

# *The* **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

September 2024



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This month's cover features Heceta Head Lighthouse located near Florence, Oregon.

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President: Kevin Sadler | Editor: Don Hosfeld | Layout/Design: Jessica Sadler

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The Berean Searchlight (ISSN 0005-8890), September 2024. Vol. 85, Number 6.

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



## A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

**“Children’s children are the crown of old men...”**  
**(Prov. 17:6).**

I have my first crown! My wife, Jessica, has teased me for some time now that I drive like a grandfather, and now I truly am one and I can proudly drive like it. On July 9th, our son, Cody, and his wife, Janna, had a little baby girl, Caroline Joy. Joy is an appropriate middle name for what she brings to our hearts.

It seems like the blink of an eye since my father, Paul M. Sadler, in the August 1999 *Berean Searchlight*, gave thanks to the Lord for the birth of Cody, who was his first grandchild. Now, twenty-five years later, I’m writing about my first grandchild. When I held Caroline for the first time, I could see the family resemblance immediately, and my heart was captured.

James 1:17 tells us that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights....” Last Christmas, Jessica and I received the birth announcement as a present. That was an exciting and memorable Christmas gift. Now that Caroline Joy has arrived—I may be biased—but I would say Caroline Joy is a “perfect gift.” We are grateful to the Lord for this gift from His hand.

As soon as Caroline was born, my thoughts went to her salvation. Our God and Savior desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). I know that the Lord loves this little girl; He died for her and desires that she trust Him for her salvation. Thus, we have been praying that Caroline will trust Christ as her Savior at a very early age.

Caroline’s father and mother have the primary responsibility to bring her “up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4), but grandparents have a secondary responsibility to that end as well. Under the statutes and judgments of the law, Israel was challenged to “teach them thy sons, *and thy sons’ sons*” (Deut. 4:9). Israel’s grandparents, were to pass God’s truth along to their grandchildren. The principle is the same for us, the Church, the Body of Christ, that grandparents under grace are to teach our grandchildren about the blessings and riches of God’s grace for today. It is our privilege to do so. Our prayer is that we would be a godly influence on Caroline’s life, while we also do a little spoiling on the side.

Grace and peace,

Grandpap Sadler



# BE A BARNABAS

**“And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus” (Acts 4:36).**

The birth name of Paul’s co-worker, Barnabas, was Joses, or Joseph. His parents named him after Jacob’s favorite son (Gen. 37:3). Barnabas was a Jew of the tribe of Levi from the island of Cyprus.

Joseph “was surnamed Barnabas” by the apostles. Barnabas was like a nickname given to Joseph. Nicknames often stick, and it did with Barnabas, as from this point on he is only mentioned by his surname in Scripture. Nicknames tell us something about the individual, such as Honest Abe, Ivan the Terrible, or even Doubting Thomas.

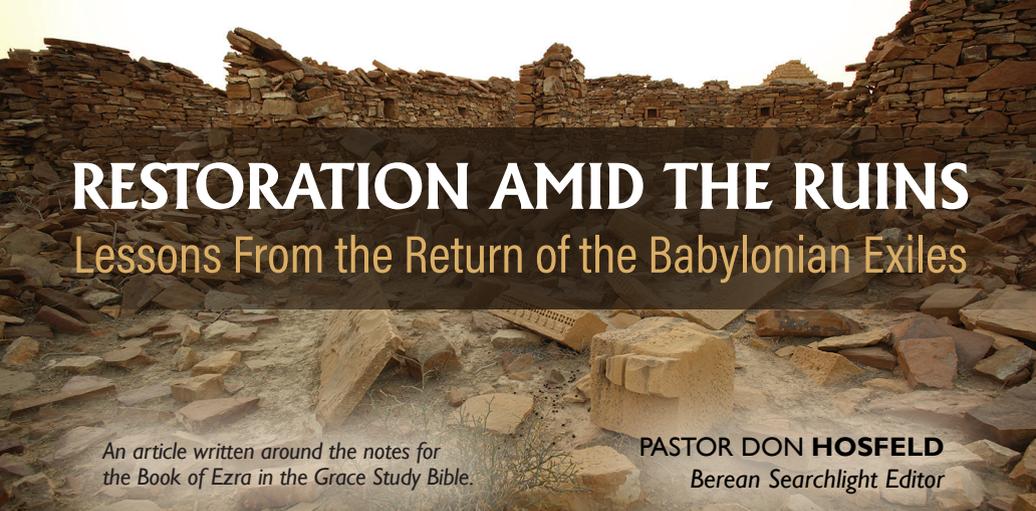
We find other examples in Scripture where surnames are given which denote a person’s character or some characteristic. In Mark 3:16-17, we read, “And Simon *He surnamed Peter*, And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and *He surnamed them Boanerges*, which is, The sons of thunder.” Simon was surnamed “Peter” by Christ, meaning a rock or a stone, referring to his resoluteness and steadfastness. Christ also surnamed James and John “Boanerges,” meaning “The sons of thunder,” referring to their fiery disposition.

As to Joses, the apostles surnamed him *Barnabas*, meaning “The son of consolation.” The Greek word translated as “consolation” would describe coming alongside another to help them in their moment of need. It is the ability to lift the burden from another so as to assist along the way. Barnabas was quick to respond to one in need with selfless kindness. He exemplified Romans 15:1-2, which says, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.” We each need to *be a Barnabas*, having a ministry of consolation, support, relief, comfort, and encouragement to others. The Church, and everyone in it, *needs* this ministry.

It has been said, “One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement...It is easy to laugh at men’s ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word.”<sup>1</sup>

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

1. William Barclay, AZquotes, accessed July 31, 2024. <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/591135>.



# RESTORATION AMID THE RUINS

## Lessons From the Return of the Babylonian Exiles

An article written around the notes for  
the Book of Ezra in the Grace Study Bible.

PASTOR DON HOSFELD  
Berean Searchlight Editor

The history and future of man is the story of restoration. The Bible makes this plain for all who would like to know the past and wish to know the future. From the onset of sin, God announced a plan for restoring His creation—from the seed of Eve would come One to crush Satan (Gen. 3:15). Sin and evil would *not* triumph; despair would not rule eternity. *There will be restoration amid the ruins!*

Far too many have lost sight of this fact and, as a result, have lost hope. But hope is something God recognizes we need and wishes we have. Paul, by inspiration of God, said, “Now the God of *hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope...” (Rom. 15:13). The student of the Bible should know that hope in Scripture is not merely the *desire* for something to happen, but something we fully expect and trust *will* happen.

God doesn’t simply want us to have hope; He made sure to provide us with a reason and way to have it.

