend Paul’s gospel with the best of them. You see, it is one thing to know the message of grace; it is a completely different matter to accept it fully and stand for it without compromise. These saints were fully committed to Paul’s apostleship and message, which God expects *every* believer to embrace in the age of Grace.

HEARD

The Philippians had “heard” the gospel of the grace of God, not secondhand mind you, but directly from Paul himself when he visited Philippi. They had heard him proclaim the secret of the gospel regarding what God was doing in Christ at Calvary. Now they were sharing the good news that Christ died for the sins of the world.

Furthermore, they had heard Paul emphasize the importance of church planting and the need to train faithful men to serve as pastors “who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

SEEN

These saints had “seen” firsthand how Paul handled adversity. He didn’t lash out in a tirade at his persecutors when he was beaten unmercifully before the very eyes of these saints. Nor did he curse the Philippian jailer when he threw Paul into the inner prison and put his feet in stocks. He rather prayed and sang songs of praise to God, which so moved the jailer that he trusted Christ immediately after the earthquake took place (Acts 16).

Paul had been a spiritual father to them. It is far more beneficial for a son to *see* his father living for the Lord, than to hand him a list of dos and don’ts.

DO

You see, Paul not only taught these things, he lived them! With this in mind, the apostle challenges these brethren to “do” these things, in the sense of performing them *repeatedly*, to which he adds, “And the God of peace shall be with you.” This charge is as relevant today as it was when Paul first gave it—a solemn challenge. 

A photograph of a person wearing a dark brown jacket, sitting and reading an open Bible. The person's hands are visible, holding the pages of the book. The background is dark and out of focus.

Did You Read Your Bible Through in 2015?

Last December, I invited all of our readers to join me on January 1st as I embarked on my annual read-through of the Bible from cover to cover. If you elected to join in on this eternally-worthy endeavor, and were able to achieve your goal, why not write and tell us about it? If you took my suggestion and involved your church or Bible study group or a friend for spiritual moral support, let us know about that too. We’ll share your comments in the *Berean Searchlight* in the months ahead to encourage all those who will join me again this coming January 1st.

If you are into making New Year’s resolutions, there is no worthier resolve that you can make than to spend the coming year reading “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). A variety of plans are available on the internet to help you keep pace. Just be sure to survey the available plans and choose one without delay. Before you know it, it will be time to be reminded once again that “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). —Pastor Kurth

Shadows from Ship and Shore

By Pastor
Ricky Kurth

When the Apostle Paul talked about things like holy days and sabbath days and called them “shadows of things to come” (Col. 2:16,17), this tells us that the Bible word for what we call a *type* is a *shadow*. If you’ve ever studied the types in Scripture, you know that the Law of Moses had “a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (Heb. 10:1). This means that many of the things in the Law were types of things to come, and many of the things that happened to men under the Law were types of Christ (cf. Acts 7:13,25). Most grace believers also know that when a Jew was blinded and a Gentile believed (Acts 13:6-12) that this was a type of what is happening today in the dispensation of grace, as Gentiles believe while the nation of Israel staggers in blindness (Rom. 11:25). But if there are types of the dispensation of grace in Paul’s life, it shouldn’t be surprising to learn that many of the things that happened to the Lord during His life here on earth were shadows of Israel’s future in the ages to come. During my recent two-year study of the Gospel of John, I saw so many shadows of Israel’s future that it confirmed what I have always said about Israel’s past—that it is a dress rehearsal for her future!

The ship and shore experience of the twelve apostles in John 21 is a good example of this. The Lord had sent them to be “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19), but when He disappeared shortly after rising from the dead, the despondent disciples went back to being fishers *of fish*.

“Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto Him, We also go with Thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

“But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

“Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No.

“And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

“And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes” (John 21:3-8).

The fishing ship they entered in their unbelief (v. 3) was a type of the unbelieving nation of Israel that had crucified their Messiah. When the faith of the apostles was restored (vv. 4-7), the disciples *left* that large ship and got into “a little ship” (v. 8) that symbolized the “little flock” of the Lord’s followers (Luke 12:32). Since salvation was nowhere to be found in that big faithless nation, but only “in the remnant whom the LORD shall call” (Joel 2:32), Peter later called on individual Jews to follow the lead of the apostles and, as Peter told them, “save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). He was exhorting them to put that faithless nation in their rearview mirror, and join them in the little ship of the little flock.

Notice that the disciples were “not far from land” when they entered the little ship (v. 8), a picture of how the safe haven of the kingdom of heaven had been “at hand” for the nation Israel during the three years of the Lord’s earthly ministry (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), but could only be reached by getting out of the big apostate ship and into the little ship of the little flock. The large draught of fish that the apostles delivered safely to the haven of the shore in the little ship foreshadowed the thousands of their brethren that they later delivered to the haven of the kingdom at Pentecost (Acts 2:41; 4:4).

