

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 2019



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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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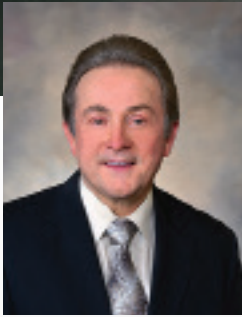
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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's time to flip the calendar over to September, and September is Echo Month here at *Berean Bible Society*! Many years ago, BBS founder Pastor C. R. Stam instituted this annual tradition as a means by which he could hear back from the hungry hearts to whom he ministered throughout the year. Like the Apostle Paul, he rejoiced to hear from the saints (2 Cor. 7:7). But Echo Month *also* helped him gauge which of BBS's ministries were having the most impact. That helped him to be a better steward of the money that grace believers entrusted to his care.

In those days, our ministry in the *Berean Searchlight* was accompanied by *Bible Time*, our radio ministry that eventually grew to include broadcasts over a hundred stations. And even back then, our literature ministry featured dozens of titles on various dispensational themes. In addition, over 700 newspapers carried *Two Minutes With the Bible*, and Pastor Stam was still much in demand as a speaker in our Bible conference ministry. Our lending library recordings were played by believers and Bible study groups across the land, and we even had a phone number that people could call to hear a pre-recorded message!

While we are still active in most of those ministries, *Bible Time* has now been replaced by *Transformed By Grace*. I don't know if Pastor Stam ever envisioned having a television ministry, but we can now be seen on DirecTV and Dish, as well as on Roku and Apple TV. Others study with us over ION antenna TV, while Chicagoland viewers catch us on WJYS broadcast TV. In your echo, if you'll let us know how you watch *Transformed By Grace*, it will help us to be better stewards of the money that grace believers now entrust to *our* care.

In addition, BBS is also now ministering through avenues that didn't even exist in Pastor Stam's day. Our website has replaced the need for our lending library, for it reaches into homes 24/7 with countless Bible study articles, audio messages and videos. And our BBS app makes all of those messages accessible to grace believers wherever they go! *Two Minutes* continues to appear in newspapers, but has also morphed into a daily devotional email. Reel-to-reel and cassette tape recordings of our messages, and even CDs have now given way to a tiny USB drive containing 423 messages that you can even plug into your car's console to hear the truth over your surround sound speakers as you drive!

If you've never joined the chorus of echoes from the people we hear from every September, don't let another year go by without letting us know how God is using our ministries to transform *your* spiritual life. Do it today!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ricky Kurth



The Value of the FOUR GOSPELS

Our Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written to and for the nation Israel under the law, in accordance with her earthly, millennial hope. It is in the epistles of Paul that we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny for us, the Church, the Body of Christ, today under grace. However, there is great value in studying the four Gospels. They are “profitable” for our spiritual lives.

When I was taking classes at *Berean Bible Institute* in Slinger, Wisconsin, I took a Missions class. Pastor and missionary Joe Watkins was my instructor. In one class, he pointed out what he perceived to be a weakness in the grace movement: that we were too often guilty of neglecting the four Gospels. He said, “That is our Savior too. There is much we can learn from His love, humility, compassion, and kindness.” Then Pastor Watkins shared an example: the healing of the leper in Mark 1.

“And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean” (Mark 1:40-41).

Pastor Watkins pointed out that nobody touched a leper. But in healing this man, the Lord was “moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him.” He didn’t need to touch him to heal him. All He needed to do was say the word. But that man hadn’t felt a human touch in years. Thus, out of His great compassion, the Lord reached over, touched him, and said, “Be thou clean.”

Like Paul, we are to teach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). In my pastorate at *Kettle Moraine Bible Church* in West Bend, Wisconsin, in both the Sunday School and Worship Service, I taught series of messages from the four Gospels. I shared how the Lord lived under the law and kept it perfectly, how He taught Israel in light of the coming Tribulation and her hope of the earthly Kingdom, and how the Gospels portray the Lord as Prophet, Priest, King, God, and man. Most of all, as Pastor Watkins had shown me, I made sure to teach about the love and mercy of our Savior. And as a result of a series on the miracles of Christ, one woman in the assembly shared that, although she had known about rightly dividing the Word for years, it was the differences in the four Gospels that really helped her to see the truth of grace for the Body of Christ today. There is *value* in learning the four Gospels!

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

WHY DOES PAUL TALK ABOUT THE *Kingdom?*

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor

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

Three men died and went to heaven, where St. Peter met them and said, "We only have one rule here in heaven: *don't step on a duck!* Ducks are God's favorite creation, so don't step on any." But there were ducks *everywhere*, so it wasn't long before one of the men stepped on one. Out of nowhere, St. Peter reappeared and chained him to an angry, contentious, and brawling woman—you know, the kind that the Bible says it's best to steer clear of (Prov. 21:9,19). He announced, "Your punishment is to be chained to this woman *forever*." The second man was so shaken by this that he took a step backward—and he too stepped on a duck. And he too found himself chained to an equally obnoxious woman.

Seeing this, the third man naturally decided to be *extremely* careful where he stepped. A couple of months later, St. Peter showed up and chained him to a very *pleasant* woman. She was so kind and sweet that the man asked, "Wow, what did I do to deserve this?" To

which the woman replied, "Well I don't know about you, but I stepped on a duck."

Which just goes to show that some men can be just as obnoxiously contentious as some women!

Well, as I'm sure you know, when Christians die we go to heaven, like those three men did—where presumably there won't be any issues with ducks. But if you know your Bible you know that it is only the Apostle Paul who *talks about* going to heaven when we die. All of the other Bible writers talk about living in the kingdom of heaven on earth that God plans to establish after the Rapture and the Tribulation. This is something that grace believers, who rightly divide the Word, are very familiar with.

The Kingdom of God

But now, if you *really* know your Bible, you know that every once in a while Paul uses the word "kingdom," and this tends to confuse grace believers, especially those

who are new to Pauline dispensationalism. So we want to get to the bottom of this by examining some of the verses in which Paul uses the word *kingdom*, beginning with the first time in Acts 14. Speaking of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in the city of Derbe (v. 21), we read of them:

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:21,22).