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).**

God is the “God of hope” (v. 13). He is the “God of patience and consolation [comfort]” (v. 5). He is also the God of “peace” (v. 33; 16:20); “love” (2 Cor. 13:11); “all flesh” (Jer. 32:27); “the whole earth” (Isa. 54:5; Rev. 11:4); “truth” (Psa. 31:5); “my life” (42:8); “my strength” (43:2); “my mercy” (59:10,17); “my praise” (109:1); and of course, “my righteousness” (4:1) and “my salvation” (18:46; 27:9; Mic. 7:7; Hab. 3:18).

It is extraordinary to think that the believer *always* has the means for hope available to them as long as we have the Word of God available to us. What does someone who has no hope need most? The Scriptures and prayer! Scripture and prayer are God’s prescription for when the world and what we see in it become too large to bear—“*He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up*

*their wounds*” (Psa. 147:3). God knew how to put the smallest parts of our being together when He formed man, and He knows what we need to know in order to maintain stability and function as He deems fit.

When Paul speaks of things written “aforetime” in Romans 15, he certainly has the Old Testament in mind, for much of the New Testament, including over half of Paul’s own epistles, had yet to be written. This is not to suggest that *all* of Scripture is not God’s prescription for hope; simply that Paul’s specific meaning here is a reference to the Old Testament and what God wrote regarding the events that took place since creation.

God specifically chose what events to record so that we “through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Have you ever put together a piece of furniture or a child’s



Christmas present and found the directions lacking? Well, the great news is nothing is lacking in Scripture. The indwelt believer armed with Scripture has what they need to be “thoroughly furnished” (2 Tim. 3:17); we are *fully equipped*.

**“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor. 1:3-4).**

God knows our struggles; He knows that life has obstacles and tribulations. Though man, with help from Satan, has “made his own bed,” God did not and does not respond by saying that we must now lay in the bed that we made. Instead, He is compassionate and gracious and lovingly provides us with what we need to get through and rise above the tribulations, and this is true comfort. Events written in the Old Testament are examples of God bringing restoration amid the ruins.

### **GOD’S NATION IN RUINS**

**“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee....The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand” (Deut. 28:15,49).**

As God formed the nation of Israel, His nation, and sent them into the promised land, He did so with His blessings and also plenty of warnings of what would happen if they chose to abandon the covenant they had made with

“Scripture and prayer are God’s prescription for when the world and what we see in it become too large to bear.”



Him (cf. vv. 62-65)—they would be delivered into the hands of their enemies. It was the Lord Who had freed them from bondage in Egypt. It was the Lord Who fed and protected them in the wilderness. To Him alone was due their thanks, their praise; He alone deserved their worship.

Yet, time and time again, Israel would begin to serve other gods. They would forget the Lord and forsake His commandments.

In 722 BC, the ten northern tribes of Israel were conquered and taken captive by Assyria. Assyria tried to conquer the southern kingdom of Judah, but “Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven” (2 Chron. 32:20). In response, the Lord sent an angel and slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (cf. 2 Kings 19:35), “Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 32:22).

Judah, however, did not learn her lesson for very long. With the death of Hezekiah came the rule of his son, Manasseh, an evil king who led Judah to sin in many abominations, including sacrificing their children by fire (cf. 2 Kings 21:6). The result was

that God pronounced judgment upon Judah. He would deliver Judah into the hands of their enemies (vv. 10-15), Babylon specifically (Jer. 20:4; 21:4-10; 25:9).

God called Judah to repent, but she refused. God issued a familiar challenge to look through the city for a just man and said that “If there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth” He would pardon Jerusalem (Jer. 5:1). God desired and pleaded with both Israel and Judah to repent: “return unto Me” (Jer. 4:1) is what the Lord said, but neither did. Thus, as Paul quotes from Isaiah 65:1-2, “But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:21).

By 586 BC, Judah would be conquered by Babylon, the temple destroyed, thousands of Jews taken captive to Babylon, and Jerusalem left in ruins. It’s hard to imagine what this must have felt like for Jews who witnessed the destruction. The once great and admired city, ruled by one of the wisest and wealthiest men ever to live, King Solomon (1 Kings 3:12; 4:31), was now completely destroyed. The temple, which



was overlaid entirely on the inside with pure gold (2 Chron. 3:4), and more importantly, the place where God's Shekinah glory once resided, was plundered, dismantled, and left without even its foundations (cf. Ezra 3:6,10). However, the city would not stay that way for long. God would bring restoration to His people amid the ruins of that great city.

### **A PLAN FOR RESTORATION**

**“For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword... Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them...And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.**

**“Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast...Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down” (Jer. 33:4-12).**

Judah and Israel would be restored, and their desolation turned to habitation. God was bringing “health and cure,” and He would do so through a Gentile named Cyrus. The Book of Ezra recounts Israel and Judah's return to Jerusalem from captivity.

**“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the Word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,**

**“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah” (Ezra 1:1-2).**

Cyrus of the Medes and Persians had conquered Babylon, fulfilling the prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar of the great image made up of nations and interpreted by Daniel (cf. Dan. 2:31-45). And now Cyrus was fulfilling the next step in God's plan for the restoration of Israel. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God told the nation that “after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good Word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jer. 29:10 cf. 25:11).

a. The return after 70 years was prophesied (Jer. 25:11; 29:10 cf. II Chron. 36:22,23; Dan. 9:2).

b. "Stirred up the spirit" possibly through Daniel (Dan. 6:25-28). See also Hag. 1:14.

c. *Lord God of Heaven*, some suggest the name is significant and the result of God's glory having left Jerusalem according to the vision of Ezekiel 8-11.

d. Verses 1-2 are a near direct quote of II Chronicles 26:32-33.

e. *Lord God of Israel* used over 1000 times in the OT but only once in the NT, Luke 1:69, to identify the fulfillment of the prophecy of the forerunner of the Messiah.

f. Jews who choose to stay and not return to Jerusalem and Judea (cf. 7:13).

g. Those who chose to stay rather than to return and help rebuild were expected to contribute more financially.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Proclamation of Cyrus

Now in the first year of Cyrus<sup>1</sup> king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled,<sup>2</sup> the LORD stirred up the spirit<sup>b</sup> of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing,<sup>2</sup> saying,<sup>c</sup>

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven<sup>c</sup> hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me<sup>c</sup> to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.<sup>d</sup>

3 Who is there among you of all his people?<sup>2b</sup> his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel,<sup>e</sup> (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth,<sup>f</sup> let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offerings<sup>g</sup> for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

### Preparations to Return

5 ¶ Then rose up the chief of the fathers<sup>b</sup> of Judah and Benjamin,<sup>c</sup> and the priests, and the Levites,<sup>j</sup> with all them<sup>k</sup> whose spirit God had raised,<sup>k</sup> to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.<sup>l</sup>

6 And all they that were about them strengthened their hands<sup>m</sup> with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things,<sup>n</sup> beside all that was willingly offered.

