

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

October 2017



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

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are getting positive feedback here at *Berean Bible Society* about our new television program, *Transformed by Grace*. After a recent airing, a lady called to subscribe to the *Berean Searchlight* and donate toward the program.

She stated that it so encouraged her because good teaching from the Word is so hard to find. Here are some responses from people initially learning about the program:

"Heard about the 'Transformed by Grace' show. Praise the Lord. I'm so excited for it." • *"With God, all things are possible. This is just wonderful."* • *"This is terrific news! Praying for you, Kevin, as the BBS embarks on this new phase of ministry."* • *"Great news! I can't wait to watch this. Praise the Lord."*

I'm starting to get more comfortable with the recording of the videos. When it's just you and two cameras when you are used to speaking to a congregation, it can be challenging. The cameras don't laugh at my jokes! It is a learning process. It is similar to a craft that you have to work at to get better. I appreciate your patience with me as I grow in this new format.

Our intent for this program is to strike a balance between the doctrinal and practical. We call the program *Transformed by Grace* because we want to teach the Word and grace dispensationally, but at the same time, God's grace should transform our lives as we correctly receive and apply the Word, rightly divided.

Some have asked whether the videos will be put online. Yes, they will be. We wanted them to appear on television initially, and then subsequently on the BBS website and the BBS YouTube channel. But when a video has appeared on television with closed captioning, by law, it must also appear online with closed captioning. This has slowed the process of putting them online. Please watch the *Searchlight* for an announcement as to when they are available online.

Just a reminder that, except in Tampa and Palatka, Florida, the program is broadcast on free, over-the-air television. An antenna (like rabbit ear antennas) is needed to receive these channels. Now that TV transmitters can broadcast in high definition (HD), there is a popular trend away from cable/satellite and toward over-the-air reception (often called "cutting the cord"). You can connect an antenna to your television by itself or along with your cable/satellite.

We have created a downloadable and printable list of stations that carry the television program. It contains instructions for how to access the program with an antenna. The flyer can also be printed out and distributed at your local church. You can find it at www.bereanbiblesociety.org/transformed.

Grace to you,

Pastor Kevin Sadler, President

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, wearing a white shirt cuff and a dark suit sleeve, placing a light-colored wooden block onto a staircase-like structure made of many similar blocks. The blocks are arranged in a series of steps, receding into the background. The lighting is bright, creating soft shadows.

Break With Tradition

By Pastor Paul M. Sadler

The early part of my Christian experience was closely identified with a denominational church that held dogmatically to the Acts 2 position. They were resting comfortably on the bed of tradition, and used its covers as security blankets to insulate themselves from the reality of God's Word, rightly divided. But with me it was somewhat different. I kept tossing and turning and was unable to get a good night's sleep, spiritually speaking. Something was wrong with the bed that I had climbed into, but I was unable to put my finger on the problem. The more that I studied and taught the Scriptures, the more restless I felt.

Tradition said, "Teach what Jesus taught." But Jesus taught, "Go *not* into the way of the Gentiles...But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5,6). Tradition said, "Walk where Jesus walked." But Jesus *miraculously* walked where no man has ever set foot before: "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (Matt. 14:25). Tradition said, "Obey the commandments of Jesus." But Jesus commanded, "And these *signs* shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17,18). Tradition said, "The Church, the Body of Christ began in Acts Chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost." But the narrative says, "Therefore let all the *house of Israel* know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye [unbelieving Israel] have crucified, both Lord and *Christ* [Messiah of Israel]" (Acts 2:36).

When I pointed these inconsistencies out to those in spiritual leadership at the time, I was politely told not to take these things so seriously. They felt that it was far more important to win lost souls to Christ than to quibble over such insignificant matters. The Word of God insignificant—God forbid the thought! Thankfully for the sake of these religious leaders, we are not living under the former dispensation lest fire come out of heaven to consume them. Little wonder the Church is in such a state of confusion. Not long after this encounter, the Lord graciously opened the eyes of my understanding to the revelation of the *Mystery*.

In the Footsteps of Paul

Berea and Athens

By Pastor Kevin Sadler

After visiting Philippi and Thessalonica on our Footsteps of Paul tour in May of this year, we headed for Berea. As a result of persecution from the Jews (Acts 17:5-10), Paul and Silas were driven from Thessalonica to Berea.

“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews” (Acts 17:10).

Berea is called Veria (sometimes spelled Veroia) today. It is 45 miles from Thessalonica. The terrain that Paul would’ve traveled through to get to Berea from Thessalonica is mostly flat farmland and fields. The Jews from Thessalonica followed Paul and Silas to Berea, and they traveled through these fields out of their hatred for Paul, his ministry, and his message, hoping to stir up the people of Berea against Paul (Acts 17:13). I was talking to my wife, Jessica, about this, while we were riding to Berea, and she said, “That must’ve been the first instance of road rage!”





This is Berea (Veria) from a distance as you approach it. It's a quaint, scenic town, situated on the side of a mountain. Its population today is roughly 65,000.

In the middle of Berea, they have mosaics and a statue commemorating the Apostle Paul's visit to their city. The mosaics depict the Macedonian vision and Paul teaching at Berea. The scroll Paul is holding has 1 Thessalonians 4:1 on it in

Greek: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Our tour group of 25 sang "My Hope Is in the Lord" in the small area around the mosaics. Our small choir really belted out this beloved hymn out and it was a present-day testimony in Berea to the Lord.

"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" (Acts 17:11).

