

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 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 Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

They say that getting old is not for sissies, and I recently learned it's true. A month after turning 60, I awoke to an *excruciating* pain in my lower back. A chiropractor's X-rays revealed a herniated disc, an injury that rendered it impossible for me to stand, or even sit, for more than a minute without unbearable pain. Since I couldn't trace this searing agony to any recent heavy lifting or trauma, I was forced to acknowledge I am just getting old! The week that followed consisted mostly of praying, wincing in pain, and "woe-is-me-ing."

But that's when the Body of Christ stepped up and rushed to my aid. After six treatments by the chiropractor nearest my home failed to bring any relief, a nurse in our assembly recommended her chiropractor, and I began feeling better after my very first visit with him. Since this man is also a believer, he has not been charging me for any of my thrice-weekly visits. And since I can't sit long enough to drive to his office, a retired man in our church has been chauffeuring me back and forth as I lay in his back seat, always making sure we have groceries or carryout food to eat. And even though my son Jesse is a busy college student with a near full-time job, he too has been stepping up to help his invalid mother and me now that both our names appear on our family's disabled list. Then there are the calls, cards, and emails that arrive daily from those to whom I minister at our church and through *Berean Bible Society*, all of which have ministered to my heart during this sore trial.

Perhaps the sorest part of this trial is being sidelined from speaking at our church, a burden on my heart that my three assistant pastors are easing by ably ministering in my absence. It also eased my heart's burden when after the first week, I discovered I could balance my computer keyboard on my propped-up lap as I lay on our family room floor, something that enabled me to keep up with writing for the *Searchlight* and answering the Bible questions that continue to come in from our readers.

Through all of this I am reminded of how Paul said of the Body of Christ "that the members should have the same care one for another" (I Cor. 12:25). I share all of this so you know that when each member does his part, the Body of Christ can continue to function, the Word of God is not bound even though a pastor is down, and the Lord is glorified in us (II Thes. 1:12).

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



How to Comfort a Seasoned Saint

By Pastor Ricky Kurth



Back in 1992, I was on my way to the hospital to visit Bernie Mack, one of the founders of the church that I pastor. As I drove, I prayed and spoke with the Lord about what to say to encourage this veteran soldier of the cross. On hospital visits I usually shared Romans 8:18 and II Corinthians 4:16-18, verses that are tailor-made to minister to the heart of any believer lying on a bed of affliction. The problem that particular day was, I knew that Bernie knew those verses. As a seasoned saint, he knew those verses before I was born. So how was I going to comfort him? What could I possibly share with him from God's Word that he didn't already know?

If you've ever found yourself in a similar situation, the Apostle Paul gives us some direction in this area in his ministry to the Thessalonians. Paul introduced those dear saints to the doctrine of the pre-tribulation Rapture during his initial visit to Thessalonica (II Thes. 2:5). After that, he reviewed this precious truth in detail in his first epistle to them (I Thes. 4:13-5:11). So by the time Paul wrote his second letter to these saints, you'd think they would have been resting confidently in the "comfort" of this cherished truth (4:18; 5:11).

But when Paul's second epistle exhorted them to "be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled" (2:2), we know that these brethren *were* shaken and troubled or else Paul would not have had to exhort them not to be. This means that even though these seasoned saints knew full well that they had been delivered from the coming wrath of the Tribulation (I Thes. 1:10), the persecutions they were enduring (I Thes. 1:6; 2:2,14; 3:3,4; II Thes. 1:4,7) were naturally causing their faith in the pre-tribulation Rapture to flag.

So how could Paul comfort them? What could he possibly share with them about God's Word that they didn't already know? How instructive it is for us that he didn't even try! Instead, he simply reviewed the doctrine (II Thes. 2:1-4) and called upon them to remember all that he had taught them (v. 5).

And that's what I did for Bernie that day. I read him the verses he knew and loved before I was born. You see, beloved, when it comes to comforting seasoned saints, God doesn't expect us to come up with anything new. He expects us to do what Paul did, and simply review what a veteran believer already knows to be true from the timeless Word of the Eternal God. May we always be found faithful in this regard.

DISPENSATIONALISM

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.



Normally, when we receive numerous inquiries on a particular subject it means that others are pondering the same questions, as the Spirit of God ministers among us. The following is a good example! —Pastor Sadler

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God; Even the Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”
—Colossians 1:25,26

There has been quite an animated discussion over the years on the subject of *dispensationalism*. John H. Gerstner, in his book *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* goes to great lengths to discredit dispensationalism on the basis that it is a more recent phenomenon. In his thinking, since Covenant Theology, of which he is an able defender, can supposedly be traced back to the second century, it is obviously the most reliable method of interpreting the Scriptures. We believe that such reasoning is flawed for a number of reasons.

One needs only to read the writings of the Church Fathers to discover that they were all terribly confused. This should not surprise us when we remember that they had turned their backs on the apostle-ship and message of St. Paul (II Tim. 1:15).

Because Church history has sometimes proven itself to be an unreliable guide, one is prudent to ask, “What saith the Scriptures?” Dr. Gerstner, in his haste to defend the traditional view of Covenant Theology, fails to see that the Scriptures themselves set forth the system of interpretation called *dispensationalism*. Understanding the Word of God dispensationally is by far the most consistent way to ascertain the eternal counsels of God. It allows the Scriptures to be interpreted *literally* unless the context clearly demands otherwise. Also, it alleviates the need to spiritualize certain passages in order to arrive at the proper sense.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE AGES AND DISPENSATIONS

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come” (I Cor. 10:11).

According to this passage, there are certain things recorded in the Old Testament which were meant to be a solemn warning to those living at the *close* of the Jewish age, as well as to those at the *beginning* of the present age. Here in one sweeping statement Paul singles out two ages. The term *age* (Gr. *aion*) is to be understood as “a period of indefinite duration or time viewed in relation to what takes place in the period.” In other words, an age is a period of time with both a beginning and an ending, as the above passage plainly teaches.

When marking the divisions of the ages, dispensationalists tend to divide the pie somewhat differently depending on their theological persuasion. May we suggest the following:

1. The Age of Liberty (Gen. 1-3).
2. The Age of the Nations (Gen. 4-11).
3. The Age of the Jewish Nation (Gen. 12-Acts 8).
4. The Present Evil Age (Gal. 1:4; Acts 9-Hebrews 13).
5. The Kingdom Age (James 1-Rev. 20; Matt. 24:3,14).
6. The Ages to Come (Eph. 2:7; Rev. 21,22).

