

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

November 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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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

A few weeks ago, Pastor Kevin and I were working in our respective offices here at *Berean Bible Society* when the sound of a happy commotion drew us away from our desks. The tumult seemed to be emanating from Christine's office, so we quickly made our way in that direction. That's where we learned the big news: Kelly is engaged!

Kelly Olesiak came to us in March of 2011, and has served faithfully in our mailroom ever since. Every order of books, booklets, tracts, CDs, or DVDs that you've received since then was carefully packaged, weighed, and stamped with the correct postage by her hard-working hands. In addition, it was Kelly who added your name to the mailing list for the *Berean Searchlight*, or changed your address when you moved. If you live overseas, she's the one who wraps and ships your *Searchlight* individually every month. Those of you who call the office know her as the youngest-sounding of the pleasant voices who pick up the phone when you dial us up.


Incarcerated *Searchlight* readers who can't afford to purchase our literature appreciate Kelly for the used book library that she keeps organized to help respond to their requests. We here at BBS appreciate her for her thrice-weekly trips to the post office that help with all of our "as long as you're going" needs, and for so much more. The smile she always flashes and the willing spirit she always shows when we add to her workload with things outside of her job description has earned her a warm and permanent place in our hearts.

So it will be hard to let her go when she leaves us next spring, but we are happy to be losing her to a very fine young man. Kelly met Warren while supervising the BBS book table at the *Berean Bible Fellowship* conference in Tipp City, Ohio. I tried to convince her that they don't allow Packer fans in Minnesota and that he should move here instead of her moving there, but somehow she saw through my clever attempt to keep her from relocating and leaving such a big hole in our hearts.



In closing, if you call BBS and a young-sounding voice answers the phone, be sure to let Kelly know that you "rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Rom. 12:15), and assure her of your prayers for her and Warren as they plan their new life together in the Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ricky Kurth



Find it in His Grace

When asking for forgiveness, the world has an expression they frequently use. They say, “Can you find it in your heart to forgive me?” But to paraphrase an old saying, they are asking others to look for forgiveness in all the wrong places! “The heart is deceitful above all things, *and desperately wicked*” (Jer. 17:9). Any forgiveness that someone finds there is likely to come with conditions and many strings attached.

If you are finding it difficult to forgive someone, rather than trying to find it in your heart, *find it in God’s grace*.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32)

Perhaps you are thinking, “Pastor, you don’t know how this brother offended me.” It’s true, I don’t. But was it more than how your sins offended God? Yet He forgave *all* of your sins by His grace, and now asks you to forgive your brother by grace. God was “satisfied” with the payment Christ made on the cross for your brother’s offense (Isa. 53:11), and has forgiven him for what he did to you. If you fail to forgive him by God’s grace, that means your standards are higher than His.

So don’t be like the world, looking for forgiveness in all the wrong places. If your brother’s sin “abounded” against you, let God’s grace “much more abound” (Rom. 5:20), even as it did when God forgave you. “Receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). Let it abound in your life to others. Be a grace believer in the highest sense of the name.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

In the Footsteps of Paul

Corinth & Rome

By Pastor Kevin Sadler

“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth” (Acts 18:1).

The Apostle Paul’s time in Athens was relatively short. After his meeting with the Athenians on Mars’ Hill, he traveled to Corinth. During our Footsteps of Paul tour in May of this year, we visited Corinth. Corinth is located on the Peloponnese peninsula, about 50 miles west of Athens. The mountain

beside Corinth is very prominent, and high on this mountain was the city’s acropolis, a citadel for defense of the city. This fortress, along with its various buildings and a temple to Aphrodite, was called *Acrocorinth*, or upper Corinth.

“And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers” (Acts 18:2,3).

Soon after his arrival in Corinth, Paul met the faithful married couple, Aquila and Priscilla. For some time, Paul stayed in their home and worked alongside them. They were “of the same craft” or trade as Paul in being tentmakers. Paul supported his ministry in Corinth



by tentmaking even though the Corinthian church was a wealthy church. So as not to hinder the acceptance of the gospel, to demonstrate the sincerity of his ministry towards the Corinthians, and to show that he wasn't just after their money, Paul supported his ministry by working (1 Cor. 9:11-18; 2 Cor. 11:9). Among the ruins in Corinth is a shop where excavations uncovered tentmaking needles. Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla likely shopped there for the tools of their trade.

“And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks...And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house...” (Acts 18:4,8).

In the excavations of Corinth, an inscription and carvings of menorahs from a Jewish synagogue were found. When Paul entered a new city, he used the synagogue as a starting point to find an audience who would give him a hearing about spiritual matters. He did so also because of his desire for the salvation of his “kinsmen according to the flesh,” the Jews (Rom. 9:3). However, just as in other places, the Jews opposed Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5,6,12). As a result of their unbelief in Corinth, Paul uttered one of his three proclamations in Acts that he was turning to the Gentiles: “And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6 cf. 13:46; 28:28). This is what God has done today, and He shows us, through the progression of the Book of Acts, how this has come to pass: in response to the unbelief of the nation Israel, God turned to the Gentiles in grace, giving all mankind the opportunity to be saved apart from Israel and the Law. God revealed this to the Apostle Paul, and making this message known was Paul's unique ministry.



“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9,10).

