

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2021



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This month’s cover features Split Rock Lighthouse in Two Harbors, Minnesota.

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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From the Editor to You

Dear Friends in Christ,

When four of my five speaking engagements were canceled last year, Pastor Kevin Sadler suggested that I visit four of our grace churches that are currently without a pastor. I thought that was a wonderful idea, and began in September with a trip to Bowler, Wisconsin, to minister to the saints of *Grace Bible Church*.

This historic grace church was originally located in nearby Wittenberg, but when their building needed pricey repairs, they purchased a restaurant and renovated it so well that it is now a lovely facility. The grace believers there confessed that they had always wanted to ask me to come to speak, but thought I was too busy!

In October I traveled to Linton, Indiana, where the saints of *Grace Gospel Church* added a new sanctuary to their existing facilities some years ago. The hunger for God's rightly divided Word that I saw in their faces as I preached made it so that my visit there was as much a blessing to me as it was to them.

November found me at *Grace Bible Church* of Goodlettsville, Tennessee, where they meet in a motel conference room. Each Sunday this Bible Belt motel allows them to put a sign in the lobby directing their lodgers to the meeting room. When I asked if travelers ever took advantage of this opportunity to worship while on the road, they said that they often did. What a great way to share Pauline grace!

By the time you read these words, I will have made my final excursion in December to *Grace Fellowship Bible Church* of Sheridan, Arkansas, where a group of Missionary Baptists learned the grace message some years ago and built a building large enough to include a gymnasium. I'll be accompanied by Oscar Ochoa Jr., a young man who grew up in my church and is now praying about becoming a pastor. Our ten hour drive there and back will afford me plenty of time to continue to mentor him.

One of the reasons I share all this with you is to invite you to pray for these congregations, all of whom meet in a variety of types of buildings. Plus, when our good friend Jerry Sterchi heard about these visits, he sent me a list of *ten more* pastorless grace churches for whom we should pray.

But the other reason I wrote this is to encourage you. While many grace believers were homebound for much of last year, I hope it heartens you to learn from this report that "the Word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9), and *cannot* be bound, no matter what happens in life. Such is the power of our God and the eternal Book that He has written.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ricky Kurth



Know Ye Not?

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

A retired clergyman told the following story: “When I was a younger man, I volunteered to read to a degree student named John who was blind. One day I asked him, ‘How did you lose your sight?’

“‘A chemical explosion,’ John said, ‘at the age of thirteen.’ ‘How did that make you feel?’ I asked. ‘Life was over. I felt helpless...,’ John responded. ‘For the first six months I did nothing to improve my lot in life. I would eat all my meals alone in my room. One day my father entered my room and said, ‘John, winter’s coming and the storm windows need to be up—that’s your job. I want those hung by the time I get back this evening...!’ Then he turned, walked out of the room and slammed the door. I got so angry. I thought, ‘Who does he think I am? I’m blind!’ I was so angry I decided to do it. I felt my way to the garage, found the windows, located the necessary tools, found the ladder, all the while muttering under my breath, ‘I’ll show them. I’ll fall, then they’ll have a blind and paralyzed son!’” John continued, ‘I got the windows up. I found out later that never at any moment was my father more than four or five feet away from my side.’”¹

In time past, God’s glorious presence resided in the temple in Jerusalem. Today, under grace, if you have trusted Christ as your personal Savior, God’s Word teaches “that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you” (1 Cor. 6:19). Under grace, the body of each believer is the temple of God and so is blessed with the indwelling presence of God. God lives in us!

Like that blind young man, perhaps we are unaware that God is there and with us. Maybe we need the reminder that Paul gave the Corinthians: “What? know ye not...?” Since the Spirit is in us, He is with us in and through all of life’s experiences. It is impossible for Him not to know what we do or go through on a moment-to-moment basis. And thus the Word teaches that the Spirit feels our hurts (Rom. 8:26), grieves when we sin (Eph. 4:30), leads us (Rom. 8:14), strengthens us in the inner man (Eph. 3:16), and gives supply for our needs (Phil. 1:19).

May we nurture a strong, ever-growing awareness of God and live in light of His presence in us.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

1. William Frey, Sermon Central, contributed April 6, 2004, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-illustrations/16198/william-frey-retired-episcopal-bishop-from-by-evie-megginson>.

Quit Being Such a Baby!

PASTOR RICKY KURTH

Berean Searchlight Editor



On the day that little Johnny's mother brought his new baby brother home, the newborn was screaming up a storm. So Johnny asked, "Where'd he come from?" His mom answered, "He came down from heaven." He replied, "Well, I can see why they threw him out!"

If you are wondering why I'm talking about babies, it's because of what Paul said to the Corinthians in the first two verses of our text in 1 Corinthians 3:1-6:

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:1,2).

Now you probably know what Paul meant when he called them "babes in Christ." When you're born into the world you're given life, and you become a baby. When you get saved, you're born again and given *eternal* life, and

you become a *spiritual* baby—a babe in Christ.¹

But the Corinthians had been saved about *five years* by the time Paul wrote that, and he *still* had to refer to them as babes. They obviously hadn't experienced any spiritual growth. So what do you say we take some time to learn *why* they failed to grow, so we don't fall into the same spiritual trap.

Nourish the Newborn

As I'm sure you know, if you don't *feed* a baby with nourishing food, he won't grow. And if you don't feed a babe in Christ the *spiritual* nourishment of the Word of God, he won't grow *spiritually*.

But we know that's *not* why the Corinthians failed to grow, for in speaking of how the church in Corinth got started, Luke wrote:

"...Paul...came to Corinth...and he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them" (Acts 18:1,11).

1. See page 36 of my book *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions* if you'd like to consider evidence that members of the Body of Christ are indeed born again, despite what is often taught to the contrary.

When Paul founded the church in Corinth, he stayed and fed them God's Word *for a year and a half!* And as it says in our text, he began by feeding them the "milk" of God's Word—the simpler things of the Scriptures. Everyone knows that babies need milk to grow, and spiritual babies need the milk of the Word to grow spiritually, as Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:2:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, *that ye may grow thereby.*"

But Paul had fed the Corinthians the milk of the Word for eighteen months! And we know that in the years that followed those months he *continued* to feed them with nourishing spiritual milk *in his epistles*.

And not just the two Corinthian epistles that appear in our Bibles. We know that Paul wrote at least one letter prior to 1 Corinthians, for in that first epistle he made reference to an *earlier* letter (1 Cor. 5:9). He probably wrote them more often than even that, for "the care of all the churches" was something that was sure to weigh heavily on his shoulders (2 Cor. 11:28), something that would have prompted him to keep in close touch with the churches he founded through a vigilant correspondence ministry.²

But even after all that spiritual nourishment, Paul heard through the grapevine—perhaps from the members of "the house of Chloe" that he mentioned earlier in this epistle (1:11)—that the Corinthians hadn't *grown* in the Word. He probably *also*

deduced this from epistles that the Corinthians wrote *him* (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1).