“As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread” (John 21:9).

When they left the little ship, they found the Lord on the shore cooking them a shore lunch on “a fire of coals” (v. 9), a symbol of the “jealousy” (Song 8:6) that God planned to provoke in Israel using the “foolish nation” (Deut. 32:21) of the little flock when He gave them the kingdom (Matt. 21:43 cf. Luke 12:32; I Pet. 2:9,10). The bread and fish that the Lord was serving that day (v. 9) was a picture of the kingdom, a kingdom in which God’s people in Israel will all have plenty to eat, with ample left over for the Gentiles (Matt. 14:20; 15:27). As the Lord had told them, “I appoint unto you a kingdom...*that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom*” (Luke 22:29,30).

“Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught” (John 21:10).

Since the Lord sent them to be fishers of men, when He commanded them to “bring of the fish which ye have now caught” (v. 10), this conjures up an image of the inauguration of the kingdom when the Lord will surely ask His fishers to bring forth the *men* they caught. The psalmist pictured this same scene using agricultural imagery when he predicted that “he that goeth forth...bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, *bringing his sheaves with him*” (Psa. 126:6). “Sheaves” were the bundles of wheat that diligent farmers could expect to reap, a picture of the “wheat” of the believers who would be gathered into the “barn” of the kingdom (Matt. 13:30).



How about you, my Christian friend? While this passage speaks of the day of reckoning and reward for Israel, is it so hard to imagine that the Lord will ask *you* to bring forth the men that *you* have caught when you stand before Him? The Apostle Paul can look forward to bringing forth the sheaves of the members of the Thessalonian church (I Thes. 2:19), as well as rejoicing in many others whom he led to the Lord.

For our own part, if you don't sing this old hymn of the faith, we would invite you to prayerfully consider its import:

“Must I go, and empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so? Not one soul with which to greet Him: Must I empty-handed go?”¹

In response to the Lord's command to bring forth their catch,

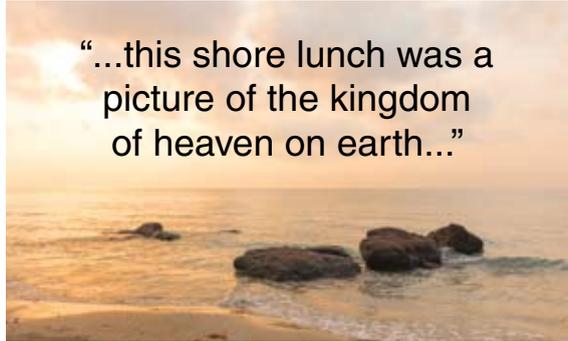
“Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken” (John 21:11).

There has been a lot of speculation as to the significance of the 153 fish that the apostles netted that day. If we extend this imagery to include the fishing that the apostles were commissioned to do among the Gentiles (Matt. 28:19), some have wondered if there weren't perhaps 153 *Gentile nations* in the world at that time, since the current number is around 195. This number could easily drop back to 153 in the ages to come, when “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14).

If there is no significance to the actual number, the significance may lie in the fact that the fish *are numbered*. God always knows exactly how many people are saved, but the believers in any dispensation can never know for sure until they arrive at the “shore” of their particular kingdom. Our kingdom, of course, is not the kingdom of heaven on earth, it is the kingdom of heaven *in heaven* (I Cor. 15:50), the one we

cannot inherit until these flesh and blood bodies are “changed” (v. 51) to be able to live there.

When the net didn’t break despite the heavy load of fish, this stands in stark contrast to the first time the Lord told the apostles to let down their nets three years earlier (Luke 5:6). At that time, they were still part of the apostate nation, and so their nets could not hold the fish that represented the Jewish believers at Pentecost without breaking. If you ever wondered what the Lord meant when He said, “neither do men put new wine into old bottles” (Matt. 9:17), the believers at Pentecost were thought to be filled with “new wine” (Acts 2:13), and the new wine of these believers would not be safe in the net of the old apostate nation, but only in the new container of the little flock.



“...this shore lunch was a picture of the kingdom of heaven on earth...”

“Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord” (John 21:12).

Here, compare the invitation to “come and *dine*” with the Lord to Philip’s invitation to Nathanael three years earlier to “come and *see*” the Lord (John 1:45,46). This is symbolic of how, at the outset of the Lord’s ministry, the people of Israel were invited to come and see Him during His three-year ministry among them and decide for themselves if He was their Messiah. After that, at the end of His ministry in Israel, the people of that nation were invited to come and dine with the Lord in the kingdom, an invitation that Peter extended when he offered them “the times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19).

