

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2018



Feature Article

The Cat’s Out of the Bag, *by Ricky Kurth*5

Articles

When Christmas Came to Egypt, *by Kevin Sadler*13

Can a Christian Be Possessed by the Devil? *by Ken Lawson*21

Departments

The Gift That Includes All Others.....4

Something We All Need20

Question Box.....25

BBS Letter Excerpts26

News and Announcements30

This month’s front cover is located in Riga, Latvia.

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 very pleased to announce the completion of the fourth and final volume of our commentary on the Book of Revelation. We are now taking orders for this 256-page volume. As any teacher or preacher of God's Word will tell you, the one who learns the most when the Word is shared with others is the teacher or preacher. I am thankful for the opportunity to share the truths that I learned during the writing of this book.

The following is the description on the back cover of the volume: "In the final volume of this series on Revelation, we will be studying chapters 20-22. These final chapters detail the binding of Satan for 1000 years, the battle with Gog and Magog, the Great White Throne, and the new Jerusalem and eternal state for the saints of prophecy.

"All of these volumes are commentaries that interpret the apocalypse in light of the Word of God, rightly divided, and the distinctive message committed to the Apostle Paul. Thus, we know that the Body of Christ will not be here for the judgment to come, because we have the pre-Tribulational hope of the Rapture. In light of the Church's eternal, heavenly hope and calling, we also know that the new earth is not our hope, whereas the new Jerusalem is the hope and eternal home for the redeemed of Israel under God's prophesied program.

"Although Revelation does not directly pertain to the Church, the Body of Christ, there is *much* we can learn from it. We learn about the character of God and His justice, righteousness, and faithfulness. In this volume, we explore His great love and grace in creating such a magnificent dwelling place for His bride, Israel, in the new Jerusalem. The revolt by unbelievers at the close of the Millennium teaches us about the incorrigible blindness and wickedness of man's heart. And the judgment of all the lost of all times at the Great White Throne is a ready reminder for the Church to be faithful in sharing the gospel of the grace of God."

About 20 percent of this volume was written by my late father. I used everything he wrote on the final three chapters of the Book of Revelation. I studied using his sermon notes and many of the same sources he used. Along with all this, I also included things I remembered my dad had written pertaining to the verse I was studying. My prayer is that this last volume will be a blessing, as the first three volumes have been for many readers, and that it will assist you in your understanding of God's Word, rightly divided, and things to come. Please see the special offer on page 28 to order a copy and complete your set today! And if you need to have your copy by Christmas, please have your order in our hands by December 13th.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Kevin Sadler, President

THE GIFT That Includes All Others



Whether the occasion is a holiday, a birthday celebration, or a graduation, it is customary to give a gift. While some gifts are given out of necessity, a gift, for the most part is an expression of our love. We normally bestow these tokens of our affection on those whom we feel deserve the honor. But God's ways are not our ways. He gave the gift of His beloved Son to His *enemies*. That's a true love story! Oh, the wonder of His grace that God sent His only begotten Son, the Son of His love, to save sinners like you and me while we were fleeing from the glory of His presence. Little wonder the Apostle Paul says, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

The word "unspeakable" here has the idea of "indescribable." The gifts I've received through the years were all describable. Some may have been a little harder to describe than others, but describable nonetheless. But the gift of God's dear Son is *indescribable*. Who can explain the incarnation: how the eternal Son of God left heaven's glory and took upon Himself the form of human flesh, yet was not tainted with our sin? Who can explain how Christ was wholly God and wholly human in one person? These wonders can only be received through the eye of faith.

The manger and the Cross stand at the two extremes of our Lord's life, but they are connected by the tapestry of redemption. Hence, "Christ Jesus *came* into the world to save sinners." A love story that ends with a death is tragic. In contrast, the death of Christ is the greatest demonstration of love this world has ever seen. How much does God love you? He gave His only begotten Son to die on your behalf. You see, Christ wasn't dying for His sin, He knew no sin; He was dying for your sins and my sins at Calvary. He was made sin for us that we might receive the righteousness of God in Him. Have you trusted Him?

Surely you would never think of paying for a gift; why, the giver would be highly offended—how much more so with God. The payment for your sins has already been furnished by the Giver. Simply receive Him as a gift from God. If you have, then why not thank Him today for His unspeakable gift? After all, this is the Gift that includes all others! —Pastor Paul M. Sadler

The Cat's out of the BAG



PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Editor

Did you ever wonder how the figure of speech found in our title came to be used for the revealing of a secret? Some say it goes back to a time when piglets were sold in bags in open-air markets. In those days, an unscrupulous merchant might sell an unsuspecting patron a bag containing a *cat* instead of a piglet, and it wasn't until the hapless patron got home that the cat was out of the bag, and the merchant's dishonest secret was revealed. And since cats have always been far less valuable than pigs, the patron was always less than thrilled to learn that the pork he thought he had purchased was only *pork substitute*.

Well, beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, an infinitely more *pleasing* secret was revealed!

"Paul...an apostle...in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested His Word through preaching, which is committed unto me..." (Titus 1:1-3).

If you're not sure what that word "manifested" means, it is well defined in something the Lord said about some things in the kingdom program:

"...nothing is *secret*, that shall not be made *manifest*; neither any thing *hid*, that shall not be *known*..." (Luke 8:17).

So to make something *manifest* means to make *known* something that was *secret* or *hidden*. That certainly applies to the promise of eternal life that God made to a Gentile like Titus!

God promised *the Jews* eternal life throughout the pages of the Old Testament, and Gentiles who wanted to get saved in those days had to get in on that promise by becoming "proselytes" (Acts 2:10), converts to Judaism, by putting themselves under the Law of Moses. But Paul was raised up to reveal that Gentiles no longer had to become proselytes to get the eternal life that God promised the Jews. Paul revealed that Gentiles had *their own* promise of eternal life, one that God made

“before the world began,” but didn’t let the cat out of the bag until Paul came along.

The Cat’s Meow

Humorist Will Rogers is said to have quipped, “Letting the cat out of the bag is a whole lot easier than putting it back in.” If you’ve ever released a cat that somehow managed to get trapped in a bag, you know he’s right, for any attempt on your part at re-incarceration was surely met with meows of protest! But there are many who are trying to put *Paul’s* cat back in the bag.