But no matter how he learned of their undeveloped spiritual growth, the bottom line is that he knew he couldn't give them the *meat* of the Word—the deeper things of the Bible—that they should have been able to handle by that time. So the question remains: why had they failed to grow? I mean, if it wasn't for a lack of spiritual nourishment, what else could have been the problem?

Stunted Growth Among the Hebrews

As we'll see in a minute, their problem was a lot like the one we read about in Hebrews 5:11-14 where, speaking of a mysterious man named Melchisedeck (v. 10), it says:

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, *seeing ye are dull of hearing.* For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; *and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: *for he is a babe.* But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of *use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

The reason those Hebrews had failed to grow is that they hadn't *used* what they had learned. You can tell by the way the writer

2. Paul mentions another non-canonical epistle in Colossians 4:16.

reproaches them that *they too* had been saved for years. They had learned the difference between good and evil years earlier, but they hadn't been *using* what they'd learned. They hadn't been *living* like they knew the difference between good and evil. So even though they'd been saved for years, the writer calls *them* babes too!

Now is there anything you can learn from that? Studying the Bible is critically important, but just *knowing* the Bible doesn't cause you to grow. You have to *use* the things you learn if you want to grow to become a mature, spiritual Christian.

We see that in something the psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:100:

“I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.”

Here the psalmist says that he understood the Word of God better than the ancients because he *obeyed* the Word of God. That verse is probably the basis of the old saying that says that God won't give you more understanding of His Word if you're not living up to the understanding you already have. Why should He bother to do that if you're not *using* the understanding you have?

A Common Problem

But this Hebrew problem of not growing because of not using what they learned is the same one the Corinthians had. We know that because after telling them they weren't able to bear the meat of the Word at the end of verse 2, Paul went on to tell them *why* they weren't able to bear it

when he began verse 3 with the word “for”:

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor. 3:3).

The reason the Corinthians hadn't grown to where they could bear the meat of the Word was that they were *carnal*. We know that word means *sinful* because after pronouncing them carnal, Paul added, “*for...there is among you envying, and strife.*” Envy and strife are sins! And if you think about it, they are really very *babyish* sins.

Have you ever watched babies play together? When one of them picks up a toy, suddenly that's the toy that the other one wants! Well, we have a word for that. We call it *envy*! And what does the baby do about it? He will usually begin to *strive* with the one who has what he wants.



So when Paul says that the Corinthians were guilty of envy and strife, that means they hadn't grown to become mature, spiritual, adult Christians. They were still living in infantile iniquity, walking “as men”—*unsaved* men.

By the way, the Corinthians spoke in tongues, and yet Paul calls them *carnal*. So don't ever let anyone tell you that speaking

in tongues is a sign of spirituality—and some Pentecostal believers *will* try to tell you that.

But now the question is this: what were the Corinthians envying? Whatever it was, it was causing *strife*. And strife, by the way, is the Bible word for *an angry disagreement* (Prov. 15:18; 29:22). And when the Corinthians strove with one another and *experienced* those angry disagreements, it was causing “divisions” among them. So what could they have been envying?

The Haves vs. the Have-nots

When we think of *envying*, we usually think of envying *material possessions*. Some people have a lot of them, and some don't. We call them “the haves” and “the have-nots.” And as I don't have to tell you, the “have-nots” tend to *envy* the “haves.” And that often causes angry disagreements when the have-nots *lash out* against the haves about *being* have-nots!

Politicians all have ideas about how to fix this class variance, but if you're a mature believer, avoiding the envy that naturally accompanies it is an easy fix. If you're one of the have-nots, *just don't envy the haves!*



Most of the men in the church that I pastor envy the beautiful Harley that one of our men rides

to church—and some of our ladies envy it too! During the coronavirus lockdown the man helped me with some painting at church and helped me salve my envy a little by letting me sit on it. But I don't have any angry disagreements with him just because he has a beautiful motorcycle and I don't. And the others in our assembly who envy him don't cause divisions by making him sit all by himself in church. We've learned to deal with our envy *graciously!*

But the Corinthians weren't envying two-wheeled chariots made by Harley-Davidson. They were envying something that Paul had in mind when he warned Timothy about men who were always

“...doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings...” (1 Tim. 6:4).

We know that the Corinthians were envying someone's words, for Paul went on in our text to say, **“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (1 Cor. 3:4).**

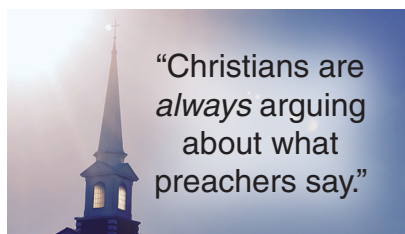
This shows that the Corinthians were envying and striving about the words of the Apostle Paul and one of his coworkers, a man named Apollos. And if you don't know how the words of preachers can cause envy and strife in a church, you haven't hung around enough preachers or churches! Christians are *always* arguing about what preachers say.

But maybe you're wondering, “Where's the *envy* come in?” If so, look what happened to Moses in Numbers 11:27-29 when

“...there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the

camp. And Joshua...answered and said, My lord Moses, *forbid them*. And Moses said unto him, *Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets...*"

When some other men started prophesying like Moses, Joshua got *envious* for his sake! He evidently felt that Moses should be the *only* man prophesying in the camp.



But as you can see, *Moses* didn't get envious that other men were prophesying. And as we read on in our text, we see that *Paul* didn't get envious that *Apollos* was preaching:

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. 3:5).

Obviously, Paul didn't envy Apollos, and he didn't want the Corinthians envying Apollos for his sake. Both Moses and Paul knew that it is just as childish to envy the words of one spiritual leader over another as it is to envy the material possessions of another.

We Have It on Good Authority

But having said all that, there's something I need to point out here. When Moses said that he didn't want Joshua to envy those other men for his sake, that

didn't mean that Moses thought those other men had the same spiritual *authority* that he had. Moses knew that he was God's man of the hour under the dispensation of the law. Look what he said about himself in Deuteronomy 4:1,2:

"Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them...Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

As you can see, Moses *pounded home* the fact that he was the man that the people of Israel had to follow if they wanted to obey God. He was the man God had chosen to write the first five books of the Bible and give the Jews the law that contained the rules and guidelines for them during the dispensation of the law. He just didn't let it go to his head, to where he thought he was the *only* one who could teach the things that God gave him. And he didn't want Joshua thinking that either.

