

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2016



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

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

Ellen Goodman once said, "We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking

for flaws, but for potential."

We have an endless source of potential in Christ to accomplish the Lord's will in the coming year. There are 365 days etched on the calendar, which is ample time to make a difference in the lives of others. The possibilities are limitless! The problem is we have a natural propensity to clutter our pilgrimage on earth with nonessential things. Paul challenged the Ephesians to be "redeeming the time, because the days are evil." The thought is to buy time from our busy schedules and set it aside for the things of the Lord. Life is short! Those who fail to do so will one day be left with the painful memory of what could have been if only they had applied this truth earlier in life.

One of the chief enemies of redeeming the time in our lives is *procrastination*. It promises, "Tomorrow Lord," but never seems to get around to it. Our heavenly Father has graciously promised us eternal life, but in the words of Augustine, "God has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination." One of the outstanding attributes of the former generation was their *zeal* to see lost souls saved. Furthermore, they did not rest day nor night in their pursuit to introduce Paul's gospel to those who hadn't seen the Word rightly divided. Many gave sacrificially of themselves again and again to make this possible. May this zeal be rekindled in us as the present caretakers of the riches of His grace.

We must also heed the charge of the Apostle Paul to stand in the defense and confirmation of the gospel of the grace of God. This isn't popular these days, but it is essential we do so, otherwise the message of grace will be lost to future generations of believers, including our children and grandchildren. Never allow anyone to rob you of this wonderful truth. It is precious to those of us who have been delivered from the confusion of denominationalism. With the dawn of another New Year, we want to reiterate the words of Lord Tennyson who stated, "Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Prayerfully consider how you might help us "make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery," in the coming year. In the meantime, "We'll be praying for you!"

Amazed at His grace,

Paul M. Sadler, President



THE Genuine ARTICLE

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Have you ever used Romans 15:16 to point out to someone that the Apostle Paul was *“the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,”* only to have them argue that no, he was just *a minister* of the Gentiles, one of many who ministered to the nations? If you bump into someone who really knows his stuff, he may even point out that there are more verses that use the indefinite article to describe Paul as *“a minister”* (Acts 26:16; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23,25) than the lone Scripture that you can cite where he is called *“the minister.”*

If anyone has ever called you on this, as you’ve sought to press the apostleship of Paul, you don’t have far to go to turn the tables and give them pause and food for thought. You see, just a few verses earlier in Romans 15, Paul referred to the Lord Jesus Christ as just *“a minister of the circumcision”* (v. 8).

How can this be? How can the Son of God be anything other than *the* minister of the people He came to save (Matt. 1:21; 20:28)? I believe it is because, while the Lord Jesus was God in the flesh, He did not come into this world to sit in an ivory tower and dispatch other men to minister to the circumcision. He Himself was on the front line of the battle for the souls of men, standing shoulder to shoulder with other ministers of the circumcision, men like John the Baptist, the twelve, the seventy, and any and all others who ministered to *“the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matt. 10:6) in the face of opposition that came from men and devils alike.

In the same way, there is no question that the Apostle Paul was *the* minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, the preeminent minister of the uncircumcision, as even an examination of the passages where he is called *“a minister”* will show (Acts 26:16-18; Eph. 3:1-7; Col. 1:24-29). But like his Lord, Paul was in the trenches, duking it out with the enemies of his gospel, standing shoulder to shoulder in the battle for truth with men like Timothy and Titus and Aristarchus and Epaphras and others.

So stick to your guns when it comes to standing for the distinctiveness of the apostleship and message of Paul. In the face of opposition from men and devils alike, continue to insist that whether he’s called by the definite or indefinite article, the Apostle Paul was the genuine article!

The Mystery of Godliness

By Pastor Ricky Kurth



No matter who you are, you've probably sung the song, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." You may even know all the words. What you may *not* know is that instead of singing, "...which nobody can deny," the British sing, "and so say all of us." And when they sing this song to a bus driver, as is the custom in England, they add, "and so say all of us *on the bus*." Isn't it interesting the variations we find in familiar things in different cultures?

Speaking of things which nobody can deny, as we look to the words of our text, we see something that the Apostle Paul says nobody can deny:

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16).

When Paul says that the mystery of godliness is something that is "without controversy," he is saying that it is something that nobody can deny. You see, a controversy is something that arises when someone says something and someone else denies that it is true. Pastor Stam spent many years proclaiming the distinctiveness of Paul's apostleship and message, and after the religious leaders of his day denied that what he was saying was true, he wrote a book called *The Controversy*¹ to describe it all. With this definition in mind, when Paul says the mystery of godliness is *without* controversy, we know he is saying it is something that *nobody* can deny!

The question is, what *is* this mystery of godliness? Most commentaries maintain that the mystery of godliness has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ's presence

here on earth as recorded in the four gospels. After all, He was God “manifest in the flesh,” and it is certainly a mystery to us how He could be fully God and fully man, as the Bible teaches.

The problem with this view is that Paul is not talking about the mystery of *God* here, he’s talking about the mystery of *godliness*. The word “godly” is a contraction, similar to the word *can’t*, which is an abbreviated form of *cannot*. “Godly” is an abbreviated form of “God-like,” and the Lord Jesus Christ was not *like* God, He *was* God. *We’re* the ones who are supposed to be godly (Titus 2:11,12). So we would submit, for your consideration, that the mystery of godliness is talking about us, members of “the church, which is His Body” (Eph. 1:22,23).

The Mystery of Godliness Was a Mystery!

Remember, we are talking about the *mystery* of godliness here. Was it a mystery that God would be manifest in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ? Before you answer, remember that a mystery in the Bible is something that cannot be found in the pages of Old Testament prophecy. With that in mind, we know that it was *not* a mystery that God would be manifest in the flesh of the Lord Jesus, for the prophet Isaiah predicted of the Lord that His mother would “call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14), which Matthew was inspired to interpret as “God with us” (Matt. 1:23). So it was no mystery that God would be manifest in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But is “the church, which is His Body” found in prophecy? No, it was a mystery! In fact, Paul calls it “a *great* mystery” (Eph. 5:32), for the pages of Old Testament prophecy can be searched in vain for so much as a *whisper* of it. So I would invite you to consider that when Paul says “*great* is the mystery of godliness” that he is talking about the “great mystery” of the church, the Body of Christ.

If you know your Bible, you know that this interpretation fits the context here far better than the interpretation that makes this verse about Christ’s life on earth. In the context, Paul just finished discussing the structure of the local church (I Tim. 3:1-14), and the local church is just the manifestation of the church, which is His Body. The apostle concluded that discussion by noting that “the church of the living God” is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (v. 15). When the Lord was here on earth, *He* was the pillar and ground of the truth, but now that He is gone, *we* are the pillar and ground of the truth. It would be strange to add a verse here about the earthly life of Christ when the context is clearly about the life of Christ *in us*.

