

# *The* **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

April 2016



Feature Article

Why Study the Old Testament?, by Ricky Kurth.....5

Articles

Why “More Noble”?, by Kevin Sadler .....13

Amazing Grace, by Tracy Lesan.....15

Prayer Peace, by Kevin Sadler .....21

Departments

A Season of Change .....4

What Should We Render to God? .....20

Question Box.....26

News and Announcements .....30

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” (2 Tim. 2:15), to *energize* the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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

Editor: Ricky L. Kurth — Graphic Design: Jessica Sadler (Book ads: Christine Mulholland)

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



You can reach us at:

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

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

Internet: [www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)

E-mail: [berean@bereanbiblesociety.org](mailto:berean@bereanbiblesociety.org)

**The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), April 2016. Vol. 77, Number 2.**

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



## *From the President Emeritus*

Dear Ones,

Greetings, brethren, from the *Intensive Care Unit* at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. I've been battling a congestive heart for several years, and had to return to ICU for a tune-up. One thing I have learned being in Intensive Care is, when a nurse says, "Take a deep breath and hold it," that's code for prepare yourself to experience excruciating pain. Thankfully, the Lord is always with us in our time of need.

For over seventy-five years, we have been very mindful that the ministry of the Berean Bible Society is the Lord's work. When Pastor Stam passed the torch of grace to me nearly thirty years ago, we both understood that we were merely instruments in the Lord's hand, which in itself is a great honor. It has never been about one man, whether it was Brother Stam or Pastor Sadler. What the ministry has been about is the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of Mystery. Although the battles with God's archenemy have been intense at times, by the grace of God, we have never faltered in our stand for the truth of Paul's gospel.

For the past three decades I have counted it an honor and a privilege to serve as the president of the Berean Bible Society. But "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccl. 3:1). On Friday, February 12, with all board members present, the BBS Board of Directors voted unanimously to appoint Kevin J. Sadler as our new president. Kevin is well equipped to hold the position, but most importantly, he has always taken an uncompromising stand for Paul's apostleship and message. This will be essential in the years to come, as the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged grows more intense preceding the Rapture of the Church. Kevin and I have always had a good working relationship in the Lord's work; in fact, as Paul said to the Philippians regarding Timothy, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state." God's very best, my son, as you take the reins of the day-to-day operations of this fruitful ministry that has brought light and blessing to so many.

I will still play an important role at BBS behind the scenes, as strength permits. I'm like a bad penny; you just can't get rid of me. I will be assisting Kevin in whatever way possible, in the capacity of an advisor. The board would also like me to continue writing for BBS, with the goal of completing my commentary on Revelation. Lord willing, this will be followed by a book on *Paul's Metaphors*.

Amazed at His grace,

Paul M. Sadler, President Emeritus

# A Season of Change

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Berean Bible Society Board of Directors is pleased to announce that we have unanimously chosen Pastor Kevin Sadler to be the successor to Pastor Paul M. Sadler. Pastor Kevin Sadler's new title will be President of the Berean Bible Society. This decision was not made hastily, but after much discussion, prayer, and planning over the past several years. With this in mind, we can confidently say that we believe he is God's divine provision to serve in this new capacity. Pastor Paul M. Sadler will continue to play a very prominent role as the President Emeritus of BBS. This means that Pastor Paul M. Sadler will remain active in the ministry of the Berean Bible Society as a member of the BBS Board of Directors, advisor to the president, and an author. It was nearly 30 years ago that Pastor Stam handed the reins over to Pastor Paul M. Sadler to run the day-to-day operations of BBS. This enabled Brother Stam to devote almost all of his time to writing. Essentially, we are following this same path of wisdom by giving Pastor Paul M. Sadler the opportunity to complete his commentaries on the Book of Revelation, along with other grace works.



We wish to make it abundantly clear that the choice of Pastor Kevin Sadler by the Board had absolutely nothing to do with his last name or the associations that go with it. *Pastor Kevin Sadler was chosen solely upon his own merits.* He has been a loyal worker at BBS for 20 years and done an outstanding job in every area requested of him. He has the right temperament, people skills, spiritual walk, understanding of grace doctrine, and proven discernment with good judgment.

In preparation for the ministry, he graduated from the Berean Bible Institute with honors. He is an outstanding preacher, and he has already shown skill as a writer. He has proven himself as a leader for more than ten years in the pastorate at Kettle Moraine Bible Church in West Bend, WI, and, most recently, as the President of the Berean Bible Fellowship. Moreover, he has taken a consistently strong stand for the distinctive apostleship and message of grace through the Apostle Paul. He is at the perfect age (42) to have had valuable experience enabling him to be ready for greater leadership at the BBS, yet he is young enough to still have decades of fruitful ministry in his new position. He has demonstrated he has the proven qualities, specified in 1 Timothy Chapter 3, for a man in spiritual leadership, including a family that likewise walks with the Lord. It is also an added bonus that he already lives in the area and is familiar with the task before him. Therefore, it is with great excitement that we announce Pastor Kevin Sadler has been chosen as the new President of the Berean Bible Society.

We invite you to rejoice with us in Pastor Kevin Sadler's willingness to undertake this ministry as God's provision for the leadership of the Berean Bible Society. We thank you in advance for your continued prayers and financial support. To God be the glory. —The Berean Bible Society Board of Directors



# Why Study the OLD TESTAMENT?

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

After many years of “pressing the flesh” at state dinner parties, President Franklin Roosevelt developed a theory. He began to suspect that people were so nervous about meeting the president that they didn’t listen to the things he said to them as he shook their hands. To test his theory, as he pressed the flesh at his next dinner party, he smiled and told each guest, “I killed my grandmother this morning.” Some of the responses he received confirmed his suspicions. One sophisticated lady replied, “Oh, how lovely!” A businessman responded by saying, “Keep up the good work.” Finally, one man indicated that he had heard the president’s words when he came back with, “Well, I’m sure she had it coming!”

Speaking of people who don’t seem to be listening, as Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, I think he began to suspect that the

grace believers in Rome weren’t listening to *the words of the Old Testament*, leading him to write to them, saying,

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).**

Even today, there are many grace believers who are not interested in studying the Old Testament, and it is easy to understand why. They know that Paul is our apostle, so they conclude that there is no reason to study the scriptures written by other Bible writers who wrote to the people of Israel. As you can see from our text, however, the Apostle Paul was not of this mindset, and if you know this epistle, you know that he had demonstrated the value of the Old Testament to these grace believers very early in this

epistle. Right after speaking to them about how righteousness was imputed to Abraham by faith (Rom. 4:1-22), the apostle had added,

***“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him...” (Rom. 4:23,24).***

Notice carefully that Paul says the things God wrote about Abraham in the Old Testament *weren’t written for his sake alone*, they were *also* written for *our* sakes. This means that if you are not familiar with what God wrote about how Abraham was justified, you don’t have all the information that God wrote in the Scriptures for your sake. And we’re not talking about information in some fringe area, we’re talking about information regarding how to be counted righteous in the eyes of God!