7 ¶ Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels<sup>o</sup> of the house of the LORD,<sup>5</sup> which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem,<sup>6</sup> and had put them in the house of his gods;<sup>p</sup>

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath<sup>q</sup> the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar,<sup>r</sup> the prince of Judah.

9 And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort

h. Those mentioned in the next chapter.

i. Other tribes did apparently go as well. See "Israel" 2:2,59,70.

#### Priesthood

j. See note 2:70.

k. *Stirred up or awakened* (Hag. 1:14; Isa. 50:4).

l. Roughly 50,000 returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:64-65).

m. A contrast to what the people of the land (Samaritans) will do for those that returned (cf. Ezra 4:4).

n. Jer. 20:5.

o. Ex. 27:19; 37:16; 39:36-39.

p. These vessels were desecrated (II Chron. 36:7; Dan. 5:2,22,23) the same night Babylon would be conquered (Dan. 5:30,31).

q. Not the same Mithredath of 4:7.

r. Possibly Zerubbabel's Persian name since both said to have "laid the foundation" of the house of God, (Ezra 5:16; Zech. 4:9) and both named as the governor (Ezra 5:14; Hag. 1:1,14; 2:2,21).

1. (1:1) 538 BC. Isaiah prophesied of Cyrus nearly 200 years prior to his birth and that he would order the temple rebuilt (Isa. 44:28). Cyrus is one of eight people in the Bible named prior to their birth: Ishmael (Gen. 16:11), Isaac (Gen. 17:19), Solomon (I Chron. 22:9), Josiah (I Kings 13:2), Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isa. 8:1-3), Cyrus (Isa. 45:1), John the Baptist (Lk. 1:13), Jesus (Matt. 1:21).

2. (1:1) The *Cyrus cylinder* discovered in 1879 affirms that Cyrus did indeed write down such a proclamation. It details Cyrus' conquest of Babylon in 539 BC as well as his policy of returning people to their land along with items needed for worship.

3. (1:3) Returning to Jerusalem was voluntary, but relatively few would determine to go. The question is, in a sense, one of accountability like Genesis 3:9 and Matthew 2:2. Who among the people of God is willing to go back to the land of promise and rebuild the temple? Had they only known who would walk into that temple around 500 years later. Today God seeks men willing to stand up and be the leaders needed to point the direction to God's place of blessing, but too few desire to enlist (cf. I Tim. 3:1).

4. (1:5) It is possible, but we should not assume God chose or stirred only some to go. God's Word can produce different results in people (cf. Acts 2:37; 7:54). For some the heart is softened, while others harden their hearts to the Word of God.

5. (1:7) The vessels of the tabernacle and temple were blessed and sanctified (Ex. 39:42-43; Num. 7:1), so they belonged to God, and He knows what belongs to Him (cf. 1:9-11; Num. 16:5; II Tim. 2:19). Believers today likewise "are known of God" (Gal. 4:9; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11) and are sanctified (Rom. 5:16; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11).

6. (1:7) (II Kings 24:10-13; 25:13-15; II Chron. 36:7; Dan. 1:2) Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold the items would be taken (II Kings 20:16-17; Jer. 27:21-22). Since the Israelites had no images (idols) of their God, Nebuchadnezzar would naturally take the temple utensils in their place.

God, through Isaiah, foretold of the coming of Cyrus, saying, “He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid” (Isa. 44:28). This prophecy came long before Judah was destroyed and taken captive and nearly two hundred years before Cyrus’s birth—Cyrus is one of eight people in the Bible named prior to their birth. Isaiah 45 continues the prophecy regarding Cyrus:

**“Thus saith the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:**

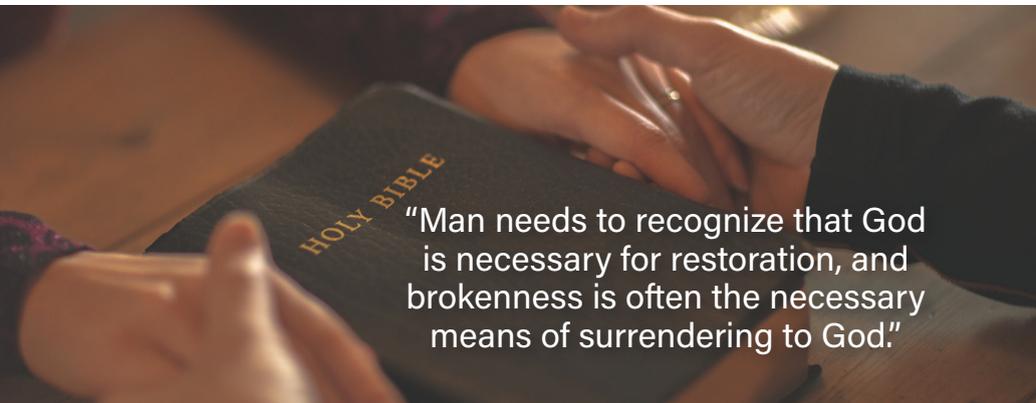
**“And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me”** (Isa. 45:1-4).

It is likely that Daniel shared this prophecy with Cyrus. We know he was alive and in high service to the court when Cyrus came to power (cf. Dan. 6:25-28). We know that Daniel was aware that the end of the seventy years in exile was drawing to a close (Dan. 9:1-4).

When Ezra 1:1-2 says that “the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus” to “build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah,” we can imagine that Cyrus would have been stirred in the spirit indeed to learn that the God of Israel said many years prior that He would open the gates and make way for him to be king. No doubt, this would inspire him to seek further favor from the God Who can do such things.

### **RESTORATION CAN BE DIFFICULT**

It would be a mistake to think that going from ruin to restoration is an easy process. This is true even when the Lord is the one doing the work. Often, man needs to see for himself the devastation his actions have caused before restoration can begin. *“The work of restoration cannot begin until a problem is fully faced,”* said Dan B. Allender.



**“Man needs to recognize that God is necessary for restoration, and brokenness is often the necessary means of surrendering to God.”**

One cannot be saved by the gospel without first facing the fact that one needs a Savior. Before believing that Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection save us from our sins, we must first face the fact that we are sinners.

These returning exiles saw the ruins firsthand. They saw the devastation that comes from forgetting God and going about to serve their heart's desires without letting God first change their hearts. This is true even today and should serve as a lesson. As much as we want to avoid the consequences of our actions, the truth remains that often our situation is not going to be fixed without us first seeing the devastation we caused. This may be in our relationships, our finances, or any number of other situations.

