

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2024



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This month’s cover features the Montauk Point Lighthouse, in Montauk, New York.

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

The celebration of Christmas is associated with lights. People decorate their homes with strings of lights inside and out. From the smallest towns to the largest cities, lights are strung during this season to encourage the Christmas spirit. Christmas lights are more than decorations, however; they are also reminders of what happened on the first Christmas.

At the time of Christ, the world was shrouded in moral and spiritual darkness, in bondage to sin, and imprisoned by the fear of death. But to shepherds near Bethlehem who were “keeping watch over their flock by night,” suddenly, “the glory of the Lord shone round about them” (Luke 2:8-9) and an angel announced the birth of the Savior. Also, in the night sky at His birth, a star and its light shone brightly signifying the birth of the King of the Jews (Matt. 2:1-2).

Light was associated with Christ’s birth, and Christmas lights are a reminder to us that the true Light (John 1:9) came into the world and was born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. God’s Son came from heaven to deliver us from sin and the power of darkness by His Cross (Col. 1:12-14).

In John 8:12, the Lord stated plainly, “I am the Light of the world.” Christ is not a light, or another light among many other lights; He is “*the* Light,” the *only* Light, the only way for the whole world. He is the Light by which truth and lies are distinguished and true spiritual direction is established. He “lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (1:9), as salvation through Him is available to every person, and through Him we see and find the way to God (14:6).

Christmas lights can also remind us of our calling as representatives of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). Paul challenged 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*” (Phil. 2:15). We shine as lights “in the midst” of this dark, crooked, and perverse world. We don’t hide; we shine. And we are not told to shine as lights but are reminded that we already do because we are light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). Opportunities often present themselves at this time of year to shine brightly for Christ and to speak of the Savior and His love. We can use this season to share the good news “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler, President



Pastor Kevin J. Sadler has been serving as president of the *Berean Bible Society* since 2016. He speaks on “Transformed by Grace,” a daily television program that airs nationally. In addition, he speaks at Bible conferences and authors Grace literature.

The Necessity of Repeating



Like many families today, we do most of our purchases with a credit card. There is a convenience of not needing to carry large amounts of cash, but we do it to accumulate points to use for free airline tickets. Recently, I scheduled a doctor's appointment over the phone, and they required a deposit with a credit card to secure my appointment. After reading off the card number, I repeated it again for clarity. Sure enough, the listener had recorded it incorrectly. I anticipated this possibility. That's why I repeated the number just to be sure they got it right and because it was the safe thing to do.

As we read through Scripture, it is easy to see that God often repeats the same instructions over and over. Why does He do so? Paul tells us why in Philippians 3:1: "To write the same things [again] to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." It didn't bother Paul to repeat important doctrines. He knew we easily forget, or it simply doesn't always register the first time.

There were three subjects Paul's converts needed to frequently have repeated. Freedom from the *Mosaic Law* was hard for many to embrace. In part this was because false teachers constantly sought to impose this legalism on those Paul led to Christ and because they had not fully grasped the principle of rightly dividing between instructions to Israel and those for the Body of Christ. So, Paul warns the Galatians that circumcision avails nothing and to stand fast in liberty (5:1-2). Then he explains to the Colossian believers that we have a far superior spiritual circumcision (2:10-11).

Water baptism was confusing for many because God once required this to accompany faith in order for Jews to be saved (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38 cf. 15:1). In our new Dispensation of Grace, Paul explained we are saved by faith alone. Water baptism would detract from the cross, and we today have a superior spiritual baptism (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:14-18; 12:13).

Many are also confused about *forgiveness*. God required Israel to confess their sins for forgiveness (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5). But believers today are given full forgiveness of all sins at the moment of salvation (Col. 2:13; Eph. 1:7).

A hymn writer said he that loves to tell others about Christ because some have never heard and of those who have, but seem to hunger and thirst for more, rejoice like the rest when key doctrines are repeated. Repeating the doctrines of Scripture is the safe thing to do.

—Pastor John Frederickson



THE *Real* LORD'S PRAYER

JOHN 17:1-26

(The following is an explanation of John 17 from the upcoming Grace Study Bible.)

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
Berean Bible Society President

John 17:1-26 is the longest recorded prayer of Christ in Scripture. During His earthly ministry, Christ frequently prayed to the Father (Matt. 11:25-26; 14:19,23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; John 11:41-42), but very little of the content of those prayers is recorded. Thus, this prayer in John 17 reveals a deeper look at the precious content of the Son's communion with His Father in heaven. Although Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 have become known as "the Lord's Prayer," that prayer was taught to the disciples by Christ as a pattern for prayer during the Tribulation. However, the prayer recorded in John 17 can truly be called *The Lord's Prayer*.

COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER (VV. 1-5)

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (John 17:1).

In verses 1-5 (see pages 8-9), the Lord Jesus Christ prayed concerning the glory and the glorification of the Father and the Son.

Our Lord prayed this prayer in the presence of His disciples on the night before He was crucified. Thus, in verse 1, when the Lord said, "Father, the hour is come," it was the time of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The Cross was the very purpose for which Christ came to the world. The Lord had said earlier in John, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27 cf. 13:1).

In John 17:1, Christ prayed for the Father to "glorify Thy Son," or bring into full display the divine character, majesty, attributes, and identity of the Son via His passion. Unlike the gospel of grace (1 Cor. 15:3-4), faith in the *identity* of the Son is what gave one salvation from their sins

under the terms of the gospel of the kingdom. That is the purpose of John's Gospel (John 20:31 cf. 1:41,49; 4:29; 6:69). When the Lord prayed, "glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee," it is the Son Who reveals the Father (1:18; 12:45), and by carrying out the plan of redemption, Christ brought glory to the Father by revealing all of His supremely divine attributes such as His love, mercy, justice, wisdom, power, and omniscience.

The Father gave the Son "power" or authority over all of heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), and "over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou [the Father] hast given Him" (John 17:2). Earlier in John, the Lord explained those that the Father gave Him more fully:

"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (John 6:44-45).

God drew people to His Son through the Word, the written Word of the Old Testament, and/or through the living Word, Jesus Christ, as He walked the earth and ministered. As people are taught of God by the Word, and they hear and learn, the Father draws them to come unto His Son to find life. Christ taught and spoke the words of God throughout His earthly ministry. The people the Father had given Him were those who heard and

responded in faith to Christ, and Christ gave them eternal life (John 10:27-30).

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 15:5



How one received life eternal under the kingdom gospel was as Christ prayed in John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." One knows God the Father by knowing and believing in the Son. And to those who knew the Son and believed in His identity as the Messiah, the Son of God granted eternal life under the gospel of the kingdom (5:24; 1 John 5:11-13,20).