God Was Manifest in the Flesh

So let’s begin an examination of the details of our text to see if these details don’t fit the Body of Christ better than they fit the Lord Jesus Christ. As we do, we’ll see that some of the things that Paul mentions here could not possibly fit the Lord Jesus when He was here on earth, such as when

Paul says that God was “preached unto the Gentiles.” However, as we begin, we’ll first see something that sounds like it *could* be applied to the Lord. When Paul says that “God was *manifest in the flesh*,” this certainly agrees with how the apostle John described the Lord Jesus when he said, “the Word was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

But it is interesting to learn that the Greek word for “dwelt” here is the verb form of the Greek word for *tabernacle*. The Old Testament tabernacle was a tent made of skin (Ex. 26:1,14) with the glory of God inside (Ex. 40:34; II Sam. 7:6). When the Lord was here, *He* was a tent made of skin with the glory of God inside—He tabernacled among us. Now that He’s gone, however, *you* are a tent made of skin with the glory of God inside! Paul calls our physical bodies “our earthly house of *this tabernacle*” (II Cor. 5:1), and says that the life of Christ is “*manifest in our body...in our mortal flesh*” (II Cor. 4:10,11). When Christ was here, God was manifest in *His* flesh, but now that He’s gone, His life is manifest in *our* flesh.

If you are not sure *how* God is manifest in our flesh, let’s read the context of Paul’s statement that God is “manifest...in our mortal flesh.” As you read what he says about *us*, see if it doesn’t sound like he is actually talking about *Christ*:

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed...” (II Cor. 4:8,9).

Doesn’t that sound like how the Lord lived *His* life when God was manifest in *His* flesh? Didn’t He manifest God when He lived that way? Well, when *you* live that way, He is manifest in *your* flesh.

Beloved, the Lord would not have been human if He didn’t get “troubled” about things now and then (John 11:33; 12:27; 13:21), but He manifested the life of God when He was troubled “yet not distressed.” In the same way, *you* wouldn’t be human if you didn’t get troubled about the things in *your* life, but when you are troubled “but not distressed” you manifest Christ! The Lord wouldn’t have been human if He was never “perplexed” (Mark 14:33), but He manifested the life of God when He was “perplexed, but not in despair,” and you manifest His life when you do the same.



When the Lord was “persecuted,” He was able to bear it because He knew He was “not forsaken.” When you are able to remember that *you* are not forsaken when *you* are persecuted, God is manifest in *your* flesh.

The words “cast down” mean to be discouraged or saddened, and the Lord would not have been

human if He never felt cast down (Isa. 49:4,5). But at such times He surely remembered verses like Psalm 42:5,6:

“Why art thou *cast down*, O my soul?...hope thou in God...my soul is *cast down* within me: therefore will I remember Thee....”

Similarly, when *you* hope in God when *you* are cast down, when you are able to remember Him at such difficult times, God is manifest in *your* flesh as you live your life like the Lord lived His. In the context, this is what Paul meant when he said that “the life of Jesus might be manifest in our body.”

God Was Justified in the Spirit

Now notice that our text says that God was not just manifest in the flesh, He was also “justified in the Spirit.” The commentaries that say that this is talking about Christ on earth point to verses like Matthew 3:16 to interpret this phrase. However, the Lord wasn’t *justified in the Spirit* when He was baptized, He was *identified by the Spirit* (John 1:31-34). So “justified in the Spirit” doesn’t fit if we apply it to the Lord. But does it fit if we apply it to the Body of Christ? Why would God need to be justified anyway? Who would ever think that *God* was less than just?

The answer is, plenty of people! For thousands of years men thought that God was unjust *for saving sinners*. That is, for thousands of years men wondered how a God of *absolute holiness* could justify a sinner like David, a man guilty of both adultery and murder. But once Paul made it

clear that “Christ died for our sins” and rose again (I Cor. 15:3,4), once men understood that God set Christ forth “to be a propitiation through faith in His blood” (Rom. 3:24,25), Paul could “declare...*His righteousness*: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (vv. 25,26). Since Christ paid for our sins, God could *justly* justify sinners and not have to sneak them into the back door of heaven when “the accuser of our brethren” wasn’t looking. So in the mystery of godliness, God was justified *in saving us* because His righteous standards were met by the sacrifice of His Son.

“...some of the things that Paul mentions here could not possibly fit the Lord...”



But what did Paul mean when he wrote that “God was...justified *in the Spirit*”? What did the Spirit have to do with justifying God’s holiness in saving sinners? Well, God *couldn’t* be justified *in the Law* in this matter, for the Law said:

“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD” (Prov. 17:15).

The Law said that it is an abomination to condemn the just and justify the wicked, and God could not be justified in saving sinners as wicked as we are under a law like that. But *in the Spirit*

He was able to put our sins on Christ, make *Him* wicked (II Cor. 5:21a), then condemn the wicked *in Him*. Then, when we believed the gospel, He put Christ's righteousness on us (II Cor. 5:21b) and justified us *in Him*. Of course, it was a *mystery* that God would do this, but that's how God was justified in the Spirit as part of the mystery of godliness!

God Was Seen of Angels

Next, Paul says that God was "seen of angels." This was yet another thing that was true of the Lord when He was here, for if the angels could describe what He was wearing to the shepherds, they would have had to have seen Him (Luke 2:11-13). The Lord was also "seen of angels" when He was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:11), when He was sweating blood in the garden (Luke 22:43,44), and when He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9,10). But it wasn't a *mystery* that angels would see the Lord, for speaking to the Lord prophetically, Psalm 91:11 says of God the Father, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways." We know that this spoke of Christ, for the Lord didn't correct the devil when he applied this verse to Him (Matt. 4:6,7). So it was no mystery that the Lord would be "seen of angels," and when He was, these sightings couldn't be part of "the mystery of godliness."

But it *was* a mystery that *we* would be seen of angels! After all, it was a mystery that the Body of Christ would even *exist*, so it had to be a mystery that we'd be seen by anyone!

If you are wondering why angels would want to watch us, these holy ones were always interested in watching God's children in Israel (Dan. 4:17). Now they are watching us, and Paul tells us why:

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

The angels knew all about the wisdom of God in His plan for the earth. They knew from Old Testament prophecy how He plans to rule the earth *through Israel* in the kingdom of heaven. But the angels knew nothing about the wisdom of God's plan to rule the heavens through the Body of Christ, so they are presently learning "by the church" that the wisdom of God has many folds, or wrinkles, for it is in speaking of the mystery (Eph. 3:9) that Paul calls God's wisdom "manifold" (v. 10).

There is also something else that angels learn from watching us. They learn principles of *rule* and *order*. Paul told the Corinthians to "let all things be done decently *and in order*" (I Cor. 14:40), he told Titus to "*set in order* the things that are wanting" (Titus 1:5), and he rejoiced to see this kind of order in the Colossians (Col. 2:5). But Paul wasn't the only one who was "beholding" the order in the Body of Christ. Women are told to accept the order of the headship of their husbands (I Cor. 11:1-9) "because of the angels" who would be *watching* their order (v. 10). In addition, Paul gave Timothy instructions about the order of spiritual rule

in the church (I Tim. 5:17-20) and then said,

“I charge thee before...the elect angels, that thou observe these things...” (I Tim. 5:21).