In Athens, Paul was bold and brave as he stood on Mars' Hill and proclaimed the truth about God as Creator and Sustainer and about Christ's resurrection. He found good success in Corinth too, the very next city he went to, but the Lord nonetheless thought it beneficial to speak to Paul in a vision and tell him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace." In Ephesians 6:19, Paul asked for prayer along very similar lines: "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." Paul was not superhuman. He was a person just like us who fought battles with fear and the tendency to remain silent. Paul needed encouragement. He needed the prayers of others. He needed God's help and assurance to be bold.



Corinth was the third place to hit me in the heart during our trip. We had devotions at each location, and one of the leaders would read from the Book of Acts. When Acts 18 was read in Corinth, I had forgotten about the Lord telling Paul to "Be not afraid." It encouraged me to know that Paul had fears too! When the Lord said, "For I am with thee," that reminded me of Isaiah 41:10 where the Lord said the same thing to the nation Israel. Isaiah 41:10 was the verse my father shared with our family during his last devotional with us. So when I heard, "For I am with thee," those words jumped out at me and were very meaningful. The same words that the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision to encourage him spoke to my heart through the written Word of God, and they encouraged me. The Lord's continual presence with us is to drive us forward in our ministries and encourage us to be bold when we don't feel like being bold. When we have fears, His presence calms our fears and gives us the courage and strength we need. We are never alone. The Lord is always there.

"And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them" (Acts 18:11).



For a year and a half, Paul lived and ministered in Corinth. When I was in Corinth, I truly felt like I was "in the footsteps of Paul." Walking down the roads and around the ruins, I knew Paul had walked these same paths and roads and shared the gospel of grace all around the city. He made a deep impact for Christ during his 18 months there.



The Lechaion Road in Corinth was the main road that led from the city to the nearby seaport on the Adriatic Sea. There was a lot of trade and commerce that took place on this road, and now it is jam-packed with ruins and storefronts. As you stand there looking at it all, you can almost picture what the city of Corinth looked like in the days of Paul.

“And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat” (Acts 18:12).

The “judgment seat,” or *Bema* to which Paul was brought is still there today, nearly 2000 years later. Because Paul was sharing the message of grace for today, the Jews accused Paul of persuading “men to worship God contrary to the law” (Acts 18:13). Paul never got to defend himself before Gallio, the Roman proconsul of Achaia. He dismissed the matter before Paul started speaking, and told the Jews, “...if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat” (18:15,16).



Some of the teachings of Paul’s epistles to the Corinthians came alive for me while in Corinth. One example is the judgment seat. Paul stood before a ruler at a judgment seat, the Corinthians knew about the *Bema*, and he wrote the Corinthians that “we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).



Seeing the temple to Apollo in Corinth made me think of Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 6:16: “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God.” Just as they understood

the *Bema*, the Corinthians would have related to the thought of temples because it was so much a part of their Greek culture. Those were

temples to dead, false gods, but Paul told them, “You’re the temple of the living God!” We are temples, our bodies are temples because God the Holy Spirit dwells within each believer in Christ (1 Cor. 6:19).

Considering the Greek mythology and Greek gods that were such a big part of their culture, I can now understand why Paul would write the Corinthians, “For though there be that are called gods, where in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God” (1 Cor. 8:5,6); and, “Casting down *imagination*s, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:5).

On the other end of the city of Corinth is what is called the Erastus Stone. We who trust the Word don’t need extra-Biblical proofs to know that the Scriptures are true, but they can be encouraging and strengthening to our faith. Now, Paul wrote the Book of Romans from Corinth. In Romans 16:23 he wrote, “Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you.” In the Book of 2 Timothy, Paul wrote, “Erastus abode at Corinth” (4:20). You can easily see the name *Erastus* on the stone. In Romans 16:23, “chamberlain” means a high-level manager, steward, or treasurer of the city. And the wording on the stone recognizes Erastus as an *aedile*, a Roman magistrate responsible for public buildings, streets, sewers, markets, and the distribution of grain, among other things. The stone was basically like a street being named after Erastus. The full inscription reveals that the honor was in return for Erastus paving that particular street at his own expense. I knew about the stone before the tour, but when I saw the name of Erastus from the Bible on that stone with my own eyes, it was like a gentle encouragement to my faith from the Lord. I was grateful to the Lord to see it.



After our tour in Greece was completed, we flew from Athens to Naples, Italy, to follow Paul’s journey as a prisoner to Rome. In Naples, we saw Mount Vesuvius. On his way to Rome, Paul would have sailed past Mount Vesuvius about twenty years before it erupted and destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum.

“And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli” (Acts 28:13).



Puteoli is modern day Pozzuoli. This is Pozzuoli from a distance. It is where Paul entered the mainland of Italy on his way to Rome.

Luke writes in Acts 28:14, "...so we went toward Rome." And so did we. From Puteoli to Rome is 150 miles. Paul traveled on the Appian Way to go to Rome. It still exists today, for we too traveled on the Appian Way to go to Rome.



Arriving in Rome, we saw the Colosseum. It was first opened in A.D. 80, about 13 years after the Apostle Paul's martyrdom. I learned some interesting facts about the Colosseum. There were 80 arched entrances, a feature probably inspired by the Great Fire of Rome in the year A.D. 64. With all its entrances, the Colosseum could empty quickly in event of a fire. I learned that the Colosseum is not circular; it is oval. People sat in the

stands according to social status and classes. The seating plan was complicated, but to simplify, the wealthy and dignitaries occupied the first level, Roman citizens sat in the middle section, and the poorest classes occupied the third level. It could seat at least 50,000 people.

