

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2020



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The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply 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 transformation of the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

“In 1860, [Henry Wadsworth] Longfellow was at the peak of his success as a poet. Abraham Lincoln had just been elected President, giving hope to many in the nation.

But things soon turned dark for America and for Longfellow, personally. The Civil War began the following year, and Longfellow’s wife died of severe burns after her dress caught fire...In 1863, Longfellow’s son, who had run away to join the Union Army, was severely wounded and returned home in December.

“...Longfellow wanted to pull out of his despair, so he decided to try to capture the joy of Christmas. He began: ‘I heard the bells on Christmas Day / Their old familiar carols play, / And wild and sweet / The words repeat / Of peace on earth, good-will to men.’

“As Longfellow came to the sixth stanza, he was stopped by the thought of the condition of his beloved country. The Battle of Gettysburg was not long past. Days looked dark...But he kept writing...‘And in despair I bowed my head; / There is no peace on earth, I said; / For hate is strong, / And mocks the song / Of peace on earth, good-will to men!’

“...But then, catching an eternal perspective and the real message of Christmas and Christ Himself, he wrote: ‘Then pealed the bells more loud and deep; / God is not dead; nor doth He sleep! / The Wrong shall fail, / The Right prevail, / With peace on earth, good-will to men!’”¹

Year 2020 has been a dark year, lacking peace, in which despair and hate have been strong. But like Longfellow wrote, God is not dead (1 Tim. 4:10) and He does not sleep (Psa. 121:1-4). He is the living God who is eternally awake. He is always aware of what is going on in the world and in our lives individually. For the believer, we rest in God’s control.

When we see a year like this with sickness, death, heartache, troubles, natural disasters, and unrest, it’s difficult to make sense of it all. But when things don’t make sense, that’s a call for each of us to “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5). When we do not comprehend what’s happening in life, we’re not to lean on our own understanding and ability to try to figure out why. We will never figure everything out (Eccl. 3:11). We’re just to trust the Lord—His wisdom, plan, and goodness. When we do that we can let the bells peal “more loud and deep: God is not dead; nor doth He sleep! The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail.”

From all of us at BBS, we wish you a joyous Christmas in the Lord!

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler, President

A Certain Man



PASTOR JEFF BERTRAM
BBS Board Member

In order to review the text for a message I was preparing, I opened my Bible to a familiar passage in Acts chapter 10. In my pastoral ministry I had been preaching through the Book of Acts, so the story of Cornelius was vivid in my memory. But before I could get into the body of the text, the first five words almost seemed to jump off the page at me. It was as though they were written in bold print and capital letters: “**THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN.**”

My mind was suddenly flooded with the realization of the extent of the love of God for man, and the individuality of it. There must have been a lot of people living on the earth during the time of Cornelius, but God was interested in *this* certain man. I am sure there were many things that could have captured God’s attention at that moment, but He was interested in him.

It made me think, with all the things going on in the world today, that we can lose sight of what is important—but God never does. He is interested in our lives and desires to be involved in them. God is so great that even with all the trials and turmoil we experience in life we can pray and He will hear our prayers. And He doesn’t just *hear* them, He is also concerned with our well-being.

You may think that Acts 10 is just the story of how God used Cornelius to illustrate the breaking down of the middle wall of partition in the flesh, and the transition from God’s kingdom program to His program of grace. That’s true, but this story *also* shows that God is concerned with individuals. He wants *all men* to be saved.

But that’s not the end of His involvement. He also wants men to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). The more truth we can know about Him, the more we can trust Him. He wants a personal, intimate relationship with you. He loves you and is sensitive to your needs (Heb. 4:15).

So when the trials of life get you down and it seems that all hope is gone, remember: you are a certain man or certain woman, and He cares for you.



The JUDGMENTS to Come

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
BBS President

Martin Luther said, “There are two days in my calendar: This day and that Day.”¹ “That Day” is judgment day, the day when we will stand before the Lord to give an account. It’s good for us to live in light of these two days. There is a day coming for believers when each of us will be judged by our Lord for our service to Him and our faithfulness to the truth of His Word.

As with many topics in God’s Word, the topic of the judgments to come must be considered rightly divided so we don’t confuse them. I have heard believers mistakenly say things like, “When I stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne...,” or, “When unbelievers are judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ...” I have winced when I’ve heard this kind of error. It is important for us to have a proper understanding of the judgments to come, when they take place, and to whom they pertain.

Judgment Seat of Christ

“...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and

every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10-12).

The first judgment to come will be the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Rapture is an imminent hope (Titus 2:13), meaning that it could take place at any time. Following the Rapture, the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place (2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1). When the Rapture occurs, the entire Body of Christ will be in heaven, from Paul to the very last member to join. It is at this time that the Lord will judge the Body of Christ. The Judgment Seat of Christ is *only* for the Church, the Body of Christ. As members of Christ’s Body, the Judgment Seat is “that Day” for us when we will stand before the Lord to give account and receive rewards from Him.

Our service and stand for the truth will be evaluated by the Lord at the Judgment Seat. Christ has a system of rewards that will be granted or withheld based on our faithfulness. Crowns will be awarded at this judgment (1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8). The degree of glorification of our resurrected

bodies will be decided (1 Cor. 15:41-42). And our reigning position with Christ will be determined (2 Tim. 2:12). Following this judgment, the Body of Christ will enter our eternal state in our glorified bodies, reigning in the heavenlies in Christ.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Moses was sent to make the law known to Israel, but Paul was sent to make grace known to the nations. Moses was the master builder of God’s dwelling place with Israel, the tabernacle. By revelation, God gave him the plans and specifications, telling him, *“See...that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”* (Heb. 8:5). Likewise, the Apostle Paul was a master builder of a new dwelling place for God. By revelation, Christ gave to Paul the plans and specifications for “God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9), the Church, the Body of Christ.

Paul wrote that the foundation for this building is Jesus Christ, and that Paul had “laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon” (v. 10). A new dispensation was revealed to Paul in which the foundation that was laid was Christ, not as the King of Israel, but as the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Paul wrote, “But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (v. 10). He cautioned the Church that those who work and build on the foundation of Christ under grace are to do so according to His present heavenly ministry. We are to build on the foundation of Christ as laid by Paul, serving according to the truths of Christ and His grace for today that are revealed in the letters of Paul.

In the building of the Church, each and every work will be made manifest, brought to light, and “revealed by fire” (v. 13). This fire refers to the Word of God. Jeremiah 23:29 tells us, “Is not my Word like as a fire? saith the LORD.” Our works, our service for the Lord, will be tested and tried by God’s Word, and specifically by the grace truth revealed in Paul’s epistles which give us the commands of Christ for the Church today.