There is a reason why angels are watching our rule and order. You see, angels currently take their orders directly from God, but one day they will be taking their orders from God *through us* (I Cor. 6:3). We are already over them in Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; 2:6), and someday we shall “reign” over them in Him (II Tim. 2:12). But since we were made “a little lower than the angels” (Psa. 8:5), angels must *learn* to obey us by beholding our order. If even the Lord Jesus had to learn to be obedient to the subordinate Romans who took His life (John 10:18; Heb. 5:7,8), simply because as representatives of the government He was under their rule, surely angels must learn to be obedient to us. The Lord had to learn this obedience because He had never had to be obedient to anyone in the past, and the angels must learn this obedience because they never had to be obedient to us in the past.

Seen of, Not Taught By

Of course, learning from men is the very opposite of the function of angels under the Law. Under the Law, angels didn’t *learn* God’s wisdom, they *taught it*. First, they taught the Jews about the wisdom of God by *giving* them the Law (Acts 7:53), and then they were involved in *speaking it* (Heb. 2:2). I believe they were involved in giving and speaking the Law to the Jews in the same way the Spirit is involved in giving and teaching

the wisdom of God to us (I Cor. 2:13). Today, however, angels are not involved in teaching us God’s wisdom. We are aware that Joseph Smith claimed an angel taught him the message of Mormonism, and that Islam claims they too received their message by the disposition of angels. But Paul is very clear that angels are *learning* from men in this dispensation, not *teaching* them.

That’s how Paul could confidently declare that even if “an angel from heaven” should “preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*” (Gal. 1:8). Paul knew that if an angel from heaven *did* preach a message that differed from his gospel that he would have to be one of the *fallen* angels from heaven (II Cor. 11:14,15), a member of the “spiritual wickedness in high places” that Paul warns us about elsewhere (Eph. 6:12). Paul could be sure that *God* would not send an angel to communicate further truth apart from what he taught, for he knew that God is not using angels to teach men in the dispensation of grace.

Angels watched the Lord when He was here, but now that He’s gone, *they are watching you*. They watched the Lord be born (Luke 2:11-13), and they watched you be *born again*. They watched, and surely cheered, as the Lord was tempted and overcame the devil’s temptation (Matt. 4:11), and I believe they watch and cheer when *you* overcome temptation. In addition, angels watched as, humanly speaking, the Lord struggled mightily to learn obedience

through the trials of Gethsemane (Heb. 5:7,8) so that He could be “obedient unto death” a short while later (Phil. 2:8), and they watch as *you* struggle to learn obedience so you can go through the trials that Paul says *you* “must” go through (Acts 14:22). These holy ones also watched the Lord as He was caught up to heaven, and they’ll watch as we are “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air” as well (I Thes. 4:17).

A Spectacular Show

Angels are watching you, beloved, and you are putting on quite a show for them. A *spectacular* show, as a matter of fact. Do you remember what Paul said about himself and his fellow workers in the ministry?

“...we are made a spectacle... to angels” (I Cor. 4:9).



The word “spectacle” means a *show*, something you might see in a theater. That’s why our King James translators translated the Greek word for “spectacle” as “theater” twice (Acts 19:29,31). When we read Paul’s description of *how* he was “made a spectacle unto...angels,” we get a feel for the kind of show that he and his coworkers were putting on for them:

“...we are made a spectacle... to angels...we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat...” (I Cor. 4:9-13).

As you can see, Paul and his team were putting on a *spectacular* show of faithfulness and humility for the angels, and this is a show you can put on for them as well. When *you* are hungry, thirsty, or are buffeted by life in other ways, yet through it all you humbly “labour” to make a living with *your* own hands, even though you are a child of the King, that’s quite a spectacle! When *you* get “reviled” for Christ’s sake but choose to bless in response, when *you* are “defamed” by men and, rather than lash out at them, you choose to “intreat” them to be reconciled to God instead (II Cor. 5:20), you are putting on a *spectacular* show for the angels, an encore performance to the one your apostle gave them so many centuries ago.

True, the Lord Jesus was also seen of angels and put on quite a show for them when He was here. But now that He is gone, God is manifest in *your* flesh, and as you seek to live your life as the Lord Jesus Christ lived His, you are putting on *the greatest show on earth*, despite what Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey might claim to the contrary!

To Be Continued!



Endnote

1. *The Controversy* is now entitled *Holding Fast the Faithful Word* (out of print).

Question Box

“In what sense does Paul use the term ‘save’ in I Timothy 4:16?”

The apostle’s charge to Timothy was, “take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” Paul’s challenge was intended to both warn his son in the faith and encourage him. The sense of the warning is, if Timothy would faithfully proclaim the apostle’s teachings of grace, he would not only save or *deliver* himself from deception and unsound doctrine but also those that hear him. In short, Paul’s gospel is a safeguard against error.

—Pastor Sadler

Letter Excerpt Extra

“I want to tell you just how much your daily articles mean to me. My late husband, Jim Cook, went home to be with the Lord in September 2013. We met 10 years ago, I am from Canada, and Jim was American, to the core!! When we met we knew that we were both Christians, however, Jim began to teach me to rightly divide the Word, and to be honest, I thought he was a little odd! It took me about 6 months to understand and I was so amazed at the wonderful realization of the mystery of Paul’s gospel. We read the daily emails from you and watched Les Feldick on TV and for 7 years I grew and loved the Word so much. Jim’s father had been a lay ‘teacher’ of rightly dividing and he grew up in Iowa knowing the Truth.

“My darling Jim had ALS and gradually his body wore out and he passed. Not a day goes by without reading your emails and I sit in Jim’s chair and am comforted daily by our precious Lord’s Truth. Jim and I only had 8 years of marriage, but they were glorious years and I know that we will meet again in Heaven. He did meet Paul Sadler at a conference some years ago, not sure where, but he spoke of it many times. I so wanted to let you know just what your articles meant to Jim and I, now to me alone. May our Lord bless your work and all who are a part of it.”



Two Minutes about Two Minutes



By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Recently we made a change to the format of our *Two Minutes With the Bible* daily devotional email and asked for feedback from our readers. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of the new format, as this sampling of responses will show:

"I like it! Very easy to read, nice, clean, uncluttered design."

"Thank you for the new format. I don't struggle to read it now."

"It seems that the message is plainer in the new format."

While most of the feedback we received mirrored these comments, a few of those who favored the old format said some things that caused us concern:

"I love the old 'solid rock and lighthouse of hope' format so much more."

"Please don't fall prey to the devil's wily ways and fall in line with 'worldly' others to 'modernize' a solid rock of ages past that has so much meaning and stability as the original format."