When Paul mentions “the kingdom” here, I’m often asked if he’s talking about the kingdom of heaven on earth, the one that Daniel described when he wrote,

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

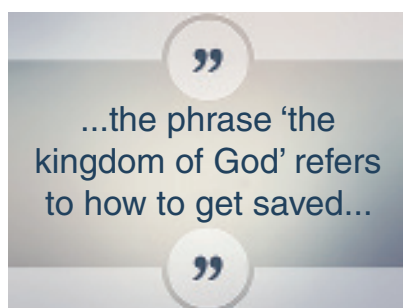
If you know the Book of Daniel well, you know who “these kings” are. In Daniel 2:37-43, the prophet predicted that the king of Babylon would eventually be conquered by the Medes, and his kingdom would be left to the people of the Medes. He also predicted that the king of the Medes would then be conquered by the Greeks, and his kingdom would be left to the people of Greece (cf. Dan. 7:1-22).

He further predicted that the king of Greece would be conquered

by—some kingdom that Daniel didn’t name, and *that king* would then be conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. And as you can see, Daniel also prophesied that the Lord would set up *His* kingdom at that time, and it would *not* be left to other people, for it will stand forever.

The Kingdom and the Mystery

Now grace believers know *why* Daniel didn’t name that final kingdom. It certainly wasn’t because God didn’t know that *the Romans* would conquer Greece! No, it was because God knew that He planned to *interrupt* His prophetic program with the dispensation of the mystery. Because of that, He also knew that when the Lord finally returns to this earth, the king of Rome won’t be the king that He will have to conquer in order to establish His kingdom. God knew that once the dispensation of grace ended, the Lord would return and conquer the kingdom of the Antichrist instead.



But when Daniel predicted that the Lord would “consume” the kingdoms of men with His kingdom, he was telling us that the kingdom God plans to set up will be *just like* those kingdoms

of men—that is, a literal earthly kingdom with a literal earthly king.

I say this because when the Lord announced that His kingdom was “at hand” 2,000 years ago (Matt. 4:17), but then no earthly kingdom appeared, some have concluded that He never meant to establish an earthly kingdom. They teach that He only meant to create a kingdom in the hearts of men. But one of the many ways that we know that the Lord merely *interrupted* His plans for an earthly kingdom is found in a prophecy of Jeremiah, who wrote:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days... Israel shall dwell safely” (Jer. 23:5,6).

A kingdom in the hearts of believers cannot execute judgment and justice in the earth, or ensure the safety of Israel. But a righteous king who will “rule...with a rod of iron” can (Rev. 19:15). And we know that the King in God’s literal earthly kingdom will be the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s the “Branch” of King David’s family tree who will sit on a literal throne in this kingdom, doing what kings are *supposed* to do, executing judgment and justice in the earth. Only He’ll do it better than it has ever been done before, of course, since He’ll do it *perfectly*.

The Kingdom and Paul

And since this is the *only* kingdom that the Bible talks about God setting up until you get to

the Apostle Paul, it’s easy to think that that’s the kingdom Paul is talking about in Acts 14:22. But with the raising up of Paul, who was given “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:1,2), a new meaning arose for the word “kingdom.” If that sounds strange to you, I can assure you that one of the keys to understanding Scripture is to recognize that the same word in the Bible can have different meanings, depending on the context.

For instance, we know that the word “heaven” can have three different meanings, for the Bible speaks about three different heavens. If you are young and in love, you may *think* you’re in “seventh heaven,” as the old saying goes, but the Word of God makes it clear that there are only three. God mentioned the first heaven when He described the fifth day of creation, saying,

“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and the fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven” (Gen. 1:20).

If heaven is described here as the place where birds fly, we know that this heaven is found in the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, making it the first of God’s heavens. But Isaiah described *another* heaven when he talked about “*the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof...*” (Isa. 13:10). Evidently the second heaven is located in what we call outer space. But the Apostle Paul wrote,

“I knew a man in Christ.... caught up to the third heaven....

caught up into *paradise*...” (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

The third heaven is obviously the throne room of God Himself, the realm we usually think of when we think of the word *heaven*. But each of those areas are *called* heaven, and the only way to tell the difference between them is by the context.

The Kingdom and Tribulation

Beloved, if you fall into the trap of thinking that a word always means the same thing when you see it in the Bible, you’re going to be tempted to think that the “tribulation” Paul says we must go through to enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22) is the *seven-year* Tribulation that the Bible says is coming after the Rapture. This is especially tempting when you consider that the Apostle John used those same words *tribulation* and *kingdom* to describe that seven-year Tribulation, saying,

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in *tribulation*, and in the *kingdom* and *patience* of Jesus Christ...” (Rev. 1:9).

The Book of Revelation is an exposition of the coming seven years of Tribulation and the kingdom of heaven that the Lord will establish on the earth afterward.¹ But we know that this is *not* the tribulation that Paul said *we* must go through in Acts 14:22, for he wrote two epistles to make it

clear that the Body of Christ will be raptured *before* that terrible day (1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; 2 Thes. 2:1-6). No, the word *tribulation* just means *trouble*, as we see when Paul wrote,

“...God...comforteth us in *all our tribulation*, that we may be able to comfort them which are in *any trouble*...” (2 Cor. 1:3,4).

Do you see how this verse defines the word *tribulation* as “*any* trouble”? So when the word *tribulation* is used in Scripture, it cannot be limited to “the time of *Jacob’s* trouble” (Jer. 30:7) that will come right before the Lord’s Second Coming (v. 8) to set up His kingdom (v. 9).²



“...it is only the Apostle Paul who *talks about* going to heaven...”

That means when Paul says we must enter the kingdom after going through “much tribulation,” he is simply saying that if you are a Christian you are going to experience trouble in life. But Paul tells us that “no man should be *moved* by these afflictions” (1 Thes. 3:3). That is, you shouldn’t let tribulations get you all shook up, “for yourselves know” what

1. John was their “companion” in the Tribulation and the kingdom in that he was there with them, “in the Spirit” (v. 10), experiencing those things with them in the visions that God showed him in a virtual reality sort of way.

2. Since “Jacob” is another name for *Israel*, we know that the Tribulation will be the time of *Israel’s* trouble, *not* the time of *our* trouble as members of the Body of Christ.

the Thessalonians knew, “that we are *appointed* thereunto” (v. 3). Paul went on to tell them,

“For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know” (1 Thes. 3:4).

Our adversary *hates* Christians, so he makes sure the Christian life is *filled* with tribulation, over and above the troubles that unbelievers naturally endure as a result of the curse that Adam incurred when he sinned (Job 5:7). But your Christian life will *not* be filled with the Tribulation that will come after the Rapture. You have God’s Word on that through the Apostle Paul!