On the way up the stairs to the mosaics, on the wall was a plaque bearing Acts 17:11 and a poem: "The word of God is a power / Neither hell nor sin gainsay; / Fruit and blessing abound / In that life where it holds sway."



I thought it was a terrific poem and very true.

We call ourselves "Bereans," and our ministry is named "Berean" Bible Society because of Acts 17:11. We need always to be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures for ourselves, and not take man's word for it. God's Word is our authority. We are each individually accountable before the

Lord for what we believe. We need to have the Berean spirit of going to the Scriptures to verify that what we hear, what we read, and what we are taught from the Word is the truth. When you read the *Berean Searchlight* or any of our literature or listen to messages from BBS, please do not take our word for it. We are not the authority; the Word of God is. Be a Berean. Go to the Scriptures yourself to see if these things are so. Eternal issues proceed from the Word of God. When the Word is taught by fallible man, it is every believer's responsibility to go to the Scriptures to see for themselves "whether those things [be] so."

Paul's ministry bore fruit in Berea. Many Bereans trusted Paul's gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, and were saved from their sins. One of the converts from Berea, Sopater, even accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4).

"Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" (Acts 17:12).

As a result of the angry Jews from Thessalonica hunting Paul down in Berea and stirring up the city against him, Acts 17:14-15 tells us,

"And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea... And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens...."

Paul went by sea to Athens; we traveled there on a tour bus. Athens is the capital of Greece, and its name is closely associated with the false Greek goddess Athena. The glory of Athens was beginning



to fade when Paul visited there, but it was still the cultural and intellectual center of the world at that time. The city enjoys a distinguished history in the arts, philosophy, science, and education, and as being home to some of the world's best-known classical philosophers, politicians, orators, and architects. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all studied or taught in Athens.



While the world stands in awe of these kinds of men, the Word says, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God..." (1 Cor. 1:20-21). When Paul was in Athens, he saw their spiritual blindness, their hopelessness, and that they "knew not God." This is still the sad state of the city today.

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:16).

In Paul’s day, Athens was not only the intellectual and artistic capital of the world; it was also a religious capital. It was the stronghold of Greek mythology. The city was full of idols. There were so many idols in Athens that an ancient historian and satirist, Peterronius, wrote that it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man. Seeing this, Paul’s “spirit was stirred in him.” The Greek word translated as “stirred” means to be provoked to anger or irritated. Paul was burdened and concerned about the folly of their beliefs and the danger for their souls. Like Paul, we should look at the world around us with our eyes open spiritually and with broken hearts over the false beliefs we see (1 Cor. 11:1).



“Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

“Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection” (Acts 17:17-18).



This is the view from Mars’ Hill looking down at the “market” or the marketplace in Athens. Paul’s burden for souls spurred him on to the synagogue, and then “daily” to the marketplace, to reach people in Athens so that they might trust Christ and turn to the living and true God. This central, public gathering place called an *agora*, was an open square in the heart of the city and was, of course, the place for buying and selling. But the marketplace was also a place

where philosophers and orators found an audience to expound on their opinions, have debates, and argue their various philosophies. Here the apostle found an opportunity where he could share Christ with the Athenians.

Two groups of philosophers, the Epicureans and the Stoics, confronted Paul in the marketplace. From these philosophers, Paul received two

reactions of ridicule: “What will this babbler say?” and “He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods,” because his subject, Christ and His resurrection, was something new to them.

“And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?”

“For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean” (Acts 17:19-20).

The philosophers decided to bring Paul to the “Areopagus,” or Mars’ Hill. A judicial body met on the hill of Mars. These judges were called Areopagites (cf. 17:34). They assembled for hearings and court procedures. Part of their responsibility was to watch over religion and education in the city. What Paul taught was “strange” enough to the philosophers that they felt it required a presentation before these men. Paul was not put on trial; rather he was invited to present his doctrine before the members of the court and the multitude on the hill in an informal meeting.



“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

“For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:22-24).

The location of Mars’ Hill and its height afforded Paul a view of the marketplace below, and the Parthenon and the Acropolis with its temples beside and above him. The streets of Athens with its many temples and statues to false gods would have been visible from where he stood. We can confidently assume that Paul pointed to these temples below and above him when he spoke of the “temples made with hands.”



Paul used the altar with the inscription “To the Unknown God” as the springboard for his message, starting with something they were aware of, and making a connection with his audience to stir their interest. Evidently, in order to appease a god they might not have been aware of, this altar was erected by the Athenians just to be safe. Pastor C. R. Stam said regarding this altar: “This altar...aptly expressed the sense of uncertainty which must necessarily trouble the minds of the heathen. Instinctively conscious of the limitations of their idol worship...and seeking to avoid the wrath of any god or gods still unknown and unacknowledged, they erected yet *this* altar, that no god might punish them for their neglect to worship him.”¹ Despite all their knowledge and higher learning, the Athenians didn’t know the true God, and Paul, speaking with authority, let them know that he knew Him and proclaimed the God Who was “unknown” to them.



For those who knew nothing about the Scriptures, Paul appealed to the testimony of creation in order to reach them. He began at the beginning. This is a lesson for all of us as well. Many from this generation haven’t been raised in church as the rest of us were and so do not know what the Bible says at all. They don’t even know the well-known stories of the Bible, or who the Bible characters are, or what sin is. We

need to follow Paul’s example and be flexible when presenting the gospel based and beginning at the point of understanding of the hearers. Often, like Paul did on Mars’ Hill, we may need to appeal to the testimony of creation and of God as sovereign Creator and Provider to Whom we are all accountable. This can be an effective way to reach the unbelieving in our culture (Rom. 1:20).

“Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us:

“For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:25-29).

Some of the “stone, graven by art and man’s device” that Paul mentions in his sermon still remain in Athens to this day.

Paul’s sermon in Acts 17, and other Scriptures, attest to the fact that God is too great to be confined in any temples men might build (1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 66:1-2a). But in verse 27, Paul shows also that “He be not far from every one of us.” Although God is too great to be housed in manmade temples, He isn’t removed from His creation so that He isn’t concerned about man’s needs. He is directly involved in our lives. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25), and “in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Further, Paul teaches that God in His sovereignty is also directly involved in the nations, the duration of their rule, and their boundaries (Acts 17:26); that men should recognize their dependence upon God so “that they should seek the Lord” and “feel after Him” with a view to finding Him. But man is guilty for not having done this. Romans 3:11 makes it clear that “there is none that seeketh after God.”

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

“Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.



“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.


“So Paul departed from among them.

“Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (Acts 17:30-34).

Paul’s purpose in his message wasn’t only to *convince* the Athenians that heard him, it was to *convict* them of their responsibility and accountability to the one true God. There is a day of judgment coming. Paul was dealing with idolatry, and he made it known that God calls for repentance, a thorough change of heart and mind, so they might turn to the true God from false gods (cf. 1 Thes. 1:9). God commands all men everywhere to repent and turn to Him “Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness.” Paul said this judgment is assured, it will happen because Christ is risen from the dead, and He is the Judge Who “will judge the world in righteousness.”

We find three reactions to the resurrection in verses 32 and 34: some mocked, some delayed, and some believed. It’s the same way when the gospel is presented today: some don’t take it seriously and laugh it off, some put their decision off for another day, and then there are some who believe.



Paul’s sermon is written in Greek on a large plaque on the side of Mars’ Hill. Paul was courageous to speak of Christ and His resurrection in a place pervaded by false beliefs. This was the second place that really touched my heart during our tour. It was inspiring to stand on Mars’ Hill where Paul stood alone, boldly sharing the truth about God in the midst of a whole culture and city that was in spiritual darkness and standing against him. Paul was a countercurrent voice to the strong flow of thought, prevailing false beliefs, and the overall course of the world. We too need to be a countercurrent voice to our culture, which is against Christ and the Word of God. May we be bold like Paul to proclaim the truth. 

To be continued!

1. C. R. Stam, *Acts, Dispensationally Considered* (Germantown, Wisconsin: Berean Bible Society, Sixth Printing, 2011), Volume 2, pp. 96,97.

Photo credit for some pictures: Terri Fredericksen.



Was Peter Competent to Interpret the “Great Commission?”

By C. R. Stam

Mark’s record of our Lord’s commission to the eleven clearly states: “He that believeth **and is baptized** shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). As to unbelievers, baptism, of course, did not even enter into their case, thus the record goes on to say, “and he that believeth not shall be damned [condemned].”

This passage has always presented a problem for Fundamentalists who cling to the practice of water baptism and deny the special revelation committed to Paul for the present dispensation. The result has been that some change the meaning of this passage, while others contend that the last twelve verses of Mark 16 are not in the inspired originals.

To change this passage to read, “He that believeth and is saved ought to be baptized,” is simply to pervert and misrepresent the written Word of God. If a minister in the pulpit can lightly do this to one passage, beware of him; he may do it to others too.

As to the argument that the closing portion of Mark’s Gospel is not in the original, we reply that one cannot **look into** this contention without concluding that it **is** part of the inspired text.

First, it must be remembered that we have no **original** manuscripts of the Bible. Second, the manuscripts we do have contain it in the ratio of 300 to 1. Third, the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts, which do not contain it, leave spaces where it has been omitted. Fourth, we have translations earlier than our oldest manuscripts which do contain it. Fifth, we have the writings of fathers who lived still earlier, containing quotations from this passage.

The most conclusive evidence, however, is that contained in Peter’s testimony at Pentecost. Surely Peter was working under the “great commission” at this time. Surely, also, he was better able to interpret the commission than we are. The Lord had already “**opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures**” (Luke 24:45). With eyes thus opened, the apostles further sat under


Christ's special instructions for forty days before His ascension (Acts 1:3). And to cap it all, we read that "THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST" (Acts 2:4).

Surely, under such conditions Peter could not have misinterpreted his commission. And are the terms laid down in Mark 16:16 omitted from his offer of salvation, or does he change or minimize them aught? Indeed not! He emphasizes them as he says to his convicted hearers:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Surely, Spirit-filled Peter, taught for forty days by Christ, with his understanding opened to God's revealed plan, would not have demanded water baptism for the remission of sins if he had not been instructed to do so. Those who would seek to eliminate Mark's record of the commission to the eleven (later twelve) have this further fact to face. Sad to say, some also misrepresent these words of Peter's by substituting three periods or an "etc." for the words "for the remission of sins."

Peter interpreted the rest of the Mark commission correctly too, for as it says, "these signs shall follow them that believe," and he promised that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (for miraculous power) would follow repentance and baptism.

Unless Fundamentalists are ready to interpret and proclaim the message of Mark 16:15-18 as Peter did, they should acknowledge that we are to labor, not under the **so-called** great commission given to the eleven, but under that **much greater** commission given by the **ascended** Lord to Paul and to us (2 Cor. 5:14-21); that commission in which water baptism has no place, but the all-sufficiency of Christ and His finished work is the theme. 