With comments like these in mind, we'd like to take this opportunity to assure our *Two Minutes* readers that omitting the pictures of the lighthouse and the solid rock does not reflect a shift away from the rock solid teaching of the rightly divided Word that has always shined forth so brightly in *Two Minutes*. We only meant to make the format more user-friendly for the many who read their email on their phones and other electronic devices. The following comments indicate we succeeded with this:



"The new format works much better when viewing the email from my mobile phone. I had difficulty viewing the old version because my email app would not auto zoom correctly, but with this new version that issue no longer exists."

"It's easy to look at, easy to read, and easy to navigate."

"I like the new design. It provides more options in the email."

And so, while we appreciate all of you who took the time to write and tell us what you think, we hope that those who favored the old format will understand as we continue to try to keep up with the technological times. And now that you know that the *content* of our daily devotionals will not change, we hope your new position will be similar to that of these readers:

"I see no problem with the new format, as long as the message remains the same."

"I liked the old and I'm fine with the new. Any form of God's Word, rightly divided, is fine with me."



PRISON MISSION ASSOCIATION

Celebrating 60 Years 1955-2015

We here at PMA want to express our gratitude to each of you who have prayed for, donated to, or volunteered to help our team these past 60 years. We give God the glory for the thousands we have seen come to Christ. In the last 15 years, over 24,000 students have taken our courses!

As we celebrate what God has done for us in the past, it is a great time to reflect on what God would have us to do in the future!

We want to continue to uphold the heartbeat of our founder, Joe Mason, and maintain his vision. To fulfill it more effectively we want to mobilize inmates to be part of our ministry to inmates, which we feel is the Pauline Biblical model set forth in II Timothy 2:2. This will help multiply our outreach to those who are looking for purpose and meaning to life and so are often the most receptive to the gospel.

If you know anyone who is doing prison ministry, or anyone in prison who might like to get our Bible Correspondence courses, please contact Pastor Dwight Anderson: (612) 423-3457. If inmates complete all 35 of our lessons they can get 6 credit hours at Berean Bible Institute.



A New Item on the Menu



By our GUIG
team of writers



The following is a lesson from our recently updated *Growing Up In Grace* Sunday School program "Bible Events Book 3." If you would like to order this book, see the book ad on page 28.

1) McDonald's Menu

"Mom, may we go to McDonald's?" How often have you asked this question of *your* mother? No doubt about it, from hamburgers to Happy Meals, we're all "lovin' it!"

These days you can order breakfast at McDonald's all day long, but for many years this wasn't the case. It used to be that they began serving breakfast items at 6 a.m. Then from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. a transition began. The menu **STARTED** to change. You could still order breakfast, but lunch items were also available. During that time, the restaurant began to *phase out* the breakfast menu and *phase in* the lunch menu. At 10:30 a.m. the transition was complete—no more breakfast. Remember, first the breakfast menu; then a transition period. Finally, only the lunch and dinner menu was available. That's not too confusing, is it? Well, God did something similar in the book of Acts.

2) The Bible and Menus

In the first chapters of the Book of Acts, God offered His **KINGDOM MENU** to the nation of Israel. But they weren't interested! After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9, God began to offer a new **MYSTERY MENU**, one that had never been served before! This menu

was for the Church called the Body of Christ. The Book of Acts describes a transition period. God phased out the *Kingdom* Menu and phased in the *Mystery* Menu. Finally, at the close of the book of Acts, only the *Mystery* Menu remained.

3) The Kingdom on Earth Menu

God PROMISED the nation of Israel a glorious Kingdom ON EARTH. Centered at JERUSALEM, its influence will reach throughout the world. ISRAEL will rule and ALL the nations will come to her in search of God. And they will find Him—God the Son will be King! This kingdom will be wonderful! God’s Spirit will come upon and within the believers. They will walk in obedience to God’s Law. Health and long life will be restored. A person dying at one hundred years of age will be a mere child (Isa. 35:5-6; 65:20).

Creation will be tamed! The lamb will lay down with the wolf in safety. If you were to stick your hand in a snake’s den, you’d have nothing to fear—no strike zone (Isa. 11:6-9)!

The prophets PROMISED and eagerly waited for this Kingdom. Finally, after four thousand years of human history, the long-prophesied King, the Lord Jesus Christ, was born. When He grew up, He and His disciples PROCLAIMED that the Kingdom was at hand (Matt. 10:5-9). But the nation of Israel did not welcome their King, they crucified Him! Three days later, the King arose from the dead and showed Himself alive to His disciples and more than five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:3-6). It is very important to observe that one of the first questions the apostles asked the Resurrected Christ was this:

Acts 1:6b—“Lord, wilt thou AT THIS TIME restore again the Kingdom to Israel?”

The Lord didn’t say “yes” or “no.” He said, “The exact time of the Kingdom is God’s business. But you will receive GOD’S POWER—to be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:7-8).

And what power they had! The Holy Spirit came UPON them. They performed miracles and signs (Acts 2:43; 5:12-16), spoke in foreign languages (Acts 2:4; 10:45-46), preached the Word (Acts 2:11; 4:29-31), and saw thousands saved. They were living witnesses of the Lord’s command (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Apostle Peter proclaimed that the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ was Israel’s King destined to sit on David’s throne. But he **charged his hearers** that they’d denied and killed the Prince



of Life. Peter looked the men of Israel straight in the eye and said, “Repent, change your mind about Christ! Be converted so your sin can be blotted out!”

And then Peter dropped a bombshell! “Ye men of Israel,” he said, “IF you repent—IF you change your mind about WHO Christ is— God will send Jesus Christ back to you!”

Whoa! Israel had killed their Messiah, BUT if they now believed that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, God would send back the Lord Jesus Christ to set up the Kingdom—just as the prophets had predicted *since the world began* (Acts 3:19-26)!

You’d think the nation of Israel would have jumped for holy joy, but they didn’t. Instead, they stoned Stephen and persecuted the disciples. Yes, God OFFERED the glorious Kingdom Menu to the nation of Israel, but they weren’t buying! Blinded to the truth, they stumbled in unbelief. They ***failed to believe*** God’s Word to them.

4) The Body of Christ Menu

God’s Menu was about to change! God had a SECRET that would surprise everyone! The Lord Jesus Christ reached down in grace and mercy to a man racing toward Damascus. This man was filled with hate, on his way to persecute the saints of God. The Lord stopped Saul and saved him by His grace and mercy. He later became known as Paul. God made *him* the apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13)! The Lord said unto Paul:

Acts 22:21b—“Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Paul was not an apostle to the nation of Israel, but rather to the Gentiles. Paul was not an apostle of an earthly kingdom, but to the Church, which is the Body of the Christ. He was not an apostle of the prophesied program, but of a secret—a mystery—hidden in God from *before the foundation of the world*.