And Paul didn't want the Corinthians to think that about *him*, even though he knew that he was God's man of the hour for *today*. Let's compare some things that Moses and Paul said about themselves, beginning with Moses, who wrote:

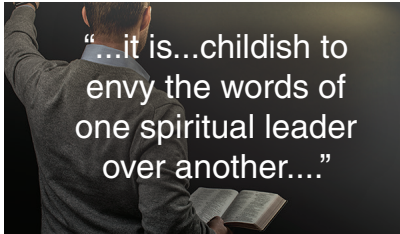
"Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me..." (Deut. 4:5).

Doesn't that sound a lot like some things that Paul wrote to the Corinthians?

“...I delivered unto you first of all *that which I also received...*” (1 Cor. 15:3).

“...I have received of the Lord *that which also I delivered unto you...*” (1 Cor. 11:23).

Do you see the comparison? Moses said that he gave Israel what God had given *him*, and Paul said that he gave the Corinthians what God had given *him*.



Do you know what that means? It means that if you wanted to follow God in time past you had to follow Moses as he followed God. And if you want to follow God today, you have to follow Him as Paul followed Him. Isn't that what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1?

“Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ.*”

So when Paul says something that sounds like Apollos was *equal* in authority with him, like when he said they were both “ministers,” we know that he didn't mean to say that he *wasn't* God's man of the hour. He was just being like Moses in that he was glad there were *other* men preaching what he preached.

The Means By Which God Spilled the Beans

Something else that should be pointed out is that God didn't give Eldad and Medad anything to prophesy that He hadn't given Moses to prophesy first as God's

man of the hour. And another difference between Moses and those prophets was the manner in which God spoke to them, as we see when God told the people of Israel:

“...If there be a *prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so... With him will I speak mouth to mouth...and not in dark speeches*” (Num. 12:6-8).

And these same differences held true for Paul and Apollos. The difference between them was that the Lord spoke to Paul *first* as His man of the hour, and *directly*, as he himself explained to the Galatians when he talked about his message and added,

“...I *neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Gal. 1:12).

The Lord *revealed* the grace message to Paul directly. That's what the word “revelation” means. It's the noun form of the verb *reveal*. The Lord revealed grace truth to Paul face to face, just as He had given the law to Moses.

But that is *not* how men like Apollos learned the new message of grace. Look what Paul says about them in Ephesians 3:2-5:

“...the *dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward...is...revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*”

See the difference? The Lord revealed the grace message to *Paul* face to face, but He revealed it to men like Apollos *by the Spirit*.

So when Paul says that he and Apollos were both “ministers,” you have to keep in mind what he wrote to the Romans, that

“...grace...is given to me of God, That I should be *the* minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles” (Rom. 15:15,16).

As the apostle himself says here, he was *the* minister of God’s new message of grace for the Gentiles. He was just thankful that he wasn’t the *only* minister of grace truth.

By the way, when Paul said that he and Apollos were both “ministers,” it shows that he wasn’t too proud to do what you might call the “grunt work” of the ministry. That is, he wasn’t just some highfalutin apostle sitting in an ivory tower somewhere mailing out epistles to what the world calls “the great unwashed.” He was working out in the mission field with men like Apollos, doing what he went on to describe in the next verse of our text:

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6).

When Paul says that he “planted,” that’s a reference to how he planted *the seed of the gospel of salvation* in Corinth (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23). But some of the Corinthians were like men today and didn’t immediately *believe* the gospel. And as they were mulling it over in their hearts, Apollos came along and *watered* the gospel seed by assuring them that Paul’s gospel was true.

So as you can see, Paul is comparing the ministry to *farming*—and there are a lot of comparisons. For instance, every farmer knows that you can plant a seed and you can water a seed, but only God can give the increase. That’s because *only God can make a seed*.

A Corny Story

There’s an old illustration of this that preachers used to tell years ago, and I know it because I’m an old preacher and I used to tell it! It’s about a scientist who invented a synthetic kernel of corn. It looked like real corn, and it had the same chemical makeup and composition as real corn. He was so proud of it, he offered a prize to anyone who could tell the difference between his fabrication and the real thing.

Hearing this, a farmer accepted his challenge, and won the prize by merely *planting* both seeds, and watering them. Eventually the natural kernel of corn sprouted and grew into a stalk of corn, while the scientist’s corn just dissolved into the soil. That’s because only corn that *God* makes has *life*.


That’s what Paul meant when he said that he planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. You can plant anything you want in the ground, and water it till the cows come home, but only God’s seeds will grow, for only God’s seeds have life. And while I doubt that story is true, I know that the moral of the story is true, spiritually speaking. There’s a lot of “holy books” in the world. They may look like the Bible, and even sound like the Bible. But plant them in the souls of men and nothing will come of it, for only the Word of God has *eternal* life.

And only God’s Word *rightly divided!* God told Abraham that



if he got circumcised it would give him life, and those who remained *uncircumcised* would remain dead in the uncircumcision of their flesh (cf. Col. 2:13). Moses told the Jews that if they obeyed his law it would give them life (Lev. 18:5; Ezek. 20:11,13,21; Luke 10:25,28; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). The Lord said that if men got baptized with water it would give them life (Mark 16:16). Paul is the only one who says that faith alone, without works like

that, can give eternal life. That means if you plant any of those other seeds in the souls of men in this dispensation, even though they are seeds found in the Bible, they won't give eternal life any more than the Book of Mormon, the Koran, or any other so-called holy book.

So if you believe that proclaiming God's word *rightly divided* is worth giving your life to, say *Amen!* Then get busy planting and watering! 

Question Box

“God often says that He is a jealous God (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; etc.), and I John 4:8 says that ‘God is love.’ So how can 1 Corinthians 13:4 say that ‘love is not jealous’?”

This is an example of the kind of question that has to be answered by recognizing a translation error. The *King James Version* of the Bible says that “charity *envieth* not,” but I’m aware of at least two dozen new Bible versions that mistranslate the Greek word for “*envieth* not” as “is not *jealous*.”

Envy and jealousy are not the same. We know that jealousy cannot be a sin because God says *He* is jealous over and over (Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16,21; etc.), and “God cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13). On the other hand, *envy* is condemned as a sin numerous times (Prov. 24:1,19; Rom. 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:21,26).

Husbands and wives sometimes ask if it is wrong for *them* to be jealous. We know it’s not, for when some false teacher tried to woo the Corinthians away from grace by preaching the “Jesus” of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to them (2 Cor. 11:4), Paul told them to put him on the pay-no-mind list, adding,

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (v. 2).

Paul would not have made that comparison if marital jealousy were sinful. That means we should be as “jealous for the LORD” as Elijah (1 Kings 19:10,14) when it comes to those who would try to entice grace believers to forsake the Christ of Paul’s epistles.—Pastor Kurth

Are You A Lot Like Lot?

Do Not Damage This Ticket

State Lottery

2 4 13 22 29 34



PAT KILGO
Contributing Writer

A recent article I read told the individual stories of some lottery winners who had become bankrupt. Most lottery winners are unaccustomed to having large sums of money, and soon they find themselves in need of a “bigger this” and a “better that.” I was surprised to learn that almost one-third of them eventually declare bankruptcy. In fact, they are far more likely to declare bankruptcy within five years than the average American!