The Kingdom of Heaven

But if the word *tribulation* in Acts 14:22 can have more than one meaning, then it shouldn’t be thought a thing incredible that the word *kingdom* can have more than one meaning as well. And that means that Paul is not saying there that we will enter the kingdom that Daniel said the Lord will establish someday here on earth. He’s saying that we will enter the kingdom that Paul went on to talk about when he spoke to the Corinthians about the Rapture, saying,

“...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...” (1 Cor. 15:50-52).

Here the apostle is talking about the kingdom of heaven *in heaven*, not the kingdom of heaven on earth. You know, the

one that your body of flesh and blood “cannot inherit” unless God *changes* it so it can live in heaven, a change He plans to make at the Rapture (v. 51 cf. Phil. 3:20,21). That’s the kingdom that Paul is talking about in Acts 14:22. That’s the kingdom we will “enter into” after a lifetime of much tribulation here on earth.

But Paul makes *other* mentions of a kingdom, in places where the word has still other meanings. Speaking of him, we read that when he arrived in Ephesus,

“...he went into the synagogue...disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).

Here that phrase “kingdom of God” has to do with how to *enter* the kingdom of God—that is, *how to get saved*. We know this to be so because that is surely what Paul would have talked about in a synagogue filled with unsaved Hebrews. Isn’t that what you would talk about if you were invited to speak in a synagogue?

The Kingdom and the Gospel

We see more proof that the phrase “the kingdom of God” refers to how to get saved when Paul preached it to some other unsaved Jews in Rome:

“...Paul called the chief of the Jews together...to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:17-23).

When Luke says that Paul *expounded* the kingdom of God, he

went on to explain what he meant by that when he said, “persuading them *concerning Jesus*.” Here the testimony of the kingdom of God obviously involved the good news of the gospel of salvation that centers in the Lord Jesus, just as it had in Ephesus in Acts 19:8.

By the way, have you ever heard the expression, “I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall when that happened?” Well, that’s how I feel when I read what happened that day. I mean, there’s a 12-hour Bible study that I would like to have attended, how about you?



Imagine hearing the Apostle Paul, who learned the Old Testament from the most eminent Bible teacher of that era (Acts 22:3), preach Christ out of the Old Testament Scriptures “from morning till evening!” You’d think that no Hebrew man or woman could walk away unsaved from a session like that. Yet we know that some did, for Luke added, “And some believed the things which were spoken, *and some believed not*” (v. 24). So don’t be discouraged when people walk away from *you* unsaved after you share Christ with them out of the Scriptures.

But all of that means that “the kingdom of God” that Paul

preached in Ephesus and in Rome had to do with *the gospel*, how to *enter* the kingdom of God.

Another Key to the Kingdom

But as we move on to other times that Paul mentions the kingdom of God, we see that this phrase could also involve *more* than just how to *enter* the kingdom. After the apostle spent “two years” in Ephesus (Acts 19:1,10), he said goodbye to the church’s spiritual leaders with these words:

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more” (Acts 20:25).

Now when Paul mentions spending *two years* “preaching the kingdom of God,” do you really think he spent twenty-four months just going over the gospel of salvation, telling them over and over how to *enter* the kingdom?

Some churches do! A lady once told me that that’s all they preached at the church she attended. I can still remember the frustration and exasperation in her voice when she added, “How many times can you get saved?” I knew she hungered for *much more* from God’s Word, for she used to attend the local church that I pastor in addition to my duties here at *Berean Bible Society*.

But let me ask you, when you read the epistle that Paul later wrote to those same Ephesians, does it *sound* like a church that never heard Paul preach anything other than the gospel of salvation? Ephesians has been called *the*

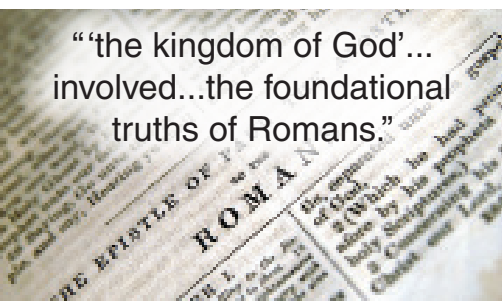
capstone of Pauline revelation, and whatever Paul taught those dear saints when he was with them in Ephesus must have included *a whole lot more* than information about how to enter the kingdom. If it hadn't, they would not have had the spiritual capacity to *receive* the lofty truths found in Ephesians. Paul's ministry in Ephesus must have included all of the *introductory* things we read about in the Book of Romans.

The Foundation of the Kingdom

You see, you're not *ready* to receive the majestic truths expressed in Ephesians until you are thoroughly grounded in the *foundational* truths found in Romans. And we know Paul must have taught those foundational truths to the Ephesians when he was with them because he went on to tell the Ephesian elders,

"...I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God*..." (Acts 20:27).

"the kingdom of God"...
involved...the foundational
truths of Romans."



At the time that Paul was in Ephesus, "all the counsel of God" would have consisted of all the foundational truths found in the Book of Romans—but *not* the lofty truths found in Ephesians that the Lord later revealed to Paul.


Remember, the Lord didn't reveal the revelation of the mystery to the apostle all at once, for around the time he was in Ephesus he wrote, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1). Obviously, there were still things that the Lord needed to reveal to Paul even at that late date, even though He had *begun* revealing things to him *decades earlier*.

But for Paul to be able to write the Ephesians about those capstone truths in an epistle tells us that he must have grounded them in the foundational truths of Romans when he was with them. Two years was more than enough time to establish their hearts in those truths, as he declared "all the counsel of God" to them.

But that means when the Bible says Paul preached "the kingdom of God" in Ephesus for two years, that phrase must have involved *more* than just how to *enter* the kingdom. It had to involve all of the foundational truths of Romans.

And one of those foundational truths is one that we see the next time Paul mentions the kingdom:

"...if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably...*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 14:15-17).

Here "the kingdom of God" refers to... 

(To be continued in Pastor Kurth's upcoming book, *More Rightly Divided Answers To Frequently Asked Questions*, due to be released early next year).

Question Box

“If Solomon was given such great wisdom, why wasn’t he able to use it in his own affairs?”