Ephesians 3:9—“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

What was this SECRET? This MYSTERY? What did the Lord reveal to the Apostle Paul that had been hidden IN GOD *since before the foundation of the world*? This is very exciting because it concerns you and me, TODAY! Yes, God had a secret for you and me that He first revealed to Paul. Paul taught that God would POSTPONE Israel’s Kingdom on Earth program. Instead He would offer a DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD to a lost and dying world.

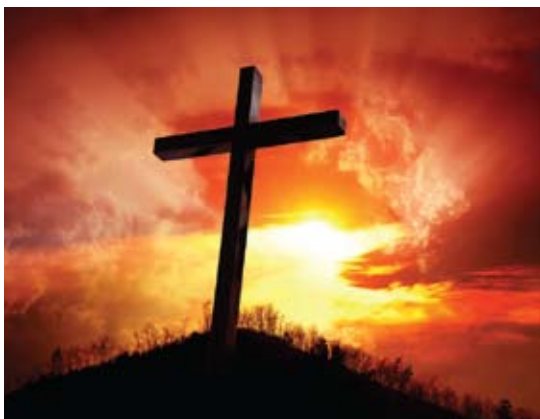
Those accepting God’s grace would become members of a new church. Not the church at the end of the street in your own neighborhood or across town. Not even the Kingdom Church that Peter’s

converts were a part of in early Acts. But the Church that is the BODY OF CHRIST, where Christ is the Head and believers are His Body (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12). As members we are joined to Christ, as one—never to be separated from our Lord!

HE the HEAD and we the BODY, making One NEW MAN (Eph. 2:15). A NEW CREATION! How do we become a part of THIS church? It's easy for us, but it cost the Lord Jesus Christ *everything*!

In this Dispensation of Grace, God has concluded ALL —both Jew and Gentile—in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL. We've all sinned and come short of His glory (Rom. 3:23). Sin earns a wage that pays in death—both physical and spiritual death. Spiritual death separates us from God now and for all eternity (Rom. 6:23).

But the Lord Jesus Christ isn't willing that any should perish. He went to the Cross and died the sinner's death. He took your sin, placed it upon Himself, and died in your place. Three days later, He arose from the dead, proving that your sin debt was paid in full. When we believe this GOOD NEWS, the Holy Spirit baptizes (places) us into the Body of Christ, and we are made "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10).



What blessed news! COMPLETE IN HIM. What can you add to something that is COMPLETE? Absolutely nothing! Are you thinking there is some work you can do or not do that will guarantee your place in heaven? Obeying the ten commandments? Being baptized? Not lying or cheating? If so, you don't understand the phrase "complete in Him." "For Christ is the END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS to everyone that **believeth**" (Rom. 10:4). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the **gift of God**, not of works lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). Our salvation depends on WHO CHRIST IS and WHAT HE HAS DONE. Not on who we are and what we have or haven't done. So trust in Jesus Christ today... and you will be COMPLETE IN HIM.

5) Transition

Now between these two menus—God's Kingdom on Earth program and God's program for the Church, which is the Body of Christ—there was a thirty-year transition period. God *phased out* the Kingdom on Earth Menu and *phased in* the Menu for the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

In a nutshell, it happened like this: After Paul was saved, the risen, glorified Lord led him to the Arabian Desert and **BEGAN** to personally teach Paul the good news for the Body of Christ.

Galatians 1:11-12—“**But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not *after man*. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

Ephesians 3:2-3—“**If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words...).**”

At first, Paul told the Jews that the resurrected Christ was God's Son. But in Acts 13, we learn how the menu had changed. Paul proclaimed:

Acts 13:38-39—“**Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.**”

Wow! Paul flat out said “trying to keep the Mosaic Law has no benefit to anyone. But **EVERYONE** who believes in the perfect work of the resurrected Jesus is declared good and right before God.”

That was a bitter pill for Israel! They were to believe in Jesus **AND** forsake the Law? The Jew would have thought, “No way!” They argued and blasphemed...and then Paul said:

Acts 13:46b—“**...It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**”

Even Peter and the other kingdom apostles found Paul's teachings hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-16). When they learned about the Body of Christ program, they, no doubt, were assured that God's plans for their Kingdom on Earth had not changed. The earthly program would be realized, but in God's time. Paul, **INSTRUCTED BY THE LORD**, went to the leaders of the Kingdom Church in Jerusalem and communicated to the apostles “that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” (See Acts 15). It was agreed that Paul would go to the Gentiles, and Peter would go to the Jews. By the end of Acts, the transition was complete. The Kingdom on Earth program was phased out. God's menu for the Church, which is the Body of Christ, was the only menu offered after that.

6) What's on the Body of Christ Menu?

Let's examine additional items on the Body of Christ Menu:

God has **ACCEPTED** us **in Christ** (Eph. 1:6), not *through* the nation of Israel.

God's Holy Spirit has **BAPTIZED** us into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Water baptism is no longer needed.

God's Holy Spirit produces **FRUIT** in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23). Awesome things occur as we yield to the Holy Spirit! Signs, wonders, and miracles are no longer valid.

God has a **NEW TEMPLE**, not the Temple in Jerusalem, but our physical bodies. The Creator of heaven and earth, the eternal I AM indwells each believer (1 Cor. 6:19-20)!

God has given us a **NEW MINISTRY**, not the great commission of Matthew 28, but a greater commission in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. We are **ambassadors** for Christ, pleading with lost sinners to be reconciled to God.

God has given us a **NEW HOPE**, not the Lord coming to earth to set up His Kingdom but His coming to catch the Body of Christ up to meet Him in the air (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

God has given us a **NEW PLACE OF HONOR**, not reigning on earth with the Lord but sitting at God's right hand REIGNING WITH CHRIST IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN for all eternity (Eph. 1:20-21; 2:6; Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:1).

Believe God's Word to YOU today!



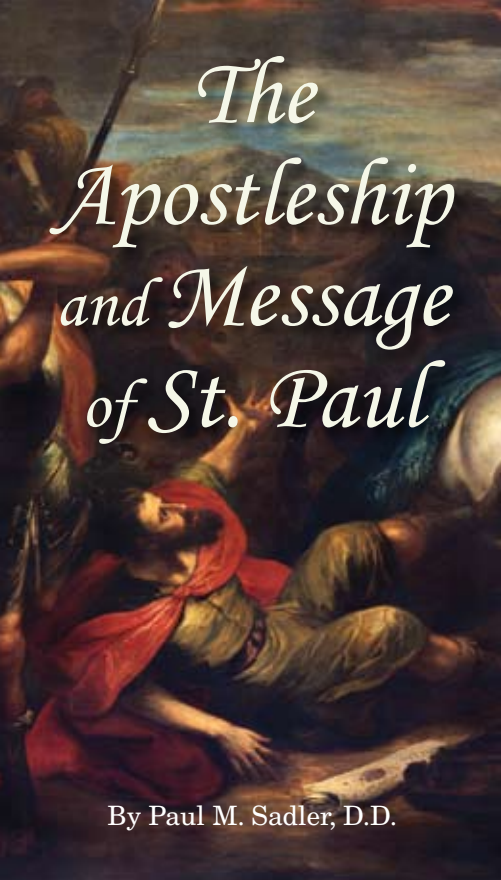
SUMMONED TO GLORY



Last October, my wife and I had the privilege of holding special meetings outside of Nashville. In attendance were two long-time friends, Dan and Janet Davis. Janet had been plagued with a number of health issues over the past few years, but she was thrilled to be able to attend the conference. In fact, you could see the glow on her face! Both Vicki and I commented afterward how well she seemed to be doing.

