BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2021

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This month's cover features Lighthouse List-Ost on the island Sylt, Germany.

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,

I have to admit, I was more than a bit concerned recently when my doctor's nurse called to tell me that I might have colon cancer, one of the leading causes

of cancer-related deaths.

My first thought was to reproach myself for not getting tested a few years ago when my doctor reminded me that it had been 12 years since my first colonoscopy, and the medical community recommends getting tested every 10 years. At the time, I asked him if I could wait three years until I went on Medicare so they could pay for the test instead of me, and he understood and agreed. Then when the time came, he advised me to start by taking the prescreening Cologuard test, a test that can determine whether you actually need the more invasive colonoscopy. I took him up on it, and some days later when I received that disturbing call, I immediately began beating myself up for putting the test off due to mere financial concerns.

When I found the news was distracting me from the work of the ministry that day, I immediately began to minister to myself in the same way I minister to others at such times. I reminded myself that it had not yet been determined that I had colon cancer, and that I would be wise to heed the counsel I often give others and not worry about something that hasn't happened yet. At such times, I always remind people of the Lord's words in Matthew 6:34: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." In other words, there are enough things to be concerned about today without inviting tomorrow's cares to plague us!

Next, I called to mind Paul's exhortation to "be careful [or *full of care*] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). I knew that only in so doing could I claim the promise Paul went on to make: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (v. 7).

And you know what? It worked. I slept well that night and every night after, until the colonoscopy results confirmed that the Cologuard test had been a false positive.

I share this with you because I don't consider myself to be any kind of super saint. I'm just someone who spent my life immersing myself in God's Word and applying it daily to the details of my life. If you'll do the same, you too can have the peace Paul talked about when the bottom drops out of your world, and that will enable you to continue to serve the Lord without distraction, as your heart longs to do.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ricky Kurth

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"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

Many see Christ as the Creator of a new order when He appeared. John walked out of the wilderness after 400 silent years to announce that the Kingdom of Heaven was ready to be set up on this earth. Then Christ the King appeared as proof that God was indeed ready to establish Heaven on earth in keeping with all the promises: to David of a throne, to Abraham of a progeny, and to others of blessing to the whole earth through His people being the head and not the tail, by keeping the Commandments of God (Deut. 28:10-13).

Our Lord appeared to announce God's being ready to set up the long-promised Heaven-on-earth...nothing new here. Israel was rebellious and crucified the King...nothing new here. They killed the twelve after our Lord returned to Heaven, proving they did not want His rule over them...nothing new here.

Paul appears in the middle of Acts to announce he had been sent to the nations (Gentiles)...something NEW here! Until Paul, God always had a door open to the non-Jew (Proselyte)...the back door. Now God announces that the front door of heaven is open to Jew and non-Jew on the same basis. Guilty, hell-deserving sinners can now come by faith in the One who paid for their redemption.

Our Lord came to confirm centuries-old and valid promises, but the Book of Acts records Israel's fall to where the non-Jew always was... something NEW!

-Harold Steinbron



TIMELINE of PAUL'S MINISTRY From Conversion to Martyrdom

KEVIN SADLER



PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER BBS President

Here at BBS, our friends often give us ideas and suggestions for new literature via phone calls, letters, and emails. Last year, I spoke on the phone with Brother John Lynch in Idaho, and we had a great conversation around the Word of God, rightly divided. During the course of the call, John recommended that BBS produce a timeline chart of Paul's ministry and the Book of Acts. He felt it would be helpful for people to have a visual depiction of when the important events took place in Acts, the dates and locations of Paul's travels, and when and where Paul's letters were written. I thought John had a tremendous idea.

When I began the study and research into this project, I soon realized that this wasn't as easy as it sounded! There are many differing opinions as to the order in which Paul's letters were written and the timing of the various events in Acts. When you put something in print, however, it's like putting a stake in the ground and announcing, "This is where I stand!" I realized that I needed to come to conclusions with the Spirit's help based on my personal study of the Word. After repeatedly reading Acts, "comparing spiritual things with

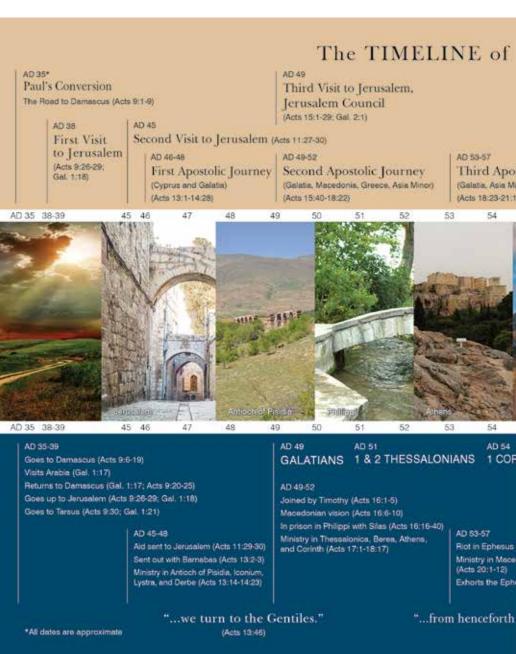
spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13), and consulting learned men who are skillful in the Word, I came to the finished product that you see on pages 6 through 8.

You will notice on the bottom left hand corner the notation that "*All dates are approximate." I am not dogmatic about the dates, but I do believe these dates to be accurate within a range of 1 to 3 years. The main purpose of the dates is to show the chronological order and flow of the events in Paul's life. And it can be helpful to see approximately when the various events of Paul's ministry took place and how far apart one event is from another.