The question will be how much of our works, service, and stand will survive the test of God’s Word in determining whether we receive a reward or whether we suffer loss of reward. If we work and serve the Lord according to grace, making known the gospel of pure grace and serving by God’s instruction for today, this is “gold, silver, precious stones” in God’s eyes, and we’ll be rewarded for it.

If, however, we work and serve according to the law, making known a wrong or mixed gospel, trying to serve the Lord based on instruction meant for Israel, many of our works will be regarded as wood, hay, stubble and will be burned up, resulting in loss of reward. But no matter how much of a person's service goes up in smoke as worthless, that person will still "be saved; yet so as by fire," as no person who has trusted Christ will suffer the loss of salvation at the Judgment Seat.



As gold, silver, and precious stones are refined when passed through a fire, so these three signify the *permanent* nature of our service to Christ. They represent those things done and taught in accordance with grace and building on the foundation of Christ according to the Pauline revelation of grace for today.

Judgment of Israel in the Wilderness

"And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and

there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 20:34-38).

After the Judgment Seat of Christ, the next judgment to come is that of Israel in the wilderness. A great regathering of Israel will take place prior to the Millennial Kingdom on earth. At Christ's Second Coming, angels will sound trumpets summoning all Jews, who have been scattered throughout the world, back to the Promised Land.

"He [the Son of man] shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect [Israel] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31).

As we just read, Ezekiel also describes this future exodus of Israel from the nations and her regathering in the land which God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Reminiscent of Israel's exodus from Egypt which was done "through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm" (Deut. 5:15), likewise this exodus from the nations to the Promised Land will be "with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm" (Ezek. 20:34).

The Lord Jesus Christ will regather scattered Israel out of the nations to bring them "into the

wilderness” (Ezek. 20:35) where they will stand before Him. Here He will plead and judge them “face to face” (v. 35). And the Lord will cause Israel to “pass under the rod” (v. 37). This is a reference to a practice in biblical times in which a shepherd would make his sheep pass under his rod as he counted them. As Israel is judged, it will be determined whether or not they will be gathered into the fold and counted as sheep which belong to the Lord, “that great Shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. 13:20). Those who are judged and counted to be the Lord’s sheep will be brought “into the bond of the covenant” and will experience the blessings of the New Covenant, which includes entrance into the earthly kingdom and dwelling in the Promised Land forever.

“And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God” (Ezek. 36:28).

At this judgment, the Lord will also “purge out from among you the rebels” (20:38). The rebels will be those in Israel who don’t believe in Christ and “transgress against” Him by not believing. They will not be permitted entrance into the land or Christ’s glorious kingdom. Ezekiel 20:36 teaches that this judgment will be “Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness.” Therefore, this future judgment harkens back to what the Lord did after Israel’s exodus from Egypt, that though God brought them out of Egypt, He afterwards destroyed in the wilderness those who did not believe.

“I will therefore put you in remembrance...how that the Lord,

having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not” (Jude 1:5).

Like the exodus in the days of Moses, those Jews who are brought out of the nations after the Tribulation will not all enter the Promised Land. Those who did not take the mark of the beast but did not believe will not be permitted entrance into the kingdom of heaven on the earth and will perish in the wilderness.

Further, this judgment includes the organization of the government in Christ’s kingdom. Faithful, believing Israelites who enter the land to rule with Christ will be rewarded and given positions of authority within His kingdom (Matt. 19:28-30).

In Luke 19:11-27, Christ told a parable about “a certain nobleman” (v. 12). The nobleman in the parable is a picture of Christ Himself. The nobleman “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” This refers to how the Lord will go to heaven at His ascension, receive the kingdom from the Father, and then return at His Second Coming to establish His kingdom on earth.

Before leaving, the nobleman in the parable charged His servants with conducting His business while he was gone. He gave his ten servants one pound each and told them to “Occupy till I come” (v. 13), or do business with that money until He came back.

The Lord said about the citizens in the parable, “But his citizens hated him [the nobleman], and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (v. 14). The

citizens, of course, represent the unbelievers in Israel and their hatred of Christ.

When the nobleman returned, representing the Lord's future Second Coming, "he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading" (v. 15). The servants were being held accountable for what was put in their charge and were called before their lord to be judged for it.

The first servant had earned ten pounds with the one pound that had been entrusted to him (v. 16). He knew the money was not his own and he used it for the nobleman, to advance his interests. Thus, his lord told him, "thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (v. 17). The next servant who stood before the nobleman had gained five pounds and the nobleman gave him authority over five cities (vv. 18-19).

The next servant made excuses and accused the nobleman of being "austere" or hard and oppressive. He did nothing with the money given to him and had just kept it wrapped up in a handkerchief and then gave it back to the nobleman. He further accused the nobleman of being unjust and exacting of others of what he himself did not give or do (vv. 20-21).

The nobleman judged this servant, that if he thought that the nobleman would be rigid, firm, and even severe, it would have been the better part of wisdom for the servant to have made some use of the money and to have at

least put it in the bank to earn some interest. The nobleman then had that servant's money taken from him and given to the first servant (vv. 22-24).

This parable teaches that there will be reward and loss of reward at this judgment of Israel. The judgment will be just and right. There will be different degrees of reward, proportioned to the measure of faithfulness. Israelites who knew that their lives and talents were not their own but belonged to the Lord, were faithful to the Lord, and used their lives to please Him and bring Him glory, they will be rewarded at that day. As a result, they will be given authority over *literal* cities in the Millennial



Kingdom. Those who did nothing with what the Lord gave them will suffer loss of reward.

This parable shows us that when the Lord returns at His Second Coming, "having received the kingdom," He will gather Israel, His servants, before Him to reward them according to their faithfulness and service to Him. And Christ will award positions in the divine government of the kingdom to faithful Jews at that time. He will also destroy unbelieving Jews who will not have Him to reign over them (v. 27).

Judgment of the Sheep and Goat Nations

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt. 25:31-33).

Also following Christ’s Second Coming, the Lord will “sit upon the throne of His glory” for another judgment to take place: the judgment of the nations. This is when the Gentiles from the Tribulation stand before Christ. At this judgment, the Gentile nations are divided by the Lord. He will classify them as either sheep or goats, according to their treatment of Israel during the Tribulation.