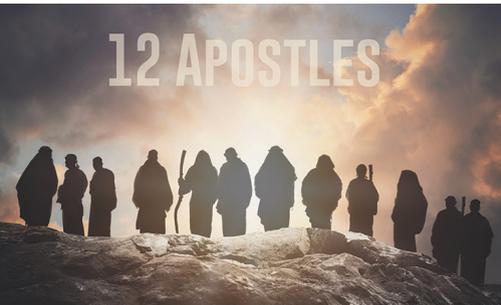
The Lord prayed, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). Christ glorified and made the Father known by doing His will and completing the work He gave Him. Finishing the Father's work was imperative to the Lord during His earthly ministry. In John 4:34, Christ said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

Having finished His work, and knowing He came from God and was returning to God (13:3), Christ asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was (17:5). Christ prayed this because He is God, Who preexisted time and creation, and is eternal. Later in the prayer, the Lord stated that the Father loved Him “before the foundation of the world” (v. 24). From all eternity, the Father and the Son have enjoyed shared fellowship (1:1), glory (17:5), and perfect love (17:24).

PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES (VV. 6-19)

“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word” (John 17:6).

In verses 6-19 (see pages 8-9), Christ prayed for “the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world,” referring to the disciples. Christ told His disciples in John 15:19, “I have chosen you out of the world.”



The disciples were chosen *out of* the world to be separate from it, for Christ to use in reaching it

(Matt. 28:19-20) with the gospel of the kingdom.

In verse 7 of John 17, we see how the disciples were capable representatives of Christ because they knew that His mission (3:16-17) and His message were of the Father (12:49). They received and accepted Christ’s words as truth and life (6:68). And the Lord stated in John 17:8 that they knew and believed two truths: first, that Christ had come from God (16:27,30), and second, that God sent Him (1 John 4:14).

When the Lord stated, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world,” in John 17:9, this does not mean that Christ was unconcerned about the world, for we know that God loves the world and sent His Son “that the world through Him might be saved” (3:17). Rather, the Lord stated that He was not praying for the world because His prayer for protection, unity, joy, and sanctification did not apply to them; it only applied to those who belong to God. In love, the Lord did not pray for the world of unbelievers to be kept, united, and sanctified in their rebellion and unbelief. The world needs to be saved from this condition through Christ.

The Son prayed for the disciples, telling the Father in verses 9-10 of chapter 17 that “they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.” The Father and Son are equal, and what belongs to One belongs to the Other (10:30; 16:15). And Christ was “glorified in them” (17:10), in the disciples, because they believed in Him and Who He is.

a. "The hour" of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension (12:23,27; 13:1).

b. Bring into full display the divine character, majesty, attributes, and identity of the Son.

c. The Son reveals the Father (1:18; 12:45), and by carrying out the plan of redemption, Christ brought glory to the Father by revealing His love, mercy, justice, wisdom, power, etc. (12:28; 13:31-32).

d. Authority (Matt. 28:18).

e. Jn. 3:35-36; 10:28.

f. Jn. 6:37,44-45.

g. Christ glorified and made the Father known by doing His will and completing the work He gave Him to do (Jn. 4:34; 5:36; 19:30).

h. As God, Christ preexisted and is eternal (Jn. 1:1).

i. The disciples (Jn. 15:19).

j. Jn. 8:31; Rev. 3:8.

CHAPTER 17

Communion with the Father

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,¹ Father, the hour is come;^a glorify thy Son,^b that thy Son also may glorify thee:^c

2 As thou hast given him power^d over all flesh, that he should give eternal life^e to as many as thou hast given him:^f

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.²

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.^g

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.^h

Prayer for the Disciples

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:ⁱ thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.^j

7 Now they have known

that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.^k

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them,^l and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.^m

9 I pray for them:ⁿ I pray not for the world,³ but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine;^o and I am glorified in them.^p

11 And now I am no more in the world,^q but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep^r through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.^r

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition;^s that the scripture might be fulfilled.^t *Psa. 41:9

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.⁵

k. The disciples knew Christ's mission (3:16-17; 6:38) and message was of the Father (Jn. 7:16; 12:49).

l. The disciples accepted Christ's words as truth and life (Jn. 6:68-69).

m. The disciples knew and believed two truths: 1) Christ had come from God (Jn. 16:27,30); 2) God sent Him (1 Jn. 4:14).

n. In vv. 9-19, Christ prayed for the disciples.

o. The Father and Son are equal, and what belongs to One belongs to the Other (Jn. 10:30; 16:15).

p. Since the eleven believed in Him and Who He is (Jn. 20:31).

q. Christ anticipated His return to heaven, praying as if He had already left.

r. Patterned after the eternal, perfect unity of the Trinity (Psa. 133:1).

s. Judas Iscariot (Jn. 6:70-71; 13:18). Judas is identified with His destiny: perdition (cf. II Thes. 2:3).

1. (17:1) John 17:1-26 is the longest recorded prayer of Christ in Scripture. During His earthly ministry, Christ frequently prayed to the Father (Matt. 11:25-26; 14:19,23; Mk. 1:35; Lk. 6:12; Jn. 11:41-42), but very little of the content of those prayers is recorded. Thus, this prayer reveals a deeper look at the precious content of the Son's communion with His Father in heaven. Although Matthew 6:9-13 has become known as "the Lord's Prayer," that prayer was taught to the disciples by Christ as a pattern for prayer during the Tribulation. However, the prayer recorded in John 17 can truly be called, *The Lord's Prayer*.

2. (17:3) To know God the Father by knowing and believing in the Son gave eternal life under the Kingdom Gospel (Jn. 5:24; 6:40; 7:28-29; 8:19; 10:38; 1 Jn. 5:11-13,20).

3. (17:9) "I pray not for the world" does not mean that Christ was unconcerned about the world (17:21,23), for we know that God loves the world and sent His Son "that the world through Him might be saved" (3:17). Rather, the Lord stated that He was not praying for the world because His prayer for protection, unity, joy, and sanctification did not apply to them; it only applied to those who belong to God. In love, the Lord did not pray for the world of unbelievers to be kept, united, and sanctified in their rebellion and unbelief. The world needs to be saved from this state through Christ. It is good and proper that we pray for the unbelieving to be saved, and the Lord, through Paul, teaches the Church to do so under grace (Rom. 10:1; I Tim. 2:1-4). *Is there an unsaved family member or friend you need to be praying for?*

4. (17:11) *Guard, take care of, preserve* (Psa. 17:8-9). Since the disciples now had to face the world's hatred (15:18-19) and trouble (16:33) without Christ's immediate presence.

