

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2024



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This month’s cover features Trevoze Head lighthouse on the north coast of Cornwall, England.

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

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of my spiritual mentors in life and ministry, Dr. W. Edward Bedore, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on May 11th of this year at the age of 79.

I first met Dr. Bedore and his wife, Linda, in 1996 after they returned from Kenya where they served as missionaries. He came to *Berean Bible Society* to meet with the board about the position of executive director of the new Bible school, *Berean Bible Institute*. After he took the reins as director, we worked closely together. We built and set up bookshelves for the main classroom. Then, since I was the BBS graphic designer at the time, when Dr. Bedore created the first BBI Handbook and other documents for the new school, I worked with him, typing, formatting, and preparing what he wrote for print.

When BBI was about to start its first semester, Dr. Bedore popped into my office and asked, "Why don't you take a class?" He surprised me, and I impulsively answered, "Okay." He replied, "Good," and he walked out. Then I remembered what Dr. Bedore told me about the chapel times, that the students would sometimes lead. The thought of speaking in front of people made me panic. I hurriedly went to Dr. Bedore's office and clarified that I would take a class, but I really didn't want to lead a chapel. Dr. Bedore said, "Sure. No problem."

Two weeks into the semester, however, my name suddenly appeared on the chapel schedule in Dr. Bedore's handwriting. Because of Dr. Bedore's simple question about taking a class, his "volunteering" me and giving me the pushes I needed, and by his training and mentoring, I was led along the path toward the Lord's calling in my life to be a pastor.

From 2005-2011, Dr. Bedore and I together pastored the Grace church in West Bend, Wisconsin, with him as the senior pastor and me as the associate pastor. I learned much about pastoral ministry during this time, and he consistently reinforced the need for me to preach the Word and take a firm stand for the truth.



Dr. Bedore watched me meet my wife, Jessica. He saw me get married and have four children, and he was there as they grew up. Our family will miss him dearly. The following quote expresses how we feel about Dr. Bedore's homegoing: "Death takes the body. God takes the soul. Our mind holds the memories. Our hearts keep the love. Our faith lets us know we will meet again."

Grace and peace,

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler, President

The

PLUMBLINE



“And, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand....Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more” (Amos 7:7,8).

As we compare the two verses of this vision, God identifies the “wall” as “My people Israel.” But what did “the plumbline” represent?

A plumbline is a tool that is used even today by masons who wish to erect walls that are perfectly straight. A simple weight at the end of a string is suspended alongside the wall as it is being constructed to ensure that it is being built straight and at a perfect right angle to the gravitational pull of the earth. Construction workers know that bowed or leaning walls are easily toppled (Psa. 62:3).

Since our text tells us that this “wall” that represents Israel was “made by a plumbline,” I believe the plumbline to be the Law of Moses. It was the Law that defined Israel as a nation, and its perfect code of righteousness ensured that Israel was built in accord with the perfectly upright standard of the very righteousness of God. Here in Amos 7, God is re-applying the plumbline standard of the Law to Israel to show Amos how far his nation had shifted away from the perfect standard with which she had been constructed and why He could no longer “pass by them any more” in mercy, but must rather bring the judgment that their sin demanded.

Today, in the dispensation of Grace, of course, God is not dealing with Israel or any other nation but rather with individual members of the Body of Christ. In the epistles of Paul, we read of how in Christ we too have been formed in accord with the perfect standard of the Law (2 Cor. 5:21) and that the righteousness of the Law is given to us as a free gift of God’s grace through faith (Rom. 3:21–26; 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30). Thus, when believers today wish to apply a standard to our lives to check to see if we have drifted from who God made us in Christ, we look not to the Law, but to the epistles of the Apostle Paul.

We close with a very practical admonition. Every builder knows that when a wall falls, it always falls in the direction in which it is leaning. If the reader has ever wondered about the harm in an occasional drink of an alcoholic beverage or the danger of seemingly “harmless” flirtations with immorality, it should be remembered that Christians are like walls—they, too, always fall in the direction in which they are leaning! Let us thank God for the plumbline of His grace, and may we determine as never before to walk worthy of Him.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth



Walk

AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

(Taken from the recent Transformed by Grace series, "Walking with God")

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
Berean Bible Society President

The following story from author Leonard Sweet highlights the importance of valuing our relationships with other people:

"Tom Wiles served a stint as university chaplain at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. A few years ago, he picked me up at the Phoenix airport in his new Ford pickup and whisked me away to keynote a leadership conference at the university. Since I was still mourning the trade-in of my Dodge truck, we immediately bonded, sharing truck stories and laughing at the bumper-sticker truism: 'Nothing is more beautiful than a man and his truck.'

"As I climbed into his 2002 Ranger for the ride back to the airport a day later, I noticed two big scrapes by the passenger door. 'What happened here?' I asked.

"My neighbor's basketball post fell and left those dents and white scars,' Tom replied with a downcast voice.

"You're kidding! How awful,' I commiserated. 'This truck is so new I can smell it.'

"What's even worse is my neighbor doesn't feel responsible for the damage.'

"Rising to my newfound friend's defense, I said, 'Did you contact your insurance company? How are you going to get him to pay for it?'

"This has been a real spiritual journey for me,' Tom replied. 'After a lot of soul-searching and discussions with my wife about hiring an attorney, it came down to this: I can either be in the right, or I can be in a relationship with my neighbor. Since my neighbor will probably be with me longer than this truck, I decided that I'd rather be in a relationship than be right. Besides, trucks are meant to be banged up, so I got mine initiated into the real world a bit earlier than I expected.'"¹

To "walk as children of light" means to live with an awareness of our actions before unbelievers and the world. God would have Christ and His light shine through us so that we might illuminate and show others the way to Him

through His saving gospel of grace.

YOU WERE DARKNESS

“For ye were sometimes darkness...” (Eph. 5:8).

