

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2020



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This month’s cover features the Mykines Hólmur Lighthouse, Faroe Islands.

The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand and enjoy the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), to energize the Christian life, and to encourage the local church.

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

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The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), January 2020. Vol. 80, Number 10.

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



A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you ponder things you might do in 2020, consider taking a trip of a lifetime to Greece with BBS "In the Footsteps of Paul." In 2017, I had the opportunity to go to Greece to visit the places our Apostle went as he took the gospel of the grace of God to the world. I will never forget it. It wasn't only the places that stayed with me, but also the distances between them. As we drove mile after mile, Paul's heart to reach lost souls affected me deeply.

On the tour, we will be visiting Crete, Ephesus, Corinth, Athens (Mars Hill and the Acropolis), Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi, and Neapolis. Each of these places is significant in the ministry of Paul. You will not read the Book of Acts and Paul's epistles the same after you've been there.

Recently, I was asked what my three favorite places were in Greece. My response was the river in Philippi, Mars Hill, and Corinth. Corinth is spectacular. The ruins there are extensive, and you get a feel for what it was like in Paul's day. Seeing the bema, the Erastus stone, and evidence of the Jewish synagogue are very encouraging to one's faith. One of the goals of BBS is "to energize the Christian life." Tours like this one definitely accomplish this goal.

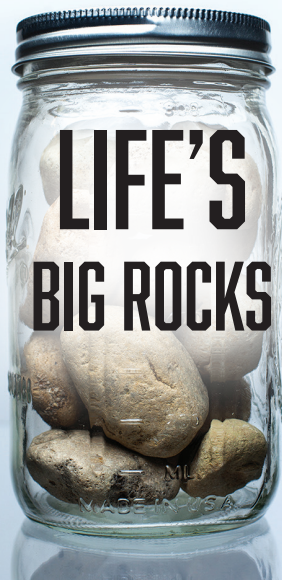
The trip is an educational tour. Between traveling and touring the sites, each day begins around eight in the morning and goes until five or six o'clock in the evening. There is a fair amount of walking involved. The itinerary includes a 3-day cruise to see Ephesus, Patmos, and Crete. We will have devotions on the bus each morning that we drive to a location. There will also be short Bible studies at the biblical sites. Pastor John Fredericksen and I are the tour leaders, and we will be sharing from God's Word at these times.

The tour will be September 16-26, 2020. The price is \$3699 per person (based on double occupancy in the hotels), and covers roundtrip airfare from New York/JFK. Also included are three nights aboard the cruise ship, six nights lodging at four-star hotels, breakfast and dinner daily at the hotel, and all meals on the cruise. Reservations are due by May 11, 2020.

To receive a brochure, please contact BBS at 262-255-4750 or berean@bereanbiblesociety.org, or you can access the brochure directly from our website at bereanbiblesociety.org/greece-tour/. To make a reservation, please contact David Schaeffer at Pilgrim Tours: dschaeffer@pilgrimtours.com or 484-772-3403. I hope you will join us!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Kevin Sadler, President



“One day [an] expert was speaking to a group of business students and... he said, ‘Okay, time for a quiz.’ Then he pulled out a one gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar.

“When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, ‘Is this jar full?’ Everyone in the class said, ‘Yes.’ Then he said, ‘Really?’ He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks.

“Then he smiled and asked the group once more, ‘Is the jar full?’ By this time the class was onto him. ‘Probably not,’ one of them answered. ‘Good!’ he replied. And he reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, ‘Is this jar full?’

“‘No!’ the class shouted. Once again he said, ‘Good!’ Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the class and asked, ‘What is the point of this illustration?’

“One eager [student] raised his hand and said, ‘The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!’ ‘No,’ the speaker replied, ‘that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.’”¹

As you look ahead into this new year, what are the big rocks of your life? What are your priorities?

Many make New Year’s resolutions. Most resolutions are ways to improve health, lifestyle, diet, or finances. But what about our walk with the Lord? Do we have the priorities of the Apostle Paul?

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. 3:10).

Will we make it a priority this year to put the Lord first and to know Him more—each day drawing nearer to our Savior, spending time with Him in prayer, growing in His Word rightly divided, and sharing Him with others? We need to put these “big rocks” in our lives first or we’ll never get them in at all.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

1. Stephen R. Covey, accessed November 30, 2019, http://www.appleseeds.org/Big-Rocks_Covey.htm.



Should Christians FAST?

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

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor

A professional dietician was giving a lecture to a group of people one day about how to eat a more healthy diet. She began by saying, “The food we eat is *so bad* for us, it can cause pain and suffering *years* down the road. Processed foods are full of preservatives and chemicals. Our meat is full of hormones and steroids. Not to mention the trouble that sugary desserts can cause.” Then she paused and asked, “Does anyone know which dessert can cause you the *most* pain and suffering years down the road?” There was a moment of silence, until one old man in the back answered, “Wedding cake.”

Well, our subject in this chapter isn't *eating*, it's *fasting*. Fasting means to *abstain* from eating for a period of time. You fast every night—that is, unless you are one of those people who like to get up to raid the fridge for a midnight snack, a favorite habit of mine. I say if we weren't meant

to have midnight snacks, why is there a light in the refrigerator?

But if you *don't* raid the refrigerator at night, then you *fast* all night, and *break* your fast when you eat your morning meal. That's why the first meal of the day is *called* “break-fast.”

But while most people fast at night, some people choose to fast during the daytime, and sometimes for many days on end. And they fast for a variety of different reasons. Some fast for health reasons, saying that it cleanses the body of toxins. Others fast to try to lose weight, while still others fast because they say it helps them think more clearly.

But many *religions* tell people to fast as part of how they want you to worship God. And the reason many *Christians* fast is that fasting is mentioned in the Bible. So we want to do a study of fasting in the Scriptures, to see who fasted, and why they fasted, to determine if it's something we

should do as members of the Body of Christ living in the dispensation of grace.

The Bible's First Fasters

The first time anyone fasted in the Bible is in Judges 20:26, where we read,

“Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.”

Now since this is the first reference to fasting in the Bible, you would think it would explain *why* God's people were fasting—but it doesn't. All it says is that they started doing it.

However, we do have a *clue* as to why people fasted in the Bible when we notice that fasting there is associated with *weeping*. People often fast when they are sorrowful simply because they have no appetite. And this connection between fasting and weeping, and the sorrow and sadness that *causes* weeping, is a connection that can be seen throughout the Bible.