That is, there are many who hold that Gentiles who want to be saved today must *still* try to get in on Israel’s promise of eternal life by keeping the Law that God gave them through Moses. They require people to keep the Sabbath and observe the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 to have any chance of eternal life. Others insist that Gentiles who want to be saved must submit to the Jewish rite of water baptism “for the remission of sins,” as Peter told “the men of Israel” at Pentecost (Acts 2:22,36).

If you’re an unsaved Gentile, *don’t you fall for it!* God promised *you* eternal life long before God promised it to the Jews under the Law, and the apostle who revealed this promise says that eternal life can’t be obtained by the “works of righteousness” of the Law (Titus 3:5). He further declares that it is “by the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5) that we are saved, and *not* the washing of water baptism. The “regeneration” or *new birth* of which he speaks is yours “by

grace...through faith” (Eph. 2:8), faith in the fact that Christ died for your sins, and rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-4).



And if you’re an unsaved Jew, things have changed for you too! Just as Gentiles who wanted to be saved in time past had to look to Moses, the spiritual leader of the Jews, and be saved through the Law, so Jews who want to be saved today must look to Paul, “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13), and be saved by grace through faith. That’s how the Body of Christ came to be made up of Gentiles *and* Jews (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28)!

The Manifestation of Much More

But now, when Paul says that God “manifested *His word* through preaching, which is committed unto me” (Titus 1:3), the “word” that He manifested involved *a whole lot more* than just the promise of eternal life for Gentiles! Remember, the word “manifest” means to make something *known* that was *secret* or *hidden*. Well, doesn’t that sound like what Paul wrote about in Colossians 1:25-27?

“...I am made a minister, according to the dispensation

of God, which is given to me for you...

“Even the mystery which hath been *hid* from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints:

“To whom God would *make known* what is the riches of the glory of this mystery....”

As you can see, the promise of eternal life for Gentiles that was hidden until it was made manifest through Paul was only *part* of something the apostle called “the mystery” that was *also* hidden until it was made manifest through Paul.

And the mystery involved much more than just the promise of eternal life for Gentiles! It involved something Paul called “the *fellowship* of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been *hid* in God” (Eph. 3:9). This fellowship is something he explained a few verses earlier when he spoke about

“...the mystery...that the Gentiles should be *fellowheirs*, and of the same body...” (Eph. 3:3,6).

The *fellowship* of the mystery is that Gentiles were not only promised eternal life, they were promised that they would be “fellow” or *equal*¹ members of the same body of believers with Jewish believers. This was a revolutionary dispensational change, for prior to Paul’s day, Gentiles could be saved, but they held a position in God’s body of believers *in Israel* that was subservient to the Jews.

That means that with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, God started a *whole new program* called “the dispensation of the

grace of God” (Eph. 3:2), a program that featured the creation of a brand new body of believers called “the Body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12).

The creation of this new body of believers is what allowed the Lord Jesus Christ to become “the Saviour of *all* men” (1 Tim. 4:10), especially “the Saviour of *the Body*” (Eph. 5:23)—the Body of Christ that is made up of Jews and Gentiles! This “church, which is His Body” (Eph. 1:22,23) was all part of “the great mystery” revealed to Paul “concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32). And mark well, this dispensational change cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament before Paul.

A Dispensational Commitment

Now when Paul says that this new dispensational program, which he calls “His word” (Titus 1:3), was “committed” unto Him, doesn’t that sound like what he told the Corinthians when he said, “a dispensation of the gospel *is committed unto me*” (1 Cor. 9:17).

Now I know what Bible teachers like to say about that verse. They say the gospel was committed to Paul in the same way that it is committed to *all* believers, that he was just one of *many* preachers of the gospel. After all, God expects us all to dispense the gospel, doesn’t He?

But in saying that God had committed the preaching of “His word” to Paul (Titus 1:3), the apostle was saying that he was *more* than just a preacher of the gospel. We know this because of what Paul told the Galatians:

“...the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter” (Gal. 2:7).

That word “as” prompts us to ask *how* the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter. Was Peter just one of many preachers of the kingdom gospel? No! He was *the leader* of the 12 apostles! After the Lord ascended into Heaven, Peter was *the* dispenser of “the gospel of the kingdom” that the Lord preached before him (Matt. 4:23). And Paul says that he was *the* dispenser of “the gospel of the grace of God” in the same way! As he himself put it, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God...was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:11).

An Honorable Discharge

And you know what Paul *did* with that commitment, don’t you? A careful study of his life shows that *he faithfully discharged it*. Toward the end of his ministry, he spoke of his fervent desire,

“...that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Did he make it? Did he finish his course? Just listen to what he wrote right before they executed him:

“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:6,7).

Paul had faithfully and honorably discharged the commitment that the Lord had given him. He had faithfully testified the gospel

of the grace of God, the gospel of the uncircumcision, that the Lord had committed to his trust.

And you know what he did with the Lord’s commitment *then*, don’t you? Right before he departed this life, he handed it off to Timothy, telling *him* to “keep that which is committed to *thy* trust” (1 Tim. 6:20). The trust that had been committed to Paul was now committed to his son in the faith.

And you know what *Timothy* did with that commitment, don’t you? We know that he obeyed Paul’s command to commit it “to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), for had he not done so, *the truth would have died with him*.



Bless God it didn’t! The faithful men to whom Timothy committed Paul’s new gospel *did* teach it to others—who taught it to others still! And now the commitment of this sacred trust lies in *our* hands. May we be as faithful with it as Paul and Timothy, for *we* are now the “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), and “it is required in stewards, *that a man be found faithful*” (v. 2). Future generations are counting on us, and the Lord is as well.

The “Our” of Power

When Paul says that his message was committed unto him “according to the commandment of God *our* Saviour,” don’t forget that he was writing that to a *Gentile*. We know that Titus was an uncircumcised Greek (cf. Gal. 2:3), yet Paul could speak to him about the mutual Savior they both had in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This too was new with Paul! In time past, God told the people of Israel, “I am...the Holy One of Israel, *thy* Savior” (Isa. 43:3). When God used the singular pronoun “*thy*” instead of the plural “*your*,” that shows that He was *Israel’s* Savior *to the exclusion of the other nations*.

Nor did this change at Pentecost with the preaching of the 12, who said of Christ, “Him hath God exalted...to be a...Saviour...*to Israel*” (Acts 5:31). Paul confirmed this when he observed that “God...raised *unto Israel* a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23).