The word *arena* comes from ancient arenas like the Colosseum. The Latin word for *sand* is *harena* or *arena*, and the large central platform where the contests took place was constructed of wood covered by sand. The sand was used to absorb the blood from the fights, whether they were man vs. man, man vs. animal, or animal vs. animal. Underneath the wooden floor was an elaborate network of tunnels and rooms called the *hypogeum* ("underground"), where gladiators, animals,



and props were held and were sometimes raised via vertical shafts up through doors in the wooden floor.



While all these facts were interesting to learn, foremost on my mind when we were there were the Christian martyrs who were killed for their faith in that arena. Romans 8:36 came to mind: “As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Their deaths were considered executions by Rome. Their crime was refusal to venerate the Roman gods. In the Colosseum there is now a cross, placed where the Roman emperors sat, to remember the Christians that died in the arena.

After seeing the Colosseum, we walked up the Via Sacra (Sacred Road), the main street of ancient Rome where the triumphal processions were held after victory in battle. At the highest point of the Via Sacra is the Arch of Titus where there is another very encouraging extra-Biblical proof. The Arch of Titus commemorates the Emperor Titus’s victory over Jerusalem in A.D. 70, depicting in relief the carrying away of spoils that were taken from the temple in Jerusalem. Most notable is a picture of the



seven-branched lampstand that was taken from Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem nearly 2000 years ago. It would be the same lampstand in the temple during the time of the Lord’s earthly ministry. The arch also shows the table of shewbread being carried from the temple, and the trumpets that were used during the feasts and for announcements in the temple. It shows the firepans for removing ashes from the altar and the keeping of the Mosaic Law by Israel—the existence of the temple and its worship, just as the Bible records.

Next we walked up Palatine Hill to see the ruins of the palace



of the Caesars. There were two places in the palace where the emperor had a throne where people would come and stand before him. It is probable that, in one of these two places, the Apostle Paul stood before Nero. I believe Paul's first time before Nero resulted in his release from prison (2 Tim. 4:16,17; Phile. 1:22); and then after the second trial before Nero, Paul's execution was ordered (2 Tim. 4:6).

This is a photograph of the only known prison that has been found from ancient Rome. It was very near to the palace of the emperor. There is a good chance that this is where Paul was held during his second Roman imprisonment and where he wrote the book of 2 Timothy and the words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).



In both Rome and Greece, we saw the temporary glory of man. All that remains of these great and powerful past empires is just a pile of ruins. As I observed this temporary glory of man on our trip, I thought of Psalm 104:31: "The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever."

The Footsteps of Paul tour was a trip that I'll never forget. Now that I have been where these churches and saints actually were, I have a new and different perspective when

I read Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, and Thessalonians. It is a privilege and joy to share my experiences with you.

What most affected me on the tour was the passion of Paul for souls that drove him to travel such great distances and endure the hardships to share the gospel of the grace of God far and wide with the lost. In this way, may we truly do as Paul beseeched us: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).



NEW

Tracts

The motivation behind our tracts at *Berean Bible Society* is in view of 1 Timothy 2:4: “[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” In accord with this two-fold mission, we print and sell gospel tracts which proclaim the free gift of salvation and also doctrinal tracts which teach the truth of the Mystery.

“**Basic Distinctions Between Prophecy and the Mystery**” is a doctrinal tract. It is the side-by-side comparison table found in chapter 2 of Pastor C. R. Stam’s book, *Things That Differ*. We used Pastor Stam’s chart to create a full-color tract that is a simple and convenient way to share with others the clear distinctions between God’s Prophetic Program with Israel and God’s Mystery Program with the Body of Christ.

An older tract has been given a new look: “**God’s Insurance Policy**.” This was the creative work of a faithful board member of BBS from years ago, Maurie Reynolds. The tract is broken down like an insurance policy, showing the *benefits* and *dividends* that believers have in Christ, benefits such as saved from wrath, eternal life, peace of mind, new body, joint-heirs, etc. “God’s Insurance Policy” contains a *Rapture Clause* and it is *Non-cancelable*. All the benefits and dividends have the supporting Bible verses listed with them.

On the pages that follow you can see the contents of these two tracts. These tracts are in stock and available for purchase.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



by C.R. Stam

These tracts
are sold in
packages of
25 for \$3.00
or 100 for
\$10.00!



by Maurie Reynolds

Prophecy



1. Concerns a **kingdom**; a political organization (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 6:10).
2. The kingdom to be established on **earth** (Jer. 23:5; Matt. 6:10).
3. Christ to be its **King** (Jer. 23:5; Isa. 9:6,7).
4. The kingdom **prophesied** “**since the world began**” (Luke 1:68-70; Acts 3:21).
5. Israel to be given supremacy over the **nations** (Isa. 60:10-12; 61:6).
6. The Gentiles to be blessed through Israel’s **instrumentality** (Gen. 22:17,18; Zech. 8:13).
7. The Gentiles to be blessed through Israel’s **rise** (Isa. 60:1-3; Zech. 8:22,23).
8. Prophecy mainly concerns **nations** as such (Isa. 2:4; Ezek. 37:21,22).
9. Prophecy concerns blessings, both material and spiritual, **on earth** (Isa. 2:3,4; 11:1-9; etc.).
10. Prophecy concerns Christ’s **coming to the earth** (Isa. 59:20; Zech. 14:4).
11. In prophecy salvation by grace through faith **alone** is not contemplated.
12. The proclamation of the prophetic program committed particularly to **the twelve** (Matt. 10:5-7; Acts 1:6-8; 3:19-26).
13. The prophetic program revealed through **many** of God’s servants (Luke 1:70; II Pet. 1:21).
14. Old Testament writers frequently did not understand the prophecies made known through them (Dan. 12:8-10; I Pet. 1:10-12).