Early Ministry

As you look at the chart, you will notice that there are 11 years between Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-9) and when he and Barnabas were separated out by the Holy Spirit for the first apostolic journey (Acts 13:2-3). That 11-year period is one-third of Paul's ministry! Prior to the first apostolic journey, Paul carried out an extensive ministry among the Gentiles during those years as he preached Christ in Damascus in Syria, Tarsus in Cilicia, and other places in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21).

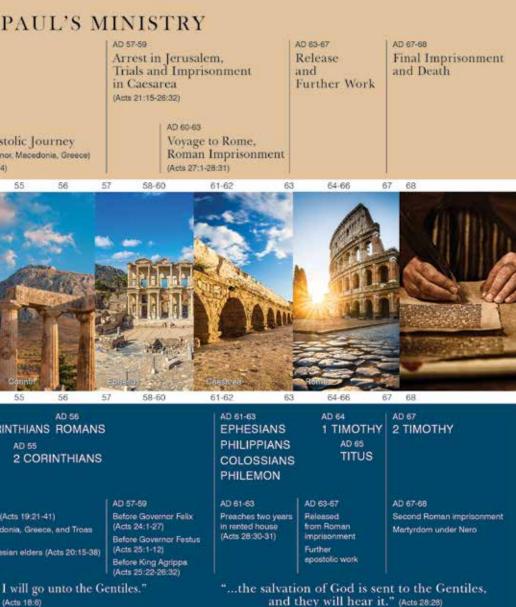
On the second apostolic journey, Luke records how "he [Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia *confirming* the churches" (Acts 15:41). During Paul's first apostolic journey, he never traveled to these regions.



Instead, he went straight to the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4). The only time Paul could have founded these Gentile assemblies was during his 5-6 year ministry in and around Tarsus (Acts 9:30; 11:25; Gal. 1:21).

Personally, I don't believe Paul spent three years in Arabia receiving the revelation of the mystery from the risen, exalted Lord (Eph. 3:1-3). We are not told by Paul in Scripture how long he spent in Arabia. Paul simply wrote, "I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

continue reading on page 8



(Acts 18:6)

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem..."(Gal. 1:17-18). The majority of those three years were spent by Paul ministering in Damascus.

Like Moses received the law from the Lord over a period of 40 days and 40 nights (Ex. 34:27-28), and like the twelve apostles were taught by the Lord following His resurrection for 40 days "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), it's possible that, likewise, Paul received the revelation of grace from the Lord over this same time period in Arabia. *continue reading on page 9*

PAUL'S MINISTRY

On the road to Damascus, God saved the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus (1 Tim. 1:15). The Lord Jesus Christ waited until Saul was in Gentile territory, in Syria, before He intercepted him. The reason was that Saul was to be the Apostle Paul, "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13).

Paul's conversion marked the beginning of the unfolding of "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25).

PAUL'S WRITINGS

Paul's first six letters were written during the time covered in the Book of Acts prior to Paul's first Roman imprisonment. Galatians was likely Paul's first letter, written following his first apostolic journey because, after traveling through the southern part of Galatia, he wrote to the Galatians, marveling that they were "SO SOON removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). 1 & 2 Thessalonians were written from Corinth where Paul resided for a year and a half (Acts 18:1,5,11; 1 Thes, 3:6). 1 Corinthians was penned at Ephesus during Paul's two-year stay there (Acts 19:1,8-10; 1 Cor. 16:19). 2 Corinthians was written from Macedonia (Acts 20:1; 2 Cor. 2:13). Romans was the fruit of Paul's later stay in Corinth (Acts 20:2-3; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14). After Paul was saved, the Lord told Ananias that "he [Paul] is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16). Paul's ministry reflects this verse in the Book of Acts. The fact that the Lord mentioned the Gentiles first and "the children of Israel" last is significant because it teaches that, following the stoning of Stephen, Israel had fallen out of favor with God. Thus, God saved Paul by His grace, revealed to him the dispensation of grace, and sent him to proclaim it to the Gentiles (Eph; 3:1-2).

Paul's next four epistles were written during his two-year imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30). There Paul wrote what are often called "the prison epistles": **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,** and **Philemon**. In each of these letters, Paul mentioned his "bonds" (Eph. 6:20; Phil. 1:13-14; Col. 4:3,18; Phile, 1:13).

Paul's last three epistles were written after the Acts period. Following Paul's release from custody in Rome, he did apostolic work on Crete (Titus 1:5) and wrote the letters of **1 Timothy** and **Titus**. However, Paul was again arrested and imprisoned in Rome, where he wrote the letter of **2 Timothy** in anticipation of his impending death (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

PAUL'S THREE-FOLD PRONOUNCEMENT

Acts 13:46, 18:6, and 28:26 is a threefold pronouncement by Paul, telling the Jews that he was turning to the Gentiles and that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles. This is significant, because it demonstrated how God was changing His dealings with mankind. The Book of Acts is about the fall, diminishing, and temporary setting aside of Israel. And as Paul wrote in Romans during the Acts period, "through their [Israel's] fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:11). Paul's threefold declaration about turning to the Gentiles reveals how God was making the transition away from His program with Israel under the law to a new program with the Gentiles and the Church, the Body of Christ under grace. Thus, when you read the Book of Acts, you see how it starts with Israel, but it ends with the Gentiles. It starts with Peter, an apostle to Israel, but it ends with Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. It begins with a message in which Peter called on Israel to "Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), but it ends with Paul taking the good news to the nations, a message Paul "received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). The gospel of the grace of God is a message of faith alone in Christ, giving all who believe an assurance of eternity in heaven (Eph. 2:4-9).