It changed with the apostleship of Paul! Paul was the first to write that God “will have *all men* to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4), not just *Jewish* men.

That’s what enabled him to write to Titus, a Gentile, and speak to *him* about “God *our* Saviour.” Before Paul came along, as far as anyone knew, the Lord came “to give His life a ransom *for many*” (Matt. 20:28), that is, the many *in Israel*. It was given to Paul to break the news that “Christ Jesus...gave Himself a ransom *for all*” (1 Tim. 2:5,6).

That’s how Paul could go on to address his epistle to Titus by saying,

“To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 1:4).

For Paul to call a Gentile like Titus his son was an *astonishing* thing for him to say. Before Paul came along, any son of a Gentile *was no son of a Jew*. But beginning with his revolutionary ministry, Paul could call an uncircumcised Gentile like Titus “*mine own son after the common faith*.”

Now to speak of a faith that a Jew like Paul had in “common” with a Gentile like Titus was *another* astonishing thing for Paul to say. Jews and Gentiles didn’t have *anything* in common before Paul came along!

Uncommon Ground

Jews certainly didn’t eat the same foods as the Gentiles. God told the Jews under the Law that certain foods were unclean (Leviticus 11). This was to remind them that certain *people* were unclean—the *Gentiles* (Lev. 20:24-26). And God gave them *more* reminders that they shouldn’t mingle with Gentiles when He instructed His people not to wear clothing that was mingled with different materials (Deut. 22:11).

God even told them not to plow their field in the same way the Gentiles plowed, with two different kinds of animals pulling the plow (Deut. 22:10). That was to teach the Jews not to *work* together with Gentiles, not to *harness their strength together* with members of those unclean nations. God further instructed them not to plant their crops as

the Gentiles did, “lest the fruit of thy seed...be defiled” (Deut. 22:9). That was to teach them not to *marry* the heathen, lest *the seed of their children* be defiled.

Does that give you any idea of what a *pariah* you would have been as a Gentile in Old Testament times? If you’re not sure what a pariah is, have you ever heard the expression, “Things that make you go *hmmmm?*” Well, a pariah is something that makes you go *eewww*. That’s how Jews felt about the lowly and despised Gentiles!

Before Paul was made an apostle, Jews had *nothing* in common with Gentiles—least of all a common *faith*. But beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, a Jew like Paul could write to a Gentile like Titus about their common faith, and to Gentiles like the Romans (Rom. 1:13) about their “mutual faith” (v. 12). What a revolutionary dispensational change was brought about with the ministry of the Apostle Paul!

The Answer to All Our Needs

Now when Paul offered “grace” to Titus (Titus 1:4), we must make clear that Titus was already saved *from his sins* by grace (Titus 3:7). But grace is more than just a way to get saved, beloved, it is the answer to all of our spiritual needs *after* we are saved as well.

We know that it was the answer to the carnality of the Corinthians, for Paul opened his epistle by extending grace to them (1 Cor. 1:3). This demonstrates that no matter how carnal a sin *you* may commit as a believer, the grace of God has already “washed” (1 Cor. 6:11) and

forgiven it in Christ. But grace then goes on to teach us to *deny* ungodliness (Titus 2:11,12) as we begin to realize that we should “walk worthy of the Lord” who saved us (Col. 1:10).

We know that grace is *also* the answer to the legalism of the Galatians, for Paul opens his epistle to those dear brethren with an identical offer of grace (Gal. 1:3). This means that no matter how strictly a believer might adhere to the Law, he still falls short of the righteousness of God just as much as carnal believers do, and stands in as much need of God’s grace as anyone else.



Then, in addition to being the answer to all of our spiritual needs, grace is also *a way of life*. Recognizing that God’s grace is “sufficient” for even our *physical* needs (2 Cor. 12:7-9) is the *secret* to the Christian life. And *reflecting* His grace in your relationships with others is another key component of the Christian life, and it is the only way you’re ever going to enjoy peace with them. This is the reason Paul opened *all* of his epistles with expressions of “grace” and “peace.”

God’s Peace Offering

The “peace” Paul offered Titus was another thing that he already

had with God as a believer (Rom. 5:1), but it is always coupled with “grace” because it is the thing that *assures* us that grace is the answer to all of our needs. That is, when a believer falls into carnality, it is easy to think that he has *lost* his peace with God. But when Paul offers peace to even the carnal Corinthians (I Cor. 1:3), we know that even *they* could enjoy the peace that grace can give, and it reminds us that *our* salvation rests on His grace as well, and not on our failing works.

Then, when we learn to be “careful”—or *full of care*—“for nothing,” but obey Paul’s instruction to pray about *everything* instead (Phil. 4:6), we can know “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (v. 7). Nothing disturbs God’s peace! He’s not up all night pacing the floor, despite the weight of the world that literally rests on His shoulders, for He knows His grace is the answer to all the needs of all the people *in all the world*. And once you come to accept this too, nothing can disturb *your* peace either!




And just like grace, peace is *also* a way of life to be emulated by members of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:18). If you’re not living

peaceably with all men, you’re not *reflecting* the peace you have with God. And reflecting what God has done for you, and in you, is what the Christian life is all about!

For Mercy’s Sake

Of course, in writing to pastors like Titus, Paul also offered “mercy” (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4). This was probably a reference to the kind of “mercy” that Paul himself received from the Lord to remain single in times of “distress” (1 Cor. 7:25,26). He in turn proffered this kind of mercy to these young pastors so that they could follow his example, and attend unto the ministry without the distraction of caring for the safety of a wife and family in stressful times. We know that the pastoral epistles were written during a time of *extreme* distress for Christians, for that time culminated in the execution of the *leader* of Christianity, the apostle Paul himself.

How precious it is then to remember that it was in light of his own coming demise that the great apostle opened his last epistles in the same manner in which he opened his very first epistles, by expressing his desire that all of God’s people enjoy His grace and peace. Paul’s message didn’t change, no matter how long he lived, no matter how many things he suffered, and no matter how dangerous the world around him became. Has yours? 

1. We know the word “fellow” means *equal* because in speaking of Christ, God the Father called Him “the man who is My fellow” (Zech. 13:7), and Christ was “equal with God” (Phil. 2:6).