The Mystery

1. Concerns a **body**; a living **organism** (I Cor. 12:12,27; Eph 4:12-16).
2. The body given a position in **heaven** (Eph. 1:3; 2:5-6; Col. 3:1-3).
3. Christ its living **Head** (Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 1:18).
4. The body chosen in Christ before the world began, but **"kept secret since the world began"** (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:4-11; 3:5-9).
5. Jew and Gentile placed on the **same level** before God (Rom. 10:12; 11:32; Eph. 2:16,17).
6. The Gentiles blessed through Israel's **obstinacy** (Acts 13:44-46; Rom. 11:28-32).
7. The Gentiles blessed through Israel's **fall** (Acts 28:27,28; Rom. 11:11, 12, 15).
8. The mystery concerns **individuals** (Rom. 10:12, 13; II Cor. 5:14-17).
9. The mystery concerns all spiritual blessings **in the heavenlies** (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1-3).
10. The mystery explains Christ's present **absence from the earth** (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:1-3).
11. Salvation by grace through faith alone lies at the very heart of the mystery (Rom. 3:21-26; 4:5; Eph. 2:8,9).
12. The proclamation of the mystery committed particularly to **Paul** (Eph. 3:1-3,8,9; Col. 1:24-27).
13. The mystery revealed through **one** man: Paul (Gal. 1:1,11,12; 2:2,7,9; Eph. 3:2,3).
14. Paul both understood and longed that others might understand the mystery revealed through him (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9-10; 2:1-3).

ETERNAL LIFE INSURANCE

Benefits — Dividends

Premiums Paid "Which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28)

Saved from Wrath by Grace "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

Eternal Life "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Peace of Mind "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"And the peace of God, which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

New Body "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Philippians 3:21)

No Age Limit—No Physical Required—Fountain of Youth—Immortality "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10)

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:53)

Children of God "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16)

Heirs—Joint-Heirs "And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17)

Put on Display "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6,7)

Judging Angels "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more the things that pertain to this life." (1 Corinthians 6:3)

Contains a Rapture Clause "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

Faithful Rewarded {Note: God is an excellent policymaker and bookkeeper; HE will settle all accounts, and HE will pay big dividends.}

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward!" (1 Corinthians 3:14)

Non-Cancelable "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Ephesians 1:13)

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts!" (2 Corinthians 1:22)

Principles for **Biblical Application**



By Pastor Ken Lawson

When a person begins to grasp the Biblical principles of right division, inevitably there are certain questions that enter his mind concerning portions of the Bible that are not Pauline. Since Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles and writes by revelation for the people in the dispensation of grace, what are we to do with the other portions of His Word? The vast majority of Scripture speaks to those who lived before the mystery was revealed, or else will feel its impact after our translation to heaven.

Most Pauline dispensationalists would agree that the entire Bible is for us. That is, it is equally inspired and for our learning, but that in Paul's writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church which is His Body. As such his epistles comprise "our private mail" as Gentiles under the dispensation of the grace of God. Beyond that there is some uncertainty in how best to apply the vast majority of Scriptures that are not Paul's. For example, what are we to do with Exodus chapter 20 through

Malachi chapter 4? These are all books that are designated as "under the law," a position that Paul affirms we are not subject to today (Rom. 6:14).

Christians have a tendency to levitate to extremes on this matter. Some pick and choose certain portions that warm their hearts, while others completely ignore many of the well-known Old Testament passages that believers have come to love. We certainly don't want to be accused of having a shorter Bible, nor do we want to give the impression that Paul's writings are more inspired than others. I believe that there are certain key principles that we can follow that are both scriptural and objective, and will help to guide us to enjoy our Bibles to the max.

Interpretation vs. Application

One of the first things to recognize is the distinction between interpretation and application of the Word of God. There is only one true interpretation, but many possible applications. That is, the biblical author had one main idea

in mind when he wrote a passage. Many Christians have come up with timely applications of a passage that are true but is it the primary interpretation? Therefore it is necessary that the reader carefully study the context to determine that he has the author's mind (and the Spirit's) before he tries to make an application for us today. A mistaken interpretation will often lead to a flawed application. Isaiah Chapter 53 is a good case in point.



"A mistaken interpretation will often lead to a flawed application."

Here are some glorious statements about Christ, His cross work, and his salvation to sinners.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

"...the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

"...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

"...for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

"...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to

grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin...."

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied...."

"...He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many...."