Of course, this limited-time offer was only tendered to those who knew that God had made the Jesus they crucified “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), and didn’t have to ask of Him, “Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.” These believers were foreshadowed by John and the apostles here who knew that this mysterious stranger was the Lord (John 21:7). Don’t forget, the gospel that they had to believe to be saved under the kingdom program was that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” in order to “have life through His name” (John 20:31), so those who recognized that He was the Lord would naturally be the ones who would be invited to the kingdom.

“Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise” (John 21:13).

When we compare the meal of bread and fish that the Lord shared with His apostles here with the bread and fish He shared with many

thousands of people earlier in His ministry, something appears to be missing. We see that in *that* instance He only partook of the bread and fish “when He had given thanks” (John 6:11). The omission of any mention of saying grace *here* provides us with further evidence that this shore lunch was a picture of the kingdom of heaven on earth, for in that kingdom the Lord will be *receiving* thanks from men, not giving it.

“This is now the third time that Jesus shewed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead” (John 21:14).

Here we have the final evidence that this passage is a foreshadowing of the kingdom. This was the Lord’s “third” post-resurrection appearance among His disciples, and the number three is associated with *resurrection* in Scripture, making this event symbolic of *Israel’s* resurrection. As you may know, the kingdom of heaven on earth will begin with the resurrection of redeemed Israel when, as Hosea put it, “*in the third day* He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight” (Hosea 6:2).

If you have enjoyed this study of the symbolism of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel of John, or you would like to study the drama of the kingdom program as it unfolds in the fourth gospel, just visit the Audio Sermon MP3 section of our website where we are posting messages from our two year study of John’s gospel. Then watch for further tastes of this shore lunch in upcoming issues! 

Endnote

1. “Must I Go Empty-Handed?” by C. C. Luther.



Amanda Olesiak

Meet Amanda!

Amanda Olesiak has joined our office workforce one day a week and is already hammering away at projects for which the rest of us never seem to have time. Amanda’s resumé includes volunteering at *Northern Grace Youth Camp* and a mission trip to the Philippines. She has also taken classes at *Berean Bible Institute*, and serves BBI as a part-time staff member. If that last name sounds familiar, her sister Kelly has been a valuable member of our team for years now, and is already showing Amanda the ropes.

Don’t get too used to that last name though, for Amanda just announced her engagement to Pastor Justin Becker, another BBI alum, now an associate pastor at *Falls Bible Church* in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. But a twenty-something Amanda by any other name would still be as welcome by Kelly and the rest of us staffers in our thirties, forties, fifties and sixties!



What to Wear

Lord, what should I put on today?
How should I dress for another day?

Should it be mere cloth to wear?
Or is it something I'm meant to share?

I'll do what Your Word says in Colossians three
Put on kindness, longsuffering and humility

Forbearing, forgiving, all come from Above
But before all these things put on love

Let the Word come to live within me
Until the day I am with You eternally.

—Judy Petras

IT'S NO CONTEST!

During his recent visit to the United States, the pope stirred up quite a bit of controversy when he canonized an 18th-century friar named Junipero Serra. The pontiff sought to recognize the friar for his work in bringing Catholicism to California, but there are some who claim he treated Native Americans harshly. This explains why a statue of Serra was vandalized after his elevation to sainthood was announced. As you can see, when your sainthood depends on your conduct, there will always be someone who will stand up to contest it.



How different it is with the saints mentioned in Scripture! The Corinthians were known for their carnality (I Cor. 3:1), yet Paul calls them "saints" (I Cor. 1:2). If you are wondering how this could be, it is because Paul knew that the verb form of the noun "saint" is *sanctify*, and while the Corinthians were carnal *in their conduct*, they were "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 1:2). In the Bible, men are "sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:16), not by any earthly church. They are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb. 10:10), and not by their behavior. Rome awards sainthood to men who are known for good works, but the Lord says that men are "sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts 26:18).

So it is that while the canonicity of all Rome's saints can be contested by men, not even *the devil himself* can contest the sainthood of the believer in Christ. It's no contest! Just remember, sainthood is a high calling, so make sure "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1).

—Pastor Kurth

The Riches of His Grace

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

—II Cor. 8:9

UNFOUNDED TRADITIONS

“A guard faithfully stood each day at his post. One day, a visitor inquired why he was standing in that exact spot. The guard scratched his head and replied, ‘I don’t know. These are my orders.’ So the visitor asked the captain of the guard. Again, he received the reply, ‘I don’t know. These are my orders.’ So the captain asked the king why the sentry was posted in that place, but even the king could not answer.