Galatians

The order of Paul's letters is often debated, but I believe Galatians is the first epistle Paul penned. Paul addressed this letter "unto the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2). He does not identify these churches, but we know they were churches where Paul had personally ministered. Galatians 4:13-14 describes how Paul preached the gospel of grace unto them "through infirmity of the flesh" and how they received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."

The Book of Acts only mentions four Galatian cities that Paul visited: Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13:14-14:23). Churches in each of these cities were established by Paul during his first apostolic journey (Acts 14:21-23). All these cities were in southern Galatia.

Paul visited Galatia in all three of his apostolic journeys. However, none of the locations or churches in the rest of the province are identified when Paul traveled in the north and "throughout...the region of Galatia" (Acts 16:6) during his second apostolic journey, nor when he "went over all the country of Galatia...strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23) during his third apostolic journey. For these reasons, I believe Paul wrote to the churches named in Acts in southern Galatia after his first apostolic journey: Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. After returning from this journey, Paul marveled that they were "SO SOON removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). All this makes Galatians the first letter written by Paul.

Galatians 2:1

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also" (Gal. 2:1).

One item I heavily debated in the making of this chart is the 14 years mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2:1. In a lot of ways, this provides the timing for Paul's ministry. I believe Paul was basing these 14 years from a single point: his conversion. The overall point of Paul's timeline of events in Galatians 1:15-2:1 is to show that he did not receive his gospel "of man, neither was I taught it" (Gal. 1:12), and that after he was saved, "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me" (Gal. 1:16-17).

Paul's point wasn't to describe how long it was between trips to Jerusalem, but to show the separation he had from the Twelve as he received revelations from the Lord since *his conversion*. For 14 years, Paul had little to no contact with the Twelve in Jerusalem, which Paul wrote to prove that they did not teach him his gospel, but that instead he received it "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).

If one adds up the years covered in this passage, the total shouldn't include only Galatians 1:18, "after three years I went up to Jerusalem

to see Peter," and then skip ahead to the 14 years of Galatians 2:1. To be consistent, the time frame should also include the "*Afterwards* I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21), where he spent approximately 6 years. Then comes Galatians 2:1: "Then fourteen years *after* I went up again to Jerusalem." Stacking and adding all the years together, it equals around 23 years.

If we place these years in the timeline of Paul's ministry and have his third visit to Jerusalem in approximately AD 58, it becomes impossible to fit everything in. Therefore, my conclusion regarding Galatians 2:1 is that the 3 years and 6 years are included within the 14 years and the 14 years was the amount of time since his conversion on the Damascus Road, "*when* it pleased God…and [He] called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen…" (Gal. 1:15-16).

Release and Further Work

As you can see in the "AD 63-67 Release and Further Work" section of the chart, I believe Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment. We can believe this for a few reasons.

First, Paul wrote Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). Other than briefly stopping by Crete in a ship on his way to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:7-9), there is no other time Paul visited Crete. But Paul told Titus that he left him there to ordain elders in the churches in every city where they had been established. These churches could have only been established after Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment.

Second, during his second Roman imprisonment, Paul asked of Timothy, "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee..." (2 Tim. 4:13). Paul had been to Troas many years earlier (Acts 16:8,11; 20:5-12), but this message to Timothy suggests that the apostle had lately visited Troas on the coast of Asia Minor and had left his cloak there. This only could have happened if Paul had been set at liberty to do so.

Third, Paul further informed Timothy, "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4:20). Trophimus, unfortunately, had become too sick to travel on with Paul for the continuing apostolic work Paul did after his release from his first Roman imprisonment.

As with everything we publish at *Berean Bible Society*, we ask that you don't take our word for anything, but that you consider this information in the manner of the Bereans of old, "in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

THE OBJECT OF PAUL'S FAITH

PASTOR PAUL SADLER Past BBS President

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

Christ was the object of Paul's faith. It was his heart's desire, as he says, "that I may know Him." Of course, Paul is not speaking about having a desire to be converted. We know he was saved by the grace of God thirty years earlier on the road to Damascus. Rather, he desired to have a more intimate knowledge of Christ, an *experiential* knowledge. If we are following Paul, as we are instructed by the Lord to do, this should be our desire as well. It is one thing to understand that we have been crucified with Christ, but it is an entirely different matter to apply this to our daily life, *experientially*, so we no longer allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies, obeying its lust (Rom. 6:6,12).

Paul did not know Christ after the flesh, nor do we. Interestingly, the apostle never deals with the annunciation of the Savior's coming, His birth, His childhood, or the life of Christ in any detail. Paul begins with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in his epistles, explaining their significance for the very first time (1 Tim. 2:5-7). Bound up in this wonderful truth is our *identification* with Christ's finished work, the theme of which is developed in Romans chapter 6. It is here that the apostle desired to have a deeper understanding of the love of Christ and what He accomplished on his behalf.

Paul also wanted to experience more fully the "power of His resurrection." When we search the Old Testament Scriptures, there are two primary events where we witness a demonstration of God's almighty power in time past. In the beginning God merely *spoke* and worlds came into being, both visible and invisible (Psa. 33:6 cf. Rom. 1:20). As we move down the corridor of time, the next great display of His divine power was the parting of the Red Sea. This particular event is appealed to frequently in the prophetic Scriptures as a practical outworking of God's almighty power, which provided deliverance for His people from the machinery of death. In Paul's epistles, the apostle always directs our attention to the resurrection of Christ from the dead as a demonstration of God's power. The day Christ died, Satan was confident he was victorious, insofar as he controlled the power of death (Heb. 2:14). Satan barred the way, which every burial site up to that point in time confirmed. In the Old Testament this is illustrated in the life of Samson who was a type of Christ, in spite of his shortcomings and failures (Heb. 11:32).