The Lord identifies Himself with His people (Acts 9:4). At this judgment, Christ will tell the sheep nations how they helped Him in the Tribulation by giving Him food when He was hungry, drink when He was thirsty, and clothes when He had none; how they welcomed Him into their homes when He was a stranger, and how they visited Him when He was sick and in prison (Matt. 25:35-36).

These righteous nations will not understand when or how they did these things for Him (vv. 37-39). But because these nations helped Israel to survive the Tribulation when believing Jews couldn’t buy or sell without the mark of the beast and were severely afflicted and persecuted

by the Anti-Christ, the Lord will tell them, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me” (v. 40). Therefore, they are judged to be Christ’s sheep, belonging to His flock, and welcomed into His kingdom and given eternal life.

However, to the nations who do not assist Israel in the Tribulation, the Lord will say, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me” (v. 45). These nations are judged by Christ to be goats, not His sheep, and are commanded to depart from His presence forever and are cast into everlasting fire.

The judgments of Israel and the nations teach us that only the righteous and believers are admitted into Christ’s earthly kingdom. All unbelieving sinners are left out of it and will be slain and cast “into everlasting punishment” (v. 46).

Great White Throne Judgment

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:11-12).

Let’s review the timeline now. The Rapture could take place at any time with the Judgment Seat of Christ immediately following it. Seven years later,

after Christ's Second Coming, the Judgment of Israel and the Judgment of the Nations will take place. One thousand years after that, following the Millennial Kingdom, will come the Great White Throne Judgment.

Christ. In John 5:22, the Lord said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Sinners will be judged by the One they sinned against. The One sitting on the Great White Throne, how-

RAPTURE

SECOND COMING

Judgment Seat of Christ

Judgment of Israel

Judgment of the Nations

Great White
Throne Judgment



This is the final judgment and the end of human history. It is the last event that will take place before time is done away with and the eternal state is ushered in. The Great White Throne Judgment is ONLY for unbelievers, unbelievers of every time period of history. Here they face their doom, are judged according to their works, and are cast into the Lake of Fire.

The throne is "great" because it is the throne of God and exudes power and fear. And it is "great" because of the great, eternal issues involved. It is a "white" throne, because of God's glory and infinite holiness. Being confronted with the perfect holiness and righteousness of God, all the unbelieving standing there in their sins and unrighteousness will be completely ashamed and embarrassed. The impurity of humanity with their black, sinful hearts will stand in stark contrast to God's perfect, white purity.

"Him that sat on" the great white throne is the Lord Jesus


ever, had made the payment at the Cross so they could have had forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. They will see the scars of love in His hands and feet and the love that they spurned, and they will face His righteous wrath.

The unsaved will be judged out of those things written in "the books" (Rev. 20:12). The books of the Bible are the righteous standard by which all the lost will one day be judged. The Word will show them how infinitely far short they fall of God's glory. In that day, God will judge the secrets of men by Paul's gospel (Rom. 2:16). Paul's gospel will show them how Christ died for the sins of the world—past, present, and future—and how a perfect provision had been made for them at the Cross. The Word will show them how they are rightfully under the condemnation of God because they are dead in their sins.

At the Great White Throne, they will be "judged every man according to their works" (Rev.

20:13). Christ will judge the unbeliever's "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21), "wicked works" (Col. 1:21), and "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11), because "their works are works of iniquity" (Isa. 59:6). Christ will review their works to show their unbelief, sinfulness, and guilt, and to determine the degree of punishment they will endure in the Lake of Fire forever.

The Book of Life will also be opened. At this point at the Great White Throne, all the unsaved will be dead, and *only* the names of believers will be left in it. Revelation 20:15 says, "And whosoever was not found written in the Book

of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire." The word "found" means to come upon after searching. The Book of Life will be searched for their names, but they will not be found, because being "dead in trespasses and sins," they do not have "life" and their names will be blotted out. Then they will be cast into the Lake of Fire, the place of the second death, to be forever in torment and separated from God. May this heartbreaking scene remind us to reach out with the saving gospel of God's grace and to share it faithfully. 

1. Martin Luther, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/203914-there-are-two-days-in-my-calendar-this-day-and>.

Question Box

"If the purpose of water baptism was to make the Jews a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6), did women have to be baptized?"

It's true that Jewish men were baptized because priests had to be baptized (Ex. 29:4), and only men could be priests. But water baptism was *also* "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38), so women needed to be baptized under God's kingdom program for Israel for that reason. That's why we read,

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God...they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

Don't forget, when the Bible says things like, "God...will have all *men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), the Greek word for "men" there is *anthropos*, from which we get our word *anthropology*, the study of *mankind*, both men and women. Be sure to keep that in mind when you read Paul say to "live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18), "do good unto all men" (Gal. 6:10), "abound in love...toward all men" (1 Thes. 3:12), "be patient toward all men" (1 Thes. 5:14), and "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph. 3:9).

—Pastor Kurth

IS PSALM 91 Our Covid 9-1-1?

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor



“Surely He shall deliver thee...from the noisome pestilence” (Psa. 91:3).

Not long after the Covid 19 virus began to cause people to fear for their lives, I started hearing from Christians who wrote to ask about Psalm 91. It’s easy to understand why, once you realize that the word “pestilence” means *sickness*, as we see when I Kings 8:37 says,

“If there be in the land...pestilence...whatsoever sickness there be....”

And when the dictionary adds that the word pestilence refers to a *serious* sickness, a *contagious, malignant epidemic*, it’s not surprising that God’s people would wonder if they could trust Him to keep them safe during the pandemic based on His promise in Psalm 91. This was especially understandable to me after a little poking around on the internet confirmed what I already suspected—that the reason I was being asked about this psalm is that a lot of pastors and Bible teachers were *quoting* it to calm believers with those reassuring words.

But when believers began to contract the coronavirus right alongside of unbelievers, the fallacy of applying God’s promise in this psalm to ourselves became readily apparent. This caused those same pastors and teachers to have to backpedal and “explain” that Psalm 91:3 wasn’t the absolute promise that verse 3 says it “surely” is. But that’s a difficult position to maintain, for anyone who bothers to read the *rest* of the psalm knows that it *goes on* to say,

“Thou shalt not be afraid...for the pestilence...A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked...There shall no evil befall thee...” (Psa. 91:5-10).

As you can see, God is clearly promising His people that their eyes would see the pestilence punish *unbelievers*, but it wouldn’t come anywhere near *them*. And that is certainly *not* how the pandemic played out. So it’s easy to see right through the words of the pastor who declared, “the promise is not security *from* the pestilence but security *in* the pestilence”—especially since verse 3 *uses* the word “from”!