5. (17:13) The Lord prayed aloud (v. 1) for the benefit of His disciples so they might have the full measure of His joy by hearing His words of comfort.

t. The disciples did not now conform to the world's beliefs and values so they were hated (Jn. 15:19).

u. The Lord prayed not for isolation of the disciples from the hostile world, but that the Father preserve them in the midst of it.

v. *Evil one*, or Satan (1 Pet. 5:8).

w. "Sanctify" means to set apart or separate for God's purposes.

x. Christ prayed for God's truth to set the disciples apart to do God's will.

y. The Lord did not want the disciples "out of the world" (v. 15) or "of the world" (v. 16). They were to be in it (v. 18) but not of it as His representatives.

z. In vv. 20-26, Christ prayed for those who would believe through the witness of the disciples (v. 18).

Unity

aa. Believing that the Father sent Him is to believe that Christ is the Son of God (Jn. 5:24; 6:40; 11:42; 20:31).

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world,^t even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them^u from the evil.^v

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.^w

17 Sanctify^w them through thy truth:^x thy word is truth.⁶

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.^y

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.⁷

Prayer for Future Kingdom Believers

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;^z

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:⁸ that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.^{aa}

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given

them;^{bb} that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them,^c and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.⁹

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory,^{cc} which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.^{dd}

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee:^{ee} but I have known thee,^{ff} and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:^{gg} that the love wherewith thou hast loved me^{bb} may be in them, and I in them.

CHAPTER 18

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples^e over the brook Cedron,^b where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

bb. The glory of His Word (v. 8). Unity is based on truth.

cc. When Christ reigns in glory in His kingdom on the earth (Matt. 25:31; Lk. 1:32-33; Jn. 12:26; 14:2-3).

dd. From all eternity, the Father and the Son have enjoyed perfect fellowship (1:1), shared glory (17:5), and love.

ee. The world does not know the Father because it rejects the Son Who reveals Him (1:10; 15:21). To know the Father, one must know the Son.

ff. Jn. 7:29; 8:55; 10:15.

gg. After Christ's resurrection (Psa. 22:22; Acts 1:3).

hh. Knowing that unjust treatment, suffering, and death were ahead of Him, Christ affirmed that the Father is *righteous* and that He *loved* Him.

a. Christ and His disciples left the upper room.

b. *Kidron* (II Sam. 15:23). The brook Kidron was an intermittent stream that flowed through the Kidron Valley, which lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

6. (17:17) "Sanctify" means to set apart; in the context of Scripture, it means to be set apart *unto God*. God does not delegate the sanctifying process. He does not command us to do it on our own. God does it Himself. As the Apostle Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Sanctification happens by God's action and working in our lives as we live by faith in Him. There are things we have a responsibility to do in the process of God sanctifying us. In John 17:17, Christ prayed to the Father about His disciples, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." As God sanctifies us and sets us apart unto Himself, He does so by His Word. The closer we are to the Lord, the further we find ourselves from ungodliness and worldliness. What God reveals to us changes our thinking, values, and our priorities. It leads us to be set apart from the thinking, values, and priorities of this world. We are sanctified as we live by faith in the truth of the Word, rightly divided.

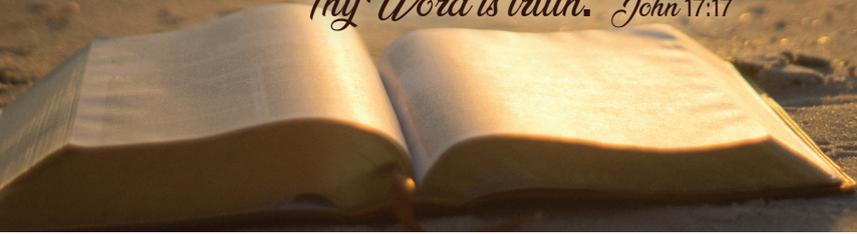
7. (17:17) Referring to His being separated to do God's will and to go to the Cross, Christ prayed His example stirred the disciples to the same type of surrender.

8. (17:21) As He prayed for the disciples (v. 11), Christ prayed that kingdom believers might be one and exhibit the character and unity of the Godhead.

9. (17:23) Christ prayed that the unity among the kingdom church would be so great and so complete that the world would take note and realize that its faith was real, that Christ is God the Son and that these believers were supremely, deeply, and eternally loved by God just as Christ is loved by God.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth:

Thy Word is truth.” John 17:17



In verse 11, when Christ said to the Father that “now I am no more in the world,” He anticipated His return to heaven, praying as if He had already left. “But these are in the world” reflected the Lord’s concern for His disciples whom He would leave behind. Thus, the Lord prayed, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name.” “Keep” means to guard, take care of, preserve. The Lord prayed this because the disciples would have to face the world’s hatred (15:18-19) and trouble (16:33) without Christ’s immediate presence. In His absence from the world, Christ desired “that they may be one, as we are,” or patterned after the eternal, perfect unity of the Trinity (Psa. 133:1) so that they might endure the difficulties of ministry together.

In verse 12 of John 17, Christ prayed that He had guarded and protected the disciples when He was in the world and none of them was lost, except for Judas Iscariot, so “that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (v. 12 cf. Psa. 41:9). But Judas was never a believer; he was “the son of perdition.” Because of his unbelief and treachery, Judas Iscariot (John 6:70-71) is identified with His destiny: perdition (cf. 2 Thes. 2:3).

When the Lord said to the Father, “these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy” (John 17:13), it meant that the Lord had prayed this prayer *aloud* (cf. v. 1) for the benefit of His disciples so they might have the full measure of His joy by hearing His words of comfort.

The disciples needed Christ’s joy and comfort. Since the disciples did not now conform to the world’s beliefs and values, they were hated (17:14; 15:19). The Lord, though, prayed not for the isolation of the disciples from the hostile world but for the Father to preserve them in the midst of it (17:15). And in the hostile world, he prayed that the disciples would be kept specifically “from the evil,” or the evil one, Satan, who “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

With both Christ and the disciples being “not of the world” (John 17:16), the Lord prayed for God’s truth to sanctify the disciples to do the Father’s will like the Lord did. “Sanctify” (v. 17) means to set apart; in the context of Scripture, it means to be set apart unto God. God does not delegate the sanctifying process. He does not command us to do it on our own.

God does it Himself (1 Thes. 5:23) as we live by faith in Him.

As God sanctifies us and sets us apart unto Himself, He does so by the truth of His Word (John 17:17). The closer we are to the Lord, the further we find ourselves from ungodliness and worldliness. What God reveals to us changes our thinking, values, and our priorities, and it leads us to be set apart unto God and His purposes. That was Christ's prayer for His disciples.