"And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron" (Judges 16:2,3).

The Gazites had Samson right where they wanted him. He was surrounded and they had securely locked the gate of the city. The icy chill of death was lying in wait for Samson! It looked hopeless! But about midnight Samson *arose* from his slumber and took the doors of the Iron Gate that barred the way and carried them away, defeating the purpose of his enemies. In like fashion, Christ destroyed the power of death, tearing it from its moorings and rose victoriously over it. As Charles Wesley beautifully states in the hymn, *O for a Thousand Tongues*: "He breaks the power of cancelled sin / He sets the prisoner free."

This same power is at our disposal—not to heal the sick or to perform miracles, but to more effectively live the Christian life. You may be thinking, I've never experienced this power. Sure you have! When you trusted Christ as your personal Savior, you experienced the power of His resurrection. You *knew* the burden of your sins was lifted and that for the first time in your life you were right with God. Your life was transformed in a moment of time!

But the good news doesn't end there; we are to make a *present* application of this truth in our daily lives. We are unable to live the Christian life in our own strength, but thankfully the power of His resurrection will help us to yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and to yield our members as instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. 6:13). You see, sin no longer has to control us; it only will as we allow it to do so. We are dead to sin, but alive unto God!

Ultimately, we will experience the "power of His resurrection" in its fullest sense when we receive our glorified resurrected bodies. In God's appointed time, the trump is going to sound and the dead in Christ shall *rise* first, and we who are alive and remain will be *transformed* in a moment of a twinkling of an eye. That's power!

Not only did Paul want to know Christ in a more intimate way, and experience the power of His resurrection, he also desired to be identified with the *fellowship of His sufferings*. Beloved, it is human nature to want to be accepted. But if you're a believer, the world will always look at you with contempt. With this in mind, Paul chose to take his lot with the Lord Jesus that he might understand more fully the "fellowship of His sufferings." Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse along these same lines:

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24).

The apostle isn't referring to the sufferings of Christ that He endured at Calvary, for only the Savior could pay the penalty of our sins. Instead, he is speaking of the sufferings of Christ that He endured because He exposed men to the righteousness of God. The world hated Christ without a cause, and the same will be true of us if we stand for the truth. Consequently, we are to bear that which still remains of the *rejection* of Christ; we then experience, at least in a limited degree, what He experienced to the glory of God. It is in this way that we fellowship with our Lord in His sufferings.

Although Paul knew there was a very real possibility he may suffer martyrdom, when he says that he desired to be "made conformable unto His death," it has the idea of dying to self. You will recall in chapter 2 of this epistle how the Lord in a *selfless* act emptied Himself of the outward manifestation of His attributes and glory to fulfill the will of His Father. This in no wise compromised His deity in any sense of the word. Thus it was Paul's desire, and it should be ours as well, to die to self that we might always be in the center of God's will (Gal. 2:20).

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Episodes are released every Wednesday.

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STITCHER



Question Box

"How did Paul have the option to live or die in Philippians 1:22?"

Paul wasn't thinking of taking his life, for that would have violated the commandment "thou shalt not kill." God purposely left that commandment open-ended to include suicide. That is, He didn't say, "Thou shalt not kill *others*," because He wanted us to know that taking your own life is one of the forms of killing He meant to prohibit.

But Paul was a master logician and tactician, and could easily have gotten himself executed in prison by saying the wrong thing to the king. He couldn't keep himself alive forever, of course. Tradition says that he was eventually put to death. But he could definitely have brought himself under the executioner's ax more immediately by pushing the king's buttons.

In your follow-up question, you ask if this wouldn't be akin to what's known as "suicide by cop," but the two do not equate. In suicide by cop, a man decides to end his life by committing a crime in order to draw fire from the police. Paul was tempted to present the truth to the king in a way that would elicit a death sentence.

We might compare how God wanted Moses to be a prophet, so He responded to his every objection with patience and longsuffering. But God *didn't* want Pharaoh to let Israel go, so He instructed Moses to answer *his* objections in ways that were an affront to his pride, something that angered him and resulted in his death. We know there is nothing sinful about this approach, for it was God Himself who implemented it. And Paul wasn't contemplating anything sinful when he considered mimicking how the Lord handled Pharaoh.

Like you, I used to wonder why it wouldn't be okay for a terminally ill person to choose suicide. But an unsaved person would be denying himself the opportunity to live long enough to get saved, and a saved person would be denying himself the opportunity to share the gospel with someone he might meet the very next day. In this case and in all others, God is more concerned with eternal matters than He is with temporal matters, no matter how difficult the temporal matter is.

And Paul reflected this same eternal outlook in making the choice that he made to remain alive (Phil. 1:24,25). He chose to live for the spiritual benefit of others rather than end his life to alleviate the physical suffering and mental weariness that decades of hardship had wrought on his "weak" frame (2 Cor. 10:10). —Pastor Kurth

IS CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW?

in all the second

DAVE **STEWART** Contributing Writer

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).

Having read this article's title followed by the Scripture below it, you might have thought to yourself, "Ok then. Asked and answered. Nothing more to see here." But since you are still reading, you are likely aware that there is more to the question, is Christ the end of the law?

The apostle Paul is clear that we are not under the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and that the law has been abolished by Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:15). So, yes, Christ is the end of the law. But that isn't the end of the story.