“ This passage has always presented a problem for Fundamentalists who cling to... water baptism... ”

Monday mornings on ION's subchannel .4



Transformed by
Grace



Duck Season

By Pastor Kevin Sadler

“The story is told of a certain African tribe that learned an easy way to capture ducks in a river. Catching their agile and wary dinner would be a feat indeed, so they formulated a plan.

“The tribesmen learned to go upstream, place a pumpkin in the river, and let it slowly float down into the flock of ducks. At first, the cautious fowl would quack and fly away. After all, it wasn't ordinary for pumpkins to float down the river! But the persistent tribesmen would subsequently float another pumpkin into the re-gathered ducks. Again they would scatter, only to return after the strange sphere had passed. Again, the hungry hunters would float another pumpkin. This time the ducks would remain, with a cautious eye on the pumpkin; and with each successive passing, the ducks would become more comfortable, until they finally accepted the pumpkins as a normal part of life.

“When the natives saw that the pumpkins no longer bothered the ducks, they hollowed out pumpkins, put them over their heads, and walked into the river. Meandering into the midst of the tolerant fowl, they pulled them down one at a time. Dinner? Roast duck.”¹

There is much deception in this world. We need to be cautious and on guard with the things we hear and read. In life, the pumpkins of false doctrine and error keep subtly coming at us. There are dangerous teachings around us at all times. Sometimes because of the volume of information coming at us through television, radio, the internet, and social media, we let our guard down and we begin tolerating them. We can feel safe when we are not. We can very easily get caught in “the snare of the devil” (2 Tim. 2:26) and be led astray into error and unsound doctrine if we don't keep our focus on the truth of the Word, rightly divided.

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).


This verse shows that Paul had no grand illusions that the world would become better and better. Rather, by divine revelation, he wrote that things and people will only get “worse and worse.” Paul informs us that, as the dispensation of grace progresses, deception will only go from bad to worse, and it will get so bad and out of hand that deceivers will believe their own lies. After peddling their lies for so long, they will actually come to believe them personally. Of course, we know that they are ultimately being deceived by Satan (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 12:9).

We visited Mount Rushmore earlier this year. As we were walking in, I noticed a booth set up by Jehovah’s Witnesses in the free speech area. There were a few people staffing the booth. As I looked at the booth and literature and knowing some of their deceptive, false teaching, it made my blood boil. On our way out, I saw an older man setting up a little chair and a simple sign with the gospel on it, right across from the Jehovah’s Witness booth. His hat said, “Jesus is my Boss.” I went over to him and thanked him for his boldness and willingness to be a light for the Lord. He was a dear brother in Christ. His name was Gary, and he had driven his motorcycle to Mount Rushmore from West Virginia just to sit there and pass out gospel tracts and share the truth. He thanked me for my encouragement and asked that we pray for him together. My family prayed with him, all of us holding hands in a circle. It struck me how the truth was made known by Gary very simply and humbly, with a small sign and some gospel tracts. He was just being a lighthouse for the truth.

Rather than telling Timothy to go after deceivers to correct the lies that they believe, Paul advises,

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Tim. 3:14).

Timothy needed to rely on what he knew to be true: what Paul had taught him. What Timothy learned from Paul, and had been assured about, was the revelation of the Mystery, the body of truth for this present dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:1-9).

We’re never going to right all the wrongs or correct all the lies people believe. It’s a waste of valuable time to try. We simply need to keep our focus on the truth and the proclamation of it. We need to do what Paul instructed Timothy to do, to “continue” or remain steadfast in the teachings of “the Word of His grace” (Acts 20:32) that the Lord committed to Paul. We must “continue” to stand for the message of grace committed to the Apostle Paul and “continue” to grow in our knowledge of it. By knowing and obeying God’s truth for today as found in the letters of Paul, we are protected from falling prey to the devil’s schemes and being pulled down into error and false doctrine. 

1. Wayne Cordeiro, “How Hunters Tempt and Nab Wary Ducks,” Preaching Today, accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2013/april/7042213.html>



The Future of Water Baptism

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

An excerpt from Pastor Kurth's upcoming book *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*.

Will water baptism be required for salvation in the Tribulation as it was in time past?

There's an old saying that says that Christians should always get their theology from the Bible and *not* from Christian hymns. In our day and age, we need to add that it is likewise a bad idea to get your theology from Christian novels and films. I say this because most fictional works about the Tribulation portray Paul's gospel as the salvation message that will go forth in that day, and his gospel of salvation by grace through faith apart from water baptism is *not* the message that God will want preached in the Tribulation.

If you are wondering how I can be so sure of this, it is because Peter reminded his readers that "baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21), and he was writing to Jews who would have entered the Tribulation had the dispensation of the mystery not

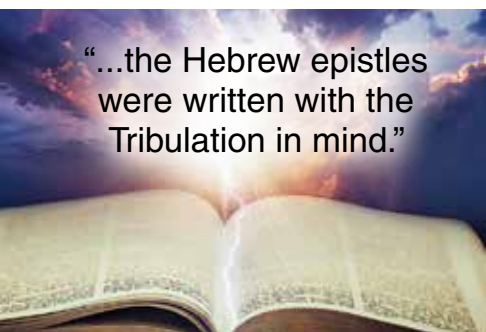
interrupted God's prophetic program for Israel. This is the reason grace believers often refer to Peter's epistles as Tribulation epistles, along with the rest of the epistles from Hebrews through Jude. We believe and teach that Tribulation Jews will look to these epistles for information that is specific to them, the way members of the Body of Christ look to Paul's epistles for information that is specific to us in the present dispensation of grace.