But there has to be more to fasting than just sadness and weeping, for in this particular case, after saying that they fasted, the passage goes on to say,

“And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

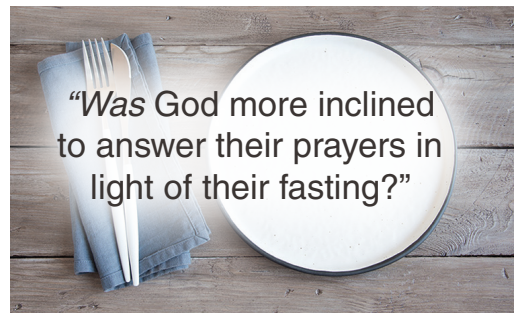
“And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle

against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand” (Judges 20:27,28).

As you can see, God's people were fasting here because they had a decision to make—a very *big* decision. They had to decide whether or not to go to war with one of their own tribes. So they did what God's people should *always* do before making a big decision. They bowed their heads to pray about it. And they decided to *fast* while praying.

Fasting and Praying

Now while we're not told *why* they decided to fast while they prayed, it would seem to be because they wanted to show God how *serious* they were about their prayers, in the hopes that He would be more inclined to *answer* their prayers. This is the reason many Christians fast today.



So now we have to ask if it worked. *Was* God more inclined to answer their prayers in light of their fasting? In this particular case, it would seem that He was, for God answered them as soon as Phinehas finished leading them in prayer.

But if you think about it, there might have been *other* factors involved in God's decision to answer their prayers. So before we can conclude that their fasting influenced God, we have to look at some *other* examples of fasting in Scripture, like the one in 1 Samuel 7:2-10:

"...and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. And Samuel spake...saying, If ye...put away the strange gods...He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel *did* put away Baalim and Ashtaroth...And Samuel said...I will pray for you...And they...fasted on that day...and the LORD heard him. And...thundered...upon the Philistines...and they were smitten..."

Here again we see fasting associated with sadness, or *lamenting*, and with prayer. But here we also see that the people of Israel didn't just fast and pray, *they also got right with God*. They quit worshipping the false gods of the heathen, and *then* God answered their prayers. So if we are going to conclude that God is more inclined to answer prayers *today* if we fast, we'd *also* have to conclude that this is only true *if we are living in obedience to God*.

Fasting and Obedience

Now we know that God *was* more inclined to answer prayer if His people obeyed Him *under His program for Israel*, for the psalmist remarked,

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18).

This of course implies that under the law God *did* hear the prayers of His people if they *put away* iniquity and were obedient to His Word instead.

And if you want to know how *serious* God was about only answering the prayers of His people under the law if they were good, look what Nathan said to David after he sinned with Bathsheba:

"Nathan said unto David... because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die...David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and... lay all night upon the earth...And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died" (2 Sam. 12:13-18).

David had disobeyed God's words in the 10 commandments, and had chosen to commit adultery and murder. So it didn't matter if he fasted and prayed. God did not answer his prayers, for he had to be chastened for his sins.

But grace believers know that this is *not* true today. God doesn't chastise us with physical chastening in the dispensation of grace, as we'll see in our next chapter. And our apostle Paul never says that God won't hear our prayers if we regard iniquity in our hearts. Thus we know that it is incompatible with grace to think that God will be more inclined to answer our prayers if we obey Him. And this would *also* suggest that it is incompatible with grace to think God will be more inclined to answer our prayers if we fast.

Other Considerations

But there were also *other* factors that God considered when it came to deciding whether to answer prayers under the law. Like the one He considered when His people in Israel were leaving captivity in Babylon and needed to know the safest route to take back to the promised land. When that need arose, Ezra wrote,

“...I proclaimed a fast...that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance...So we fasted and besought our God for this: and He was intreated of us” (Ezra 8:21-23).

When it says that God was “intreated” of His people, that means He answered their prayer and directed them toward the safest route back to Israel. So again it’s tempting to think that He answered because they fasted while they prayed.



But here’s the thing about that: *it was the will of God* for them to return to Israel. So in praying for guidance in returning to the land, they were praying for the will of God to be done.

So now you might be thinking that if *we* fast and pray for things

that are in accord with God’s will that we too can expect Him to answer our prayers. But what’s God’s will for today? Didn’t Paul make His will clear when he wrote,

“...God...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3,4).

But haven’t you ever prayed that someone would get saved, and they didn’t? Haven’t you ever prayed that someone would come unto the knowledge of the truth of the special revelation that was given to the Apostle Paul, and it didn’t come to pass? Well, in light of Ezra’s example, you might be thinking that if you had *fasted* and prayed, the outcome would have been different.

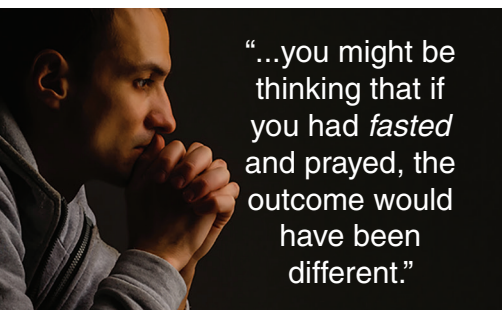
Fasting and the Will of God

But here’s the thing about *that*: the people of Israel had a *covenant* with God, a covenant that said that if they were bad, God would drive them out of the land, but if they repented, He would gather them back into it. *And they could hold God to that promise* when they prayed, as we see Nehemiah doing in Nehemiah 1:4-9:

“I...wept, and mourned...and fasted, and prayed...I beseech Thee, O LORD God...the...God...that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments... Remember, I beseech Thee, the word that Thou commandedst Thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto Me, and keep My commandments...yet will I gather

them...and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen....”

Here we see Nehemiah reminding God that He had *promised* to release them from captivity and bring them back into the land if they repented and turned back to Him. We see Daniel doing something similar in Daniel 9:3-19. And so we know that God didn't just answer their prayers because they fasted, but because they were holding Him to His promise, and God always keeps His word.



“...you might be thinking that if you had *fasted* and prayed, the outcome would have been different.”

But under grace, we don't have a promise like that, for we don't have a covenant like that! So yes, it's God's will for men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth, just as much as it was God's will for the Jews to return to their land. But God never *promised* that all men would be saved if we pray and turn from our sins back to Him. And He never promised they would come to a knowledge of the truth, even if we fast.