When sharing the gospel of grace, many have encountered the objection which goes something like this: "So you're saying that the Ten Commandments don't apply anymore. God doesn't care if we kill, cheat, steal..." and so on. When the average person hears us say that the Law of Moses has been done away by Jesus Christ, what they hear is that the moral Law of God has been made obsolete. But nothing could be further from the truth, as we will see.

Then there are those who object on Scriptural grounds, citing such verses as...Psalm 119:44, "So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever." And...2 Kings 17:37 "...the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore...."

So how, they ask, can Christ be the end of the law when the Bible says that the law is forever?

The confusion stems generally from the fact that the term "the law" in the Bible refers to several different things. For example, it refers to the law received by Moses at Mount Sinai:

"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13).

In this context, Paul is speaking of Adam and those who lived during the time of Genesis and early Exodus. He calls that time "until," or before, the law, a time in the Bible, he says, "when there is no law." So the law he has in mind is the specific set of commandments Moses received on the mount hundreds of years after the close of Genesis.

Yet on other occasions, Paul refers to events in Genesis as occurring within the law, such as in Galatians chapter 4:

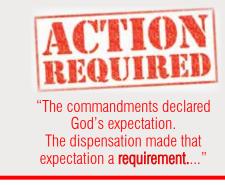
"...do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons..." (Gal. 4:21,22).

Here Paul uses the term "the law" to refer to the complete writings of Moses known as the Torah, which includes the Book of Genesis where we find the account of Abraham and his sons. The term can be expanded even further to include the entire Old Testament, as in this passage:

"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people..." (1 Cor. 14:21).

The portion of the law Paul refers to here is from the book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 28 verse 11) and not from Moses' writings at all.

So we see that the term, the law, can refer to different things depending upon its context. And there are other distinctions to be made, such as the differences between what we call the "moral law" and the "ceremonial law," which generally distinguish between the Ten Commandments and the laws regarding sacrifices, Sabbaths, feast days, etc. This



too is a Scriptural distinction, for Moses himself set the Ten Commandments apart when, after rehearsing them for the children of Israel, he said:

"These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me" (Deut. 5:22).

But apart from the myriad ways in which the Bible refers to the law, the answer to the confusion regarding the *end* of the law, like it is for so much confusion regarding so many things, is of course, dispensational.

So for the topic at hand, we only need to know that "the law" represents two distinct things. On the one hand, the law speaks of the righteous commandments revealed by God to the nation Israel through

Moses. At the same time, the law speaks of a dispensation given by God to be the rule for obtaining a righteous standing before Him. The former represents the righteousness of God while the latter represents His requirement for the salvation of men. The commandments displayed God's perfection. The dispensation demanded the same of mankind. The commandments declared God's expectation. The dispensation made that expectation a requirement for righteousness.

"And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments..." (Deut. 6:25).

The dispensation of the law required fallen man to exhibit the righteousness of God. Of course, no man born of Adam had ever met such a requirement, nor could he, so the apostle Paul speaks for all of humanity when he writes:

"...the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:10).

The law was a dispensation under which a man was required to adhere to every one of hundreds of commandments, including the offering of sacrifices for his inevitable infractions, that by these, offered in faith, the man might "scarcely be saved" (1 Pet. 4:18). The law was a dispensation that promised blessings for perfect adherence and cursings for anything less (Deut. 28). The law was a dispensation that ultimately left, not only those who received it but all mankind, guilty before God (Rom. 3:19). It was an administration of condemnation, a dispensation of death (2 Cor. 3:7,9). And, praise God, it was that dispensation that was ended by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

During His earthly ministry, the Lord said that He had come to "fulfill" the law (Matt. 5:17). And that, He did perfectly (John 8:29). As the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ fulfilled the law by keeping the commandments without fail. The life He lived reflected the righteousness of God as perfectly as did the commandment.

And so the *expectation* of God had finally been met in the man, Christ Jesus. But the *requirement* of God, the dispensation of the law, was not done away by the life of Christ. It was done away by His death.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14).

It is not the righteous life of Christ that saves us from the curse of the law. The Lord was not merely an example for us to follow, for the law had already provided that. If not for His sacrificial death on our behalf, the life of Christ would only further condemn us. It was not the righteousness displayed for us by His life, but the righteousness imputed to us by His death that brought the dispensation of the law to an end. Let's look at our opening verse again.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).

Jesus Christ did not just live the righteousness of the law, He ended the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. The dispensation of "the law for righteousness" has ended and a new dispensation of faith alone for righteousness has begun (Rom. 3:19-26).

The moral law of God, like the righteousness of God, will never end. It is the *dispensation* of the law that has ended. And when this current age comes to a close, the old dispensation of the law will be replaced by a new dispensation of the law, a New Covenant wherein the moral law of God will not be imposed from without, but engrafted within.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...But...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:31-33).

Even today, thou shalt not kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery, and so on, all contained in the single commandment, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Rom. 13:9); this continues to be the rule for Christian behavior. But it is no longer the rule for righteousness before God. Faith in Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins and rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-4), this is the one rule for salvation, righteousness, and eternal life today. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Western Wisconsin Special Meetings

September 25-26, 2021

Location: Grant County Farm Bureau 9755 Hwy 61, Lancaster, Wisconsin

Speaker: Pastor Kevin Sadler, BBS President

For directions or more information contact: Jack Trumm (608) 794-2410 or Mel Flogel (608) 348-7574

MAN TO MAN

"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" (2 Tim. 1:16).