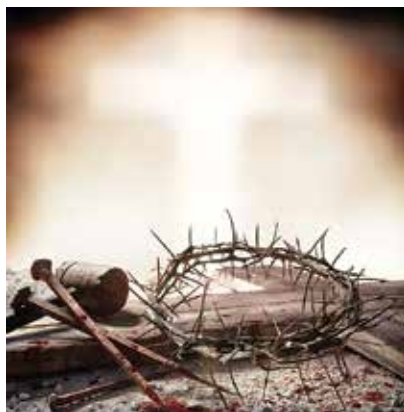
These quotes might be first interpreted as being spoken to or about Christ and the present day church. However, that should be a secondary application, not the primary interpretation. During Isaiah's lifetime the church with its associated mysteries was yet a secret hid in God (Eph. 3:1-9). The Hebrew nation was the only one that Isaiah addressed in his prophecies. That is why he wrote, "For the transgression of my people was He stricken." Isaiah's people, as we know, was Israel.

It is important to recognize that the "mystery of the gospel" was not revealed before Paul and his ministry to the Gentiles. But who would deny that once that mystery was made known that the truths of Isaiah 53 took on a much wider and glorious display? Whereas the sacrifice was said to "bare the sin of many," Paul's revelation expands it to encompass everyone everywhere. "[Christ Jesus]...gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6).

Paul not only identifies the person of Isaiah's prophecy, but explains to us the mechanics of how His substitutionary sacrifice works so that we can now see in it much more than Isaiah or even the twelve apostles could.

Time would fail us to expound the riches of the typology of Israel's tabernacle, the priesthood, the holy feast days, the Levitical offerings, the brazen serpent, and

literally hundreds of other types and shadows that the Old Testament sheds on the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of these would be lost without seeing the primary interpretation to Israel, but also the sweetness of the secondary application to the saints of this dispensation.



Having had a brief lesson on interpretation vs. application, there are three more principles that a Christian needs to know to consistently apply non-Pauline passages in the Bible. The first principle is that God does not change, and that any passage of the Bible that pertains to His character is equally applicable to all ages and dispensations. God says, “I am the Lord; I change not...” (Mal. 3:6) and “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). God is perfect in every way, and His wonderful attributes of love, mercy, grace, holiness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness are unchangeable whether they occur in the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Hebrew epistles, Revelation, or Paul’s epistles.

Humanity’s Need

The second principle is that man also does not change, and that any passage of the Bible that pertains to our fallen nature or our need of Christ and the gospel of God are equally applicable to all ages and dispensations. One of the evidences of the inspiration of the Bible is that God does not attempt to compliment nor raise man’s self-esteem to reach him with the truth. We are altogether addressed as lost, blind, dead, naked, poor, wretched, wicked, evil, sinful, and lacking in righteousness, goodness, and divine life. This is true regardless of what portion of the Bible it may occur. Man’s only hope is in the person and work of Christ on the cross and His subsequent resurrection. Even then, man’s inborn nature does not change, but rather he receives Christ’s life as a free gift that brings freedom from his old nature of sin.

Paul’s Pattern

The third principle that we need to heed is a bit more difficult to grasp and practice, but it is well worth the effort. It is simply the truth that anything in God’s Word is still valid for us today IF it is repeated in principle in Paul’s writings or his Acts ministry.¹

Paul wrote of many distinctive truths concerning Christ and His church, the Body of Christ. However, not every subject of which he wrote was a new revelation. This is manifest through his many references, quotes, and allusions to the Old Testament. God has always been interested in developing in His saints such things as, love, mercy, grace, holiness,

truth, faithfulness, and goodness. In short, He wants His children to partake in His own nature and develop Christ likeness. These are addressed in all portions of the Bible.

Practicing the Principles

How is it possible to know if a certain scriptural subject is addressed by Paul and therefore for us? There is no shortcut. We must study. We must know Paul's writings like the back of our hand. We cannot trust human opinion, wisdom, or tradition. Here are a few examples to consider.

Example #1. Peter confessed that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). We know that this remains the same because it deals with the character of Christ that never changes. We also see this repeated in Paul's ministry in Acts. He confounded the Jews proving that He is the very Christ and the Son of God (Acts 9:20, 22).

Example #2. The old Psalm says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psa. 58:3). So much for the idea of sinless babies. This speaks to our fallen, natural depravity before God and the inability to improve the flesh. Paul affirms this analysis when he says, "There is none righteous, no, not one" and "...there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:9-12).

Example #3. The Sermon on the Mount says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). This one is a little trickier, for now we have before us a verse that can be only

partially applied to us. Meekness is a blessed state in any age, for we see it in Moses, Christ, and Paul (Num. 12:3; Matt. 11:29; Gal. 5:23). However, it is not true that we (the present day church) will inherit the earth. That is Israel's lot in the coming kingdom. Our inheritance is one in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1; Eph. 1:3, 11; 2:6; Phil. 3:20; 2 Tim. 4:18).



Countless examples could be given, but we believe you get the principles. All of the Bible is for our learning and profitability (1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16). Paul's writings are particularly to us and about us so that we can claim "first dibs" on them. But let us also see and appreciate the multifaceted variety of our God in all of Scripture, and how all of these revelations can minister to our hearts and lives. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. There are some notable exceptions to this principle. For example, the supernatural manifestations of visions, voices, tongues, healings, miracles, and other sign gifts were all a part of Paul's early ministry and could all be called "transitional elements" while God was attempting to reach more of the Jewish people during the book of Acts. That these were discontinued after the Acts period is certain from such passages as 1 Cor. 13:8, Col. 1:25-26; Phil. 2:25-30; 2 Tim. 4:20.