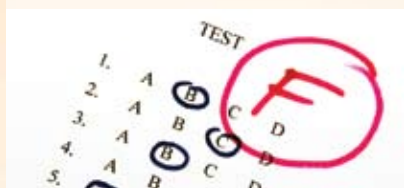
“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by REVELATION He made known unto me the Mystery” (Eph. 3:2,3).

Within the framework of the ages God has manifested His will in what is commonly known as *dispensations*. A dispensation should never be regarded as a period of time, as its counterpart, although it is correct to say that it does cover time. The word simply means, “A mode of dealing out, an arrangement or administration of affairs.” The only hope that mankind ever had of knowing the will of God was through direct revelations. These revelations were given or *dispensed* to holy men of God who were led by the Spirit. While the attributes of God are *immutable* (unchangeable), He does at times *change* His dealings with mankind, as we shall see in a moment.

Unfortunately, there is also disagreement among dispensationalists as to how many cuts should be made in the dispensational pie. Some believe that there are only *three* administrations, which they divide accordingly: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is an interesting concept, but it lacks Scriptural support. Moving to the other end of the spectrum, there are those who teach that there are as many as *twelve* dispensations. One is hard pressed, however, to defend this position. *Seven* dispensations is perhaps the most widely accepted view held by most Bible teachers. While we have no major objections to this view,

it does seem to confuse time, as we know it, with the eternal state. Therefore, to help clarify the distinction, we hold the position that there are *eight* dispensations:

1. Dispensation of Innocence (Gen. 1:27,28).
2. Dispensation of Conscience (Gen. 3:7; Rom. 2:14,15).
3. Dispensation of Human Government (Gen. 9:1-7).
4. Dispensation of Promise (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17).
5. Dispensation of the Law (Ex. 19,20).
6. Dispensation of Grace (Eph. 3:1-6).
7. Dispensation of Divine Government (Psa. 2:1-12; Rev. 11:15-19; Rev. 20).
8. Dispensation of the Fullness of Times (Eph. 1:10; II Peter 3:12,13).



“If there is one thing the human race does consistently, it is *fail*.”

It is interesting that each dispensation begins with a *probationary* period which serves as a time of testing. With this in mind, the course of each dispensation basically follows the same pattern: the dispensing of God's will, human responsibility, man's failure, and God's judgment. God has placed man under a different set of circumstances in each dispensation to demonstrate that man is a sinner in desperate need of a Savior.

CORRELATING THE AGES AND THE DISPENSATIONS

We have created the following outline of the ages and the dispensations within them, as we understand it. We have given special attention to where the present *dispensation of grace* fits into the overall picture.

I. Age of Liberty (*Dispensation of Innocence*)

- A. *God's Will*: God was dealing with man in his innocence.
 1. Man created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27).
 2. Man created to rule (Gen. 1:26,27).
 3. Man to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28).
 4. Perfect environment—man was to be a vegetarian (Gen. 2:5,8,9).
- B. *Human responsibility* was to guard the garden and to *abstain* from partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16,17).
- C. *Man's failure* came when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, resulting in the entrance of sin and death (Gen. 3:6).

D. *God's Judgment*: The pronouncement of the *curse* and expulsion from the garden (Gen. 3:14-19,23,24).

It is noteworthy that even though God is no longer dealing with man in innocence, there are aspects of the original revelation given to Adam that are *still* binding today. For example, the command to be fruitful and multiply has never been rescinded and the consequence of sin remains the same—DEATH! (Rom. 6:23).

II. The Age of the Nations (*Dispensation of Conscience*)

A. *God's Will*: God dispensed conscience, which indicates that man had come to a knowledge of good and evil. Conscience means *to know*.

1. Adam and Eve *knew* they were naked after they disobeyed God (Gen. 3:7).
2. The First Civilization was established (Gen. 4:16-24).

B. *Human Responsibility*: Now that conscience was to govern man, God required them to do good and refrain from all forms of evil (Gen. 3:22).

1. God commanded Cain and Abel to bring a blood sacrifice to be accepted by Him (Gen. 4:1-4).
2. God required *faith* (Heb. 11:4).

C. *Man's Failure*: Cain disobeyed God and in a jealous rage murdered his brother Abel (Gen. 4:5-15).

1. The polygamy of that day was in direct disobedience to God's command that marriage is to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5,6 cf. Gen. 4:19).
2. Violence filled the earth because men refused to heed their conscience (Gen. 6:13).

D. *God's Judgment*: The universal flood in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:17).

The believer today, of course, is not required to offer blood sacrifices nor to build an ark. Everyone, however, does have a conscience and *knows* inwardly the basic difference between right and wrong (Rom. 2:14,15).

Continuation of the Age of the Nations (*Dispensation of Human Government*)

A. *God's Will*: God revealed that man was now to *govern*, which strongly implies the rise of nations.

1. The fear of man was placed on the beast of the field (Gen. 9:2).
2. Man was permitted to eat meat (Gen. 9:3).
3. Human government was established (Gen. 9:5,6).

B. *Human Responsibility*: Man bears the responsibility to establish laws that are in accordance with the righteous standard of God.

1. God's law states, "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6). Hence, man is responsible to administer capital punishment.

2. "Be fruitful and multiply" should have resulted in the human race dispersing to the ends of the earth (Gen. 9:7).

C. *Man's Failure*: If there is one thing the human race does consistently, it is *fail*. And fail they did, when they sought to unite together and defy God's command to populate the earth (Gen. 11:4).

1. Their desire to BE KNOWN meant that they had neglected to implement some form of human government, which produced the spirit of lawlessness spoken of in Romans Chapter 1.

2. The erection of the so-called Tower of Babel was also in defiance of the Holy One of heaven as evil men desired to pay homage to the *astrological signs* of the heavens (Gen. 11:3,4 cf. Rom. 1:22,23).

D. *God's Judgment* was swift as He confounded their language, thus forcing them to scatter abroad (Gen. 11:7-9).

III. Age of the Jewish Nation (*Dispensation of Promise*)

A. *God's Will*: God dispensed a promise to Abraham that his seed would be multiplied as the stars of heaven.

1. The promise included:

- a. A *land* called Canaan that bordered the Nile River to the South and extended to the River Euphrates to the East (Gen. 15:18).

- b. A *nation* known as Israel (Gen. 12:2).

- c. Worldwide *blessing* (Gen. 12:3).