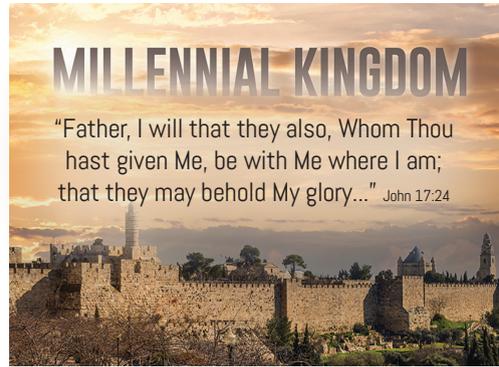
The Lord did not want the disciples "out of the world" (v. 15) or "of the world" (v. 16). As His representatives, they were to be in the world (v. 18) but not of it. When the Lord prayed, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself" (v. 19), He referred to His being wholly separated to do God's will and to go to the cross, and His prayer was that His example might stir the disciples to the same type of surrender and sacrifice.

PRAYER FOR FUTURE KINGDOM BELIEVERS (VV. 20-26)

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word" (John 17:20).

In verses 20-26 (see pages 8-9), Christ prayed "for them also which shall believe on Me through their word," or for those who would believe through the witness of the disciples (v. 20). Christ sent His disciples into the world (v. 18) to share the gospel of the kingdom and many would believe as a result. As He prayed for the disciples (v. 11), Christ prayed

that kingdom believers might be one and exhibit the character and unity of the Godhead (v. 21).



When Christ prayed "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (v. 21), this meant for the world to believe that Christ is the Son of God, a belief which was required for salvation under the gospel of the kingdom (6:40; 20:31).

In verse 22 of John 17, the Lord prayed, "And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them." "The glory" that the Father gave the Son is the glory of His words. As the Lord said earlier in His prayer, "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me..." (v. 8). These words were given "that they may be one," as the unity that Christ desired for kingdom believers was to be based on truth, the truth of God's words.

In verse 23, Christ prayed that the unity in the kingdom church would be so great and so complete that the world would know, take note, and realize that its faith was real, that Christ is God the Son, and that these believers were supremely, deeply, and eternally loved by God.

Christ then prayed for these kingdom believers to “be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory” (v. 24), praying that they would be with Him when He reigns in glory in His kingdom on the earth (12:26; 14:2-3). They will behold His glory at that day.

The Son has known and been loved by the Father since before the foundation of the world (17:24). As Christ said in John 7:29, “But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.” In contrast, the Lord prayed, “the world hath not known Thee” (17:25). The world does not know the Father because it rejects the Son Who reveals Him (1:10; 15:21). To know the Father, one must know the Son. The disciples

and the kingdom believers, however, knew and believed that the Father sent the Son (17:25).

Christ had declared the name of the Father during His earthly ministry, and He stated that He “will declare it” (v. 26), which anticipated His resurrection. After Christ rose again, He would continue to give glory to the Father. Christ was hours from the cross, yet He declared “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (v. 26). Knowing the unjust treatment, suffering, and death that was ahead of Him, Christ affirmed and knew that the Father loved Him. And the Lord prayed that this divine, eternal love might be in the kingdom believers. 



Day OR Night

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Christ could return to catch away the Church, the Body of Christ, at the Rapture anytime, day or night. We are to be “looking” for Him always. We may somehow imagine that the Lord is going to come at noonday to catch us away to heaven. It may or may not be daytime in the United States when this great event takes place. It is going to be nighttime in a lot of places around the globe when the Lord returns. Thus, it may be in the evening, at midnight, or three o’clock in the morning in the United States when He comes.

As we are faithfully “looking for that blessed hope” and are always ready, we should remember when we go to bed that the Rapture could happen in the middle of the night when we are sound asleep. But what a great way to be awakened with “a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (1 Thes. 4:16)!

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



A Spotlight on Joseph

PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Berean Searchlight Editor

The remembrance of Christ's birth often invokes thoughts of wise men being led by a bright star, cattle lowing, shepherds guarding, angels singing, and Mary giving birth in a stable. There is one, however, who seems to get very little attention, and that's Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus.

One would likely have more of the spotlight in a Christmas play playing Herod the Great than Joseph, and the events of Herod and the Wise Men didn't even occur at the time of Jesus' birth. And while some have made Mary into an object of prayer, Joseph is brushed aside and relegated to relative obscurity. Though there are no recorded words of Joseph contained in Scripture, there are useful and applicable things we can learn from this man who no doubt played an important part in the life of Christ and His birth.

THE LORD KNOWS HIS OWN

Maybe the first lesson we can learn and appreciate from Joseph is that *a life set apart for the purposes of Christ should not seek the admiration and recognition of men.*

Not receiving recognition for the things we do can be one of the more difficult lessons for people to experience. People are used to being recognized for what they do. Most even prefer a merit-based approach to life. At an early age, we learn that when we stand in front of adults and sing as a choir of children, we are applauded. When we go to school and perform well in our studies, we receive accolades. When a person shows up to work every day and does their job well, they usually expect to be recognized for their effort.

But serving God to be seen or praised among *men* does not bring eternal recognition and rewards. All mankind should serve God simply because He is worthy *and* out of eternal thanks for what He has already given to every one of us. Are we doing things for His glory



“...a life set apart for the purposes of Christ should not seek the admiration and recognition of men.”

or to receive glory for ourselves? Why we do what we do matters as much as what we do, and it’s always mattered.

Under the Law:

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, *that they may have glory of men.* Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:1-4).

To the Church, the Body of Christ, we read:

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses....*As unknown...*” (2 Cor. 6:4,9).

The Greek word for “unknown” means to dismiss, ignore, or disregard. In all ages and through all times, many servants of God go unnoticed and are seemingly “unknown.” But we can be sure that “The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. 2:19). A minister of God may not be well known to the world, but he is known to God.

A JUST MAN

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

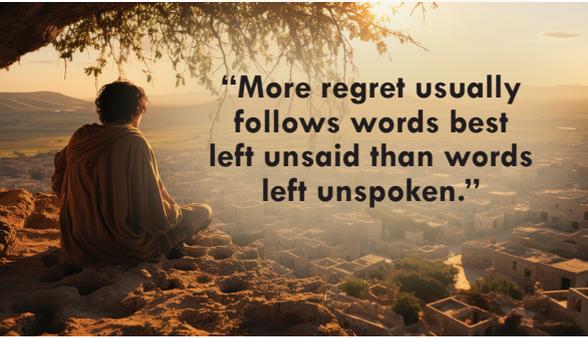
“Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily” (Matt. 1:18-19).

Most know the story but imagine living the situation from Joseph’s perspective. We learn from Luke that when Mary learned from the angel Gabriel that she would “bring forth a Son,” she left “*with haste*” to visit Elizabeth (1:39).

Matthew tells us that upon learning of her pregnancy, Joseph “minded to put her away privily” (v. 19), but the angel appeared to him in a dream. Following this, Joseph “took him his wife” (i.e., he took her into his home [cf. 1:24]). But since Mary left right after learning

herself, Joseph could not have taken her into his home until after she returned. Thus, Joseph most likely didn't know of Mary's pregnancy until she got back from Elizabeth's.