The theme of the Bible, Old Testament as well as New, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the riches of whose saving grace are unfolded to us in the Epistles of Paul, the chief of sinners saved by grace.

—C.R. Stam

Question Box

“Will God be angry if we eat blood?”

Eating blood was forbidden under the Law of Moses (Lev. 7:26,27), but “we are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:15). It is true that men were told not to eat blood *before* the Law, but there was a reason for this. God told Noah,

“...flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Gen. 9:4).

When God expanded Adam’s vegetarian diet here (Gen. 1:29 cf. 9:3), He warned Noah not to eat the flesh of an animal with its blood, for the blood of an animal is “the life thereof,” and God had *another* purpose in mind for the life of animals:

“...the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood...” (Lev. 17:11,12).

The word “therefore” here clearly shows that *the reason* they weren’t to eat blood under the Law was because “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” We know that this was also true *before* the Law, for animal sacrifices were required to be “accepted” by God before the Law as well (Gen 4:7).

But this is *not* true under grace! Now that Christ shed *His* blood to reconcile us to Himself (Col. 1:20,21), anyone who says we shouldn’t eat blood because the life of the flesh is in the blood must believe that the blood of animals *still* atones for men’s souls, for this is the only reason eating blood was prohibited.

This is similar to God’s prohibition against eating unclean animals. The only reason God said some animals were unclean (Lev. 11) was to teach Israel that some *people* were unclean, i.e., the Gentiles (Lev. 20:24-26 cf. Acts 10:9-16,28). That means anyone who says certain foods are unclean *today* must believe that the Gentiles are *still* unclean. And anyone saying we shouldn’t eat blood “for the life of the flesh is in the blood” must still believe that the blood of animals atones for men’s souls.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6).

God would have us pray about *everything*, whether it is of a spiritual or physical nature. In view of the fact that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings today, we certainly agree that our prayer life should primarily center on spiritual things, such as praying for lost souls, a fuller understanding of the Scriptures, a knowledge of God’s will, wisdom, etc. Here again, however, we must keep in mind the importance of *balance* in the things of the Lord. God would also have us make known our physical requests.

Paul prayed about his *physical infirmity*, not once, but three times (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Prior to his incarceration in Caesarea, the apostle requested that he might have a *prosperous journey* to Rome; that is, free from hardship (Rom. 1:9,10). We are to pray for *earthly rulers* that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life to further the cause of Christ (1 Tim. 2:1-3). Paul instructs us not to be an ungrateful people, as Israel was in time past; consequently, we are to return *thanks* at every *meal* for God’s bountiful blessings (1 Tim. 4:4,5). We are also to pray about the *circumstances* in which we might find ourselves. As we have noted, Paul coveted the prayers of those at Philippi that he would soon be *delivered* from his prison cell in Rome. The apostle writes to Philemon along these same lines: “But withal prepare me also a *lodging*: for I trust that through your *prayers* I shall be *given unto you*” (Phile. 1:22).

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler

This plaque rested on Pastor Sadler’s desk throughout the many years he led the ministry here at *Berean Bible Society*.





CHRISTIAN ASTROLOGY

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

If you're like me, and don't pay much attention to the chatter of the "Christian" world, you're probably unaware that yet another prediction of the Rapture has come and gone. The latest misfire took place on September 23, when both the sun and the moon were in Virgo. When this astrological alignment began to draw near earlier this year, it triggered a Christian numerologist to predict that the Lord would return for us that Saturday, based on a misunderstanding of Revelation 12:1-5:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet..."

"And she...brought forth a man child...and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

Since the "man child" here is "caught up unto God," it is commonly taught that this is a reference to the Rapture, when the Body of Christ will be "caught up together...to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thes. 4:17) and return with Him to Heaven. And the presence of a woman and the sun and the moon in this passage were enough to prompt the numerologist to conclude that we'd all be raptured home when the sun and the moon were in Virgo.

But grace believers know that the Rapture is part of the "mystery" that was revealed to Paul (1 Cor. 15:51-54), and that there are no references to Paul's mystery in the Book of Revelation. Revelation is a book of "prophecy" (Rev. 1:3), not mystery, so this catching-up must be addressing something in God's prophetic program. But what?

Well, we have a clue when we notice that the woman in John's vision wore "a crown of twelve stars" on her head (Rev. 12:1). The number 12 in Scripture is associated with *Israel*. The nation was divided into 12 tribes, and the Lord called 12 apostles to rule over them in the kingdom of heaven on earth (Matt. 19:28). So we know this woman must have something to do with Israel (cf. Gen. 37:9,10).

We also know that she must have something to do with Israel *in the Tribulation*, for after she gave birth to the man child, John tells us that she “fled into the wilderness” (Rev. 12:6). This is the flight that the Lord recommended the Jews take “into the mountains” (Matt. 24:16) when the Antichrist shall “stand in the holy place” in the temple (Dan. 9:27 cf. Matt. 24:15). When they flee from the Beast in that day, they will heed the Lord’s advice and leave without taking the time to pack provisions (24:17,18), so the “nations” (Rev. 12:5) will have to “feed her there” in that mountainous wilderness (v. 6). Gentile believers in that day will know from God’s Word that they must bless the Lord’s brethren in Israel with food and clothing if they want to be saved (Matt. 25:31-46).