2. Circumcision was mandatory as a seal of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:9-14).

B. *Human Responsibility*: The promise that God made with Abraham was *unconditional*.

1. Abraham's descendants were responsible to *trust* God to fulfil the promise (Gen. 26:1-4; 28:10-15).

2. With privilege always comes responsibility. In this case they were to occupy the land God had given them.

C. *Man's Failure*: One lapse of faith after another seemed to plague the descendants of Israel in its early history.

1. Isaac, for example, reluctantly obeyed the Word of the Lord not to go down to Egypt when a famine came upon the land. He did, however, move to Gerar, which is about as close to Egypt as one could get without actually being there (Gen. 26:1-6).
 2. Jacob stole the birthright from Esau (Gen. 25:24-34).
 3. Israel forsook the land of her forefathers and moved to Egypt (Gen. 41:54-57 cf. 46:26). This is a good example of the *permissive* will of God.
- D. *God's Judgment*: God's chastisement was to allow Israel to remain in bondage to the Egyptians for 400 years. This made Israel appreciate more fully the forsaken Promised Land (Ex. 1:7-22).

Continuation of the Age of the Jewish Nation (Dispensation of the Law)

A. God's Will: God dispensed the Law to Moses.

1. The characteristics of the Law:
 - a. Moral—The 10 Commandments were given to govern Israel's moral life (Ex. 20).
 - b. Civil—This touches Israel's social life, that is, how the Israelites were to act toward one another (Ex. 21).
 - c. Ceremonial—Provided a means whereby they could make atonement for their sins. Here their religious life was in view (Lev. 16).
2. The purpose of the Law was to give Israel a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).

B. Human Responsibility: Since the Covenant of the Law was *conditional*, those who were placed under it were responsible to keep *all* 613 commandments.

1. The blessing of God could be realized only IF they obeyed the voice of the Lord (Ex. 19:3-7; Deut. 28:1-12).
2. Israel's willingness to accept the challenge soon proved to be a yoke about her neck (Ex. 19:8; Acts 15:10).

C. Man's Failure: Israel's failures under the Law are almost too numerous to list.

1. Idol Worship (Ex. 32:1-6).
2. Unbelief (Num. 13:26-33).
3. Murmuring (Num. 16:1-8).
4. Fornication (Num. 25:1-3).
5. The words of Jeremiah sum it up well (Jer. 31:32).

D. *God's Judgment*: Historically, Israel experienced a number of serious judgments of God over the 1500-year period she was under the Law. These are perhaps the most devastating calamities that befell her:

1. The Assyrian Captivity (II Kings 17:4-6,15-18).
2. The Babylonian Captivity (II Chron. 36:11-21).
3. The setting aside of the nation in unbelief at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7; Rom. 11:11-15).

IV. The Present Evil Age (*Dispensation of Grace*)

A. *God's Will*: God dispenses *grace* to a lost and dying world (Eph. 3:2).

1. A new creation is brought into existence known as the Church, the Body of Christ, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles without distinction (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:22,23; 2:14-17).
2. Christ is the Head of the Body, and holds a position of exaltation at the right hand of the Father as He carries out His *heavenly ministry* (Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9; Col. 1:18).
3. Believers are baptized spiritually into one Body by the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4,5).
4. We are no longer under the Law, but under GRACE. The abolition of the Law means that there are *no* ordinances to be observed during this administration (Rom. 6:14; Col. 2:14-17). (The Lord's Supper is not an ordinance, it is a memorial).
5. The Rapture of the Church is imminent (I Thes. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13).

B. *Human Responsibility*: Members of Christ's Body are responsible to preach Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery (Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 9:16-18).

1. Believers are called with a holy calling and are to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh (Rom. 12:1,2; Gal. 5:16-26).
2. Believers today are to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5).

C. *Man's Failure*: The Church today has failed miserably even to acknowledge the Mystery, much less make it known.

1. May God help us not to repeat the same mistake as the early members of the Body of Christ when they forsook Paul's message (II Tim. 1:15).
2. Thankfully, time still remains "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery" (Eph. 3:9).

D. *God's Judgment*: At the sound of the trump, the members of Christ's Body will *all* appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. A thorough review will be made of our lives to determine whether or not we have been faithful to the message of Grace that God called us to proclaim (Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:9-17; II Cor. 5:10,11).

This present dispensation should be of special interest to each of us since the preceding instructions are *our marching orders*. We pray without ceasing that the Body of Christ will not follow in the footsteps of unbelief as did those of former dispensations. May we learn from their failures and heed the warnings that are committed to us by our apostle, lest we fall prey to the same departure from the faith (I Cor. 10:1-15).

To Be Continued!



MEN WANTED!

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

As Ezra prepared to lead God's people back to the Promised Land after the Babylonian captivity, he had plenty of money to buy animals for sacrifice in the newly rebuilt temple (Ezra 7:11-17), but no Levites to offer them (8:15).

This reminds me of the situation in our own day. Grace churches frequently have enough *money* to serve the Lord, but no *men* willing to offer their bodies as "a living sacrifice" to God (Rom. 12:1). Will you be such a man, willing to serve Him in the ministry? I'm reminded of the Lord's lament to men of God in Ezekiel's day:

"Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD" (Ezek. 13:5).

As grace pastors retire and others go to be with the Lord, there are always going to be gaps that need to be filled in the front lines of the battle for truth. If God is speaking to your heart about championing the cause of Paul's gospel, why not say with Isaiah, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).





The Departure From Paul's Message

By Cornelius R. Stam

THE RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE

The Church, even the *true* Church of believers in Christ, is doubtless larger today than it has ever been. Yet it is weak and sick, confused and divided.

Many feel that the causes of the Church's low spiritual state are: failure to live separated lives, lack of prayer, indifference toward the lost, etc. These, however, are the *effects*, not the causes. The *cause* is the Church's departure from God's message and program for our day, as revealed through the writings of the Apostle Paul. There lies the root of the trouble, though few as yet recognize or acknowledge it.

With Israel it was the departure from Moses' law that constantly got her into trouble; with us it has been the departure from Pauline truth. For, remember, *as surely as the dispensation of the Law was committed to Moses, so surely was the dispensation of Grace committed to Paul* (Eph. 3:1-3), and those

who have lapsed or backslidden from his day to ours, have done so, not so much by departing from the Word of God in general as by departing from the Word of God *through* Paul in particular.

Toward the close of his life Moses urged the people of Israel not to take the riches of Canaan for granted. Indeed, he warned them that if they did this they would soon "utterly perish from off the land" which they had gone to possess, and would be scattered among the heathen.

Likewise Paul, also, warned believers that they would lose the blessings intended for them if they departed from the truth and the program made known to them. Some, indeed, had already begun to depart, and the loss of blessing had become evident. The Galatians are a striking example of this and a lesson to us.

How they had rejoiced when Paul first came to them with "the preaching of the cross" and "the

gospel of the grace of God"! As they heard him preach, and noted the difficulty, and perhaps pain, he experienced with his eyes, one said to another: "I wish I could give him *my eyes!* I would gladly do without them. He needs his sight so badly, and think of the joy and blessing he has brought to us!"