Making the situation even tougher, the whole town would have also learned this at the same time. It was when Mary arrived back from her trip that "she was found with child" (Matt. 1:18). The same Greek word for "found" is used in Matthew 2:11 when the Wise Men came to the house and "they saw" the young Child. Upon her return, it was evident that Mary was pregnant. People could see it. The situation with Mary and Joseph would be a spectacle to all.



“More regret usually follows words best left unsaid than words left unspoken.”

How Joseph responded is another testimony to the character of this man. It says "he thought on these things" (v. 20). Joseph didn't respond hastily. Though he must have been greatly impacted emotionally, he didn't allow emotions to control him. We should likewise be "slow to wrath" (Prov. 14:29; Jas.

1:19) and consider matters thoughtfully (cf. Prov. 21:5). More regret usually follows words best left unsaid than words left unspoken.

Few men are described in the Bible as being just, seven to my count, and one of those is Christ (Matt. 27:19). But Joseph was a just man. Joseph was a fair-minded man who endeavored to conform to the precepts of the Law (cf. Lk. 1:6; 2:25), and according to the Law, he could have called for a trial, and she could have been stoned (Deut. 22:23-24).

But Joseph struggled within himself. Though he surely felt angry, dishonored, embarrassed, and betrayed that all his plans for the future were gone in an instant, Joseph pondered what to do. A hot-headed man might have exploded, rebuked her before all, and instantly called for a trial. The picture we see of Joseph is of a man who had no will to make Mary a public example to be mocked and ridiculed before the whole community.

It seems Joseph understood what Jesus would later tell the Pharisees to learn: "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice..." (Matt. 9:13). These hypocritical Pharisees were ready to deny mercy to others, while ignoring the fact that God was giving *them* mercy each time they brought sacrifices for their sins.

Jesus was quoting from Hosea 6:6 when God rebuked Israel for focusing on the letter of the law while ignoring its spirit because the heart of the Law was mercy. Even today, we should not forget that mercy and salvation go hand in hand (Titus 3:5), and God's mercy is what ushered in the Dispensation of Grace (Rom. 11:32).

THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB

“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

“And she shall bring forth a Son, and *thou* shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:20-21).

Mary was undoubtedly an extraordinary person who demonstrated faith and resilience. God selected Mary to be the mother of our Savior, and God does not err in His choices—He chose perfectly. We must also keep in mind that God chose Joseph as well. There was no mistake in His selection of him either.

Referring to Joseph as “thou son of David” affirms that he has a part to play and is included in the line of Christ. Remarkably, when one considers the prophecies that Christ would come from the seed of David, no doubt Joseph was the intended earthly father that God already had in mind.

When the angel told Joseph, “and *thou* shalt call His name JESUS” (v. 21), we see that he will not be regarded as less than a father to God’s Son. He would be afforded every right and respect that every other father in Israel received. Like other fathers who had the privilege of announcing their son’s name during the circumcision ceremony, Joseph would also have that honor.

Jesus: The name above all names, the name that every knee will bow to and every tongue confess, both in earth and in heaven, though entrusted to both Mary and Joseph, it was to Joseph *alone* whom God granted the privilege and honor to be the one to tell the priest *His name shall be Jesus*.

“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son: and *he* called his name JESUS” (Matt. 1:24-25).

Joseph may be the forgotten man of Christmas who often stands in the shadow of other figures, but in him, we can see the quiet strength and steadfastness all men would do well to emulate.

Joseph remains an unsung hero—a silent guardian who took on the heavy mantle of responsibility without seeking recognition. Only a humble man ready to endure the judgment and ridicule of society while embracing a path filled with uncertainty would do for this situation. His actions exemplify a character that is not loud or showy but profound in its simplicity.

Joseph reminds us that true strength lies not only in bold statements but also in quiet resolve and commitment. He faced ridicule from neighbors yet maintained his integrity, choosing faith over fear when society could have easily cast him aside. 

Where BBS has ministered in 2024



- LENA, WISCONSIN
- BANNING, CALIFORNIA
- SUN CITY WEST, ARIZONA
- GUTTENBERG, IOWA
- ALPHA, KENTUCKY
- TIPP CITY, OHIO
- WELLSVILLE, KANSAS
- SALEM, MISSOURI
- ASHTABULA, OHIO
- FRIENDSHIP, WISCONSIN
- DUNCANVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA



Where BBS is headed 2025

- FEBRUARY—NOKOMIS, FLORIDA
- FEBRUARY—LENA, WISCONSIN
- MARCH—BANNING, CALIFORNIA
- MARCH—SUN CITY WEST, ARIZONA
- APRIL—ASHTABULA, OHIO
- MAY—OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN
- JUNE—TIPP CITY, OHIO
- AUGUST—CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
- OCTOBER—RIDGELEY, WEST VIRGINIA
- OCTOBER—BBF FALL CONFERENCE
- TBD—ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Question Box



“Paul teaches that God is not mocked and that we will reap what we sow. How do I understand that living under the grace of God and not the law. Will God reward me for doing good?”

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Sowing and reaping was certainly an integral part of the Law. So much so that many of Israel’s feasts and holy days took place during the spring or fall harvest. Surely it was no coincidence that God picked a time so reflective of sowing and reaping for His people to refrain from any work and instead reflect on Him. Might there be a lesson being reinforced: “they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” (Job 4:8 cf. Psa. 7:14-16), but to those who sow righteousness, He says, “it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings” (Isa. 3:10 cf. Prov. 13:21).

Though we do not live under the Mosaic Law, it would be a mistake to think that foundational truths like sowing and reaping no longer apply. Even today, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23); thankfully, “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3), and when we believe the gospel, we reap His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

Still, the child of God will reap what he sows: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Christians are not granted complete immunity and become free from accountability. At the Bema seat we will look Christ in the face and give an answer for our Christian lives. Without so much as a word from us being necessary, Christ will reveal our lives and service for Him—serving both as inspiration and warning.

Our actions and motivations shall be put to the fire to see what remains (1 Cor. 3:13), and if anything does, “he shall receive a reward” (v. 14), but “if any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss (v. 15)”. The Judgment Seat will not simply be a time of joy while anxiously waiting in line to pick up our prizes. There will be a real sense of loss and accountability.

But we can live as the Apostle Paul did and “press toward the mark for the prize” (Phil. 3:14), knowing that we will reap what we sow because Christ Jesus will justly honor and recognize our service to Him. “Let everyday begin with seeds you plant”—Robert Louis Stevenson.