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When Christmas Came TO EGYPT

PASTOR KEVIN **SADLER**
BBS President

The full Christmas story is more than a quiet nativity scene with starlight, shepherds, animals, and a manger. It also includes a raving-mad ruler, a fugitive family, and thousands of slaughtered babies. We tend to avoid this part of the story of the Lord's entering this world, because it's violent, sad, and tragic. It goes against the way we want the Christmas story to be.

The Bible, however, is always truthful. When it tells the story of Christ's birth, it tells the whole story of what really happened and includes Herod's jealous hatred and the atrocity of killing little children. Christ did not come into a G-rated world. He came into the real world of sin, darkness, and unrelenting evil. But Christ did not come into the world to avoid sin and death; He came to confront it by dying for our sins and abolishing death through His cross and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:10).

THE BACKSTORY

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. 2:13-15).

The story before us begs for context. When the wise men from the East arrived in Jerusalem, they went around Jerusalem asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (2:2). When Herod "the Great," the paranoid ruler over Israel at that time, caught wind of this, he was greatly troubled. After all, he believed *himself* to be king over the Jews.

Herod therefore demanded of the chief priests and scribes to tell him where the King, the Messiah, was to be born. They answered him: Bethlehem of Judea, according to Micah 5:2 (Matt. 2:5-6).

Herod subsequently met with the wise men in secret and asked them to tell him exactly when they had first seen the star. Based on the ages of the young boys slaughtered in Bethlehem, we know their answer was sometime in the two years previous (Matt. 2:16b).



Herod then told them to go to Bethlehem to search for the Messiah and bring back word of His exact location so that he, Herod, might come and worship Him too. Of course, this was a lie.

Herod employed all possible means to obtain accurate information about this young Child: the *time* of His birth, the *place* where He would be born, and His *exact location*. All of this was so that Herod might be led right to Him and be sure of killing this threat to his throne. From the beginning of His earthly life, the threat of death hung over our Lord. Satan sought to destroy Him from the very time of His birth and used Herod to do so.

As the wise men headed for Bethlehem after leaving Herod and Jerusalem, the star that appeared at Christ's birth about two years earlier reappeared. It led them to Joseph and Mary's house (Matt. 2:9-11). After worshipping the young Christ and presenting Him their gifts, the wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod as commanded. They obeyed the warning of the dream and returned to their home in the east without reporting back to Herod in Jerusalem (2:12).

THE FLIGHT

The words "when they were departed" in verse 13 refers to when the wise men departed from Joseph and Mary's house. Joseph and Mary's joy, wonder, and excitement from the magi's visit was cut short by a divine message to Joseph. Either that same night or shortly thereafter, as Joseph was sleeping, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, telling him to "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt," and stay in Egypt with Mary and the Child until the angel brought him word. The angelic being explained that the reason for the sudden warning was that Herod was going to search for the young Child to destroy Him.

Herod's threat was no surprise and no problem for God. God's plan had been in His mind from eternity past. And no *human* plot can ever stop a *divine* plan. We see God's plan spelled out by the angel.

The first word of the angelic warning was “Arise!” There was no time for delay. In obedience to the angel’s warning, verse 14 records that Joseph “arose” and got up in the middle of the night. We can imagine Joseph waking Mary, and then both of them scrambling around their home trying to decide what was essential to take and what could be left behind. “Flee” (v. 13) means to seek safety by flight, to escape safely out of danger. Because of the immediate danger, Joseph took Jesus and Mary and left “by night,” that same night, and “departed into Egypt” under cover of darkness, making their way south.

The flight into Egypt was not an easy trip. It was 300 miles or more. Their method of travel was not like our modern means of travel whereby we can knock out 300 miles in a day without a problem. Traveling by foot or by donkey, it would have taken a while to get there. In His providential care for His Son, God provided the treasures received through the magi to pay this young family’s expenses for traveling to Egypt and living there.

We know little of their stay in Egypt. We don’t know how long they stayed nor where. Historical records tell us that there was a Jewish population in and around Alexandria, Egypt at that time. For example, in the Book of Acts, we learn that, some 35 years after the birth of Christ, there was a “Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria” (Acts 18:24). Fellow Jews in Alexandria likely would have

welcomed this family, so it’s possible they stayed in Alexandria, but we don’t know for certain.

THE MASSACRE

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not” (Matt. 2:16-18).

Herod has been referred to as the “Jewish Nero” because of his jealousy for power and uncontrollable suspicion of everyone in his life. He married nine times, killing his first wife and one of his brothers-in-law. In guarding his position as king of the Jews, he did not hesitate to execute at least three of his own sons whom he suspected of plotting against him, as well as 300 military leaders. The Roman Emperor Augustus has been quoted as saying that it was better to be Herod’s pig than his son, for his pig had a better chance of surviving. The Jewish historian, Josephus, called Herod “A man...of great barbarity towards all men equally.”¹ He was a dangerous, evil man.

The wise men’s decision to return home without reporting the young King’s exact location infuriated Herod. As soon as he

learned that the wise men had not complied with his request, his murderous heart was stirred. He put into action a plan to kill all the male children in Bethlehem, ages two and under. Herod knew that the Christ had been born in Bethlehem and assumed He was still living there.

Herod had no idea which of the young boys in Bethlehem was the One, so in senseless rage, to make sure of killing Him, Herod handed down a death sentence to all of them: “all the children that were in Bethlehem...from two years old and under” (v. 16). Not only was this done in Bethlehem, but also “in all the coasts thereof,” or in the area around it, so it was Bethlehem *and beyond*. The soldiers were dispatched. The deed was done. This was a crime so unspeakable and heinous that historians have given it a name: the massacre of the innocents. The details are hard even to contemplate, much less to describe.

Author and speaker Philip Yancey writes the following: “... after Christmas, I accepted perhaps the hardest assignment of all—not in terms of quantity of suffering (can it ever be quantified?) but in the sheer intensity of horror.

“I addressed the New England town of Newtown, Connecticut, a community reeling from the murder of 20 schoolchildren and 6 teachers and staff just days prior. An ambulance driver captured the mood in Newtown well. ‘All of us on the fire and ambulance corps are volunteers,’ he told me. ‘We don’t train for something like

this—nobody does. And my wife is a teacher at Sandy Hook. She knew all 20 children by name as well as the staff. After hiding out during the carnage, she had to walk past the bodies of her colleagues in the hallway.’