And He never promised to release you from whatever situation in life that you feel has you in captivity either. Maybe you feel as if you're imprisoned in a bad marriage, or a captive to poor health, or to some other adverse

situation in life. In such cases, you can fast all you want, but you can't remind God of any covenant He made with you promising to *deliver* you from the captivity of your difficult circumstances. Under grace, God promises that His grace is “sufficient” to help you *endure* the captivities of life, as opposed to promising to deliver you from them (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Why God Never Promised You a Rose Garden

Now the reason for this difference in God's programs for Israel and for us is that God has different *purposes* for us under grace than He had for the people of Israel under the law. We see one of His purposes for Israel in the events described in Esther 3:6, where we again find God's people fasting:

“Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom...”

“And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and *fasting*, and weeping, and wailing” (Esther 4:3).

Now if you know your Bible, you know that God honored their prayers and fasting and didn't let Haman exterminate His people. And if you think it through, you know why. It was because one of God's purposes for the people of Israel was *to provide the world with a Savior*. So if Haman had succeeded in his genocidal plot, that purpose could not have been realized, for the Lord Jesus Christ would never have been born.

But as I'm sure I don't have to tell you, God's purpose for us is quite different! Today, God is not trying to produce a Savior, He's trying to produce a people who will glorify Him in the eyes of the world (Phil. 1:11).

Glory to God in the Highest

Of course, that was also one of His purposes with the people of Israel. He wanted to use them to glorify Himself in the eyes of the world just as He uses us today. But with them, He accomplished that purpose by *delivering* them from their captivity in Babylon, and from their physical illnesses, and all of the other things that held them captive, deliverances that He faithfully gave them when they returned to Him. But today He's glorifying Himself in a much *greater* way by sustaining you *in* all those things, rather than delivering you out of them. In fact, we have God's word that "in" things like that we are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:35-37), not *out* of them!

Now if you think it glorifies God more to *deliver* people from their adversities than to sustain them, I would respectfully submit that you don't know much about the nature of men! Let me give you an example of what I mean.

When your child was young and screamed that he wanted something, what was the easier thing to do: give him what he was crying for, or teach him how to be content without it? Giving him what he was screaming for was easier, of course. But while it was harder to teach him to be content

without it, it was the right thing to do, and it gave you more glory as a parent.



And the same is true when it comes to how God deals with us. Due to the selfishness of men, it's *way* harder to make a man content in the midst of his difficult circumstances than it is to deliver him *from* his difficult circumstances. But it glorifies God more to do what's harder than what's easier.

With that in mind, aren't you thankful for the privilege of suffering so that God can get glory, as others see the power of His sustaining grace working in your life? If not, you may want to begin to thank Him for this privilege, for doing so will give you a whole new perspective in regard to your sufferings, and make them much easier to bear, knowing you are suffering *for His glory*.

Fasting and Religion

Now as we come to our next Bible example of fasting, we see evidence that God's people in Israel were wrong to expect that fasting would *guarantee* that God would answer their prayers. God told Isaiah the prophet,

"...shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob

their sins...They seek Me...as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God...they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure" (Isa. 58:1-3).

Now the reason God had to tell His prophet to remind Israel of their sins here was that they were fasting, and so they didn't think of themselves as sinful! They thought they were a people who "did righteousness, and forsook *not* the ordinance of their God."

When it says they took delight in approaching to God, that's talking about *their religion*. Their God-given religion was the means by which they had the right to approach their God. They *loved* their religion, and they loved *practicing* their religion by doing things like fasting. They *delighted* in it! But they'd forsaken the God who *gave them* their religion, and were living in sin and disobedience to Him, thinking that delighting in their religion made it *okay* to live in sin.

And then they wondered why God didn't seem to be hearing their prayers, even when they afflicted their souls with fasting. What an example of how *religion* always perverts the things that God gives us *into empty rituals*—even in Israel!

Fasting and Pride

When God told them, "in the day of your fast ye find pleasure,"

He was saying, as it were, "When you fast in this empty, religious way, *you have your pleasure*, so don't expect any more from Me!"

What kind of pleasure did they find in their fasting? God went on to describe it, saying,

"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high" (Isa. 58:4).

They were striving and debating with one another about who fasted the most, or who suffered the most while fasting, so they could beat each other up with the "fist" of that wickedness! That's religion for you! That's an example of religious pride at its finest.

Naturally, God told them *not* to fast the way they were fasting that day if they wanted their voice to be heard by God on high, adding,

"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast...?" (Isa. 58:5).

This was God's way of saying, "You call this a fast? A day for a man to afflict his soul just so he can take pleasure in boasting to others about how much he was suffering while fasting?" He then went on to describe the kind of fasting that He *was* interested in seeing in Israel:


"Is not this the fast that I have chosen?...to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" (Isa. 58:6,7).

Here God was saying, as it were, "Do you want to know the

kind of fast that *really* honors Me? It's the kind where you abstain from food—not to get some prideful religious pleasure out of it, *but so that someone else can eat*. I want you to fast so you can have some poor people over to your house to eat the food from which you're abstaining!" *That's* the kind of fasting God wanted. *Functional* fasting, not empty religious fasting!

Paul and Fasting

Now maybe as a grace believer you're thinking, "But didn't our apostle Paul, the apostle of this dispensation, engage in some fasting?" If so, you're right!...

(To be continued in Pastor Kurth's upcoming book, *More Rightly Divided Answers To Frequently Asked Questions*, scheduled for release sometime this spring). 

Question Box

"We say that Paul lost his ability to heal since he didn't heal anyone in his later ministry. But is this a good proof? If he was in prison during his later ministry, how could he have healed anyone?"

Well, first of all, people in prison need healing just as much as other people! Sometimes even more so, due to the harsh conditions found in prisons in those days, and the "stripes" and other beatings that were often laid on Roman prisoners (Acts 16:23; 18:17).


But Paul was under a sort of house arrest during his first imprisonment, as we see in Acts 28:30:

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him."

Under this house arrest type of incarceration, he was able to receive "all that came in unto him." That would have afforded him plenty of opportunity to heal people if he still had that ability. And he seemed to be in the same kind of bonds during his second imprisonment, with people being able to visit him, and even stay with him (2 Tim. 4:9-13).

We know he *lost* his power to heal during his first imprisonment, however, when he gave Timothy medical advice (1 Tim. 5:23) instead of sending him a blessed handkerchief as he'd done before (Acts 19:11,12). And during his second imprisonment, he mentioned having to leave a beloved co-worker behind "sick" in between his two incarcerations (2 Tim. 4:20).

—Pastor Kurth



It's a Question of Value

MR. DAVE STEWART
Contributing Writer

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).