—*Pastor Don Hosfeld*

A TRUE *Christmas Story*

LUKE 2:1-20

PASTOR JIM TOLLAR
BBS Business Manager

Many are familiar with the movie *A Christmas Story*. It's about a boy named Ralphie Parker and his quest to convince his parents to give him a Red Ryder air rifle for Christmas. For Ralphie, that gift would be the greatest Christmas gift one could ever receive.

While many enjoy Christmas movies during the holiday season, most often, they are fictional stories to entertain the masses. If you look up the meaning of the word "story" online, you will find two definitions. It can mean "an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment" or "an account of past events in someone's life." The account of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ fits the latter definition and is recorded for us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

In 1 Timothy 1:15, the Apostle Paul tells us why the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners....*" No matter the program of God, prophecy, or mystery, the Lord Jesus Christ had to come

to die for the sins of mankind so believers can enjoy eternal life, which is the greatest gift God can give (Eph. 2:8-9). But, to read about the Lord coming into the world, we must turn to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The Gospel of Luke contains much more information as compared to Matthew about the events surrounding the Lord's birth, including the announcement of John the Baptist's birth, Gabriel's appearance to Mary and her visit to Elizabeth, John's birth, and Zacharias' prophecy. Luke does not record the visit of the "wise men" from the East (Matt. 2:1-12), which was still about two to three years away.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city" (Luke 2:1-3).

Caesar Augustus had decreed that the entire "world" or Roman

Empire was to be taxed, and what government doesn't like taxes? Augustus was the adopted heir of Julius Caesar and is considered the first Emperor of Rome, and the month of August is named after him. Regarding Cyrenius, not much is known of him, except that he was the governor of Syria, and his territory also included Judaea. This decree caused many to travel great distances to obey this law from Caesar, and we read,

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child” (Luke 2:4-5).



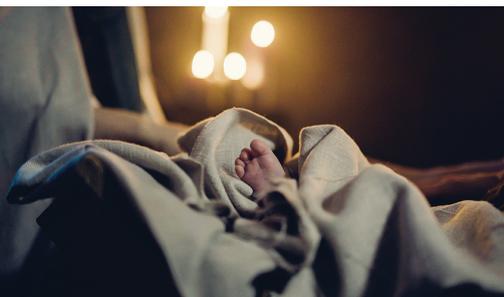
The Jews of that day were required to go to their city of origin to be registered for taxation. Joseph was obedient to this decree. Even though he was from the lineage of David, Joseph was a poor carpenter, far removed from being King because of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. But for Joseph and his espoused wife Mary, obeying this order meant traveling to Bethlehem since King David's father, Jesse, was a Bethlehemite (1 Sam. 16:1). This

is a good lesson for today, as our Apostle Paul commands believers to obey those in authority over us as long as it does not go against the Word of God (Rom. 13:1-7 cf. Dan. 3:16-18).

It's also interesting to note that only in Luke's gospel is Bethlehem called the "City of David" (vv. 4,11). In all other books of the Bible, the title "City of David" refers to Zion or Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:7; 1 Kings 8:1; 2 Kings 9:28; 14:20; 1 Chron. 11:5; 2 Chron. 5:2). So, this begs the question, "Why did Luke call Bethlehem the City of David?" We're not told the reason, but perhaps it's because of its role as the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah. The prophet Micah wrote, "*But thou, **Bethlehem Ephratah**, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*" (Mic. 5:2).

Today, we enjoy many conveniences when we travel. Cars, trucks, and airplanes, for the most part, are comfortable, and we can stop at any number of locations to rest and eat. This was not the case for Joseph and Mary! They could not simply "jump in" their SUV or take the next flight to Bethlehem. It's about 65 miles away by air and 92 miles by highway. Most likely, they traveled in a caravan, either on foot or by donkey or perhaps a little of each. No matter how they traveled, it would've been a long and difficult journey, especially when you consider Mary was about three to four months pregnant (Luke 1:56).

“And so it was, that, while they were there [Bethlehem], the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:6-7).



Once in Bethlehem, and not on December 25th, Mary gave birth to the Lord Jesus. When it says that her “*days were accomplished that she should be delivered,*” it means she had a normal nine-month pregnancy, making Jesus about six months younger than John the Baptist (1 Chron. 24:10 cf. Luke 1:5,11,23-24,26,36).

To the Galatian believers, Paul wrote, “*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (Gal. 4:4-5). While the Lord was her firstborn son, He wasn’t the only child of Joseph and Mary. Scripture is clear that Mary gave birth to other children (Matt. 13:55-56), and Scripture is also clear that Mary was a sinner just like the rest of mankind (Rom. 3:23 cf. Luke 1:46-47).

However, there was a problem. They had nowhere to stay upon

arrival. We aren’t given the details surrounding their search; all we know is that there was “*no room for them in the inn*” or the lodging house/guest chamber. The innkeeper was not unkind, but because of the registration, many had traveled back to Bethlehem, so any public housing and family member’s homes were probably full.

The Lord’s entrance into this world was not glamorous. He was wrapped in “swaddling clothes” which were bandage-like strips of cloth for the purpose of closely confining the limbs of the infant to the body, which was the custom. However, He was also laid in a manger, which was a trough from which cattle were fed. Definitely not how one would expect the King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16) to enter the world. Though not glamorous, this fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah wrote, “*...He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him*” (Isa. 53:2).

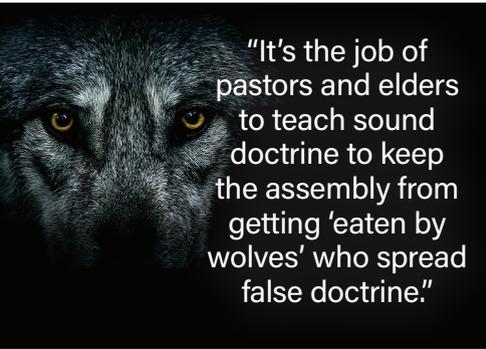
The Lord Jesus Christ, God in the flesh (John 1:1,14), came as a humble servant (Phil. 2:7-8) to die for the sins of not only Israel (Isa. 53:8), but for the sins of all mankind (Rom. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:15). If you have not trusted Christ alone, please do so today (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9)!

AN ANGELIC APPEARANCE

“**And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night**” (Luke 2:8).

At this time of our Lord’s birth, shepherds were keeping watch over their flock in the evening.

Their job was to care for them by feeding them and keeping them from danger. What's one of the biggest dangers? Wolves! As you may or may not remember from Saturday morning cartoon days, there was a cartoon starring Ralph the Wolf and Sam the Sheepdog. Both would punch a time clock to start their day, and it was Sam's job to protect the sheep from Ralph, who was trying to eat them!



"It's the job of pastors and elders to teach sound doctrine to keep the assembly from getting 'eaten by wolves' who spread false doctrine."