“He paused to control his voice, then continued: ‘Everyone experiences grief—in the worst case the terrible grief of losing a child. Usually, though, you bear grief as if in a bubble. You go to the grocery store. You go back to work. Eventually that outer world takes over more of you, and the grief begins to shrink. Here in Newtown, we go to the store and see memorials to the victims. We walk down the street and see markers on the porches of those who lost a child. It’s like a bell jar has been placed over the town, with all the oxygen pumped out. We can’t breathe for the grief.’”²

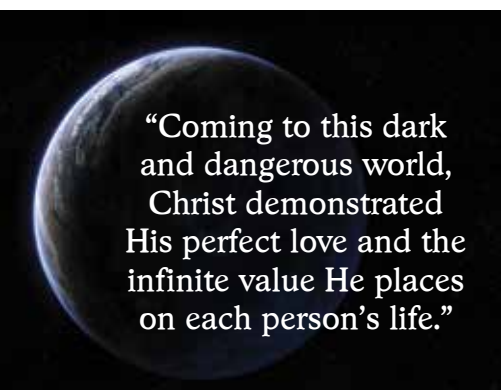
The grief of the parents, family members, and residents of Bethlehem would have been much the same. Very few think of Bethlehem as a burial place. They think of it as a birthplace. But the biblical account reminds us of the whole story.

The Newtown shooting and this massacre of the innocents remind us of the desperate wickedness of man’s heart (Jer. 17:9) and the cruel, sin-cursed world of pain, grief, and sorrow that the Savior entered in order to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). It reminds us of the love of Christ, “Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4). It also reminds us of the spiritual

battle behind the scenes. Satan was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), and we see his influence here in his first attempt to kill the Messiah.

Herod's chilling crime and the weeping which followed were a fulfillment of the words of Jeremiah the prophet:

"Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel [Rachel] weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not" (Jer. 31:15).



"Coming to this dark and dangerous world, Christ demonstrated His perfect love and the infinite value He places on each person's life."

Ramah was the staging area for the Jews to be carried away captive to Babylon in 586 B.C. As a result of their disobedience and idolatry, God permitted His people to be conquered by the Babylonians. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, the land pillaged and burned, and practically the entire population was carried off into exile. Ramah is the place where King Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers organized the Jews into caravans, put them in chains, and marched them off to Babylon (Jer. 40:1). Because Rachel died near Bethlehem after giving

birth to Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-19), Jeremiah refers to Rachel, representing the mothers of Israel, weeping as they saw their sons going into captivity, refusing to be comforted because their grief was so great.

Israel's mourning at the time of the captivity is correlated to the weeping brought on by Herod. The wailing that came from the mourning at the captivity prefigured the wailing of the mothers at Herod's massacre, mothers who also, as would be expected, refused to be comforted because their grief was so great in losing their little boys.

THE RETURN

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young Child's life. And he arose, and took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:19-23).

Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus stayed in Egypt until the death of Herod. As the angel had promised, he let Joseph know when it was safe for them to return. With the death of Herod, the



coast was now clear to return to Israel. The angel assured Joseph of this in a dream, and like the previous dream, the angel told him to “Arise” when it was time to leave. We can’t say for certain how long they were in Egypt, but the Lord was still a “young Child” when they came back, so they weren’t there very long.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew wrote that the return to Israel from Egypt was fulfillment of Hosea 11:1: “Out of Egypt have I called My Son” (Matt. 2:15). Thus, this prophecy, given hundreds of years earlier, became clothed with new meaning. In its original context, the prophecy referred to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. But Matthew revealed its twofold interpretation and meaning, as the prophecy was fulfilled ultimately in the life of Christ by His return to Israel from Egypt.


As if to retrace the steps of the Exodus, Christ left Egypt for the land that God promised to Israel. It is impossible to fail to notice the parallel between Christ and Moses. Both Moses and Christ came out of Egypt, and God protected both of His chosen deliverers under similar circumstances. About 1400 years before Christ, there was an evil ruler, Pharaoh, who ordered the death

of Israelite baby boys (Ex. 1:22). But God protected a little baby, Moses, who would escape that attempted genocide and deliver the nation. At the time of Herod, the baby who would deliver the nation was Jesus Christ.

On the return trip, when Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus reached the land of Israel, Joseph heard that Herod’s son Archelaus had succeeded his father as ruler over Judea. Thus, Joseph was reluctant to venture any farther. History records that Archelaus was as wicked and brutal as his father. Discovering Archelaus was ruling over Judea, Joseph knew that he, Mary, and the Christ Child were no safer under Archelaus than they had been under Herod the Great. Common sense told them to be careful and to wait.




Joseph’s fears were confirmed by God in a dream, and God warned him to divert his path and go to Galilee. Thus, Joseph took his wife and God’s Son and traveled north to Nazareth in Galilee.

A photograph of the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, with the largest pyramid on the left and two smaller ones to its right, set against a hazy sky.

The Lord grew up in Nazareth and became identified with that city, as in Scripture our Savior is often called “Jesus of Nazareth.”

We rejoice each Christmas season to be reminded that Christ came willingly to this earth to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8), in order to save sinners. Coming to this dark and dangerous world, Christ demonstrated His perfect love and the infinite value He places on each person’s life.

The wickedness we see in this account, and that we see incessantly in the world today, reminds us how desperately the world needs Christ and His saving gospel of grace. The Salvation Army bell-ringers

we see around us should remind us how the Church needs to be God’s salvation army and take Christ’s good news to the unbelieving so that souls might be saved, that hearts might be won, that Christ might transform lives, and that God might be glorified. This is the answer to the world’s wickedness. Christ is the Answer. Christ is always the Answer. 


1. Josephus, *Josephus: The Complete Works*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, last modified April 21, 2011, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/josephus/complete.ii.xviii.viii.html>.

2. Philip Yancey, “National Tragedy and the Empty Tomb,” *Christianity Today*, March 28, 2013, <https://www.christianity-today.com/ct/2013/april/national-tragedy-and-empty-tomb.html>.

BBF WINTER CONFERENCE

January 26-27, 2019

Location: *Grace Bible Fellowship Church*
4979 Arbor St., Inverness, Florida

A photograph of a long wooden pier extending into the ocean, with waves breaking against its base.

Theme: “*The Teaching of Grace*”

Guest Speakers:

Pastor Kevin Sadler, Pastor Ken Lawson, Pastor John Fredericksen,
Mr. Dave Brown, Pastor Ken Lyon, Mr. Travis LaBrake

For questions, a brochure or more information, please contact:
Pastor Ken Lawson at: (352) 726-9972 or (352) 423-1051

SOMETHING WE ALL NEED

“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col. 1:11).