Normally, we tend to see the providence of God more clearly in the rearview mirror. The series I delivered at the meetings was entitled, *The Realms Beyond Time*, with special emphasis on the heavenly realm that we call home. Janet got me aside between services and thanked me for the messages that had truly touched her heart. She said that she took great comfort in the hope we have in Christ. She must have sensed that the time of her departure from this life was near because one week later she was called home to be with the Lord. The news left all of us conflicted, because on one hand we mourned her passing, but on the other we rejoiced that she is with Christ, which is far better. Please keep Dan in prayer that God will comfort him with the full assurance that his beloved wife is alive and well in His glorious presence!

—Pastor Sadler



By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”
—Romans 11:13

It is an indisputable fact that God has placed the major division in His Word between Prophecy and Mystery. The Mystery program is God's *secret purpose* for the heavens. When the appointed time arrived for its unveiling, the Lord raised up a new apostle to herald the good news. It is now common knowledge that the man who was sent from God was Paul. God makes a very special case in regard to his apostleship that we might clearly see the *difference* between the apostleship of the twelve and that of Paul.

The Spirit of God draws our attention to the conversion of Paul in such a way that the child of God cannot help but grasp the paramount importance of the event. The better part of three chapters is devoted to the subject in the Book of Acts (Acts 9:22;26), followed by two additional chapters in Galatians and I Timothy, which expand further on the truth of his coming to know Christ. No other conversion in all the Word of God is explained in such detail. The Holy Spirit rivets our attention to the salvation of Paul in order to teach us that there has been a change in the program of God. With Israel set aside in unbelief, Peter and Paul were directed to announce to the chosen nation that the prophetic program was temporarily suspended “until the fullness of Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:12,13,15,25; II Pet. 3:3-9,15,16).

The Lord set His new program in motion by commissioning a *new* apostle to declare to the world that He was doing something new and different among the Gentiles. Subsequently, Paul was ordained to this divine office to preach Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-3). This explains why he rightfully defended his apostleship from the attacks of false accusers.

WHO CHOSE PAUL?

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)” (Gal. 1:1).

This passage should settle once and for all that Paul was not one of the twelve, nor was he the

thirteenth apostle of the kingdom. We are to understand instead that he received a distinct ministry from the glorified Lord of Heaven to make known the riches of His grace among the Gentiles. This is precisely what the Spirit of God wants us to understand when we read the above passage.

Paul's apostleship is said to be "not of men." In other words, he was not ordained to his office through *human instrumentality*. In our day it is common for a young man, after preparing for the ministry, to be ordained publicly into the Lord's service. The elders, who are summoned to such an honorable occasion, declare by their presence that the candidate before them is called of God to preach the gospel.

In Paul's case, however, the twelve did not assemble themselves together, nor did any other group of religious leaders, to elect him to his office. The Spirit goes on to reinforce this truth by stating, "neither by man." Here, undoubtedly, Paul had Peter in mind, revealing to us that his apostleship was not initiated through *human* channels. Peter did not say, "Paul is well-qualified to hold the position, I will give him my personal endorsement."

Unlike Matthias, Paul's apostleship is unique in that the Lord of glory personally appeared to him in a heavenly vision to call him to be an apostle to dispense a new message, which had been kept secret since the world began (Acts 26:19; Col. 1:26).

PAUL AND MATTHIAS

"And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was

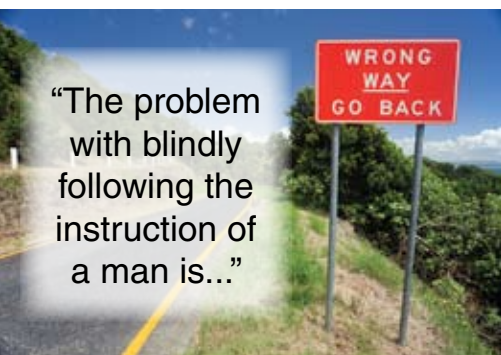
surnamed Justus, and Matthias" (Acts 1:23).

Many Christians would reject the conclusion stated in the foregoing lines. We believe most of these are genuinely sincere believers who have followed the teachings of men without searching the Scriptures for themselves. The problem with blindly following the instruction of a man is that when he makes a wrong turn, everyone following him goes down the same pathway of error. A good illustration of this would be those who teach that Peter was out of the will of God in appointing Matthias to the apostolic seat left vacant by Judas. They claim that Peter overstepped his bounds because God had intended Paul to be the twelfth apostle. It is our firm conviction that God is sovereign; consequently, man cannot undermine His purposes. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35). If God had planned for Paul to be the twelfth apostle of the kingdom, no one, not even Peter, could have intervened. Clearly the Holy Spirit's guidelines that He sets forth here in Acts Chapter 1 completely eliminate Paul from the picture.

Unlike the other believers in the upper room, Peter and the disciples had already received the Holy Spirit when our Lord appeared to them during His post-resurrection ministry (John 20:22). Since Peter was under the control of the Spirit, it meant

that he was in the center of God's will in this important matter of business.

With Peter officiating, he imparts to those present in the upper room that it would be necessary for another disciple to fill the position vacated by the one who betrayed the Master. Two qualifications had to be met by those considered for such a high calling. First of all, it had to be someone who had faithfully accompanied them during the *entire course* of the earthly ministry of Christ (Acts 1:21,22).



"The problem with blindly following the instruction of a man is..."

The guidelines were "beginning with John," that is, John the Baptist, because he was the first to preach the kingdom at hand, which declared Christ to be the King of Israel (Luke 16:16; John 1:49). Then the nominee had to be someone who had faithfully followed Christ until His ascension to glory—"Unto that same day that He was taken up from us." It was to be until the ascension because our Lord, by that time, had taught all the facets of the kingdom to come (Acts 1:3).

The second qualification binding on the candidate was that he must be an eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ in His earthly ministry, believing that

He was the One to be seated on the throne of David. This meant that those being considered for this office must be in a position to testify that they had *seen* the resurrected Christ. Paul could not possibly have fulfilled either one of these qualifications. As we know, he was not even saved at the time (Acts 9).

PAUL IS NOT THE THIRTEENTH APOSTLE

"And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26).

The search for candidates ended with only two being eligible to meet the stipulations set down by the Holy Spirit—Barsabas and Matthias! When these two brethren were singled out, they cast lots endeavoring to discover the Lord's will as to which one *He* had chosen (v. 24). This is another testimony to the sovereignty of God and human responsibility harmonizing like a symphony. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). Unquestionably, the human channel was used by our Lord to appoint Matthias, because the plural pronoun *they* in verse 23 refers directly to the 120 in the upper room.