This fact was a real “head-scratcher” for me. How could something like this possibly happen? Most people live their lives on the brink of financial disaster, and then the ones with the fewest excuses for bankruptcy end up losing everything? It’s just so unnecessary!

Bankrupted lottery winners have a lot in common with Abraham’s nephew, Lot. As a young man, Lot was rich and blessed with every opportunity to succeed. But as his life unfolded, sadly we discover that Lot made poor spiritual choices that led to downfall and disgrace. As a result, Lot twice lost all of his wealth (Gen. 14:1-12; 19:24-30), lost his wife (Gen. 19:26), and became a slave (Gen. 14:12). By the time he died, he was a bitter, penniless, drunk, incestophile living in a cave—a real “riches to rags” story if ever there was one.

You might be tempted to think that Lot was just another unbeliever wrapped up in worldly things. The Bible makes it clear, however, that he was a believer! Peter writes of God’s judgment and specifically mentions Lot:

“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)” (2 Pet. 2:6-8).

The Bible doesn’t throw around words like “just” and “righteous” to describe the unredeemed—Lot was a believer! But today we remember

him as an example of how NOT to live the life of faith. How did he fall so far? What can believers do to avoid making the same kinds of mistakes? The life of Lot offers us the answers.

As a counselor, I can tell you that many counselees have problems with roots tracing all the way back to their childhoods. These early influences can be extremely difficult to overcome, setting up the person for a life of struggles. It's entirely likely that Lot had early childhood exposures to licentious behaviors, and while he could have overcome

those influences, these experiences may well explain some of the attitudes that led to his eventual fall. The Bible says this of Lot's early days:

"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there" (Gen. 11:31).

The intention of Terah, the grandfather of Lot, was to take his family to Canaan, which was polluted with idolatry (Lev. 18:24-25). Terah himself became an idolater at some point (Josh. 24:2) and eventually settled in Haran. Abraham (then known as Abram) presumably was also exposed to idolatry and licentiousness but managed to live life on the "straight and narrow" (we will discover how below). This serves as another subtle reminder that we should strive to provide a godly environment for our children during their impressionable years.

When Abraham receives his first call from God (Gen. 12:1-3), we immediately see that Lot shares in that blessing:

"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came" (Gen. 12:4-5).

Abraham's "substance" was substantial; the Bible calls him "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen. 13:2). But in the verses that follow, we will begin to see what separates Abraham from Lot:

"And he (Abraham) went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning,



"...when you break fellowship with God's people...you yourself will soon look just like an unbeliever."

between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents” (Gen. 13:3-5).

The Bible says Abraham visited an altar he had previously built and “called on the name of the Lord.” Lot, the Scripture says, “had flocks, and herds, and tents.” Sometimes what the Bible *doesn’t* say can tell us a great deal. There is no mention in this passage or any other concerning Lot’s devotion to God. Nothing at all. We have to be careful that we don’t “over-interpret” something the Bible doesn’t say, because lack of evidence isn’t proof of anything. But coupled with other events in Lot’s life, we are left with the impression that he was not a spiritually devoted believer.

Abraham, on the other hand, built altars to the Lord everywhere he went (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4,18; 22:9). I once heard a preacher say, “If you were searching for Abraham in the desert, all you had to do was follow the altars he had built until you found him!” Abraham loved God, worshipped him regularly, and knew that He was the reason for the increase in his life. Lot “had flocks, and herds, and tents” but he was lazy in his devotion.

Today, we are just as susceptible to a moral decline like Lot’s if we get lazy in our spiritual disciplines. The consistent practice of spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible study, fellowship, stewardship, gratitude and others are important in keeping us heading in the right direction. When we get loose with those disciplines, rest assured something will take their place, usually worldly things. We then become spiritually weak and open ourselves to compromise. This is what happened to Lot.

For Abraham and Lot, a time soon came when “the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great” (Gen. 13:6). Their herdsmen were disputing with each other over the shared property, so Abraham offered Lot whichever portions of the land he desired. Lot, perhaps eager to unshackle himself from the godly influence of Abraham, did the following:

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where...even as the garden of the LORD... Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other” (Gen. 13:10-11).

Despite clear evidence that Lot’s substance came as a result of Abraham’s blessing, he became secular in his thinking and worldly in his choices. He picked out the best-looking land for himself, figuring that worldly things would ensure his sustenance. Lot disregarded Abraham’s needs and essentially left him with scrub land. Lot chose the bigger, better, wetter land and separated from Abraham. But the very next passage gives us some insight into Lot’s final step towards worldly perdition:

“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly” (Gen. 13:12-13).

You see, when you break fellowship with God’s people and “pitch your tent toward Sodom,” you yourself will soon look just like an unbeliever. I’ve heard younger Christians give me all kinds of rationalizations for hanging out with worldly crowds. And the Apostle Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that we will always have to have one toe in the world (1 Cor. 5:9-10). But when your life becomes characterized by desiring to be in the frequent company of worldly people, then you had better get ready for a fall.


And that’s exactly what happened to Lot. After he inclined his ways to the culture of Sodom, he was living like an unbeliever. Before long, he was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked” (2 Pet. 2:7). The Bible is clear that living with the Sodomites day after day further took a toll on whatever godly influence was left in him: “For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2 Pet. 2:8). Whether you are a new believer trying to find your way or a seasoned spiritual superstar, large amounts of time spent with worldly people will eventually “vex your righteous soul!”

The saddest part of the story is that Lot’s family had “hitched their fortunes to his wagon,” and he brought them down too. Lot’s wife became so enamored of the sinful life in Sodom that she couldn’t tear her eyes away from it as God destroyed it. His daughters married wicked men, and the girls themselves were considered no better than whores by their father as the Sodomites sought to tear down the doors of Lot’s house in a sex-crazed frenzy (Gen. 19:8-14). Later the daughters purposefully became impregnated by their own father, who unwittingly was drunk and (ostensibly) unaware. The progeny of one became the Moabites, while the offspring of the other became the Ammonites, nations that plagued Israel throughout her history. None of Lot’s family is remembered by name; they are just debased footnotes in the life of one of the most reprobate men in the Bible.

How about you? Do you find yourself becoming lazy in your spiritual disciplines like Lot? Or have you started to value worldly things over spiritual things? Does the crowd you desire to fellowship with look more like Sodomites or more like Abraham?

Even if you find yourself in advanced stages of worldliness, you can always turn back to God, and it starts with a reboot of your spiritual disciplines. The psalmist tells us exactly where to begin!

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word” (Psa. 119:9).