“Did you hear the Texas tall tale about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots? He asked for help, and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn’t want to go on. By the time they got the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, ‘Teacher, they’re on the wrong feet.’ She looked, and sure enough, they were.

“It wasn’t any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, ‘These aren’t my boots.’ She bit her tongue rather than...scream, ‘Why didn’t you say so?’

“Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they gotten the boots off when he said, ‘They’re my brother’s boots. My mom made me wear ’em.’ Now she didn’t know if she should laugh or cry, but she mustered up what grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again. Helping him into his coat, she asked, ‘Now, where are your mittens?’ He said, ‘I stuffed ’em in the toes of my boots.’”¹

This teacher is a perfect example of patience and longsuffering. This is something we all need in life. Difficult people and circumstances in our lives can make patience and longsuffering difficult to live out. However, we are promised God’s help in this area. By the indwelling Holy Spirit we are “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power” to be more patient and longsuffering.

God is longsuffering. During this present evil age, God is demonstrating His longsuffering as He gives all people an opportunity to be saved (1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Pet. 3:15). And while believers are not perfect in their practice, God is patient and longsuffering with us as we grow in Christ. One aspect of godliness (or God-likeness) is to be patient and longsuffering like Him (Eph. 5:1).

God wants us to endure patiently and suffer long with those who may try our patience to the limit. God desires long fuses as misunderstandings arise, cutting words are said, or unkind actions are done. The old nature lashes out, retaliates, and is impatient, but God wants self-restraint in His strength. God’s selfless love teaches us that “Charity suffereth long, and...is not easily provoked” (1 Cor. 13:4-5). Living out this attribute of Christ in our relationships can make a great difference in the quality of these relationships and, in turn, the quality of our lives.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



1. “Child’s Boots Leave Teacher Frustrated,” submitted by John Beukema, Preaching Today, March 2007, <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2007/march/9032607.html>.

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL?

PASTOR KEN LAWSON
BBS Board Member

This is the question that many have been asking who have seen or read much in the popular culture about the increasing satanic influence in these last days of the dispensation of grace. They fear that the powers of darkness are a present threat to them personally or to their friends and family. Since the release of the movie, *The Exorcist* in 1973, the discussion of the devil and his demons has become mainstream in pop culture as well as the church. The movie and its many sequels and spinoffs have become big business, as Hollywood has capitalized on the current interest in the supernatural, and even used various clergymen to bolster the theme. But is the movie industry or fantasy books the place where Christians should go to learn of these things and what power (if any) Satan can have over the children of God?

We know that the Bible has been given to us to learn of these things and be well informed about Satan, his demons, and his strategy (2 Cor. 2:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Before we examine the question at hand, there are a few things we must understand about our enemy, the devil.

1. He is a real person, not just an evil force. He tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the Lord Jesus Christ before his ministry began (2 Cor. 11:3; Matt. 4:1-11).

2. We read that Satan entered into Judas to betray Jesus (Luke 22:3; John 13:27).

3. Demon possession was common in Israel during the ministry of Jesus Christ, and these demons are still loose today (Matt 8:28; 10:8; 12:22,43; Luke 10:17).

4. The Apostle Peter (a believer) was addressed by the Lord as Satan, presumably because he was using Peter to oppose the purpose of God (Matt. 16:22-23).

5. Paul refers to the former (unconverted) life of the Ephesians as living “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). “The Prince

of the Power of the Air” is a title that refers to the devil, and we know that he possesses the children of disobedience (a description of the unsaved) because his spirit works *in* them.

WHO'S POSSESSION?

Being possessed by the devil often produces images of a wild-eyed mad man going about committing acts of violence and mayhem. The Bible does show this side of the demon possession. (We say *demon* rather than devil. There is one devil and many demons, all of which are under Satan's authority). But much more prevalent in our dispensation is a more subtle and sinister form of



Satanism that is much more effective in deceiving the masses. Actually the word “possessed” means *belonging to* or *in the possession of someone*. It carries the meaning of ownership and control. Since the fall of man at the beginning, we have naturally gravitated toward evil and the powers of darkness (John 3:18-20). This is certainly true of those outside of the Christian faith, for Christ addresses them as the children of the devil (Matt. 13:38; John 8:44; 1 John 3:10). Further, the apostles tell us that we are living in the present evil world, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness (or the Wicked One) (Gal. 1:4; 1 John 5:19). While there are those who outwardly worship and serve Satan, those in the Bible practiced a more covert form that was outwardly religious, law-keeping, and respectable in the eyes of their countrymen.

Such is still the case today. There are many who would never fall down and worship Satan, and would vigorously deny being a child of the devil. They might attend church every week, work hard for their family, obey the civil law, and be regarded as pillars of their community. But they are self-righteous while trusting in their respected name, good works, and religious duty to help save them and give them a home in heaven. They are ignorant of God's righteousness that is given as a free gift of His grace, and are going around trying to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:4). Without acknowledging the work of the cross on their behalf and trusting in the merits of Christ's shed blood as their only hope of eternal life, they are yet in darkness. When describing his conversion, Paul repeated the words of the resurrected Christ in the grace commission.

“Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:17-18).

Likewise, in addressing the saints at Colosse Paul wrote that God had “delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

These would indicate that all of those outside of the faith of Christ are under the power and possession of the devil, even those who would deny his existence. His power of deception is so expansive, and their blindness so profound, that they cannot see that they have been blinded and deceived. Paul also put himself in this category in his former life as a persecutor of the believers (1 Tim. 1:13).

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

NO FELLOWSHIP

As much as we acknowledge the devil’s possession of the unsaved, that still does not answer the original question, “Can a Christian be possessed by the devil?” Here we must remember several things. First of all, does not the Word of God declare that believers’ bodies are the temple of the living God, and that there is no common tie between Him and the powers of darkness?

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial [Satan]? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:15-16).

Since our bodies are the temple of God and the Spirit of Christ lives in us, the devil cannot co-occupy the same sanctuary.

Secondly, we must notice that we belong (are possessed) by God, for He calls us *My* people. We have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ, and now we are His, body, soul, and spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20, 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Finally, God assures us that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of redemption (the time of Christ’s appearing for His Church) (Eph. 1:14). Since the Spirit Himself is the seal, He assures His continual ownership of us, and eternal security in Christ.