“So the king asked his advisors. A hundred years earlier, Catherine the Great planted a rosebush there and the sentry was posted to guard it. Although the rosebush had died eighty years earlier and Catherine the Great

was long gone, the sentry still stood guard.”¹

The Church down through the centuries has likewise adopted traditions that have been observed for so long they are generally accepted as truth. One such tradition is that Christ was born on December 25th. However, there is not a shred of Scriptural evidence that this was the month and day the Savior came into the world. Astute Bible teachers, who have taken the time to examine carefully the biblical record, generally agree that Christ was born in the early fall, probably in the month of September. Their conclusion is based on the eighth priestly course of Abia (Abijah—I Chron. 24:10) found in Luke’s gospel, which marks the beginning of the timeline preceding the birth of Christ (See Luke 1:5,24-26,36,39-42; 2:1,2).

This seems to be confirmed further by the unlikelihood that Caesar would have ordered a census

in the winter, especially since his subjects were ordered to return to the city where their family was from originally to register (Luke 2:1-5). We also know that the shepherds were still in the high country keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke 2:8). This means they had not yet brought their flocks down to the nearby towns and villages in preparation for rainy season that accompanies winter in Palestine.



But should we set a day aside every year to remember the *birth* of Christ? Of course, it is inconsequential that the exact day is unknown; the important thing is we celebrate the fact that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (I Tim. 1:15). The Apostle Paul gives a great deal of latitude in such matters when he says, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, **regardeth it unto the Lord**; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” (Rom. 14:5,6). You see, grace gives liberty within the boundaries of the Word of God. It respects the convictions of others who may not share our conviction.

We do not believe it is prudent to get caught up in the worldliness of the season or become entangled in the unfounded religious traditions of men. However, we do believe that a day should be set aside to thank our heavenly Father for His *unspeakable gift*—the gift that includes all others!

Perhaps we are well served to remember that our nation pauses every year in the month of February to pay tribute to perhaps the most honored president our country has ever known. But we find it interesting that it is Mr. Lincoln’s *accomplishments*, not his date of birth, that the nation commemorates. If this is true of a president who merely had feet of clay, how much more so the Lord Jesus Christ, Who left heaven’s glory to accomplish the greatest work this world has ever known. He gave Himself a ransom for all, that all those who believe on Him might have eternal life.

This time of the year gives us a wonderful opportunity to *expose* the traditions surrounding the events of Christ’s entrance into the world. Therefore, tell one and all that we no longer worship the babe in Bethlehem’s manger, but serve a living Savior who *died* for the sins of the world. In so doing, men and women will be brought into a fuller understanding of Paul’s gospel (II Cor. 5:14-21). Little wonder the apostle shows us the correlation between the birth of Christ and the gospel of the grace of God. This prompts us to ask three questions based on Paul’s chronology here in II Corinthians 8:9: When was Christ rich? When did He become poor? And in what sense are we rich?

THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Paul's statement "though He was rich," takes us back to eternity past. Remember that the Scriptures clearly teach Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. Indeed, He is the very fullness of God. The apostle says of Him that He is the "firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15). The word "firstborn" is used in two senses in the Scriptures. We are perhaps the more familiar with its usage to describe the first child born into a family. Here the term normally denotes *order*—first, second, third born, etc.

Birth order is a fascinating study in itself. Firstborn children are customarily *perfectionists*, probably because their parents expect them to be little models of themselves. They are usually very well-organized individuals. Disorder drives them absolutely crazy. The second born, who is loved just as much, often complains of being the forgotten one. Of course, it doesn't help matters when Aunt Julia visits and can't remember the second child's name. And, naturally, there is no question in the minds of the other siblings that the third born is spoiled rotten and gets away with murder.

In any event, when Mary brought forth her "firstborn" Son, it was in the sense of the above. He was her first offspring, implying other children were born to her and Joseph, who began a normal marriage relationship *after* the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:25 cf. 13:53-58).

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven,

and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (Col. 1:15,16). This term "firstborn" is also used as a title of honor and dignity as noted in the passage. Although Israel was the least among the nations, God called the chosen nation His firstborn son (Ex. 4:22). In other words, Israel held a position of *pre-eminence* over the nations. With that said, not only does Christ have a preeminent position over creation, He also has preeminence as the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ. He is *heir* to all things and we are joint-heirs with Him.

As the Creator, He wore honor, glory and majesty as a robe. The angelic host of heaven humbly bowed in adoration before Him. The Seraphim rested not "day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." But Christ left it all behind for the sake of the great work of redemption. He emptied Himself of the *outward manifestation* of His attributes and glory (Phil. 2:6-8). Bear in mind that He was wholly God and wholly man when He walked this earth. He simply veiled His glory with the garb of human flesh so that sinful humanity could enter into His presence. Christ took on the form of a servant that He might experience what it was to be human. Indeed, He became the poorest of the poor in the process!

WHEN DID CHRIST BECOME POOR?