### **Doctrinal Reasons to Study the Old Testament**

Besides helping us understand the fundamental issue of how to be counted righteous, there are other reasons to study the Old Testament. Paul tells members of the Body of Christ that “all Scripture is...profitable for *doctrine*” (2 Tim. 3:16). This means that if you don’t study the Old Testament, you don’t have all the *doctrine* that God says is profitable for you. For example, after speaking to the Corinthians about the doctrine of paying their pastor, Paul added,

***“Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written...Thou shalt not***

***muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written” (1 Cor. 9:8-10).***

Since the word “altogether” means *fully, completely, and totally*, we know that *the entire reason* those words were written in the Law was *for our sakes*. Martin Luther is said to have quipped, “Of course it was written for our sakes, *oxen can’t read*.” So here we have an example of something in the Old Testament that was written “altogether” *for us*.



***“...the entire reason those words were written in the Law was for our sakes...”***

To demonstrate yet another value of the Old Testament, Paul told the Corinthians that the Jews in time past “were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Cor. 10:6), adding,

***“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand” (v. 8).***

You may be wondering how Paul could say that these Old Testament Jews whom God judged for their sins were our examples, since we live in the dispensation of grace, and not the dispensation of law and judgment. If so, you should know that just because

God has chosen to react with grace toward such sins does not mean that He has mellowed over the years and doesn't mind sin as much as He used to. His wrath burns as white hot against sin as it ever did! The way in which those events serve as our examples is by reminding us of how God feels about sin in order to encourage us not to presume upon His grace by grieving His Holy Spirit with our transgressions (Eph. 4:30).

### **Practical Reasons to Study the Old Testament**

Did you notice that our text in Romans 15:4 begins with the word "for"? That's because Paul's words about "whatsoever things were written aforetime" follow close on the heels of his citation of something that was written aforetime in the previous verse (v. 3). To understand this Old Testament citation, let's begin in verse 1 to get the context:

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1).**

In every church there are strong and weak Christians. As Paul observed earlier in this epistle, the strong Christian in Rome believed he could eat meat, but "another, who is weak, eateth herbs" (14:2). This was bound to create friction at church dinners, and when God's people hosted one another in their homes. To avoid this kind of tension, Paul instructed the strong to "bear the infirmities of the weak" (Rom. 15:1); that is, rather than insisting on his

right to eat meat, Paul exhorted the strong brother to *give up* his right in order to avoid offending his weaker brother. This would "please his neighbour for his good to edification," as Paul explained in the next verse (15:2). The apostle then went on to cite the ultimate example of giving up one's rights from a verse in the Old Testament:

**"For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (Rom. 15:3).**

The Lord Jesus Christ is certainly the supreme example of someone who was willing to give up His rights. Paul is pointing this out by quoting a Messianic psalm that predicted that all of the reproaches that men felt for God would fall on Christ at Calvary (Psa. 69:9). As you know, all of the hatred that people had for God *did* fall on Him that fateful day as they jeered at Him, spat in His face (Psa. 69:7 cf. Matt. 26:67), crucified and killed Him.

Now, if you want to talk about someone who could have insisted on His rights, the Lord could have argued, "The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and I never sinned, *so I have a right not to die!*" But rather than insisting on His right, He gave it up in order to edify and please *us*. In the context, that's the Old Testament example that Paul wants us to follow. Consider what he said in the previous chapter:

**"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him**

**with thy meat, for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:15).**

This was Paul’s way of saying to the strong brother in Rome, “Christ was willing to *die* for your weaker brother; aren’t you willing to give up eating meat for him?”

After reminding these Romans that “whatsoever things were written” in Psalm 69 “were written for our learning” (Rom. 15:3.4), Paul went on to pray that the Lord’s example might prompt them to be “likeminded one toward another” (v. 5). But how was that going to happen? Remember, the problem in Rome was that they were *not* likeminded. The mindset of the strong was that he could eat meat, but the mindset of the weak was that he should only eat herbs. How were people of such conflicting mindsets supposed to be likeminded?

Well, when Paul prayed that they might be “likeminded one toward another *according to Christ Jesus*” (v. 5), he was telling the strong brother to solve the problem by doing what Christ did, *by giving up his rights*. Beloved, the way to get a weaker brother to be likeminded with you is not to badger him until he changes his mind and thinks like you think about things. That would certainly please *you*, but we are not to please ourselves. The way to become likeminded with a weaker brother is to change *your* mind to think like he thinks. When strong believers are willing to do this, there is an *instant* likemindedness in the local assembly.

## **The Old Testament Helps You Glorify God**

If you think that bringing likemindedness to your local assembly sounds like something that would glorify God, Paul would agree. He went on to tell these saints that the purpose of following the Lord’s selfless example was,

**“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 15:6).**

It glorifies God when we are willing to give up our rights in order to edify weaker brethren. Do you know what *doesn’t* glorify God? Debating with weaker brethren over such things as marginal as the eating of meat!

In medieval times, it is said that religious scholars debated over how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, and the world has used that example to ridicule Christianity ever since. “Those Christians argue about the *stupidest* things,” they say. Obviously, that debate did *not* glorify God, and God is not glorified today when unbelievers hear us argue about things as equally trivial as the eating of meat.

To further press the example of Christ in all this, Paul added,

**“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:7).**

How did Christ receive you? Did He say, “I’ll receive you when you think and act as holily as I do?” You know better than that! Rather than insist that you be like Him so that He could receive you, He glorified God by giving



up His right not to die in order to receive you, and you now have an opportunity to glorify God by giving up *your* rights. Rather than insist that your weaker brother think and act like you do before you can receive him, be willing to give up your rights in order to receive him.



In so doing, you can glorify God more than *any one* or *any thing* in all Creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psa. 19:1) when countless stars and planets rocket through space without colliding as they were programed to do by their glorious Creator. When salmon know how to travel over 900 miles to return to where they were spawned, that too glorifies the Creator who instilled in them such an astounding guidance system. When geese fly in that familiar “V” formation according to God’s aerodynamic design, each one flying in the wake of another, all the while rotating positions so that the leader that bears the brunt of breaking the wind can be regularly eased, it glorifies God that they know to do this! But remember, stars and salmon and geese don’t have a choice, they are just doing what God *programed* them to do. You

have a choice. You don’t have to glorify God by giving up your rights, so when you do, you glorify God more than the very *heavens* that declare His glory!

“Can’t I ever take a day off from glorifying God in this way?” Of course you can! But what would happen if the stars took the day off from following their precision paths and began to crash into one another? I’m guessing that wouldn’t be a good thing. And when stronger brethren take the day off from glorifying God by giving up their rights, it sets them on a collision course with weaker brethren who must depend on them to keep the peace. That’s not good for them *or* for the lost who watch the bickering that inevitably ensues.