Other well-meaning pastors and teachers attempt to mitigate the absoluteness of God’s promise in this psalm by pointing out that it is a

messianic psalm, something that we wouldn't contest, for verses 11,12 go on to say,

“For He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways. They shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.”

We know that the psalmist had the Lord in mind here, for when the devil tempted Him to throw Himself from a pinnacle of the temple, he quoted those words and ascribed them to the Lord in Matthew 4:6. In response, the Lord didn't deny that He was the subject of the those verses. Instead He went on to say,

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matt. 4:7).

Since the word “tempt” can mean to *test* (Gen. 22:1 cf. Heb. 11:17), the Lord was saying that God's promise to protect Him didn't give Him the right to test His Father by foolishly hurling Himself from a deadly height.

But the Lord's reply there has provided pastors who seek to qualify God's unconditional promise in Psalm 91 with what they think is an “out.” They argue that the Lord was saying His Father wouldn't have saved Him had He tempted Him by leaping from the top of the temple, so God won't save *us* if we carelessly expose ourselves to the virus.

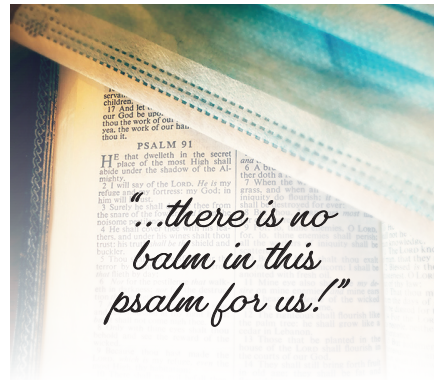
But the Lord didn't mean to say that leaping from a temple pinnacle would make God's promise of none effect. Who can deny that His Father *would* have kept His promise to save His Son had He tempted death before it was time to die for His people? That means that tempting God by carelessly exposing yourself to Covid 19 would not negate God's promise to protect His people from pestilence either.

Psalm 91 *is* a promise of safety—and not just a promise to keep the Messiah safe. It is a promise to *any* Jews who “say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust” (Psa. 91:2). But it is a psalm that has *future* Jews in mind, as we see when the psalm concludes with God further promising those who trust in Him,

“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation” (Psa. 91:16).

When will Jews who trust in God enjoy the “long life” that He promises here? Right after the Lord defeats the dragon serpent that we read about a couple of verses earlier (v. 13) at the battle of Armageddon. In other words: in the millennial kingdom of heaven that will *follow* Armageddon. And that's when God will “surely” deliver those who trust in Him from pestilence as well.

We see more proof of this when we compare the promise of long life that God gave in Isaiah 65:20, where the prophet wrote:



“There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.”

We know this is a description of conditions in the millennial kingdom, for a few verses later Isaiah predicted,

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord” (Isa. 65:25).

You wouldn’t expect to see the effect of this promise on your next trip to the local zoo, for you know that this is a description of conditions on earth during the millennium. But that means you shouldn’t expect God to honor the promise of a “long life” that He gave in the context there. Nor should you expect God to honor His unconditional promise of safety from pestilence given in the context of the promise of longevity in Psalm 91:16.

And when Isaiah *also* foretold,

“...it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Isa. 65:24),

doesn’t that sound a lot like *another* promise that God made in Psalm 91:

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him...” (Psa. 91:15).

Instantaneous, unconditional answer to prayer like that is something else that will be the norm during the millennial kingdom. It’s part of what will *make* the kingdom *heaven on earth*. But instantaneous answer to prayer is *not* the experience of God’s people today in the dispensation of grace. That’s not a promise that we can hold Him to, for it is not a promise He made to us. So any attempt to hold Him to His promise of unconditional protection from pestilence—a promise He gives in the same context—must *also* be in vain.

This explains why God is not honoring the similar prayer promise the Lord gave His followers when He told them,

“All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. 21:22).

That too sounds pretty heavenly, and it should, for that too will be the norm in the kingdom of heaven on earth. But in the age of grace, our apostle rightly observed that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:26). What a disaster it would be if people who didn’t know what to pray for as they ought received everything they asked for in prayer! God could never trust *us* with a promise like that, for we would be sure to abuse it.

But God *will* be able to trust His people in Israel with such an unconditional promise *in the kingdom*. You see, in that day they will be filled with God’s Spirit as they were at Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and *caused*

to walk in His statutes (Ezek. 36:27) to such an extent that they will be literally incapable of sinning (1 John 5:18). People who “cannot sin” (1 John 3:9) can be trusted with unconditional prayer promises such as the Lord gave in Matthew 21:22, for they won’t abuse them any more than the Lord would have abused God’s promise to protect Him.


And it is also in the millennial kingdom that God’s people in Israel will be able to rest in His promise to prevent pestilence from coming anywhere near them, for in that day it will be said of *all* God’s saints: “thou hast made the LORD...even the most High, thy habitation” (Psa. 91:9).

To hold God to that promise *today*, however, is an act of *presumption*, not faith in God’s Word. So don’t let the “name it and claim it” crowd convince you, as I heard one of them advise people, “Just say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge, and my fortress’ (Psa. 91:2) and you won’t contract the virus.” He then went on to encourage his listeners to say that aloud, instead of moaning, “I’m afraid I’m going to get sick and die!” In other words, name it and claim it, blab it and grab it!

Other pastors and teachers seek to explain away the absoluteness of Psalm 91’s promise by pointing out that the Psalms employ poetic language, and poetry cannot always be taken literally. Still others suggest that the deliverance promised in this psalm “refers to a wide range of persistent attacks, including spiritual—and not necessarily always referring to illnesses.” In other words, you have to *spiritualize* the psalm’s promise of safety from pestilence to get it to work today! And as Pastor J. C. O’Hair used to say, “when you spiritualize the Scriptures you *tell spiritual lies*.”

One pastor spiritualized Psalm 91 by pointing out that if it was written by Moses, as was the previous psalm, then we should view Psalm 91 as nothing more than a testimony to what God did in the past under Moses, what He *can* do today if He chooses, and what He *will* do someday in heaven. But that’s playing fast and loose with the Scriptures, and is a perfect example of handling them *deceitfully* (2 Cor. 4:2).

In conclusion, I should say that I firmly believe that “*all*” of God’s promises in Christ are “yea, and in Him Amen” (2 Cor. 1:20), but only the promises He made *to us* in Paul’s epistles. Psalm 91 is *not* our Covid 9-1-1. On the news we hear reports of the numbers of Covid 19 deaths that sound a lot like “a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand” (Psa. 91:7), but God’s promise in the rest of that verse, that the pestilence “shall not come nigh thee,” is not one that you can take to the bank as a member of the Body of Christ.