"Yet for your sakes He became poor." As we have seen, Christ is the eternal Son of God Who pre-existed the incarnation. "But

when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). According to the prophetic Scriptures, the phrase, “when the fullness of the time was come,” looks back to the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel. Daniel revealed that from the completion of the wall in Jerusalem under Nehemiah, until the coming of the Messiah, there would be 434 years (Dan. 9:24-25). This period was fulfilled when Christ was born at Bethlehem—it was God’s appointed time.

But the fullness of time, humanly speaking, was also favorable for the following reasons. While Rome ruled the world with an iron fist in those days, Caesar Augustus had established the *Pax Romana* or Roman peace. During this time, which covered about 200 years, there was very little military intervention by the caesars.



Throughout that period Rome had built a network of roads across the known world to enhance trade and commerce with other countries. This, of course, also gave free access for the delivery of the gospel. When God sent the Savior from heaven’s glory, in His infinite knowledge,

He foreknew all these events, which paved the way to provide redemption for mankind.

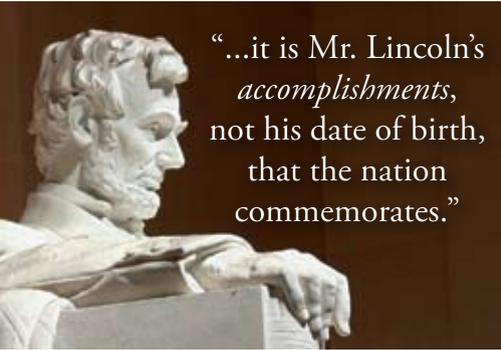
The Apostle John adds, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). The Greek verb translated “was” in this passage is actually “became” in the original language. So then, the “Word *became* flesh” the night that Christ was born of the virgin. Interestingly, He chose not to be swaddled by those living in a royal palace, where only a select few would have access. Rather, He was born into *poverty*. As a result, down through the generations all men, rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, could approach Him freely.

Every child of God marvels at the virgin birth of Christ. But His entrance into the world was not unusual in itself—it was like thousands of other births. What was miraculous is the profound truth that Christ was *conceived* by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin.

After centuries of waiting for the consolation of Israel, the fullness of time had finally arrived. Unknown to him, in accordance with the providence of God, Caesar Augustus determined that “all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2:1). This census required that everyone under the sphere of Roman rule return to the place of their extraction. Since *both* Mary and Joseph were of the house and lineage of David, it necessitated that they return to Bethlehem to be registered. Of course, by this time, Mary was great with child. She probably thought to herself that this Roman imposition could not be more untimely. But with

one turn of the wheel God fulfilled a twofold purpose.

What little money Mary and Joseph had was probably nearly depleted by the time they arrived at the city of David. It made little difference, since weary travelers had already filled every available room in town. Even the stables were overflowing with beasts of burden, leaving no room at the inn. Apparently, Mary and Joseph found refuge at one of the out-buildings, or caves, nearby which at least gave them some shelter from the cool night air. Far from the ivory palaces of Rome, Christ was born in the *obscure* little village of Bethlehem. There was no pomp nor fanfare, only the sigh of the wind as it blew the autumn leaves across the dirt floor.



“...it is Mr. Lincoln’s
accomplishments,
not his date of birth,
that the nation
commemorates.”

On this night of nights there were indeed visitors who came to pay homage to the newborn King. And we would expect the list of dignitaries to be impressive seeing that the King of Kings’ and the Lord of Lords’ arrival was foretold by the prophets, and now gloriously announced by an angelic host. Sadly though, the rulers of this world were all slumbering in *darkness*. As we stand in amazement and witness the state of the

world at the time, we want to shout from the top of the house, “Awake, awake ye evildoers, the Savior is in your midst!” But they were dead to the world, as they say.

God chose rather to announce the coming of His Only-Begotten Son to a handful of poor, lowly shepherds. Ironically, it was this humble group of shepherds, faithfully attending their sheep, who were among the first to worship the Lamb of God. They probably were amazed to find the Holy One of God lying in a manger, a common feeding trough for animals. But this would be characteristic of His years on the earth. In fact, early in His earthly ministry the Lord stated, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head” (Matt. 8:20).

Shortly after Mary and Joseph attended to their business at Bethlehem, they began their long journey back to Nazareth where they lived (Luke 2:39). Their travels took them through Jerusalem, where they remained for a few days for good reason. Here Mary’s firstborn was circumcised on the eighth day, and given His name, Jesus. With the birth of every male child a special offering was required according to the law. Normally, a lamb was offered unless the family was *poor*, in which case a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons were sacrificed (Lev. 12:8 cf. Luke 2:24). This further substantiates that Christ was born into *poverty*.

IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE RICH?

“That ye through His poverty might be rich.” The riches that

Paul speaks of here are spiritual riches. We are blessed today with all spiritual blessings in the heav- enlies. There are well over 300 of these riches found throughout Paul's epistles. We have listed below a small number of what the Body of Christ enjoys in Christ.