Solomon is well known for the wisdom he demonstrated when two women both claimed to be the mother of a baby boy. His suggestion that the baby be divided in half with a sword to satisfy both parties revealed which woman was the loving mother and which was a selfish imposter (1 Kings 3:16-28). In addition, the wisdom he displayed in the Book of Proverbs is part of the reason that the books of Job through Ecclesiastes are known as the “wisdom literature” in the Bible. The Queen of Sheba found his wisdom positively *breathtaking* (1 Kings 10:4,5).

But in his own personal life, Solomon displayed a striking *lack* of wisdom when he married “outlandish” pagan women who caused him to sin (1 Kings 11:1-8; Neh. 13:26). In addition, his decision to unwisely tax the people of Israel too heavily planted seeds of discontent in the northern ten tribes, seeds that eventually led them to secede and form their own nation (1 Kings 12). Plus, how unwise do you have to be to choose to have a thousand mothers-in-law? (I can say that because I have a terrific mother-in-law!)

But while Solomon’s wisdom is legendary, God would have had to interfere with his free will to cause him to *implement* his wisdom and use it to govern his affairs. And if God were to force a man in Israel to *walk* in wisdom, how could He justly reward him with “ten cities” to rule in the kingdom of heaven on earth (Luke 19:17), while only giving “five cities” to a man He *didn’t* force to walk in wisdom (v. 19)?

An old saying says, “Your right to swing your fist ends where my nose begins.” Similarly, God’s right to impose His will ends where man’s will begins, something that He decreed to be so in the original creation. You see, He Himself has free will, and He made man in His own image (Gen. 1:27). And while man fell afterwards, we know that he still retains the image of God, for the reason murder is still a capital offense is that “in the image of God made He man” (Gen. 9:6).

What a lesson for us! It’s not how wise you are about the Bible that matters, it’s whether you are *walking* in wisdom that counts with God. Remember, it is our apostle Paul who wrote,

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

"ABOUT *This* QUESTION" (Acts 15:2)



PASTOR WHITEY MYERS
Guest Writer

The fifteenth chapter of Acts opens with a controversy about Paul's gospel which he preaches in the synagogues and cities of Cyprus and Asia Minor on his first apostolic evangelistic missionary journey. Jews from the believing church in Jerusalem argued with Paul and Barnabas having "no small dissension and disputation with them."

Who was involved in this controversy? Paul and Barnabas, the church in Antioch, and certain Jews from the church in Jerusalem. When did the controversy take place? It followed the first recorded missionary journey Paul made among the Gentiles. It took place in Antioch of Syria, and was moved to Jerusalem "about this question" to have the matter settled by the apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church.

Paul had been appointed by the Lord to be the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles. According to Romans 1, three times it is said that the Gentile world had been "given up" by God back in the days of Abraham, and had no apostle until Paul was raised up to be their apostle. They had prophets like Jonah and Nahum, but no apostles. Paul was the apostle to the whole world, Jew and Gentile alike, but especially to the Gentile world (Rom. 11:13). The Gentiles had no other apostle. He was God's "chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15). In Paul's appearance before King Agrippa in Acts 26:18, he said he was sent to the world "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

Barnabas was originally an associate of the Lord's twelve apostles and participated with them in the work of the church in Jerusalem. He was also the one who introduced Saul of Tarsus (Paul) to the apostles, and who later brought Paul from Tarsus to assist in the work in Antioch of Syria. He accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey. He was a citizen of the island of Cyprus and went there with Paul when they began their early ministry.

The church in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 15:4 had been taught by the Lord's disciples (Acts 2:42). Their commission is found in Matthew 10 and is quite clear; they were not to minister to the Gentiles whom God had given up. The twelve disciples, who became apostles, and who were taught by the Lord, were strict observers of the Mosaic law, and were very strict about the law of circumcision. They preached about

the restoration of Israel's lost kingdom, about the restoration of David's throne, and Christ's rule as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. They preached the gospel of circumcision.

According to Acts 15, "certain men" came from the Jerusalem church to the church in Antioch of Syria and taught the people what they had been taught by the apostles in Jerusalem. What they taught stood in contrast to what Paul and Barnabas had taught in the synagogues of Cyprus and Asia Minor and in Antioch. The contrast resulted in "no small" argument about the validity of Paul's gospel.

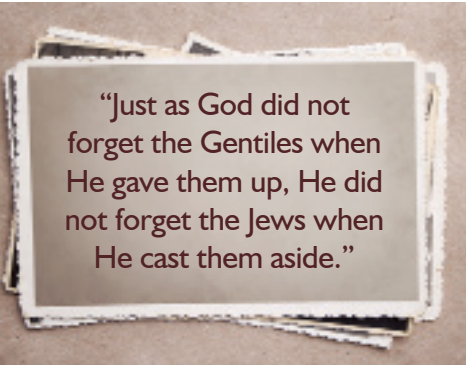
The church in Antioch may have been planted by Jews who fled the persecution in Jerusalem that followed the martyrdom of Stephen. They arrived in Antioch and preached to Jews only (Acts 11:19).

The Jews from Jerusalem argued that it was necessary to obey the Mosaic law in order to be saved, and to be circumcised according to the covenant God made with Abraham, which was later incorporated into the Mosaic law in order to be part of "God's people." Paul did not preach the gospel of circumcision. He preached the gospel of the uncircumcision. Israel was God's "people," but Romans 11:28 says they are not NOW His people. Romans 11 says God cast aside His people for a season and turned His attention to the rest of the world. Just as God did not forget the Gentiles when He gave them up, He did not forget the Jews when He cast them aside. The church Paul calls the Body of Christ, according to Titus 2:14, now became God's "people." We who have received Christ as our Savior are members of the Body of Christ. We are God's people.

The twelve apostles did not know Paul's gospel of uncircumcision because it had never been revealed or taught to them by the Lord. Therefore, even though Paul joined with the apostles after his conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9:27), they could not teach the gospel of uncircumcision to him because they did not know it. Paul says in Galatians 1:11-12, he learned it by direct revelation from the Lord. Paul's gospel did not announce the restoration of Israel's kingdom. The Body of Christ never lost a kingdom God promised to restore. Paul's gospel did not promise a return to the promised land. The Body of Christ never had any earthly promised land. Because the Body of Christ never had a land governed by the Mosaic law, it never had a king to govern it, so Paul's gospel does not announce a coming king to the church. Paul's gospel did not proselyte Gentiles into Judaism but the gospel of circumcision did. Peter's gospel of circumcision proselyted Gentiles.