### **The Old Testament Establishes the Mystery**

Now that Paul has stressed the need for us to understand and follow the example of an Old Testament verse as seemingly obscure as Psalm 69:9, it looks like he is changing the subject as he moves on to a verse with which most grace believers are much more familiar. But as we shall see, this verse that is rightly such a favorite among grace believers fits right in with what he has been saying about the importance of studying the Old Testament.

**“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).**

This is a great verse to use to contrast how, when Christ was

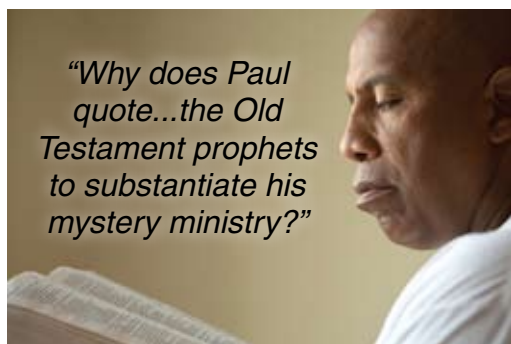
here on earth, He was “a minister of the circumcision,” while Paul is “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles” (v. 16). But did you ever notice that Paul gives more than one reason why God made His Son a minister of the circumcision? It was, as Paul says here in this verse, “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,”

**“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name” (Rom. 15:9).**

God made the Lord Jesus Christ a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the circumcision fathers, *and* that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. Here we have to ask, How would sending Christ to the Jews cause the Gentiles to glorify God? You’d think that this would cause the Gentiles to *complain* to God that the Lord had not been sent to them too! But Gentiles such as the Syrophenician woman understood that God had a plan to bless the Gentiles through the crumbs of blessing that trickled down from the table of the children of Israel (Matt. 15:21-28), and this was a plan of which you too need to be aware as a grace believer.

You see, when you tell the average Christian that Christ was not sent to the Gentiles, they will often ask if that means God didn’t *love* the Gentiles. Of course God loved the Gentiles! He so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). But He planned

to *reach* the world *through Israel*, specifically through the “rising” of Israel above the nations when the light of Christ shone upon them (Isa. 60:1-3). When Israel brutally murdered the Light of the world, God the Father had every right to pour out His wrath on them.



*“Why does Paul quote...the Old Testament prophets to substantiate his mystery ministry?”*

Of course, that would have left the Gentiles out in the cold. So instead of insisting on His right to judge Israel, God did an end run around her and raised up Paul, sending him directly to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21; 26:17), revealing His secret plan to bless the Gentiles through Israel’s *fall* (Rom. 11:11) rather than through her rise, a plan He called the mystery (11:25). In so doing, He gave up His right to judge the Jews in order to edify us Gentiles. He gave up His right to please Himself in order to please us.

### **How the Old Testament Applies to You**

But this raises another problem that we have to address. If the Gentiles are being blessed according to God’s mystery plan in this dispensation and not according to God’s prophetic plan,

why does Paul quote several verses from the Old Testament prophets to substantiate his mystery ministry among the Gentiles (Rom. 15:9-12)?

Well, when Paul first began preaching to the Gentiles, you'll remember that the Jews were alarmed and convened a council in Jerusalem to discuss the matter. After Paul testified about his ministry among the Gentiles, James observed that his ministry seemed to "agree" with the words of the prophets, who had spoken about how "the Gentiles" would "seek after the Lord" (Acts 15:12-17). But notice that James did *not* say that Paul's ministry *fulfilled* prophecy, he said that it *agreed* with prophecy. That is, the goal of the prophetic program was the blessing of the Gentiles, and under God's mystery program the Gentiles were being blessed.

This is the key to understanding Paul's use of the Old Testament. Most New Testament writers quote Old Testament verses to show *fulfillment* (Matt. 1:21,22; 21:4; 26:56, etc.), but Paul quoted them to show *agreement* and *harmony*. The mystery didn't fulfill Old Testament prophecy, but it didn't contradict it either! That's why Paul wasn't shy about quoting what the *prophetic* Scriptures had to say about blessing coming to the Gentiles to validate his *mystery* ministry among the Gentiles. Any time Paul saw anything in the prophets that agreed with what God is doing during this dispensation of the mystery, he never hesitated to quote them.

Consider the prophecy that God made through Hosea:

**"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction..." (Hos. 13:14).**

In this verse, God is obviously promising to raise someone from the dead, and we needn't wonder who. Earlier in the passage, God cried, "*O Israel...I will be thy King...I will ransom them from...the grave*" (13:9-14). But if this prophecy is about Israel's resurrection, why does Paul quote it and apply it to our "mystery" resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51,55)? Surely it is because death has no sting, and the grave has no victory, for *any* believer *in any dispensation*.

Do you think there might be *other* things in the Old Testament that agree with other things Paul taught? I know for a fact there are! And a familiarity with the context of Old Testament verses that Paul quotes can often help us more readily understand his meaning in quoting them. Beloved, if we believe, as we say, that "all Scripture is *for* us, but not all Scripture is *to* us," it is inconsistent to ignore the parts of Scripture that we say are for us!

### **The Old Testament Gives Us Hope**


One final thought. After quoting all of those Old Testament prophecies about how the Gentiles will be blessed when Messiah rises in Israel and trickles down blessing to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:9-12), prophecies that

failed to be fulfilled in time past, how can Paul go on to say,

**“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 15:13).**

If God’s original plan to bless the Gentiles failed in time past, how is that supposed to fill us Gentiles with hope? Well, now that you know what God *did* when the plan failed, if that doesn’t fill you with hope, I don’t know what will! God had a plan to bless the Gentiles that He talked about *for 2,000 years*, but when Israel refused to be His channel of blessing

to the Gentiles, God refused to let her stand in the way of blessing them and raised up Paul, “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13).

Do you get the idea that when God is determined to bless someone that *nothing can stop Him!* As you then read God’s plan in Paul’s epistles to bless you throughout eternity in accord with His mystery program, it should “fill you with all joy and peace in believing,” that is, in believing “that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ” (Eph. 2:7). *Glory!* 



# Grace Family Bible Church CONFERENCE

**Dates:** May 21-22, 2016

**Location:** *Grace Family Bible Church*  
2243 Mill Road, Duncansville, Pennsylvania

**Speaker:** Pastor Kevin Sadler, President, Berean Bible Society

For questions or additional information, please contact:  
Pastor Jim Zaebst: (814) 327-3028 or Church (814) 696-4366

**Grace Believers are family in Christ, come for this family reunion!**



# Why “More Noble”?

By Pastor Kevin Sadler

**1 Thes. 2:13: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”**

**Acts 17:11: “These 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.”**

I had one of those “Aha!” moments when studying God’s Word recently. It has troubled me for years as to why Paul said “these [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica.” You hear it said often how the Thessalonian church was a model church. They were noble. Based off of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, it’s easy to see why we say that. So why were the Bereans more noble than these Thessalonians?