- Saved by grace alone
- Justified freely by His grace
- Redeemed by the Blood
- Forgiven of all sins—past, pres- ent, and future
- Given the gift of eternal life
- Members of the true Church— the Body of Christ
- Predestinated unto the adop- tion of full-grown sons
- Identified with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- Given a new nature
- Indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise
- Seated with Christ in the heav- enlies
- Heavenly hope and calling
- Hope of the Rapture
- Hope of the resurrection

After pondering all that the Savior has done for us, Paul ex- claims, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable [indescribable] gift!" But there is more, much more! It is difficult to compre- hend, but after all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf, God plans to show us His *kindness* in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7).

Picture, if you will in your mind's eye, walking with God the Father in heaven and pausing every so often to hear Him say, "These heavenly realms are your inheritance, take full possession of them; they are yours to enjoy. These positions of authority once held by the workers of darkness

are now yours. The angels were created specifically to serve you throughout eternity. Since the heavens are higher than the earth, all members of my Son's Body shall reign over the earth." The queen of Sheba marveled at the riches of Solomon's kingdom, but they pale by comparison to our spiritual riches in Christ. We are blessed with *riches* untold!

Our heavenly Father has en- sured that the world will never forget that He sent His Only- Begotten Son. He accomplished this by making Christ the *center* of history. In the course of time all major events prior to the birth of Christ are identified as B.C. (before Christ). After His com- ing, they are distinguished by A.D. (Anno Domini) "in the year of our Lord" (i.e. the year of our Lord's birth).

In a recent attempt to expunge any reference to Christ, the world has changed B.C. to B.C.E. which means, *Before the Common Era*. In place of "in the year of our Lord," we are now told to use C.E., identified as the *Common Era*. But the world cannot erase Christ from the pages of the Word of God. Neither can it remove His name from past historical events, nor from the millions and millions of legal documents that bear "in the year of our Lord." Despite the world's obsession to remove Christ from the fabric of our lives, He is still the center of all things! This, however, does beg the question, "Is He the *center* of your life?" 

Endnote

1. Author unknown, hotsermons.com/ sermon-illustrations.



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Pennsylvania:

“I’m writing in response to Echo Month. It’s my pleasure to testify as to how this ministry has impacted me...my spiritual life has become focused and fixed on the work of the cross. The grace that flows from it causes me to live the dream.”

From our Inbox:

“Have I got it? I don’t need to repent or pray or do anything, including water baptism, for salvation. I simply need to believe Jesus died, was buried and is risen from the grave according to the Scriptures, then trust in Jesus’ faithfulness?” (You got it. Welcome to the family!—Ed).

From Florida:

“I give praise and thanks to God for blessing me once again by letting me hear your kind and uplifting words to me. Thank you dear sir. In the past 24 calendar years that I’ve been incarcerated, no preachers, pastors or evangelists have ever taken the time to write a letter to me.”

From Minnesota:

“I was just thinking about sending you a note regarding your audio sermon series on the book of Colossians when I saw the Echo request in the *Searchlight*...it was my first time hearing a book of the Bible taught rightly divided, and it greatly edified me, but also gave me so much information to use in teaching my own class, and also in learning how to teach the Word.”

From our Inbox:

“Thanks for penning the article entitled, ‘A Guilty Conscience.’ Sometimes you just hit the ball right out of the park! And this is a great example. I copied it and put it in a file I have with other writings of this top caliber. We’ll see you in Heaven, but for now, God bless you, Pastor Sadler.”

From Louisiana:

“I greatly appreciate all of the reprints of long-gone books!”

From Nevada:

“Thank you for the booklets, Pastor Sadler. I really appreciate your writing style; it’s easily accessible.”

From West Virginia:

“Before Echo Month ends we wanted to let you know how much we appreciate your efforts to edify and encourage us as believers... The *Berean Searchlight* always has such timely messages. This month’s ‘Blood Moon Mania’ came the day after a fellow believer told me about the dire prediction. After reading the article I was able to biblically counter this myth.” (We’re all still here; prepare for the backpedaling and spin-doctoring!—Ed).

From New Zealand:

“Living as we do at the end of the world in NZ, we don’t have a grace church in the country let alone our town, to my knowledge, so your *Berean Searchlights* are so much more precious to us down here.”

NEW ITEMS!