Turn on almost any Christian television station, radio station, Facebook or YouTube channel, and you'll hear a similar plea: Ask Jesus into your heart, give your life to Christ, repent of your sins and believe. And what makes these “gospel” messages similar? It's the word, *your*: your heart, your life, your repentance. But more important than what these messages contain is what they all curiously seem to omit: faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what's so important about faith in the blood of Christ? Well, it's a question of value, by which we mean that, first, it's a valuable question. And second, the answer involves the value of faith in His blood. “Your life” is of insufficient value to save you from your sins. “Your heart,” being desperately wicked and deceitful (Jer. 17:9), is of even less value, and “your repentance” springs from that very heart.

A Valuable Question

The passage above declares that the propitiation (the sacrifice that fully pays) for our sins is applied to us through “faith in His blood.” So what does it mean to have faith in His blood? Well if you have faith in His blood, you have many things. First, since the Bible is the source of the command to have faith in His blood, and you have that faith, then clearly you understand that the Bible is true and worthy to be believed even to the saving of your soul. Therefore you must believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Next, you understand that “His” blood must be special, and therefore He Himself is special and not like other men. He must be separate from sinners and therefore something more than man. It also means you understand that salvation is not a work

of your own but comes through the sacrificial death of another. You also acknowledge that sin itself is such a grievous offense against the righteousness of God that only the blood, the very life, of this special One is sufficient for its price. Finally, if you have faith in His blood, you must have a dispensational understanding of the gospel (whether you know it or not) since salvation by faith in His blood, and by faith alone, is only true through the Pauline revelation.

So enfolded within those four little words, “faith in His blood,” is nearly the entire statement of faith held by every dispensational Bible believing church. The Bible is the Word of God. Jesus Christ is the unique and only begotten Son of God. Sin is an eternally grievous offense against the perfect righteousness of God. Salvation is not of works but of faith. Salvation today is had only through the gospel delivered to us through the Apostle Paul. Add in the trinity and the virgin birth (both of which are implied in the above) and you’ve got the whole package simply by having faith in His blood.

So the question itself—what’s so important about faith in the blood of Christ—is one of the most comprehensive and valuable inquiries a person can make. It’s a question that not only leads to the saving of the soul, but encompasses every fundamental issue of the Christian faith, and reaches to the heart of nearly all that we believe.

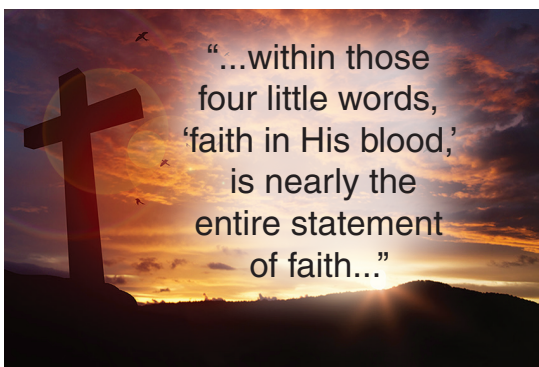
The Value of the Blood

Now here we come to the answer to that valuable question: what’s so important about faith in the blood of Christ? And here, once again, it’s all about value.

“Take heed therefore...to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

According to this passage, God has purchased the church with His own blood. This means that, quite literally, the blood of Christ was the blood of God Himself. The blood of Christ was the blood of the sinless One, the infinite One, the eternal One, the blood of the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things in heaven and earth. This is what we mean when we say it’s a question of value. It’s about the value of the blood of Christ itself.

The fact that our Lord was **sinless** means His blood was of sufficient value to pay for the sins of another. Having no sin of His own to pay for, He was able to take upon Himself the payment for another man’s sins.



In that Christ was **infinite**, His blood was of sufficient value to pay for the sins of ALL others. The blood of Christ represents not merely a life for a life, but the infinite life for ALL lives.

In that Christ was **eternal**, the scope of His death was also eternal. Thus His blood is of sufficient value to pay our eternal punishment, to absorb the eternal wrath of God against the sin of mankind, and then, to keep us in His grace for all eternity.

And finally, in that He was **Creator and Sovereign** of all things, the blood of Christ not only atoned for our sins, but was then of sufficient value to reconcile all things in heaven and earth back to God (Col. 1:20), earning back to Himself every throne, dominion, principality, and power, so delivering the universe itself from the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21).

What's so important about the blood of Christ? It carried the value of sinlessness itself, of infinity, of eternity, of sovereignty itself. It carried the full value of the very life of the Man who was God.

A Valuable Word of Caution

Now here we will stress that the value of the blood of Christ is not in the substance of the blood itself. If our Lord's blood were collected in a cup you would have nothing more than if you had the blood of any other man. The value of the blood of Christ was not in its substance, but in the work it accomplished and in the truth it declared.

The Value of Faith

Just as the value of our Lord's precious blood was not found in its substance, even so, the value of our faith exists nowhere within the faith itself. Our faith carries no power to save. Only GOD has the power to save. Faith in His blood saves us because it pleased God to forge the door to salvation with a keyhole fitted to that faith. And it is here that the value of faith is to be found. Our faith is valuable because God has made it so.

And this leads us to the most valuable thing of all...

The Divine Value

In Psalm 51, King David makes this remarkable statement:

"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Psa. 51:4).


David is saying that he will accept the responsibility (the payment) for his own sin if it means that the justice and judgment of God would remain unassailable. He will not launch a defense, he will not argue, he will bring no reason for doubt upon the integrity of God. He confesses his sin and assumes the full responsibility that God may be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges him for his offense.

We wonder, even doubt, if we could be as noble as this man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), to prefer that our sin be laid to our own charge, with all that that entails, rather than to see the justice of God in any way marred or impugned. But thanks be to God, it is precisely here that the greatest value of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is found.

"To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

The greatest value in the blood of Christ is not your eternal salvation, or mine. The greatest value is not even the reconciliation of the universe itself. No, the greatest value of the blood of Christ is that it enables God to justify sinful men and to reconcile all creation WHILE maintaining the purity of His own righteousness and of His own justice. That He might be just, and the justifier of sinners like you and me.

If you have placed your faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have unlocked the door to the most valuable treasure in heaven and earth—a sacrifice with the breadth of infinity, the length of eternity, the depth of pure sinlessness, and the height of sovereign glory.

And if you're still asking, what's so important about faith in His blood, we can only ask in return, how important is your eternal soul? In the end, it's a question of value. 