Prior to trusting Christ as Savior, God’s Word states that we “were sometimes [once, formerly] darkness,” meaning spiritual darkness. Notice that this passage does not say we were IN darkness, but that we were darkness itself. We partook in the very nature of spiritual darkness and were fully identified with it.

Darkness describes the character of an unsaved person’s spirit and life. This darkness results from the absence of trust in the saving knowledge of God and of Christ. Being darkness, unbelievers are lost and wandering aimlessly as darkness, in sin, error, confusion, ignorance, depravity, and evil.

Being in their sins, unbelievers are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1,5), or separated from the life of God. Being darkness also refers to that separation, because darkness, the absence of light, is due to the unbeliever’s spiritual separation from God, Who is light (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 1:5).

Satan’s kingdom is a kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). Unbelievers are in bondage within that kingdom and are enslaved to the prince of darkness. They are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do, John 8:44 tells us. They are ruled, influenced, and led by the power of darkness (Eph. 2:2), and they represent that dominion of



darkness in their own hearts and reveal it by their actions.

Tragically, sinners love the darkness. As our Lord said, “...and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d” (John 3:19-20). Unbelievers love darkness because they love their sinful lifestyle and evil deeds, and they don’t want this to be reprov’d because they do not want to change.

If one remains in this state of spiritual darkness outside of Christ, and dies in his sins, he will spend eternity in darkness in hell. As our Lord said, “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer *darkness*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30).

YOU ARE LIGHT

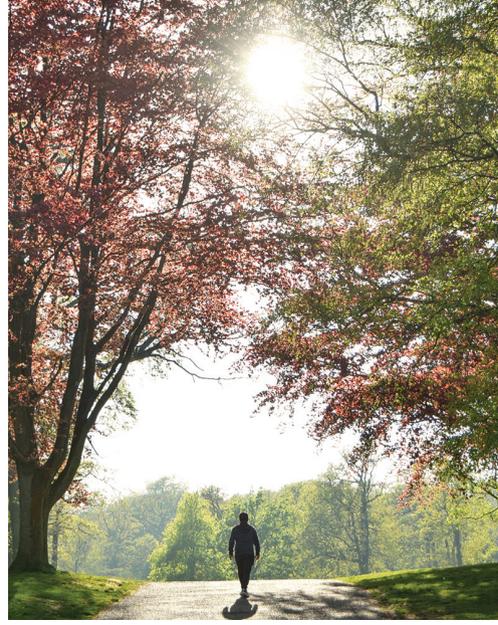
“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord...” (Eph. 5:8).

Paul wrote that we *were* formerly darkness, but when we trust Christ as our personal Savior, we are darkness no more and never again. The change is not gradual; it happens immediately at salvation. We are darkness, but then when we trust the gospel of salvation, *instantly*, we are light in the Lord, and we are light in Him forever. Notice in this passage how there is no in-between, gray area, or middle ground. It's cut and dried, one or the other. You are either light or darkness, saved or lost, bound for heaven or hell.

Just as with darkness, when we were not just in darkness but were darkness itself, Paul says that, at conversion, we become light itself. When we trust “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4), that light of the knowledge of God in Christ drives the darkness out forever (v. 6), and we are “light in the Lord” at that moment (Eph. 5:8).

Christ rescues sinners from spiritual darkness. The gospel of grace “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). It has the power to deliver sinners from the power of darkness and to transfer them into Christ’s kingdom of light (Col. 1:12-13). We do not earn or merit this instant and eternal transfer from darkness to light. It is a work of God, by His grace, done in response to our faith in His gospel of grace (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The believer is light “in the Lord,” Ephesians 5:8 tells us. One of the focuses of the Epistle



to the Ephesians is who the believer is “in Christ.” Being in Christ is a radical change of identity. Christ is “the Light of the world” (John 8:12), and when we trust in Him (Eph. 1:12-13), we who were darkness are joined in perfect union with “the Light.” We are light because the Light is within us and we are *in Christ*, the Light.

Just like darkness refers to separation from God, light refers to fellowship, union, and a relationship with the living God, Who “is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

When the electrical power suddenly goes out at your house and you are left in the dark, you hurry to find a source of light: a flashlight or a candle. You stumble through the house, feeling your way around, hoping on the way that you don’t run into the sharp corner of the coffee table, step on a Lego piece on the floor, or stub your toe on the leg of the couch.

You find in those types of moments that darkness is disorienting, crippling, limiting, and can be frightening. That is the state of those who are spiritual darkness and the kind of things they figuratively experience without the Lord (Prov. 4:19).

However, when the electric company fixes the problem and your house suddenly bursts with light again, the light overcomes and overwhelms darkness, and there is gladness, and you find that light affords you vision, direction, liberation, perspective, relief, and freedom from fear. That is what we experience spiritually in Christ (Prov. 4:18). And being light in the Lord, we know we are on the side of victory because light *always* drives the darkness away.

WALK IN LIGHT OF WHO YOU ARE

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

The term “walk” is a biblical metaphor for practical daily living. The believer’s life is a journey, and we are to walk it, making consistent forward progress in the strength of the Spirit by faith. Our new identity in Christ calls us to a new lifestyle. In stark contrast to spiritual darkness and the darkness of the world which the believer used to walk in (Eph. 2:2; 5:3-5), God would have us now walk as children of light. Our walk now, by God’s grace, should be different from the world, as different as light and dark, day and night.

The word “children” reminds us of verse 1 of this fifth chapter, where Paul wrote that believers are “dear [beloved] children.” As God’s dear children, we are called to live as children of light in this world. It is God’s will that we walk in the light into which we have been transferred, to live according to who we are in Christ.



To walk as light, we are being called to live as a bright testimony to God’s grace and truth, to walk in a manner that reveals God and His Son to the world (Col. 1:27-28). We do this so that those who are spiritual darkness might be rescued and find light and hope in Christ. We walk as children of light to enlighten others to Christ, to Who He is and what He has done for us by His cross and resurrection, and to illumine the way to Him.