The Miracles of Calvary, Rightly Divided

By Paul M. Sadler

Pre-Order Now! Available Jan. 21st

DVD SERIES Price: \$15.00

Disc 1:

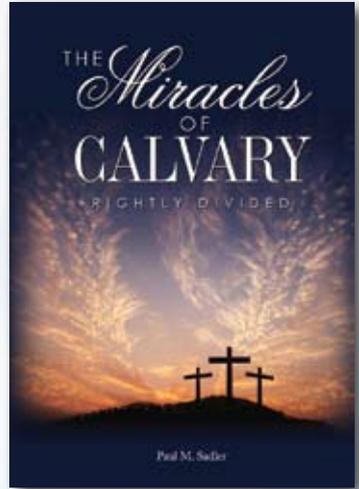
Message 1: The Scarlet Thread

Message 2: Supernatural Darkness and Dismissal of the Lord's Spirit

Disc 2:

Message 3: The Renting of the Veil and The Miraculous Earthquake

Message 4: The Resurrection of Christ and The Bodies of Them that Slept Arose



Bible Contrasts

By David Adams

We see a number of dissimilar wordings within God's Word. The main reason for these differences is that God is setting forth two separate programs, one that deals with the earth and Israel, the other that concerns the heavens and Christ's Body Church.

BOOKLET 28 PAGES

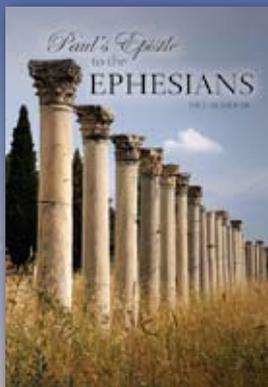
Special Price: \$2.00

(Expires Dec. 31st)

Orders up to \$30.00, add **\$4.00** for p/h — Orders over \$30.00, add **15%** for p/h

Wisconsin residents please add 5.6% for sales tax

Give the Gift of Light on God's Word!



Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

By Paul M. Sadler

Explores our riches in Christ!

HARDCOVER 400 PAGES

Special Price: \$12.00 (Reg. \$16.50)

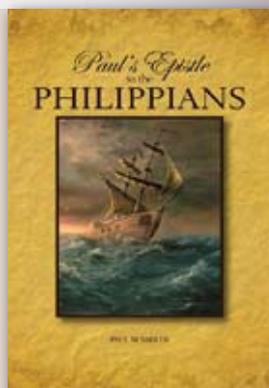
Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

By Paul M. Sadler

Explores the mind of Christ!

HARDCOVER 224 PAGES

Special Price: \$8.00 (Reg. \$12.00)



Colossians

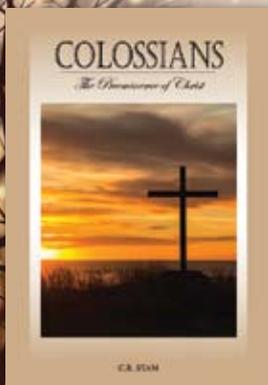
By Cornelius R. Stam

Explores the preeminence of Christ!

HARDCOVER 256 PAGES

Special Price: \$10.00

(Reg. \$14.50)



THESE OFFERS END DECEMBER 31, 2015

Orders up to \$30.00, add \$4.00 for p/h — Orders over \$30.00, add 15% for p/h

For international orders please ask for special pricing

News and Announcements

The New BBF Conference: The *Berean Bible Fellowship* conference that was always held in Cedar Lake, Indiana, has been relocated to the *Community Bible Church* in Tipp City, Ohio, accompanied by some other changes of which they'd like to make you aware. The conference will begin on Sunday evening instead of Saturday evening, and end on Thursday afternoon. The 7 a.m. messages have been moved to 8 a.m. to better accommodate the many who love to hit the snooze button. The host church has a gymnasium, six rooms for youth classes, room for outdoor games, and a campfire pit. Be sure to mention the BBF conference when you reserve your \$69 conference-rate room at LaQuinta Inn & Suites before June 4th (937-667-1574), and plan to visit the Creation Museum, a scant hour away, prior to or at the conclusion of the conference.

New North Carolina Church: Now that U. S. Marine Jamie Arnold is back from three combat tours serving his country, he is serving the Lord by combatting the errors that always arise when the Word of truth is not rightly divided. If you know Paul's gospel, you're among the few who can handle the truth, so why not join his home church in the Jacksonville area. You can contact Jamie at arnoldjay73@gmail.com, or at (717) 880-7047. Be sure to thank him for his *semper fi* service to God and country, and tell him oorah for us.

New Arizona Church Location: As of January 1, *West Valley Grace Fellowship* will be teaching the same timeless truth they've always taught in a terrific new location. Most locals know that Sun City West is just west of Phoenix, but if you are not sure how to find 14465 R H Johnson Boulevard, just contact Pastor Mark Dilley at jjdster@gmail.com, or at (623) 377-3071.

What's in Your Wallet? We've always accepted Visa and MasterCard to receive your donations and orders, but recently we came up with the capital idea of accepting American Express and Discover cards as well. It pays to discover new ways to order our materials, and as for giving to the Lord's work...priceless.