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Runaways John Mark

(An excerpt from Pastor Kevin Sadler's upcoming book, *Runaways*)

PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER
BBS President

“On September 23, 1908, at the Polo Grounds in New York City, there were two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning. The New York Giants and the Chicago Cubs were battling for the National League pennant, with the score tied at 1-1. The Giants had two men on base: 19-year-old Fred Merkle on first and Moose McCormick on third. Al Bridwell slapped a single up the middle, scoring McCormick.

“The game seemed to be over. But instead of tagging second base, Fred Merkle trotted off the field to the Giants’ locker room. The Cubs threw the ball to second, forcing out Merkel. The run didn’t count, the Giants lost the pennant, and Fred Merkle picked up the name, ‘Bonehead Merkle.’

“But that’s not the end of the story. Fred Merkle got another chance and went on to play for 14 more seasons, including five trips to the World Series.”¹

Fred Merkle made a bonehead mistake, but then went on to have a solid Major League career.

Likewise, John Mark made a mistake, leaving Paul and Barnabas on the mission field, but he did not allow this mistake to keep him from going on to carry out a fruitful ministry for Christ.

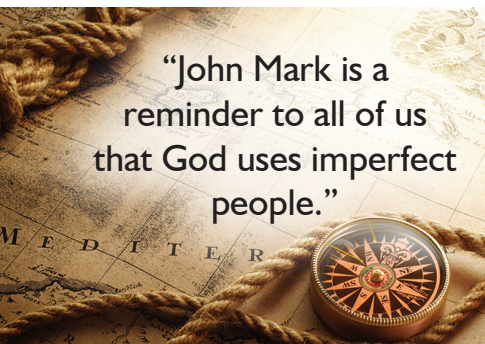
In Jerusalem and Antioch

“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:25).

John Mark was raised in a home where they believed in Jesus Christ as Israel’s Messiah and the Son of God. His devout mother’s home at that time became a meeting place for believers in Jerusalem to gather to pray (Acts 12:12). Mark had been deeply influenced for Christ by his mother, the Jerusalem kingdom church, as well as Barnabas.

In Acts 11:28, we learn about a great famine that had spread throughout the world. The church in Antioch had “determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which

also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:29-30). The delivery of the relief to the Judean saints was the ministry that Barnabas and Paul “fulfilled” in Acts 12:25, after which they returned to Antioch in Syria. When they did, they “took with them John, whose surname was Mark.”



Mark was family to Barnabas. Colossians 4:10 informs us that Mark was the “sister’s son to Barnabas,” which is to say that Mark was Barnabas’ cousin. This explains why Barnabas and Paul took Mark with them to Antioch. Barnabas knew him, trusted him, and recognized his experience with the saints in Jerusalem and his desire to serve the Lord. Barnabas likely convinced Paul that John Mark would be useful to the ministry at the church in Antioch.

It’s something to be said for Mark and his faith that he was willing to leave his home, family, church, and all that he knew to go to a different country to serve the Lord with the new and different apostle. Mark left Jerusalem and traveled north with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in Syria, nearly 300 miles away.

In Cyprus and Pamphylia

“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus” (Acts 13:4-6).

At the Antioch church, the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas to an important work (Acts 13:2). This work was to take the gospel of the grace of God “far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21). After the church fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them (Acts 13:3), they sent them away on Paul’s first apostolic journey. John Mark went with them as their “minister” (Acts 13:5), or assistant, to help wherever he was needed.

On the first leg of the journey, Paul, Barnabas, and Mark traveled overland 16 miles southwest to the seaport of Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. Landing at Salamis on the east coast of Cyprus, they visited various Jewish synagogues and preached the Word in them. John Mark no doubt helped Barnabas and Paul in a variety of ways, relieving them of tasks and managing details so they could focus on preaching the Word.

From Salamis, they worked their way across the entire length of the island to Paphos on the southwestern coast of Cyprus.

Here, Bar-jesus, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, confronted them. He was a satanically motivated opponent of Paul and the gospel of grace who attempted to keep a Roman proconsul named Sergius Paulus from hearing and believing the gospel. Paul boldly stood up to Bar-jesus and told him, “O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10). Immediately following this, Paul commanded blindness on the man for a season. His temporary blindness pictures the blindness of much of Israel in the dispensation of grace (Rom. 11:25).

Imagine the impression this made on a young man like John Mark. He was probably standing there with wide eyes at what he was seeing and hearing. The journey had begun with this strong opposition and an intimidating confrontation. It was a frightening threat from the enemy.

Along with this fearful experience, simply traveling in those days wasn't easy. It was grueling, exhausting, and dangerous. They had to walk great distances. They were “in perils of robbers” (2 Cor. 11:26). There weren't fast food restaurants or hotels on nearly every corner. It was difficult to find something to eat and they didn't have comfortable places to sleep.

From Paphos, the three men sailed northwest to Pamphylia and made their way overland to Perga. Pamphylia was a Roman province on the southern coast of

present-day Turkey, and Perga was the provincial capital.

Back to Jerusalem

“Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem” (Acts 13:13).

The daunting resistance from Bar-jesus, the uncertainty of what opposition might be around the corner, the danger and difficulty of travel into unknown territories, and likely being homesick, all combined to overwhelm Mark. The record states very plainly that John just left them and returned to Jerusalem. No reason is given for his sudden departure. He abandoned the mission and abandoned Paul and Barnabas. He failed to finish the task.



Mark runs away from the mission field by himself and travels over 500 miles by boat or over 750 miles by land back to Jerusalem. He left, not for Antioch, the church where he had served, but for his *home* in Jerusalem. Mark went back to the familiar, back to his mother, friends, and church home.

“It was advertised that the devil was going to put his tools up for sale. On the date of the sale the tools were placed for public inspection, each being marked with a sale price. There were a treacherous lot of implements. Hatred. Envy. Jealousy. Doubt. Lying. Pride. And so on. Laid apart from the rest of the pile was a harmless-looking tool, well-worn and priced very high.

“The name of the tool?” asked one of the purchasers. ‘Oh,’ said the adversary, ‘that’s Discouragement.’ ‘Why have you priced it so high?’ ‘Because it’s more useful to me than the others. I can pry open and get inside a person’s heart with that one, when I cannot get near him with other tools. Now once I get inside, I can make him do what I choose. It’s a badly worn tool, because I use it on almost everyone since few people know it belongs to me.’