Acts 15 is about the historical meeting of two different gospels and how the differences were reconciled. It was agreed among them in Antioch that the argument be settled in Jerusalem by the church, which was led by the apostles and elders. The matter was not referred to the apostate Sanhedrin Council. The second chapter of Galatians seems to indicate that the conference held in Jerusalem marks the

first time the church there heard Paul's gospel of uncircumcision that he preached to the Gentiles in Cyprus and Asia. He says he "communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles." The Lord's twelve apostles may have heard about it through the grapevine, but they did not know it. The Lord sent Paul to Jerusalem to explain it to them (Gal. 2:2).



"Just as God did not forget the Gentiles when He gave them up, He did not forget the Jews when He cast them aside."

At this conference Peter related his experience of going to the house of Cornelius. He preached the gospel of circumcision to those gathered because he knew no other gospel. He proselytized those Gentiles, making "no difference" between them and the Jews. The Gentile believers and the Jews believed and practiced the same things. From the days of Abraham any individual Gentile could be saved by believing in Israel's God,

as Ruth the Moabitess and Rahab in Jericho.

It was at this conference that the apostles "perceived" the gospel that had been revealed to Paul, and this perception came with the help of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28). They gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, but they themselves continued going to the Jews as they had been commissioned in Matthew 10. There seems to be no record of them ever abandoning that commission. The "fellowship" of the twelve apostles with Paul and Barnabas seems to be in their service for the same Lord and Savior.

So, the matter was settled. But sad to say, today many do not know about the gospel Paul preached, and they preach a mixture of the two gospels nobody can understand or explain. Though the matter was settled at the Jerusalem conference, the settlement has not been understood, accepted, known about, or believed by many Christians today. Paul's gospel is ignored. When we ask pastors if they know what the mystery is, they don't know. They often do not even know what we are talking about.

Paul's gospel of uncircumcision was a mystery hidden in the mind of God until the Lord met Paul on the Damascus road and began preaching it. See his remarks in Galatians 1:8 and 1 Corinthians 9:16. He told the Ephesians in Acts 20:17-20 he had made it fully known to them. Oh, how we need preachers today who will open their Bibles and make the gospel of God's amazing grace fully known, here at home and around the world. It should not still be a mystery. May God's indwelling Spirit make us who know the truth faithful and uncompromising publishers of the greatest news the world has ever heard, and so desperately needs to hear today.



NEWS

Transformed by Grace

NOW REACHING MORE HOMES!

Transformed by Grace is now available to more than 20 million more households by our recent purchase of time on ION Plus.

- We have been airing on ION previously using the .4 ION network channel Mondays at 8:00 am ET. If you have been watching on .4, you can still catch us just next door at the .3 ION channel, same day new time Mondays at 10:30 am ET. We now reach 20 million more homes on cable and ATT U-verse television services that carry the ION Plus channel.
- These cable services are scattered across the nation. Check with your local cable company to see if they offer “ION Plus,” the lifestyle station of the ION Network.
- You can also check by using the website www.ionplustv.com. This site allows you to search availability by zip code. Once you are on the site, click on the words “Find ION Plus” on the green bar across the page on the far right of the screen.
- We hope you will tune in and watch! On Mondays, you can find us at 10:30 am ET on ION Plus – over the air on your local ION Stations position .3 following *Through the Bible with Les Feldick*.

We are available to watch over the air in over 50 television markets (see the list of stations on the *Berean Bible Society* website for full list, in some places, on cable and satellite.

Sunday 9:00 am in Chicago on WJYS

Monday 10:30 am ET: ION Plus

Monday 6:00 pm ET:

- DirectTV: Channel 376
- Dish Network: Channel 267
- Glory Star Satellite System: Channel 117

Roku and Apple TV—BBS Network 24/7 streaming channel



MEDITATION

(Adapted from Pastor Sadler's commentary
on *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*)

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28).

What is the biblical solution to the sin of stealing? Work! “Let him that stole steal no more.” Notice that the apostle doesn’t end the sentence here, as we are going to see. Simply telling someone to stop stealing is like telling an alcoholic to quit drinking. He may muster enough willpower to abstain from the bottle for a week before finding himself

back on another binge. That’s why the campaign a few years ago to “Just Say No” to drugs was such a miserable failure. You see, God’s principle of *replacement* must be applied if there is to be a meaningful change in behavior.

In the case of stealing, God instructs those who struggle with this sin to “let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good.” This serves a twofold purpose: First, his time is *occupied*, drastically diminishing the opportunity to steal. The old adage “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop” is truer than we may think. Second, if he earns an honest living, he can purchase what he needs or wants, plus have the satisfaction of supplying for his family (2 Thes. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8).

This would end the abuse of welfare in our country as we know it. Many able-bodied people receive assistance from state and federal agencies (a form of stealing in and of itself) who should be earning a living. Usually, they end up wallowing in the mire of self-pity and wonder why they suffer from depression. A full day’s work is the remedy for this ill. It gives a sense of purpose, worth, and accomplishment. Now, please don’t misunderstand me, I believe there are many handicapped, indigent, and elderly who *legitimately* need this help. Even in Old Testament times, God made provisions for those who had various maladies. Often they were placed by the temple gate where those who passed by could give them a gift (Deut. 15:11 cf. Acts 3:1-7)....

Before we leave this subject, Paul gives another incentive to those who are given to stealing. He adds, “that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). Stealing is a selfish act! Giving a helping hand to someone is an unselfish act. In other words, holding down a steady job provides the means and the opportunity to share generously with others in need.

—Pastor Paul M. Sadler



ENGLAND

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ADAM'S APPLE

PASTOR KEVIN J. **SADLER**

BBS President

This year marks the 18th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In September 2015, my family and I visited the United 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The memorial honors the passengers and crew of Flight 93 who, on September 11, 2001, stopped terrorists from reaching their intended target—the U.S. Capitol Building—by fighting the hijackers. It was a sobering place to visit. The design of the memorial shows the flight path of the plane to where it crashed. Along a walkway near the crash site, a Wall of Names, forty inscribed, white marble panels, honors the passengers and crew.

One couple on the plane, Donald and Jean Peterson, were traveling to *Yosemite National Park* for a vacation. When they arrived at the airport in Newark, New Jersey early that fateful morning, they were offered the opportunity to take United Flight 93 instead of their later scheduled flight, and they accepted. United 93 crashed in that Pennsylvania

field at around 550 miles per hour, upside down and nose first. The force of the impact caused nearly everything to disintegrate. One thing recovered *intact* at the crash site, however, was Don Peterson's personal Bible, which included a handwritten list of men for whom he was praying.