May God’s Word tame our wondering hearts! And may the disappointing life of Lot motivate each of us toward the higher calling of Christ Jesus our Lord. 

Things Pertaining to the Kingdom



(From a message given at the 2019 BBF Summer Conference in Tipp City, Ohio)

PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER
BBS President

“In the midst of a storm, a little bird was clinging to the limb of a tree, seemingly calm and unafraid. As the wind tore at the limbs of the tree, the bird continued to look the storm in the face, as if to say, ‘Shake me off; I still have wings.’

“Because of Christ’s resurrection, each Christian can look the experience of death in the face and confidently say, ‘Shake me off; I still have wings. I’ll live anyway.’”¹

Through Christ, we have victory over death (1 Cor. 15:51-58). The post-resurrection appearances of Christ over a period of 40 days gave the apostles the confidence, boldness, and strength to minister as Christ’s witnesses and suffer persecution for His name. The knowledge that Christ lives can do the same for us!

Many Infallible Proofs

“To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

Acts 1:3 is the only place we learn that the period between

Christ’s resurrection and ascension was 40 days. The post-resurrection appearances during this time include:

1. Near the tomb, seen by Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9-11).
2. On a road near Jerusalem, seen by the women returning from the tomb (Matt. 28:10-15).
3. On the road to Emmaus, seen by two men (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35).
4. To Simon Peter/Cephas in Jerusalem (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
5. In the Upper Room, seen by 10 of the 11 apostles (Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23).
6. In the Upper Room 8 days later, seen by all 11 apostles (John 20:24-29).
7. By the Sea of Galilee, seen by 7 of the apostles (John 21:1-25).
8. On a mountain in Galilee, seen by the 11 apostles (Matt. 28:16-20).
9. Seen by over 500 disciples (1 Cor. 15:6).
10. Unknown location, seen by James, the Lord’s half brother, and then by “all the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:7).
11. On the Mount of Olives, seen by the apostles (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11).

During the 40 days after His resurrection, the Lord taught His apostles, ate with them, and showed them the scars of His crucifixion. He appeared again and again.



The sum total of all of it was “many infallible proofs,” numerous, undeniable, thoroughly convincing proofs. There was *zero doubt* that Christ rose from the dead. This is the only place that the Greek word translated as “infallible proofs” is used in the New Testament. It means that from which something is surely and plainly known with absolute certainty. It refers to evidence so uncontrovertible that it could be used in a court of law. This was not circumstantial evidence. This was eyewitness testimony. The Apostle John wrote in his first epistle,

“That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have *handled*, of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1).

Showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs for 40 days, the Lord was preparing His apostles to bear testimony to Israel that the One Whom they had crucified was undeniably

alive and risen from the dead. The apostles’ message to Israel was that she should now turn to Him in repentance and faith and accept Him as their Messiah and the Son of God.

Acts 1:3 teaches that they both *saw* and *heard* Him over those forty days. When they heard Him, He spoke “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” “Things pertaining to the kingdom of God” is a good title for the four Gospels and their theme and content. The earthly “kingdom of God” was Christ’s consistent and only message for the apostles to take to Israel.

- **Matthew:** “But seek ye first **the kingdom of God**, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).
- **Mark:** “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into **the kingdom of God**” (Mark 10:25).
- **Luke:** “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in **the kingdom of God** is greater than he” (Luke 7:28).
- **John:** “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see **the kingdom of God**” (John 3:3).

When you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you read about “things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” and Christ continued to teach and reinforce this with His apostles for 40 days after He rose from the dead. The Lord had preached and told Israel that the Kingdom was “at hand”

(Matt. 4:17); this is why the Book of Acts is so important, because in it we learn why the kingdom Christ promised was temporarily postponed.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5).

After referring to the infallible proofs of Christ’s resurrection and teaching in Acts 1:3, Luke relates a meeting the disciples had with the Lord in Jerusalem. The risen Savior commanded them to remain in Jerusalem and to “wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, *ye have heard of Me.*” Prior to His death and resurrection, in the Upper Room, the Lord had told the apostles about the coming of the Spirit:

“But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me” (John 15:26).

The Lord reminded His apostles, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” We find two baptisms in this one statement by the Lord, a wet baptism and a dry one. The Lord taught the apostles that they were to be baptized or identified with the Holy Spirit. This baptism *with* the Spirit, however,

was not the baptism of Jews and Gentiles into one Body. Our baptism into Christ “*by the Spirit*” (1 Cor. 12:13) is part of the revelation of the mystery, which had not yet been revealed during the time of the Gospels and early Acts and was “hid in God” (Eph. 3:9).

The baptism with the Spirit the Lord referred to in Acts 1:5 was a baptism for miraculous power (Luke 24:49). Being filled with the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the power to be witnesses of Christ and to testify effectively to His resurrection. Their bold witness, accompanied by the ability in the Spirit to perform miracles in Christ’s name—casting out demons, raising the dead, speaking in tongues, and healing—gave undeniable testimony to Christ’s resurrection and identity as Israel’s Messiah. The purpose for this was that Israel should believe in Jesus as “both Lord and Christ” and repent of crucifying their Messiah (Acts 2:36-38).

In Acts 1:5, the Lord said the same thing that John the Baptist said when he foretold of Israel’s baptism with the Spirit: “I indeed have baptized you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Mark 1:8). John gives the added detail that *Christ* would be the One Who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. In this, we find another contrast between Israel’s baptism at Pentecost and the Church’s baptism under grace. At Pentecost, *Christ* was the Baptizer Who identified and joined those who had believed with the Holy Spirit. Under grace, the *Holy Spirit* is the Baptizer who identifies and places those who have believed into Christ: “For by

one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit and His power was reserved for kings and prophets, and occasionally everyday people, if and when the Lord wanted to accomplish something extraordinary. The filling of the Holy Spirit was a rare gift and given only temporarily. He filled and empowered certain individuals for a brief time and for a specific purpose and then departed. This baptism at Pentecost, though, was to be a permanent presence of the Holy Spirit. This was new! However, it was also part of prophecy and the new covenant: "I am the LORD...And shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD" (Ezek. 37:13-14).

Christ told His apostles that this baptism would take place "not many days hence." God had a timetable of observances for Israel under the law and her prophetic program. Pentecost means 50 or fiftieth. The Feast of Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks) was 50 days from the end of Passover. Christ showed Himself alive for 40 days and then He ascended to heaven. Therefore, 10 days after Christ's ascension, the feast of Pentecost took place and the Holy Spirit was sent in fulfillment of prophecy. It really was as the Lord said, "not many days hence" (Acts 1:5) they were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

One Last Question

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him,

saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

Suppose you were given the opportunity to ask the Lord one question. What would you ask Him? Our questions would likely center around reassurance of our hope or maybe a "why did this happen" question. Or perhaps it would be, "When will the Rapture take place?"