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul gives thanks to God without ceasing for the Thessalonians. The reason he was so thankful for them here was for their response to the Word, that when they “received the Word of God,” they received it “not as the word of men” but as the Word of God. Paul was deeply grateful that the Thessalonians recognized the true nature of his preaching and teaching.

The message Paul brought to them was a revelation from Christ that was unrevealed in the Old Testament. Paul received a new message, a new gospel directly from Christ, and he relayed it to the Thessalonians who “received” it as God’s Word. In Galatians 1:11,12 Paul



says, “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.” Paul wasn’t taught his gospel by man because his gospel could not be found or be taught to him from the Old Testament Scriptures. His gospel necessitated a revelation from Christ in heaven because it was new. It had been unrevealed in the past, hidden in the mind of God (Eph. 3:9).

Paul, in his missionary journeys, was making known the Word of God by God’s authority, with his words and preaching, without it being found in the written Word of God at that time. Paul was grateful that the Thessalonians not only listened to the message as God’s Word, but that they had swung open their hearts and embraced it warmly as God’s truth. They didn’t believe it was the “word of men,” or just the word of Paul, Silas, Timothy (1 Thes. 1:1), or something they had made up or concocted, but that it was the very Word of God. They believed that the gospel of grace, the revelation of the mystery, and the truth of the Rapture that Paul brought to them was the Word of God, which Paul says was the “truth.”

The two times “received” is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 it conveys two different meanings. The first “received” in the Greek primarily means, “to receive and take from another.” It communicates the idea that the Word of God was heard, understood, and grasped. The second word “received” in the Greek goes a step further. It primarily means, “to accept and welcome eagerly.” When we welcome God’s Word, we’re allowing its truth into our hearts. We receive it for ourselves. We make it our own. We believe it, embrace it, welcome it with full approval. We receive it into the inner man and make it a part of our lives, and by this the Word “effectually worketh...in you that believe.”

The Bereans also “*received* the Word of God.” The word “received” in Acts 17:11 is the word meaning that they accepted and welcomed eagerly the Word of God through Paul. But the reason why the Bereans were “more noble” than those in Thessalonica was because they “searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” They received it, believed it, but then they made sure.

President Ronald Reagan once said, “Trust, but verify.” When Paul spoke of a gospel, a church, a heavenly hope, and a coming of Christ that was unrevealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, the Bereans trusted, but then verified and checked it out for themselves to make sure it was true. This made them “more noble” than the Thessalonians, who just received and trusted. It was noble as well that the Thessalonians trusted the message of Paul, and Paul was thankful for this. But the fact that the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so, made them “more noble.” When we are like the Bereans and verify from Scripture the things we hear and read, then we too are “more noble” in the eyes of God.



# Amazing Grace

By Tracy Lesan, Missionary to Slovakia

## The Apostle of Grace

You can never go far in the letters of the Apostle Paul without running into the marvelous truth of *grace*. The primary Greek word for *grace* is charis, from which we get the word “charity”. But there are also three others that share the same root and convey the same ideas: the noun charisma, meaning a *gift*, and two verbs, charitoō and charizomai, usually translated *freely give* and *forgive*, respectively.

Paul used these four words an astonishing 134 times in his 13 letters—on average, over 10 times per letter, and 1.5 times per chapter. That’s a lot of grace! By contrast, in the four Gospels, which are almost twice the length of Paul’s letters, those words appear just 17 times, and that only in Luke and John. Paul was captivated by grace. Besides *faith* and *love*, no other theological term or

topic about which he wrote comes even close to rivaling grace’s dominance.

Regarding the meaning of grace, Paul’s teaching consistently focuses on the concept of undeserved favor or kindness. Grace can never be earned or deserved. It isn’t granted with respect to any personal qualities or actions of the intended recipient, but rather freely, as an expression of love. We can’t do anything to make ourselves more worthy of grace or less worthy. All that we can do is receive it with humble gratitude for the giver’s kindness.

God’s grace, of course, is what most occupied the apostle’s attention, and he always linked it with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of the infinite merits of what Christ accomplished through His death for our sins and resurrection, the Heavenly Father graciously, freely

pours out His boundless eternal blessings upon all who do nothing but trust in His Son. It was no coincidence that Paul named the message that he preached *the gospel of the grace of God* (Acts 20:24). And we could rightly name Paul the apostle of the grace of God, for it was he whom God appointed to bring to light a wonderful new plan of grace for the present age (Eph. 3:9).

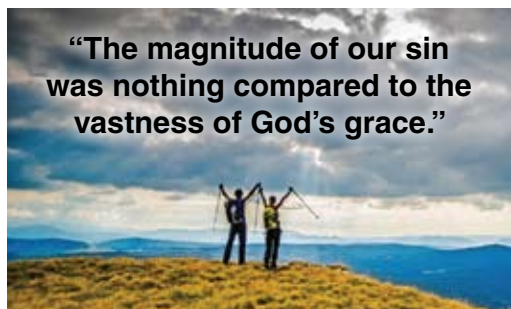
### **The Government of Grace**

Let's look at what Paul writes about this special plan in his letter to the Ephesians:

**I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 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... Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 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: 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. 3:1-10).**

God gave Paul a special *dispensation* or administration<sup>1</sup> of grace which was associated with a *mystery*, something that had been *hidden* and *not made known* in the past. From the beginning, God had kept it a secret—even from Israel's prophets and the other apostles—until He revealed it to Paul following Christ's ascension to heaven.



In the past, God worked to accomplish His purposes primarily through His chosen people, Israel, whom He had set apart for privileged treatment and to whom He gave His law of commands and ordinances to guide them in the path of righteousness. With the unveiling of this new administration of grace, however, God has made several dramatic changes.

Firstly, He has temporarily hardened unbelieving Israel, but has opened His arms of blessing to Gentiles like never before (Rom. 11:7-25). Jews and Gentiles are now equal before God—equally alienated and guilty *under sin* apart from Christ and equally free to receive God's *mercy* in Christ (Rom. 3:9; 11:30-32).

Secondly, He is forming believers in Christ into a new chosen people that Paul calls the body of Christ. All members of this unique assembly—Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free—share the same privileged position, spiritual blessings, and eternal hope (Eph. 1:3-21; 3:6; Gal. 3:23-29).

Thirdly, He has abolished or nullified the law, and substituted a new rule of grace: *ye are not under the law, but under **grace*** (Rom. 6:14; see Eph. 2:13-16). We are under grace regarding salvation, for we are justified or declared righteous only by faith in Christ without works of obedience to Israel's law or any other legal system: *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...unto all and upon all who believe...Being justified freely by his **grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 3:21-24).<sup>2</sup> We are also under grace in our daily lives after we are saved. Unlike the Jews, we don't have to be circumcised (Gal. 5:1-15), observe the Sabbath (Rom. 14:5-6), or avoid certain foods (1 Tim. 4:1-15). So, bring on the bacon with those eggs! God's grace, not law, instructs us in the way of righteousness (Titus 2:11-12), and most importantly, leads us to love. When we live in love through God's Spirit who indwells us, we fulfill all that the law required (Rom. 13:10).