In the same way, God has instructed pastors and elders to protect the flock (assembly) from false doctrine, not by "bopping them on the head" as in the cartoon, but as Paul instructed the leaders from Ephesus, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after My departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock*" (Acts 20:28-29). It's the job of pastors and elders to teach sound doctrine to keep the assembly from getting "eaten by wolves" who spread false doctrine (Eph. 4:12-14).

"And, lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid" (Luke 2:9).

When Luke wrote that the angel of the Lord "came upon" them, it means that the angel "stood by" them (Acts 23:11). Notice also that the angel did NOT appear at the Temple in Jerusalem to the religious leaders, but to lowly shepherds (Gen. 46:32-34) who were glad to hear this wonderful news (Luke. 2:17 cf. Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10). Shepherds were some of the most used men of God (Ex. 3:1; 1 Sam. 16:11), and it should remind us that God uses the least of us for His purposes (1 Cor. 1:26-27).

GOOD NEWS!

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

When someone visits with "good tidings," what are they bringing? Good news! The angel had some good news to share. This good news was for all "the" people (definite article in the GR), meaning for those in Israel who were looking for salvation and deliverance from their enemies (Luke 1:71-72). The Messiah had been born, the One by whom the gospel of God's coming earthly Kingdom would be proclaimed, and was later offered by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 3:19-21).

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Talk about great news! Men like Simeon and women like Anna

FIRST COMING



SECOND COMING



“...unbelievers need to be warned by us that His Second Coming in judgment will NOT be like His humble birth.”

had been looking for this day (Luke 2:30-32,38). They understood what the prophets wrote. Jeremiah wrote, “*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely...*” (Jer. 23:5-6). This glorious day, however, was postponed by the Dispensation of Grace (Eph. 3:1-12). After the Rapture (Titus 2:13), though, God will again resume His prophetic program with Israel and all the nations. Like Paul warned the Athenians (Acts 17:31), unbelievers need to be warned by us that His Second Coming in judgment will NOT be like His humble birth (Rev. 19:11-18)!

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12).

A sign was given for a couple of reasons. One, because the Jews require a sign (1 Cor. 1:22), but also because they would have to know how to identify the Christ Child because His actual birth was nothing out of the ordinary.

Having this information from the angel, we read,

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13-14).

The hosts of heaven were praising God for this miraculous event. Just think of it: God Himself took on the likeness of human flesh and experienced life as we do. Then, He was unjustly nailed to the cross, not for anything He’d done wrong, but for the sins of mankind. Because of this, believers today should loudly proclaim, like the angels of heaven, “*Glory to God in the highest!*” Each member of the Body of Christ should give God all the glory for His grace and mercy in this dispensation (Rom. 15:9; Eph. 1:6), because He alone is worthy and created all things to praise Him (Rev. 4:11). So if you’re wondering why God created you, Revelation 4:11 gives us the answer!

What about peace on earth? Why would the angels say this? Certainly, nowhere in human history have we seen this. Someday, though, there will be peace on earth as God establishes His

literal Kingdom on the earth (Isa. 9:7). In the meantime, we can thank the Lord that each believer is at peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and will never experience His wrath both today and in eternity (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thes. 5:9).

Finally, we read,

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

“And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

“And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

“And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them” (Luke 2:15-20).

The shepherds quickly left their flock and visited Joseph, Mary, and the Lord Jesus. On their way home, they made known all the things the angel said to them. Though we're not given great detail about who they visited or spoke to, the main thing we can learn is that they proclaimed God's good news. We should follow the shepherd's example.

In the Dispensation of Grace, we've been given a wonderful message, the mystery, and we should glorify and praise God for it (Rom. 15:6,9,11; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:6; Phil. 4:8), and **boldly proclaim** this message to others (Rom. 16:25; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 3:1-4; 6:19-20). 

Florida Special Meetings

Sunday, February 2, 2025

**Location: *Grace Bible Fellowship*
2600 N Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, Florida**

**Speaker: Pastor Kevin Sadler,
Berean Bible Society President**

**Contact: Pastor Matt Ash at 941-966-5959
or email at pastor@gbfcflorida.com**





Fanny Crosby

CHRISTIAN *to* CHRISTIAN

O CHILD OF GOD

“For ye are all the children of God by faith
in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26).

O child of God, wait patiently
When dark thy path may be,
And let thy faith lean trustingly
On Him who cares for Thee;
And though the clouds hang drearily
Upon the brow of night,
Yet in the morning joy will come,
And fill thy soul with light.

O child of God, He loveth thee,
And thou art all His own;
With gentle hand He leadeth thee,
Thou dost not walk alone;
And though thou watchest wearily
The long and stormy night,
Yet in the morning joy will come,
And fill thy soul with light.

O child of God, how peacefully
He calms thy fears to rest,
And draws thee upward tenderly,
Where dwell the pure and blest;
And He who bendeth silently
Above the gloom of night,
Will take thee home where endless joy
Shall fill thy soul with light.

—Fanny Crosby—

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth
the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but
a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through
Christ” (Gal. 4:6-7).

BBS Letter Excerpts



From North Carolina:

“We continue to enjoy the *Searchlight* and your TV study with Pastor Kevin. Keep on keeping on.”

From Arkansas:

“I would like to receive the free Bible study magazine [*Berean Searchlight*]. I received a copy of the book *Baptism and the Bible* from *Grace Harbor Church* in Illinois. I really enjoy reading it.”

From Facebook:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible*—“They’re Out There!”) “I appreciate you sharing this message. Few, if any, ‘friends’ get excited about Bible study or appreciate solid teaching. It gets discouraging when all you hear is ‘repent and be baptized; work for the Kingdom and pursue the great commission.’”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “All About the Bible—Pt. 2”) “This and all your teaching is so comforting, relaxing, and edifying. Exalting God and His Word above all else gives such a profound sense of peace in this sinful, deeply troubled, and restless world...Bless you all at BBS.”

From our Inbox:

(Responding to *Daily Transformation*—“Honor Your Wife”) “This is a good one. Words from Scripture that never return void. I hope you watch and enjoy how she’ll respond in love, respect, and honor.”

From Guam:

“Brother Kevin and Brother Don: We are seeing fruit in Guam, and we just want you to know that our blessed Lord God and Savior is blessing our ministry, and we bless you and all the brothers and sisters called by God to work for God at BBS.”

From our Mailbox:

“I was reborn in Christ Jesus on April 3, 2019. That was the day I was arrested for trying to kill a man. By the grace of God, I failed in my devilish ways, but in doing so, I found God and realized that having a loving relationship with God is the only path to salvation. I am writing to you to request that I be added to your mailing list. A fellow inmate gets your *Berean Searchlight* magazine, and I just love reading it....I look forward to reading next month’s magazine.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 5 | Red Sea”) “Loved it! Great explanation of the story of the parting of the Red Sea and the symbolism of death and resurrection. Thank you!”