Here are truths that are most precious to every believer. The very Creator of the universe wants us as His own possession, and willingly paid such a price to make it possible! Now that we are redeemed from the hold of the devil, we can rejoice in sins eternally forgiven, and have peace in knowing that nothing (not even Satan) can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:31-39).

SATAN'S DEVICES

This does not mean that the devil cannot use his great intelligence and experience to cause us great trouble while on planet earth. It would be great if he would just leave us alone once we come to Christ. Unfortunately, Scripture and experience tell us otherwise, as his hatred for Christ and His people know no bounds. This much is certain. Satan will:

1. Use false religious teachers to promote doctrine that will deceive people and keep them from receiving the truth (2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).

2. Blind people to the gospel of the grace of God (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

3. Use our own fleshly tendencies against us in order to arouse anger and pride. This can bring us into a snare and condemnation of the devil (Eph. 4:27; 1 Tim. 3:6-7).

4. Hinder us (1 Thes. 2:18).

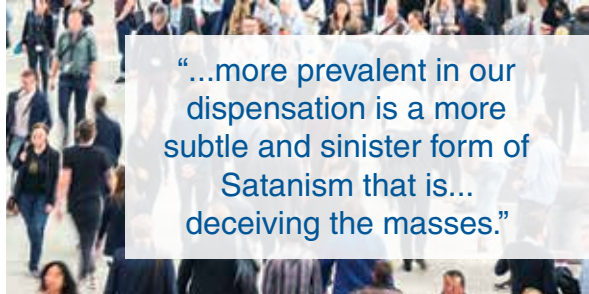
5. Catch believers in his snare and take us as prisoners of war in this great conflict (2 Tim. 2:26).

6. Be used by God for a good purpose (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). God can use anything for His own Sovereign purpose, even the devil.

7. Use sensuality to tempt you to ruin your testimony and family (1 Cor. 7:5).

When it comes to Satan's strategy, there seems to be two extreme views. First is the idea that Satan's realm is only in the bars, the brothels, and the dregs of society. The other is that Satan only influences people in the religious realm. Both views fall short of the whole truth. It is true that Satan primarily uses false religion to blind men to the truth. He uses a potent vaccine of dead religion to inoculate people against the saving power of Christ. Then when the gospel of grace is presented, they will have built up a strong immunity against it by thinking, "Oh, yes, yes, I have heard all of this before. But I am a good person, and I have my church membership, my confirmation, and my church friends. That is all that I need." They have it all except that which God requires: Christ's life which is life eternal. This is received as a free gift of God's grace, based on Christ's death for us and subsequent resurrection.


Having acknowledged this side of the devil's work, it is also true that he can use our baser passions to diminish or destroy God's use of us as His servants. There is no other kind of sin that people are more hesitant to forgive and restore a servant than that of illicit sexuality.



“...more prevalent in our dispensation is a more subtle and sinister form of Satanism that is... deceiving the masses.”

This is true in politics, business, education, and the church. Make no mistake. Satan can use both realms effectively if it serves his purpose to hinder, oppose, and deceive God's people. How important to receive God's warnings and take heed according to His Word! We are to put on the whole armor of God, which is Christ Himself, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 6:10-17).

THE REST OF THE STORY

We know that all power is ultimately from the Most High, and that God will give Satan even more power than he has today (2 Thes. 2:9). The coming Tribulation period will show great satanic power far above what has ever been revealed, and it will all ultimately work out to God's (and our) advantage. We have the assurance of deliverance from that terrible time (1 Thes. 5:9-11) and that "the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Satan will be banished to the Lake of Fire for eternity, while we who believe will enjoy the riches of His glory and grace forever and ever. Praise the Lord! 

Question Box

"I hear that Muslims are getting saved after being visited by Christ in a dream. Does the Lord reveal Himself in dreams today?"

God spoke to men in dreams in past dispensations, but now that the Bible is complete, He speaks only through His Word.

If these stories were true, it would give unsaved men an excuse when they are sentenced to the lake of fire for their sins (Rev. 20:12-15). They could rightly argue, "It's not fair. The Lord never visited *me* in a dream. If He had, I would have believed too."

But we know that unsaved men will have no excuse in that day, for it is still true that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psa. 19:1). The testimony of God's creation reaches all men (v. 2-6) and is enough to leave men "without excuse" to not "seek the Lord" and "feel after him, and find Him" (Acts 17:27; Rom. 1:20).

—Pastor Kurth



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Michigan:

"Your monthly issues of the *Searchlight*...have meant a lot to me, especially since the death of my husband of 66 years. On some of my hardest days, they have encouraged me to keep my eyes on things above, not on the things down here."

From our Inbox:

"I didn't finish my seminary education...I lost my passion. In spite of my education, to me all the pieces of the Bible didn't fit together properly. After all, if God wrote the Bible and wrote it for us, it should make sense to us. Therefore, around 3 years ago, I began my own quest to find a denomination, ideology, or system that could put the Bible together like the perfect, divine puzzle I knew it was. A year and a half ago, I discovered the BBS website and since then my fervor for the Bible has grown, as the Bible in whole has begun to make more sense to me than ever before. It is this renewed passion that caused me...to begin our home Bible study."

From New Mexico:

"It's always a blessing to read the *Berean Searchlight*. This month's article, 'Grace Killers,' by Tracy Lesan, was very encouraging!"

From Iowa:

"Over the last few months, through Scripture study and the resources BBS supplies, the importance of studying the Bible rightly divided is becoming much more clear."

From Michigan:

"I am so glad you put this *Two Minutes* message ["Changing Our Want-to"] out there for us. Like Paul, I have had a couple problems that I have been bothered by that burden my heart at times."

From Colorado:

"I just finished C. R. Stam's Thesalonians commentary. Boy, what an encouragement, just like Paul intended for that letter to be. I had studied 1 Thessalonians on the subject of the Pre-tribulational catching away of the Body, but didn't realize there is a bunch of ammo in the second letter as well..."

From Minnesota:

"Thank you so much for continuing to teach the word of God rightly divided. We live in an area where only our small church of 12 people recognize this truth. We also so appreciate Pastor Kevin Sadler's program on our Dish Network Channel 267."

From Spain:

"I discovered that the videos of *Transformed by Grace* are on YouTube...Pastor Kevin is doing a great job in all these videos, and I believe that this ministry should be promoted as much as possible."