We can search the Bible high and low, but we won't find any of these distinctive truths anywhere except in Paul. All of Scripture reveals the grace of God, but

only Paul sets forth and explains God's present governmental plan in which grace is the defining feature of His relationship with mankind.

### Surprised by Grace

One of the most surprising displays of human grace that I've ever encountered came by way of a letter from our bank many years ago. The keepers of our money had written to tell us that, on one day during the previous month, we had let the balance in our account drop below the required minimum amount. A feeling of dread crept over me as I read the news, waiting to find out how big of a fine they'd charged. But the anticipated blow never came. The letter simply stated that they'd chosen to waive the penalty. No reprimand. No warning. They even thanked us for being their customers. I reread the letter a couple of times to make sure that I hadn't missed anything, and probably pinched myself to make sure that I wasn't dreaming.

We don't expect such gracious gestures from banks, because banks don't operate on grace. They can allow for it at times, but it's never the normal policy. In fact, I'm sure that if our balance had dropped more than just a few dollars below the limit or stayed there for more than just a few hours, they would've squeezed every last cent out of us that the contract would've allowed. Such is the way of this usually graceless world. We all know the cold, hard facts of life: You have to play by the rules. You get what you pay

for. And, there's no such thing as a free lunch.

But, oh, how different it is with God! He doesn't merely allow for grace; He's purposely built it into the system. He doesn't merely grant it now and then as an exception; it's the standard operating procedure in all of His dealings with us today. The radical truth about salvation by grace is that our deeds, good or bad, aren't a deciding factor. We don't have to do anything to get it, and no amount of sin will disqualify us from it. Our eternal relationship with God is not based in any way upon us or our merits or demerits but upon Christ and His merits. His sinless perfection, all-sufficient sacrifice, and glorious resurrection are all that matter. Let's now look at one last passage where Paul explains in more detail how it works.

### Grace Reigns

The following segment of the apostle's letter to Rome oozes with grace<sup>3</sup> and also unveils the essence of the gospel:

**Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (...But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one;**

**much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)... Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:12-21).**

Paul explains that we're all guilty before God, not primarily because of our countless personal transgressions—though they would be more than enough to condemn us—but because of Adam's *one transgression*. God put Adam's sin on our crime record, too, and we all experience His punishment of *death*. “Hey, that's not fair!” we cry. “God's punishing us for something that we didn't do!” Actually, there are two additional aspects of God's “unfairness” which work out for our benefit, as we'll soon see. But first we need to let what we've just read sink in a bit.

Our sin in Adam put the entire human race on a level playing field: *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23). It makes no difference whether we're Mussolini or Mother Theresa. No one child of Adam can ever be more deserving of condemnation and death than any other. We can try as hard as we like to clean up our lives, to do fewer bad things and more good, but it's futile as far as our salvation is concerned. No amount of self-reformation can ever wash away the deadly stain we inherited from the *one that sinned*. And the bad news keeps



getting worse. Paul adds that Israel's law made our sin and guilt *abound* even more. In brief, we've all sinned, we all must die, and the law only adds fuel to the fire.

Thankfully, God had a marvelous cure for our desperate condition: *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. To counteract the increase of our sin, God multiplied His grace. The Father laid the blame of our sin upon His sinless Son and let Him die our death so that we might freely receive His *righteousness* and *life*. If it wasn't "fair" that God counted us guilty for what Adam did, then it certainly wasn't "fair" for Him to count Jesus guilty for what both Adam and we did, and then count us righteous for what Jesus did. Praise God that the gospel is not just about fairness, but even more about grace!




The magnitude of our sin was nothing compared to the vastness of God's grace. As the sun outshines the moon, so the *abundance of grace* in Christ overwhelmingly eclipses our guilt. Now we who've believed in Christ are under the *reign* of grace and continually dwell in her unmerited favor both now and forever: *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace*

*with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into **this grace wherein we stand*** (Rom. 5:1-2).

The songwriter got it right:

Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon  
and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that is greater  
than all our sin!<sup>4</sup>

God saved us *by grace* (Eph. 2:5,8-9) and gave us a wonderful standing *in grace* (Rom. 5:2) so in the ages to come He might display through us *the exceeding riches of His grace* (Eph. 2:4-7), *all to the praise of the glory of His grace* (Eph. 1:6). Amazing, indeed.

As we close, please join me right now in lifting up your heart to God in prayer, and giving Him back a small portion of what He's already lavished upon us: **Thanks** (literally, *charis*—**Grace**) *be unto God for His unspeakable gift* (2 Cor. 9:15)! And let us further honor Him by showing His grace to others as we have received it from Him: *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God* (Rom. 15:7). 

## Endnotes

1. The Greek word *oikonomia* refers to an administrative plan and is translated *dispensation* and *fellowship* in Eph. 3:2,9 (see also Eph. 1:10; 1 Cor. 9:17; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4).
2. Salvation and justification by faith without works is frequently stressed by Paul (see Rom. 3:28-4:5; Gal. 2:15-21; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:1-9; 2 Tim. 1:8-9; Titus 3:3-5).
3. The word grace (*charis*) appears five times, as does the word gift, which is used to translate three different, though synonymous, Greek words: *charisma* (vv. 15, 16), *dōrea* (vv. 15,17) and *dōrēma* (v. 16).
4. "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" by Julia H. Johnston.

# What Should We Render to God?



When the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21), it was clear that He meant that the tax money they had asked Him about (v. 19) should be rendered to the king. But did you ever wonder what He had in mind in speaking of the things that should be rendered unto God?

Well, in the context of being asked about money that God’s people owed the government that ruled over them in civil matters, the Lord was surely thinking of the money they also owed the priests who ministered to them in spiritual matters. Remember, the priestly tribe of Levi was granted no inheritance in the Promised Land, leaving them no source of income other than the tithes that faithful Hebrews had to pay if they wanted to render to God what was God’s.

But I believe the Lord was thinking of something else that people should want to render to God. Let’s not forget how the Lord determined what should be rendered to Caesar. The penny He had asked to see (v. 19) bore the emperor’s image (v. 20), and He rightly concluded that it therefore belonged to the emperor. But by that reasoning, since all men bear the image of God by virtue of creation (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7), they belong to Him and owe Him the glory that historically men have refused to give Him (Rom. 1:21).

Of course, while many Christians glorify their Creator, all of them should, since we who are saved bear God’s image spiritually as well. You see, when God saved you, you were “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29), and you “put on the new man” which bears “the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:10). So if we render money to Caesar because it bears his image, we should also yield ourselves to God “as those that are alive from the dead” (Rom. 6:13).

In addition, your physical body also belongs to Him (1 Cor. 6:19,20), so it too is among the things that are His that should be rendered to Him. That means that while you will no doubt want to render to God financially to support the ministries that minister to you (1 Cor. 9:11; Gal. 6:6), you should also consider following the lead of the Macedonians, who “first gave their own selves to the Lord” (2 Cor. 8:5).