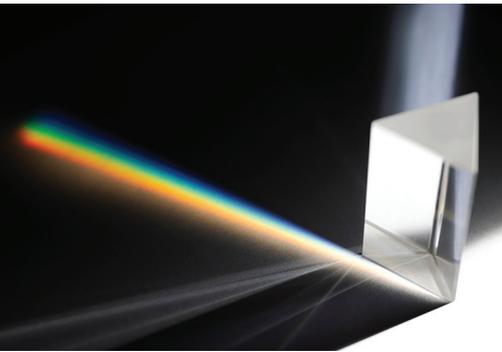
In the plans and purposes of God within His earthly, prophetic program, the nation of Israel had been the light to show the world the way to God and His salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord told Israel, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14). Israel was called to reveal and live out God’s truth as His people

so that she might be a light and blessing to the nations, that they might come to God and be saved.

Israel, however, was temporarily set aside by God due to her unbelief and rejection of His Son, Israel's prophesied Messiah. Today, under grace, the Church, the Body of Christ, is the people of God and His light to the world, to enlighten people to eternal life through faith alone in the gospel of the grace of God. Philippians 2:15 challenges the Church, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, *among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*"

LIGHT PRODUCES FRUIT

"(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:9-10).



Just as sunlight produces fruit, so spiritual light produces spiritual fruit. The spiritual light of God within us can enable us to bear the Holy Spirit's fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Ephesians 5:9 could be viewed as a prism to the light of God, which

separates it out into goodness, righteousness, and truth in our lives. These are the fruits of the light.

In contrast to a walk in darkness, as described in verses 3-5, which lists such sins as fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, and foolish talking, the fruit in the life of one walking in the light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. These latter three things describe the Person and character of Jesus Christ, the Light, and they are worked out in our lives by the Spirit as we walk as children of light.

Verse 9 is parenthetical, so verse 10 is grammatically connected with verse 8. Thus, it should be interpreted as "walk as children of light...Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Believers are to walk as children of light, examining and regulating their conduct according to what is acceptable and well-pleasing to the Lord (Psa. 19:14; Heb. 11:6).

We do not determine what pleases the Lord by our own feelings, thoughts, or conscience. Rather, we learn and prove what is acceptable to Him by the Word of God. And we must rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15) to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord during this current dispensation of grace.

In the past, under the law, Israel had different instructions to prove what was acceptable to the Lord and to function as God's light. The instruction the Lord would have the Church, which is His Body, live by today is the message of grace that He revealed to



“The Church *does more* for the world
when it is *least like* the world.”

the Apostle Paul, found in the letters of Romans through Philemon. As we grow in, apply, and serve according to this teaching for the Church, we will be enabled to shine even brighter as lights of God’s truth for His present dispensation.

LIGHT REVEALS THE DEEDS OF DARKNESS

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5:11-14).

To ensure a bright testimony for Christ, Paul teaches that the “children of light” (v. 8) should refrain from joining “the children of disobedience” (v. 6) in their deeds. He exhorts the Church not to participate in or get tangled up with the unsaved in their sinful works of darkness (v. 11).

Notice that we are taught to avoid the unfruitful *works* of darkness, not the people who are darkness. It is the deeds of

unbelievers that believers are to shun, not the unbelievers who do them. We must have contact with those who are darkness to reach them for Christ but, as children of light, we are not to join in with their sins and sinful lifestyles. Rather we are to reprove them by our consistent and godly testimony for Christ.

Paul wrote that it is shameful even to speak of the things done by unbelievers in secret (v. 12). And if it’s shameful just to speak of them, the committing of these things is even worse, which is why they are done in darkness and secret.

In verse 13, Paul stated that light, by definition, makes manifest whatever is in the darkness. Light is the means of seeing what things are. By light, we discern form, nature, and appearance. Likewise, the light of a godly walk manifests and exposes evil deeds for what they truly are. It reveals by contrast the sinfulness of unbelievers’ lives. The character and cost of sin are made clear when subjected to the light of a godly life in Christ. Evil cannot masquerade as anything else when exposed to the light of God’s goodness, righteousness, and truth.

The Church does more for the world when it is least like the world. By this light of contrast and a loving Christ-like example, unbelievers are made acutely aware of the destructiveness of darkness and sin and their need for Christ.

This is what Paul is teaching in verse 14. This verse is the child of light speaking to those who are sleeping in darkness and lying in spiritual death. The unbeliever is exposed to his sinfulness by the light with the hope that, due to the Spirit's conviction, he "that sleepest" in spiritual darkness might awake, and he that is in spiritual death might "arise from the dead." And in trusting the Savior, Christ will give him the spiritual light of salvation.

The life of one who walks as a child of light is always preaching a sermon and extending the invitation of verse 14 to unbelievers. If the unbeliever answers the invitation, and they trust the gospel of grace, Christ will give them light, and they will be saved.

The command to "walk as children of light" is given because it is possible for believers to not walk as children of light, and to continue walking and habitually living according to darkness and the ways of the world. This does nothing to endanger a believer's salvation, but it does endanger others' salvation. We are called to walk as children of light in order to reveal the light, life, and love of God so that the world may see a testimony to Christ and a representative of God's truth in us and so find the way to Him.

Obedience to the instruction to walk as children of light is an act of love toward the unbelieving so that they might see the contrast between faith and unbelief, light and darkness, and so realize their need for salvation. Our duty as ambassadors is, as the Lord told Paul on the Damascus Road, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from *darkness to light*, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins..." (Acts 26:18).



The story is told of a great fire in Edinburgh, Scotland, in which people hurried to exit the building through a passage that led to the street. They were almost safe when a rush of smoke met them, blowing into the passage from the outside. Instead of running through the smoke, they entered a door into a room that seemed safe. But soon all the oxygen was exhausted and they all suffocated. If only they had seen the light, they might have lived.² 

1. "Man Chooses Relationship over Being Right," Preaching Today, accessed July 26, 2024, <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2006/june/1060506.html>.