In a verse preceding this one, Paul challenged Timothy to "be not thou therefore *ashamed* of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner..." (v.8). Following this challenge, Paul pointed out those in Asia Minor who were *ashamed* of Paul, the Lord's prisoner: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (v. 15). After reminding Timothy of this dark picture of unfaithfulness, Paul brought forward a shining example of loyalty and an exception to those in Asia: Onesiphorus, a man who "was not ashamed" of Paul or his chain.

Onesiphorus is an important role model for the Church. Many are ashamed of Paul today. They do not want to associate with him or the message that Christ committed to him. Some choose to follow the prevailing doctrine of their denomination and follow Peter instead of Paul. However, Onesiphorus is an encouragement for us to follow his example of courage and resolve to stand with the Apostle Paul. This is God's will.

"But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me" (2 Tim. 1:17).

Onesiphorus made it his business to find Paul in Rome. Believers were being falsely accused, tried, and tortured to death in Rome at that time but, without thinking of himself, and not being ashamed of Paul, Onesiphorus risked his life, diligently looking high and low in one prison-barracks after another until he found Paul.

Those in Asia who turned from Paul exemplified the qualities that Paul warned Timothy against: fear and shame. In contrast, Onesiphorus demonstrated the characteristics that Paul commended to Timothy and the Body of Christ: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (v. 7).

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day..." (2 Tim. 1:18).

Paul, as a prisoner on death row, was not able to repay his friend for all his gracious help. But the Lord could. And because of the mercy Onesiphorus had shown him, Paul requested that the Lord show Onesiphorus mercy and reward him "in that day," the day of the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Onesiphorus is a reminder that, in that day, one will be duly rewarded for faithfulness and an unashamed stand for the message of grace that Christ committed to the Apostle Paul. —Pastor Kevin Sadler

SPOTLIGHT on Grace Churches



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The Two Musketeers

PASTOR RICKY KURTH Berean Searchlight Editor

A first grade teacher presented her class with the first half of some well-known proverbs and asked each student to come up with the remainder of the proverb. Here's a few of their insightful responses:

It's always darkest before... Daylight Savings Time.

You can't teach an old dog new...math.

When the blind lead the blind *....get out of the way.*

Children should be seen and not...spanked or grounded.

Two's company, three's...*the Musketeers*.

Now there's some fun answers!

But speaking of the Three Musketeers, did you know the Lord seemed to have three favorite *apostles*? We see evidence of this when the ruler of a synagogue asked Him to come to his house to heal his daughter, and the Lord answered,

"Be not afraid, only believe. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, *and John*....And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue" (Mark 5:36-38).

Of course, I suppose it is possible that the Lord didn't bring all twelve apostles into this ruler's house because they wouldn't all *fit* in his daughter's room. But this wasn't the only time the Lord singled out those three apostles for special attention, as we see in Mark 9:2, where we read:

"...after six days Jesus taketh with him *Peter*, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them."

There was certainly plenty of room on the top of that mountain for all twelve apostles to accompany the Lord and witness His transfiguration. Yet again, He deliberately brought only those particular three "by themselves." This suggests that Peter, James and John were part of what today we might call the Lord's *inner circle* of apostles. Now I doubt the Lord was the type of leader who would play favorites and choose to hang out with those three more than the other members of His team just because He liked them more or preferred their company. It seems clear that He must have singled them out to *groom* them for special positions of leadership among the twelve.

"...the Bible seems to focus on Peter and John..."



What Happened to James?

But at some point, *James* seemed to slip from his place among this threesome. We see the first evidence of this in Luke 22:8, where we read of the Lord that

"He sent *Peter and John*, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat"

We see more evidence of this when the Bible seems to focus on Peter and John in the Book of Acts:

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple....When they saw the boldness of Peter and John...they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus....Peter and John answered..." (Acts 3:1; 4:13,18,19).

What's more, the Jewish kingdom church seemed to *recognize* that James was no longer a member of the Lord's threesome, as we see "when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God" and "they sent unto them *Peter and John*" (Acts 8:14).

Now don't get me wrong. James was still an apostle. He just didn't have the same presence in that inner circle that he had earlier in his ministry. And I can't tell you why that might be, at least not with any degree of certainty. But I wonder if it might be due to what happened in Mark 10:35-37:

"James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master...grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory."

Maybe *that's* why James lost his place in the Lord's threesome. The pride he showed in wanting one of the best seats in the house in the kingdom of heaven on earth might have led to his seeming demotion.

You say, "But John was *also* in on that attempted power grab," and that's true. But you'll notice that James and John were both sons of Zebedee. That meant they were brothers, of course. Yet every time they're mentioned, James is mentioned first. That might be because he was the elder, but it also might be because he was the dominant personality of the two. I mean, half of the time we read about Aquilla and Priscilla she is mentioned first, even though you would think he would be mentioned first as the husband. That suggests that she was the more outgoing of the two. So when James is always mentioned before his brother John. it's possible that it is because he was the dominant personality, and subsequently the *ringleader* in that plot to get the best seats in the house in the kingdom, with John just kind of going along with it.

If that was the case, then James is a good example of something we read about in Proverbs 16:18, where Solomon wrote,

"Pride goeth before *destruction*, and a haughty spirit *before a fall*."

It might have been *pride* that caused James to fall from his spot in the Lord's threesome. After all, Solomon also wrote,

"A man's pride *shall bring him low:* but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit" (Prov. 29:23).

Now is there anything you can learn from all that? I don't know if there's anything that will make more of a mess of your life than simple human *pride*. I know it has made some of the biggest messes in my own life. Throughout the Bible, *humility* is emphasized, and humbleness of mind. So pride is something that you should avoid like the spiritual plague that it is.