When John predicts that the nations will feed the woman in the wilderness for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Rev. 12:6), this 1260-day-period is a reference to the latter half of Daniel’s 70th week of years (Dan. 9:27). During this 42-month-period, the Beast will blaspheme God (Rev. 13:5) and “speak great words against the most High” for “a time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan 7:25), or a year, two years, and half a year.



But if the woman in Revelation 12 is Israel, who is the “man child” to whom the nation will give birth in the middle of the Tribulation? Well, whoever he is, we know he is destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Rev. 12:5). This clue reminds us of how the Lord predicted,

“He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

“And he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26,27).

In the Tribulation, “he that overcometh” the temptation to take the mark of the beast and endures faithful “unto the end” of the Tribulation (v. 26) will be saved (cf. Matt. 10:22; 24:13). Then, as one of God’s “kings and priests” in Israel (Rev. 1:6; 5:10), he will join the Lord in ruling over the Gentile nations “with a rod of iron” (Rev. 19:15) in the kingdom which the Lord will return to establish at the end of the Tribulation (v. 11-15).

So it is clear that the man child represents a special group in Israel who will be spared the horrors of the latter half of Daniel’s 70th week, a group I believe will consist of the 144,000. When we are introduced to this elite group, they are on the earth (Rev. 7:1-8), but the next time they are referenced by name they are in heaven, “without fault *before the throne of God*” (14:1-5). That means that somewhere in between Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 they must have been “caught up unto God, and to His throne,” something that is said of the man child in Revelation 12:5.

This means that the event John is describing in Revelation 12:5 is a mid-trib evacuation of the 144,000, *not* the Rapture of the Church. But a failure to recognize the clues we examined in this passage has led many Christians to believe that the Rapture will take place in the middle of the Tribulation, for it is clear that *someone* is caught up to heaven in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. But grace believers know that Paul assures members of the Body of Christ that we will be raptured *even before the first half of the Tribulation* (1 Thes. 4:13—5:11), the “peace and safety” portion of the Day of the Lord (5:3), and “delivered...from the wrath to come” (1 Thes. 1:10 cf. 5:9).

Most date-setting for the Rapture is based on a misunderstanding of Scripture, but this one is especially sad in that it draws astrology into the mix, despite what the Bible has to say about “astrologers...stargazers” and “monthly prognosticators” (Isa. 47:13). And while you wouldn't think that grace believers would fall for date-setting predictions like this, it was a grace believer who called my attention to this one. This is why I felt constrained to address this error in the *Searchlight*, to remind our readers that you just can't mix prophecy and the mystery!

The Lord may come today, but if He does, it won't have anything to do with anything that is happening in the stars. So if He does come today, make sure He finds you studying His Word and not the constellations, and doing your part “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery” (Eph. 3:9).



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BBS Letter Excerpts

From Facebook:

"Praise the Lord for the new broadcast of *Transformed by Grace*. I have my DVR set for Monday in Phoenix." (You can buy a DVR for over the air broadcasts. –Ed).

From South Africa:

"I am excited and encouraged to see the BBS going as strong as ever and using whatever means available to get the message of Grace out to people."

From our Inbox:

"Finally!!! Looking forward to this! I hope our satellite carries this station." (It won't, but you can add an antenna. –Ed).

From Indiana:

"Last weekend I read the articles you wrote on rightly dividing the commissions in the October and November 2016 *Searchlights*. These articles are the best explanation of explaining and comparing the kingdom and grace commissions I have ever seen. I just wanted to thank you, Pastor Sadler, for your insight and commitment in studying and explaining the Word, rightly divided."

From Australia:

"My, my, Pastor Ricky! This *Two Minutes* [A Pauline Doxology] was an awesome reminder of the purpose of doxology. By the time I read the last paragraph I was moved to raise my hands and lift my voice with thanksgiving in honor of Our King Lord Jesus. Thanks!"

From our Inbox:

"Brother Sadler, let me take the opportunity to thank you for the series of grace messages on audio that I downloaded from BBS. They were really inspiring. It was my first serious encounter with your exposition of the grace message, having listened attentively to our grace fathers, Pastors Stam, Sadler, and Kurth. May God continue to bless you in your ministry as you carry the torch for a younger generation."

From Kentucky:

"Pastor Kurth, I hadn't spoken with you since the BBF summer conference, but wanted to let you know I appreciated your message from Revelation. I thought it was very clear teaching, and some messages just aren't so clear when it comes to Israel's prophesy...Tell Dave Stewart I really enjoyed his message also. It was thought-provoking."

From our Inbox:

"I truly believe that Christ is my Savior and that believing in Him I am obligated to follow His teachings to the best of my ability. According to many of the TV evangelists, since I do not speak in tongues, I have not received the Holy Spirit and thus am not born again and presumably not saved. Please explain to me why it is essential to talk in tongues to demonstrate you have accepted Christ." (Only the grace message has the answer to this religious confusion! –Ed).

From our Inbox:

"My friend and I have just started studying *Revelation* Book 1 together. We are grateful to your dad for the work he has done concerning this commentary."

From the Philippines:

"I am one of those who greatly benefitted from your *Berean Searchlight* and *Two Minutes* with the Bible devotionals. I am a Filipino Baptist, an Acts 2 dispensationalist. When I first read your *Berean Searchlight*, I was hooked because I was learning things I had not heard from the pulpit. I am very much interested to learn mid-Acts dispensationalism...Pastor Stam's commentaries on 1 Corinthians and Galatians and *Things that Differ*...are a treasure."