2. John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1986), p. 214.

Question Box



“In the days after the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat had vanished, i.e., in Zerubbabel’s and Herod’s Temples, what did the Jewish High Priest do in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement?”

Leviticus 16 describes the exact procedures the High Priest was to follow on the Day of Atonement. He could only come one day of the year (vv. 2,30), he had to be washed (think baptism) and wear special garments (v. 4), and he had to come with an offering for himself and the nation (vv. 3,5). The priest was to first make a sacrifice for himself and his house and bring the blood to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat (vv. 6,11-13). Then he would kill the sacrifice for the nation and likewise enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood on the Mercy Seat.

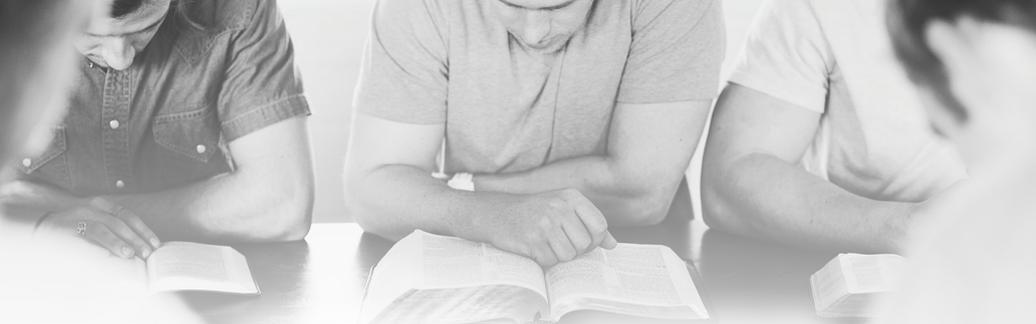
Scripture does not tell us what the High Priest did on the Day of Atonement once the Ark went missing. However, we do know that in Nehemiah’s day (Zerubbabel’s temple) the “sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel” continued to be observed “at times appointed year by year...as it is written in the law” (Neh. 10:33-34).

We don’t have much else to guide us except Rabbinic tradition, which says that the High Priest would sprinkle the blood and the other parts of the ceremony directly on the Foundation Stone upon which the Ark sat, and which was also the place that Abraham built the altar to offer Isaac.

—Pastor Don Hosfeld



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CHILD *to* ADULT

“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength...” (Psa. 8:1-2).

After praising God’s excellence on the earth, King David looked up to extol God’s greatness and stated that God’s glory is higher and exceeds that of the heavens. The Lord God is greater than everything He has made.

Verse 2 takes us from the highest heavens down to some of the smallest beings on earth: “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.” “Babes and sucklings” refer to young children. God’s power and glory are seen in the massive heavens (Psa. 19:1) as well as in small children.

As David marveled at the heavens, he equally marveled at the wisdom that often comes out of the mouths of children. Children find it easy to acknowledge God and to honor Him as the Creator. God’s transcendent glory and greatness can be grasped and expressed by a child. Children have a way of capturing spiritual truth in ways that amaze and can even offer correction to adults.

Dr. Edward Bedore (see page 3), one of my spiritual mentors who is now with the Lord, often told me that a child can read Genesis 1-11 and understand it better than many theologians. Children take things literally, and they take them to heart. We need this kind of mindset when we read the Bible, and we should respond to it with child-like faith (Luke 18:17).

After healing the blind and the lame that came to the Lord in the temple (Matt. 21:14), children that were present in the temple began crying out and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Son of David is a Messianic title which declares that Christ is the King of Israel. The praise of these children made the chief priests and scribes “sore displeased” (21:15). Quoting Psalm 8:2, the Lord responded, “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?” (Matt. 21:16). Those children had an open heart and more understanding as to the Person and identity of Jesus Christ than the learned priests and scribes in Israel.

We tend to think only of children learning from adults but sometimes, adults can and should learn from children. Psalm 8:2 reinforces the fact that “...God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor. 1:27).

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



WHAT'S DONE "IN CHRIST" WILL LAST

Remembering Dr. Ed Bedore

Just outside my office here at *Berean Bible Society* hangs a plaque that reads, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." For those around here, the significance goes beyond these words. As the story goes, Dr. Ed Bedore, while working out of the BBS as the Executive Director of *Berean Bible Institute*, decided the better wording would be, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done *IN* Christ will last." Dr. Bedore was correct, and he lived a life of service that will last for eternity.

ONLY one life: 'twill soon be past.

ONLY what's done for Christ will last.

Ed was a friend, but more importantly, he was an example for me and countless others. He had a thirst for knowledge, a drive to know the truth, and a care for sharing it. Many passages of Scripture remind me of Ed; one of those would be Galatians 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Ed's life as a believer was one of service to Christ by serving others.

In his booklet *A Biblical Life*, he wrote, "Our liberty in Christ does not mean we are to demand our every right. No, being freed from the law of sin and death, the believer is free to walk in the newness of life. Free to serve others on behalf of Jesus Christ. Our liberty in Christ can only be fully realized on the altar of love when "*ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Rom. 12:1).

Even in his final months while at home on hospice, Ed served Christ by serving others. The nurses and others who came to *serve him* found themselves the ones being served *by him*. Still presenting the gospel, still teaching the Bible, and answering questions, Ed continued to present his body as a living sacrifice.

To Ed, I would say *you* "have fought a good fight," *you* have finished your course, *you* "have kept the faith," "Henceforth there is laid up for" *you* "a crown of righteousness" (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).

One way Ed's work in Christ can last is by doing more than merely remembering him. My hope is that Ed's life can remind *and* motivate us all that we, too, can choose to be used of God as a help in the lives of others.