But now, if you think about it, Peter *also* fell victim to pride. When the Lord told the twelve that they would all forsake Him when the soldiers came to arrest Him (Mark 14:27), how'd Peter respond to the Lord's prediction?

"Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him...before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise" (Mark 14:29-31).

Doesn't that sound like pride to you? It does to me! So if James lost his place among the Lord's inner circle due to his pride, how come Peter didn't lose *his* place?

A More Likely Story

This is why I think it is more likely that James counted *himself* out of the Lord's inner circle, as opposed to the Lord demoting him. If so, then this is a good example of how people are often harder on themselves than they are on others.



Many years ago, a pastor friend of mine had a son who fathered a child out of wedlock. When that happened, he felt unworthy to continue in the ministry and announced his intention to step down. But another pastor and I went to see him, and we were able to convince him that he was the only one who felt that his son's actions disqualified him for the ministry.

But to show you how *powerful* this form of self-condemnation can be, the pastor who helped me convince him to remain in the ministry experienced the very same thing many years later. He remarried soon after his wife died. and thinking that all Christian women would be as spiritual as his first wife, he married a little too quickly. A plethora of problems soon arose in his marriage, and his new wife divorced him not long after. This caused him to step down from the ministry of his local assembly, and for years after that he also declined invitations to speak at Bible conferences. It took him many years to realize that he was the only one who felt he was disgualified from the ministry. And I think James was similarly unwilling to cut himself a break.



If you are thinking, "But it seems *the Lord* was holding it against James, for He sent only Peter and John to find a room for the Passover." That's true, but I doubt the Lord overlooked James in that instance because He thought he had disqualified himself from His inner circle. I rather think that the Lord chose to *honor* James' decision to step back from His threesome in order to give him time to heal.

That's also what that pastor's local assembly did when he stepped down from the ministry, and it is what the grace movement did when he declined to speak at their conferences. Honoring his decision to give him time to heal was the gracious thing to do—and *it worked!* He eventually came back stronger than ever. And James will too, in the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Now I do think that the Lord was *reluctant* to honor James' decision, for hours before the cross, we read of Him and the twelve that

"...they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him *Peter and James and John*, and...saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed..." (Mark 14:32-35).

As you can see, the Lord included James in asking His usual trio to watch and pray while He poured His heart out to God in prayer during His final hours before the cross. In doing so, I think He was attempting to woo James back to feeling comfortable in the inner circle.

But once the Lord ascended into heaven and left the twelve apostles in charge of the kingdom program, the Spirit that He sent them at Pentecost *also* seemed to honor James' decision, for only Peter and John are mentioned in the forefront of the twelve in the Book of Acts as we've seen.

Give Yourself a Break

If all of this is so, then I think there's something else we can learn from it. And that is not to be so hard on yourself when you feel like you've let the Lord down in some way. I can't tell you how many times I've heard from Christians who made some kind of spiritual gaffe and were reluctant to let themselves off the hook. They continued to beat themselves up about their blunder and think that they were not qualified to serve the Lord. They refused to allow themselves the forgiveness that they would surely extend to their brethren in the Lord if the shoe were on the foot of those others.

I always remind such people that if the Lord has forgiven them, then they should forgive themselves. And if they *don't* forgive themselves, then that means their standards are higher than God's. And if your standards are higher than God's, *that's a problem!* God is "satisfied" (Isa. 53:11) with the payment Christ made for any and all of our sins, and we should be too.

The apostle of grace is very clear when it comes to the matter of forgiveness. He wrote,

"...be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

Paul tells us that if God has forgiven us because of the payment Christ made for what we did to Him, then we should forgive others for what they do to us on the same basis. He echoed the same sentiment when he told the Colossians that they should be

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: *even as Christ forgave you*, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13).

"...people are often harder on themselves than they are on others."



So if you are reading these words and feel unqualified to serve the Lord because of some spiritual misstep you have made, I can assure you that God doesn't feel that way. And if God's people are obeying Paul's instructions about forgiveness, then you can be sure that they don't feel you are unqualified to serve Him either. So cut yourself some slack and take some time to heal, but don't forsake the Lord's work indefinitely. No matter who you are or what you've done, you can still serve the Lord in some capacity. Those who have experienced God's grace are often more appreciative of His grace than those who haven't, and it is an appreciation of the grace of God that just might be the most important qualification there is when it comes to serving Him. 🤳

BBS Letter Excerpts

From New Mexico:

"Dear President Sadler: We were introduced to the grace gospel and the message and mystery that God gave Paul to the Gentiles and Jew alike. We get a continual blessing every month in the *Berean Searchlight*."

From Florida:

"Thank you for the many years of sound rightly divided teaching. While I have not always been faithful in my walk, you have always been here for me, every month! Even when I have placed myself spiritually in the wilderness, there is always the *Searchlight* to help me back to the path of righteousness....You have made a difference and are having an impact on my life!"

From our Inbox:

"Thank you to Pastor Kevin and all at the *Berean Bible Society*. You have helped me tremendously! I was Catholic for 50 years. I will be 60 this year. For the last 10 years, I have dabbled in different Christian denominations. Nothing seemed to make sense. I recently discovered your website and rightly dividing the Word. This has been a huge step for me!"

From our Inbox:

"I can't put the *Searchlight* magazine down. You put the apostle Paul's writings in a wonderful way so I can understand....I've been saved since 1976, but I appreciate how simple the subject of Paul was brought out in the May issue."