"And he [Matthias] was numbered with the eleven." These words were not uttered from the lips of Peter, but rather Luke, who was led by the Spirit to record these events. From this point forward, Matthias is always identified by the Spirit of God as being one of the twelve apostles of the kingdom (Acts 2:14; 6:2; I Cor. 15:7).

Some, having accepted the legitimacy of the above argument, conclude that Paul then must be the thirteenth apostle of the kingdom. This, however, would disrupt the numerical system of the prophetic program; consequently, breaking the continuity of the infallible Word of God. The number 12 is the number of governmental authority, which is permanently stamped on the nation Israel. There were 12 sons of Israel from which came the 12 tribes of Israel, who were to have the Promised Land divided into 12 portions, with 12 princes to rule over the tribes. Our Lord taught His disciples that they would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). For their faithfulness, they would also have the honor of their names being inscribed on the 12 foundations in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). Prophecy does NOT leave room for a thirteenth apostle!

If Paul is not the twelfth or the thirteenth apostle of the kingdom, then where does his apostleship fit into the picture of prophecy? It doesn't, nor did God ever intend it to! The Lord of Heaven appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road for the sole purpose of appointing him the *apostle to the Gentiles*. God stopped the prophetic clock as the Tribulation period approached and ushered in a new program known as the Mystery. As we have previously stated, with this new program came a new apostle to proclaim it among the nations.

The number of the Mystery dispensation is ONE. There is *one* body, *one* Spirit, *one* hope of our calling, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* Father and *one*

apostle—Paul (Eph. 4:4-6; Rom. 11:13). Paul's apostolic credentials to be the revelator of the grace of God are as follows: He had seen the resurrected Christ on more than one occasion (Acts 26:16; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8); the Corinthians were the fruits of his labor, being the seal of his apostleship (I Cor. 9:2); the signs of an apostle were evidenced in his ministry (II Cor. 12:12); and Paul's instructions are said to be the commands of Christ for the Church, which is His Body (I Cor. 14:37).

How we thank God for the Apostle Paul's ministry, through which we have come to understand the manifold wisdom of God! Until the Church at large comes to accept Paul's God-given authority, it will continue to be tossed on the sea of confusion and leave itself at the mercy of the traditions of men. Perhaps the comparison on the following page of the apostleship of Paul and the twelve will prove to be helpful.

PAUL'S UNIQUE MESSAGE

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11,12).

The Apostle Paul did not mince words when he wrote to the Galatians that the gospel he was preaching “is not after man.” He sought to make it perfectly clear that his message was not conceived by him, nor anyone else for that matter. It can be said accurately that most false religions of the world have originated with some extremist who was deceived



THE TWELVE

- 12 Apostles represented Israel
- Chosen by Christ on earth
- Preached the kingdom message, which offered an earthly hope
- Based on prophecy and covenants
- Scope—Palestine and the world through Israel
- The Great Commission



THE ONE

- Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles
- Chosen by Christ from heaven
- Preached the gospel of the grace of God, which offers a heavenly hope
- Based on Grace alone!
- Scope—the World apart from Israel
- Commission of Reconciliation

by Satan. The cruelties of Islam, for example, can be traced straight back to Mohammed, while the strange doctrines of Mormonism were largely propagated by Joseph Smith. Conversely, only Judaism and the gospel of the grace of God have been Divinely-ordained from above.

Seeing that Paul's gospel did not originate with man, it logically follows that he neither received it, nor was taught it through human channels. Therefore, we can safely conclude that the apostle never majored in grace theology at the *University of Tarsus*, nor did he learn about the Mystery at the feet of Gamaliel while attending *seminary* in Jerusalem.

Looking back on the corridor of Divine revelation, we know now that the dispensation of Grace was foreordained, but was a carefully-guarded secret. Only God knew when and to whom He would make known the eternal counsels of His will for the heavens. One bright, sunny day on a dusty road leading to Damascus, God chose to save a wretched sinner by the name of Saul. This divine intervention into the affairs of men marked the dawn of a *new era*. With one turn of the wheel, God set into motion a series of events that would change the course of history.

Paul's conversion experience is an informative snapshot of the message he was being raised up

to proclaim. For example, God waited to save Paul until he was in sight of a *Gentile* city, which is representative of his forthcoming ministry among the Gentiles (Acts 26:16 cf. Rom. 11:13). Another significant feature is that our Lord appeared to the apostle-to-be in a *heavenly* vision. This, of course, launched the heavenly ministry of Christ, which offers the hope of heaven to all who believe (Acts 26:16-19 cf. Col. 1:5).

A short time later, he realized he actually had laid eyes on the Lord of glory, Who for the very first time revealed Himself as the *Head* of the Body of Christ (Acts 26:13-15; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18). Prior to Paul's conversion, he was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against all who named the name of Christ. He was God's foremost enemy. But rather than crush His enemy, God manifested His longsuffering and saved the leader of the rebellion, who, incidentally, has become a pattern to all those who should hereafter believe on Christ (I Tim. 1:15,16).

As we mentioned a moment ago, Paul did not receive his gospel through human means. Rather it was by direct revelation of the

Lord Jesus Christ. It would have been impossible for Peter to teach Paul the Mystery, simply because he had absolutely no knowledge of it. This explains why the apostle is so adamant when he declares that he was called "To reveal His [God's] Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus" (Gal. 1:16,17).

In all probability, the Lord appeared to Paul a number of times during his sojourn in Arabia where he received the ABC's of Grace teaching. On another occasion, he was caught up to the third heaven where the Lord personally tutored him further in the dimensions of the Mystery. These experiences indicate to us that he received the gospel of grace *progressively* over a period of about thirty years. This is what the apostle is speaking of in II Corinthians 12:1 when he writes:

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord."



MAYBE THIS YEAR

When the magistrates realized they'd unlawfully beaten and imprisoned Paul, they sent sergeants to release him. As a Roman citizen, however, Paul insisted it was only right they "*come themselves*" and fetch him (Acts 16:35-37).

As citizens of heaven (Eph. 2:6), we have no right to ask the Lord to come release us from this world of sin, but "*the Lord Himself*" has *volunteered* to come for us (I Thes. 4:16). Why? For the same reason *the king himself* fetched Daniel from the lion's den (Dan. 6:19)—because He loves us. Maybe this will be the year!

—Pastor Kurth





BBS Letter Excerpts

From Georgia:

"A prerequisite for sanctification is ingestion of the Word (and an accurate one at that). To that extent BBS's work has been invaluable. Additionally, it has encouraged, consoled and uplifted."

From Delaware:

"I love your *Searchlight* magazine! Thanks!"