—Pastor Don Hosfeld



A BIBLICAL LIFE

*Following Paul as
He Followed Christ*

PASTOR W. EDWARD BEDORE
Initial Executive Director of BBI

FOLLOWING PAUL

In “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” it is imperative to acknowledge the distinctive revelation given to the Apostle Paul concerning the Grace of God and the Body of Christ. It is in Paul’s letters that we find the details of the hope, practice, position, and doctrine of the Church. Those who understand and love the wonderful message of the Dispensation of the Grace of God as revealed through the Apostle Paul take seriously his admonition to “*be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*” (1 Cor. 11:1).

WHAT DID PAUL MEAN, FOLLOW ME?

Obviously Paul was not trying to draw believers away from following the Lord Jesus Christ. The last part of 1 Corinthians 11:1 says “*even as I also am of Christ.*” The idea put forth is that believers are to note Paul’s example and to do likewise.

The doctrine concerning the Body of Christ that is found in Paul’s letters is vital to understanding what God is doing today. Salvation by grace through faith, the believer’s heavenly calling, justification, sanctification, and the blessed hope are just a few of the subjects that are exclusively dealt with in Paul’s letters. These wonderful truths alone are enough to bring untold joy to the heart of every believer.

Most who consider themselves to be *grace believers* claim to be followers of Paul. That is, they embrace his letters as God’s revealed truth concerning the Body of Christ, and the Dispensation of the Grace of God that is in effect today. In other words, they follow Paul in doctrine.

IS DOCTRINE ENOUGH?

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that Paul received special revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. “*But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the*

revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11-12 cf. 2 Cor. 12:1-7; Eph. 3:1-5; Col. 1:14-17). While it is important that we pay particular attention to Paul’s doctrine and the revelation of the mystery, to follow him embraces much more. First, we must not ignore the rest of the Bible and the great doctrines that form the bedrock upon which Paul laid down the foundational teachings about Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church which is His Body. Second, we must not ignore what is taught in Paul’s letters concerning what it means for the believer to walk pleasing to the Lord.

To put 1 Corinthians 11:1 into context, we must look at the last three verses of chapter ten. *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ”* (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1). Following Paul through this passage of Scripture takes us beyond the bounds of doctrinal agreement and into the realm of service to others on behalf of Christ.

PAUL’S EXAMPLE

If we desire to follow Paul as he followed Christ, we must take a careful look at his example as it is laid out for us in Scripture. Even a casual reading through the Book of Acts should impress upon any believer the fact of Paul’s zeal for his Lord and his determination to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God at any cost. No threat of violence, no lack of resources, nor lack of support could deter him. In the eleventh chapter of 2 Corinthians, we find a list of trying experiences that the Apostle Paul had gone through up to that point (see 2 Cor. 11:23-27). It is interesting to notice that there are several incidents

listed here that are not mentioned in the Book of Acts. Second Corinthians was written about AD 56, at least two years before his arrest



in Jerusalem. This means that the shipwreck of Acts chapter twenty-seven was at least the fourth that Paul was involved in. This alone would cause most to give up the quest and retire to a safer and less harrowing endeavor. But not the Apostle Paul, whose resolve was to press on regardless of the hardships.

Paul provided the list of 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 in defense of his God-given apostleship and commission to preach the Gospel of Grace. This defense was against the charge that he was not a true apostle and a challenge to the false gospel that was being proclaimed by his accusers. He declared that those who were bringing charges against him were false apostles who had appointed themselves as apostles and whose work was to deceive by preaching another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel (see 2 Cor. 11:1-4,12-15).

In verse twenty-three Paul asks the question: “*Are they ministers of Christ?*” In answering his own question, Paul declares that his labor in the ministry of the gospel [has] far surpassed their efforts. He then listed the hardships, physical trials, and difficulties that he had willingly endured on behalf of his Lord for the profit of those who so desperately needed to hear the truth.

Paul had been scourged with whips, beaten with rods, frequently thrown into prison, was often in danger of death, stoned, shipwrecked, had made many hard journeys, [and] was in almost constant danger from bandits while traveling whether in the cities or in the countryside. While having these constant dangers and threats always present, the Apostle Paul pressed on in weariness and the pain of toil. In carrying out his ministry, he often went without sleep, food and drink, proper clothing, and protection from the elements (2 Cor. 11:23-27).

PAUL'S MOTIVATION

As we reflect on the things that Paul had suffered in some twenty years of ministry, we should ask the question, WHY? Why did Paul continue on? Paul's statement in the next chapter reveals his attitude or mind-set. Writing to the church at Corinth he said, “*and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you*” (2 Cor. 12:15). For the sake of the Corinthians Paul was willing to spend, that is to give, whatever it would take to minister to the benefit of the Corinthian believers. This included physical labor to support his ministry when needed as well as any material resources that he might have had. He was also willing to be spent on their behalf. To be spent, drained of all resources, to be used up, to give even his own life is the meaning here. Paul's attitude was one of love, a love that the world knows nothing of. It is a real and lasting love. It was that love that is shed abroad in the hearts of believers by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). It is the kind of love that is demonstrated by the sacrifice of self (Rom. 5:8).

COMPELLING LOVE

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then we are all dead: and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Simply put, Paul is saying that because of the great love with which Christ has loved us, every believer’s life should be given over to do His will according to His purpose. This, in fact, is the underlying theme of Paul’s letters. Romans 12:1 reads: *“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* These words are given not only in the light of the preceding chapters of nine, ten, and eleven, which explain the why and wherefore of Israel’s temporary spiritual blindness and why the Dispensation of Grace is now in effect, but also in regards to chapters five through eight. The following verses testify to this fact: *“...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts”* (Rom. 5:5); *“But God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8); *“...all things work together for good to them that love God...”* (Rom. 8:28); *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us...nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8:35-39). Yes, Jesus Christ’s great love for us should compel us to serve Him as it compelled the Apostle Paul. Jesus Christ’s love for us should be manifest in our love for others. 