An Outline for the Ages

We see this reflected in the positioning that God has chosen to give the Hebrew epistles in the Bible. You see, the books of our New Testament do not appear in chronological order. That is, Matthew was not written first, then Mark, and so on. These books rather appear in a *logical* order that reflects the flow of the ages. If this line of thinking is new to you, consider the following.

The four gospels come first in the New Testament because they chronicle our Lord's announcement to the people of Israel that their kingdom was "at hand" (Matt. 4:17). The book of Acts comes after the four gospels because it records Peter's *offer* of that kingdom to the nation (Acts 3:19), and her *rejection* of that offer with the stoning of Stephen.

Acts then goes on to document the raising up of Paul, whom God used to introduce the mystery of the Body of Christ and the dispensation of grace. This is why the book of Acts is followed in the Bible by Paul's epistles. The Pauline epistles provide the specific information that members of Christ's Body need to function in the dispensation of grace, so God made sure they appear in our Bibles right after the introduction of the age of grace in the book of Acts.



But the Hebrew epistles come after Paul's epistles because they are written to *the people* who will come after us, the Jews in the Tribulation period. We know that the epistle of Hebrews was written to Hebrews, of course, and James says that he too was writing to Jews (James 1:1). And we

know that these Hebrew epistles were written to Jews with the Tribulation in mind because of the kinds of works that James says are required for salvation.

Tribulation Salvation

James told his readers that faith alone couldn't "save" them (James 2:14), they had to *demonstrate* their faith by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked to be saved (James 2:14-17). That's because when the beast issues his mark in the Tribulation, and people are unable to buy food or clothing without it (Rev. 13:17), *many* of God's people will be hungry and naked. God knew that when that day comes people will be hesitant to share their provisions, so He made it part of the very plan of salvation that they *must* share their provisions to be saved.

This is how the Jews to whom James wrote demonstrated their faith back in his day (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-37),¹ and it is what Jews will have to do *again* to be saved in the Tribulation. Gentiles who want to be saved in that day will also have to bless God's people in Israel with food and clothing if they want to be saved (cf. Gen. 12:3), for the Lord made it clear that the determination of their eternal destiny will be based on whether or not they fed and clothed His brethren in Israel (Matt. 25:31-46).

So it is clear that the Hebrew epistles were written with the Tribulation in mind. It is true, of course, that these epistles were *primarily* written to Jews who were alive at the time that

those epistles were penned. But remember, those Jews would have entered the Tribulation had God not interrupted His prophetic program with the dispensation of the mystery. And so when Peter reminded his readers that “baptism doth also now save us,” it is clear that the Jews to whom he wrote those words were saved by the work of water baptism (cf. Mark 1:4; 16:16; Acts 2:38), and it is just as clear that baptism will again be required for salvation when God’s prophetic clock resumes ticking after the Rapture.



Preparations for the Priesthood

Once the Tribulation begins, God will again begin to prepare the people of Israel to be the “kingdom of priests” that He means for them to be in the kingdom of heaven on earth that will follow the Tribulation (Ex. 19:6). This is why Peter told his readers, “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). The Jews to whom he wrote were destined to be “kings and priests” (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) in the kingdom, and priests had to be baptized (Ex. 29:1-4). But when the people of Israel rejected their kingdom by rejecting their King and His

prophet Stephen, God put the kingdom program “on hold,” so to speak, and ushered in the dispensation of the mystery.

But once the last trump sounds and the Rapture brings a close to the present divine interregnum, God will raise up a *new* generation of Jewish believers to be kings and priests in the kingdom. When that happens, they too will need to be baptized with water to initiate them into the priesthood in accordance with Exodus 29:1-4. And since God likes His priests to be saved, water baptism will also be required for salvation, just as it was in time past.

Grace believers are sometimes puzzled as to *why* God will revert to insisting on water baptism as a condition that must be met to be saved in the Tribulation. After all, as we have seen in our answers to previous questions, the cleansing of water baptism was just a *symbol* of the cleansing of men’s *souls* by the blood of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:5). And as we have also seen, now that members of the Body of Christ already have the cleansing that His blood affords us, we stand in no further need of *the symbol* of that cleansing in water baptism. So why will God again require the symbol of that cleansing in the Tribulation? Why will He demand the “shadow” of something of which we now have the substance (Col. 2:12-17) when the Tribulation begins to unfold?

Symbolism with Substance

The answer is that in *our* program the substance of Christ *replaces* the symbols of Him that

were found in Israel's religion, but in Israel's program God always required the symbol *with* the substance.



**“Why will He
demand the ‘shadow’
of something of
which we now have
the substance....”**

For instance, believers in time past were saved by the blood that Christ shed “for the remission of sins that are past” (Rom. 3:25), but they still had to offer the *symbol* of that blood by sacrificing animals. Similarly, God required all male Hebrews to be circumcised to be saved, but this was only an outward symbol of the *spiritual* circumcision that God also required of them to be saved (Jer. 4:4). In other words, they had to have the *substance* of heart circumcision along with the *symbol* of physical circumcision.² In the same way, Tribulation Jews will have the substance of the cleansing of the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7), but they will be required to be washed with the symbol of that cleansing in water baptism to be saved (1 Pet. 3:21), just as in time past.

Tribulation believers will, however, finally understand *how* water baptism saves. A fuller quotation of the verse we referenced earlier from Peter's epistle reads,

“...baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer

of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).