It is difficult to imagine the horror of those forty people's last minutes and the grief felt by their family members. Flight 93 was a tragedy resulting from an abominable act of terrorism, and there are abominable events that take place in this world constantly. After God created all things, He pronounced His creation "very good" (Gen. 1:31). But things are not and have not been "very good" in this world. What happened? A commonly asked question is, "If God is a God of love, why does He allow suffering in the world?" The simple answer to this question is found in Genesis 3.

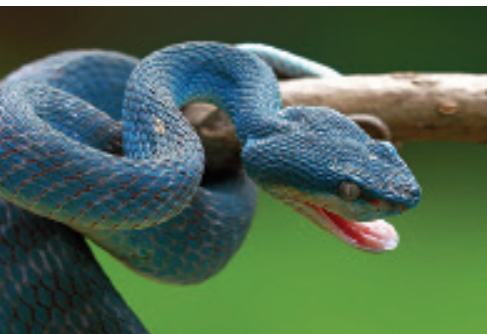
THAT OLD SERPENT

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field

which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1).

“The serpent” is the devil. The Book of Revelation calls him “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). God cast Satan down because of his pride (Ezek. 28:15-17). After his fall, he attacked man, who was made in the image of God, seeking to cause man to fall too.

Satan is a deceiver. He “deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). In the beginning, he deceived Eve (1 Tim. 2:14). Since then, he has deceived mankind for thousands of years, and he continues to do so to this day. But the one he has deceived the most is *himself*. He believes in all seriousness that he “will exalt [his] throne above the stars of God” and “be like the most High” (Isa. 14:13-14). This will never happen.



For those who question how Satan was able to talk through a serpent, we should remember that, on one occasion in Israel’s history, God allowed a donkey to speak, Balaam’s donkey (Num. 22:28). In the Gospel records, we learn how demons have the

ability to inhabit human bodies *and* the bodies of animals, such as pigs (Luke 8:33). In the Garden of Eden, Satan chose to indwell the cunning serpent as the vehicle most suitable for his evil purposes.

Satan, through the serpent, approached Eve. He began his conversation with her by questioning God. Neither she nor Adam had ever imagined that it was possible for a creature to question God’s Word: “Yea, hath God said...?” In other words, “Did God really say such a thing as that, Eve?” Or, “Has God really said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” In the question was a mocking disdain for Eve’s naïve acceptance of God’s clear command.

The suggestion that God could be questioned was accompanied by the insinuation that God was not as kind as they had thought. “He has not allowed you to eat the fruit of *every* tree? Why do you suppose He is withholding something from you? If God is really kind, wouldn’t He be more generous?”

For Adam’s and Eve’s own good, there was a prohibition set by God. But Satan put a seed of doubt in Eve’s mind as to God’s goodness. Satan’s tactics haven’t changed. He still tempts people to question the Word of God and the goodness of God. His technique is to try to make us have negative thoughts about God.

ADDING AND SUBTRACTING

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God

hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Gen. 3:2-3).

Eve’s response to the serpent’s insinuations was to assure him that he was wrong. She correctly replied to the serpent that God had given them permission to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. There was only one tree in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:9) that was forbidden (vv. 16-17).

Yet in her attempt to correct the serpent’s implication, she revealed that his question had an effect on her. In her reply, she added to, subtracted from, and changed God’s actual words. Her response made God out to be less generous and more demanding than He really was.

Eve made God less generous by subtracting from God’s Word, saying, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden” (3:2), when God had said, “Of *every* tree of the garden thou mayest *freely* eat” (2:16).

Eve made God more demanding by adding to God’s Word, saying, “But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it...*” (3:3). God had not forbidden them from touching the fruit; He had only forbidden them from *eating* it: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not *eat* of it: for in the day that thou *eatest* thereof thou shalt surely die” (2:17).

Eve changed the consequences of disobedience: “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, *lest ye die*” (3:3). “Lest ye die” suggests the *possibility* of dying,

when God had said, “for in the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*” (2:17).

**“The devil’s deceptions
are all the more
effective when they
are half-truths....”**


$$\frac{1}{2} \text{ TRUTH} + \frac{1}{2} \text{ TRUTH} = \text{LIE}$$

Eve subtracted from God’s Word, added to God’s Word, and changed God’s Word. People haven’t changed! This has been done throughout history and is why there are warnings in God’s Word about these very things (See Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5,6; Rev. 22:18-19).

THE FIRST LIE

“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5).

With Eve (and Adam) now questioning God’s authority, goodness, and His Word, Satan “went in for the kill,” you could say. “Ye shall not surely die” was a lie, the first lie. “Ye shall not surely die” was a direct contradiction to God’s “thou shalt surely die.” At that point, the devil didn’t just alter or question God’s Word, he blatantly contradicted it and boldly called God a liar. But it is Satan who “is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Satan flatly contradicted God about the consequence of death for disobeying His command. Satan attempted to make what God said beside the point. He suggested that the reason for God's warning about the fruit was that God feared they would learn too much and "be as gods, knowing good and evil."

In his subtle trickery, the devil mixed in a bit of truth with his lie. He still does this to make us fall and sin. He told Adam and Eve that they would know good and evil. This was true; after their sin they did know good and evil, *but not as gods*. The devil's deceptions are all the more effective when they are half-truths or distorted truth. This reminds us that we need always to be Bereans!

"Ye shall be as gods"—the desire to "be like the most High"—was the same temptation that had led to Satan's own fall. This temptation proved irresistible to Adam and Eve and resulted in their fall as well. By the influence of darkness, there are world religions that teach that one can become a god. Secular humanism perpetuates this lie, holding out that man is god and the ultimate authority. In Satan's temptation, we see the exalting of man and the belittling of God. Satan suggested that God could lie and that God could fear something, when God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and He has no fears.

Adam and Eve were also enticed by higher knowledge. This satanic deception continues through New Age teachings, which promise enlightenment and higher consciousness. In

this, we find how Satan targets the mind. He wants to change the way we think. Our Apostle



Paul wrote, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). Adam and Eve had a simple command, but the devil deceived them and drew them away from God. Likewise, the devil desires to confuse and complicate our thinking to draw us away from the simplicity that is in Christ.

THE FALL

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:6-8).

Having allowed her mind and emotions to be influenced by the satanic suggestions of doubt and pride, Eve gazed at the forbidden tree. Its fruit seemed more and more delectable. She lingered at the place of temptation. We get into trouble in life when we do the same.