August 16-18, 2024

Location: *First Grace Gospel Church*
5730 Adams Ave, Ashtabula, Ohio

Speaker: Pastor Jeff Seekins, BBS Board Member

Contact: Pastor Michael Morris at 440.997.8191



The *Two Witnesses*

PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Berean Searchlight Editor

At the most recent annual *Berean Bible Fellowship* summer conference, I was tasked with speaking on the two most famous witnesses in the world: The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.

It is ironic that when describing these two witnesses as the most famous witnesses in the world, something I believe justified, we also have to mention that we don't even have definitive proof of who *precisely* these witnesses are. Like Tim "The Toolman" Taylor's neighbor, Wilson, on the 90's hit TV show *Home Improvement*, we never quite know for sure who is behind that fence because there is enough that's left unrevealed.

Of course, we can speculate as to their identity (something we will do later in this article), and we can even have a strong and reasonable suspicion; however, as far as us knowing for sure who these two men are, we should accept that the Bible is silent on that. Thus, we ought to conclude that knowing *who* they are is not as important as the other details

surrounding them. Let us not make the all-too-common mistake of spending more time on what *we* want to know and less time on what *God* wants us to know.

Besides "who" these two witnesses are, some of the other usual questions surrounding them are *to whom do they witness; when do they come to witness; why two witnesses; what are they a witness to; what will be the reaction of those that hear them?* But probably the first question to ask, and the best place to start, is *why there is a need for witnesses at all.* Why does God supernaturally raise up and empower two men to come and testify on His behalf? Won't the Scriptures be enough? The obvious and simple answer is no.

There is a real need for these witnesses. After the Body of Christ is raptured, the world will be left without a single believer. All those remaining on earth will be those who have rejected the peace offering that is the gospel of the grace of God and will thus, by their own doing, enter into the

Tribulation—God’s time of wrath and judgment.

But I suggest another reason that these two witnesses will be necessary: to fulfill the prophecy, role, and responsibility of God’s mandate that Israel be His witness to the nations—something Israel has repeatedly refused to do throughout its long history.

CAN I GET A WITNESS

It’s interesting that when searching the Scriptures for the phrase “my two witnesses,” we find it is only used in Revelation 11. However, if we search for “my witnesses,” we find *that phrase* is used three times, and remarkably, the context of all three very much lines up with the ministry and testimony of the Two Witnesses during the Tribulation.

“...the first question to ask, and the best place to start, is why there is a need for witnesses at all.”



Isaiah chapters 43 and 44 describe God’s assurance to the nation of Israel and His promise to be their Savior in their darkest of times. The prophecy has both nearer and farther-away implications. Though Isaiah is writing prophetically to the Babylonian exiles some 150 years before they return to rebuild the temple and

city, these verses provide much insight into God’s purpose and plan with the nation, which to date has yet to be fulfilled.

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour...” (Isa. 43:1-3).

One can easily imagine how these promises could be very reassuring to the nation during the Tribulation. But we also see in these two chapters that God redeemed and called Israel not only so He could save them but for an additional purpose: that they might serve Him by helping Him reach the nations with the truth.

“Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth *their witnesses*, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth” (v. 9).

Verse 9 invites the nations to gather and present *their* witnesses regarding who the true God of this world is. He challenges those who would witness for another god to present their case and let them name another god that can prophesy of events long before they happen, and if they can’t, let



"Israel may have failed to be God's witness, but God will raise up from among them Two Witnesses who will fulfill that role."

them hear the truth—that the Lord alone is God—a truth that Israel knew because they saw it displayed on many occasions and in many ways; thus, God says to Israel:

"Ye are *my witnesses*, saith the LORD...before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore *ye are my witnesses*, saith the LORD, that I am God" (vv. 10-12).

Israel was to be God's witnesses to the nations that the Lord alone is God and that there are no other gods besides Him. He says in verse 21, *"This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise."* There is no ambiguity here, no hope-so. Israel *shall* show forth God's praise. They *shall* be His witness to the nations. But how have they done thus far? Have they been that witness? We know from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah that the nation quickly reverted to breaking the law and marrying foreign wives once returning

from captivity. Chapter 44 of Isaiah continues the message of the previous chapter.

"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and His redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God...*ye are even My witnesses*. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isa. 44:6-8).

The issue facing the world during the Tribulation is identifying who the real God is, and it's the same reason that God lists in Isaiah 43 and 44 as to why Israel would be His witness. Is Jesus the Christ or is the imposter described in Daniel 9:27 (cf. Rev. 13; Matt. 24:15-16)? Will there ever be a more needed time for a witness as to who the real God is than in the Tribulation? Israel may have failed to be God's witness, but God will raise up from among them Two Witnesses who will fulfill that role.

IDENTIFYING THE TWO WITNESSES

There are many theories as to who the Two Witnesses will be. Some suggest that they will be two men alive at the time and empowered to do these wonderous

deeds. However, when we consider that these are “witnesses” and not merely prophets, we should conclude that these two men must have seen and heard Jesus; otherwise, they would not be witnesses. It is noteworthy that the Body of Christ is never referred to as witnesses for God, and that’s because we walk by faith and not by sight. We have not seen nor heard Jesus; thus, we aren’t and can’t be witnesses.

Paul was called a witness by Ananias when he said, “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and *see that Just One*, and shouldest *hear the voice of His mouth*. For thou shalt be *His witness* unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:14-15 cf. 26:16).



Consequently, to be a witness, a person must have seen or heard. There must be firsthand knowledge, not hearsay. This is especially true in legal proceedings, and lest we forget, the Two Witnesses will be making legal decisions based on their authority (cf. Rev. 11:6).

Another theory as to the identity of the witnesses is that of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest. This is because the witnesses are said to be “the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Rev. 11:4), and Zerubbabel and Joshua are described as such by the prophet Zechariah (cf. Zech. 4:1-7,12-14). However, it seems that John is simply using the teaching and imagery from Zechariah to describe the ministry of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 as being similar to what was done through Zerubbabel and Joshua rather than trying to provide an identification of who specifically those witnesses are.