The pastors who are advancing Psalm 91 as the balm for believers today may be standing firmly on the Word of God, but there is no balm in this psalm for us! If you want to be able to stand on God’s Word without any reservations or apologies, you have to learn to stand on His Word *rightly divided!* 



Christmas Times

This article is available for purchase in tri-fold tract form.

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
BBS President

The Charles Dickens novel, *A Christmas Carol*, famously begins with the words, “Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.” According to the Bible, in Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1-6, apart from Christ, mankind is “dead in trespasses and sins” to begin with. There is no doubt about that. We need the forgiveness of sins and the eternal life that only God can give in order to be sure of our future in Heaven.

CHRISTMAS PAST

The Christmas season brings to mind fond memories from Christmases past: good food, laughter, excitement, the spirit of giving, enjoyable times spent with family and friends, and the warmth and tenderness we’ve felt. As we consider Christmas past, we should also remember the reason for the season, which is the birth of Jesus Christ. His birth is significant above all others because His birth was prophesied 700 years before it took place, a Bible prophecy that tells us that Jesus Christ is “Emmanuel” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). The title Emmanuel means *God with us*. It means that the birth of Christ was God the Son coming from Heaven and becoming a man (John 1:14).

The Bible tells us, in 1 Timothy 1:15, why He came to the world: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” In this verse, you have Christ’s birth at Bethlehem: “Christ Jesus came into the world”; and you have His purpose: “to save sinners.” *Christ was born to die on the Cross, taking the penalty for our sins in our place, because that was the only sacrifice which would satisfy God’s justice against our sins.* God’s judgment against sinners is Hell. Because Jesus Christ bore God’s judgment on us, He “saves” us from an eternity of conscious torment. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read, “For He [God the Father] hath made Him [God the Son] to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” On the Cross, Christ was made to be our sin and, when we trust Christ as our Savior, we are made to be His righteousness. He came “to save sinners,” and each and every one of us is a sinner in need of the Savior. Romans 3:23 plainly states, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

So when we look at Christmas past, we need to look at Christ, the eternal Son of God, becoming a man while remaining fully God, coming to this world to be our Substitute and Savior by His death for our sins at the Cross and then rising again the third day.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Christmas is celebrated with lights, and we remember the coming of the Light of the world (John 1:9; 8:12; 12:46) to deliver us from the darkness of sin and death and give us the light of life. We sing the carols out of joy for the Infant Who was born and placed in a manger in Bethlehem, Who came to save us from all our sins and the Hell we deserve. As we sing in *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, “Mild He lays His glory by, / Born that man no more may die; / Born to raise the sons of earth; / Born to give them second birth.”


As we celebrate Christmas today, we give and receive gifts, but we should do so remembering that Christ is the perfect Gift, Who willingly gave Himself to die for us so we can have eternal life. Christ came to this world to provide us with the free gift of salvation and eternal life. Ephesians 2:8-9 confirms that it is a gift from God: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is *the gift of God*: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Romans 6:23 also says, “For the wages of sin is death; but *the gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Have you accepted God's gift of salvation? All that is required to have eternal life in Heaven is faith in what Christ did for us: “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day” (1 Cor. 15:3,4).

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Christmas is about hope, peace, and joy. The future is bright and full of hope, peace, and joy for those who have trusted Christ as their Savior. Colossians 1:5 reads, “For the **hope** which is laid up for you in Heaven.” Romans 5:1 teaches us, “Therefore being justified [declared righteous] by faith, we have **peace** with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Where once our status was having “come short of the glory of God,” when we trust Christ as our Savior, we now “**rejoice** in hope [certain expectation] of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2).

Christmas is a time for being with family and loved ones. Our future will be spent with the family of God, and the One “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). 1 Thessalonians 5:10 says that Christ “died for us, that...we should live together with Him.” For eternity, we who have trusted the gospel have a safe home in Heaven, dwelling in the presence of our Savior. Psalm 16:11 proclaims, “In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

If you've trusted Christ as your Savior, then you can say with all believers, “*God has blessed us, every one!*” 



A LICENSE TO SIN?

TRACY LESAN
Contributing Writer

A common objection against the teaching of salvation by faith apart from works is that it gives people the freedom to sin as much as they want. We're supposedly saying that they can live like the devil now and still get away with it in the end as long as they believe in Jesus Christ.

Interestingly, this was the weapon which some popular religious teachers used long ago in their relentless assault against the apostle Paul and his preaching. Paul expresses their "license-to-sin" argument in Romans 6:1: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* I wonder how many times Paul heard these kinds of jeers from pious Jews: "You've got to be kidding, Saul! Or have you gone mad? If your sin magnified God's grace when he justified you [see Rom. 5:20-21], then why not keep on sinning now that you're a believer in order to magnify grace still more? Go ahead, live it up! Eat, drink, and be merry! Sin to your heart's content! After

all, as you say, your Messiah has already wiped your slate clean." The remainder of Romans 6-7 contains Paul's defense against this grievous misunderstanding of God's gracious gift of new life in Christ.

Freed from Sin

The apostle wastes no time in refuting his opponents' charge that preaching grace promotes sin. He immediately answers with the emphatic negation: *God forbid* (Rom. 6:2). The idea that believers should keep on sinning for grace's sake is both repugnant and wrong, as he goes on to explain:

"...How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:2-4).

Christians shouldn't keep living in sin, Paul declares, because they've *died* to it. What a fascinating concept! As in our news reports, so in the Bible, almost everything that we read about death is negative. It was no laughing matter when God warned Adam about the forbidden fruit: *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* (Gen. 2:17). Equally sobering is the fact that all people are born *dead in trespasses and sins* (Eph. 2:1) and that *the wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23). The fact that believers in Jesus are *dead to sin*, however, is wholly positive.

Paul, here, takes us by the hand and leads us even deeper into the miracle of God's grace to feature a stunning truth which nobody, especially his opponents, would ever have been able to predict: the grace that saved us from sin's penalty has also severed sin's power. We used to be in Satan's kingdom where Sin *reigned* over us like a cruel tyrant, dictating or at least influencing every thought and action (Rom. 5:21). Even our most noble pursuits and purest notions were perverted to some degree under its powerful spell. But God through Christ has rescued us from that wretched domain and transferred us into a glorious realm where *grace reigns* (5:21).