From our Inbox:

“I would just like to say thank you for the resources available on your website and the daily [*Two Minutes with the Bible* and *Daily Transformation* devotional] emails. I find them very helpful. It’s so nice to find a mid-acts dispensational ministry. There seem to be very few about.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*—“Finishing to Win”) “Thank you so much, Pastor, for the inspiring message and the dispensational teaching of the Word of God. From Canibungan Proper, Tudela, Missamis Occidental—Philippines.”

From our Inbox:

“To inform you, I have downloaded the BBS App and will no longer need to receive a hard copy of the *Searchlight*. It has been a blessing in these years, but now we have online access. Thank you for all you do to make the gospel more understandable to many who know nothing of rightly dividing.” (Glad you are enjoying the app; it’s a great tool for keeping up with all things BBS.—Ed.)

From Missouri:

“Thank you so very much for what you people do. I listen to Pastor Kevin every day, or should I say night, as I go on YouTube.”

From Illinois:

“A few years back, the Lord led me to the gospel of Grace. This has had a profound effect on my understanding of the Bible. I only wish others would come to know this truth and the peace and understanding that comes with it. And I zealously tell those who will listen and some who won’t....Thank you for all that you do, and may our Heavenly Father bless this ministry and all who make it happen and all who listen.”

From Facebook:

“Love me some BBS. Thank you for telling the truth about our glorified Lord and ministry given to Saint Paul.”

From Alaska:

“Thank you for your ministry through *Transformed by Grace*. It has been such a blessing to us as we learn to ‘Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth’ as we are taught in the Word.”

From our Inbox:

“Many thanks for keeping me posted. Good to also continuously keep on receiving booklets from you.... Many thanks, team, for continuing to bring light to the lost world.”

From our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible*—“Will Amputees Still be Missing Limbs in Heaven?”) “Glory to God, Hallelujah, for I will be perfect on the day of the resurrection.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “Major Events of the Bible—Pt. 4 | Call of Abraham”) “Thank you for the German subtitles. In Germany, there are no representatives of the right division of God’s Word who put the sermons online.” (We are pleased to know the foreign subtitles have been a blessing to you.—Ed!)

From Wisconsin:

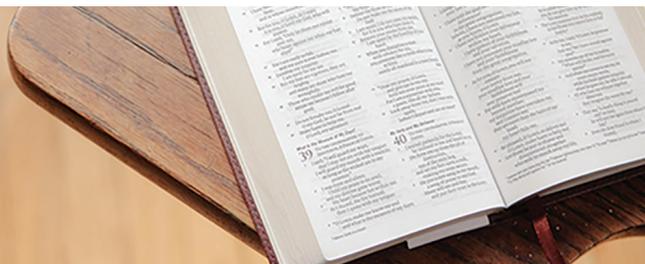
“Dear *Berean Bible Society* staff, we are sincerely appreciative to all of you for your continued stand for teaching dispensational truth and rightly dividing the Word.”

From our Mailbox:

“Thanks so much for all your labor in the Lord. Our prayers are with you always. May you be strengthened by His Spirit every day!”

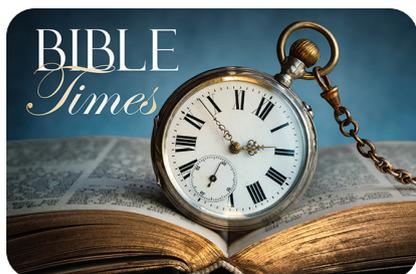
“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

—2 Timothy 2:15—





This Christmas season is a perfect opportunity to catch up on the latest videos from Transformed by Grace! These recent series are available to watch on TBG YouTube, our BBS website, or you can purchase a DVD series set.



BIBLE TIMES
4 DVD set—\$10.00

This series includes these episodes:

- Video 348: God's Timetable Overview
- Video 349: Time Past
- Video 350: Time Present
- Video 351: Time Future



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- 320 The Tower of Babel
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- 324 Damascus Road
- 325 The Second Coming



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- 340 Walk Not As Other Gentiles
- 341 Walk in Love
- 342 Walk As Children of Light
- 343 Walk Circumspectly
- 344 Walk by Faith
- 345 Walk in the Spirit
- 346 Walk Honestly
- 347 Walk to Please God



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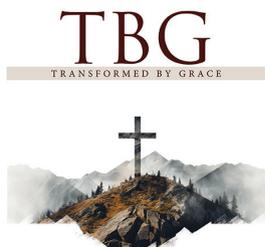
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News & Announcements



Read Your Bible Through in a Year: Do you want to spend more time in the Word of God in 2025? For many people, having a schedule to follow helps them to accomplish those necessary things in life. If that's the case, you may want to go to the BBS website and download one of the Bible reading plans. It will give you a schedule to follow in order to read your Bible through from cover to cover in one year. At bereanbiblesociety.org/bible-reading-plans/ you'll find two different options. One that follows the biblical order of the books and tells you how far to read each day to finish in one year and another which begins in Genesis and Matthew and tells you how far to read if you'd like to spend time each day in both the Old and New Testaments. These plans are also downloadable, so you can print them out and keep them in your Bible.

Out of Print Books and Booklets by C.R. Stam: We frequently get questions regarding the writings of BBS founder Pastor C.R. Stam, which were previously sold by the *Berean Bible Society* but are currently unavailable in our bookstore. Titles like *The Charismatic Movement — A Personal Testimony*, *Courage For the Conflict*, and *The Dimensions of the Mystery*, among others, can be accessed for free on our website at <https://bereanbiblesociety.org/stam-out-of-print>. You're welcome to download and print these works as you wish.

Promotion to Glory: Brother Ron Achtyes went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Monday, September 16, 2024. Ron faithfully served as the president of *Grace Gospel Publishers* in Denver, Colorado. GGP prints sound grace materials for both adults and children, including their classic work, "First Things First." In addition, many have been impacted over the years by the grace writings contained in GGP's devotional booklet, "Amazing Grace." Please keep Ron's wife, Sharon, and their family in your prayers.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Grace Bible Fellowship, February 2, 2025, Nokomis, FL

Northern Wisconsin Grace Conference, February 15-16, 2025, Lena, WI

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

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the Mighty God,
Who that first Christmas
would humble Himself,
take on flesh and
enter the world He created."

—Charles Simmons



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- The WALK Television Network

Monday–Friday 6:00 pm ET:

- Christian Television Network (CTN)
 - DirecTV: Channel 376
 - Dish Network: Channel 262
 - Glory Star Satellite: Channel 117



TBG Network 24/7 streaming channel on Roku and Apple TV
Also available on TBG YouTube, and the BBS website