In Acts 1:6, the apostles were on the Mount of Olives speaking to the Lord for the last time before He departed the earth, and we find their last question for Him and His response. They asked Him about their hope: the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. Believers under prophecy looked forward to that day when the glory of Israel would be restored in the earthly kingdom of their Messiah (Amos 9:11,14-15).

Throughout His earthly ministry, and during His 40-day post-resurrection ministry, the Lord spoke "of the things pertaining to the kingdom" (Acts 1:3). In accord with this, the apostles had a question about "the kingdom of God." Their question was "When? Will You establish it *now*?"

By their question, you see the apostles' conviction that Jesus Christ is Israel's Messiah. After spending over three years with

Him, and seeing Him for 40 days following His resurrection, they fully believed it. So they were simply wondering when His Kingdom would happen, and they were hopeful that it was imminent as they asked “...wilt Thou at this time?”



**“Suppose
you were...to
ask the Lord
one question.
What would
you ask Him?”**

The apostles yearned for the day when the Messiah’s kingdom would be established on the earth, and Israel would be regathered to dwell in the Promised Land in peace and safety, with Christ, the Seed of David, ruling over them in righteousness from David’s throne in Jerusalem. Likewise, when we in the Church think about our Blessed Hope and being caught up in the air to forever be with the Lord in heaven, we’re very much like the apostles in their question; our hope too is that it will take place sooner rather than later and during our lifetimes.

Notice also that the apostles’ question concerned the restoration of the Kingdom *to Israel*. That’s all they knew. They knew nothing of the Body of Christ. And the Spirit coming at Pentecost wasn’t about the beginning of the Church but “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

When Christ told His apostles of the baptism with the Spirit,

they concluded that the restoration of Israel’s Kingdom must be very near. In the disciples’ minds, the coming of the Spirit and the coming of the promised kingdom were linked, because the prophetic Scriptures joined the two, as we see in Isaiah 32:15-18:

“Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high...Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”

Notice how the Lord answered their question in Acts 1:7. It wasn’t, “I’m not going to restore the Kingdom to Israel.” Their understanding of the promised Kingdom and that He would restore it to Israel as her Messiah was correct. Christ’s answer was that it is going to happen, but when it happens is in the Father’s hands and under His authority.


An important condition had to be fulfilled before that Kingdom would come. That condition was Israel’s national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah. This never happened. Israel continued in her unbelief and rejection of Christ. And when Israel’s leaders stoned Stephen, she fell. Instead of Israel’s fall resulting in Daniel’s 70th week and the prophesied Tribulation, however, God turned to the nations and ushered in a previously unknown, hidden dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:2-6). That dispensation—that is, this present dispensation—has delayed the

fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ restoring the Kingdom to Israel.

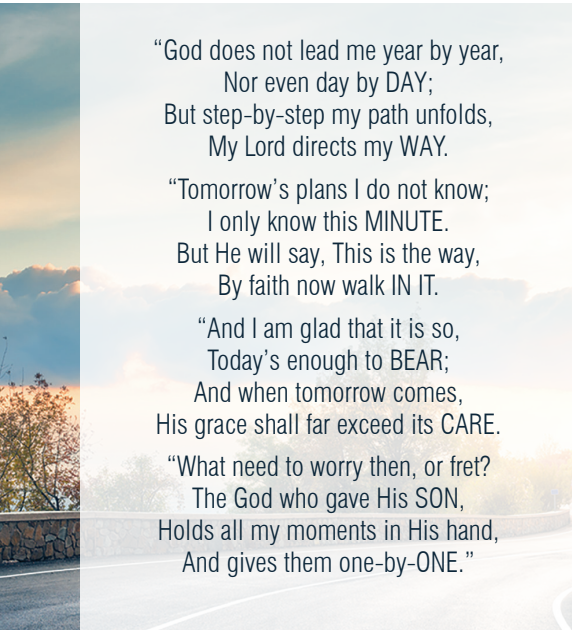
It will happen one day though. Christ's earthly Kingdom will be established, but not until after this dispensation has finished its course with the Rapture, and after the 7-year Tribulation. Only then will the world see Christ's Second Coming and the establishment of the prophesied Kingdom of God.

They asked about the future, the Lord taught His apostles what they presently needed to concern themselves with: being His witnesses in His absence in the power of the Holy Spirit. Like ripples that widen from the place where a stone is tossed into a pond, the apostles were commissioned to begin their ministry at Jerusalem, then the surrounding, southern part of the region of Palestine in Judea, then north to Samaria, and then "unto the uttermost part of the earth." This widening circle was the order for the so-called Great Commission.

The Lord's commission for the apostles had a worldwide scope and outreach because God loves and has always loved the world (John 3:16). However, according to the prophetic program, it was for Israel to be a channel of blessing to the world (Gen. 12:2-3). Therefore, Israel needed to be reached first before they could be the light to the rest of the world. The plan for this commission was in keeping with Mark 7:27: "Let the children [of Israel] first be filled." Only then were the Gentiles to be blessed.

Today under grace though, Gentiles are blessed in spite of Israel's unbelief, because "through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:11). In this age, there is no order of places for us to go to make the gospel of grace known. We just go to the world and tell all people. "We are ambassadors for Christ," and we beg anyone and everyone "in Christ's stead" to "be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). 

1. Wayne A. Lamb, <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/1998/march/3661.html>.



"God does not lead me year by year,
Nor even day by DAY;
But step-by-step my path unfolds,
My Lord directs my WAY.

"Tomorrow's plans I do not know;
I only know this MINUTE.
But He will say, This is the way,
By faith now walk IN IT.

"And I am glad that it is so,
Today's enough to BEAR;
And when tomorrow comes,
His grace shall far exceed its CARE.

"What need to worry then, or fret?
The God who gave His SON,
Holds all my moments in His hand,
And gives them one-by-ONE."





The Clarity of SINCERITY

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Berean Searchlight Editor

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul gave a young minister named Titus some advice that is good for any Christians who long to minister sound Bible doctrine to others:

“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: *in doctrine shewing...sincerity*” (Titus 2:7).

The dictionary says the word *sincere* means *pure* and *unmixed*. That’s why Paul wrote,

“Let us keep the feast, *not with...the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity...*” (1 Cor. 5:8).

God told the Jews under the law to keep the “feast” of unleavened bread right after they kept the passover *by not mixing leaven in their bread* (Lev. 23:4-8), and Paul says that the way to keep that feast today under grace is to keep the leaven of sin out of our lives to show God how thankful we are that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).


Now you would think that every believer would know that our lives should be pure and unmixed with sins like “malice” and “wickedness” as we teach the doctrine of grace. But the carnal Corinthians were *teaching* grace but *living* in malice (1 Cor. 14:20) and wickedness (1 Cor. 5:13), wrongly believing that grace is a license to sin those particular sins and many others. If that describes *your* Christian life and ministry of the doctrine of God’s grace, I’d invite you to consider showing *sincerity* in doctrine instead. Ours is a high and holy calling!