Man needs to recognize that God is necessary for restoration, and brokenness is often the necessary means of surrendering to God. As author and pastor Vance Havner said, "God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever."

Brokenness was no doubt what the apostles experienced after Christ's crucifixion, and it was this brokenness that led them to the restoration that followed.

Restoration is often a very challenging process and involves much effort. Even though the

returning exiles were on the path to restoration, it took time and effort. There were no shortcuts. From Zerubbabel's laying of the foundation to the Temple's completion was twenty-one years (cf. Ezra 3:8-10; 6:15). It wasn't easy; as the Book of Ezra details, the returning exiles had adversaries and faced opposition from the people of the land (4:1,4). It took a willingness to submit and surrender to the will of God.



Through God's help and encouragement, Jerusalem and the temple were restored, but more than that, the Jewish people themselves were restored. God's desire was not for a city or even a temple to make burnt offerings and sacrifices, but for His people to worship Him in truth and *from the heart* (cf. Jer. 31:31-33; Mic. 6:6-8; Jn. 4:23). God's desire was for the nation of Israel, *the people*, to be restored.

After the temple was complete, Ezra, the priest, would come to Jerusalem to restore true worship of God, for he had "prepared his heart" (Ezra 7:10), but once again, the process would be difficult. The people would stumble

and fail, but eventually, because of God and the willingness to surrender to Him, there was restoration amid the ruins, and there will be again. The day is coming when God will once again fulfill His promises and restore the kingdom to Israel. God will once again restore His people, Israel (cf. Rom. 11:26).

We can learn a lot from our example in the Book of Ezra. God is still able to restore the ruins of our lives if we are willing to recognize that He is necessary, turn to Him, surrender our hearts to His will, and put in the work He calls us to do.

Many marriages today are on life support and in desperate need of restoration, but the first step is acknowledging that God is necessary for restoration. If God can restore the relationship between Himself and unrighteous

men, He can certainly restore any relationship between men. God is still in the business of bringing restoration amid the ruins. Whether it's a broken marriage or a broken friendship, there is no relationship that God cannot fix *if* we are willing to let Him.

Another great thing about restoration is that it bears fruit and brings joy.

**“And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy” (Ezra 6:16).**

Those who returned from Babylon and went through the lessons and labor found joy. It was God Who restored their joy, and He can restore yours, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 15:13). 

## *Fall Berean Bible Fellowship Conference*

**October 5-6, 2024**

*“Loving Our Neighbor”*

**LOCATION: Friendship Bible Church**  
100 Adams Street, Friendship, Wisconsin

**SPEAKERS:** Pastor Kevin Sadler, Pastor Don Hosfeld, Pastor John Fredericksen, Pastor Ken Lawson, Pastor Wes Barteck & Mr. Travis LaBrake

For more information, please contact host pastor Pastor Denny Kenepf at 608.567.8314, PastorDK@outlook.com or BBF President Pastor Ken Lawson at 352.726.9972, KandBLawson@sbcglobal.net



# Question Box



**“Please explain Matthew 16:19. I am aware that this was a Jewish conversation and not to the Gentiles, but I would like to know what it means.”**

**“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19).**

The keys spoken of here are symbolic of the authority to bind and loose that Christ will bestow directly to Peter and indirectly to the other apostles. The text here suggests that Peter alone is being given the keys because of the use of the singular words *thee* and *thou*. In fact, three times in the verse, the singular form of “you” is used; however, we see in chapter 18 that Christ three times uses the plural form of “you” when speaking of the same authority that would be given to *all* the apostles (v. 18 cf. v. 1).

Binding and loosing is a Hebrew idiom for exercising authority. To bind is to declare what shall be binding. The keeper of the keys was one of the most important roles a household servant could hold (cf. Mk. 13:32-34); a high official held the keys in a royal kingdom, including in God’s house, the temple (Isa. 22:20-22).

The apostles specifically would be granted authority from Christ and the Father for a couple of reasons. First, Christ would be going away and not be present until His return after the Tribulation, and authority would be vested in His apostles during His absence. It is noteworthy that immediately after telling Peter of his authority here in Matthew 16, the next thing we read is that “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (v. 21).

Another reason for this authority is that their roles and positions in the future Millennial Kingdom come with authority—they will be sitting on “twelve *thrones, judging* the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30).

The authority given to the twelve passed away with them, and at the end of that dispensation, it did not pass to anyone else. It is reserved for them. They will be resurrected prior to the start of the Millennial Kingdom, and the promise to them will be fulfilled (cf. Rev. 20:4).

—Pastor Don Hosfeld



# SAINT *to* SINNER

## IMPUTING SIN

### II CORINTHIANS 5:19

*“United States v. Wilson, 32 U.S. 150 (1833), was a case in...which...George Wilson was convicted of robbing the US Mail...and sentenced to death.”* Due to his friends’ influence, Wilson was pardoned by Andrew Jackson. Wilson, however, refused the pardon. The Supreme Court was thus asked to rule on the case. The decision was that if the prisoner does not accept the pardon, it is not in effect: “A pardon... may then be rejected by the person to whom it is tendered; and if it is rejected, we have discovered no power in this court to force it upon him.” Therefore, Wilson was hanged.

When the Scripture says that “...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...” (2 Cor. 5:19), He is informing us of two things. He is telling us that Christ’s wonderful payment for sin, or provision for eternal salvation, has been made and is now offered to all mankind. God is not saying that all the sins of all mankind, including the lost, are already forgiven. Long after the cross, the Apostle Paul describes the natural state of all mankind as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1), “under sin” (Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22), and “dead in your sins” (Col. 2:13). He goes on to say the natural man is “inexcusable” (Rom. 2:1), and warns unbelievers that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Before God will pardon one’s sins, the sinner must see himself as “guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19) and believe that he can only be “justified freely... through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). *How is a sinner redeemed from the eternal consequence of his sin?* It was not applied, or imputed, to all at the cross, even though the payment for sin was made by the Savior at Calvary. The imputing of each individual’s sins to the Savior is only “...upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22), or trust, in Christ alone as the payment for their sins. Christ died corporately “for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn. 2:2), but His payment is only applied individually to them “that believeth [or trust] in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). But, like George Wilson, if the pardon offered by Christ is rejected, it is a pardon not received.

Make your presentation of the gospel clear. Show lost souls that God offers them forgiveness of their sins if they will trust in Christ.

—Pastor John Fredericksen



# Every Knee WILL BOW

PASTOR PAUL SADLER  
Past BBS President

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10,11).