From Florida:

"I met Pastor Fredericksen while taking a walk in the neighborhood here in the Orlando area last year. He came to my home and dropped off some books that same day. I've been intrigued and blown away by C.R. Stam, whom I love. He's one of my new favorites. Also I have been digging into the Moses and Paul book and decided to order it for a good friend at the church. The teachings are amazing! I am studying at this moment the great commission and your viewpoint on it." (Obviously Pastor John expanded the command to teach *vour children* the truth "when thou walkest by the way" [Deut. 6:7]! -Ed.).

From New York:

"Our family wants to thank you so much for your outreach ministry that has touched so many lives!...Your *Transformed By Grace* television series truly does transform lives."

From Facebook:

"Thank you Pastor K. Sadler for your very clear teaching from the Word of God rightly divided."

From Illinois:

"I watch you on WJYS Chicago.... Pastor Kevin is my favorite pastor and I enjoy watching every Sunday morning. *Transformed by Grace* is informative, inspiring, and yet very relaxing. I feel at home with Pastor Kevin. Thank you so much for your ministry. It is truly a bright spot in my week."

From YouTube:

"I so appreciate your kind, simple delivery—which belies the power of the message! Always 100% on track, Brother! I'm a forever fan of your dad and Pastor Stam. Bookshelf is full of all their offerings! Thank you for continuing the legacy and your commitment to the Word, rightly divided."

From Minnesota:

"Thank you so much for your article in the March *Searchlight* "The Builder and His Reward.' In 40+ years of being in the Body, I never heard what the *fire* that our works are going to pass through was all about. The 'FIRE of God's WORD' makes perfect sense (Jer. 23:29)....Also, it helped me when you brought out how gold, silver, precious stones should be compared to Romans 12:2's good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:2)."

From California:

"Now that *Two Minutes* ["A Forward-Thinking Man"] is a walk-off home run!" (You're just making a baseball reference because your Giants are having a good year!–Ed.).

From Indiana:

"I just finished your audio lessons on 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. I was truly blessed!"

From Iowa:

"During these times of being masked and separated from loved ones and friends, it is always comforting to know that we have our Lord. Thank you for the *Searchlight* and study materials. With the Holy Bible first and then your material, I am never at a loss for something of the greatest meaning to do."

From our Inbox:

"WOW!!! Thank you so very much Pastor. You answer questions so crystal clear and easy to understand....I am so very grateful for you taking the time to answer my questions and explaining our Sacred Volume (the Bible). So much to learn, and I am extremely hungry for the Word, as in hermeneutics and exegesis."

From Arizona:

"Thank you for the great teachings! My hubby and I have come a long way in our Christian journey. We were saved in a Pentecostal church...then Baptist mixed-up message churches. Then a friend showed us 'rightly dividing' the Bible. Wow! What else can I say? We support you monthly."

From Illinois:

"The book version of *Two Minutes With the Bible* has been my daily 'go to.' It is a blessing to me."

From Nova Scotia:

"Wow, wow, wow! I just finished the fourth study book on Revelation by you and your dad! I've always had trouble reading the Book of Revelation...I loved reading those studies. As never before I really understood everything you were talking about...finally! I have highlights EVERYWHERE. I love the anecdotes which remind me of your beautiful presentations on the *Transformed by Grace* videos, which are to us absolutely THE BEST BIBLE STUDIES."

From our Inbox:

"Just wanted to say thank you for your correspondence. It's been helpful to correspond with a grace pastor about this issue. I very much appreciate you, your ministry, and the BBS!"

BEA BEREAN

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

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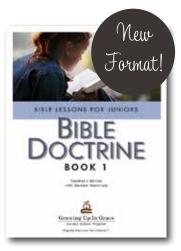


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News and Announcements

A Notable Milestone: Pastor Kevin recently recorded the 200th episode of our Transformed By Grace television program. They say the first 200 are the hardest, but please keep him in prayer as he continues to reach out to the lost and confused multitudes all about us with what Pastor Stam used to call "the wonderful gospel of the wonderful grace of God."

We're still looking for part-time help in our mailroom. This position involves the packaging and shipping of our literature orders, stocking our shelves, mailing packages of *Searchlight* to churches, and helping with answering the phone. This is a position that could eventually evolve into a full-time position, making it something that might even be of interest to grace believers who don't currently live in the area. If you'd like to learn more about it, call Pastor Jim Tollar at (262) 255-4750 or email him at businessmanager@bereanbiblesociety.org.

Wyoming Bible Conference: The faithful saints of *Grace Chapel of West Laramie* have invited BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler to come and minister the bread of life to their hungry hearts, and they agreed that August 14,15 would be the best dates for this BBS Regional Conference. Even if you don't live in the region, you may want to make a trip of it and add a trip to the scenic Medicine Bow Mountains nearby to your summer travel plans. Just be sure to let Pastor Dennis Moore know you are coming: (307) 745-5801.

Colorado Meetings: If thoughts of the impending end of summer are dampening your spirits, the saints of *Cope Community Church* of Cope, Colorado, can help you cope. They've invited BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler to come for a day of special meetings, and they've agreed on August 22, for the date. If that date agrees with your schedule too, contact Mark Craig to let him know you're coming: gardenwannabe@yahoo.com or (970) 554-4536. If you are a pastor looking for a church, this would be a good time to visit, for this is a church that is looking for a pastor.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

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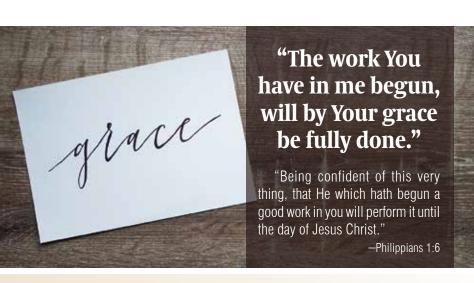
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