The description is that they will be candlesticks that light the way while being fed oil from two olive trees. Olive oil is often used to speak metaphorically about the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit feeds (empowers) the candlesticks (the witnesses), which are lights to point that generation to the truth.

MOSES AND ELIJAH

Many have concluded that Enoch and Elijah will be the witnesses, and that is certainly possible. However, considering Enoch was a Gentile, some have rightly questioned if God would not instead send two Jews to witness in the city of Jerusalem. Not to mention, if they are there to help usher in the Kingdom, it doesn’t seem likely that God would use a Gentile, seeing that Israel and Jews individually have a favored status over Gentiles.



“The sending of these Two Witnesses demonstrates that God has always wanted and will always want to warn man not to follow Satan towards destruction.”

While acknowledging that we can't know for certain who the Two Witnesses are, Moses and Elijah appear to be the most likely candidates. They represent the law and the prophets, which, according to Christ, is the testimony to Jews (cf. Lk. 16:28-31).

It was Moses and Elijah who appeared at Christ's transfiguration (Matt. 17:2-3), and Christ Himself confirmed that Elijah would be coming back (Matt. 17:11 cf. Mal. 4:5). Few are ever described as standing before God like these Two Witnesses are (Rev. 11:4), yet both Moses and Elijah are named as doing so (cf. 1 Kings 17:1; Psa. 106:23). But probably the greatest weight of evidence for Moses and Elijah to be the Two Witnesses comes from comparing the listed miracles.

“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies...” (Rev. 11:5).

Elijah famously called down fire from heaven in judgment over the priests of Baal (cf. 1 Kings 18:36-39). And what was the point of that situation? To “let it be known this day that *Thou art God* in Israel” (v. 36), “that this people may know that *Thou art the LORD God*” (v. 37). What

was the response of those who witnessed this event: “And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God” (v. 39).

Often overlooked is the fact that Moses also used fire from heaven in judgment. Just prior to the exodus, we're told that Moses “stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, *and the fire* ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, *and fire mingled with the hail*, very grievous...” (Ex. 9:23-24). Another instance of Moses and fire coming down to judge and consume others is found in Numbers 16:28-35. Besides this, other similarities exist between the miracles of the Two Witnesses and Moses and Elijah.

“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will” (Rev. 11:6).

Shut Heaven: It was Elijah who told King Ahab, “As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor

rain these years, but according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1 cf. Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:17).

Water Turned to Blood: Moses famously turned the waters in Egypt to blood in judgment for Pharaoh not letting the people go (Ex. 7:19-20), but it was about more than that. Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the Lord as God. Verse 17 says, “Thus saith the LORD, *In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD:* behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.”

Once again, we see the issue surrounding all these events as identifying the real God. The Two Witnesses, like Moses and Elijah many years before, will bring truth to those who wish to

replace the true God with a false one. They will bring judgment, but as much as anything, they will be demonstrating God’s goodness even in His time of wrath.

The sending of these Two Witnesses demonstrates that God has always wanted and will always want to warn man not to follow Satan towards destruction. He has always wanted what is best for mankind. The words of 1 Timothy 2:4 that God wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” are on full display in the sending of these Two Witnesses.

“For the word of the LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD” (Psa. 33:4-5.) 

One of our dispensational charts in the new Grace Study Bible

The Major Division in God’s Word

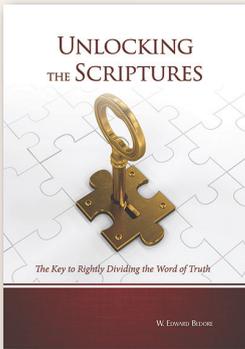
“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)

	Prophetic Program God’s plan and purpose for the earth	Mystery Program God’s plan and purpose for the heavens
Theme	Christ’s reign on the earth (Jer. 23:5; Matt. 16:28; 17:1-5)	Christ’s reign in the heavens (Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 3:1-4)
Time Factor	Revealed from the foundation of the world (Luke 1:37-70; Acts 3:21)	Kept secret since the world begin (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:25-27)
Channel of Blessing	Israel (Gen. 12:1-3; Matt. 10:5,6)	Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; I Cor. 12:12,13,27)
Hope	Earthly (Job 19:25,26; Matt. 5:5)	Heavenly (Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:5)

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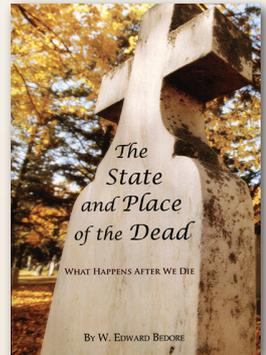
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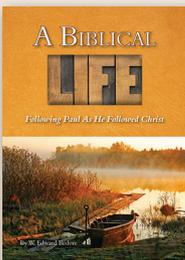


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“Your ministry is simply fantastic, Pastor Kevin! You have such a beautiful way of presenting the truth of the Bible rightly divided, and it has made such a fantastic impact on our Christian walk and understanding. I cannot say enough about that. We love *Berean Bible Society* and love love love *Transformed by Grace* as it is an incredibly beautiful ministry of truth. We have forwarded so many of your teachings to Christian friends.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 3 | Tower of Babel”) “Thank you for this very interesting teaching. It always makes me joyful when God shows His power and will and makes it come to pass, as His Word is truth, and I know I can trust in Him alone.”

From Kentucky:

“Enjoyed your two sessions [*Transformed by Grace* episodes] on water baptism. Thanks for standing for our ‘one’ baptism (which is spiritual) in this dispensation of Grace. Keep up the great work.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to “The Commission for the Body of Christ”) “The difference between Israel’s and the Body of Christ’s commission was well explained. I love the reminder and encouragement of our commission today to share the gospel with the lost! Thank you! I really enjoy listening to Pastor Kevin; I am always edified!”