And there are other things with which doctrine shouldn’t be mixed. Paul described his ministry to the Corinthians as one that was conducted “in simplicity and godly sincerity, *not with fleshly wisdom*” (2 Cor. 1:12). Corinth was a city in Greece, and the Greeks were known for the “wisdom” of their philosophers. So in writing to the Corinthians, Paul decried “the wisdom of men” over and over (1 Cor. 1:17-3:19), insisting that *he* had not mixed doctrine with worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 2:4) as evidently Corinth’s “ten thousand” false teachers had done among them (1 Cor. 4:15). Perhaps the reason they seem to have bought into this was that they thought such a mixture was the only way to make the doctrine of grace more palatable and popular. That

prompted Paul to tell them what he told Titus, that doctrine should be preached in *sincerity* instead.

Now you'd think that nearly 2,000 years later preachers would know better than to mix Bible doctrine with the wisdom of men. But when the theory of evolution arose, many pastors were intimidated by science—science that was actually nothing more than “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20). So some of them mixed that example of unbiblical worldly wisdom with the doctrine of creation and came up with something called “theistic evolution.” That's the theory that claims that evolution is real, but that it was set in motion and superintended by God! And there are many other examples that could be cited of mixing doctrine with the wisdom of men.

But instead of taking your valuable time to cite more examples of the folly of worldly wisdom, I'd rather point out one more thing with which sound Bible doctrine should not be mixed, something Paul pointed out when he told the Philippians about some who “preach Christ *even of envy and strife; and...contention*, not sincerely” (Phil. 1:15,16). There are believers who mix sound doctrine with things like envy and strife and contention. In other words, they preach doctrine just to pick a fight with others! I hear from men like this all the time, and I believe it is just as dishonoring to the Lord as mixing doctrine with carnal wickedness or fleshly wisdom.

Before you set this article aside, why not pray about this important matter? Doctrine that is unmixed with carnality, human wisdom, or contentious envy and strife is sure to give your words the clarity of sincerity that you long for as you share grace truth with others. 

SPOTLIGHT on Grace Churches

OLD BETHEL BIBLE CHURCH

352 Old Bethel Church Rd.
Alpha, KY 42603

Senior Pastor: Jeff Bertram

Meeting Times (all times ET):

Sunday: 10:00 am Sunday School (all ages)

Sunday: 11:00 am Worship Service

Sunday: 7:00 pm Evening Service

Wednesday: 7:00 pm

Contact Pastor Jeff Bertam at: (606) 348-3071





THE WICKED ONE REVEALED

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (2 Thes. 2:8).

The first epistle to the Thessalonians was written to remove all anxiety concerning brethren who had died. To remove this anxiety, Paul reviews the blessed truth of the Rapture of the Church which is His Body. Paul writes to them that they might no longer be ignorant of the fact that the saints, whether dead or alive, will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air at His coming (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

Paul’s second epistle was written upon his hearing of the anxiety touching the living saints. He writes to assure them, that in spite of what they might have heard from others, the dreaded “day of the Lord” could not come until the saints were gone. Only after the Church is gathered unto Christ and taken out of this sin-cursed world will “the man of sin,” the wicked one, be revealed. Then will those who rejected the truth, along with the wicked one, become the due objects of God’s wrath. Thus, Paul reassures the Thessalonians that they will be separated from the scene of judgment and the revelation of Satan and the unbelievers.

The foremost concern is that we be not found in the company of those “who believed not the truth.” The moment we believe the gospel—how that Christ died for our sins and took the judgment of God for us—and put our trust in Him, we pass from death unto life. We are saved—saved from our sins and their penalty, saved from eternal separation from God, and saved from the dreaded “day of the Lord.” Once we have put our trust in the Saviour, we can have full assurance with the Thessalonians that “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:9).

—John Baker

BBS Letter Excerpts



From Wisconsin:

"Our local church body has been edified, and our outreach to others has been helped by your resources and publications. Thank you for all you do in reaching others for Christ with the beautiful Pauline truth!"

From Illinois:

"I became a believer in 2011 at the age of 65. As I diligently studied the Word of God, there were many questions that bothered me. I noted these questions in the margins of my Bible. Then dispensational truth was introduced to me in 2015. All of my questions were answered; not immediately, but over time. Since then I have read all I can get my hands on by dispensational teachers."

From Florida:

"I am a long-time reader...of the *Searchlight*. This little booklet, this tool of the Lord, changed everything I knew and did not understand about the Word of God...The Lord used C. R. Stam to 'hook' me, and I am so glad He did!"

From Montana:

"I have been a Christian since... 1960. Thank you for your help in learning about Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, and my growing faith."

From Georgia:

"Thank you so much for the wonderful videos on your website. They are a blessing to watch and learn the message of grace from God's Word."

From Florida:

"I really enjoy Pastor Kevin's video ministry on Roku. I will be using it with some neighbors and family soon."

From Georgia:

"Your program is one of my most treasured times with the Word of God...Thank you for providing such enjoyable and enlightening lessons."

From Pennsylvania:

"We are enjoying Pastor Kevin's series *Portraits of Grace* on channel 64.3, Monday mornings...They are enriching to our souls."

From Mississippi:

"Brother Sadler spoke this week and explained so well the end of miracles and their use. Thank you...I take notes!"

From Michigan:

"Last Sunday at our Men's Council meeting we elected to increase our monthly donation to the video fund.... We are thrilled at the good response from viewers."

From Guam:

"An absolutely wonderful and blessed article that really touched my heart, Brother. 'You've Got to Stand for Something.'"

From California:

"'You've Got to Stand for Something' was a great series. Thanks. We needed that!"

From Pennsylvania:

"I just finished off the final article from the October Searchlight and was incredibly blessed by it....Pastor Willis's experience mirrors my own in regards to discovering and teaching right division and Grace truths.... God bless you Pastor Willis, family and assembly. Your words bring strength to my spirit and may move my body toward a bigger commitment to help others see the truth rightly divided."

From our Inbox:

"Once I started the *Searchlight* I didn't stop until I reached the back cover!...Pastor Kevin's piece on Justification and Sanctification is a gem of a tool. I intend to print out the chart later when the noise of my printer won't wake my wife. I noted that nothing was included in the issue about the virus. That was pleasing since everywhere else has so much of it. Carry on!" (Smart men let sleeping wives lie! -Ed.).

From Texas:

"I was reading the book *Rightly Divided Answers*....Thanks for this book! It has opened my understanding of many questions I had."

From Brazil:

"Thank you once again for sharing your thoughts with me concerning Ephesians 4:8. I'm glad to learn about this difficult passage. Reading what you wrote here, I honestly think the way you interpreted the verse fits best in the context."