Soon after his departure, however, they were taken in by the Judaizers who "zealously affected [courted]" them to draw them away from Paul and his message (Gal. 4:17). And now Paul had to write them:


"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (1:6).

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched [charmed] you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath

been evidently [plainly] set forth, crucified among you?" (3:1).

"WHERE IS THEN THE BLESS-EDNESS YE SPAKE OF? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal. 4:15).

Gone was the blessedness! Those who had rejoiced so greatly in the riches of God's grace proclaimed by Paul, had now turned back to Moses and the Law.

In Paul's epistles we find both the tendency on the part of believers to depart from the path of blessing and God's diagnosis of the particular cause of the trouble. In every case the cause is rebellion against Paul's God-given authority and departure from his God-given message and program. 

Taken from Paul, His Apostleship and Message by C. R. Stam.

To order this book, see ad on page 28.

A World of Difference

If God is no respecter of persons, why did He favor one nation, Israel, above all the rest and, for many centuries, bless them above all others? The answer: God made a difference to show that "there is no difference" (Rom. 3:22,23). He made an artificial difference, a dispensational difference, to show that there was no essential difference, no moral difference. He erected a "middle wall of partition" between us to show that that wall must be broken down (Eph. 2:14-16).

And thus it is that the same God who once said to Israel:

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant...Unto you first..." (Acts 3:25,26)

—this same God now says:

"There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek [Gentile], for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12,13).

—C. R. Stam





Foes in High Places

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

While it is nice to have *friends* in high places, God's people have *foes* in high places!


“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

The Greek word for “high” here is *epouranios*, elsewhere translated “heavenly,” “celestial,” and “in heaven.” Only here is it translated “high places,” a phrase that is elsewhere always found in the Old Testament, where it was associated with the worship of the false god Baal (Num. 22:41; Jer. 19:5; 32:35) and idolatry (II Chron. 14:3). That’s why it angered God when Israel allowed these high places to exist in their midst (Psa. 78:58), and why He was pleased when they were removed (II Kings 18:1-4) and displeased when they were not (II Kings 12:3; 14:4; 15:4,35).

But here’s the kicker. As strange as it may sound, *Jehovah* was often worshipped in these high places *in the worship of idols* (II Kings 17:32; II Chron. 33:17)! If that sounds familiar, it is because fusing the worship of God with idolatry is a device Satan used for centuries during the Dark Ages in the church of Rome in our own dispensation.

This pollution of worship was still going strong when our Authorized Version was translated, and it might be why the translators rendered *epouranios* as “high places” in our text. They may have perceived that while the “spiritual wickedness” they wrestled was the host of fallen angels in heavenly places, the sphere of operation of these wicked spirits on earth was in the Roman church whose towering cathedrals reminded them of the “high places” where God was worshipped with idols in Israel.

In Daniel's day, a wicked spirit wrestled with an angel sent from God to try to keep *a message from God* from getting through to *a man of God* (Dan. 10:10-14). Similarly, during the Reformation, the Reformers wrestled with wicked spirits who tried to keep *the message of God's Word* from the people of God by using the brute strength of the Roman church that restricted His Word to the Latin language that few could read. The Reformers wrestled and overcame them by translating the Bible into the languages of the people.

Today those same wicked spirits strive to keep the message of God's Word *to us* from God's people, the message of Paul's distinctive apostleship. This is the battle we fight here at *Berean Bible Society*, and it is the wrestling in which *you too* must be engaged if you want to "fight the good fight" (I Tim. 6:12). It is the "good fight" that Paul fought to his dying breath (II Tim. 4:7). Is it your fight too? 



Three Causes of DEPRESSION

By Paul M. Sadler, D.D.

Sin: When Cain failed to bring the acceptable blood sacrifice that God required, "his countenance fell." He descended into a state of depression due to his disobedience. The Lord confronted Cain to do what was right! In other words, bring the proper sacrifice and he would be accepted, but if he refused to do so, "sin lieth at the door," that is, crouching at the door to consume him with guilt. Disobedience and unaddressed sin in a life can be one of the causes of depression.

Satanic Attack: After Elijah's incredible triumph at Mt. Carmel over the prophets of Baal, Jezebel vowed to hunt him down and kill him. Since this was no idle threat, Elijah fled for his life. On the lam, he sat down under a juniper tree and descended into a dark place called depression. Oftentimes after we experience a great victory for the Lord, Satan will cause a shadow of melancholy to come over us. Many of the past giants of the faith, who made major inroads into the kingdom of darkness, were afflicted with bouts of depression.

Medical: Sometimes depression is a medical condition, which can be caused by any number of reasons: biological differences, brain chemistry (neurotransmitters interaction with neurocircuits), hormones, family history, etc. If you suffer with clinical depression, it should not be taken lightly. Consult your family doctor as soon as possible. There are many very effective medications today that can help you live a normal life.

Question Box

“What do you attribute the lawlessness to that currently plagues the nations?”

It is a product of the mystery of iniquity, which is Satan’s plan to undermine all God-given authority. He has been effectively working behind the scenes since the days of the Apostle Paul to bring the world to a state of chaos, with a specific purpose in mind (II Thes. 2:1-12).

The false religions that Satan introduced throughout the centuries all stand in direct opposition to the true Church, where righteousness is extolled as a virtue. Contrariwise, in the name of religion, which Karl Marx called “the opiate of the people,” terrorists shed the blood of innocent victims to promote their ungodly ideology. Sadly, we are only witnessing the tip of the iceberg. Make no mistake, the primary target of these extreme jihadists is Christians. Simply watch their training clips, and you will find that most of the images they are shooting at have the Cross of Christ embossed on them.

Satan also loves to sing the praises of theological liberalism! The Word of God that once influenced the lives of both the believer and unbeliever is no longer held up as the final authority. The new normal is there are no absolutes any more. The mantra of our day is, “Let every man do what’s right in his own eyes” (cf. Judges 21:25). As a result, our streets have become like the wild west with shootings and murders commonplace.

With no spiritual mooring to the Word of God, marriage has become optional with more and more couples living together. This is the seed plot for immorality and pornography which have become rampant, leaving the souls of men and women burdened with guilt and a sense of worthlessness. Satan has successfully undermined the authority of the home, which is foundational to any society. Every time he destroys a home it weakens the moral fabric of a nation.

Clearly Satan is behind these evil influences and every other evil known to mankind. He merely sets things in motion, and the flesh is more than willing to accommodate whatever sinful pursuit that is put before it. The goal of the evil one is to bring the world to the precipice of utter confusion. When he accomplishes this objective, he will introduce the Antichrist after the Rapture of the Church. The man of sin will step onto the stage of the world as a *man of peace*, with all the answers to the world’s ills that have eluded men. He will be an overnight sensation being the Devil’s “Answer Man.”