From our Inbox:

"Wow! Do you get much sleep at night? What a dramatic (and quick) response!"

From Ohio:

"I am an independent Baptist in the Toledo area. I am a graduate of *Pensacola Bible Institute*, Dr. Peter Ruckman's school. I've heard about you 'hypers' as we call you, lol, for a while...I teach adult Sunday school at my church, and I've been covering the seven baptisms. Thought I'd get it 'from the horse's mouth' and searched for Stam, and came across your site. Lots of good stuff, as we agree on many issues." (May the horse be with you. -Ed.).

From North Carolina:

"Fantastic teaching and great fellowship [at the BBS Regional Conference in Winston-Salem, NC]. Loved it!"

From South Carolina:

"I have several books by Brother Paul Sadler, and these books have been such a great help to me. He is surely very deep in the understanding of God's Word. He also writes in such a way that is very easy to read and understand."

From Facebook:

"It appears to me that faith is rejection of reason. I find this disturbing. As an example, faith for many means rejecting the evidence of evolution. One could still believe in god(s) and accept evolution as the means whereby god created life and man." (Please pray for this man who responded to Pastor C. R. Stam's *Two Minutes* article, "Faith" -Ed.).

From Colorado:

"Your ministry has been a blessing to us. We are understanding our Bible, as you show us how to rightly divide the Scriptures."

From our Inbox:

"Your answer did help...It was a little confusing. Just hadn't gotten a full picture of what was going on."

From Ohio:

"I am very thankful for Pastor Kurth who always takes the time to answer my questions. I look forward to sharing these materials with friends who do not completely grasp right division."

From California:

"I've been receiving the *Searchlight* for years...I used to be in a Pentecostal church...when I bought *Things That Differ*, that changed everything!"

From Kansas:

"It's people like you on the BBS staff who make us stop and realize how much God spoils us." (We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and to the victor go the spoils! -Ed.).

From Florida:

"Thank you for the recent *More Minutes With the Bible* article, 'The Spirit Within.' I found it speaking to my own spirit and heart. I loved the reminder that Christ is sufficient, and able to bring me back into a right fellowship with him by His Spirit in me, leading me back to live the life that is glorifying to him."

From Washington:

"September's *Searchlight* reminded me that it was Echo Month. I have to keep this short because I *cannot* put into words what your ministry has done for me...Without your ministry, I might never have learned...the Word rightly divided, and the unique apostleship of Paul."



"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

Reasons to Celebrate

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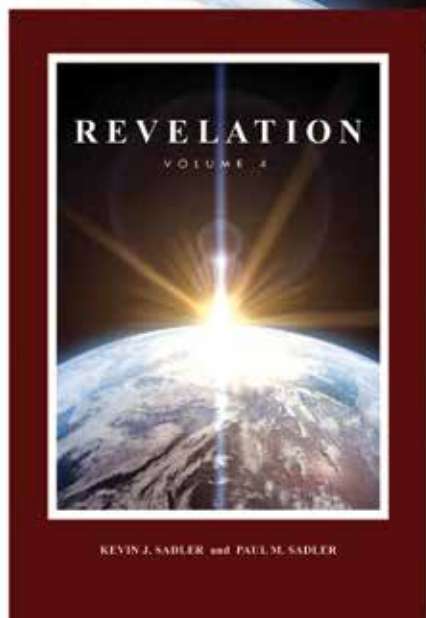
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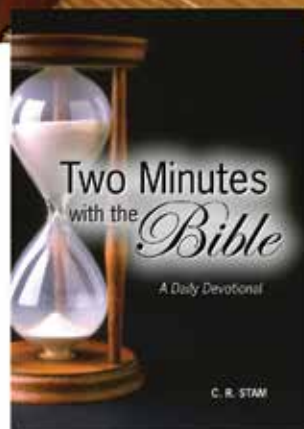
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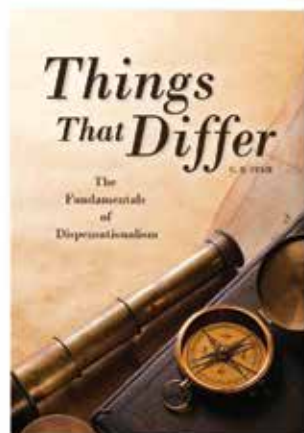
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News and Announcements

If you live in Chicago you can now take it from the top! Our *Transformed By Grace* television program is now being broadcast from the top of the Willis Tower—or as those of us who live in the Chicago area still stubbornly refer to it, the Sears Tower. Every Sunday morning at the top of the hour at 9, our top-notch show will now ride a signal generating from the studios of WYJS and emanating out from our nation's tallest rooftop to areas in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. Now 4 million households in America's third-largest market can tune to Channel 62 on Directv and Dish, and stay on top of things, spiritually speaking.

Orlando Special Meetings: If you're thinking that some good Christian fellowship would really warm your heart once the weather turns cold in February, the saints at *Fellowship Bible Church* may have just what you're looking for! They've asked BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler to lead their Sunday services, and they claim they have room for you too. Contact host pastor Fred Bekemeyer for further information at (321) 303-2480. But this February 3rd event will be here before you know it, so be sure to book one of those always reasonably-priced flights to Orlando without delay!

New Grace Ministry: Our good friend Tom Langley has established a new grace Bible study group at a local seniors center in Burlington, Washington. If you live in the area and would like to join the happy fellowship, you can contact him at o.thomas.langley@juno.com to learn when and where they meet. He mentioned that the center's administrators received his offer to minister at their facility enthusiastically, and that our readers might want to look into ministering at senior centers in their areas as well. Good idea!

Another New Grace Ministry: Our new friend Vince Curcio was *very* excited when he discovered our BBS website a few months ago, and he's now drinking deeply from the well of God's rightly divided Word—so much so that he is eager to start a Bible class in his home! If you live near Concord, North Carolina, and would like to be a part of what God is doing in Vince's life and ministry, you can contact him at (704) 222-6369.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

BBF Winter Conference, January 26-27, Inverness, FL

Tupelo Bible Conference, March 16-17, Tupelo, MS

Phoenix Bible Conference, March 22-24, Phoenix, AZ

Best of Israel Trip, May 7-16, 2019



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“Those who plan
to seek God
at the eleventh
hour often die
at 10:30.”

—Author Unknown