King Hezekiah “rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him” (2 Chron. 32:25), but in light of the endless love and amazing grace that God has bestowed on us, let’s you and I render unto God the things that are God’s!

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



# Prayer Peace

By Pastor Kevin Sadler

The following is a chapter from *A Praying Life* by Kevin Sadler. If you would like to order this booklet, see the ad on page 28.

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

**“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).**

Knowing that *“the Lord is at hand”* (Phil. 4:5), that is, realizing Christ’s present nearness and presence with His Church, the Body of Christ, and His future coming for the Church, should free us from fear, worry, and anxiety in life. *“Be careful for nothing,”* speaks of not being full of care and worries. When our Lord was visiting Mary and Martha at their home in Bethany, the Lord told Martha, who was busy preparing the meal, *“thou art careful and troubled about many things”* (Luke 10:41). The idea there and

in Philippians 4:6 of the term “careful” is of being full of care and troubled about day-to-day things. There are many things in life that necessarily demand our attention and care and concern. We are not called to live a “carefree” life here, but rather to “not be anxious,” to not worry and be full of cares, or be constantly troubled and fearful.

A man said to his friend, “I’m really in trouble. I have a mountain of credit card debt, I lost my job, my car is being repossessed and my house is in foreclosure, but I’m not worried about it!” “How can that be?” asked his friend. “I have hired a professional worrier, and he does all my worrying for me,” said the man. His friend replied, “That’s fantastic! How much does a professional worrier cost?” “\$50,000 a year.” “Wow, that’s expensive. Where are you going to get that

kind of money?" The man replied, "I don't know, that's for him to worry about."<sup>1</sup>

God doesn't want us to be professional worriers. Worry is a joy stealer. God wants us to not worry about anything and instead to be "prayerful for everything." George Mueller wrote, "The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety."<sup>2</sup> To bring everything to God in prayer is a call to walk by faith and to trust God in every circumstance. 1 Peter 5:7 says that God wants His own to "[Cast] *all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.*" The Lord wants to bear our burdens and cares, because He cares deeply for each of us. We do so knowing by faith that we are not in control, but He is. We don't know the future, but He does. We don't know everything, but He does. He is all-wise, so we should trust Him in all things.

A lady came to the great preacher of the last century, G. Campbell Morgan, and said, "I only take the big things to God. I don't take the little things to God." G. Campbell Morgan looked at her and said, "Lady, anything you take to God is little."<sup>3</sup> We can bring everything to God because anything we bring to God is little to Him, no matter how big it seems to us. He is a Sovereign God. Is anything too hard for Him? No! "*In every thing,*" any matter of life, any circumstance, any physical or spiritual problem, any and all concerns of your heart or mind, is prayer material. God wants us to give Him all worries, stresses,

tensions, troubles, frustrations, failures, and to pour our hearts out to Him, "*by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.*"

"*By prayer,*" speaks of simply talking to God, conversing and communicating with Him and reverently worshipping and praising Him in it, and meditating on His Person. When worries creep up, God wants our first action and reaction to be to get alone with Him, to think about Him, and to worship Him reverently. We first need to see the greatness and majesty of God. God wants us to know that He is big enough to solve our problems.

Lee Eclov tells the following: "Travel back 200 years in Christian history to John Newton, the slave-trader-turned-pastor and hymn writer. He believed in what he called 'large asking.' When explaining what he meant, Newton would cite a legendary story of a man who asked Alexander the Great to give him a huge sum of money in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. Alexander agreed, and told the man to request of Alexander's treasurer whatever he wanted. So the father of the bride went and asked for an enormous amount. The treasurer was startled and said he could not give out that kind of money without a direct order. Going to Alexander, the treasurer argued that even a small fraction of the money requested would more than serve the purpose. 'No,' replied Alexander, 'Let him have it all. I like that fellow. He does me honor. He treats me like a king and proves by what he asks

that he believes me to be both rich and generous.”<sup>4</sup> And so Newton concluded, “In the same way, we should go to the throne of God’s grace and present petitions that express honorable views of the love, riches, and bounty of our King.”



We are to take everything to God in prayer knowing our God and how good and generous and gracious He is, and ask in light of this. In bringing everything to God in prayer, we express an honorable and true view of God, who is deeply interested in every area of our lives (Psa. 139:1-18). He is loving and generous, and we should call on His name and pray to Him always. And we should pray big, making big and bold requests in light of the riches and bounty of our great God (Eph. 3:20).

We also come before God with “*supplication*” or praying earnest, specific prayers to Him about any need, making defined, detailed, intelligent requests to God. He is eager to hear our prayers, and He wants us to spell them out to Him. And we are to make our prayer and supplication “*with thanksgiving*.” We have many things to thank our God for when

we pray, things such as free and continual access to Him. We should thank Him for hearing our prayers and being there for us always. We are to thank Him for specific things, noting His working, seeing what He has done and thanking Him for it. We should thank Him for answered prayer, whether the answer was yes, no, or wait. We should thank Him for Him, for who He is, that He is a good God, that He is the God of all grace and mercy. We should express our gratitude to Him for His patience and longsuffering to us. We should thank Him for His countless blessings, both spiritual and physical, and specify these to Him. D. L. Moody summarized this verse as “Be careful for nothing, prayerful for everything, and thankful for anything.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul goes on and says to just “*let your requests be made known unto God*.” Timothy Jones writes, “We don’t like to stand speechless or stammering before God, but that doesn’t mean God holds it against us when we do. I remember a vacation with my parents in France when I was in high school. I had just completed two years of French, hardly enough to make me fluent. Still, there we were, tourists wanting to make the most of our time. So when we needed a bathroom, when we wanted to find a café, or when I lost my eyeglasses, I falteringly used my butchered French. I was trying—to the politely suppressed laughter of others—to speak the language. But I remember more than the townspeople’s bemusement. I remember how they



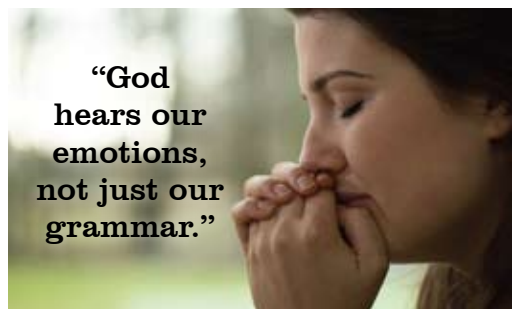
warmly received my efforts. They strained to hear past my fractured sentences. They honored me by responding. Is God any less generous? He hears all that arises from us—the words of our mouth, the longings of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds, the intentions of our wills. Regret, grief, thanksgiving, hope—God hears our emotions, not just our grammar. Because of His grace, not our eloquence, we can pray, even if we stammer.”<sup>6</sup>

What it comes down to is this: **just pray.** Pray all the time and pray about everything. God wants us to let our requests be known to Him, no matter how it comes out, and we do so knowing He hears our hearts and emotions. God wants us to trust Him, to live in light of His presence, to live in light of His love knowing He’s there for us and wants to carry our burdens, and so we pray knowing this.