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler



Being in the pastorate can be discouraging. After all, you are an obvious target for criticism. The messages are always too long or too short, you use too many illustrations or not enough, the content is too deep or too shallow, you stand too strongly on biblical truth or not strongly enough, and so it goes. On one occasion, I had a Christian leader harshly dress me down in public for 45 minutes and accused me of a variety of things I simply

had not done. He only *thought* I had done them. I left that meeting so discouraged; I just wanted to give up the ministry, and maybe even give up walking with the Lord. Thankfully, He sent me encouragement when I needed it most.

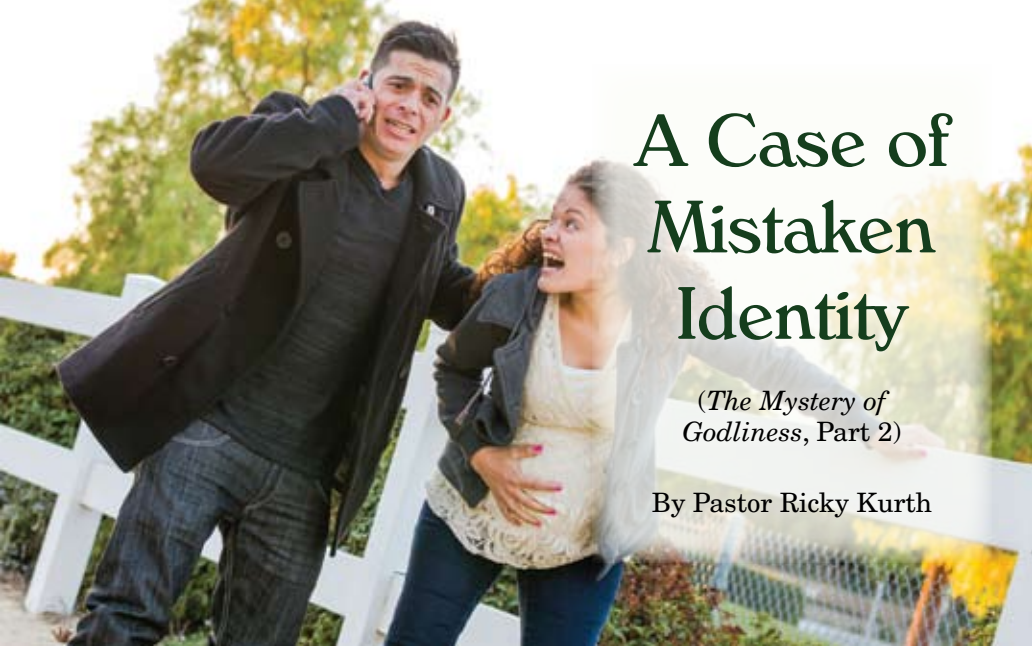
Being discouraged spiritually isn't exclusive to pastors either. All believers encounter this at one time or another. You can almost feel the sorrow of heart when you read the testimonies of God's men of the past. David wrote: "I had fainted..." (Psa. 27:13), Jeremiah said: "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me" (Jer. 8:18), and Jonah said: "...my soul fainted within me" (Jonah 2:7). They were so discouraged and spiritually weakened that they simply felt like giving up. Thankfully, these servants of God did *not* give up, and there is much to learn from what carried them through.

Jonah relates to us how he found the strength to carry on: "I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple" (Jonah 2:7). Coupled with obedience to God's will, his discouragement turned when he stayed his mind on the Lord in prayer. Similarly, Isaiah proclaims: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength...they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). As you can see, Isaiah also found it helpful to focus his thoughts on the Lord through prayer.

The Apostle Paul had opposition from without and from within the company of believers, and had much to be discouraged about, but he didn't quit. His testimony was: "seeing we have this ministry...we faint not" (II Cor. 4:1). He kept his heart focused on serving the Savior, with Galatians 6:9 in mind: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Simply put, heaven and reward from the Savior strengthened the resolve of this servant. It can for us too.

Are you discouraged spiritually? Don't quit! Pray, focus on the importance of serving Christ, and rejoice in future reward!

—Pastor John Fredericksen



A Case of Mistaken Identity

(*The Mystery of Godliness*, Part 2)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Did you hear the one about the 911 operator who one day answered a call from a frantic sounding man who blurted out, “My wife is in labor, and her contractions are only a minute apart!” Hearing this, the 911 operator asked, “Is this her first child?” To which the man replied, in exasperation, “No, you idiot, this is her husband!”

This clear-cut case of *mistaken identity* is similar to what you’ll find if you open most any Bible commentary and read the author’s exposition of I Timothy 3:16:

“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.”

Every commentary I’ve ever seen mistakenly identifies the object of this verse as the Lord Jesus Christ, and it’s easy to understand why. After all, wasn’t God manifest in the flesh of the

Lord Jesus when He was here on earth?

Not the Lord Jesus

But as we saw in the consideration of this verse that we initiated in our last issue of the *Searchlight*, the details don’t match what we know to be true about the Son of God during His sojourn here on earth. With that in mind, we posited that Paul is not talking about the *physical* body of Christ, he is talking about His *spiritual* body, “the church, which is His Body” (Eph. 1:22,23), and we showed from Scripture that today, in the dispensation of grace, God is manifest in *our* flesh (II Cor. 4:10,11). We then began to show how the details of this verse fit the spiritual body of Christ much better than they fit His physical body. We also saw that applying this verse to the church fits the context better as well, for it lies at the end of a discussion of the local church (3:1-15), and the local church is the

visible manifestation of the church which is His Body.

Preached Unto the Gentiles

As we turn our attention now to the remaining details of this verse, I think you'll agree that "the mystery of godliness" revolves around *us*, and has nothing to do with the earthly life of Christ. For instance, when Paul says that "God was...preached unto the Gentiles," this is most assuredly *not* something that was true of the Lord during His time here on earth. In Romans 15:8, the Apostle Paul reminds us that "Jesus Christ was a *minister of the circumcision*," and this certainly agrees with what the Lord said when a Gentile asked for His help:

"...He answered and said, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matt. 15:24).