From our Inbox:

"Pastor Kevin, just a word of encouragement. I had my Mom watch a conference testimony you gave, after watching the video she said, 'you make it that simple,' I told her that that's what grace is...it's hard to get tradition and works out of people. Have a great day!"

From Facebook:

"Thank you so much for the article 'A Guide to Godliness' written back in April 2009. Nothing has given me more understanding on these chapters in Romans as this article. I listen to you weekly."

From our Inbox:

"Wow! That was one fast answer. I wanted to be sure. This will be a Bible class topic in a couple of weeks, and I have one guy who frequently mentions this verse when Paul is mentioned as a master builder. No problem now!"

From our Inbox:

"What does *Berean Bible Society* believe? Eternal Security or Conditional Security? I'm VERY confused and distressed on this matter. I'm a relatively new practicing believer, though I was saved in 1975. Any help would be greatly appreciated."

From Facebook:

"I received the *Searchlight* today. I appreciated them so much. You are one of the instruments of God...They are very enlightening and useful. My husband is a teacher. He is going to use these in sharing God's Word to other people."

From our Inbox:

"Thank you so much for your quick response, I know how busy you must be. Your information is invaluable! There are no Grace churches anywhere near me, at least none that I am aware of yet...I am so very thankful for the *Berean Bible Society*! My husband and I plan to attend your AR/OK conference in November." (See you there! -Ed).

From Australia:

"I was given a subscription for your *Berean Searchlight* magazine as a wedding present...Since we divorced can I change the name to...at the same address as I love the *Berean Searchlight*?"

From our Inbox:

"I'm letting go an echo! After years of sitting under denominational teaching, I have come to the realization that the confusion lies with no distinction between Kingdom believers and the Body of Christ. I stand with you, proclaiming the gospel of grace and the revelation of the mystery."



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

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unto the LORD; for He is good:
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Psalm 136:1



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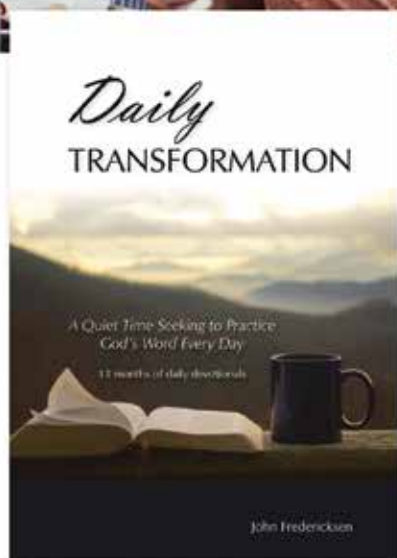
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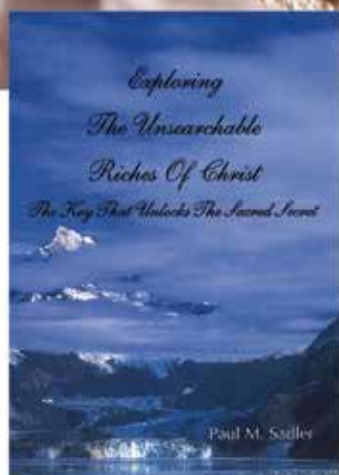


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News and Announcements

Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions is the name of our latest publication here at BBS, and the printers assure us that your editor's book will be available by early December. There is simply no finer gift you can give those who struggle with questions about salvation, eternal security, baptism, sign gifts, and challenges that our opponents raise to the distinctiveness of Paul's apostleship and message. See the next issue of the *Searchlight* for information about how to order this important work.

The 50th Anniversary of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* will be observed next year at the annual BBF conference in Tipp City, Ohio. For many years BBF's summer conference has focused on expounding a different Pauline epistle each year. To mark this milestone anniversary, next year's speakers will address *all thirteen of our apostle's letters* in an inclusive way that is sure to give you a better understanding of each epistle as a whole. Since your editor was present at the third annual conference in 1971, I've been asked to be the daily Bible Hour speaker. BBF is preparing a video presentation to mark its semicentennial, and you can be part of it by sending your old photos of past conferences to bereanbiblefellowship68@gmail.com, or to Box 224, Sheboygan, WI 53082. Testimonies of your warmest memories of conferences past are also welcome!

Our hearts go out to Les and Iris Feldick after the recent loss of their daughter. Laura was active in the administrative aspect of Les's ministry, but several years ago was thrown from her horse and broke her neck. This left her a quadriplegic, but it did not dampen her heart for serving the Lord. She now serves Him in person, and delights in the fellowship of many who would not be in Heaven were it not for her father's ministry.

When the roll is called up yonder, our dear brother Mike Karnes will now answer. Mike was a good student of God's rightly divided Word, and he and his wife Roberta were well known by face to those who attended our Bible conferences. Roberta will miss his love and we will miss his fellowship, but it comforts us to know that the Lord Jesus Christ can now enjoy the fellowship of this dear man for whom He gave His life on Calvary's cross.



On the cover this month is *Darss Lighthouse*. This historic lighthouse stands on the Darss Peninsula off the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. The Darss Peninsula is famous for being a resting place for tens of thousands of migrating cranes and geese.



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