From Missouri:

“We are so appreciative of the *Transformed by Grace* program. It’s become one of our most enjoyable television ministries, teaching the truth of the Word with Scriptural validation. We introduced your program to our pastor, and he has become an avid viewer as well.”

From North Carolina:

“Greetings, friends. As always, we appreciate all your ministries. Our prayers are with you for continued growth.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to “The 144,000”) “Thank you for your in-depth analysis of Scripture, with your unique tenderness and wit, helping us to eat the real meat of revelation and drink in Holy Spirit wine.”

From our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible*—“No Beauty That We Should Admire Him”) “Love your articles... I forward so many that I have forgotten the count.”

From the Philippines:

“Thank you very much, *Berean Bible Society*. I am a pastor with *Things To Come Mission* in the Philippines. I receive your monthly booklet [*Searchlight*]. Thank you so much for the articles.”

From our Inbox:

“After studying with Pastor Kevin via the DVDs, my husband (a new Grace believer) asked me why Grace believers/Bereans are in such a minority. He shakes his head and says, ‘It’s so plain and simple; it’s in the Bible!’ I am at a loss to answer him.... It almost seems like a massive cover-up when it comes to Paul’s epistles and the Mystery.... God bless you, and thank you for sharing the wonderful Grace of God!”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“A Few Good Men”) “Well done! I have been enjoying your teachings so much!! Thank you!”

From our Inbox:

“Your teachings mean so much to me. You make the Scriptures much easier to understand. I recently got Roku, and I spend so much time watching all your shows...I do feel that you have the best grasp of Bible interpretation. You explain things very clearly....”

From Delaware:

“We listen to Pastor Kevin daily and have learned so much. His explanation of Scripture is clear and understandable—like putting the cookies on the bottom shelf! Thank you for bringing truth and understanding into our home!” (Love the cookie analogy! —Ed.)

From YouTube:

(Responding to “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 2 | The Flood”) “Very awe-inspiring teaching. It makes you just marvel at the greatness and brilliance of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you, and God bless you all and your ministry.”

From Facebook:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible*—“Will There Be Recognition in Heaven”) “This is so encouraging to me....thank you, Pastor Paul Sadler, I’ll look for the tall person in Heaven!”

From our Inbox:

“Pastor Kevin, thank you so much for sharing the wonderful grace of God with such enthusiasm and heart! Your *Transformed by Grace* segments/DVDs are full of truth, life, fun, and color, with the ability to reach everyone wanting to learn!”

From our Inbox:

“I always look forward to the arrival of the *Searchlight*. I appreciated the brief thoughts concerning the Lord’s Prayer. Now, Pastor Kevin can continue the Sadler legacy by showing us the dispensational implications of the true Lord’s Prayer of John 17.”

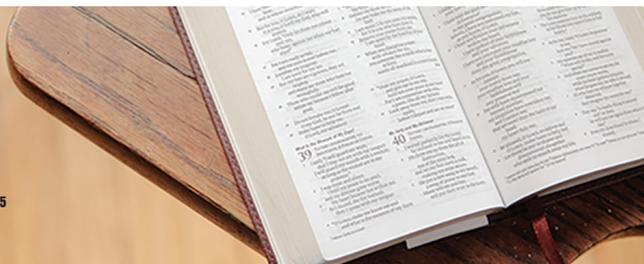
From YouTube:

(Responding to “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 1 | Creation”) “I always LOVE LOVE LOVE your teaching brother Kevin, thank you.... Also, your MP3 stick is great also. Thank you!”

From Facebook:

“This post was absolutely fascinating. I learned so much from studying it.”

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



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3 Click on the BBS Network app icon, then click the **Get** button to download the app for free. Then click the **Get** button on the next page to confirm download.



4 To launch it, go back to the **Home** screen and swipe up, down, left, or right on the touchpad until you reach the BBS Network app. Click on the app to launch it.



News & Announcements



BBF Fall Conference: The *Berean Bible Fellowship* will hold its annual fall conference October 4-5 at *Friendship Congregational Bible Church* in Friendship, Wisconsin. Speakers include Pastors Kevin Sadler, Don Hosfeld, Ken Lawson, John Fredericksen, Wes Barteck, and Mr. Travis LaBrake. This year's theme is "Loving Our Neighbor: Our Unfeigned Flow of Love." For more information, please contact Pastor Denny Kenepp at PastorDK@outlook.com or BBF President Pastor Ken Lawson at KandBLawson@sbcglobal.net.

Pastoral Search: After 24 years of faithful service, Pastor Ronald T. Fox, Jr. is retiring at the end of August; thus, the saints of *Berean Bible Church* of Denver have begun the process of identifying and calling a new pastor. This multicultural grace assembly has its roots in the message of the Apostle Paul and hosted our former President, Pastor Paul Sadler, some years ago. If you have an interest in laboring for the Lord in Denver, please visit the church website (bereanbibledenver.org) for more details or email PastoralSearchCommittee@bereanbibledenver.org.

Grace Family Bible Conference: If you are going to be in the Duncansville, Pennsylvania, area (or can be), then you should stop in at the Grace Family Bible Church Conference, which will be held November 2-3 at *Grace Family Bible Church*. Pastor Kevin Sadler will bring his famous (or infamous) jokes as well as his timeless teaching of God's Word rightly divided. For more information, you can contact the church at 814.696.4366 or Pastor Jim Zaebst at 814.327.3028.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

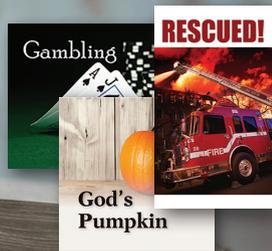
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"I used to ask God to help me.
Then I asked if I might help Him.
I ended up by asking Him to
do His work through me."

—Hudson Taylor—



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