It also agrees with what the Lord said when He sent the twelve apostles out to preach:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

***"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 10:5,6).**

You know what this means, don'tcha? It means that when Paul says that "God was...preached unto the Gentiles" *he could not have been speaking of the Lord or His disciples.*

An Answer to an Objection

Now sometimes when we point out that the Lord told the twelve to stay away from Gentiles, objectors to the grace message remind us that *later* in the Lord's earthly

ministry He *did* send them to the Gentiles in the Great Commission. And it's true, after the Lord died and rose again, He commissioned the apostles, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations*..." (Matt. 28:19). Mark quotes Him as having said, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*" (Mark 16:15). But if someone raises this objection when *you* share these things about the Lord's exclusive ministry to the circumcision, ask if the twelve ever *reached* the Gentiles. If your objector claims they did, ask about Acts 8:1:

"...at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

Here we see that the twelve apostles *never got past Jerusalem* in fulfillment of their commission to preach Him to every creature, in all nations, in all the world. And it wasn't because the twelve were too *lazy* to take the gospel to the world, or too *racially bigoted against Gentiles*, as some commentaries have actually dared to suggest. The *real* reason the twelve remained behind when the rest of the kingdom church fled the persecution raised by Saul of Tarsus was that they were operating under a *severe restriction*.

An Apostolic Handicap

You see, when the Lord instructed the twelve to take the gospel to the Gentiles "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47), they knew they couldn't just move on to greener pastures among the

Gentiles if the Jews in Jerusalem didn't believe. They remembered that when that Gentile woman asked the Lord for His help, He replied,

“Let the children first be *filled*: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs” (Mark 7:27).

Having heard these words, the twelve knew something that the commentators who criticize them either forgot or never knew. They knew that it wasn't enough just to *feed* the children of Israel in Jerusalem with the bread of God's Word, they knew they had to remain in the city until Jerusalem was *filled* with the knowledge of God. They knew it was God's plan to reach the Gentiles *through redeemed Israel* (Isa. 60:1-3) from a base of operations that had to be established in Jerusalem first (Isa. 2:3).



A Jewish Roadblock

However, Jerusalem's rejection of Christ and His prophet Stephen meant that the twelve apostles couldn't get past the roadblock of Jerusalem's resistance when the leaders of that city stubbornly refused to be God's channel of blessing to the Gentiles. The only time any of the twelve preached to a Gentile was when Peter

preached to Cornelius (Acts 10), and the only reason God sent him to a Gentile was to pave the way for *Paul's* ministry among the Gentiles, as Peter himself later testified (Acts 15:7-11).

But don't get the idea that Peter preached to any *more* Gentiles. There is no record of this in the Book of Acts, and we can tell that even Peter's epistles were written to Jews by the way he told his readers to live "honest among the Gentiles" (I Pet. 2:12 cf. 4:3). In addition, there is no Scriptural evidence that any of the rest of the twelve ministered to Gentiles, and for good reason. If any of them preached to any Gentiles after the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15, they broke the agreement they made with Paul when they vowed to let *him* go to the heathen while they confined their ministry "unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2:9).

All of this means that God was *not* "preached unto the Gentiles" by the Lord or His apostles in the past. God *will be* preached to Gentiles by the Lord's followers in Israel during the Tribulation, of course (Matt. 24:14). But here it is important to remember that our text is talking about the *mystery* of godliness, and it was no mystery that God would be preached in all the world by the Jews (Isa. 27:6). So the "preached unto the Gentiles" segment of the mystery of godliness *cannot* be a reference to the Lord or His Jewish followers in either time past or in the ages to come.

Preached to the Gentiles by the Church

But was it a mystery that God would be preached unto the

Gentiles *by us*, members of the Body of Christ? Why, of course! It was a mystery that we would even *exist*, let alone preach to anyone.

Not surprisingly, the Apostle Paul was the *first* member of Christ's Body to preach to the Gentiles. After entering the city of Antioch on his first apostolic journey, he did what he always did¹ and preached to the Jews in the local synagogue (Acts 13:14-41).

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them...And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God” (Acts 13:42,44).



Then, when the Jews “spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul,” he *immediately* turned to the greener pastures among the Gentiles (Acts 13:45,46). You see, Paul didn’t labor under the same apostolic handicap as the twelve. The Lord hadn’t commanded *Paul* to begin his ministry in Jerusalem and remain there until the city had been brought to its knees. In fact, when Paul tried to fill that great city with the knowledge of God, the Lord told him to “get thee quickly *out of* Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me” (Acts 22:18).

See the difference? The twelve couldn’t leave Jerusalem until the city was converted, but Paul was told to leave the city because Jerusalem *refused* to be converted. And throughout the Book of Acts, when the Jews turned a deaf ear to Paul’s preaching, he quickly turned to the Gentiles.

All of this means that when our text talks about how “God was...preached unto the Gentiles” it must be speaking about how God was preached to the Gentiles *through the ministry of the Apostle Paul*, and through the ministry of the church which is His Body ever since, *not* through the ministry of the Lord or His apostles. To ascribe I Timothy 3:16 to the Lord Jesus personally is to deny one of the very pillars of the grace message, the pillar that says God was preached *unto the Jews* under the Lord’s earthly ministry, *not unto the Gentiles*.

Believed on in the World

Now as we read on in our text, Paul says that God was also “believed on in the world.” Here we have further proof that the apostle did not have the Lord Jesus in mind when he penned those words. The Lord wasn’t “believed on in the world” during His first advent. You see, He ran into the same Jewish roadblock that the twelve later ran into when they tried to take the knowledge of God to the Gentiles, for “He came unto His own, *and His own received Him not*” (John 1:11).

But was God believed on in the world through the ministry of the Apostle Paul? To find out, we need only consider what Paul told the Colossians about his gospel:

“...the truth of the gospel...is come unto you; as it is in all the world...” (Col. 1:5,6).

Did you catch that? The twelve were *sent* to “all the world” (Mark 16:15) but only Paul was able to *reach* the world, since he didn’t have to wait for Jerusalem to be converted before reaching out to the world that lay beyond Jerusalem. Later in that same Colossian epistle he told those dear saints that his gospel “was preached to *every creature which is under heaven*” (Col. 1:23). The twelve had been *sent* to “every creature”



“...I Timothy 3:16 could well be called ‘The Biography of the Body of Christ’...”

(Mark 16:15) but Paul was able to *reach* every creature, once again because he did not have to wait for the Jewish creatures in Jerusalem to believe.

The Answer to Another Objection

Here we must pause to add that this latter verse has been the subject of many an objection raised by many a Bible critic, all of whom protest that Paul could not possibly have preached the gospel to “every creature which is under heaven.” As we consider Paul’s words in the context of all that we have seen in this study, however, we understand that he was merely claiming he had been

able to preach the gospel to *every* creature under heaven and not just to the *Jewish* creatures under heaven in Jerusalem. Since Paul didn’t have to fill the Jewish creatures in Jerusalem with the gospel of God before moving on to the rest of the creatures under heaven among the Gentiles, this enabled him to boldly go where no apostle had gone before.