“The devil’s price for Discouragement was so high, he never sold it. It’s still his major tool, and he still uses it on God’s people today.”²



There have been many casualties in the spiritual warfare due to discouragement. Many have left

the ministry because of it. This tool of the devil worked effectively with John Mark. He had become discouraged. When they arrived at Perga, John Mark couldn’t take it anymore. The journey had taken the heart out of him. Ministry was tougher than he expected. It was all too much. And he left.

Paul and Barnabas continued on without John Mark and completed their first missionary journey, sharing the gospel of grace throughout Gentile territory in places like Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium. They courageously preached Christ and many souls were saved. “And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region” (Acts 13:49).

Back to Cyprus

“And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus” (Acts 15:39).

Later, when Paul and Barnabas made plans to take a second apostolic journey, we learn about a sharp disagreement between them over John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). Mark was willing to go with them again. Barnabas, a man known for his ability to encourage (Acts 4:36), refused to allow his family member to remain a casualty of his past, and he was determined to take Mark along.

Paul, on the other hand, felt it would be wrong to take Mark with them because he had “departed from them” and “went not with them to the work” (Acts 15:38). He

did not finish the task yet before them on that journey. Whatever reason John Mark gave for leaving them, Paul did not accept it. It was not a good excuse in Paul's mind, and he feared Mark would desert them again. Thus, Paul refused to allow Mark to join them on the second journey.

In Paul and Barnabas's disagreement, neither would yield to the other; Barnabas would not go without Mark, and Paul would not go with him. The contention was so sharp between these two old friends that they decided to separate, Barnabas taking Mark and sailing again to Cyprus, and Paul choosing Silas and traveling by land through Syria and Cilicia.

In Rome

“Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)” (Col. 4:10).

After Acts 15, and his trip to Cyprus with Barnabas, John Mark is not mentioned in Scripture until years later during Paul's first Roman imprisonment, when he wrote letters to the church at Colosse and to Philemon.

In Colossians 4, Paul listed the names of those who were with him in Rome and who sent greetings to the Colossian church. One of the names Paul listed as sending his personal greeting was “Marcus,” or John Mark. Likewise, in his letter to Philemon, Paul sent greetings to Philemon from a number of people, including Marcus. He included Mark's name with others

whom he called “my fellowlabourers” (Phile. 1:24).

Paul's attitude toward Mark had changed. About ten years earlier, Paul saw him as an unreliable runaway, someone he could not trust to take with him on his second missionary journey. Now Paul saw him as a co-worker, one of the hard workers in the gospel ministry. The one-time defector was now listed as an honored part of Paul's ministry.

Mark had changed as a result of time, growth, and maturity in the Lord. He was given another chance and he made the most of it. He kept serving and working. He proved himself to be a dependable and faithful servant of the Lord. In doing so, he had regained the confidence of the Apostle Paul.

In Colossians 4:10, Paul wrote to the Colossians about the possibility of Mark visiting their church. The church in Colosse evidently knew of Mark's abandonment of Paul in the past, and word had been sent to the church earlier that, should Mark come to them, they should welcome and “receive him” with open arms. No grudges were to be held against him for his previous failure. Paul reminded this assembly that Mark was to be warmly embraced and accepted by them.

Back to Rome

“Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take

Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:9-11).

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, with Paul's execution at hand, he told Timothy to do his best to come see him in Rome with all possible speed. He then mentioned ones who forsook Paul in his hour of need: Demas, Crescens, and Titus. He informs Timothy that only Luke was with him in Rome.

Mark had also forsaken Paul many years earlier. But that was the past. A change had taken place in Mark's life. Paul told Timothy to come to see him in Rome and to bring Mark with him. The same Mark who had once been unprofitable to Paul on his first missionary journey was now "profitable to me for the ministry."


Mark was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment and had been a comfort and help to Paul at that time. Now during his second and final imprisonment at the end of his life, Paul wanted him back. Paul wanted to see *two people* before he went home to be with the Lord: Timothy and Mark. The apostle, who once refused Mark as a traveling companion, chose him now as one of his dearest and most helpful companions to come see him in the days prior to his death.

Back to the Present

God's invitation for salvation is to everyone. His invitation for service is, likewise, to every believer in the Church, the Body of Christ. God can use any and all of us. It's been said that "God uses

people who fail—Cause there aren't any other kind around."³ John Mark is a reminder to all of us that God uses imperfect people. This is encouraging, because none of us are perfect in our practice or our service. Some of God's most fruitful laborers are people, like John Mark, who have known failure and who have triumphed over it in faith and faithfulness.

John Mark's "runaway" story is one of the greatest stories of being restored in ministry. Paul wrote that he was "profitable to" him "for the ministry," and you and I find him profitable for the ministry too. He is profitable and encouraging to us in that he failed in the ministry, then learned from his mistake, grew in Christ, and became a faithful and useful servant of the Lord.

John Mark is also, and most notably, profitable to us every time we open the Word of God to read about the Lord's earthly ministry to Israel. Mark's remarkable comeback is capped with being given the high privilege of writing the second book of our New Testament, the gospel according to Mark. 

1. "On September 23, 1908, At The Polo Grounds In New....," Sermon Central, contributed December 12, 2005, taken from *Today in the Word*, December 27, 1994, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-illustrations/22938/on-september-23-1908-at-the-polo-grounds-in-new-by-sermoncentral>.

2. "The Devil's Favorite Tool," Steve May – Your Life Is Now, October 10, 2016, <https://stevemay.com/devils-favorite-tool/>, excerpted from John W. Lawrence, *Down to Earth: The Laws of Harvest* (Multnomah Publishers, 1975).

3. John C. Maxwell, *Failing Forward* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007), p. 31.

The Gospel According to
MARK

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Don't Cloud the Issue!

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor

Are you looking for the Lord to come in 2020? You should be! Paul says we should *always* be “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

But if you're thinking that the Lord can't come on a bright sunny day, it's probably because you remember that the Apostle John wrote, “He cometh *with clouds*” (Rev. 1:7). If so, you should know that the Book of Revelation is all about the Lord's coming to “judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11), *not* His coming to rapture us to heaven!

But it might interest you to know that *neither* of the Lord's comings have to be accompanied by *rain* clouds. The word “cloud” in the Bible sometimes refers to a cloud of *men*, as it does in Hebrews 12:1, where we read about “a cloud of *witnesses*.” Here the writer is talking about Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, and all of the other men and women who did things “by faith” (Heb. 11:4,5,7,8,9,11,etc.). As we read the pages of the Old Testament where these heroes of faith appear, we are “compassed about” or *surrounded* by this cloud of people who *witnessed* to their faith by their works (Heb. 12:1).