In the Tribulation, they will understand that *ultimately* they are saved “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” just as His resurrection saves us (Rom. 4:25). Water baptism will just be “the answer of a good conscience toward God,” just as it was when Peter wrote those words to his Jewish readers.³ That is, if God says you have to be baptized to be saved, a good conscience answers by being baptized!

But the water of water baptism cannot wash away the filth of the sins committed by the flesh of men, as Peter is careful to explain. Baptism's power to save will lie in what happens when God takes those who believe and are washed with water and washes them in the blood of Christ in response to their faith (Rev. 1:5).

The Obedience of Faith

This is *always* how water baptism saved. It is what the Bible calls being “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). The “faith” that the priests in Acts 6:7 were obedient to was the faith that Peter had preached a few chapters earlier at Pentecost, that of “repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). So when Acts 6:7 tells us that these priests were obedient to the faith, that means they repented and were baptized.

Whatever God says to do to be saved, in any dispensation, the faith of men must always respond by obeying His instruction. In time past, the obedience of faith

always involved works like bringing an animal sacrifice to be accepted by God (Gen. 4:7). When the New Testament dawned, water baptism was added to what was required for the obedience of faith. That's because men were still under the Law, "shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed" to Paul (Gal. 3:23), the faith of salvation *without* works like water baptism. But in speaking of the obedience of faith in the present dispensation, the Apostle Paul wrote,

"...we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name" (Rom. 1:5).

The apostleship that Paul received was an apostleship that *differed* from that of the twelve. They were sent to baptize (Matt. 28:19) for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), so the priests in Acts 6:7 had to be baptized for the remission of sins to be obedient to the faith. But the Apostle Paul said, "Christ sent me *not* to baptize" (1 Cor. 1:17). So today, the answer of a good conscience responds to God by being obedient to the faith that was given to Paul by choosing *not* to be baptized to be saved. But after the Rapture brings an end to Paul's apostleship among the Gentiles, water baptism will again be required for the obedience of faith in the Tribulation.

The Assurance of Obedience

In submitting to water baptism, Tribulation believers will be able to have the same assurance of salvation that we have when we trust Christ *without* water

baptism. We see this expressed in yet another Tribulation epistle, where the writer says to his Hebrew readers:

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).




When a believer submitted to water baptism under God's program for Israel, he could have "full assurance" that God would sprinkle his heart from an evil conscience in response to the faith he expressed in having his body washed with the pure water of baptism. This was the case in time past, as we see in Hebrews 10:22, and it will be the case again in the Tribulation, when the kingdom program resumes after the Rapture.

It has *always* been God's desire in every dispensation that His people be able to rest in the assurance of sins forgiven, and He has always made this possible through the obedience of faith. Today, we can have "all riches of the full assurance of understanding" (Col. 2:2) by understanding that salvation in this dispensation is by grace through faith without

works (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5). In time past, however, performing works like water baptism and feeding and clothing God's people brought this assurance (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:17-19). And so it will be again in the Tribulation.

Having said that, there have probably always been believers who *struggled* with their assurance even after performing the work that God required for salvation, just as there are believers today who struggle with their assurance at a time when salvation is by faith without works. But this doesn't change the fact that God has always made it possible for believers in every dispensation to enjoy the assurance of eternal security that He longs for them to have.

If you are not sure of *your* eternal destiny, I would encourage you to immerse yourself in a study of the Scriptures. Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17), the "*full assurance*

of faith" (Heb. 10:22) in any dispensation can only come by hearing *more* of the Word of God, and allowing it to sink down into your soul. 

ENDNOTES

1. Ananias and Sapphira demonstrated their *lack* of saving faith when they refused to obey the Lord's command to "sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor" (Luke 18:22) "to inherit eternal life" (v. 18).
2. Some hold that circumcision was not required for salvation in Israel, but speaking to the Gentile believers in Colosse, Paul wrote, "And you, being dead in your sins *and the uncircumcision of your flesh*, hath He quickened..." (Col. 2:13). Before they were saved, the Colossians were spiritually dead in their sins *and in the uncircumcision of their flesh*, for circumcision was required for salvation. And without circumcision, Hebrews in time past would have been as dead as the Gentiles in the uncircumcision of *their* flesh (Col. 2:13). This doesn't mean that Hebrews who were circumcised as infants were *saved* as infants. They had to grow up to believe to circumcise their hearts to be saved. But they could not be saved without physical circumcision.
3. We know that Peter wrote to Jews for it would have made no sense for him to tell his readers to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles if he were *writing* to Gentiles (1 Pet. 2:12).



The Early Bird

They say the early bird gets the worm, but if you are thinking of hosting a Bible conference or having special meetings at your church in 2018, the early bird is much more likely to find *Berean Bible Society* president Pastor Kevin Sadler or *Berean Searchlight* editor Pastor Ricky Kurth available to meet your needs. It's not too late to touch base with us early about this, but it will be soon, so contact us *today* at berean@bereanbiblesociety.org or at (262) 255-4750. No group is too small. See page 30 for information about a ladies Bible class that is hosting a conference next month!



Taken Where?

By John Baker
Grace Memorial Church, Denver, CO

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

“And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

“Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.


“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. 24:37-42).

In these chaotic days in which we live, there is much speculation about end times. Unfortunately, this often involves the misinterpretation of Scripture. These verses in Mathew 24 are often quoted in reference to the catching away to Heaven of the Church which is the Body of Christ. This is in error for two reasons.