**“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).**

As we are anxious for nothing and, instead, pray and share our concerns with thanksgiving, we have a promise from God. The promise isn’t that He will answer every prayer in the way we ask or desire, like under the prophetic kingdom program (cf. Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13,14; 16:23). God’s promise for us, the Body of Christ today, under grace, is that His peace, which transcends all human reason or understanding, will “*keep*” or guard, or garrison our “*hearts and minds through*


*Christ Jesus.*” God’s peace will garrison our thoughts and emotions, and keep worry, anxiety, doubts, and fears **out**, and keep His rest, comfort, peace, strength, and security **within**. God’s peace stands guard over the two areas that create worry: the “heart” or our feelings and emotions, and the “mind” or our intellect and thinking.



J. Oswald Sanders has rightly said, “Peace is not the absence of trouble; peace is the presence of God.” Christ is our peace and the peace that passes all understanding is His presence in our lives (Phil. 4:5), and a closer walk with Him by prayer results in greater peace and joy. Dave Dravecky, a former Major League pitcher who lost his pitching arm to cancer, said this, “I have learned that God’s silence to my questions is not a door slammed in my face. I may not have answers. But I do have Him.” That’s where peace is!

So as we pray and trust the Lord, as we grow closer to Him, we’ll find His all-surpassing quiet calmness and peace. God’s peace comes to us as we trust and pray. The peace of God is grounded in God’s presence, promises, wisdom,

and power, knowing He is in control and is working all things together for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).

**Challenge:** *Make a 30-day commitment to pray for your local church and Berean Bible Society. Make a 30-day commitment to pray for an unsaved acquaintance, pray for a loved one going through a hard time. Make a 30-day commitment to just thank God for all that He has done for you!* 

## Endnotes

1. <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/stop-drop-and-roll-tony-bazen-sermon-on-peace-62065.asp>.
2. <http://christian-quotes.ochristian.com/D.L.-Moody-Quotes/page-2.shtml>.
3. G. Campbell Morgan, *Tony Evans Book of Illustrations*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL: 2009) pg. 234.
4. <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2009/october/7101909.html>.
5. Author Unknown.
6. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/moi/2009/006/november/just-stammer-away.html>.

# Let's Do Something...



...even if it's wrong. Have you ever heard that platitude? In every dispensation, God has always had well-meaning children who served Him sincerely, but without an understanding of His rightly divided Word, and so did and taught things that were dispensationally *wrong*. But in every dispensation there have also been men like “the children of Issachar, *which were men that had understanding of the times*, to know what Israel ought to do...” (1 Chron. 12:32), dispensationalists who knew where they stood in the program of God, and so knew how to do what is dispensationally *right*.

We are not shy to unabashedly proclaim that in the present dispensation of grace, *grace believers* are the modern day men of Issachar! We have an understanding of the times. We know what the Body of Christ ought to be doing. But with great knowledge comes great responsibility! Why not get in the battle for truth? After all, it's not what you know that counts, it's what you “do” (Phil. 4:9) with what you know. Let's do something now that we know that what we are doing is *right*.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

## Question Box

*“What does Paul mean when he says that whatsoever is not of faith is sin”?*

**“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).**

We know that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Word of God *through Paul* says that we can eat all things (1 Tim. 4:4), but he who is “weak in faith” (Rom. 14:1) doubts this and limits himself to eating “herbs” (v. 2). His faith has not yet matured to believe Paul when he says he can eat meat, so “he that doubteth... if he eat...he eateth not of faith.”

But if he wouldn’t eat it “of faith,” why would he eat it? Well, in this passage, he might eat meat trying to follow the example of his stronger brother. This is why Paul encourages strong brethren not to eat meat in front of a weaker brother (v. 15), which might make “the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat” meat (cf. 1 Cor. 8:10). If he eats meat to try to walk in the footsteps of his stronger brother, rather than eating it because “of faith” in God’s Word, it will cause him to stumble (Rom. 14:13,21) by doing something that bothers his conscience.

Back to our question. How come “whatsoever is not of faith is sin”? It is because “to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it *is* unclean” (v. 14). God actually adjusts the definition of what is unclean to agree with a weak brother’s conscience. Since his faith does not yet believe that he can eat meat, “he eateth not of faith,” and whatsoever is not of faith is sin *to him*.

Why would a weak brother “be damned if he eat”? Well, the word “damnation” doesn’t always refer to *eternal* damnation *in Hell*. If all damnation was eternal, the Lord was being redundant in speaking of “eternal damnation” (Mark 3:29). Likewise, if all damnation was to Hell, He would not have had to add the words “of Hell” when He spoke of “the damnation of Hell” (Matt. 23:33). The word “damnation” simply means *condemnation* or *judgment* of any kind. Those who resist the government “shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom. 13:1,2), the judgment and condemnation *of the government*. So when a weak brother eats meat that he believes is unclean, it is sin for him, and he is condemned *by his own conscience*, since he judges what he has done to be sinful.

—Pastor Kurth



## BBS Letter Excerpts

### From our Inbox:

"You are awesome! Lots of studying for me...you gave me a lot of Scriptural thought."

### From Georgia:

"I got Dr. Sadler's new video on Thursday's post. I listened to the first one. It was wonderful. I think I will be giving away several of these."

### From Tennessee:

"I was very familiar with knowing...what is said in God's Holy Word. Then, with your help, I began learning where it should really be placed and then, and only then, I could know what the Bible was saying, instead of just what it said. I had begun teaching from the pulpit what I had learned, and we even ordered Sunday School literature from you. The people were very receptive, and I was pleased but still under a Baptist title. I resigned." (Keep this pastor in prayer as he starts a grace church. See page 30—Ed).

### From New York:

"Thank you...a very solid and timely article...I have recently been struggling with understanding the seeming silence of God in this present dispensation...Your perspective with regard to God's patience sheds more light on the subject."

### From our Inbox:

"This article ['You Can't Judge a Woman By Her Cover'] is very helpful to me as a woman."

### From our Inbox:

"Thank you for your patience. I have a new-born Christian friend who did not have a clear understanding of what I tell him, but it has all been cleared up and he is now convinced what I was telling him is true, thanks to you."

### From Missouri:

"I had to take a minute to thank you for the Two Minutes article that you wrote entitled 'You Can't Get By With This.' It is very succinct and clearly shows the difference that all Bereans hope to impart to others."