From California:

"I remember Pastor Stam very well. My husband and I sat in his Bible class at *North Shore Church* on Wednesday nights, and I can still picture him in my mind's eye standing there teaching...Please send me five copies of *Things That Differ*, as every once in a while I wish that I had one to pass along to someone."

From Indiana:

"Please send Revelation 1 & 2 to my granddaughter...She is attending BSF this year, and they are studying Revelation...I told her about this wonderful author, full of God's grace, who had written two volumes on the Book of Revelation and is working on a third. She is waiting for these two volumes. Thank you so much!" (I humbly bow before the Lord and give Him all the glory!—PS).

From Oregon:

"We are blessed by your ministry every Sunday as we have home church. We are Grace Bible Church of Oregon, unofficial, but alive."

From Pennsylvania:

"Pastor Sadler's persistent graciousness, Ricky Kurth's cheerful proclamation, John Fredericksen's perceptive counsel, Kevin Sadler's clearly-written insights, and many others motivate me to 'walk worthy of the Lord....'"

From Wisconsin:

"Our volunteer days at BBS have been such a blessing! You have a wonderful ministry and a great staff that works hard and well together to keep our beautiful Grace message and teaching going out."

From Mississippi:

"We at *Grace Bible Ministry Church* in Tupelo send our thanks for Pastor Ricky Kurth coming and being part of our conference this year. His messages reached our hearts and minds in the faith." (I enjoyed the fellowship, Pastor Smith!—Ed).

From Missouri:

"How grateful I am for your ministry...The *Question Box* by Pastor Sadler in September was most helpful in understanding the different resurrections. I also appreciate your tract ministry and am able to reach others by circulating many tracts at a veteran's hospital."

From the Philippines:

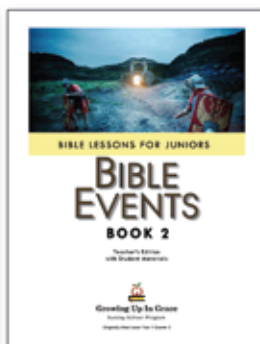
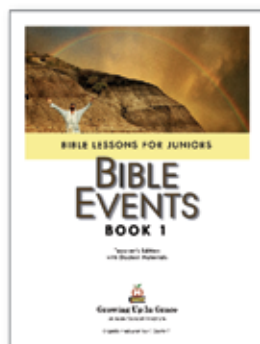
"The *Searchlight* has amazed me since I read the one I borrowed from my sister, and I would like to have my own copy."

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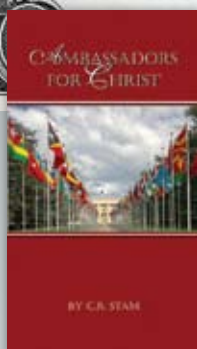
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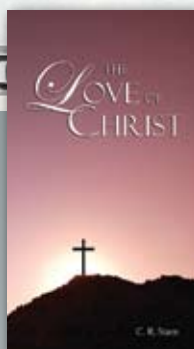
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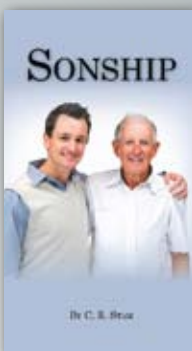
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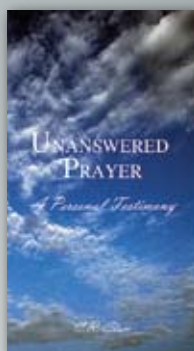
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News and Announcements

The Grace Bible Fellowship Church of Nokomis, Florida, plans to hold their annual Bible conference on March 5-6, 2016. The assembly is located at 2600 N. Tamiami Trail. The guest speakers this year are Pastor Paul M. Sadler, Pastor Ken Lawson, and Pastor Art Sims. The conference will also include a *Question & Answer Session!* For more information, please contact Pastor Ed Bedore at 414-313-0928 or Church 941-966-5959 or email Brother Ed at eandlbedore@gmail.com. Don't forget to bring your Bible, a notepad, and a friend to hear the sound preaching of the Word.

A Special Word of Thanks: As much as we would love to do so, it is nearly impossible to respond to every letter and email thanking us for faithfully making known the riches of God's grace. While we are merely instruments in the Lord's hands, we want you to know that your thoughtfulness is a great encouragement to all of us here at the *Berean Bible Society*.

Thanks, But It's Not Necessary: BBS contributors who mail us paper checks always receive a thank-you letter, with a receipt, and a business reply envelope to simplify the mailing of their next contribution. If you are one of the contributors who kindly affixes a stamp over the "postage paid" box in an effort to save us from being charged for the mailing, we thought that you should know that the Post Office machinery ignores your stamp and reads our bar code and charges us anyway. So thanks for thinking of us, but save that stamp for that letter you owe your mom!

The West Valley Grace Fellowship of Sun City West, Arizona, will be holding their annual Bible Conference on March 18-20, 2016. The church is located at 14465 R. H. Johnson Boulevard. The guest speaker this year will be Pastor Paul M. Sadler. For more information, please contact Pastor Mark Dilley at jjdster@gmail.com or 623-377-3071, or Jim Humphrey at jhumph783@gmail.com or 623-466-7636. All are invited and, of course, in this part of the country you will receive a very warm welcome.



The *Cape Blanco Lighthouse* is located on Cape Blanco, Oregon. Erected in 1870, this lighthouse stands on Oregon's farthest west point of land. It is the state's oldest continuously operating light and has the highest focal plane above the sea at 256 feet. Its history is full of shipwrecks and lives saved.

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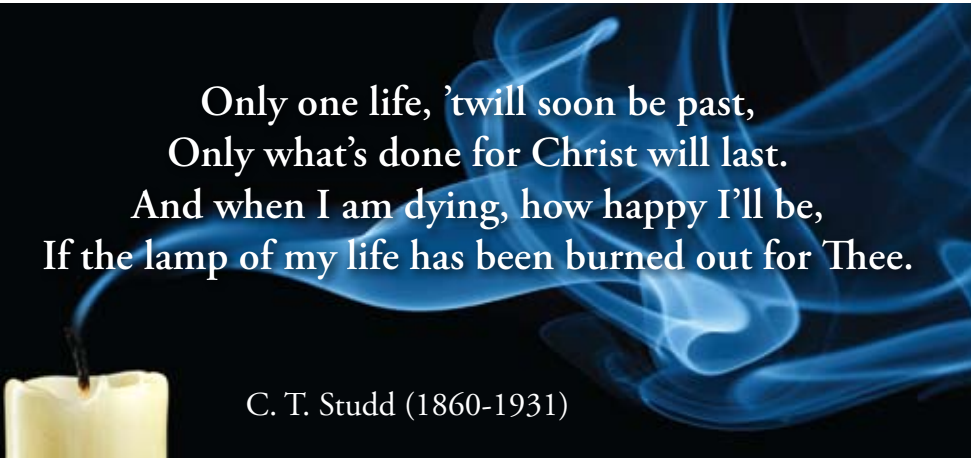
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