We have before us one of the most solemn accounts of *things to come* recorded in the Word of God. These passages clearly teach *universal subjugation*, that Christ has conquered all; therefore, at the name of “Jesus” every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. Men *bow* themselves before gods and kings in recognition of their authority. Soon every soul will bow before the Son of God and acknowledge that “Jesus Christ” is who He claimed to be. Jesus Christ is God—the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world! In addition, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Every soul will acknowledge His *title* as “Lord.” Despite the atrocious claims of the evolutionists, geologists, and paleontologists who deny Him, Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things in heaven and earth. He is sovereign! He is the Lord of lords.

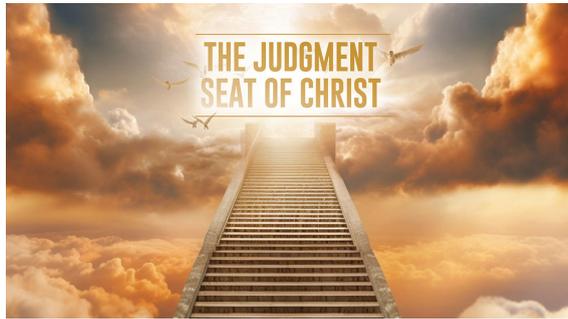
In regard to the three realms the apostle makes reference to here, you will note that the term *things* is in italics, which simply means the word does not appear in the Greek text, but has been supplied by the translators to help give us the sense of the passage. The three phrases that appear here in the original are three adjectives, which can refer to either “things” or “people.” With this in mind, we believe that the term “people” or “beings” best fits the context—ultimately, it’s a judgment call. The *King James* translators are to be commended for their sound judgment in this area. In their “Letter to the Reader” that appears in the original 1611 *King James Version* of the Scriptures, the translators collectively state the following:

“Some peradventure would have no variety of the senses in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding controversies

by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgment not to be so sound in this point...they that are wise had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other"

So then, with the above modification applied, the passage reads accordingly: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven, and *beings* in earth, and *beings* under the earth." The universal subjugation spoken of here applies to both men and angels and will apparently take place at three separate events in the future.

The *first event* will be the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, when the members of the Body of Christ will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. We are the *beings* in heaven that will stand before Him. As believers in Christ, we have been conquered by His *love*; therefore, we will willingly bow before



Him as we pay homage to our Savior, Who gave Himself a ransom for our sins. Believers freely acknowledge Jesus is Lord, but those members of the Body who have not made Christ the Lord of their life will confess He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Furthermore, Paul warns us not to judge one another, "for we shall all stand before the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12).

In all likelihood, the elect angels of heaven's glory will also bow in humble adoration at the close of the Judgment Seat. At that day, the host of heaven will fully understand the manifold wisdom of God "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). When they witness the fullness of our exaltation with Christ in the heavenlies, which was hidden in God in ages past, they, too, will confess that "Jesus" is indeed Lord to the glory of God.

The *second event* will be at the *Judgment of Israel and the Nations* when Christ returns in power and glory to the *earth* at the close of the Great Tribulation. After the



King of kings separates the wheat from the chaff, the unbelievers will be cast into outer darkness. This will be followed by the resurrection of all the prophetic saints, commonly known as the first resurrection. As Christ sits on the throne of His glory, believing Israel and those saved through her will stand before Him. Here again, *love* conquered those who placed their faith in Him. They, too, will gladly bow before Him, acknowledging He is the Messiah who delivered them from the hands of their enemies and redeemed them from their sins. These saints will also confess “Jesus” is Lord, but they will understand that the “Jesus” of the New Testament was the Jehovah (LORD) of the Old Testament.

Paul often borrows passages from the Old Testament in his writings in order to make an application for the Body of Christ, as we saw in Romans a moment ago. What was true for Israel will, in this case, also be true for us at the Judgment Seat of Christ—we, too, will bow before the Holy One of heaven. The passage Paul quoted was taken from the Book of Isaiah, which directly pertained to the judgment of Israel and the nations currently under consideration. In time past, the Lord said through Isaiah concerning the subjects of this particular judgment: “I have sworn by Myself, the Word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come” (Isa. 45:23,24).



The *third event* will transpire at the *Great White Throne Judgment* at the close of the Millennium. In that day, all the unsaved of all ages, who are confined to the infernal regions *under the earth* will be raised from the dead. This is the second resurrection. The infernal regions made reference to here

are located in *hades*, which is divided into three sections: the torment compartment where the unsaved presently reside, *tartarus* where the angels that sinned in the days of Noah are chained, and the *abussos* (bottomless pit) where Satan will be incarcerated during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 14:9-11; Luke 16:19-31; II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:1-3). All three of these realms are located in the *center* of the earth.

The scene described here should strike fear into the hearts of those who are headed for a Christless eternity. When they see the Lord Jesus, *regret* will sweep over them like a tidal wave. Every unbeliever will appear before the Judge of the earth, including those who were persecuting the saints at Philippi in Paul’s day. In Isaiah 45:24, quoted above, the passage goes on to say concerning those who will bow before Him, “*and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed.*”

*“Those who blatantly reject Christ, believing Him to be nothing more than a misguided teacher, will tremble when they bow before Him and reverently acknowledge He is God.”*



Those who blatantly reject Christ, believing Him to be nothing more than a misguided teacher, will tremble when they bow before Him and reverently acknowledge He is God. John Lennon once said after a performance before a large crowd of screaming teenagers: “We [the Beatles] are more popular than Jesus Christ.” Someday, when he stands before Him, he will regret having ever made that statement!

Those who cursed in His name will confess at this solemn occasion that His name is above every name. They will acknowledge before the court of Heaven that “Jesus” is Lord of all to the glory of God the Father! As we saw earlier, Rome required its subjects to acknowledge that Caesar was *Lord*. Those who persecuted the saints at Philippi for refusing to submit to Caesar’s claim will, along with the Caesars, humbly declare “Jesus” is Lord.

The universal subjugation of beings *under the earth* will also include Satan and the fallen host of angels who defected with him in the original rebellion against God in the beginning. Satan’s desire to exalt his throne above the throne of God will be dashed when he and his emissaries prostrate themselves before the Lord of Heaven. They, along with the unsaved, will suffer eternal damnation, which they have sadly chosen.