A Bible cloud can *also* refer to *angels*, as it does when Daniel was given a vision of heaven, and we read:

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came *with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him” (Dan. 7:13).

Who are the “they” here? It has to be *the clouds*. And when it says “they” brought the Lord to God the Father, well, that's not something rain clouds can do. But clouds of angels can!

The Lord Jesus Christ has always been surrounded by an *entourage* of angels. When He was born, “there was...a multitude of the heavenly host praising God” (Luke 2:13). And we know the Lord's angelic entourage didn't leave Him during His sojourn here on earth, for in speaking of Him the psalmist predicted,

“He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways” (Psa. 91:11).

We know that's talking about the Lord, for the devil *quoted* this passage and ascribed it to Him (Matt. 4:6), and the Lord didn't say, “That's not talking about Me.”

We *also* know the Lord's entourage stuck with Him when the going got tough. When the soldiers came to arrest Him, and Peter tried to relieve one of them of the burden of his head, we read,

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword...Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:52,53).

As you can imagine, those angels were standing by, just *waiting* for the order to defend Him.

After the Lord died and rose again, and "He was received up into heaven" (Mark 16:19), Luke says that "*a cloud* received Him" (Acts 1:9). We know this is a reference to *another* cloud of angels because two of them told the apostles that "this same Jesus...*shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven,*" and the Lord's second coming will *also* be accompanied by angels.

How do we know that? Well, when Revelation 1:7 says, "He cometh with clouds; *and every eye shall see Him,*" if He is going to come with *rain* clouds, then it would have to be cloudy everywhere where people have eyes to see Him, right? And that's everywhere on earth, isn't it? Well, is there ever a time when the entire planet is *covered* by clouds?

If that ever happened, that would signal that the Lord was coming, and we know He won't be telegraphing His arrival, for He said "the Son of man cometh *at an hour when ye think not*" (Luke 12:40).

Plus, look at what it says in Psalm 104:1-3:

"O LORD my God...*who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*"

Now when it says God makes the clouds His *chariot*, doesn't that suggest something to you? I mean, when you climb into your Dodge Chariot, do you get in just to sit there, or do you hop in intending to *go someplace*? So when the psalmist says that God uses clouds as *His* chariot, we have to conclude He uses them when He intends to go somewhere.

And when the psalmist *also* said that God *walked on the wings of the wind*, compare that to what we read about the second coming of Christ in Psalm 18:10:

"...*He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind*" (Psa. 18:10).

Did you catch that? Both psalms talk about walking on the wings of the wind, but one says He'll ride *on a chariot of clouds*, while the other says He'll ride on a *cherub*, an *angel*. Do you see how that equates clouds with angels?

If that's too much of a stretch for you, look how Matthew describes the second coming:

"...they shall see the Son of man coming *in the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory. *And He shall send His angels with a great*

sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds...” (Matt. 24:30,31).


Where’s the Lord going to *get* those angels to send to gather His elect into the kingdom of heaven on earth? Well, if the “clouds of heaven” that He comes with are made up of *angels*, He’ll have plenty of angels on hand to send!

Finally, Matthew records the Lord as saying,

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him...” (Matt. 25:31).

When the Lord returns for the people of Israel, He is going to return with an angelic escort that will reflect His “power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30). Now I know that rain clouds can do that when they appear with powerful thunderstorms, but clouds of angels can do it better!

And you can glorify Him now! How? Well, when “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour” comes (Titus 2:13), “then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4). When the day comes that we can’t sin any more, that will be a glorious day for us all!

But Paul *went on* to tell the Colossians, “Mortify *therefore* your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection” (v. 5). The “therefore” there tells us that God doesn’t want us to wait to glorify Him by leaving our sins behind at the Rapture, He wants us to mortify those sins now, in *this* life. Beloved, “ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20), the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). “Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 

When You Read the Bible Through

“I supposed I knew my Bible, reading piece-meal, hit or MISS; a bit of John or Matthew, next a little of GENESIS.

“Certain chapters of Isaiah, certain Psalms—the twenty-THIRD, twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs. Yes, I thought I knew the WORD.

“But I found a thorough reading, was a different thing to DO, and the way was unfamiliar, when I read the Bible THROUGH.

“We treat the Crown of Writings, as we treat no other BOOK, just a paragraph disjointed, just a crude, impatient LOOK.

“Try a worthier procedure, try a broad and steady VIEW, you will kneel in very rapture, when you read the Bible THROUGH.”

—Amos Wells





BBS Letter Excerpts

From our Inbox:

"I feel as if my brain has been given a whole new section! I received more from this one message [A Distinctive Hope] than I have in the last 20 years of seeking answers to my questions from every source I've sought after... This really helps a LOT! Tears of Joy!"

From North Carolina:

"I want you to know that studying and believing the grace message the past year has been like stepping onto an oasis of truth. You are hitting a home run in my world."

From Illinois:

"Much of what BBS presents is incredibly enlightening. It seems that every message I listen to says whatever I've heard or read elsewhere needs re-evaluation. It seems I have to read the entire Bible over again. I did think there was a lot more about Paul's messages than what most preachers I've come across understand....I don't think any of these other preachers I have listened to make the gospel message so clear." (The gospel is only clear when the Word is rightly divided. -Ed.).

From Iowa:

"As I have been using your four volumes on *Revelation* in our Bible studies (two groups), the most often asked question...is: Why have we not been told this in our churches (several denominations)?...Your books have given us a terrific guide...rightly dividing God's Word."

From Wisconsin:

"In your September issue you requested an echo. I saw a copy of the *Searchlight* some 20 plus years ago... It was a real eye-opener! I had been brought up on the gospel message of the four writers. Even in my young adult life it was the same message in another denomination. No one mentioned saved by grace. When I started receiving the *Searchlight*, I could not get enough."

From Florida:

"I am eternally grateful for all that you have taught me over the years. You have securely anchored me to Christ by *rightly dividing*."

From our Inbox:

"I'm really struggling with my salvation. I know that I'm a sinner and right now I'm heading straight to hell and the lake of fire, and I'm terrified and deserve every bit of it...I have hated God and hated Christ for more years than I can count, but I know I need Him for salvation...I know that He paid the penalty for my sin...is it really that easy? Just trust Him?" (Yes, the hardest thing about the gospel is that people think it can't be that easy. -Ed.).

From our Inbox:

"This info you shared surely cleared up my understanding...Thank you for your help. Keep up your outstanding online ministry in helping others. I may have future questions, so I may call on you again for help."