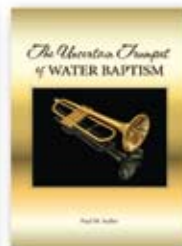
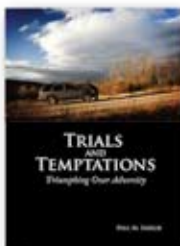
### From our Inbox:

"You're in dreamland. Seems to me you spend your life trying to disprove God's power. His power is alive and well, and since you don't have it, for obvious reasons you try to take it away from everyone else or prevent them from believing they can have it. May the God of Israel in our Lord Jesus forgive you and show you like He did me."

### From Pennsylvania:

"I never was a 'dollar menu' customer, and I'd feel really cheap to take advantage of you to only pay seventy-five cents for the booklet special in the January *Searchlight*. So, to sleep better tonight, I'll send five dollars each for the eight booklets, and a little for shipping—and some extra for BBS." (Support like yours helps us run specials to get the message out!—Ed).

**"I have planted, Apollos watered;  
but God gave the increase." (I Corinthians 3:6)**



## **A COLLECTION OF BOOKLETS BY PAUL M. SADLER**

- *Are You Secure?*
- *The Historical Beginning of the Church*
- *Trials and Temptations*
- *The Uncertain Trumpet of Water Baptism*

**Price: \$8 per set of four booklets plus s&h\* / \$2 each plus s&h\***

**OFFERS END APRIL 30, 2016**

\*Orders up to \$30, add \$4 for shipping and handling; orders over \$30, add 15%

Wisconsin residents please add 5.6% for sales tax

**(262) 255-4750 or [www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)**

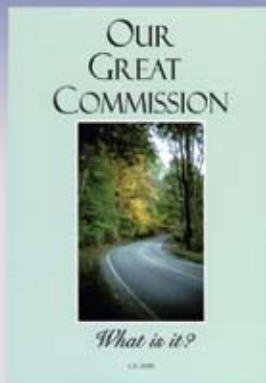




*If retailers can have  
"Christmas in July," we can have*

## **PRESIDENTS' DAY IN APRIL!**

As Pastor C. R. Stam passed the baton of our presidency to Pastor Paul M. Sadler, who has now passed it to Pastor Kevin Sadler, this month's specials feature works by each of our presidents.



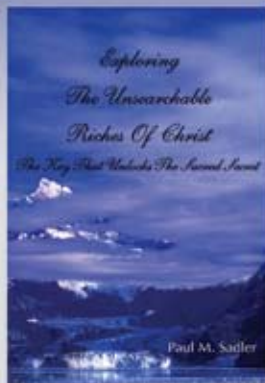
### **Our Great Commission**

*By C. R. Stam*

Paperback 142 pages

**Price: \$8.00**

plus s&h\*



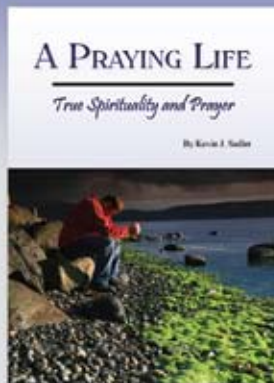
### **Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ**

*By Paul M. Sadler*

Hardcover 190 pages

**Price: \$11.00**

plus s&h\*



### **A Praying Life**

*By Kevin Sadler*

Booklet 50 pages

**Price: \$3.00**

plus s&h\*

**OFFERS END APRIL 30, 2016**

\*Orders up to \$30, add \$4 for shipping and handling; orders over \$30, add 15%

Wisconsin residents please add 5.6% for sales tax

**(262) 255-4750 or [www.bereanbiblesociety.org](http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)**



# News and Announcements

**Arizona Conference Date Change:** Pastor Mark Dilley and the saints at *West Valley Grace Fellowship* in Sun City West have graciously changed the date of their March 18-20 conference to April 22-24 to allow Pastor Kevin Sadler to remain in Wisconsin while his father struggles with his recent heart issue. Please take note of this date change, and contact Pastor Dilley at [jjdster@gmail.com](mailto:jjdster@gmail.com) or at (623) 377-3071 for more information.

**New Pastorate:** *Grace Bible Church* of Beloit, Wisconsin, has welcomed BBS board member Pastor Jim Tollar as their new interim pastor. Jim and his wife Missy attended GBC soon after they learned the grace message many years ago, so this new appointment has all the warmth of a homecoming mixed with a family reunion. If you live close enough to attend this sound grace assembly, or even just visit on occasion, you can learn more about this new partnership at [gbcbeloit.org](http://gbcbeloit.org).

**New Grace Ministry:** Now that former Baptist Pastor Ted Dean has come to rejoice with us in the riches of God's grace found in the epistles of Paul, the burden of his heart to get this blessed message out to others has led him to establish a new church in Copperhill, Tennessee. If you don't live close enough to attend this new assembly, ask him about the newsletter he sends out in a further effort to share God's rightly divided Word with others. Just give him a call at (813) 951-1711, or write him at [bibleperspective36@gmail.com](mailto:bibleperspective36@gmail.com).

**Attention Stranded Grace Believers:** *Grace Bible Church* of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, would like to invite grace believers without a local church to connect with a mentor to share God's Word, prayer, and encouragement. One-to-one meetings can be arranged for participants by email, Skype, and by phone. Believers of all levels of growth and understanding who seek grace fellowship are welcome. To learn how to make this new ministry a part of your spiritual life, visit [gbcoshkosh.org](http://gbcoshkosh.org), or just email them at [graceinchristconnect@gmail.com](mailto:graceinchristconnect@gmail.com).



*Europa Point Lighthouse* stands at the southern most point of Gibraltar. Situated as a gateway between the Atlantic and Mediterranean, it serves as a guide to vessels traveling through the Strait. The lighthouse is locally known as "La Farola" (literally 'lamppost' in Spanish).

# PRICE LIST

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

### (Hardcovers)

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

### Paperbacks

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

## WORKS BY PAUL M. SADLER—PRESIDENT

Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (Hardcover) .....	\$12.50
Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter, The (Hardcover) .....	13.50
Oneness of Marriage, The (Paperback) .....	8.00
Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Hardcover) .....	16.50
Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Hardcover) .....	12.00
Revelation, Volume 1 (Hardcover) .....	12.50
Revelation, Volume 2 (Hardcover) .....	14.00
Studies in James (Paperback) .....	10.00
Triumph of His Grace, The (Hardcover) .....	13.50
According to the Scriptures (Booklet) .....	2.00
Are You Secure? (Booklet) .....	2.00
Historical Beginning of the Church, The (Booklet) .....	3.00
Key to Understanding the Scriptures, The (Chart) .....	0.50
Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period, The (Booklet) .....	4.00
Trials and Temptations (Booklet) .....	2.00
Uncertain Trumpet of Water Baptism, The (Booklet) .....	2.00
Miracles of Calvary, The (DVD) .....	15.00
What It Means to Be a Grace Believer (DVD) .....	15.00

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

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

*Foreign orders must be remitted in U. S. currency*

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

PERIODICALS  
PAID AT GERMANTOWN, WI  
AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES

Nothing is so apt to keep a family together  
as mutual faith in Christ and a mutual love  
for the Bible.  
-C.R. Stam