# SPOTLIGHT

## on Grace Churches

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# The Right Hands of Fellowship



*(Taken from the Transformed  
by Grace episode #220)*

**PASTOR KEVIN SADLER**  
*Berean Bible Society President*

“Staking a claim’ in the Old West was serious business. Doing so gave a person the rights over a mine or a piece of land. If a prospector found gold or silver on his claim, others would rush to stake claims nearby in hopes of striking it rich. It was not uncommon for fights to break out over who had staked a claim first or over where one claim stopped and another started. Men were known to lie, cheat, gamble, steal and even kill to get and keep their claims.”<sup>1</sup>

“Staking a claim” is what Paul was doing in Galatians 2: a claim to apostleship and apostolic authority. Paul staked his claim not to elevate himself but rather for the sake of his gospel that was given to him by special revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **A PRIVATE MEETING**

**“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I**

**preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain” (Gal. 2:1-2).**

When Paul wrote, “Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem,” he was basing this time on a single point: his conversion. The purpose of Paul’s timeline of events in Galatians 1:13-24 was to show the separation he had from the Twelve since his conversion. For fourteen years, Paul had little to no contact with the Twelve in Jerusalem, which Paul wrote to prove that he did not receive his gospel from them, but that he received it “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12).

Fourteen years after his conversion, Paul went up again (1:18) to Jerusalem, and brought two key men with him: Barnabas and Titus. Barnabas was a Jew (Acts 4:36); Titus was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3).

Barnabas had been Paul’s ministry companion to the Gentiles and an eyewitness to the fact that

the Holy Spirit had come upon the Gentiles in response to Paul's gospel of faith alone in Jesus Christ. Titus was a Gentile convert who had never been circumcised as the law of Moses required, but he was a saved man, saved by the grace of God. Titus was an important object lesson and test case to show the kingdom saints in Jerusalem that God was now saving Gentiles apart from the law and Jewish circumcision.



Paul "went up [to Jerusalem] again by revelation"; that is, the Lord directed Paul to go there by special revelation. The reason that *the Lord* sent Paul to Jerusalem was so that the apostles and the kingdom church would recognize Paul's special calling and message to the Gentiles.

Paul went up to Jerusalem to communicate "that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles" (2:2). He did not go to Jerusalem to communicate that the gospel he was preaching to the Gentiles was the same gospel that the apostles were preaching to the Jews. Paul went to tell them about "that gospel," the gospel of the grace of God that Christ had revealed to him by revelation (1:11-12), the

gospel that he was now preaching to the Gentiles, by which souls were being saved.

Paul did not go to the apostles and leaders of the Jerusalem church to receive authorization or approval for his ministry; rather, he went to declare what God was doing through his ministry among the Gentiles, and to defend his apostleship and his message of liberty from the law and justification by faith alone. Paul's gospel was approved by Christ, and he was "an apostle...by Jesus Christ, and God the Father" (1:1); thus, he did not need his apostleship and message to be approved by the kingdom apostles in Jerusalem.

Arriving in Jerusalem, Paul began with a private meeting with "them which were of reputation." In verse 9 of chapter 2, we learn that these men were James (1:19), Cephas [Peter], and John. Paul called these three, men "of reputation," as he recognized their positions of leadership and that they were deserving of respect.

Paul met with these men "privately," he wrote, "lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain," meaning that a public meeting could have resulted in more harm than good causing his visit to be fruitless and amounting to nothing. Paul felt a private meeting was important to bring about a greater understanding of his God-given ministry among the Gentiles.

### UNWELCOME VISITORS

**"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was**

**compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:3-5).**

Paul wanted the leaders in Jerusalem to meet an uncircumcised Gentile who had been genuinely saved entirely apart from circumcision or the law of Moses.

The belief that circumcision was necessary to be saved comes from the Bible (Acts 15:1). Circumcision was a rite instituted by God as part of the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:10-14). It was later made part of the law of Moses (Lev. 12:3). Circumcision was a required rite that set Jews apart to God as His chosen people. If any man was not circumcised, he was to be cut off from the nation Israel.

However, Paul’s gospel for this present age is a message of justification by faith *alone* apart from the works of the law (Rom. 3:28). Paul’s gospel declares that we are free from the works of the law as a means of acceptance with God, free from its statutes and regulations as a way of living, and free from its curse and condemnation (Gal. 3:13). Due to the liberty from the law that we have in Christ under grace (5:1), Paul took a strong stand against circumcision being necessary for salvation.

At the dawn of the age of grace, Jews were trying to impose, upon Gentiles under grace,

requirements for salvation from a previous dispensation, the dispensation of the law. That still happens today! And this is what took place *during* Paul’s meeting in Jerusalem.

“False brethren,” in an underhanded manner, secretly sneaked into the meeting between Paul, Barnabas, and Titus and James, Peter, and John. Their purpose was to pull Titus, Paul, and Barnabas back under the bondage of the law of Moses, requiring Titus to be circumcised.

“False brethren unawares brought in” means they were men who were secretly smuggled into the meeting. They “came in privily,” which means they slipped in by stealth to “spy out,” which means to view closely and inspect to obtain information for the purpose of plotting against. The way Paul described their entrance revealed how much disdain he had for their unwelcome presence.



These false brethren sneaked into the meeting to get more information and then attack the liberty that characterized Paul’s apostleship, gospel of grace, and his converts. They did so to pull

them back into the bondage of the law and to rob them of their freedom in Christ.

These men also attempted to compel Titus to be circumcised (2:3). The word “compelled” means to necessitate, constrain by force or threats. The strong meaning behind this word reveals how they forcefully attempted to intimidate Titus into being circumcised. But the false brethren were unsuccessful as Titus and Paul took a bold stand for the truth of the gospel, and Titus refused to be circumcised.

Paul added, “to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour.” “Not for an hour” is an idiom like our modern expression, “Not for a second.” Paul and Titus refused to submit to the attempts of the false brethren to put them under the bondage of the law, and they would not back down to add anything to the salvation we have in Christ (Col. 2:10), because He has done everything necessary to save us from all our sins.

Paul’s motivation was not just to prove he was right and they were wrong. He took a firm stand so “the truth of the gospel might continue with you” Galatians, and, by extension, all Gentile believers. Paul did not give an inch so that the gospel of grace might remain pure, and so that the Galatians and others might hear and know the true gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone.

### **AN ENLIGHTENING MEETING**

**“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter**

**to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter” (Gal. 2:6-7).**



Every four or eight years, the United States experiences a change and a transition when a new president is inaugurated. The former administration is replaced with a new one. Things may then change with a new administration’s agenda. Life can be considerably different than it was before in the previous administration. As a result, many voters will not be happy about it.

Galatians teaches about the change in God’s administration from law to grace. We learn about people who were not happy about that change to how things are now under grace. The leaders of the old administration of the law and the new administration of grace met in this account, and those of the previous administration came to an understanding and acceptance of the change that has taken place in God’s dealings with mankind.

Paul referred to James, Peter, and John as “these who seemed to be somewhat.” Paul referred to them this way to show that they were not superior to him in authority as apostles. And the authority God had given these men was being withdrawn and replaced by a new apostolic authority for the present age: the Apostle Paul.