First, the Church for today had not even been revealed at the time the Lord spoke these words. Therefore, the catching away which we refer to as the Rapture of the Church had not been revealed either. For this reason alone, this passage could have nothing to do with the Body of Christ. The Church, which is His Body, as well as the secret catching away was revealed to and through the Apostle Paul alone (Eph. 3:1-9; 1 Cor. 15:51).

There is, however, a reason within the context which shows that this taking away mentioned by the Lord is not even for believers. The example given in verses 37-39 is that of Noah’s experience in the great flood. It is stated that the “flood came and took them all away.”

Those taken away were taken by the judgement of the flood. Note Luke 17:26, 27 which relates the same example: “and as it was in the days Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” With this example, the Lord illustrates that at His Second Coming, some will be taken to judgement, just as those taken by the flood. A remnant will remain to go into the Kingdom, just as Noah and his family remained, passing through the flood. Neither you nor I would want to be included in the company of those which are here taken.

We can be assured that we will be in the company which is caught away to Glory, as revealed by the Holy Spirit in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, by putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment I believe that He died for my sin and was raised again on account of my justification, I have my ticket for the catching away to Glory. Won't you join me? 

Question Box

“How can Matthew 5:12 talk about rewards in heaven for kingdom saints if their future will be here on earth?”

This verse is not alone in promising heavenly rewards to kingdom saints (Matt. 6:20; 19:21; Heb. 10:34). But Peter wrote to them about “an inheritance...*reserved* in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4). Jews would understand from this that he wasn't saying they would go to heaven to receive their inheritance. They would have known he meant that their inheritance would come to them on earth in the kingdom. The Lord told a parable in which...

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return...And...when He was returned, having received the kingdom...” (Luke 19:12,15).

The nobleman represents the Lord (cf. Mark 13:34). The “far country” to which He traveled after His resurrection was Heaven. When He returns for Israel, He will return “having received the kingdom” that He will establish on earth for them. But in the meantime, all of the “treasures” of the Jewish kingdom saints are “reserved” there in Heaven with Him.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

God's Pumpkin

Problem. We “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We are all sinners, and sin separates us from God (Romans 6:23a).

Unfit. We are unfit for Heaven because of our sin. We can never reach God's standard of righteousness on our own (Romans 3:10).

Made to be sin for us Who knew no sin. Jesus Christ came as a sinless Substitute. He knew no sin, but was made sin for us at the Cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Paid the penalty of sin on the Cross. When we believe that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, we are forgiven of our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Know how much the Lord Jesus Christ loves you (Romans 5:8). “...He loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Intant. We are saved from Hell and the eternal death we deserve the instant we believe (Ephesians 1:13), and now have eternal life (Romans 6:23b).

No need to fear. Nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). We are eternally safe in Christ.

If you haven't trusted Christ as your personal Savior, then don't wait. Receive His free gift of salvation today. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

Once you've made the decision to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have a home in Heaven with the Lord forever. “We give thanks to God...For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:3,5).



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From our Inbox:

"Praise God for this new TV ministry!"

From Michigan:

"Saw you on the shopping channel through Grand Rapids, Michigan! Yay!"

From our Inbox:

"Yay! This is so awesome!" (For more letter excerpts about our new television program, see Page 3! –Ed).

From Florida:

"You have saved me much pain by getting the rightly divided truth to me in a way I could understand. I was so sincere in my early Christian life I considered plucking my right eye out (before learning right division), and going to other extremes, like selling everything and giving it to the poor. Look what the truth has done for me and my family...Thank you, thank you."

From our Inbox:

"Your message (Pastor Kevin Sadler) on 'The Commandments of the Lord' was very special! Thank you again for your messages from the BBS."

From our Inbox:

"This *Two Minutes* ['The Teachings of Jesus'] is the finest description of Paul's calling. It is so important that people be taught and reminded of this truth regularly as the constant chatter of the law takes over the mind."

From Alabama:

"I recently read your article 'Preach the Word,' and it deeply moved my heart. I serve as the associate pastor of a Baptist Church, but I want to be a grace pastor. The Lord opened my eyes to rightly dividing the Word of truth about two years ago. Since then, I have been on fire for studying and preaching Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. There are no grace churches in my area, and I hope to change that someday but don't really know where to start...I just don't feel right about preaching Baptist doctrine any more. Can you help me?"

From our Inbox:

"I am so blessed to read this *Two Minutes* ['How to Comfort a Seasoned Saint']. Thank you Pastor. I really need this right now."

From Nigeria:

"God is using the books...to bless my spiritual life and...most especially the books with the title *Things That Differ...* and *Moses and Paul*. It is just like I'm in Bible college!" (Pastor Stam wrote *Things That Differ* for the curriculum at the old *Milwaukee Bible Institute*. –Ed).

From our Inbox:

"I have been studying your teaching on being grafted into the olive tree. I can see how this is a subject that was a difficult one. You did a splendid job on it, and I came away with better understanding."

From Virginia:

"I'm truly in awe at this moment. I've read the cover letter, both articles, and the contents of the email... comparing Scriptures along the way and I'm just astounded. Thank you immensely...I am truly seeing God's hand in it all! By the way, I have my 16-year-old daughter listening to your messages with me as well...awesome stuff! Much love!"

From Mozambique:

"I see in your statement of faith that you...mention that the ministry of signs has ceased? Are you inferring that miracles (which are the supernatural intervention of God into the affairs of mankind) are past?...I liked your article on tithing." (It always brings a smile when God's people dislike our position on gifts but love our position on tithing! —Ed).