The *Little Sable Point Lighthouse* is located in Silver Lake State Park close to Mears, Michigan. Several miles to the north is the *Big Sable Point Light*, which is the same height (107 ft.) as the Little Sable Light. Little Sable Point means "little point of sand," representing its location which juts into Lake Michigan.

PRICE LIST

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS BY C. R. STAM—FOUNDER

(Hardcover—Gold Stamped)

| | |
|--|---------|
| Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Volume 1 | \$21.50 |
| Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Volume 2 | 21.50 |
| Colossians (Commentary)..... | 14.50 |
| I Corinthians (Commentary)..... | 12.50 |
| II Corinthians (Commentary)..... | 12.50 |
| Divine Election and Human Responsibility..... | 10.50 |
| Galatians (Commentary)..... | 14.50 |
| Hebrews, Who Wrote It and Why? | 10.50 |
| Holding Fast the Faithful Word <i>Out of print</i> | 14.50 |
| Man, His Nature and Destiny..... | 12.50 |
| Memoirs of Pastor Cornelius R. Stam, The | 13.50 |
| Pastoral Epistles (Commentary) | 12.50 |
| Paul, His Apostleship and Message | 11.50 |
| Romans (Commentary)..... | 16.50 |
| Sermon on the Mount, The | 10.50 |
| Suggestions for Young Pastors | 10.50 |
| Thessalonians (Commentary) | 12.50 |
| Things That Differ..... | 13.50 |
| True Spirituality | 11.50 |

Paperbacks

| | |
|--|--------|
| Baptism and the Bible | \$9.00 |
| Lord's Supper and the Bible, The | 7.00 |
| Moses and Paul | 7.00 |
| No Other Doctrine..... | 9.00 |
| Our Great Commission | 9.00 |
| Things That Differ, English or Spanish | 10.00 |
| Two Minutes with the Bible..... | 11.00 |
| Twofold Purpose of God, The..... | 7.00 |

WRITINGS BY PAUL M. SADLER—PRESIDENT

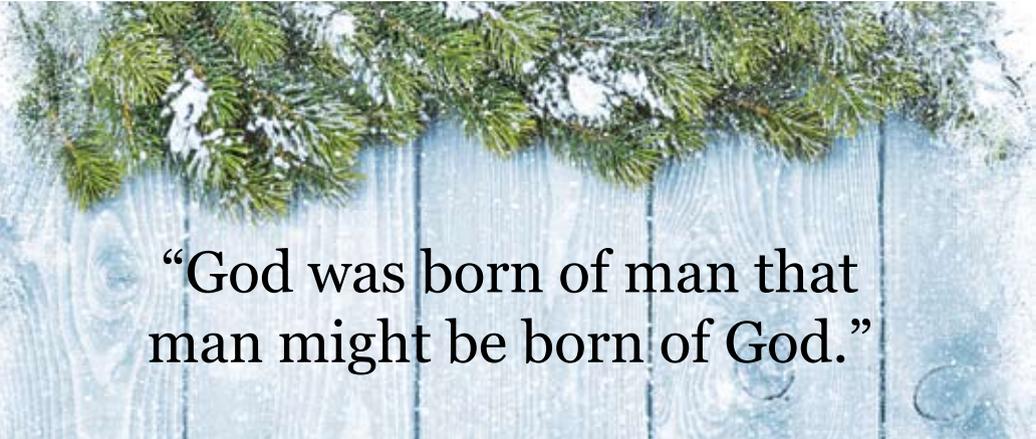
| | |
|--|---------|
| Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (Hardcover) | \$12.50 |
| Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter, The (Hardcover)..... | 13.50 |
| Oneness of Marriage, The (Paperback)..... | 8.00 |
| Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Hardcover) | 16.50 |
| Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Hardcover) | 12.00 |
| Revelation, Volume 1 (Hardcover)..... | 12.50 |
| Revelation, Volume 2 (Hardcover)..... | 14.00 |
| Studies in James (Paperback)..... | 10.00 |
| Triumph of His Grace, The (Hardcover)..... | 13.50 |
| According to the Scriptures (Booklet) | 2.00 |
| Are You Secure? (Booklet) | 2.00 |
| Historical Beginning of the Church, The (Booklet)..... | 3.00 |
| Key to Understanding the Scriptures, The (Chart)..... | 0.50 |
| Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period, The (Booklet)..... | 4.00 |
| Trials and Temptations (Booklet)..... | 2.00 |
| Uncertain Trumpet of Water Baptism, The (Booklet)..... | 2.00 |

Orders up to \$30.00, please add **\$4.00** for Postage and Handling
Orders over \$30.00, please add **15%** for Postage and Handling

Foreign orders must be remitted in U. S. currency

THE BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT
N112 W17761 MEQUON ROAD
PO Box 756
GERMANTOWN, WI 53022-0756

PERIODICALS
PAID AT GERMANTOWN, WI
AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES



“God was born of man that
man might be born of God.”