The temptation appealed to the body, soul, and spirit. To Eve, the tree was “good for food” (appealing to the physical, *the body*), “pleasant to the eyes” (appealing to the emotions, *the soul*), and “a tree to be desired to make one wise” (appealing to one’s knowledge and spiritual insight, *the spirit*).

Instead of finding strength in God’s Word by faith and obedience, Eve questioned, added, subtracted, changed, doubted, and rejected God’s Word in favor of the temptation to the body, soul, and spirit. It all led her to grab a piece of fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and to eat it.



Then she gave it to Adam who was standing there “with her,” saying nothing. Don’t think that Adam was off on the other side of the garden pruning a pear tree. He was beside Eve the whole time. However, while Eve was completely deceived, “Adam was

not deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14). Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. He was fully aware that he was willfully defying God and His direct command. Adam’s sin was deliberate, wicked, inexcusable rebellion.

Satan said that they would know good and evil if they partook of that tree, and at that moment, they most definitely knew good *and evil* by the conscience which they now had. Adam and Eve had known only good in their innocence, but now they knew evil as well. By Adam’s sin, evil and the evil consequences of sin entered this world.

Adam and Eve knew good and evil, and just as quickly, they knew the serpent had lied to them. They didn’t become “as gods”; instead, they were filled with guilt, shame, and embarrassment. They became acutely aware of their nakedness. Sin and disobedience to God does not lift us up; it pulls us down!

In their shame, Adam and Eve fashioned crude girdles of fig leaves and covered themselves. Fig leaves could never cover or hide the guilt of their sin against God. The aprons of fig leaves are emblematic of man’s ongoing attempt to save himself by a bloodless religion of good works. People still try to hide their lost condition by their own efforts, convincing themselves that they have done enough good to cover their sinful hearts and that God will merely overlook their sins. However, sin can never escape the eye of God’s righteous judgment, no matter what we fashion or do to try to gain His favor.

We need “the garments of salvation...the robe of righteousness” (Isa. 61:10), which only God can provide. God clothed Adam and Eve with “coats of skin” which came from shedding the blood of an animal (Gen. 3:21). This is a type, a foreshadowing of animal sacrifice under the law and, later, the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and the remission of sins requires the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22). The Lord Jesus Christ willingly paid the price for our sins and shed His blood at the Cross that we would have the forgiveness of all our sins and that God would clothe us in His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

No longer did Adam and Eve enjoy the fellowship with God for which they had originally been created. Instead, they “hid themselves” (Gen. 3:8). God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and instead of encountering Adam waiting expectantly for a time of fellowship, he and Eve were hiding in the trees. When they hid from the Lord’s presence, it teaches us that sin brings separation in our relationship with Him. It is a futile endeavor to try to run and hide from God.

As God said, death entered the world because of sin, both physical and spiritual death (Rom. 5:12). As a result of Adam’s sin, Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the earth were cursed by God (Gen. 3:14-19). Thus began the downhill slide of the creation. It has continued since that time to this day. This is why things are not “very good” in this world. As a result of the fall,

“we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:22).



Every bad thing that ever happens in this world is rooted in the events of Genesis 3, in the fall of man, the day sin entered into the human experience. After this event in the biblical account, we find death, anger, envy, murder, deception, betrayal, pain, suffering, sorrow, bitterness, theft, covetousness, and so on. “Someone has said, ‘The wreckage of earth and a million billion graves attest that God is true and Satan is the liar.’”¹

In this account lies the simple explanation of all the suffering that has plagued the human race. It is because this is a broken, sin-cursed world. The suffering we endure in this life is difficult, but we must remember that this world is not our home. We have hope in Christ!

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

1. William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1995), pp. 35-36, e-Sword 11.1.0.



THE GUILT IS GONE!



“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Job asked the question “how should man be just with God” (Job 9:2). In 1515 an Augustine monk studying the Book of Romans saw Romans 1:17: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.” This was the beginning of change in Martin Luther’s life and the beginning of the reformation.

Justification means that upon the basis of the Justice of God, man can be justified. How can a man be just before God? “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Justification is the gracious act of God declaring righteous the sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note the following:

1. Justification is an act, not a process. No one believer is more justified in God’s sight than any other. Justification has to do with standing not state—with position not condition. Upon believing, a person is instantly given a righteous standing before God.

2. Justification is unchanging. Once God declares that we are righteous through the Lord Jesus Christ, the sin question is settled once and for all.

3. Justification is not the same as regeneration. Regeneration gives a new life. Justification gives a new standing before God.

4. Justification is not the same as forgiveness. If I am forgiven, I am still guilty. Being justified means I am declared not guilty.

5. Justification is not the same as pardoned. A pardoned criminal is still a criminal. Justification removes the guilt.

—John Baker

(This article first appeared in *Amazing Grace*, and we share it with you by permission from our friends at *Grace Gospel Publishers*, Denver, Colorado.)



BBS Letter Excerpts

From Illinois:

"We have been enjoying Pastor Kevin's messages on DVD. We watch one every Sunday morning until we get a new pastor...Thank you for making them for us to use."

From our Inbox:

"I have embraced Pauline authority. What do I do now? There is no grace church where I live. I sometimes wonder if God is telling me to start something here. There is no church in my community that I know of that will accept this teaching. I have no supporting church from which to work. What should I do?" (Starting something sounds like a good plan. Let us know how we can help. -Ed.).

From Germany:

"I want to sign up to receive an email notification when the *Searchlight* is posted. Sometimes, I use your studies for my own Bible teachings. We have a little, we call it 'Bibels-tunde,' or *Bible study* in English, at my house. Rightly divided of course!"

From Texas:

"My brother-in-law...died...For the past several years he has been searching for the truth. He asked me a lot of questions, most of which I could answer...When I couldn't answer, or my answers were inadequate, I would send him copies of *Two Minutes*. They were always spot on and so much clearer than my words. They were indispensable in his understanding of the Word, and mine."

From our Inbox:

"That gospel tract [*Gambling With Eternity*] will be perfect! In addition to just having something like that available to give out, I was wanting something to take with me to hand out when I'm in Vegas. Thanks!"

From Pennsylvania:

"I truly appreciate all the help you have given me. I try not to be angry with others, yet at times I'm frustrated because, thanks to Lordship Salvation, I was borderline suicidal last spring. It really tore me apart. I found your site and a few others who really have changed my understanding of God's love and forgiveness. It has changed my life and my relationship with Christ. Now I try to help others understand and come to true faith by trusting in Christ alone."