From Colorado:

"Thank you for the book you recently sent me by C. O. Griggs. I very much enjoyed it. We continue to support the *Berean Bible Society* in our prayers... Thank you for your hard work in the ministry of the Word, rightly divided."

From Ontario:

"Please find enclosed a donation to the *Berean Bible Society*...There is such a need to give the gospel of Christ's finished and completed work to so many...Kevin it's always a pleasure to speak to you and share things of the Lord's work at BBS."

From Kansas:

"Pastor Kevin, we are so thankful that you have learned from your father and been diligent in reading God's Word...Enjoy the *Two Minutes* and more."

From the Philippines:

"Thank you for making your 1 Timothy audio sermons available for download in your website."

From our Inbox:

"When Did the Gift of Tongues Cease?" by Pastor Dennis Kiszonas... was... such an excellent way to present the truth. I will share this with my pastor who is presently teaching in Corinthians. We were just discussing the 'in part' last night with the possible viewpoint of the end of world idea when the perfect is come. This helps greatly. Appreciate your answering so quickly!"

From Washington:

"My brother and I spent 2+ hours on the phone yesterday discussing the wonderful time he had in fellowship at the conference in Ashtabula... Both you and Pastor Adams really ministered to him in the Word and grace...grace believers can be very ungracious...but that was clearly not the case with the reception my brother received...Looking forward to meeting you in person in West Bend!" (It was great to meet you! —Ed).

From our Inbox:

"What an encouraging *Two Minutes* message to brighten my day ["Are You Laboring in Vain?"]. God bless."

From Texas:

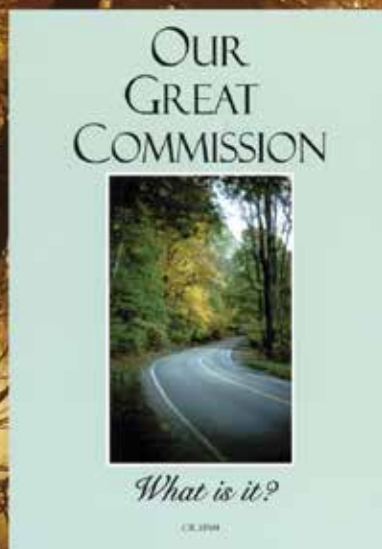
"Please send me two of Paul Sadler's books...I'm a house-bound senior citizen who is a grace believer because of your teachings in the *Searchlight*...Thank you for rescuing me and my late husband from the shackles of modern-day Presbyterianism."



"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

ON THE TRAIL OF GRACE TRUTH

If you enjoyed Pastor Stam's comments about Israel's great commission on Pages 15 and 16, you might want to order...



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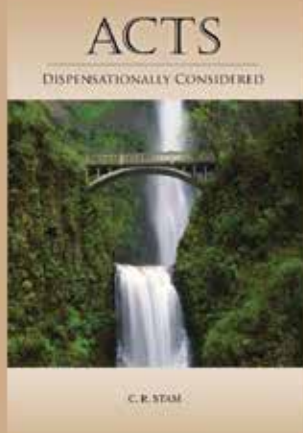
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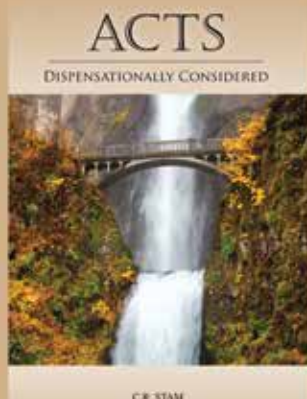
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News and Announcements

Acquire a Flyer! Our BBS receptionist/GUIG director Christine Mulholland has created a promotional flyer to advertise our new *Transformed By Grace* television program. It provides information on how to receive the broadcast, and contains a listing of all the television stations that carry the program in all the cities where it appears. You can download the flyer from our website and make as many copies as you want for your friends and your church, or call us at (262) 255-4750 to receive some copies in the mail.

Northwest Arkansas Conference: The Ladies Bible Class of West Siloam Springs, Oklahoma, have invited *Searchlight* editor Pastor Ricky Kurth to shine the light of Pauline truth just across the border in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Call the *Holiday Inn Express* at (479) 549-1833 to reserve your room, and be sure to ask for the special conference rate. Call today though, for a local event threatens to gobble up vacancies that November 3,4 weekend. If you'd like proof that even a ladies Bible class can host a Bible conference, contact Orville or Wilma Baldridge for further information at (918) 458-0822, or at wilmabaldridge@cablelynx.com.

Grace Family Bible Church Conference: One of the ways Pastor Jim Zaebst keeps his congregation fired up about the grace message is by inviting speakers like our own BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler to come and reinforce the truths that he so faithfully proclaims Sunday after Sunday. So the place to be come November 4,5 is Duncansville, Pennsylvania, and the number to call to let Pastor Zaebst know you're coming is (814) 327-3028.

New Louisiana Church: Our new friend Brandon Talley and his wife taught Sunday School classes in a denominational church for many years, but after learning Paul's gospel, they felt constrained by grace to establish a church in their home where they could teach God's Word *rightly divided*. If you would like to grow in grace and be a part of what God is doing in Franklinton on Sunday mornings at 10, call or text him at (985) 773-3219.



Doubling Point Light was built in 1898 on Arrowsic Island on the Kennebec River in Maine. It was one of four lighthouses built that year to provide navigational aid for ships on their way to Bath, "the City of Ships." It remains an active aid to navigation.



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In that life where it holds sway."

-Author Unknown