Similarly, since Paul did not have to wait until the nation Israel was converted before reaching out to other nations, he was also able to testify that his gospel had been “made known to *all nations*” (Rom. 16:25,26). And since he didn’t have to curb his outreach to the Gentiles when the city of Jerusalem refused to believe, Paul could report that “from Jerusalem, *and round about unto Illyricum*, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:19). Thus it cannot be denied that *it was through the ministry of the Apostle Paul* that God was “believed on in the world,” and that this could *not* be said of the Lord’s ministry here on earth, when the stubbornness of God’s chosen people kept the rest of the world from hearing about Him.

Received Up into Glory

Finally, our text asserts that God was “received up into glory.” Now this particular facet of the mystery of godliness is a detail that *could* be applied to the Lord Jesus. After all, didn’t Mark say that “*He was received up into heaven*, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19)?

But once again, we’re talking about *the mystery* of godliness in this text, and we know that the

Lord's ascension into heaven was no mystery, for it was clearly predicted in Psalm 68:18, a text that Paul quoted and ascribed to the Lord (Eph. 4:7,8). Likewise, it was no mystery that subsequent to the Lord's ascension He would take His place "on the right hand of God," for David predicted that He would receive this honor in a verse that is cited in the New Testament and ascribed to Christ (Psa. 110:1 cf. Acts 2:34; Heb. 10:12,13). So it was no mystery that God would be "received up into glory" in the person of the Lord Jesus.

But was it a mystery that God would be received up into glory *in us*? In speaking of the Rapture, our apostle says, "behold, I show you *a mystery*" (I Cor. 15:51). So when our text says that God was "received up into glory" according to the mystery of godliness, it *must* be talking about how God will be received up into glory *in us*.

Days of Future Past

At this point you may be thinking, "Wait a minute! Paul is using *the past tense* in describing how God was received up into glory.



That has to be a reference to Christ Himself, since the Body of Christ has not yet been raptured!" For that matter, all of the details of I Timothy 3:16 are mentioned in the past tense, giving rise to some serious doubts that it is speaking

of us and not of Christ. That is, until we remember that Paul was *a prophet*, and the prophets often spoke of the future in the past tense. For instance, Isaiah used the past tense when speaking of the future crucifixion of Christ:

"...He *was* wounded for our transgressions...He *was* cut off out of the land of the living...He *was* numbered with the transgressors..." (Isa. 53:5-12).

You see, Isaiah saw the events of our Lord's crucifixion in a vision, he saw these events as clearly as if they had already occurred, and this enabled him to use the past tense in describing them. In this we see an example of God being the kind of God He said He would be in Isaiah 46:9,10:

"...I am God, and there is none like Me, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.*"

God sees the end from the beginning, and when He shows His prophets the end from the beginning in prophetic visions it enables them to *declare* the end from the beginning *using the past tense*. This is how Paul could declare in our text that God *was* "received up into glory" *in us*, even though this great catching up into glory has not yet taken place. The Lord knows that He is going to rapture us, He knows that His counsel will stand, and He will do all His pleasure *in us*. Because of that, in His mind we are as good as received up!

A Lofty Position

This is why Paul uses the past tense when he says that God "hath

raised us up together, and *made us* [past tense] sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). Many years ago, this writer received a clever Christian greeting card that made a play on words on the old adage, “keep looking up.” On the cover of the card it said, “Keep looking *down*...” After puzzling over this odd exhortation, I opened the card to find that it went on to say, “...you are seated with Christ in heavenly places.”

Praise the Lord! We know that the Son of God has already taken His place at God’s right hand, and we know that since “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Eph. 5:30), *we too* are seated in heavenly places *in Him*.


Thus it is that while Ephesians 2:1-10 has well been called “The Biography of the Believer,” our text in I Timothy 3:16 could well be called “The Biography of the Body of Christ,” a biography *written in advance*, before the vast majority of Body members had ever been born, but a biography that is accurate in every detail, for it is written by Him that knows the end from the beginning!

Before we close our study of this verse, I should mention that our text’s affirmation that “God was manifest in the flesh” is often used as a proof text for the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Thus when we affirm that this verse is *not* speaking of Christ, we are often charged with robbing the Bible of a text that promotes His deity. To this charge we respond by noting that there are plenty of verses that prove Christ’s deity (Isa. 9:6; John 1:14; 10:30; Col. 2:9; etc.), and to force this doctrine on a verse that

does not fit the Lord’s description does more harm than good to the great doctrine of His deity.

So What?

So what are you going to do about all this? If you’re not sure, may I remind you that if you don’t manifest God in your flesh by living your life as the Lord lived His, then you are interfering with God’s only mode of manifesting Himself to the world in the dispensation of grace. If you don’t preach to the Gentiles, you are obstructing God’s only channel of blessing to the creatures of the world. And if you are not living your life in light of being received up into glory, you should know that the Apostle Paul seldom mentions the Rapture without exhorting us to live with His coming in view.

For instance, right after a mention of “the coming of our Lord,” Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “be perfectly joined together in the same mind,” and encouraged them to cast off all their divisions (I Cor. 1:7,10). Right after another mention of the Lord’s coming (I Cor. 15:23) Paul exhorted them to “awake to righteousness, and sin not” (v. 34). And right after the apostle gives us his most detailed account of the Rapture (I Thes. 4:13-17) he exhorts us to “comfort one another with these words.” In the measure that you are able to heed these admonitions, in that measure God will be manifest in *your* flesh, to the praise of His glory. 

Endnote

1. Acts 17:1,2 affirms that addressing the Jews first in each city he entered was his “manner” or *custom*.



BBS Letter Excerpts

From our Inbox:

“Thank you for this encouraging *Two Minutes*. I have felt down and discouraged after having lung surgery to remove a cancerous growth, so your messages are a great encouragement to me.”

From Pennsylvania:

“Perhaps you will remember me... I wrote you a long letter and received a very long one back with lots of good answers and information...I am 81 now, and needless to say I am excited at how the Lord has worked in my old age to show me new and exciting things in His Word, and also cleared up some wrong thinking.”

From Oregon:

“Wow! Just finished reading ‘Twice Divided’ by Dave Stewart. So deep it warrants reading a second and third time, and then some. A keeper! We’re making several copies to give to the ladies at our Tuesday morning Bible study and also to our local assembly’s small group of gracers, as well as to a couple in our RV park, and whoever else!” (Now *that’s* getting the message out!—Ed).

From Pennsylvania:

“I...have enjoyed many messages on the MP3 player. Among others, I found Kevin’s messages on Joseph edifying. As I read of Julio Ortiz’s ministry in Puerto Rico, I rejoiced to hear how the Lord worked through one faithful minister, and now his son Miguel has taken his place.”