From Arizona:

"These tracts [*How To Please God, Christmas Times, You Do Need Him*] save lives!!! Best gift I can ever give anyone that doesn't know our Lord Jesus Christ!"

From Texas:

"Do you have a tract or way that I can get a copy of the Powerpoint slide called 'That Precious Deposit' that was shown in your *Transformed By Grace* episode 113 'Taking a Stand'? I have family members that have been introduced to the grace message but I'm looking for a handy reference to put in front of them to aid their deeper understanding."

From New York:

"Love your show on IONplus (in N.Y. state), *Transformed by Grace*. I'm learning to rightly divide and study."

From Facebook:

"The Old Testament reveals that Satan is Yahweh. When Jesus asks you who he is, you insist on combining him with Yahweh who is Satan. And when you go on from there to combine Yahweh with the Holy Spirit, you have committed the unpardonable sin because you have combined Satan with the Holy Spirit. How can you not see that?"

From our Inbox:

"Thank you for your lengthy explanation. I asked it because my Sunday school teacher said to blaspheme the Holy Spirit means to blaspheme Jesus. I didn't agree with his statement but also did not know the answer. Your explanation makes sense, and I bet many Christians don't really know what that means." (Sadly, I bet you're right. —Ed.).

From our Inbox:

"Thanks so much for your ministry. It's been very beneficial for me and my family."

From Minnesota:

"In a recent *Two Minutes*, you wrote about 'A Saying That Shouldn't Go Without Saying,' that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' Your article spoke to me especially that day."

From Ohio:

"Hey BBS, I have been...reading your material for approximately eight years now. My journey with 'proper division' began in 2001 when I was introduced to the subject by my 'maverick' Baptist pastor...His teaching whetted my appetite for dispensational truth, and when I moved to Ohio for my job, I was left without any means to satisfy it. That's when I found your website and the *Searchlight*, and you guys have been my constant support ever since."

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"We are in South Africa and we want to buy a book, but your order site only shows three countries. Is it possible to buy books from your bookstore in South Africa?" (Yes, *St. Mark's Congregational Church* in Port Elizabeth is a grace church that distributes our literature there. —Ed.).

From Wisconsin:

"Thank you for holding your conference at our church where David Brown is the Bible study leader. All the speakers were good, but Pastor Kevin Sadler's sermon on the Rapture was exceptional. He has a powerful style, great visuals, and a superbly crafted message."

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"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



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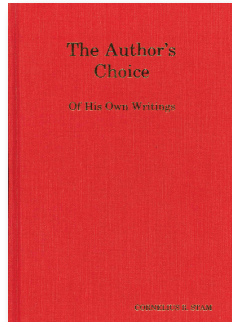
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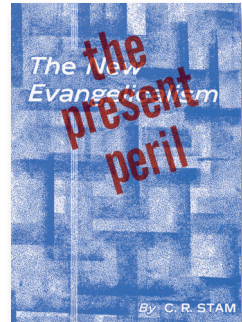
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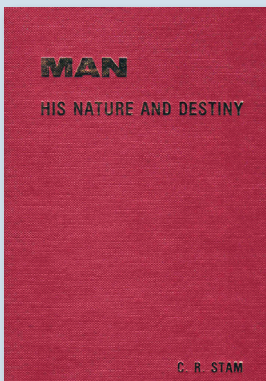
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News *and* Announcements

Help us spread the word! Our *Transformed By Grace* TV broadcast is reaching people with the grace message, and you can help make this happen in your area! We have business cards that we send free of charge to any who request them, in any quantity, listing the times and stations where people can catch our program. So if you'd like to see people in your area transformed by God's grace, contact us today!

Help us spread the word even after you are with the Lord. Remembering BBS in your will can ensure that your burning desire to help people see the grace message will continue to bear fruit long after you are gone. If the idea of carrying on a ministry here on earth after you've begun serving the Lord in person in heaven appeals to you, why not make the necessary arrangements *today*. You'll be eternally glad you did.

Help us be good stewards of the Lord's time. When you call BBS, please remember that each member of our staff has a number of responsibilities, and don't keep them any longer than necessary. We *love* to hear from each member of our BBS family, and welcome all the literature orders and inquiries that prompt them to call. And if you have a Bible question, you can bounce it off any one of *four* grace pastors who are part of our staff. Just remember to let us share our time with others, and give ourselves faithfully to the ministry with which God has entrusted us.

Help Us Help You with your Bible questions. The "Ask A Question" page on our BBS website is a great place to help get your knottiest inquiries resolved. While you are always welcome to call with questions, you can often catch Pastor Kurth's attention here even when our office is closed after business hours and on weekends. We can also link you to articles and video messages on our website that can provide follow-up information to address your question in more depth. So the next time a question about God's Word is burning a hole in your heart and just won't leave you alone, click on our home page and you'll see the "Have Questions?" link right below the pretty picture of the lighthouse!



UPCOMING 2020 CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Arizona Bible Conference, March 20-22, Phoenix, AZ

Mississippi Bible Conference, March 20-22, Tupelo, MS

Ohio Bible Conference, April 24-26, Ashtabula, OH

Footsteps of Paul Greece Tour, September 16-26, 2020

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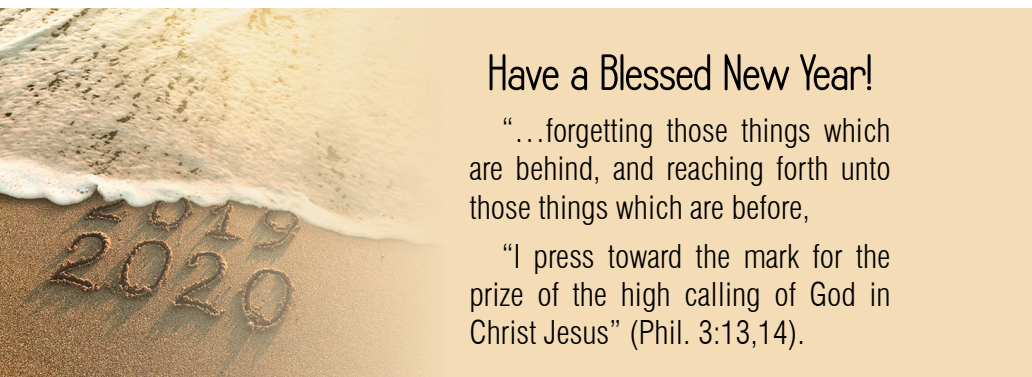
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