You also see this shift taking place in verse 9, where James, the Lord’s brother, is listed first and before Peter. Peter had been given the keys to the kingdom and was Christ’s chosen leader of the kingdom church (Matt. 16:18-19), but with the setting aside of Israel and the change in dispensations, Peter’s authority faded and decreased to the point that James, who was not even one of the twelve apostles, was now before Peter as the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

These men of reputation, Paul wrote, “added nothing to me.” Paul was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), and had been taught the Scriptures by the revered teacher Gamaliel (22:3). He knew the Old Testament and the law backward and forwards. There was nothing these men could have possibly told Paul about prophecy, the law, the Messiah, and the

promised kingdom that he didn’t already know.

In Galatians 1, Paul emphasized that his contact with the other apostles had been minimal. In Galatians 2, when he finally conferred at length with them, they added nothing to Paul. “But contrariwise” (v. 7), Paul added something *to them*.

Paul told them about a gospel that they had never heard before, which Christ made known to Paul in “the revelation of the mystery,” a gospel that had been “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25). The “gospel of the uncircumcision” (Gal. 2:7) is a message of God’s good news for the nations (1:11-12). This is a gospel apart from circumcision and all the works of the law, a gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ, and it was “committed” *to Paul* for this age (2:7). In Romans 4:9-10, Paul wrote:

**“...for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”**

In this passage, Paul pointed out that Abraham was declared righteous by God *before* he ever received the sign of circumcision, at least 14 years before he was circumcised. Abraham was not



**“...Peter’s authority faded and decreased, to the point that James, who was not even one of the twelve apostles, was now before Peter as the leader of the church in Jerusalem.”**



**“The light went on!  
This meeting gave these men  
an understanding they did  
not have before, that Christ gave  
to Paul a new gospel for the world!”**

righteous before God because of the rite of circumcision, but solely because of his faith in God.

Paul’s gospel is a message of justification by faith, and like “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (4:3), it’s the same for us. We just believe God and His gospel of grace (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and we receive the very righteousness of Christ.

While this gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, Paul wrote that the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter. The “gospel of the circumcision” was a message concerning God’s good news for Israel. Abraham was given the rite of circumcision to separate himself and his seed from the Gentiles (Gen. 17:9-14). This separated-out nation was then to be a blessing to all other nations. Because circumcision was part of God’s covenant program for Israel, it was good news. This was God’s sanctioned method for being part of His chosen people under His covenant so that one might have an eternal relationship with Him.

The gospel of the circumcision committed to Peter is synonymous with the gospel of the kingdom, which required believing Peter’s testimony that Jesus was “the

Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), along with Peter’s words to Israel, to “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38).

Verse 7 of Galatians 2 says that James, Peter, and John “saw” that Christ had revealed and committed to Paul a new gospel. They saw the difference between Peter’s gospel of the circumcision and Paul’s gospel of the uncircumcision. The light went on! This meeting gave these men an understanding they did not have before, that Christ gave to Paul a new gospel for the world!

### **A PROLIFIC MEETING**

**“(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal. 2:8-9).**

Not only were their gospels different, but Paul pointed out also that his apostleship was separate from Peter’s. Paul stated that Christ worked effectually in Peter to be the apostle

of the circumcision, or Israel. And the same One Who gave Peter his apostleship to Israel gave Paul his apostleship mightily to the Gentiles. Most churches and denominations follow Peter and his apostleship, and much confusion has stemmed from this. To properly understand God's Word and His dealings with mankind today, we need to follow Paul's apostleship and message of grace.

In verse 7, James, Peter, and John "saw" that a different gospel had been committed to Paul. In verse 9, they "perceived" that Paul had a different ministry from theirs as well. They perceived that "grace" was given to Paul, that is, the grace of his calling to be the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Paul wrote that James, Peter, and John "seemed to be pillars," due to their waning authority as God's program transitioned to grace. In the authority that they still had at that time, these men entered into a formal agreement with the Apostle Paul, and they gave to Paul and Barnabas "the right hands of fellowship."

When these men gave Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, it meant that they understood that Paul and Barnabas were working under a different commission with a new gospel. By this historic handshake, these leaders acknowledged that Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles (v. 8) and that he was sent to the nations with a new message, the gospel of the uncircumcision.

In addition, James, Peter, and John recognized that their great commission, which sent them

to all the world to teach all nations (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8), was now suspended because, by their handshake, they agreed to take their gospel of the circumcision only "unto the circumcision," or the Jews (Gal. 2:9).



This handshake agreement also shows that the writings of these three men in your Bible, the Epistle of *James*, the Epistles of 1 and 2 *Peter*, and the Epistles of 1, 2, and 3 *John* and the Book of Revelation are written to the circumcision, or to believing Israel, in accordance with her prophesied, kingdom hope, while Paul's 13 epistles, Romans through Philemon, were written "unto the heathen," or the Gentiles under grace.

Paul is our apostle today. Paul wrote in Romans 11:13: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." As Gentiles and members of the Church, the Body of Christ, if we want to know what the mind, heart, and will of God are for our lives, we need to turn to the writings of Paul. 

1. Excerpted from *Today in the Word, Precept Austin, "Galatians Devotional,"* [https://www.preceptaustin.org/galatians\\_devotionals](https://www.preceptaustin.org/galatians_devotionals).

# BBS

## Letter Excerpts



### **From Indiana:**

“Thank you for your wonderful lessons. I love them. My husband and I never miss a lesson, and we learn a lot from each one. Please keep them coming.”

### **From our Inbox:**

(Responding to *Daily Transformation*—“Not Being Offensive—Acts 16:1-3”) “Amen. I arm myself with this mindset and become active in effectively sharing the Gospel. Regards from South Africa.”

### **From Virginia:**

“Thank you so much for the monthly magazine [*Berean Searchlight*].” (Thanks to God and the gifts of His people it’s been 84 years of the *Searchlight* and counting! —Ed.)

### **From Malaysia:**

“I was just watching *Transformed by Grace*, ‘What Happened to Israel?, Part 1’ in preparation for teaching Galatians. I appreciate your exemplary teaching on the subject of law and grace. I also was glad to see that the Gospel was presented at the end of the lesson. Praise God!”

### **From YouTube:**

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“Absent from the Body”) “Love this! Such a great reminder to believers of our confidence that we are headed home to Heaven. Clear salvation presentation at the end! Enjoying your teachings so much!!!! Thank you!!!!”

### **From YouTube:**

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“Battling to Win”) “Pastor Kevin I want to thank you for delivering God’s Word with a clear message with love and understanding. Blessings, brother, from a like-minded brother....”

### **From YouTube:**

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*, “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 1 | Creation”) “Thank you, Pastor Kevin. Look forward to and always enjoy your videos.”