From North Carolina:

“In 1991 I ran across the Plymouth Brethren, whose structure agreed with my understanding, and they were dispensational, though dispensational lite. I was so excited, because I had held those views since the ‘70s. Now, I’ve discovered you folks who see Acts and the mystery revealed to Paul as important markets in what God is doing today. Again, very excited!”

From our Inbox:

“I appreciate our correspondence in so many ways. I am learning at an exponential rate and our conversations are teaching me to discern His Word and test the spirits in a big way...”

From Wisconsin:

“After New Year’s, the elders and I will be teaching through *Things That Differ* during the Adult Bible Class on Sunday.” (A great idea from Pastor Tim Board of *Friendship Bible Church* in Friendship, Wisconsin.—Ed).

From Facebook:

“Stam always makes it so easy to understand.”

From our Inbox:

“I used to be like you. I went to a church that had no power and didn’t believe in any gifts or deliverance. People like you refuse to accept Mark 16. THE GIFTS ARE ALIVE! I pray in tongues everyday like Jesus said we would. You are wrong, and when you meet the Lord Jesus, you will find that out.”

From Washington:

"I am a prisoner...I came across a copy of the *Searchlight*. I read the issue...studying each article with my Bible next to it. I felt the power of the Holy Spirit talk to me through many of the articles. In the current situation I am in now, it is difficult to focus on God and let the Lord lead me in life. However, with a publication such as yours I can nourish my soul with the Scriptures."

From our Inbox:

"You've certainly given me something to think about...I never considered the word 'kingdom' as having several meanings, depending on the context. What you say makes a lot of sense to me, though..."

From Arizona:

"Outstanding and edifying *Two Minutes* study on 'worship'! It blessed me!"

From our Inbox:

"I have been using *Two Minutes with the Bible* as my morning devotional. It amazes me how pertinent the articles are, especially considering when they were authored."

From Michigan:

"The Scofield Bible is 100 years old and does not hold a candle to the revelations Stam has uncovered. It also doesn't have the great charts that Sadler, Stam, and others have created." (Charts are great when it comes to teaching our message, and our website has many good ones.—Ed).

From our Inbox:

"Thank you so much for your explanation on election. Wow! I never had it explained so precisely!"

From Wisconsin:

"I was reading the article by Pastor Sadler, 'A Profile in Courage.' It really hit me. I found I was more like Gideon than I wanted to admit."

From Florida:

"I see...the truth about dispensationalism...your J. C. O'Hair article, 'The Children of the Kingdom,' has really become a great witnessing tool, as has your article, 'The Olive Tree Graft.'"

From Tennessee:

"I ordered a subscription of the *Searchlight* for some friends some months ago. They now tell me how much they are enjoying it and how much of the Bible it is clearing up for them." (When adding the names of friends to the *Searchlight* mailing list, we only ask that our readers be reasonably certain their friends wish to receive it.—Ed).

From our Inbox:

"That does make sense and helps my understanding. Thank you so much for taking the time to explain that to me!"

From Florida:

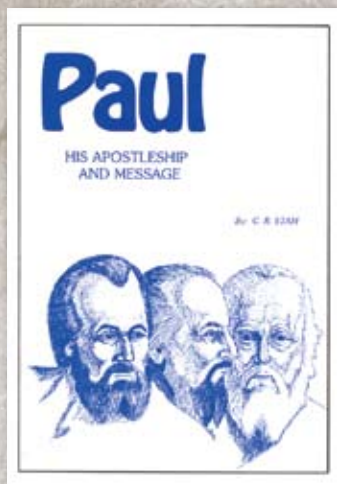
"We feel very special that the Lord allowed us to hear Brother Stam on a Sunday morning forty years ago on the radio, teaching on the so-called Great Commission. Thank God that as Baptists that got our attention!"

From our Inbox:

"I used to have all your books when I was in prison, but when I was released, I donated them to the chapel, since they had none of your teachings there, so others could learn to rightly divide the Word of truth."



"These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
—Acts 17:11



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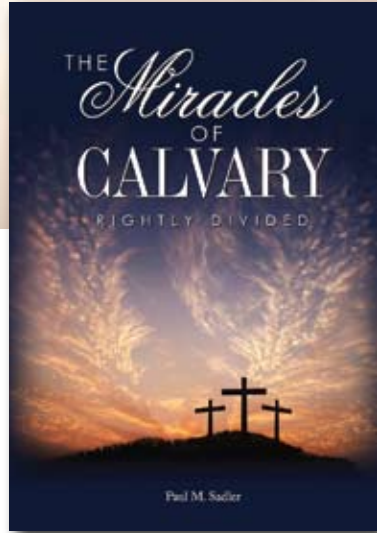


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News and Announcements

Pastoral Opportunity: The *Valley Grace Church*, currently meeting in Sun City, Arizona, is seeking a Pastor. The congregation is a small group of mature saints who have been in the Grace message for many years. If you are interested, please contact the *Berean Bible Society* for further information.

New Scripture Index: Our good friend, Dennis Moore, who serves as the pastor of the Grace Chapel of Laramie, WY, called a short time ago to say that he wanted to volunteer his time to make a Scripture Index for Pastor Stam's book, *Two Minutes with the Bible*. Needless to say, we were truly touched by his gracious offer. Pastor Moore painstakingly recorded each reference on an Excel spreadsheet, checking and rechecking each entry. Brother Moore's labor of love has been placed on our website as a PDF file for those who are interested in accessing it. It can also be downloaded for future reference.

To Our Canadian Friends: We want to welcome our new friends to the north who have recently expressed an interest in the ministries of the *Berean Bible Society*. If you plan to give a donation to BBS, we would like to encourage you to channel it through BBS Canada. John Peters, the President of BBS Canada and his wife Debbie, will see that you receive a receipt for tax purposes. Our Canadian address is: *Berean Bible Society*, 54940 Light Line, RR #1, Vienna, Ontario N0J 1Z0. In addition, you can order BBS books and booklets through our Canadian office which eliminates the currency exchange and lengthy delays waiting for your order from the States. Many, many thanks to our northern co-workers who faithfully help us spread the good news of Paul's apostleship and message.

New Online Grace Ministry: If there is no grace church near you, why not join *The Berean Classroom* each week for live online Bible study and fellowship with other stranded grace believers just like you. If your Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons are free, our good friend Jordan Karr is waiting to hear from you at www.bereanclassroom.org.



The *Amrum Lighthouse* is located in the southern part of the German island of Amrum. First lit on January 1, 1875, the lighthouse was featured on two German stamps in 2005 and 2008. It is one of the highest lights along the German North Sea shore.

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