Christ conquered sin through His death and resurrection, and now all who are *baptized* into, or identified with, him by faith get to share in his victory.¹ His death became our death; His resurrection became our resurrection. We've *died* with Him *to sin* and can *walk* with Him *in newness of life* (6:4). Though this *body of sin* in which we reside (6:6) is still as weak and vulnerable as ever, we no longer have to stumble and fall. The instant that we believed in Christ, God broke the chains by which we were bound,



releasing us from the obligation to obey Sin's orders. We've been set free! And now that we have Christ's life within us, we have the power to both overcome sinful behavior patterns and resist any temptation that Satan might hurl our way.

Freed to Serve

This vital teaching about grace's transforming work within

1. Far from a mere symbolic ceremony, the *baptism* of Romans 6:3-4 is a real and powerful spiritual operation. Through it, all believers have been *clothed* with Christ, (Gal. 3:23-29), united with Christ's death and resurrection (Col. 2:11-12), and freed from sin's rule so that they might *walk in newness of life* (Rom. 6: 3-4). No clergy could ever accomplish these things with water, only God with His Holy Spirit: *For by (or with) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body* (1 Cor. 12:13). This is the *one baptism* that all Christians have in common (Eph. 4:5) through faith in the gospel (see Eph. 1:13). To link it to a water ceremony, at best, obscures its divine source and power. At worst, it compromises the gospel by making salvation dependent on at least one human work.

us serves as the foundation for Paul's call to obedience in the next section:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:12-13).

The word *therefore* in verse 12 draws our attention back to what Paul has just said in verses 2-11 about our new spiritual birth, while the words which follow focus on what God now expects from us. That's always Paul's order of instruction—first grace, then responsibility. As those who've died and been raised together with Christ, we're called to continually offer our bodies to God as *instruments of righteousness* for His glory.

The Christian's spiritual obligation to God is one of the most prominent features of Paul's theology. His letters are bursting with commands which address virtually every area of our lives—our personal devotion to God, familial relationships, moral purity, service in the assembly, even duties to governing authorities. Especially noteworthy is his constant emphasis on *good works*:

“Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Rom. 13:3).

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8).

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:9-10).

“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).

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:7-8).

“...we also...do not cease to pray for you....That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work...” (Col. 1:9-10).

“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Thes. 2:16-17).

“But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing” (2 Thes. 3:13).

“I will therefore...that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety...with good works” (1 Tim. 2:8-10).

“Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work” (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they...*do good*, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of *good works*: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned...” (Titus 2:7-8).

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every *good work*, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1-2).

“And let ours also learn to maintain *good works* for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

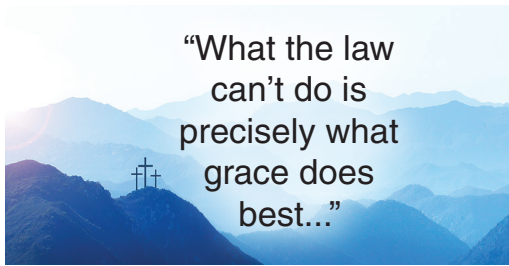
Paul has nothing against good works! Except for Moses, in fact, nobody else in all of Scripture emphasizes them as much as he does. He just wants to make sure that we keep them in their proper place, as we see in the following passages:

“**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

“**But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according**

to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:4-8).

Good works are our duty after we have received salvation, not part of the means of attaining salvation. First, we must *believe in God* and receive his gift of life apart from *works of righteousness*, and, then, as those newly *created in Christ*, we are to *maintain good works*.



“What the law
can’t do is
precisely what
grace does
best...”

Obedience is at the heart of our calling as believers: *He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again* (2 Cor. 5:15). We who have new life through faith in Christ should live no longer for selfish gain but for the glory of our Savior. This is the very purpose of God’s work to save us: *Jesus Christ... gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* (Titus 2:13-14). The Lord Jesus laid down His life for us, not just that we might be with Him forever in heaven, but also that we might eagerly obey Him now on earth.

True Motivation

One of the basic beliefs underlying the “license-to-sin” objection is that law is the only, or at least best, motivating force for good. Without rules and the punishments associated with breaking them, it’s assumed that nobody will regularly choose to do what’s right. God, however, has a different perspective.

After having set forth in Romans 6:1-13 grace’s transforming work in our hearts and our responsibility in light of it, Paul makes the following astounding statement about law, grace, and sin: *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace* (Rom. 6:14).

In case your eyes glossed over that, I’ll quote it again: *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Do you realize what Paul is saying here? He’s equating being *under law* with being ruled by sin and equating being *under grace* with being freed from sin. Imagine that—the law promotes sin and grace prevents it!

This verse begins a line of teaching which he expands upon in chapter 7 about the inability of the law. Though all of the commands that God gave to Moses are *holy, and just, and good* (7:12), they lack the power to make people holy and just and good. All that they can do is reveal how unholy and unjust and bad we are in our disobedience to them.

Because sin’s grip upon us is so strong, the only wall that we feel like touching is the one with the sign that says, “Fresh paint, don’t touch!” Forbidden fruit always looks the most attractive to our fallen eyes. Hence, Paul’s conclusion:

“Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (7:13).

God hasn’t given us the law to keep us from being sinners but to show us that we need a Savior²

Everything is wonderfully different *under grace*. What the law can’t do is precisely what grace does best—give righteousness and life. And far from being contradictory, obedience and grace go hand in hand in the lives of Christians, as Paul tells Titus: *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world* (Titus 2:11-12). Like a good parent, grace *teaches* or trains her children to reject evil and be devoted to good. It both rescues and reforms. It removes our wrongs and moves us to do right. We now strive to obey, not because of the fear of hell, but because of the assurance of heaven and the joy which grace has implanted within our heart. We endeavor to please God, not because we have to, but

2. Paul also teaches elsewhere that the law’s only purpose today is to point out our sin and lead us to Christ (Rom. 3:19-20; 4:15; 5:20-21; 7:5-6; Gal. 3:19-24; 1 Tim. 1:5-11).

because we want to. Grace is the most powerful force that the world has ever known.

Overcoming Evil

How, then, should we respond to the accusation that salvation by grace gives us an open invitation to “live like the devil”? Some of our brothers seek to defend the gospel by arguing that a believer must not, or will not, sin anymore—at least not too much or for too long—and that he must, or will, perform good works instead—at least some good works some of the time. Or else! Though such answers may sound good, they cause far more problems than they solve. For one thing, they’re hopelessly relative. How much sin is “too much”? Which sins are “too serious”? How long can we keep sinning without its being “too long”? Which good works are necessary and how many are “enough”? Far worse yet, they confuse the gospel by making salvation dependent, in part, upon our manner of life, and they destroy the full assurance of salvation.³

The truth is that all of us live like the devil to a greater or lesser extent, even those who don’t think that they have a license to do so. If we say that we never live that way, we’ve just proven that we’re liars (1 John 1:8). And we all know who the father of lies is (John 8:44).