### **From our Inbox:**

(Responding to *More Minutes with the Bible*—“Evidence for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture”) “Thank you so much for this email; it really set me straight. I’m starting to get caught up with the end-of-the-world stuff going on, and this really set me back on my feet again. Thank you so much. May the Lord bless you and keep these things coming because there’s so much stuff going on out there about the end of the world, and Christ is coming back. Everybody should read this. Thank you very much.”

### **From our Inbox:**

“I’m writing my thesis, and your chart, ‘The Timeline of Paul’s Ministry From Conversion to Martyrdom,’ is INCREDIBLE. I’m saving it. What a wonderful reference tool! Thank you to the person or people who put this together—there’s an extra jewel in your heavenly crown!”

**From YouTube:**

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“What Happened in Acts 2?—Pt. 2 | The Feast of Weeks”) “I loved this!! What a great explanation of the feasts and how prophecy all fit together with Acts 2. So easy to follow and understand! Thank you! That takes much study and planning to teach us so clearly.”

**From Facebook:**

“Thank you for your time and for the daily *Two Minutes with the Bible*! I read them every single day, and I appreciate it.”

**From our Inbox:**

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible*—“How To Have Boldness”) “Thank you for sharing this very thought-provoking piece. God’s grace and help will enable me to be conscious that growth takes time, discipline, and consistency.”

**From YouTube:**

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“Our Heavenly Inheritance”) “Great explanation of the two locations for eternal hope! Very clear! Thank you again!”

**From our Inbox:**

(Responding to *More Minutes With the Bible*—“Three Times When the Lord Wouldn’t Answer”) “Very deep and all true! I do not know if I would have understood it 50 years ago....I am now 87 years old. Keep the articles coming. I love them all.”

**From our Inbox:**

“Your breakdown of Sheol, Hades, Hell, and the grave was awesome!! Very Scripturally sound and easy to comprehend.”

**From our Inbox:**

(Responding to *Daily Transformation*—“What Does It Take – Acts 5:1-42”) “I needed this today. I needed the encouragement not to give up.” (Make sure to read the quote in the back of this month’s *Searchlight!* —Ed.)

**From our Inbox:**

“I’ve been remiss in writing to let you know how much I am enjoying the new *Searchlight* formatting and many new articles in 2024. Pastor Don Hosfeld is doing wonderful things in your ministry and is a fine addition to your staff.

“I just finished the article on ‘One Unifying Baptism.’ This article is awesome! Well written, informative, and packed with biblical references that clearly support the one baptism. It is also well timed as I (and no doubt many others) continually bump up against water baptism and its seeming identification as ‘proof’ of one’s salvation. I plan to share this article now and pray that people read deeply and carefully what it clearly communicates to the (Berean) reader. Thank you, Pastor Sadler, for this piece. I even read it, hearing your voice in my head... and I haven’t yet watched the TBG episode.”

**From Facebook:**

“I am thankful for your continuous sending of the *Berean Searchlight* to me. It is such a blessing and helps me grow in the knowledge of the truth. I praise God for His amazing work. You are all a vessel of His amazing Word that enlightens us. I pray He blesses your ministry, and I pray that many of those who are in the darkest valley may have the light of this *Searchlight.*”

## BE A BEREAN

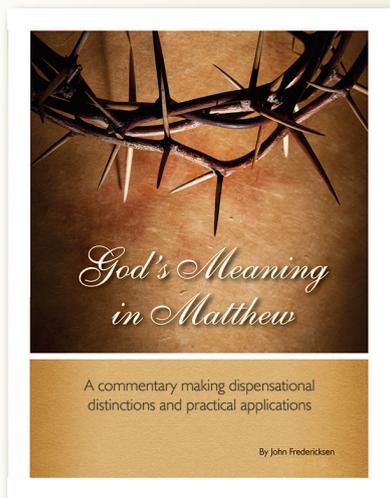
“These [the Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

—Acts 17:11—



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

—2 Timothy 2:15—

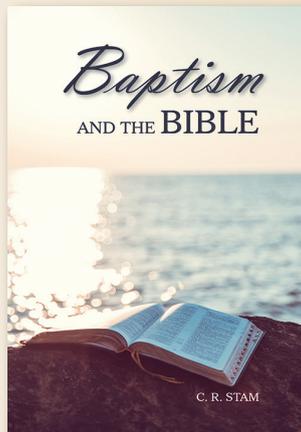


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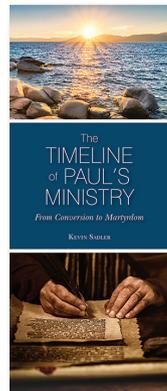


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# News & Announcements



**Pastor Wanted:** *Altoona Bible Church* in Altoona, Pennsylvania, is looking for a full-time Grace pastor who will rightly divide the Word of God and teach the grace message. If you or someone you know is interested, please call or text 814.931.7086. "...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace..." (Rom. 10:15).

**New Grace Church:** It is always so exciting when we can pass on the news of a new Grace church forming. The saints in Black Canyon City, Arizona, have determined to come together and form a new grace assembly. They are also seeking pastoral candidates. For more information or to simply reach out and tell them you will be praying for them, please contact Casey Cross at 602.601.2648 or email them at [dorancross@gmail.com](mailto:dorancross@gmail.com).

**New Translation of Stam's Acts Commentary:** A while back, we were contacted by a man named Ivar from Norway who had a burden to see his countryman learn to "rightly divide" the Scriptures and asked if he could translate Pastor Stam's commentary, *Acts Dispensationally Considered* into Norwegian. This project is now well underway. We thank God for men and women who use their talents and abilities to help others see "what is the fellowship of the mystery." Please pray for Ivar and the work ahead. Who knows, the seed for many new "grace" pastors in Norway may be sown at this very moment.

**New Transformed by Grace Series:** Pastor Kevin Sadler recently completed a 9-part series on *Walking with God*. Titles include: "Walk Worthy," "Walk Not as Other Gentiles Walk," "Walk in Love," "Walk as Children of Light," "Walk Circumspectly," "Walk by Faith," "Walk in the Spirit," "Walk Honestly," and "Walk to Please God." If you missed it on CTN, you can still watch it on The Walk Television Network, the BBS website, or the TBG YouTube channel. For more information about TBG and how to watch, visit <https://bereanbiblesociety.org/transformed/>.

*Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!*

**BBF Fall Conference**, October 5-6, Friendship, WI

**Grace Family Bible Church**, November 2-3, Duncansville, PA

# Media Price List

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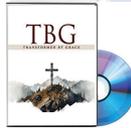
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“The waters are rising,  
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**BUT OVER!”**

—Catherine Booth



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