From Wisconsin:

"Thank you for *More Minutes With the Bible*. I am doubly blessed each time I download these messages."

From California:

"Dear Pastor Kurth, so you had to go and write another timely *Two Minutes* article! ['Behavior That Honors the Savior']. You're killing me."

From Missouri:

"Thank you so very much for the conference information. We are 78 and 79 years young and so looking forward to our first conference next year in Tipp City, Ohio....Wish we had known about y'all back in 2004 when we first heard the rightly dividing message from Les Feldick Ministries. We found what we had been searching for in order to fully understand the Bible."

From Tennessee:

"Several times I have gotten involved with studies and churches but always felt something was missing. I recently found a copy of the *Berean Searchlight* and found myself reading what seemed to be truth. Everything I read somehow agrees with my spirit...I am hungry to learn and grow in...Pauline teaching."

From Minnesota:

"Since I am unable to attend church services, *Berean Bible Society* has become my source of Bible teaching, rightly divided. Be blessed in this wonderful work you are doing."

From Indiana:

"Our son...is in jail. He receives your *Searchlight*...and he shares it with others. It has been well received there, and is making a difference."

From Pennsylvania:

"We've been receiving the *Berean Searchlight* since the early 70s. Thank you for keeping the light on."



**Your gifts help to keep
the Searchlight shining!**

The Catch of the Month

Don't let your understanding of God's kingdom program peter out, or you'll find yourself robbing Peter to pay Paul!

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

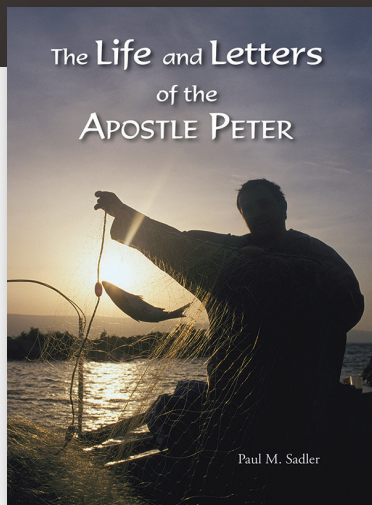
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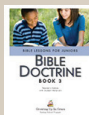
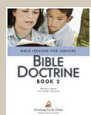
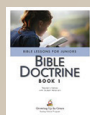


Pat Kilgo's article on Lot this month sure drives home the importance of ensuring that your child is growing up in grace!

TEACHERS MANUALS JUNIOR LEVEL (9-11)

Each book contains 13 Sunday school lessons teaching children the Word of God, rightly divided.

Bible Events Book 1	\$15.00 (Spiral Bound Book)
Bible Events Book 2	\$15.00 (Spiral Bound Book)
Bible Events Book 3	\$15.00 (Spiral Bound Book)
Bible Doctrines Book 1	\$35.00 (Binder)
Bible Doctrines Book 2	\$35.00 (Binder)
Bible Doctrines Book 3	\$35.00 (Binder)
Life of Christ	\$35.00 (Binder)



If you prefer to have the lessons on CD and print just what you need, the CD's of each book are available for \$15.00 each.



News and Announcements

Mingle with Singles! If you are single and would like to meet other grace singles, mark your calendar for the *BBS Singles Event* scheduled for February 13. Then start honing your volleyball and basketball skills for the excursion we'll be making to the local YMCA. If ping-pong and corn hole are more your speed, we'll also be engaging in these and other icebreaker activities here in our spacious office facilities, and Pastor Kevin Sadler will lead two Bible study sessions as well. So contact Jessica Sadler at Jessica@bereanbiblesociety.org to learn more, and be sure to invite your friends!

Welcome a Board Member! Here at BBS, we recently added Pastor Jeff Bertram to our board of directors. Jeff is the pastor of *Old Bethel Bible Church* in Alpha, Kentucky, as well as the owner/operator of the Bertram Lumber Company in nearby Monticello. That means he will be able to provide business advice that is based on spiritual understanding, and spiritual advice that won't conflict with good business sense. Plus, we like the guy! Welcome aboard the board, Jeff!

Music to Our Ears! We recently heard from our BBS webmaster that the MP3 audio Bible studies on our website average about 8,000 downloads *per month*. That means the grace pastors we feature there are leading believers in the study of God's Word over 250 times a day! Why not check to see which of the topical messages and Bible book studies we offer would pique your interest, and then alert your friends to the availability of this valuable resource as well.

An old saying says: "Do your givin' while you're livin'." That way you're knowin' where it's goin'." That's good advice! Many an estate has not found its way to *Berean Bible Society* as the testator had hoped. This underscores the importance of consulting with an attorney when formalizing your will or trust. They can help prevent such misdirection and ensure that Paul's desire for "fruit that may abound to your account" (Phil. 4:17) is not frustrated. The Lord said, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be," and once you're with Him there's no better way to tell the world where your heart was in life than to make *careful* arrangements of your assets before it's too late.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

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

BBS Footsteps of Paul Greece Tour, October 2021



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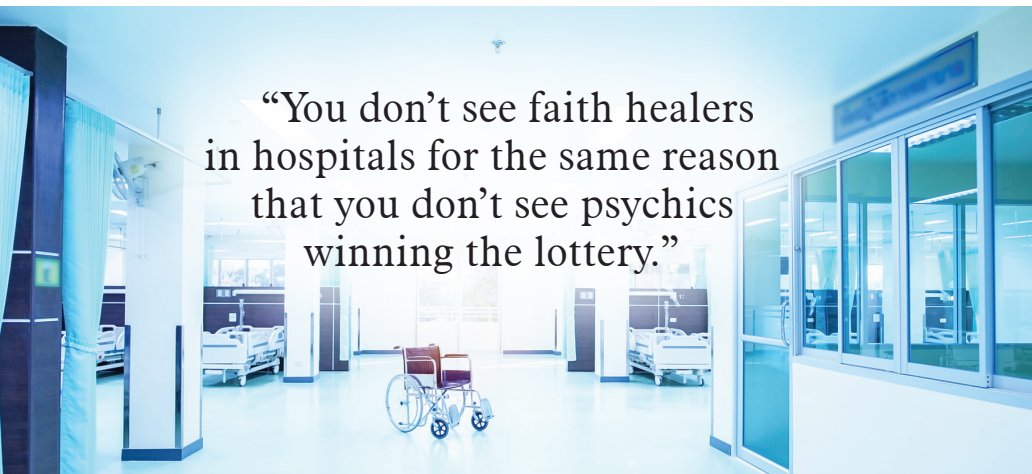
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A photograph of a hospital hallway with a wheelchair in the center. The hallway is brightly lit with large windows on the right and medical equipment on the left. The text is overlaid on the image.

“You don’t see faith healers
in hospitals for the same reason
that you don’t see psychics
winning the lottery.”

Transformed By
Grace

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