From our Inbox:

"I had been struggling with the flesh/sin problem for quite some time, and I was not able to get the victory over it in my past church. I was confused and troubled... determined to find the answer. So I began to do my own study and research on various doctrines of the Bible on the web, and...I found Paul Sadler's *What It Means to Be a Grace Believer* on YouTube. It...opened my understanding of the Bible....It is awesome to know my place in the Bible, and how to rightly divide the Bible has made more sense to me now than all the 20+ years I have been reading the Bible."

From North Carolina:

"I have been receiving the *Berean Searchlight* for nearly a year now and greatly look forward to each new issue. I am saving each issue as a reference to aid my teaching of Sunday school."

From Alabama:

"Pastor Kevin, Thank you for your humble boldness and steady stance on the Word of truth, rightly divided. The *Berean Searchlight* and the BBS app are a part of my go-to arsenal for spiritual guidance and sharpening. May God richly bless you and your family with grace and peace."

From Nova Scotia:

"I just finished your article 'A Guide to Godliness,' and...WOW WOW WOW, what a fantastic piece of writing. I understand things a lot better than I did before and appreciate *so much* you penning this for us out here."

From Ontario:

"I'm reading this now ['A Guide to Godliness'] and as I'm reading the peace of Christ is reigning in my soul. His words and your commentary are a blessing."

From our Inbox:

"Thank you so very much for taking the time to answer! I have read the article you attached...I came across an old sermon by Pastor Stam...He explained it as you did...I totally get it now...I am completely convinced now and am happy to have it settled in my heart...You guys have an amazing ministry!" (It's our privilege to carry on the ministry that Pastor C. R. Stam began nearly 80 years ago. —Ed.).

From the Fiji Islands:

"I humbly seek your in-depth sharing on the Bible verses in Matthew 6:25-33. I wish to share the verse with my church members this week."

From California:

"Thank you for this *More Minutes With the Bible* article ['The Confession of Sins,' by Ken Lawson]. Love it!"

From our Inbox:

"Why do you say the gift of tongues has been withdrawn? Even our Apostle Paul says to NOT deny speaking in tongues, but rather seek to prophesy so the entire body would be edified! I normally share your messages, I will not share this one!"

From Montana:

"We want to tell you all how helpful the *Transformed By Grace* TV program and the *Searchlight* have been to us. Our understanding of Scripture has helped our faith grow, as we are finally receiving correct instruction."

From North Carolina:

"Holy cow, Pastor Ricky! That... reading gave me chills. Must have glossed over that one in my studies! I love how you then turned these harsh verses into sound advice: Go and Tell. God's desire is that none should perish, and it is our mission to plant the seeds, or water seeds planted by others and then leave the rest to God! Thanks for the blessing today."

From Washington:

"I don't have long to live, but I need to place one more order so I can leave some things with friends before I go home." (What a touching, thoughtful, and wonderful idea. —Ed.).

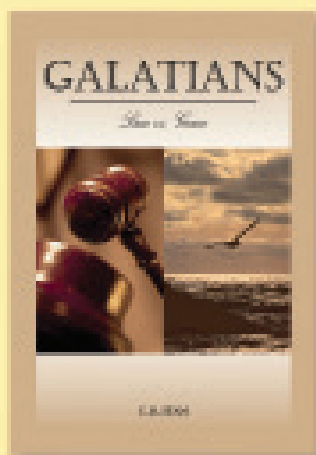
Be a Berean

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



*"Who hath delivered us
from the power of darkness, and hath translated us
into the KINGDOM of HIS DEAR SON:"*
-Colossians 1:13

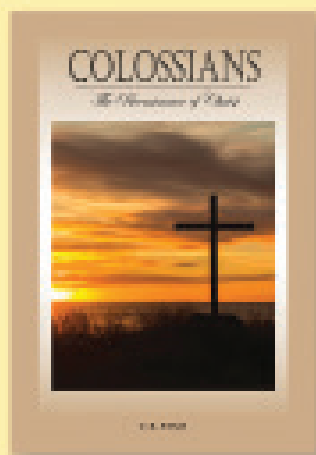
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News *and* Announcements

England Bible Conference: If you've been waiting your whole life for an excuse to cross the pond and visit the UK, what better reason to go than to combine your trip with a grace conference? Our new friend Marcus Emerson is seeking to establish a grace work in Alcester, and has invited your editor to join Karl R. Coates and Barry Pumphrey at a conference at the Arrow Village Hall. Alcester is just 8 miles from Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon, so you won't have to go far to start your sight-seeing if you are a fan of the bard. Just be sure to email Marcus asap at gga-uk@outlook.com to let him know you plan to attend this October 12-13 event.

Tennessee Bible Conference: *Grace Bible Church* of Goodlettsville would like to extend an invitation to grace believers everywhere to join them in welcoming BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler to their October 18-20 special meetings. If you have yet to experience the love and hospitality of these dear saints, your editor can vouch for both, and their hunger for God's Word will make you feel right at home as well. But don't delay in making your plans to visit this Nashville area conference. The first day of autumn is just around the corner, so contact Duane Hatfield today to let him know you're coming: (937) 726-0168, or info@gracebibletn.org.

The Fall Conference of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* will be held October 12,13 at the *Fountain Park Methodist Church* in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Speakers Kevin Sadler, Andy Kern, Aaron Harris, Justin Lynn, Jeff Bertram, and Wes Barteck will focus on the theme of *The Rapture*. So if you want to learn more about your eventual exit from Planet Earth, contact Wes Barteck at bereanbiblefellow68@gmail.com.

More Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions is the title of your editor's next book. The writing is finished, and I'm reviewing it to ensure its accuracy and readability. After that comes the painstaking task of proofreading and editing, and the typesetting that must also be done before we can send it to the printers. We appreciate your prayers as we try to make this new work available early next year.

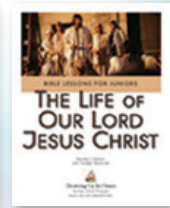
UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Western Wisconsin Special Meetings, September 6-7, Lancaster, WI

BBS Regional Conference, September 20-22, Kalispell, MT

England Special Meetings, October 12-13, Alcester, UK

Middle Tennessee Bible Conference, October 18-20, Goodlettsville, TN



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