So let’s praise God, little devils! Praise God that He’s offering us a

free ticket to heaven paid for by Christ’s obedience rather than our own: *For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous* (Rom. 5:19). Praise God that, once we accept it, we’re eternally secure, and not even our most devilish deeds will ever break God’s seal upon us: *grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption* (Eph. 4:30). Without God’s unmerited favor, we’d all equally deserve His undiluted wrath.


Our apostle makes it clear that grace does, indeed, give us the freedom to sin. But that’s only half of the picture. God, by grace, not only unconditionally saves us but also wholly transforms us. He transformed our spirit when we believed the gospel by uniting us with Christ and putting an end to our old life dominated by sin. He also keeps forming us further as we grow, molding us more and more into the *image* of Christ: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (2 Cor. 3:18).

As a result of God’s miraculous work within, we have the ability to resist sin and *walk in newness of life* (Rom. 6:4). Moment by moment, day after day, God’s grace constantly beckons us to follow the path of righteousness and even enables us to do so as we rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit.

3. The most that some theological paradigms give is conditional assurance. They say, “You were/are/will be saved if ...” followed by a list of do’s and don’ts usually disguised as “marks of a true believer.” Failure to fulfill the conditions proves that we have either lost our salvation or never, truly, possessed it at all.

Is it grace's fault that believers sometimes go astray? Together with Paul, we answer: *God forbid!* Grace never says, "Go ahead, Christian, live however you please because you're saved and secure in Christ." We don't ever continue in sin for grace's sake or with grace's approval. The fact that we still sin proves nothing about the adequacy of grace as a motivator—or about our salvation—only that we as saved people still have a tendency to follow other motivating forces besides grace. Far too often we shut our ears to her majestic melody

of holiness and, instead, sprint after the loathsome, though strangely enticing, screech of *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* (1 John 2:16).

Yet even when we wander off, grace never gives up on us. It pursues us, convicts us, leads us back to the right path, and ever urges us to keep trudging forward. In this sense, grace doesn't give us a license to do evil. Indeed, it gives us something infinitely better—the freedom, desire, and power to *overcome evil with good* (Rom. 12:21). 



Location: *Berean Bible Society*
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Germantown, WI 53022

Time: 10:00 am until 8:30 pm

Price: \$20.00 pre-registration by February 1, 2021 (space is limited)

2 Bible Sessions led by Pastor Kevin Sadler

Activities at the Berean Bible Society Building will include:

Ice Breakers, Lunch, Ping-Pong, Corn Hole, Dinner/Dessert.
Volleyball and Basketball games at the local YMCA gym.

For more information, please contact: *Berean Bible Society* at:
(262) 255-4750, or email: jessica@bereanbiblesociety.org



BBS Letter Excerpts



From Florida:

“I listen to *Transformed By Grace* on YouTube...Pastor Kevin is wonderful! I can't believe how much I didn't know, and I look forward to all I will learn!”

From Ohio:

“My internet service took away almost all my Christian programming, and I just happened to find your program. I'm a born again Christian, and that was the best message on Solomon I've ever heard. It was so clear, and I get it.”

From our Inbox:

“Aw, Brother Kevin, Glory be to God!!!! Just heard your sermon on TV about Moses wanting to see and know more of God. WOW! If only the people in the Body of Christ would crave knowing God like that.”

From Massachusetts:

“Since 1974 I have watched many TV pastors and evangelists and teachers. My opinion is that very few have included the Bible not compromised or watered down. Your program is pure gospel and a joy to listen to.”

From Facebook:

“Thanks for making the point clear for those who don't rightly divide the Word of truth. Pray they would have spiritual eyes to see and open hearts to be receptive to the key that unlocks the confusion. Thank you, Pastor Kevin.” (In response to the May President's Note).

From Texas:

“I am an 81-year-old Southern Baptist pastor who is 10 years retired...During my 10 years of retirement I...discovered the Berean website and...discovered many things in the Bible that I never really saw before....Having been given this new knowledge by the Lord so late in my life, I felt like I should share it with others....I have lost two...good friends...But...I am being blessed by Bro. Sadler's sermons on TV.”

From Wisconsin:

“After reading Pastor Sadler's 'Note from the President' in May, my heart is again at rest. I have friends that need to read this.”

From Facebook:

“I hope all my family and friends read this with an open mind.” (In response to the May President's Note.)

From Missouri:

“Last evening I was doing my second read through the April, 2010 article: 'The Measure of the Ministry'...I was so blessed by re-reading it...I will continue to labor for Him. I plan to use this 'revisited' *Searchlight* article when I speak before our small women's group...My sincere thanks for this article.”

From Delaware:

“I love the *Searchlight*. After reading it, I take my name off of it, and it goes to the YMCA.” (It's fun to read at the YMCA! –Ed.).

From California:

“Catchy title, Pastor Ricky, [‘The Rarity of Charity’] followed by a squirm-factor message. Keeping this one.”

From Idaho:

“Been teaching through the Gospels chronologically. Your MP3 lessons have been helpful on John 14-16.”

From our Inbox:

“Holy cow!...Pretty sure Stam wrote this [‘Do the Work of An Evangelist’] in the 50s but it sure sounds like it was written in this decade!”

From England:

“Last year’s conference was THE greatest event of my entire life!!”

From our Inbox:

“Pastor Kevin...I want to thank you for the wonderful conference in Lancaster on Saturday and Sunday. Praising the Lord!”

From Uganda:

“I am so much blessed to have my questions answered. Thank you so much and always keep correcting us.”

From Arizona:

“That was a great chapter [‘How To Deal With Sin In My Life’]. Most insightful! Thanks!”

From our Inbox:

“Thank you so much for answering my questions. I am a retired medical doctor and got saved by the grace message! I asked too many questions, regarding Matthew 5:5 and Mark 16:16, for example! Then met Ed Wisart in South Africa in early 80s... my life changed!”

From Florida:

“I am understanding the Bible more each time thanks to your program.”

From our Inbox:

“Hi Ricky, I wish I could address you as pastor, but we have been past that...This is primarily because of your lack of understanding of Scripture...I am solidly a dispensational believer. But you take things way past that into areas that are not dispensational...Your passion is in the right place but your knowledge of God’s Word has been tempered by what you think those in BBS before you explained.” (I freely admit to being well taught! –Ed.)

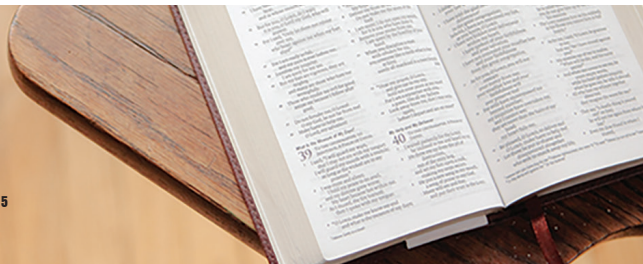
From South Africa:

“Thank you for all you are doing for the Lord in sharing Paul’s Gospel....We marvel at how God is using you to teach and encourage us at the southern tip of another continent. My mom and I recently started...a weekly Bible study...since there are no nearby grace churches....We only recently listened to your ‘What to do if there is not a nearby grace church?’ message, so this was both a tremendous encouragement and confirmation to us.”

From Pennsylvania:

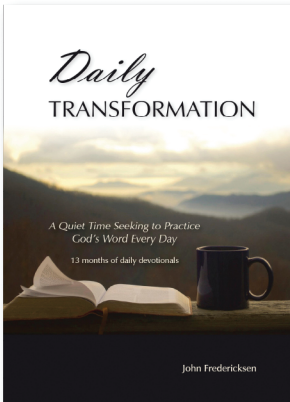
“An echo from Carlisle! Thanks... for sharing the truth of the mystery... with people like me. Your writings, video and audio programs have had a profound impact on me, my wife of 30 years and our four kids. Pastor Sadler, Pastor Kurth, and all the staff... thank you for your constant outpouring of spiritual meat that feeds us each day. You are making a difference in our family and community.”

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”



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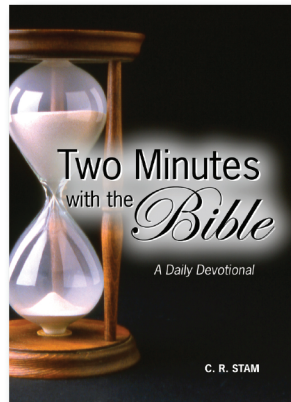
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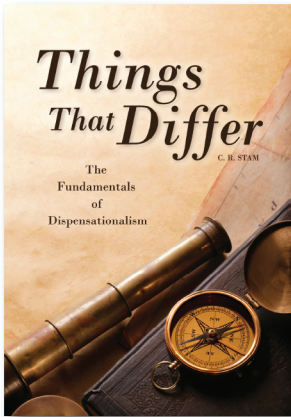
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News and Announcements

Show and Tell: Here at BBS, we love to hear from people who tell us how our ministry has blessed them, and we also love to share letters like that in our Letter Excerpts pages. But we didn't realize what we were missing until last month when a reader sent us a picture of himself holding a *Searchlight* while vacationing in a scenic area. We're missing you! So if you'd like to make a 30 second video of you holding the gospel tract that led you to Christ, or the book that taught you the grace message, send it to us and we'll post it on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

We Can Help! If you are thinking of reading your Bible through from cover to cover in 2021, BBS can help! Just go to our website and you'll find two different plans featuring the most popular options. One starts in Genesis and tells you how far to read each day to finish in one year. The other begins in Genesis and Matthew and tells you how far to read if you'd like to spend time each day in both the Old and New Testaments. These plans are also downloadable so you can print them out and keep them in your Bible. "Give attendance to reading!" (1 Tim. 4:13).

Presidential Visit in 2021: As your church makes plans for the coming year, consider inviting Pastor Kevin, president of BBS, to come to your assembly in 2021. No group is too small! He would love the opportunity to preach the Word, rightly divided, and inform your church about the various ministries of *Berean Bible Society*.

New Alabama Church! If you live in Birmingham, you'll be happy to learn that our new friend John Woods is home churching on Thursday evenings at 6:30 at 921 Viridian Way. His group is still small enough to ensure social distancing should that still be a concern by the time you read these words. If you're hungering for some in-person fellowship, why not join this group of grace believers whose hearts are being "knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery" (Col. 2:2). Email John at jwoods1768@gmail.com to learn more.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Pastor Kurth "Pulpit Supply," December 13, Sheridan, AR

BBS Grace Singles Event, February 13, 2021, Germantown, WI

BBS Footsteps of Paul Greece Tour, October 2021

Bible Study Books

Written by BBS Presidents

(This is only a partial price list. For a full price list please see our website or contact BBS.)

BOOKS BY C. R. STAM

Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Volume 1 (Hardcover).....	\$21.50
Acts, Dispensationally Considered, Volume 2 (Hardcover).....	21.50
Baptism and the Bible (Paperback).....	9.00
Colossians (Hardcover).....	14.50
I Corinthians (Hardcover).....	12.50
II Corinthians (Hardcover).....	12.50
Divine Election and Human Responsibility (Hardcover).....	10.50
Galatians (Hardcover).....	14.50
Lord's Supper and the Bible, The (Paperback).....	7.00
Man, His Nature and Destiny (Hardcover).....	12.50
Moses and Paul (Paperback).....	7.00
No Other Doctrine (Paperback).....	9.00
Our Great Commission (Paperback).....	9.00
Pastoral Epistles (Hardcover).....	12.50
Paul, His Apostleship and Message (Hardcover) <i>Out of Stock</i>	11.50
Romans (Hardcover).....	16.50
Thessalonians (Hardcover).....	12.50
Things That Differ, English or Spanish (Paperback).....	10.00
True Spirituality (Hardcover).....	11.50
Two Minutes with the Bible (Paperback).....	11.00
Twofold Purpose of God, The (Paperback).....	7.00

BOOKS BY PAUL M. SADLER

Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (Hardcover).....	\$12.50
Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter, The (Paperback).....	12.00
Oneness of Marriage, The (Paperback).....	8.00
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Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Hardcover).....	12.00
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*Revelation, Volume 4 (Hardcover).....	15.00
Studies in James (Paperback).....	10.00
Triumph of His Grace, The (Hardcover).....	13.50

BOOKS BY KEVIN J. SADLER

*Revelation, Volume 4 (Hardcover).....	\$15.00
Runaways (Paperback).....	8.00

**Revelation, Volume 4 was authored by Kevin J. Sadler and Paul M. Sadler*

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